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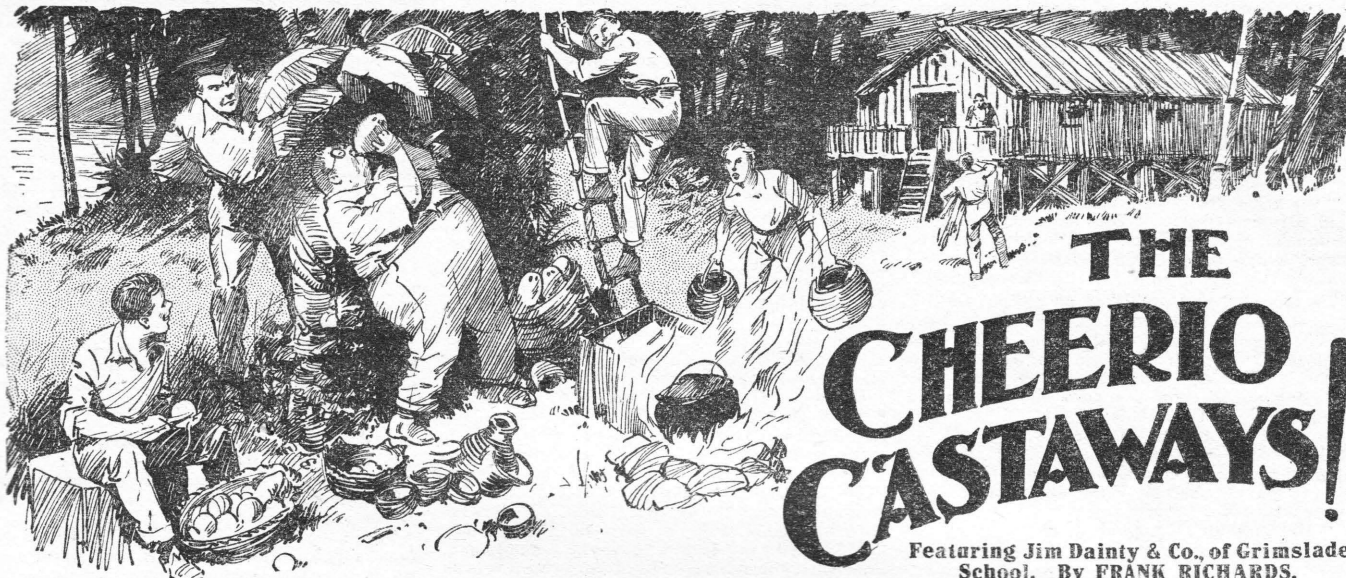


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FUN AND ADVENTURE ON CASTAWAY ISLAND—SOMEWHERE IN THE ATLANTIC OCEAN



Featuring Jim Dainty & Co., of Grimslade School. By FRANK RICHARDS.

After Dark!



GINGER RAWLINSON came out of the hut on the beach of Castaway Island, shaded his eyes with his hand, and stared along the shore. Westward, the sun was sinking behind the wooded hill, and dusk was creeping over the Atlantic from the east.

Ginger was looking north, where the island shore curved away in tangled wildernesses of mangrove swamps. The red-headed junior of Grimslade was anxious and uneasy. Streaky Bacon and Sandy Bean joined him. From the hut they were followed by the unmelodious snore of Fritz Splitz. Fritz was taking one of his many naps.

"Can't see them?" asked Streaky.

Ginger shook his head.

"Not a sign of them! They're not coming!"

"Sammy said they would be back by dark!" said Sandy Bean.

"It will be dark jolly soon, and they're not back!" said Ginger. "I—I wonder whether they've hit trouble."

It was a disturbing thought to the shipwrecked schoolboys. That morning Dr. Sparshott had started to explore the other side of the unknown island on which the Grimslade fellows were cast away. He had taken Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson with him. Ginger & Co. had passed the day cheerfully enough. Their confidence in Sammy Sparshott was unbounded. But night was falling now, and there was no sign of the explorers returning.

The sun dipped behind the hill. Shadows closed over the wide Atlantic, and crept over the bay and the beach. The chattering of the birds ceased in the jungle. Ginger drew a deep breath.

"They're not coming," he said. "Something's kept them. May be farther round the island than we thought. Anyhow, they're all right. I put my money on Sammy."

Ginger spoke with a confidence he did not wholly feel. He glanced at the shadowy jungle, at the tall palm-trees black against the darkening sky. The brief twilight of the tropics was going fast. He was thinking of Ezra Sarson, the man who had scuttled the Spindrift, lurking somewhere on Castaway Island. Ginger & Co. had beaten off his attack on the hut that morning. But they were wondering what the hours of darkness might bring.

"Better get in and bar the door," said Ginger at last. "That sweep may come barging in after dark—" He broke off with a startled yell as Sandy Bean suddenly grabbed him by the arm, and dragged him over. "My giddy goloshes! What the thump—"

Crash! A jagged lump of rock, whizzing from the dusk under the palm-trees, struck the beach where Ginger had been standing a second before.

"Cover!" panted Sandy. "I spotted him just in time! Get into the hut—quick!"

Ginger glared towards the dusky jungle.

"The roiter! I've a jolly good mind—"

"Get into cover!" snapped Streaky, and he caught Ginger Rawlinson by the arm, and dragged him into the hut.

Sandy Bean followed, and the door was shut and barred within. As Sandy jammed the bars in place, another rock crashed on the outside of the door. It had been closed only just in time.

Inside the hut it was almost as black as a hat. There was a squeal as Ginger trod on something soft.

"Ach! Mein gootness!" Fritz Splitz woke up quite suddenly. "Peast and a prute! Vy for you chump on mein dummy? You gif me a colossal bain in mein pread-pasket! Ooooooh!"

THE SCHOOLBOY WHO WAS BOOKED FOR AN ALLIGATOR'S BREAKFAST!

"You silly ass!" growled Ginger. "Park your bread-basket somewhere else! Roll away, you Boche bloater!"

"Prutal pounder!" gasped Fritz, scrambling out of the way. "Vy for you vake me up, plow you? I vas tream tat I vas pack in Chermany, and eating lofely Cherman sausages. Ach! It is all tark!" Fritz blinked round in the darkness, with his saucer eyes. "Vere is Sammy? Has Sammy gum pack?"

"No, ass! Shut up!"

"Mein gootness! Ve neffer see tat Sammy any more—"

Crash! The impact of a heavy rock on the door of the hut made the little building shake. The enemy was without.

"Ach! Is tat Sammy gum pack?" exclaimed Fritz. "Open te door and let Sammy in. Tank cootness he gum pack!"

"You blithering bloater, it's not Sammy—it's that sweep Sarson!" howled Ginger. "Shut up!"

"Ach himmel!" howled Fritz. "Geep him off! Geep him away! Mein goot Chinger, mein pelofed Pacon and Pean, geep tat peast away from me!"

Crash, crash! came on the barred door. The scuttler of the Spindrift was standing outside, wielding a heavy rock in both sinewy hands. Leaving Fritz to howl, Ginger & Co.

gathered inside the door, with their cudgels in their hands.

It seemed as if the savage attack must break in the door. But the hut was strong, built of the timbers from the raft on which the castaways had floated from the sinking Spindrift. And the walls were strengthened by the kegs and boxes and cases packed round inside. Fierce as was the attack, the rock crashed on the stout timbers in vain.

Again and again it came, the juniors listening within, with beating hearts. But it ceased at last, and they heard the ruffian fling down the rock. His voice came to their ears.

"You'll let me in, dog-gone you! I guess I'll let you run, if you hand over the hut and the stores. That's what I want! You hear me, you geeks?"

"Rats!" replied Ginger Rawlinson. "Come in, and take them, if you want them, you unwashed rotter!"

"I guess you'll unbar this door!" roared Sarson. "I'm sure going to fire the hut if you don't!"

"Oh, my giddy goloshes!" murmured Ginger.

"Ve shall all pe purned to teeth!" wailed Fritz.

"Gammon!" whispered Sandy Bean. "He won't burn the stores—he wants them as much as we do. He must have been living on coconuts and bananas for the past week. Trying to put the wind up us, that's all."

"Right on the wicket!" assented Ginger.

The canny Scot had guessed correctly. Ezra Sarson was not likely to destroy the stores in the hut, so long as the remotest chance remained of getting his thievish hands on them. They heard him prowling round the hut, groping over the walls, like a wild animal seeking admittance; but there was no sign of starting a fire. It had been an empty threat.

For an hour or more they heard him prowling. Then there was silence, and they wondered if he had given it up and gone. But there was no sleep for Ginger & Co. through the long hours of darkness. Even Fritz von Splitz did not close his saucer eyes, and for once his snore did not wake the echoes of the beach of Castaway Island.

Night in the Swamp!

"**T** IRED?" asked Dr. Samuel Sparshott genially.

Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson looked at him in the pale glimmer of starlight that stole through the heavy branches. Tired was not the word for what they were feeling like. They were so weary that they could scarcely drag one foot after another. Even the iron-limbed Sammy was feeling the strain.

"Just—just a bit, sir!" gasped Jim Dainty. Dawson did not answer. He leaned on a

foul slimy trunk, and breathed hard. The swamp seemed endless, although actually it was not extensive. Had daylight lasted, they might have emerged from the fetid wilderness, but the fall of night had almost banished hope, and they were hopelessly lost. Still they struggled on: weary to the bone.

"Keep your pecker up, my boys!" said Sammy Sparshott, quietly. "Grimslade never says die, you know."

"We're sticking it, sir!" answered Jim. "We shall get out of this in the daylight," said Dr. Sparshott. "You boys cannot keep on much longer, I know. I'm looking now for a spot where we can stop and wait for dawn—without sinking up to our necks. Keep going."

He tramped and squelched on again. Dainty and Dawson followed him. Sammy's tall, athletic figure loomed dimly ahead of the two juniors. They went in single file, Jim next to Sammy, Dawson bringing up the rear.

"Look out!" came a sudden shout from the headmaster of Grimslade.

Something stirred in the swamp. What looked like a mud-encrusted log heaved among the slimy roots, and two little cruel eyes twinkled. Sammy Sparshott came tramping back to the juniors.

"An alligator!" panted Jim. Half-seen in the dimness, the great snout was reaching for him. He bounded away, crashing through brittle bush and tangled roots. Dawson, a few feet from him, leaped away, caught his foot, and fell. He strove to rise; a strong hand grasped him and lifted him, and he was carried on, slung like a sack over the stalwart shoulder of the headmaster of Grimslade.

They could hear the giant alligator splashing in the mire behind them. Dawson felt his flesh creep at the sound. There was not a run left in his aching legs—but for the help of Sammy, he would have fallen a helpless victim to the demon of the swamp. But Sammy seemed tireless; he tramped on with the junior on his shoulder, and the splashing and crashing of the great beast died away.

Dr. Sparshott halted. He listened for a moment or two, and then set Dawson on his feet.

"Safe now!" he said. "Dainty! Keep together, Dainty!"

"Jim!" called Dawson. There was no answer from Jim Dainty. Dr. Sparshott set his lips. He had supposed that Jim was behind him; but it was evident that Dainty had leaped another way in escaping from the alligator.

"Dainty!" roared Sammy. His voice rang far and wide through the swamp, booming

back in a thousand echoes. "Dainty! Where are you? Answer!"

He bent his head to listen, as the echoing died away. Faintly, from afar, it seemed to him that he had caught an answering cry. He shouted again, and listened. But this time there came no answer.

"We—we've lost him!" breathed Dawson. "We've got to find him!" said Sammy, between his teeth. He peered at the exhausted junior, almost sinking with fatigue. "Come!"

"I—I can keep on, sir!" mumbled Dawson. But Sammy, unheeding, picked him up, and swung him over his shoulder again. The headmaster of Grimslade seemed made of iron. Burdened with the exhausted schoolboy, he strode on, shouting again and again, but without receiving any answer save the booming echoes.

Suddenly, Sammy felt a draught of purer air on his face. Through the darkness of slimy trunks and branches came a glimpse of the open. He tramped on, and felt firmer ground under his feet. It was the boundary of the dismal swamp, and he emerged, at last, into open starlight, where graceful palms nodded against the deep blue of the heavens.

He set Dick Dawson down at the foot of a palm tree, and stared round him. They were through the swamp at last, on the western side of Castaway Island. Then he looked back. Somewhere in the shadows of the swamp behind him was Jim Dainty. He looked at the sky, and the position of the stars told him that it was midnight. Dawson, worn out, lay like a log at the foot of the palm.

"Sleep, my boy!" said Dr. Sparshott gently. "I'm going back for Dainty!"

"I—I'll come!" panted Dawson. Sammy smiled faintly.

"I should have to carry you!" he said. "Remain here, and sleep! Probably I shall not be long."

Dawson made an effort to rise, and sank back from sheer weariness. He watched the tall figure of the headmaster of Grimslade as it disappeared into the swamp. Then his heavy eyelids closed, and he slept.

Hand to Hand!

DAWN on Castaway Island. Up from the glimmering sea came the golden ball of the sun, and it was day. Through chinks in the timber walls of the hut the light glimmered on the tired faces of Ginger and Co., and the nodding head and blinking saucer-eyes of Fritz von Splitz.

All through the night the Grimsladers had kept watch, and several times they had heard sounds of prowling outside. Through the long

hours, they had hoped to hear the sound of Dr. Sparshott and his companions returning; certain that Ezra Sarson would scuttle away, like a frightened rat, if the headmaster of Grimslade appeared.

But the night wore away without sign of Sammy. It was some hours, now, since they had heard any sound from outside. But they had no doubt that Ezra was watching, and until the light of day strengthened, they did not think of opening the door of the hut.

Ginger rose to his feet at last, and rubbed his eyes. He put his eye to a chink close by the door, and looked out into the rising sunlight. At a short distance, he saw a figure lying in the soft sand—the tattered figure of the 'Frisco tough. The man seemed to be sleeping. Ginger's face set hard.

"See him!" whispered Streaky. "Yes—asleep, not a dozen feet away!" answered Ginger. "And now it's light, we're not going to stay bottled up here, you men. We're going out to handle him; and this time he's not getting away."

"Hear, hear!" murmured Sandy. "Mein gootness!" gasped Fritz Splitz. "You will not be so mat as to open te door, while tat peast and a prute is tere! Ve shall all be tead!"

"Shut up!" growled Ginger. "Quiet, you men! The brute looks as if he's asleep; and we may catch him napping. Get hold of a rope! If we get our hands on the rotter, we'll tie him up, and keep him till Sammy comes back."

"What-ho!" Ginger Rawlinson took another look through the chink. The tattered, sprawling figure in the sand had not stirred. Softly, silently, he removed the bars from the door. In the open daylight, when they could see their enemy, the Grimsladers were not afraid of Ezra. They had beaten him once, and had no doubt that they could beat him again. They were going to try, anyhow.

Fritz Splitz quaked with terror as the door was softly opened. It did not seem to occur to the fat Fritz to lend a hand in the enterprise. He sat and blinked with scared eyes.

Ginger and Co. trod on tiptoe out of the hut. Each of them had a thick and heavy cudgel in his hand, and Ginger had a rope looped over his arm.

The prone figure in the sand did not stir as they neared it. Ezra Sarson lay extended, his head resting on his left arm, his right hand on the knife in his belt, his tanned, bony face shaded by the plaited grass hat.

Breathing hard, they drew closer and closer to him. Ginger put his cudgel under his arm, and made a loop in the rope. In another second or two, Streaky and Sandy would have flung themselves on the ruffian to pin him down, while Ginger looped the rope over his arms. His stillness and silence convinced them that he was sleeping. But a moment more, and they knew that it was a trick.

The still figure suddenly woke to life. With the swiftness of a springing tiger, Ezra was on his feet, his knife drawn, and lunging at Ginger. The red-headed junior of Grimslade started back, the cudgel slipping from under his arm, barely eluding the murderous lunge. Sarson was following it up with another, which must have taken effect, had not Sandy Bean lashed out with his cudgel in time.

The heavy stick came with a crash on the ruffian's arm, numbing it. Sarson gave a yell, his arm dropped to his side, and hung useless. He made no effort to lift the knife again, but his arm hung as if broken, and he gave a howl of pain.

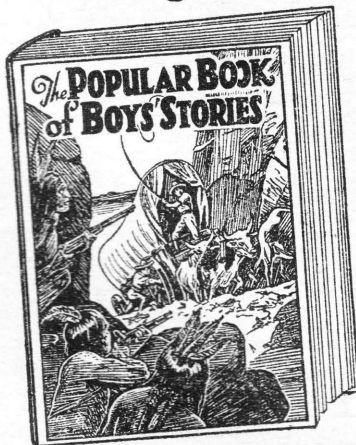
"At him!" panted Streaky. "Oh, my giddy gosloshes!" panted Ginger. "Spoofing us, the rotter! Give him jip! Give him beans!"

He grabbed up his fallen cudgel, and joined his comrades in the attack. Ezra Sarson bounded desperately back and made a wild run for the jungle. But Ginger passed him, and, swinging round his cudgel, caught the ruffian across the chest, sending him spinning backwards. He was not getting to the cover of the jungle this time.

"Collar him!" panted Sandy Bean. Streaky and Sandy leaped on Sarson as he staggered. The knife was still in his hand, but he could not lift his arm. He twisted and

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cluded them and dashed along the beach, with the Grimsladers in full cry after him. The desperado raced along the sand towards the northern side of the bay, the way Dr. Sparshott had gone the previous day.

"Get him!" panted Ginger, between his teeth. "He's not getting away, you men! We've got to get him."

"You bet!" breathed Streaky. They raced after the ruffian, who was making towards the mangrove swamp. That was his only refuge now from capture, and if he reached it, he escaped. The three juniors strained every nerve in pursuit.

"Oh, if we could only see Sammy coming back!" gasped Streaky.

But there was no sign of Sammy. Nothing stirred in the dismal swamp but the foul vapours rising in the sunshine. Desperately the ruffian panted on. Once among the mangroves, it was easy to dodge pursuit, but he had not reached them yet. The juniors were almost upon him, and Sandy's cudgel crashed on his back.

"Stop, you rotter!" roared Ginger. "We've got you!"

But the blow seemed only to spur the desperate man on. He made a fierce leap, and ran on. Swampy ooze was squashing round his feet now, and a last bound landed him among the mangroves. Like a hunted animal he twisted among the roots and stems and vanished from sight.

Ginger & Co. halted, panting for breath. Sarson, lost to sight, could be heard splashing in the ooze; and the sound died farther and farther away. They looked at one another. But it was futile to penetrate among the tangled mangroves, the muddy creeks and pools, in search of him. Ginger shook his head. And the splashing and trampling of the desperate man died away in the depths of the dusky swamp.

A Fearful Fate!

"OH! Good luck!" gasped Jim Dainty. The sound of a footstep in the desolate swamp came like music to his ears.

It was yet early; but the sun was already hot, the swamp simmering with heat and hazy vapours. For hours—it seemed to him years—Jim had struggled on after he had lost his companions in that miry wilderness. Again and again he had shouted, till he was too exhausted to shout again; but no answer came. Dr. Sparshott and Dawson were out of hearing—he had missed them in the sudden flight from the alligator, and he was hopelessly lost.

It was not till he was utterly spent that he sank down on a patch of firm soil in the slimy waste and slept. It was a sleep of exhaustion, and the sun was high in the sky when he awakened. He had food in his rucksack, and he ate; but his water-bottle was empty, and his throat was dry with thirst.

Water bubbled round him, salt from the sea, slimy and foul; he could not touch that. But the light of day renewed his courage, and he started once more to struggle on, in the hope of finding his companions, or finding his way out of the swamp.

And then, crackling among the brittle undergrowth, he heard a footstep, and his heart leaped. He knew that Sammy would be searching for him, and he had no doubt that it was Sammy.

"Here!" he shouted. "This way! This way!"

From the foul thickets came a startled, panting exclamation. The rotten vegetation swayed and crackled, and a tattered figure came into sight.

Jim Dainty started back. It was not Dr. Sparshott. The tanned face and savage, sunken eyes of Ezra Sarson glared at him in the shadows of the swamp. The ruffian's lips were drawn back in a snarling grin from his discoloured teeth. He shot a hurried glance to right and left, and understood that Jim was alone. He came closer, grinning.

From a shallow pool the huge head of an alligator was lifted, and the little eyes blinked under the flickering eyelids. Sarson did not heed it; and Jim did not even see it as he stood with set teeth, his eyes on the ruffian.

"You!" said Ezra. "You, you scum! Where's Sam Sparshott?"

"Find out!" retorted Jim. His heart was beating in great jumps, but he kept cool, his hand gripping hard on his cudgel. He had little chance in single fight with the ruffian, but his pluck did not fail him. Flight was impossible—the ruffian was too close. He faced his enemy, ready to defend himself to the last.

"I guess I'll find him!" Ezra rubbed a bruise on his head. "I guess I'll put paid to that dog-goned schoolmaster before he gets out of this swamp. You're lost—I reckon you wouldn't have shouted if Sam Sparshott had been anywhere near! I've got you, I guess."

Jim could see that the ruffian had been through trouble—bruises showed on his head, on his shoulders through his torn and ragged shirt, and there was dried blood on his tanned, unshaven face. His right arm hung stiffly. But he was more than a match for the school-boy—and both of them knew it.

With a sudden spring, he leaped. Jim struck fiercely, and Ezra hissed with rage as the blow struck him—but Jim had no time for another. Savage hands were on him, and he went down

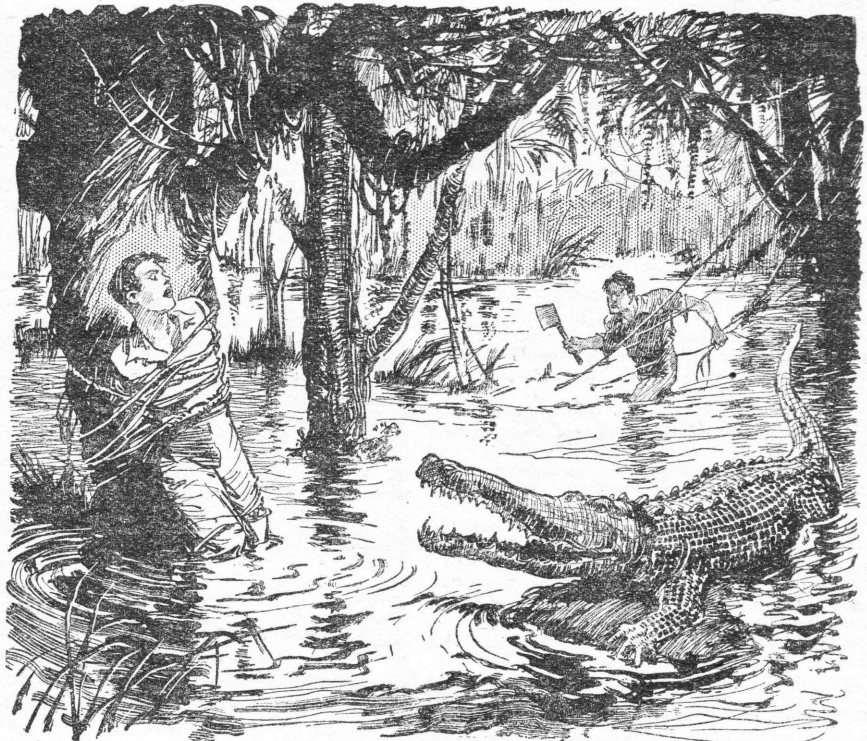
Sammy was searching for him—Sammy would find him—his trust in his headmaster was unshaken. He could only wonder that the ferocious ruffian, at whose mercy he was, was sparing his life.

But he did not know all yet. Having secured him till he could not stir a limb, and hardly a finger, Sarson stepped back. He picked up a lump of rotten wood and hurled it into the shallow water at a little distance. Jim's eyes followed the whizzing missile; and his heart almost died within him as he saw the snout of an alligator lifted from the slime.

The missile struck the long snout, and the great brute stirred, scrambling up on its clumsy legs in the shallows. The ruffian picked up another log and hurled it, striking the huge reptile again on the snout. The alligator began to move towards him, swamping heavily in the slimy water.

Ezra turned to the bound schoolboy, showing his blackened teeth in a grin.

"I guess I'm going!" he said hoarsely. "I guess you're paying for what I've got from your friends, dog-gone you! And I'll sure



Trampling, splashing, stumbling, Sammy Sparshott tore through the swamp. "Sammy! Sammy! Save me!" Sammy saw Jim Dainty now, bound to the trunk of a tree, knee deep in water. And stithering towards him was an alligator with cruel, open jaws!

on his back, the cudgel flying from his hand. Ezra had fled like a hare from Ginger & Co.—but, single-handed, this boy was at his mercy. And there was no more mercy in his savage heart than in an alligator of the swamp.

Jim struggled fiercely. But a sinewy knee was planted on him, pinning him down on his back. Ezra dragged his wrists together, and bound them hard and fast. Then he rose to his feet, grinning, the junior panting on the ground.

The ruffian's next proceedings puzzled him. Taking his knife with his left hand, Sarson began cutting lengths of the wiry creepers that grew in tangled masses on all sides. Then he returned to Jim, dragged him to his feet, and jammed him against the trunk of a slimy tree that grew half in a shallow pool of muddy water.

The junior sank to his knees as he was placed there. Round him, and round the trunk the ruffian wound the stems he had cut, stems of creepers as strong as rope, almost as hard as wire. He knotted them hard. Then Jim Dainty understood that he was to be left bound to the tree in the swamp; and he felt a gleam of hope.

serve Sam Sparshott the same when I get a cinch on him."

He turned and disappeared into the swamp, taking Jim's rucksack on his back.

Jim did not speak. His voice died in his throat. He hardly heeded the ruffian's going. His eyes, almost starting from their sockets, were fixed on the huge beast only a dozen yards from where he stood, bound and helpless.

Ezra had deliberately irritated the reptile, and left the schoolboy at his mercy. The sound of the great brute squashing through the shallows brought the chill of death to Jim's heart. This was the revenge of the merciless ruffian who had scuttled the Spindrift.

Through muddy water and oozing slime the alligator waddled. Jim, white as chalk, watched him, his heart hardly beating. He strained at the knotted cords that held him to the tree, though he knew that it was in vain. He could not stir a limb, and the frantic effort left him exhausted and breathless.

With staring eyes he watched the hideous reptile. He saw the snout headed in his

THE CHEERIO CASTAWAYS!
(Continued from page 113.)

direction, caught the gleam of the half-hidden eyes.

A cry burst from Jim Dainty, ringing far through the dismal solitudes of the swamp. If Sammy could only hear, Sammy would save him!

With the bitterness of death in his heart he cried out, again and again, while the hideous jaws of the alligator crept nearer and nearer.

Sammy to the Rescue!

DR. SAMUEL SPARSHOTT stopped and gripped the handle of his axe. Reeking with mud, bitten by innumerable insects, aching from head to foot with fatigue, the headmaster of Grimslade was still seeking the lost schoolboy in the mazes of the swamp.

He stopped, and stared through the dusky openings of the tangled growths of the swamp at the sight of a figure he knew, and his grip closed hard on the handle of his axe as he recognised Ezra Sarson.

There was an evil grin lurking on the tanned, savage face of the ruffian, and a deadly fear came into Sammy's heart that the wretch might have chanced on the lost boy in the swamp.

Ezra stared round, and his eyes blazed at the sight of Dr. Sparshott. He was seeking the headmaster of Grimslade, but he was seeking to surprise him, to attack him by treachery; an open meeting was not what the ruffian wanted. He spun round, and started to run as Sammy rushed towards him.

"Stop!" roared Dr. Sparshott. The ruffian tore on. Up went Sammy's hand, with the axe in it. A few seconds and the fleeing rascal would have vanished in the swamp. But the axe flew from Sammy's hand with deadly accuracy. It struck the running man behind the knees, and he pitched forward and crashed on his face. As he sprawled, Sammy was upon him with a bound.

The headmaster of Grimslade caught up the axe again. And as Sarson twisted over and glared up, he lifted it in the air.

"Lie there, you dog!" said Sammy, between his teeth; and the ruffian crouched back, gritting his teeth with rage.

Sammy bent over him. The icy glint in his eyes was more terrifying than the weapon in his hand.

"What are you doing here?" said Sammy quietly. "Have you met Dainty in the swamp? Answer me, you dog!"

"I guess not. I—"

"You lying rascal!" Sammy's keen eyes were on Jim's rucksack, which the ruffian had strapped over his shoulder. "That is Dainty's. You've met him. If you've harmed him, may Heaven have mercy on you, for I will have none! Speak!"

The axe was over Ezra's head, and the eyes above him glinted like cold steel.

"I guess I left him alive!" panted Ezra. "I swear—"

"Better for you if you did!" said Dr. Sparshott, between his shut teeth. "Take me to him! Get on your feet, you cur! Lead the way. You have never been nearer to death than you are at this moment!"

Ezra staggered up. Sammy's grip was on his arm, biting like a vice. They tramped on

together, and Sammy's grasp never relaxed for a second—till suddenly, ringing through the dusky swamp, there came a wild, shrill, terrible cry.

Dr. Sparshott started. The cry was repeated, again, and again, in accents of horror and despair, echoing and ringing through the swamp. And then, following the wild cries, came words, that went straight to Dr. Sparshott's heart.

"Save me! Sammy! Sammy! Save me!" Dr. Sparshott released the ruffian's arm and dashed away through the swamp.

Trampling, splashing, stumbling, Sammy Sparshott tore through the swamp in the direction of the cry. It came again and again:

THE GIANT APES ARE COMING!



THE GIANT APES ARE COMING!!

"Sammy! Sammy! Save me!" "I am coming!" shouted Dr. Sparshott hoarsely.

He had a glimpse of the boy now—he saw him, bound to the trunk of the tree, knee-deep in water, his face white, his eyes wide open and staring. And he saw the slimy monster that was swamping towards him, the cruel jaws, with their terrible teeth, hardly a couple of yards from the bound and helpless boy.

With desperate bounds the headmaster of Grimslade rushed on. It seemed as if the snapping jaws must seize the helpless schoolboy before he could reach him.

But with a last desperate bound Sammy was on the spot, and his feet landed fairly on the huge head of the alligator. His weight, as he crashed there, drove the reptile's head under the shallow water.

Sammy slid off, knee-deep in water and mud. The great head lifted again, the little flickering eyes glared round at him, the vast jaws opened.

Jim Dainty cried out in horror. Sammy had come; Sammy was there—but only to fall a victim to the fearful monster of the swamps.

But Sammy, plunging backwards, escaped the snap of the terrible jaws, and his axe was flung up, grasped in both hands, and came down with terrific force on the scaly head.

So terrible was the blow that the stout ash handle of the axe split and broke like a lath, leaving the stump in Sammy's hands. But the sharp steel was buried in the scaly head of the alligator, and the great beast swamped down heavily in the slime.

Water and mud stirred wildly as it struggled beneath the surface. Whether it was mortally wounded or not, Sammy did not know. He did not waste a second. He threw aside the broken handle of the axe, whipped the knife from his belt, and sprang to Jim Dainty.

With fierce haste he freed the boy. Jim Dainty reeled from the slimy trunk, free—and was caught up in Sammy's powerful arms.

Jim Dainty knew that he was saved; but he knew no more. His senses swam, and it was an insensible burden that Sammy Sparshott bore away through the swamp.

"Jim, old man!" Jim Dainty's eyes opened.

He sat up dizzily. Dick Dawson's arm supported him; it was Dawson's anxious face that was peering at him. And Dr. Sparshott's hand held a young drinking-nut to his lips.

"Drink, my boy!" said Sammy.

Jim drank deeply. The rich juice of the coconut revived him, and he sat up, leaning against the trunk of a palm and looked round him.

He realised that he was out of the swamp—that Sammy must have carried him out. Sammy had saved him—from a fate that he shuddered to remember.

"Better, old chap?" asked Dawson. Jim grinned faintly.

"I'm all right, old bean! Right as rain! You saved me, sir!" He looked at Sammy.

Dr. Sparshott, caked with dried mud, tattered by thorns, bitten by insects, sat chewing coconut. He nodded and smiled.

"It was Sarson!" muttered Jim.

"I know! I came on him in the swamp! He's lying here now; the scoundrel bound hand and foot. We shan't have any more trouble with him."

Sammy finished his coconut. "We're on the western side of the island now," he said. "No sign of other land—no sign of inhabitants so far. We seem to have the island to ourselves. We shall have to get back to the southern shore—we're not risking the swamp again! Rest now, my boys—rest and sleep. We must get going as soon as the heat of the day is past."

Dr. Sparshott stretched himself in the herbage under the nodding palms. Jim Dainty was glad to close his eyes. In a few minutes Dawson was as sound asleep as his chum. But Dr. Sparshott was not sleeping. He kept watch.

(What fresh adventures await the school-boy castaways? Read next week's big surprise story—it's super!)

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