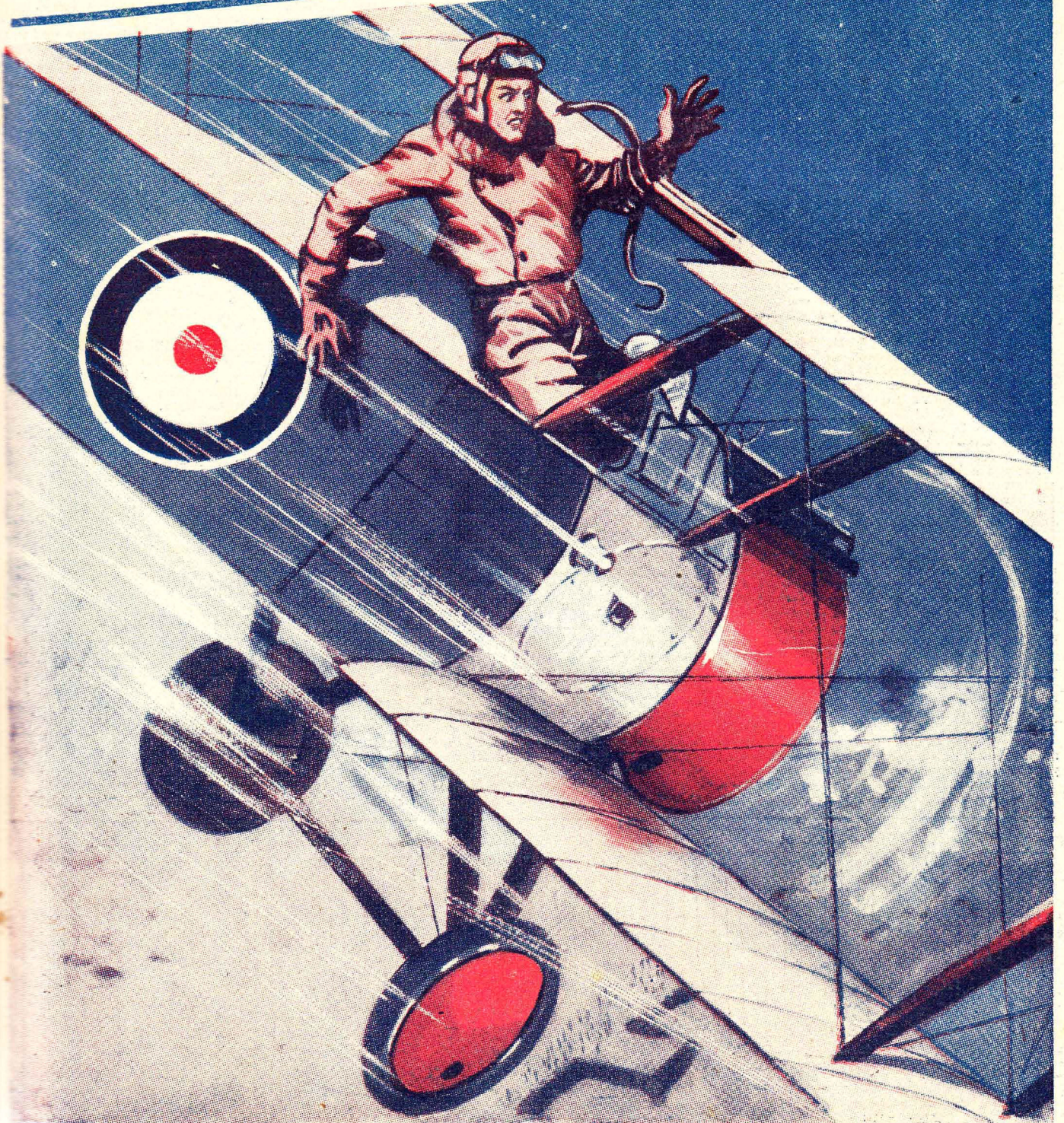
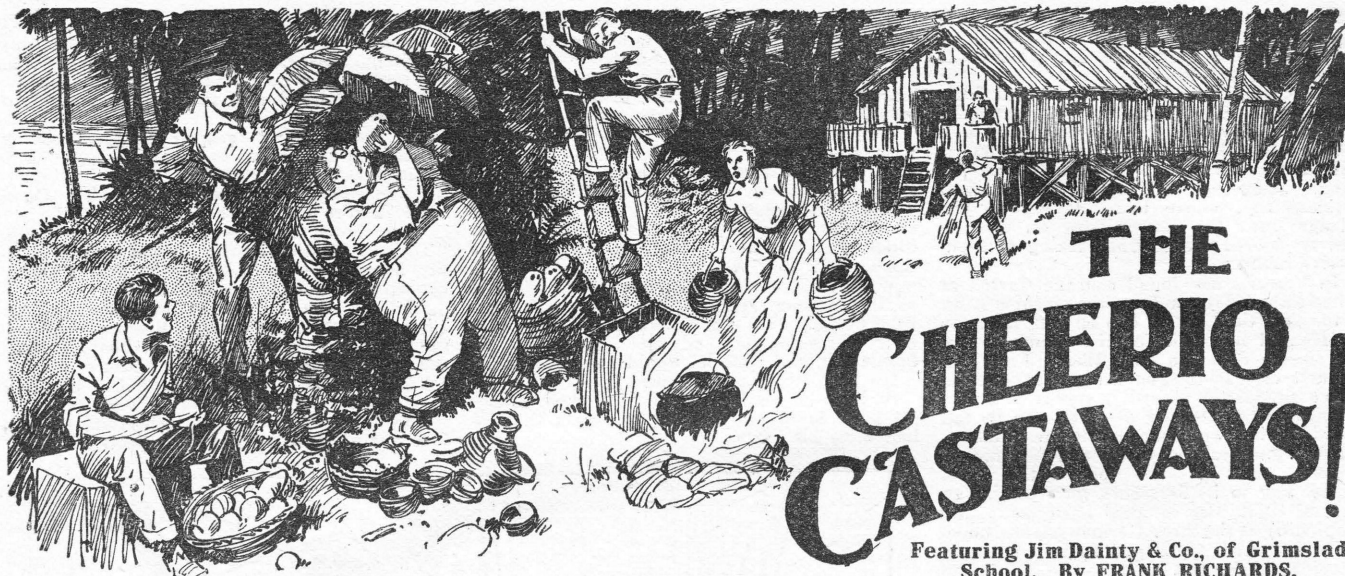


EVERYBUDDY READS "THE RANGER"! 7 UNBEATABLE THRILL-STORIES EVERY WEEK!



# The RANGER<sup>2</sup>





# THE CHEERIO CASTAWAYS!

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

## "Ship Ahoy!"

SHIP!" yelled Ginger Rawlinson.

It was a hot afternoon on Castaway Island. Ginger & Co. were gathering coconuts under the palm-trees near the hut built by the Grimslade castaways. There was a high wind from the sea, ruffling the blue waters



of the bay on the east side of the lonely island and shaking the fronds of the tall, slanting palms. Nuts were falling in the wind, and Ginger, Bacon, and Bean were improving the shining hour by collecting them. At the same time they kept a sharp eye open for Dr. Sparschott, who had left them the day before to explore the western side of the island, taking Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson with him. There was no sign of Sammy Sparschott returning yet; but Ginger, looking round, suddenly spotted the sail far out at sea. He dropped an armful of coconuts and yelled in great excitement.

"Sandy! Streaky! Look!" yelled Ginger. "My giddy goloshes! It's a ship—a jolly old ship! Hurrah!"

Sandy Bean and Streaky Bacon fairly spun round. Far out at sea, just appearing round the high rocks at the southern end of the island, came a small two-masted vessel, running before the wind. She came suddenly in sight from beyond South Point, as the castaways had named it. The three Grimslade juniors stared eagerly at the vessel. The Grimsladers rather liked Crusoe life on Castaway Island; but the sight of a ship made their hearts bound. Crusoe life was jolly in its way, but they realised that they wanted to see England and Grimslade School again.

Ginger waved his hat wildly.

"Hurrah!" he roared.

"A schooner," said Sandy Bean.

"How do you know it's a jolly old schooner?" demanded Streaky. "Might be a jolly old brig, or a jolly old barque."

"Fathead!" answered Sandy, with the grin of superior wisdom. "Can't you see it's got two masts, both fore and aft rigged?"

"What's fore and aft rigged, ass?"

"Booms, fathead, like a cutter, instead of yards, ass! If it was a brig it would have a yard on the mizzen."

"That's the back mast," said Streaky. "Would it have a back yard on it?"

"They're coming here!" said Ginger.

"They're making the island!" said Sandy. Sandy's people were seafaring people, and Sandy knew how to talk nautically.

"Eh? This island was made a long time ago," objected Streaky Bacon. "It was a finished job before we got here."

"Fathead!"

"Fritz!" roared Ginger. "Fatty! Frump! Fathead! Show a leg! Roll out! A sail, old podgy porker!"

There was a snore from the hut. Fritz von Splitz was sleeping in the heat of the day. The siesta, or midday sleep, necessary in tropical climates, suited Fatty Fritz. He liked it, and he started it early and ended it late. He did not hear Ginger's excited yell, snoring on regardless.

Ginger rushed into the hut. Fatty Fritz lay on his back on a bed of palm-leaves, his eyes shut and his mouth open. He snored happily. Beside him lay bananas and coconuts, remnants of his last feed. Perhaps he was dreaming of Grimslade School. More likely he was dreaming of the sausages of his native land, for a happy smile irradiated his podgy face as he slumbered.

"Fritz!" roared Ginger. "Wake up, fathead!"

Snore!

Ginger picked up a young nut and jabbed his penknife through the soft spots at the end of the shell. The "milk" within began to

**RESCUE SEEMS IN SIGHT FOR THE SCHOOLBOY CASTAWAYS WHEN THEY SIGHT A PASSING SCHOONER AND SEND UP SMOKE SIGNALS. BUT THE RESCUE ENDS IN SMOKE!**

trickle out. Ginger tilted it over Fritz's open mouth. He fancied that that would awaken Fritz von Splitz!

It did!

As the stream of coconut juice flowed into his wide-open, capacious mouth, there came a horrible gurgle from Fritz, and his saucer-eyes opened at once.

"Gurrrrgh! Mein Gott! Urrrrgh!" Fritz sat up, spluttering. "Urrrrgh! I joke in mein neck! Himmel! I was joking in mein trout! Grrruugh!"

"I thought it would wake you up!" grinned Ginger.

"Ach! Urrrph! Peast and a prute!" spluttered Fritz. "Vy for you vake me, ven I tream of Chermany and lofely Cherman sausages? Mein gutness! I tink tat I peat you till you pellow like a pull!"

"A ship, fathead! A sail, ass! Come and look!" yelled Ginger, and he grabbed the fat Rhineland by a fat neck and jerked him to his feet.

"Led go!" roared Fritz. "I tell you tat I joke in mein trout. I have no more te breff! I tink tat I tie—"

Ginger Rawlinson, chuckling, ran the fat

German out of the hut, gurgling and spluttering. He pointed to the schooner in the offing.

"Look, fathead!"

"Mein gutness! It vas vun ship!" exclaimed Fritz, realising at last the glorious news.

"Rotten luck Sammy not being here," said Streaky Bacon. "What on earth can have kept him away all night? He was to be back at dark yesterday. But they'll wait for him to turn up; they're going to put in at this island, you can see."

"Let's show 'em we're here," said Sandy, the practical man. "They may be passing the island. Can't see what any ship wants to come to a lonely spot like this for?"

"Good egg!" said Ginger. "Get a fire going! They're sure to see the smoke."

The schooner was still distant. It seemed to be making for the bay—East Bay, as it was named by the Grimslade castaways. But the bare possibility of the sail passing on, and leaving them on the island, was enough to make the boys get busy. There was plenty of wood at hand, dry as tinder in the hot tropical sun. They gathered it fast and piled it up, and set the fire going. In a very few minutes a column of smoke was rising from the beach, between the margin of the bay and the hut. Black and thick, it rolled against the bright blue sky, and could have been seen for miles at sea.

"Keep it going!" said Ginger. "Lend a hand, Fritz, you fat slacker! Pile it up!"

"Tat is all right! You keep te fire going while I vatch for Sammy to gum pack!" suggested Fritz, sitting down on a rock.

He sat on that rock, in ease and comfort, for about the tenth part of a second. Then three pairs of hands rolled him off it, and he bumped on the broken sea-shells of the beach with a crash and a roar.

"Like to lend a hand now?" asked Ginger.

"Ach! Peast and a prute, you preak me te pack!" yelled Fritz. "Leaf off to kick me on mein trousers! I have a bain in mein trousers! Whoop!"

Fatty Fritz lent a hand fetching firewood. Ginger & Co.'s persuasion was too strong to be resisted.

The fire was piled higher and higher, the heat of it driving the juniors back. But they still threw on fuel. An immense column of smoke rolled against the sky. The wind carried it inland, rolling away across the verdant hill that filled the centre of Castaway Island. It was likely enough that Sammy Sparschott might see it from beyond the hill, and guess that something was on. At all events, it was certain to be seen from the schooner. In the intervals of piling on fuel the juniors watched the vessel with anxious eyes. It was so near now that they could make out figures on the deck—men with dark faces, negroes or mulattoes, like many of the

crews in West Indian waters. The dark faces were turned, staring, towards the beach of Castaway Island, and the men were speaking and gesticulating with obvious excitement. No doubt they were surprised to see the signal fires, and the figures round it, on a solitary and uninhabited island in lonely seas.

"That chap's the skipper, I fancy!" said Ginger, pointing, as a figure in white drill appeared and stared at the beach. "He's a white man, anyhow, and he's seen us."

"Hurrah!"  
It was plain now that the schooner was making the island. She headed direct into East Bay, and came swooping down under sail towards the beach, like a great seagull. The juniors left the fire now—glad to get away from its heat. Fritz Splitz rolled away to the group of palms, at a little distance, in search of a drinking-nut. Fritz was thirsty. So were the other fellows, but they forgot it in the excitement of watching the schooner put into the bay. It was rescue from the solitary island, and glorious news for Sammy when he came back from exploring. The schooner came on so swiftly before the wind that it seemed to Ginger & Co. that she must rush on the beach. But at a cable's length from the shelving shore the sails dropped, and the schooner was hove-to. A boat swung from the davits, and a white man sat in the stern-sheets, while four brawny mulattoes sat to the oars. And Ginger & Co. waved their hats in wild excitement as the boat pulled to the beach.

### Down the Ravine!

**D**R. SAMUEL SPARSHOTT stopped, shaded his eyes with his hand, and stared at the blue sky over the wooded hill.

"Smoke!" he said.  
Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson looked. Floating up from behind the hill, clothed to its summit with verdure, came a rolling volume of smoke. It spread fan-like against the deep blue of the heavens. Dr. Sparshott's brows contracted as he looked. Unwillingly he had remained away from the camp on East Bay for the night. Evidently the smoke was a signal, and he wondered whether Ginger & Co. were trying to signal to him across the island. Yet they could be in no danger—for Ezra Sarson, the ruffian who had scuttled the Spindrift, their only enemy on Castaway Island, was now a prisoner—following the three explorers with his hands bound behind his back. "Ginger must have lighted a pretty big fire to send up smoke to that extent, sir," said Jim Dainty.

"Can't want a fire on a day like this!" grinned Dick Dawson, wiping a stream of perspiration from his brow, and smacking mosquitoes with a damp hand. "Must be a signal."

"To us!" said Dr. Sparshott. "Or they may have seen a sail. In either case, push on."  
"A sail!" repeated the two juniors. And willingly enough they pushed on after their headmaster. Behind them the sullen-faced Ezra tramped and stumbled. The Grimsladers gave him little heed. He was free to cut and run if he liked, with his hands bound; but as he had no chance of getting his hands loose he was not likely to run. He muttered savage words as he followed, but below his breath, and his mutterings died away in silence if Dr. Sparshott's eyes turned on him.

It was hard going. The three explorers had gone round the island on the northern side, struggling through the swamp, but they did not care to attempt returning through the fetid marshes. On the south side the island was a wilderness of broken rocks and rugged reefs, with inlets running far in. Dr. Sparshott had decided to strike across the hill, and the thick woods and tangled jungle made the going very hard. The heat was overpowering, and the buzzing insects innumerable. Here and there volcanic rocks cropped out of the rugged hillside; but the greater part was jungle, thick and tangled. But it was better than the fetid swamp, at all events, and Jim Dainty and his chum tramped on cheerily in the wake of their headmaster. That stalwart young man seemed to be made of iron, with muscles of tempered steel, and almost tireless. Thicker and blacker the smoke rolled against

the sky over the hill. Through the trees the murmur of falling water came to the ears of the three, and they were glad to hear it. Their water-bottles were empty now, and their throats dry with thirst. The gleam of water, flashing in the sun, came to their eyes, and they hurried on. They had worked their way round the southern slope of the hill to the eastern side, and, but for the jungle, could have looked down on the beach where the camp lay, and the open Atlantic beyond. But the trees shut off the view. From the higher slopes of the hill water came tumbling in a glittering cascade, in a deep ravine worn by its own action.

"Oh, good luck!" exclaimed Jim Dainty, and he plunged into the rocky ravine and held his burning face under the falling water, his example immediately followed by Dawson. The coolness was delicious. Sammy Sparshott, with a cheery grin, followed the two juniors. The water fell on them and flowed down past them in a series of shallow cascades. They stood knee-deep in it.

Dr. Sparshott turned his back on the cascade, and stood looking down the winding, rugged ravine, where the water flowed on and down. Nowhere was it more than a couple of feet deep, in places only a few inches—here a few feet wide, there a few yards.

"We're in luck, my boys," said the headmaster of Grimslade. "We've found a short cut."

"A short cut, sir!" repeated Jim.

"This," said Sammy, "is undoubtedly the stream that flows down into East Bay, and its last cascade is not fifty yards from our hut. If we follow the stream we get a short cut home—what?"

"Jolly good idea!" said Jim. "We shall get pretty wet, but we've been too jolly dry! Let's!"

"Take care!" said Dr. Sparshott. "The rocks are slippery, and a fall might be serious!"

"I guess I can't make it with my hands tied!" growled Ezra Sarson.

Dr. Sparshott looked at him. He nodded. Rascal and ruffian as the man was, he did not want him to break his neck in clambering down the watercourse with his hands bound. But he had no intention of releasing him. The scuttler of the Spindrift was too dangerous for that. He untied the man's hands so that Sarson could use them, but tied the cord to his arm, and the other end to his own belt. Ezra's eyes glittered. Now that his hands were loose, it was easy to guess that he hoped for a chance of making his escape, if not of turning the tables on his captors.

"Come!" said Dr. Sparshott tersely.

He led the way, clambering down the watercourse, and the juniors followed. Here and there the stream levelled out, only to fall farther on in another low cascade. Scrambling down the rocks in the shallow, falling water was rather a lark to the juniors, and Sammy did not seem to mind it. The coolness of the water was refreshing in the blazing heat of the tropic sun. It was easier going than pushing and struggling through tough jungle, and infinitely more rapid. At this rate it looked as if they might be back at the camp in another hour or so, instead of tramping on wearily till nightfall or later.

"Halt!" said Dr. Sparshott suddenly.

They stopped at a level where the water gathered in a wide pool, the ravine broadening out between walls of rock. Here there was room to land on one side of the stream, broad, shelving rock jutting between the water and the high walls of the ravine. Sammy's keen, grey eyes had turned on a dark opening in the rock—a natural cave. He waded out of



An immense column of smoke rolled against the sky as the perspiring juniors piled fuel on the fire to attract the attention of those on board the schooner. Would the castaways be rescued?

the water on to the wide, rocky shelf beside the stream, the cord forcing Sarson to follow him. He peered into the dusky opening of the cave.

"Later," said Dr. Sparshott, "we will come up here again and explore this. At present I am anxious to get back to the camp. We have not far to go now. We can already see the sea between the trees. I—"

He broke off with a gasp. For the moment, as he looked into the deep, dusky opening of the river cave, the headmaster of Grimslade was off his guard. With the spring of a tiger Ezra Sarson leaped on him from behind, and Dr. Sparshott went down with a crash, the ruffian over him. The two juniors were standing in the stream. They rushed and scrambled ashore as the ruffian made his sudden attack. But a lump of loose rock was clutched up in Sarson's hand, lifted to dash out the brains of the headmaster of Grimslade.

The juniors could not have reached him in time. But Sammy Sparshott, though he had for once been caught napping, was not an easy man to handle. He twisted over like an eel, hitting as he twisted, and the descending rock crashed on the ground a foot from his head.

The next moment he was grappling with Sarson.

The ruffian fought like a tiger. They rolled over and over on the level shelf of rock between the cave and the stream. Jim Dainty and Dawson scrambled out of the water and hurled themselves on Sarson. Jim got an arm round his neck, Dawson laid hold of his tousled hair with both hands, and they dragged him away from the headmaster by main force.

Dr. Sparshott scrambled up, panting. As Sarson turned savagely on the schoolboys, the headmaster of Grimslade leaped on him and crushed him down to the rock, with a knee on his chest. The savage eyes, under the beetling brows, glared up at him like a tiger's. But Sammy had the man where he wanted him now.

In a grasp of iron he seized the ruffian's wrists and dragged them together. At a word from him, Jim Dainty wound the cord round the wrists and knotted it. It was knotted hard and fast, and Ezra was a prisoner again.

"You've asked for it once too often, my man," said Dr. Sparshott grimly. "I shall leave you here—to wait till I may return for you."

He pitched the ruffian into the opening of the cave, and left him. His savage yell of rage died away behind as the headmaster and the two schoolboys resumed the descent of the ravine.

"The sea!" exclaimed Jim Dainty suddenly. The jungle thinned away lower down the ravine, and the wide Atlantic, rolling blue in the sunshine, burst on their view. The next moment Dawson gave a yell.

"A ship!"

Anchored in the bay below was a schooner, with five or six black men on her deck, staring shoreward.

"Oh, what ripping luck!" exclaimed Jim, his eyes dancing. "That's why Ginger lighted the fire—a signal to the ship!"

"Come on!" said Dr. Sparshott, briefly.

They scrambled onward and downward, in hot haste. They went headlong through the last waterfall, and dropped into the stream that flowed through the palm grove to the beach. Scrambling ashore, they dashed the water from their faces, and looked in the direction of the hut, visible now through the trunks of the palms. They had a glimpse of moving figures, and were about to start towards the hut, when a sudden, sharp sound ringing out on the air brought them to a standstill, in alarm and astonishment. It was the ringing report of a revolver!

### In Hostile Hands!

GINGER and Co. almost danced with joy, as they watched the boat pulling from the schooner in the bay.

The white man sitting in the stern-sheets eyed them, evidently astonished to see them there; and—if Ginger and Co. had not been too excited to notice it—looking anything but pleased. In a calmer moment, they might have noted that the schooner's skipper was far from a pleasant-looking man. His face was dark, telling of a dash of negro blood, though

he was a white man; his features were of a Gallic cast, his eyes black and glittering. There was a revolver stuck in his belt, and once or twice his dusky hand strayed to it, as he stared at the Grimslade juniors.

The boat bumped on the soft sand of the beach. The black boatmen jumped out, and dragged it up the sand, Ginger and Co. gaily lending a hand. Then the schooner's skipper stepped out dry-shod.

"Jolly glad to see you, sir!" chirruped Ginger.

"Allons! Vous etes Anglais! You are English?" said the dark-skinned man, changing into that language.

"Yes, rather, sir! Is that a French ship?" asked Ginger. A slight feeling of uneasiness came over him, and Sandy and Streaky felt their joyful enthusiasm diminish. The cold, hard, steady glare of those black eyes was discouraging.

"That is my schooner, the Courlis, et je suis le capitaine Luz—I am Captain Luz. What do you here?"

"We're shipwrecked," explained Ginger, his heart sinking, as he read the cold hostility in the hard face of the skipper.

"Mon Dieu! I find you here!" exclaimed Captain Luz, savagely. "It might have been better for you if you had gone down with your ship!"

"Look here—" exclaimed Streaky Bacon.

"Taisez-vous—silence!" Captain Luz turned to the four blacks, who had moved to surround the Grimslade juniors, and barked out an order in French. Immediately the black hands were laid on Ginger and Co.

They were taken too much by surprise to attempt resistance. Not that it would have served them, for in the grasp of the powerful Martinique negroes they were powerless.

"My giddy goloshes! What's this game?" yelled Ginger, fiercely. "What are you up to? Are you mad?"

One of the negroes brought a rope from the boat. They proceeded to bind the hands of the astounded schoolboys. Ginger and Co. looked at one another in stupefaction. All their high hopes were dashed now. They had taken it for granted that a ship putting in at Castaway Island meant that they were saved. But the dark-skinned skipper of the Courlis was evidently a foe, not a friend; though for what reason they could not begin to guess.

"I have business here!" said Captain Luz, with a sardonic curl of the lip. "I did not expect to find castaways on the island, which has never been inhabited since the days of the pirates. But, morbleau, finding you here, I shall see that you do not give trouble."

He turned towards Fatty Fritz, who was staring at the scene from a distance, with his eyes and mouth wide open with astonishment. He beckoned to the fat German.

"Venez! Come here!" he shouted.

"Mein gootness!" gasped Fritz. He understood no more than Ginger and Co. why the strange visitors to the island were foes. But he did understand it, and he had no idea of falling into their hands like the unlucky three. He bolted through the palms like a frightened rabbit.

Captain Luz tore the revolver from his belt. "Come!" he roared. "Come back, or I shoot!" The revolver glinted in the sun as he aimed.

Fritz Splitz, with a gurgle of terror, dashed on. In utter horror the Grimsladers saw the skipper take aim and pull trigger.

Crack! The report of the revolver rang far and wide over Castaway Island. Ginger and Co., their hearts thumping, watched, hardly breathing. Whether the swarthy scoundrel intended to shoot down the running Fritz, or only to frighten him into returning, they couldn't tell. The bullet glanced on a palm trunk a yard from Fatty Fritz, and knocked up earth a dozen yards further on. A yell of terror rang from the fat German, and he ran on frantically, disappearing among the palms.

"Yap! Allez—follow him!" snapped the captain, and one of the mulattoes dashed in pursuit of the fleeing fat German.

"My giddy goloshes!" groaned Ginger. "We're out of the jolly old frying-pan into the fire! What the thump does it all mean?"

Captain Luz gave no more heed to the

fleeing Fritz, evidently satisfied that Yap, the mulatto, would run him down. He turned to the trio again.

"Four of you!" he snapped. "Are there others?"

Ginger and Co. were silent. For some reason beyond their understanding captain and crew of the schooner were enemies to the castaways. Evidently the Courlis was no peaceful West Indian trader, and her skipper had some special purpose in visiting the lonely island, though what it was was a mystery.

"Morbleu! I ask you a question!" snarled Luz. "Answer, then!"

"Find out!" retorted Ginger, "and go and eat coke, and be blowed to you!"

Captain Luz gave him a dark look. For a moment Ginger expected another savage blow; but the captain controlled his anger and turned away. Leaving the three juniors, bound hand and foot, lying on the sand, he strode up the beach to the hut by the tall rock, followed by the blacks.

Sitting up, with some difficulty, Ginger and Co. looked in the direction of Fritz's flight. They had little hope that the fat German would succeed in getting clear. Every minute they expected to see the big mulatto, Yap, come tramping back through the palm grove, dragging the podgy Rhinelander after him. But minute followed minute, and he did not appear. If Fritz escaped—if by happy chance he found Sammy and warned him!—as the long minutes passed Ginger and Co. hoped more and more. And they would have chirruped with glee if they could have seen what was happening beyond the screen of palms by the stream.

Fatty Fritz, in a state of panic terror, ran as he had never run before. Fritz was no sprinter; but danger behind him made him put on a burst of speed that was really wonderful. Panting, gasping, gurgling, the fat Rhinelander bolted on, spurred to greater efforts by the sound of padding feet in pursuit.

He blinked back, with terrified saucer-eyes, and gave a squeal of terror at the sight of the brawny mulatto, only a few yards behind him.

"Ach!" squealed Fritz. "Geep off, peast and a prute! Mein gootness, I have no more te breff, and I tink tat I tie!"

He barged on wildly, winding among the trunks of the palms, along the bank of the stream. Closer and closer came the padding of the black's naked feet, and Fritz could hear his deep breathing as he ran. Closer and closer, till the outstretched fingers of a black hand touched the fat shoulder of the German.

The touch brought a squeal of fear from Fatty Fritz, and he bounded on as if electrified.

But it was in vain! The grinning black rushed after him, and his grasp fastened on Friedrich von Splitz. In utter terror, the fat German collapsed at his feet, gurgling wildly.

Grimming, the black man dragged him up. Another moment, and Fatty Fritz would have been dragged away to the beach, to join the other prisoners there. But as the mulatto dragged him, a stalwart figure came springing through the palms, and a fist that was like a lump of iron crashed on the side of the black man's head. It was a blow with all the strength of Sammy Sparshott's strong right arm behind it, and it might have cracked the skull of a white man. It stretched the black man senseless on the earth. He fell like a log, and lay inert where he had fallen.

Dr. Sparshott stopped and jerked Fritz to his feet.

"Geep off!" shrieked Fritz. "Peast and prute, tat you geep off—"

"Come!" barked Dr. Sparshott.

"Mein gootness! It is Sammy!" gasped the bewildered Fritz. "Ach, I was so bleasted to see you as neffer was before."

Dr. Sparshott made no answer. He dragged the gasping Fritz away among the trees, leaving the senseless mulatto where he lay. Dainty and Dawson were there, panting with excitement. Sammy made them a sign to follow him, and scrambled back up the ravine, his face set and grim. Ten minutes later Captain Luz stood under the palms, staring down in amazement at the senseless mulatto.

(Will Sammy succeed in rescuing the Grimslade boys from this fresh peril on Castaway Island? See next week's amazing story.)