

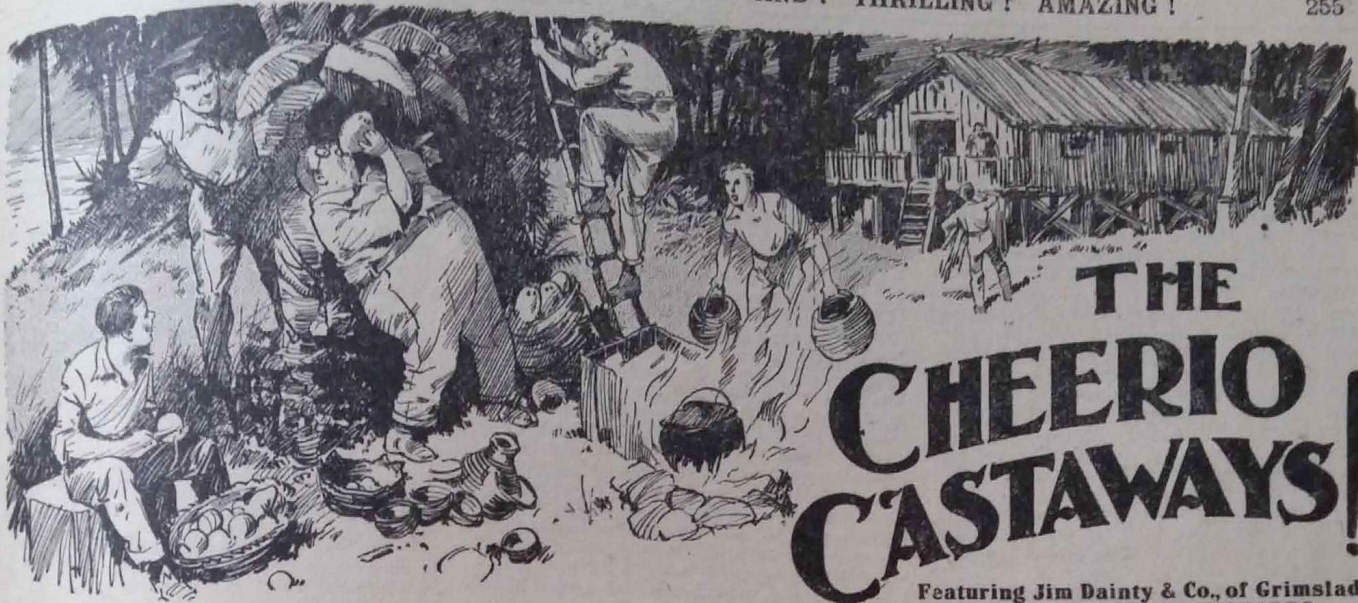
SEVEN SUPER-THRILL STORIES—THIS WEEK! NEXT WEEK! EVERY WEEK



THE RANGER

2D





THE CHEERIO CASTAWAYS!

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

Tricked!



FRITZ SPLITZ grinned. Bright morning shone on Castaway Island. After the hurricane of the previous day, all was fair and smiling. It was going to be a busy morning for the shipwrecked Grimsladers.

Dr. Samuel Sparshott, with his field-glasses slung over his shoulder, had already started to ascend to the highest point of the island hill, to scan the sea for a sign of the schooner that had been swept away in the hurricane. Jim Dainty & Co. had another, and to them a more attractive, occupation. They were going treasure-hunting.

And Fritz Splitz, as he heard the five juniors laying their plans and making their preparations, grinned—a wide grin, that extended across his fat face from one extensive ear to the other.

"You see," Jim Dainty was saying, "that crew came in the schooner to hunt for the treasure, buried here long ago by order of a jolly old black King of Hayti. Sammy's given us leave to hunt for it—and we're going to find it—if it's here."

"If!" murmured Sandy Bean. Sandy was sceptical.

"No 'if' about it," said Dick Dawson, stoutly. "I jolly well believe it's here; and that skeleton we found in the cave up the ravine is a clue to it."

"Might be tons of money!" said Streaky Bacon. "Pieces of eight—whatever pieces of eight are—and jolly old doubloons."

"My giddy goloshes!" chuckled Ginger Rawlinson. "Fancy going back to Grimslade stacked with Spanish doubloons."

"Share and share alike, if we find it!" said Jim Dainty. "You coming, Fritz?"

Fritz Splitz, still grinning, shook his head.

"Nein! I vas not guming!" he answered. "Perhaps I gum anodder dime! But I tink two dimes before I share and share alike after! If I vind me tat dresoure, I tells you tat tat dresoure pelong to me, nicht war!"

"You fooling, frowsy, slabby Boche!" roared Ginger Rawlinson. "Sit down!"

"Ach! Whoop!" roared Fritz, as the red-headed junior of Redmayes House at Grimslade School up-ended him, and he sat—hard; on the sandy beach of Castaway Island.

"Peast and a prute! Ach!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jim Dainty & Co. started for the ravine, leaving Friedrich von Splitz sitting on the sand, glaring after them with his saucer-eyes.

"Prutal pounders!" roared Fritz. "If I vind tat dresoure, I giff you not vun touploun—not vun!"

The Grimslade juniors clambered up the steep ravine on the hillside, heedless of the spray of the falling water. When they had

disappeared from sight, Fritz Splitz picked himself up, and rolled slowly after them. The podgy grin reappeared on Fritz's face. Deep thoughts were working in the depths of the fat Rhinelander's podgy brain.

Tramping up the shelf of rock beside the tumbling stream, the castaway schoolboys reached the opening of the cave. All was quiet and peaceful there now; very different from the day when they had been attacked there by Captain Luz and the black crew of the schooner. They were going to make a day of it; and Jim Dainty carried a bag of provisions, Dick Dawson a lantern, and the other fellows cans for water, which they filled at the stream.

Deep in the dark cave lay the skeleton they had discovered, that of one of the blacks who had buried the treasure—as they believed, at least. According to what they had heard, a black nobleman of Hayti, bearing the weird title of the "Marquis of Marmalade," had

JIM DAINTY & CO.—MODERN ROBINSON CRUSOES—IN ANOTHER EERIE, THRILLING ADVENTURE ON CASTAWAY ISLAND.

buried the treasure on that lonely island, by order of King Christophe, to save it from his enemies the French.

More than a hundred years had passed since then. But it seemed likely that the buried treasure was still there, the island being so lonely and unknown, far from the track of ships and trade. The schoolboys who were cast away on it did not know where it was, except that it was in West Indian seas.

"Here we are!" said Dick Dawson, lighting the lantern, and flashing the light into the dark opening of the cave.

"Fill the cans, you men," said Ginger Rawlinson. "We shall want all the water we can carry, before we come out of that jolly old cavern."

"Hallo, Fritz has changed his mind!" exclaimed Jim, as the juniors were about to enter the cave. Fatty Fritz, red with exertion, came clambering up the ravine, panting for breath.

"Ach! Tat you stop! Tat you gum pack!" Fritz squealed from a distance.

"Buck up, old bloated Boche, if you're coming!" shouted Ginger.

"Ach! Vait!" yelled Fritz, and he came panting breathlessly up. "Tat poor Sammy—poor old Sammy—ach!"

"Sammy?" exclaimed Jim. "Nothing's happened to Sammy!"

"He fall from vun cliff—"

"What?" yelled the juniors in dismay.

"I tink tat he preak him to neck!" "My giddy goloshes! Where?" yelled Ginger. "Come on, you fellows—we know the way he went!"

Treasure-hunting was instantly forgotten. Lantern and provision-bag, cans of water, were dropped where the juniors stood, and they raced away down the ravine. Plunging recklessly through the falling water, scrambling and tumbling over stones and boulders, they went in breathless haste, thinking only of the brave, true-hearted headmaster who had saved them from so many perils.

They emerged from the lower end of the ravine, and started for the route Dr. Samuel Sparshott had taken up the hill, at some distance from the stream. He was not to be seen on the hillside; but a thousand jutting rocks and trees might have hidden him.

"Better shout!" exclaimed Ginger. "Poor old Sammy! He might be lying among any of these dashed rocks!"

"Go it!" said Jim. And the five juniors, lifting up their voices together, roared:

"Dr. Sparshott! Sammy! Sammy!" "Hallo, Grimslade!" came a distant shout from among the rocks. To their intense relief, it was an answering hail from their headmaster, and his tall, athletic figure leaped into view on a high rock.

"He's not hurt!" gasped Dick Dawson.

"What the thump!" exclaimed Jim Dainty. The juniors hurried on. Dr. Sparshott surveyed them with a smile, as they came panting up.

"Tired of treasure-hunting, or what?" he asked.

"Aren't you hurt, sir?" gasped Ginger. Sammy raised his eyebrows.

"That fat idiot Fritz came after us, yelling that he'd seen you fall!" exclaimed Dick Dawson.

"The young rascal!" exclaimed Sammy, his brows darkening. His face softened as he looked at the juniors, breathless, panting, scratched and bruised by their hurried clamber up the hill. "My dear boys, so that's why you came! Splitz was deceiving you—I suppose that was his idea of a joke!"

"Spoofed!" gasped Ginger.

"When I see Fritz again," said Dr. Sparshott quietly, "I will give him a lesson that will warn him not to play such tricks. I am very sorry you have been needlessly alarmed, my boys."

With a kindly nod to the juniors, the Head of Grimslade resumed his way. Jim Dainty & Co. looked at one another.

"That Boche bloater!" hissed Ginger. "My giddy goloshes, we'll scrag him bald-headed! We'll mop him up! We'll—oh, come on, and let's get hold of him!"

And the juniors tramped back down the hill, and reached the ravine once more—with intentions towards Friedrich von Splitz that were absolutely ferocious.

Fritz in a Funk!

"PLOCKHEADS!" chuckled Fritz Splitz. Fritz had not followed Jim Dainty & Co. from the ravine. Having spoofed the Grimslade juniors into hurrying off on a fool's errand, Fritz von Splitz slung the provision-bag over a podgy shoulder, picked up one of the water-cans, and the lantern, which was still burning. Then, chuckling over the success of his stratagem, the fat Rhinelander marched into the cavern.

"Plockheads and dummkopfs!" chuckled Fatty Fritz.

Like the other fellows, he firmly believed that the skeleton in the cave was a clue to the buried treasure of King Christophe of Hayti. And Fatty Fritz was going to unearth that treasure before the other fellows had a chance, and if he found it he was going to claim the lot, by right of discovery.

The fat German advanced deeper and deeper into the cavern. The spot of daylight at the entrance disappeared behind him. But the hurricane-lamp showed a bright light round him, and Fritz marched on and on till a glimmering of something white on the floor caught his eyes.

He shivered a little as he halted and stared down at the skeleton. If this was one of the men who had landed with the "Marquis of Marmalade," the bones had lain in the gloomy cavern for more than a century. Had the Black Marquis slain the man who had helped him hide the treasure? It looked like it; and it was possible enough, for King Christophe of Hayti, in his day, had not placed a high value on human life.

Fritz shuddered and glanced round him uneasily, rather wishing that he had not come alone. Still, he had to come alone if he was to forestall the other fellows and bag the whole of the treasure! Encouraged by the thought of Spanish doubloons, the fat Rhinelander blinked round for other signs of that ancient visit of the Black Marquis to the island cavern.

"Ach!" he ejaculated.

In the light of the lantern he discerned a narrow fissure that split the wall of the cavern from rugged floor to a point higher than his eye could reach. It was not more than three feet wide, a "fault" left in the rock by some volcanic convulsion of former times. Fritz rolled into it and flashed the light round. And on the floor, almost at his feet, lay another grisly object—a skeleton, whose ghastly skull seemed to grin at him in the light.

Fritz's teeth chattered at the sight. But he pulled himself together. It was a clue—he felt that it must be a clue! And, taking his courage—such as it was—in both hands, Fritz Splitz marched on, blinking to and fro nervously in the shadows.

Suddenly he came to a stop. Before him the fissure ended in a wall of rock!

"Mein goetness!" exclaimed Fritz in dismay.

He seemed to have followed a blind alley to its end. Yet, if the men from Hayti had not passed that way, how came the skeleton lying in the fissure? Fritz's fat brain was spurred to unusual exertion by the thought of treasure. After a long, dismayed blink at the wall before him, he approached it more closely and shone the light upon it, scanning it carefully. Then he grinned.

"Himmel! I was on te drack!" he gasped.

Close examination showed that the rock before him was not a solid wall, like the sides of the fissure. It was formed of rocks stacked up, one on another, crammed between the walls of the passage; and it was clear that they had been piled up by human hands.

Fritz's saucer-eyes gleamed.

He placed the hurricane-lamp on the ground, his bag and can beside it, and groped over the rocky obstruction with his hands. Solid as it looked, the irregular shape of the blocks enabled him to grasp them and drag them loose.

Rock after rock he dragged away, and then there was a crashing and a rumbling and a shower of rocks tumbled down.

Fritz jumped back with a gasp. Something that had been hidden in that stack of rocks, freed by their fall, fell forward towards him. It came falling forward, and Fritz uttered a

yell of horror as the bony arms touched him and the glimmering skull came into icy contact with his fat face.

"Ach! Himmel! Yaroooh!" roared Fritz, in utter terror, as he bounded backwards.

The skeleton fell at his feet, with a clatter of dry, old bones. And Fritz, catching his foot in a fallen rock, stumbled backwards, and fell with a bump—on the hurricane-lamp!

The light instantly went out! Blackness rushed on Fritz Splitz.

"Ach! Help! Gum to me!" he roared. "Chim, Chinger, mein goot friends, vere was you? Ach, mein gootness! Mein gootness! Whoop!"

Fritz blinked round him in the blackness. He could not see an inch from his fat little pimple of a nose. He groped for the lantern and gave a shriek as his fat little fingers came in contact with a skull.

He scrambled wildly away, bumping wildly on the rocks, stumbling and falling, picking himself up again, panting and gasping. Somehow he got back to the main cavern. Then he remembered that he had matches in his pocket, and he grabbed out the box. Even the slight, flickering illumination of a match was a comfort to the terrified Fritz.

It went out, and he struck another. He blinked round him, trying to screw up his courage. In his panic terror he would hardly have been surprised if the skeleton which he had disturbed in its century-old resting-place, walled-up in the rocks, had followed him from the fissure. But gradually his panic subsided a little.

"Ach! It was only a peastly skeleton!" gasped Fritz. "Vy for be afraid of vun skeleton tat is tead? I vill go pack!"

And Fritz struck another match, to light his way back to the fissure. A sudden draught of air blew it out, and Fritz jumped. The cavern was windless; the air was fresh, as if it had two outlets, but there was not a breath of wind. Yet the match in his fat fingers had been blown out from behind him!

"Mein gootness!" gasped Fritz.

He struck another match. Instantly it was blown out over his shoulder.

This time there could be no mistake. The match had been blown out! By whom? How? A panic-stricken howl pealed from Fatty Fritz. He dropped on his fat knees, yelling.

"Ach! Mercy! Go away, goot Mister Skeleton—go away mit you pefore! Ach! Mein gootness! Mercy!"

Gold!

"AFTER him!" growled Ginger Rawlinson.

"After the Boche bloater!" said Jim Dainty savagely.

Breathless, and boiling with wrath, Jim Dainty & Co. arrived at the mouth of the cave. If they had wondered why Fritz Splitz had played that scurvy trick on them, they would have known as soon as they saw that the lantern, the provision bag, and the can of water were missing. Fritz had spoofed them into going after Sammy while he helped himself to their supplies, and forestalled them in the hunt for the treasure.

Without hesitation, the juniors plunged into the dark cavern. Fritz had calculated that they would have to go back to the hut for another lantern; but they did not wait for that. They were too anxious to get after Friedrich von Splitz!

"Keep to the wall!" called out Jim Dainty, and, keeping to the right-hand wall of the cavern, the five juniors tramped away into the darkness.

They expected soon to sight the glimmer of the hurricane-lamp carried by the fat German. That would be a guide to them. But no glimmer of a lamp reached their eyes. They were unaware that Fritz had discovered the fissure in the wall and disappeared into it. But from the cavern ahead of them they heard a sound like falling rocks. It boomed in a thousand echoes through the hollows of the island mountain. Soon afterwards the unmistakable sound of Fritz's squealing, terrified voice reached their ears.

"My giddy goloshes! That's Fatty Fritz!" chuckled Ginger.

"But what is the fat ass doing in the dark?" asked Streaky. "No wonder he's in a funk if he's let the lamp go out!"

"Look!" breathed Jim Dainty.

The flickering of a match in the darkness caught their eyes. In its glimmer they had a glimpse of Fatty, not a dozen yards from them.

"Quiet!" whispered Jim Dainty. "Stand still, you men! Not a sound!"

Leaving the other fellows close by the cavern wall Jim stepped towards the fat German, as the match went out. When Fritz struck another, Jim Dainty circled behind him. When the second match went out Jim was within a few feet of Fatty Fritz.

He heard the fat Rhinelander's muttering voice, and grinned. And when Fritz struck another match Jim leaned towards him and blew it out over his shoulder. And when he blew out the next one, in the same manner, it was enough for Fatty Fritz.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell from the unseen Grimslade juniors as Fritz von Splitz, in the full belief that the skeleton was after him, howled and yelled for mercy.

Quite unaware that the juniors were in the cave, that yell of laughter gave the finishing touch to Fritz's terror. To his scared ears it was the howling laughter of demons and phantoms of the darkness.

"Ach! Mercy! Go away!" shrieked Fritz. "I vill not gum after your dreasure after, goot Mister Skeleton! Ach! Herr Skeleton, go away mit you! Mein gootness!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was too much for Fatty Fritz. He scrambled up from his fat knees and ran! Where he ran, in the dark, he did not know, till he bumped into the cavern wall!

"Yaroooh!" roared Fritz.

He scrambled frantically away, feeling along the wall in the dark, afraid to leave it. And it was with a gurgle of relief that he saw daylight at the mouth of the cave again, and staggered out on the bank of the stream in the ravine, bedewed with perspiration. He sank down, gasping for breath.

Left behind him in the cave, Jim Dainty & Co. chuckled loud and long. Fritz had had what he deserved for his trickery.

"Jevver see such a howling funk!" chuckled Ginger. "But where has the frabjous freak dropped the lantern? Can't be far off—look for it!"

Matches were struck, and the juniors found the fissure where Fritz had left the lantern.

"Another jolly old skeleton here," said Ginger coolly. "That old sportsman, the Marquis of Plum-Jam, seems to have left plenty of souvenirs behind him. Hallo, here's the lantern—and another skeleton, by gum!"

The hurricane-lamp, fortunately, was not much damaged. Ginger relighted it and held it up, and the juniors gazed round them with keen interest. The wall of rocky blocks that Fritz had pulled away was more than half demolished, and beyond it the fissure extended deeper into the mountain.

"Come on!" said Ginger.

He pushed his way through the opening, and one by one the others followed him. They tramped on by a narrow, rocky passage, hardly more than three feet wide. Ginger halted suddenly.

"My giddy goloshes!" he ejaculated.

"Look!"

Crowding forward and peering past Ginger, the juniors saw that the fissure ended in a yawning gulf that extended to an unknown depth. Below all was darkness. Ginger flashed the light into it without seeing the bottom of the rift.

"Oh, my hat! What's this?" exclaimed Jim. He pounced on a small object that lay near the edge of the precipice.

It was metal, black with age; but evidently a coin. Stepping back from the perilous edge of the abyss the juniors examined it eagerly. Jim rubbed it hard, and a gleam of yellow came through the black.

"Gold!" he breathed.

"Gold!" repeated the juniors, in awed tones. It was a proof—that single coin, dropped carelessly a hundred years ago in that remote nook of the mountain—that they were on the track of the treasure!

Treasure for Fritz!

BUT it was the end of the treasure-hunt, if the Marquis of Marmalade, in those old days, had lowered the treasure into that abyss in the heart of the mountain, the Grimsladers had no means of reaching it. All they could do was to report what they had discovered to Sammy. Jim slipped the coin—which was a Spanish doubloon—into his pocket, and they retraced their steps to the cavern. There, in the light of the hurricane lamp, they sat down to deal with the contents of the provision bag and discuss the discovery they had made. And when, after the meal, Ginger picked up the empty bag, he gave a chortle. A bright idea had come into Ginger's active brain.

He gathered up stones from the cavern floor and crammed the bag to the brim, the other fellows watching him in wonder. Having filled the bag with stones, Ginger tied the neck of it carefully with a cord, twisting it tight, and knotting it hard.

"What the thump's that for?" asked Jim. "Treasure for Fritz!" said Ginger coolly. "Let him see that doubloon—and his jolly old imagination will do the rest."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors. They tramped back to the mouth of the cavern, their treasure-quest having ended sooner than they had expected. The afternoon sun was burning down on Castaway Island when they emerged into the ravine. There they found Fritz Splitz.

Fritz was waiting for them to return from their pursuit of Sammy, never dreaming that they had returned long ago and followed him up the cave. Fritz supposed that the treasure-hunt was yet to begin—having no idea that it was over. His saucer-eyes almost started from his head at the sight of the juniors coming out of the cave.

"Mein gootness!" exclaimed Fritz. "Vas tat you? You have been in tat gave mit yourselves, while I tink tat you vas gone after Sammy! Peasts and prutes, I tink tat you pull me to leg."

"Just a few!" grinned Ginger. "Ha, ha, ha!" "Prutes!" roared Fritz, the truth dawning on his fat mind. "It vas you tat plow out to match in to gave—"

"Got it at last!" grinned Jim Dainty. Jim took the doubloon carelessly from his pocket, and the sun shone on the gold. Fritz gave a yell.

"Himmell! You have found tat treasure?" He grabbed at the doubloon with a fat hand, and Jim slipped it into his pocket again. "Mein gootness! Vat you got in tat pag, Chinger?"

"Guess!" chuckled Ginger Rawlinson. He heaved down the bag. "My giddy goloshes, treasure's all right, but it's jolly heavy!"

"Dreasure!" yelled Fritz. "Mein gootness! All tat is dreasure! And you vas leaf me out! Chinger, Chim, mein goot and pelofed jums, you vill share tat dreasure mit your old goot friend Fritz!"

"No jolly fear! You refused to share with us."

"That was vun choke!" gasped Fritz. "If I vind me tat dreasure, I share mit mein pelofed jums! Ja! Ja wohl! You vill not be vun greedy peast, mein goot Chinger—you



"My giddy goloshes!" ejaculated Ginger. "Look!" Craning forward and peering past Ginger, the juniors saw that the fissure ended in a yawning gulf that extended to an unknown depth.

vill not all be greedy peasts—you vill gif me vun share of vat is in tat pag?"

Ginger Rawlinson looked round. "What about it, you men?" he asked. "That bloated Boche wouldn't have shared with us—but were not Boche bloters! Shall we let him in?"

"Let's!" said Jim Dainty. "Share and share alike!" said Streaky Bacon.

"Tat is right—tat is as chenerous as a Cherman!" beamed Fritz Splitz. "Tat is vat I eggspect of mein pelofed jums."

"Well, look here," said Ginger, gravely, "you carry the bag down to the hut, and we'll share in what's in it—and you shall whack it out."

"Ja wohl!" exclaimed Fritz eagerly. And he heaved the bag on a fat shoulder. Fritz did not like work—but when the work was carrying treasure which he was to share, even Fritz could make an effort. But the bag was large, and it was well packed with solid stones; and it had been a good weight for Ginger to carry. It was a staggering load to Fatty Fritz.

"Mein gootness! Tat gold is heavy!" gasped Fritz. "I tink tat you help me carry tat pag, isn't it?"

"No fear!" said Jim Dainty. "You've done nothing so far, except tell lies and spoof us. You'll carry that bag all the way to the camp, or you won't get a whack in what's in it."

"Hear, hear!" "I vill carry it!" gasped Fritz. And he did!

Staggering under his load, the fat Rhineland started. The juniors followed him, grinning. Fritz tumbled down the waterfall, dropping the bag; but below, he heaved it on again, and they left the stream, the fat German bent almost double under his burden, gasping and grunting with exertion.

Jim Dainty & Co. strolled easily back to camp; but it was not an easy stroll for Fatty Fritz! He could almost have wished that less treasure had been found, so terrific was the weight of that bag! But he staggered on. The hut was reached at last, and Fatty Fritz

slid the bag to the ground. He plumped down beside it, streaming with perspiration.

"Open tat pag, mein goot Chinger!" he said feebly.

"You open it, if you want a whack in it!" answered Ginger.

"Prute!" Fager as he was to see the gleam of gold, it was some minutes before Fatty Fritz recovered from his exertions sufficiently to get on with opening the bag of "treasure." But he got on with it at last. His podgy fingers fumbled with the knots, and he got them undone, loosened the cord, and opened the neck of the bag. Up-ending it, he poured out the contents on the sand.

The juniors watched him with keen interest. From the opened bag a cascade of stones poured out. Fritz von Splitz gazed at them. He blinked at them. He stared at them!

"Vat—vat—vat is tat? Vere is te dreasure?" he gorgled.

"That's the treasure, old podgy bean," answered Ginger genially. "All we've got, except Jim's doubloon. Whack it out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But—but—but it vas only stones!" howled Fritz. "Tere is no gold—tere is no diamonds! Mein gootness! You pull me to leg!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors. Fritz gazed at them. He had staggered under the weight of that hefty bag, believing that it contained treasure. And it contained stones, of which he could have picked up any number on the beach—if so disposed!

"Peasts and prutes!" he gasped. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Aren't you going to whack it out?" inquired Ginger. "Fritz doesn't seem satisfied, you fellows! Well, look here, Fritz, I'll tell you what—you shall have the lot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors walked away, leaving Fatty Fritz with the lot! But, to judge by his looks, he did not derive much satisfaction from it!

(Dr. "Sammy" Sparshott in the clutches of a giant octopus! That's one of the many thrills in next week's grand story featuring the Grimslade castaways!)

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