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The **RANGER** 2^D

New Series No. 20 Vol. 1.—Every Saturday.

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LOOK!
NINE WONDERFUL
FREE-GIFT
PICTURES *INSIDE*

*The
Phantom
Horseman!*

11/5/33

THE CHEERIO CASTAWAYS!



Illustrated By
FRANK RICHARDS.

The Big Idea!



Fat poat vas pigger!" sighed Fritz Splitz.

"If 'ifs' and 'ans' were pots and pans," remarked Ginger Rawlinson, "what would tinkers do for a living?"

"But if it vas only pigger, ten ve could get away from tis peastly island!" said Fritz

Splitz. "Mein goot jums, I have been tinkering, and I have vun idea!"

"Sammy seems to be looking for something!" said Jim Dainty.

"Neffter mind Sammy! I tink tat I have vun ferry goot idea!" persisted Fatty Fritz.

Nobody seemed very interested in Fritz Splitz's idea, whatever it was. The Grimslade castaways had their eyes on their headmaster, Dr. Samuel Sparshott.

"Sammy" was standing on a rock, with his field-glasses to his eyes, staring out to sea. Jim Dainty & Co. wondered whether he had sighted a sail on the Atlantic, so intent was his gaze. Looking in the same direction, to the southward of Castaway Island, all they could see was the vast, rolling Atlantic, with one tiny speck breaking the monotony of the wide waters.

But that speck was not a sail—they had noticed it many times, and supposed that it was some lonely rock that jutted from the sea. Sammy, for some reason, seemed keenly interested in it.

The boat was beached. Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson sat on the gunwale. Sreaky Bacon and Sandy Bean were rooting through the lockers. Fatty Fritz sat in the warm sand, leaning against the boat, too lazy to move, as usual, though apparently his podgy brain had been working.

Somewhere on Castaway Island Ezra Sarson was lurking—but the boat that had brought him to the lonely island had fallen into the hands of the Grimsladers. They had hoped that Sarson's boat would prove capable of carrying them away from the solitary island in which they lived the life of Crusoes.

But it was only a dinghy, hardly more than twelve feet long, and evidently could never have carried seven passengers and stores for a voyage. It was extremely useful to the castaways, but it was of no use for escaping from the island.

"I tink," resumed Fritz Splitz, "tat I have vun ferry goot idea! Neffter mind Sammy—joost listen to me! Tat poat vill not garry all of us—but subbose tat some remain behind!"

"My giddy goloshes!" ejaculated Ginger Rawlinson. "Is that the idea, you podgy Boche?"

"Tat is it," said Fritz. "Tat peast and a prute, Sarson, gum to te island in tat poat! If vun man can gum, vun man can go, see?"

"Oh!" said Jim Dainty. "You mead that Sammy could take the boat and get away, and get help to take us off afterwards?"

"Also tat I go mit Sammy—"

"What?"

"Tat is te idea!" explained Fritz. "It vill be necessary to take plenty of food, so tere vill be no room for you. It is ferry important to take plenty of food. You can remain behind, and if it is possible to find te island again after, you vill be safed. Anyhow, you vill have te pleasure of knowing tat I am safed. Vat you tink of tat idea, mein goot jums?"

"I think you'd better put it to Sammy!" chuckled Jim Dainty.

Dr. Sparshott closed the field-glasses with a

THE SLEEPING SCHOOLMASTER WHO WAS VERY WIDE AWAKE!

snap, and stepped down from the rock. He came striding down to the beached boat. Fatty Fritz heaved his weight out of the sand. The juniors grinned, as they saw that he was about to propound his great idea to Sammy.

"If you please, sir," said Fritz, "I have tinked of vun goot idea! I tink tat if you take te poat and leaf te island—"

"I have already thought of that, Splitz!" said Dr. Sparshott tersely. "But I could hardly leave you boys unprotected on the island. Captain Luz and his crew of ruffians might return at any time. But that is not all. It is probable that I could reach safety in the boat—but it might mean weeks of drifting on the ocean, and as the bearings of this island are quite unknown, it would very likely be impossible for me to find it again in a ship. It would simply mean that I should be saved and the rest left to their fate."

"But if I gum mit you, sir—"

"What?"

"Ten I should be safed!"

Dr. Sparshott looked fixedly at Fritz Splitz for a moment. Fritz blinked at him hopefully. It seemed an excellent idea to Fritz. Somehow it did not seem such an excellent idea to Sammy.

"Dainty!" barked Dr. Sparshott.

"Yes, sir!"

"Fetch me a bamboo—a thick one!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

Jim Dainty hurried up the beach, and fetched a bamboo. He came back with it, grinning. Fritz looked rather uneasy.

"Vy do you vant a pampoo, sir?" he inquired.

"I am going to show you, Splitz, what I think of your idea," said Dr. Sparshott, taking the bamboo from Jim. "Bend over the boat!"

"Mein gootness! But vat—"

"Bend over!" barked Sammy, as if he had been back in his study at Grimslade School. He swished the bamboo.

"Ach! Mein gootness!" groaned Fritz Splitz, as he unwillingly bent his podgy person over the gunwale of the boat.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Ach! Mein gootness!" roared Fritz.

"Whoop!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yooo-hoop!" yelled Fritz. "Ach himmel! Yarooooooo!"

Dr. Sparshott threw down the bamboo.

"Now, Splitz, you understand what I think of your idea," he said. "We may drop the subject!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"My boys, I am going in search of Ezra Sarson," said the Head of Grimslade. "You will remain here, and guard the boat. If the rascal should be able to regain possession of the boat, he can snap his fingers at us. Take every care while I am gone. I shall leave you one of the revolvers, Dainty! Do not hesitate to shoot if Sarson should appear."

"I can handle a gun, sir!" said Jim Dainty.

Dr. Sparshott strode away up the beach, and disappeared into the jungle. Fatty Fritz leaned on the boat, and groaned.

"Tat Sammy is a peast and a prute!" he groaned. "Vy for he peat me on mein trousers? I tink tat he is vun peast and a prutal pounder! Ach!"

Ginger Rawlinson picked up the bamboo.

"Sammy's shown you what he thinks of your stunt, old fat Boche," he remarked. "Now it's my turn!"

Whack!

"Yaroooooo!" roared Fritz, and he bounded away up the beach, roaring, followed by a yell of laughter from the juniors round the boat.

Hand to Hand!

"MY giddy goloshes! Look out!"

"He's coming!"

Jim Dainty's face set grimly! It was some hours since Dr. Sparshott had left the juniors, to track Ezra Sarson through the thick, tangled jungle of Castaway

Island. Fritz Splitz had gone to sleep in the hut; but the five other fellows remained with the beached boat, keenly on the watch for the enemy. And as the sun was dipping behind the hill, Ginger was the first to spot the stubbly, savage face that looked from the jungle, and the sunken, glinting eyes that stared towards the boat.

"Sarson!" exclaimed Dick Dawson, with a deep breath. And he grabbed a boat-hook.

Jim Dainty took the revolver from his belt. On the range at Grimslade School Jim had been a good shot with a rifle; and he could handle a revolver. Since the capture of Sarson's boat there had been a good supply of cartridges. With the six-shooter, loaded in every chamber, in his hand, Jim stood facing the savage face that peered from the jungle. Ginger & Co. grasped their axes.

Slowly, with the tread of a wild animal on the trail of its prey, Ezra emerged from the jungle. Slowly he came down the beach towards the boat. There was no sign of Dr. Sparshott. Evidently the ruffian had dodged the man who was hunting him and doubled back to the bay, in the desperate hope of getting hold of the boat again. There was a heavy axe gripped in his hand, a desperate glare in his eyes.

The Grimslade juniors stood in a group, watching him as he came, their hearts beating fast. They would have been glad to see their headmaster in those thrilling moments; but Sammy was far away. But their courage did not falter. Closer and closer came the ruffian, till he was within a dozen paces, and then Jim Dainty lifted the revolver and took aim.

"Stop!" he rapped.

Ezra halted, showing his tobacco-stained teeth in a snarl. Jim's hand was steady, his eye cool and clear, as he looked over the levelled barrel.

"Dog-gone you!" snarled Ezra. "I guess you won't scare me with that iron, you geek! Get going, darn you, while the going's good. I guess I'm having that boat!"

The ruffian made a movement.

"Stand back!" said Jim Dainty quietly. "I'll shoot if you come a step nearer, Ezra Sarson!"

For a long minute the ruffian stood half-crouched, glaring at the schoolboys. The levelled revolver daunted him. But for that, he had no doubt that a desperate rush, a savage slashing with the axe, would have driven the schoolboys from the boat. Hand-to-hand, the ruffian had no fear of the five of them. But he had no firearm, and the revolver looked him in the face.

"Dog-gone you!" he breathed at last; and he turned, as if to go. Jim Dainty felt a throb of relief. It would have fired, in self-defence; but he shrank from pulling a trigger, even on the hardened ruffian who had scuttled and wrecked the Spindrift.

"Look out!" yelled Dawson.

Ezra had turned; but with lightning speed he turned back and hurled the axe. It whizzed through the air at Jim Dainty with the speed of an arrow. He dodged swiftly, and barely escaped the deadly missile as it tore by. The keen edge grazed his shoulder as it passed.

The revolver was lowered, and before Jim could raise his arm again Ezra came after the whizzing axe with the spring of a tiger. Jim Dainty went crashing to the sand under the ruffian's grip.

Instinctively he gripped hard on the butt of the revolver. Ezra's grasp was on the barrel, striving to wrench it away. In a few seconds it would have been his. But those few seconds were not granted him.

Taken by surprise as they were by the desperate, sudden attack, the Grimsladers rallied at once. Dawson thrust with his boat-hook, and the barbed head gashed into the ruffian's brawny arm, and with a yell of pain Ezra rolled over on the sand, barely escaping a blow from Ginger's axe.

"Soak it to him!" yelled Ginger.

Jim Dainty was released, and he scrambled up, pulling trigger as he did so. The bullet splashed up sand over the ruffian, missing him by an inch. Ezra bounded to his feet and ran desperately up the beach.

"After him!" roared Ginger Rawlinson.

"Stick to the boat!" panted Jim Dainty.

He could have shot the ruffian down like a

rabbit as he ran. He contented himself with sending a bullet whizzing over his head, and Sarson, panting, disappeared into the jungle.

A fat face looked out of the doorway of the hut. Fritz Splitz rubbed his eyes and blinked at the Grimsladers.

"Vy for you make all tat row and vake me up when tat I sleep mit myself!" he demanded.

"Sarson!"

"Ach! Mein gootness!"

That name was enough for Fritz. There was a slam as the door of the hut closed and a rattling of the bars as the fat German jammed them into place.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ten minutes later there was a rustling in the jungle. But this time it was not Sarson. Dr. Sparshott emerged into view and came running down towards the boat. Evidently Sammy had heard the firing, and had lost no time in returning.

"Sarson has been here?" he demanded.

"Yes, sir. He's gone. He never got the boat," grinned Ginger.

"Nobody hurt?"

"Only Sarson, sir. He got a few knocks." Sammy grinned.

"Good! He seems to have left his axe here." Dr. Sparshott knitted his brows. "I shall not leave you again. Perhaps the mountain will come to Mahomet, if Mahomet does not go to the mountain."

"He won't show up so long as you're here, sir," said Dainty.

"I think, Dainty, that he may make an attempt to steal the boat after dark," said Dr. Sparshott. "I hope so, at all events. Now let us see about supper."

Sammy's Trick!

"LEAVE it there!"

"But, sir—"

"Are you arguing with your headmaster, Dainty?"

"Oh no, sir!" said Jim, in haste.

After supper, in the glimmer of the stars, the juniors had gathered round the boat, lying on the sand. It was beached about high-water

mark, and was safe from the tide. But it was some distance from the hut, and was certainly not safe from Ezra Sarson, if he came creeping back in the small hours.

The schoolboys had taken it for granted that the boat would be dragged up to the hut for safety, and they were laying hold of it, to shift it, when Dr. Sparshott tersely ordered them to leave it alone.

Sammy knew best, no doubt; but the juniors could not help wondering. The headmaster pointed to the hut.

"Bed!" he said laconically.

Slowly the schoolboy castaways went up the beach to the hut. Fritz Splitz had already turned in. Fritz was not worrying about the boat, or anything else. His deep snore greeted the chums of Grimslade as they came in.

"My giddy goloshes!" murmured Ginger Rawlinson. "Sammy said himself that the brute might come after the boat again, after dark. Now he's leaving it there for him to snaffle!"

"Sammy knows best, I suppose!" said Jim; but he spoke rather dubiously.

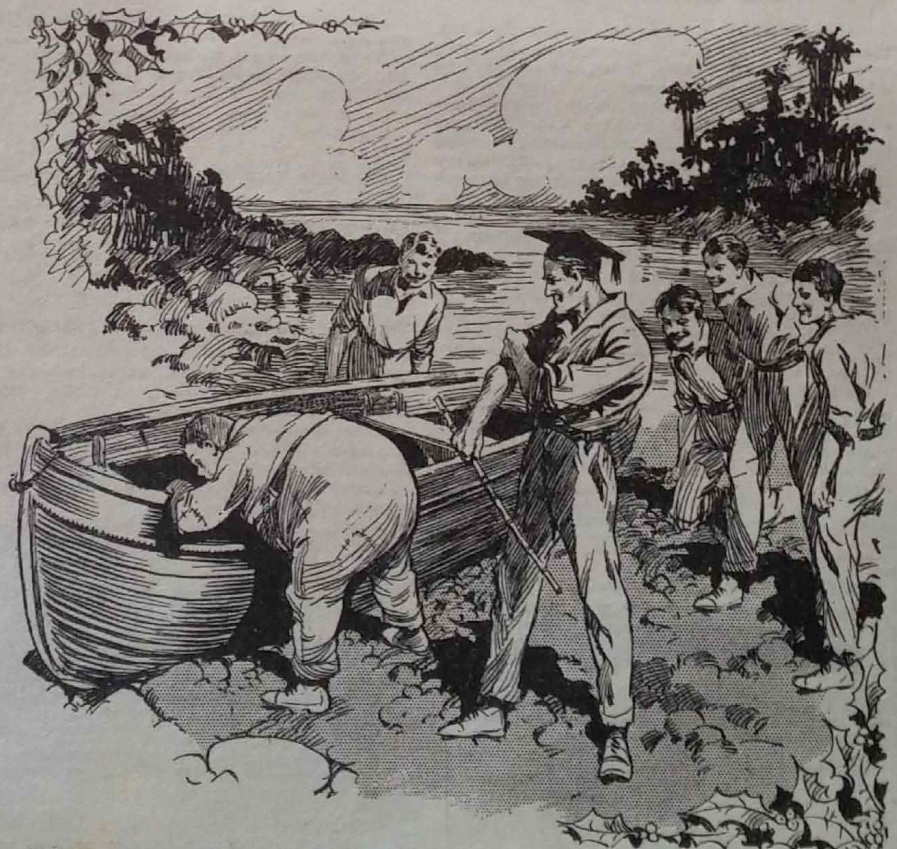
Ginger gave a grunt.

"If that blighter, Sarson, snaffles the boat, and gets away in it, we're done!" he said. "He will come back—but he won't come alone next time. He will bring some of his gang with him. We jolly well ought to keep watch on the boat!"

"Ten to one the brute's watching us from the jungle!" said Streaky Bacon. "He's bound to be watching for a chance. If he sees us all turn into the hut he won't be long getting after the boat."

The juniors could not help feeling perplexed, and a little worried. Their faith in Sammy was strong, but it was important to their safety, to their very lives, to keep possession of the boat; and it did seem as if Sammy, for once, was being a little careless.

However, orders were orders, and Sammy had to be obeyed on Castaway Island as at Grimslade School. They turned into their bunks, leaving the hurricane lamp burning for Sammy. But they were not asleep when Sammy came in.



"I'm going to show you, Splitz, what I think of your idea," said Dr. Sparshott, taking the bamboo from Jim Dainty. "Bend over the boat!" Whack! Whack! Whack! "Ach! Mein gootness!" roared Fritz as the bamboo descended again and again. "Whoop!"

Dr. Sparshott stood in the open doorway for some minutes, looking out into the clear, tropical starlight. His eyes were fixed on the dark edge of the jungle at a distance; and perhaps he detected a slight movement there, for a grim smile curved his lip. He stepped back into the hut at last, slammed the door, and rattled the bars into place. Then he extinguished the hurricane lamp, and all was darkness.

But he did not turn into his hammock, which was slung inside the doorway. Sammy, it seemed, was not planning to go to bed yet. But if he was staying awake to watch, the juniors were puzzled to know why. Sarson, it was certain, was not likely to attempt to attack the whole party in the hut. And from the distance, after dark, the stranded boat could not be watched. The juniors remained silent and uneasy, only Fatty Fritz's snore breaking the silence.

"Dainty!" Sammy's sudden whisper in the dark made Jim start. He sat up in his bunk.

"Yes, sir?"

"We have been watched coming into the hut, Sarson knows now that we are safe for the night. I shall drop from the window, and you will close it, and bar it, after me, without a sound! Do you understand?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Jim.

"Make no sound. He is watching from a distance, but he is as wary as a wolf! Secure the window safely."

Without a sound, Sammy swung open the shutter at the side of the hut, which covered the aperture that served as a window. He dropped lightly to the ground outside. The hut was between him and the spot where his keen eyes had picked up that stirring on the edge of the jungle. Jim Dainty, in silence, closed the shutter again, and replaced the bars inside. He returned to his bunk—but not to sleep!

"My giddy goloshes!" whispered Ginger. "That's Sammy's game—lying doggo, and waiting for the blighter! Sammy's no fool, after all!"

The juniors did not close their eyes. They lay in the darkness and listened. But they heard nothing save the snoring of Friedrich von Splitz.

Sammy Sparshott made no sound as he went. His plans were cut and dried. On his hands and knees he crept away from the hut, taking advantage of every inequality of the ground, every ridge of sand in the beach, to cover his movements. Had he walked, watching eyes might have spotted him in the starlight, and he had no doubt whatever that Ezra Sarson was watching. But a jaguar creeping through the dusk was not more cautious, and more invisible, than Sammy.

He gave himself plenty of time. Sarson, if he made his attempt, was not likely to make it too early. He was sure to wait and watch till he was certain that the coast was clear. Inch by inch, foot by foot, without a sound, Sammy crept on hands and knees among the ridges and knolls of the sandy beach, his ears keenly on the alert.

He stopped at last by the rock on which he had stood early in the day to scan the distant islet with his field-glasses. He was now hardly more than a dozen feet from the beached boat, and completely screened by shadow. There he waited!

Long, long minutes passed. They lengthened into an hour—two hours! Still there was no

sound, save the wash of the tide on the beach. But at last the headmaster of Grimsdale heard a slight movement, and listened more intently than ever. A faint, soft, scraping sound came to his ears, and a grim smile flitted over Sammy's tanned face.

He moved his head, and peered round the rugged edge of the rock. Keen as his ears were, he had not heard Sarson creep down to the boat. But he knew that he must hear the boat when it moved—and that was what he heard now.

Dim in the starlight, a sinewy figure was grasping the boat, and dragging it down the shelving sand to the sea. The stars glimmered on the stubbly, savage face of Ezra Sarson, beaded with perspiration from the efforts he was making.

Sammy did not stir! He watched, with cool interest. Slowly but surely Sarson dragged the boat down the sloping sand, till its nose edged into the water. Then he paused for rest and breath, and wiped his perspiring brow. He shook a knuckly fist in the direction of the hut, far up the beach, and his muttering voice came to Sammy's intent ears:

"Sleep, you dog-gone schoolmaster—sleep, you gol-darned geck! I guess you'll howl some when you wake up and find the boat gone! By the great horned toad, I guess you'll howl some! You'll see me agin, dog-gone you, with a dozen more to help, next time, and if I leave one of you alive—" He broke off, with a muttered oath, and resumed dragging at the boat.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT.

Owing to the Christmas Holidays, readers should note that next week's issue of RANGER will be on sale

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22nd.

Knee-deep in water, he floated it out, scrambled into it, and caught up an oar to shove off.

Then the headmaster of Grimsdale moved—swiftly.

An arrow in its flight was not swifter than Dr. Sparshott, as he crossed the space from the rock to the sea. Before the ruffian in the boat even saw him, Sammy had leaped in.

A startled howl broke from Ezra. He staggered, and stumbled over, as the boat shot out to sea under the impact of Sammy's leap. That impact drove it a dozen yards from the beach, rocking on the tide. Dr. Sparshott landed on his feet. The next moment his grasp was on the ruffian, grappling him down into the bottom of the boat.

"You!" panted Sarson, in amazement. "You, Sam Sparshott! By the great horned toad—"

With mad fury the ruffian struggled. He knew now how he had been tricked into believing that the boat was left unwatched—tricked into placing himself in the grasp of his enemy! But he was not taken yet!

It was man to man, and he was a sinewy and powerful ruffian. The boat rocked wildly as they struggled in a desperate grasp.

A round metal rim was pressed to Sarson's tanned forehead.

"Better give in, I think!" said Sammy Sparshott quietly. It needed only a pressure of his finger to send a bullet crashing through the ruffian's brain.

Ezra, gritting his teeth, still struggled. He reckoned that Sammy was not the man to do it, and he was right! Dr. Sparshott did not press the trigger. But he lifted the revolver and brought down the barrel with a crash on the ruffian's stubby head. Ezra gave a husky yell, and sank in the bottom of the boat.

"Sorry!" said Dr. Sparshott politely. "But I could not allow you to drown us both."

He grasped the wrists of the half-stunned ruffian, and caught up an end of rope. In less than a minute, Sarson's hands were safely knotted.

Then Sammy left him lying. Taking no heed of the scowling, cursing ruffian, he stepped the mast, and ran up the little sail. To the prisoner's surprise, he trimmed the sail to run out to sea. Ezra dragged himself into a sitting

position, leaning on the lockers, and stared at him.

"Dog-gone you!" he muttered. "You ain't making the island! What's this game?"

Dr. Sparshott, with the tiller in one hand, the sheet in the other, glanced at him.

"We are going on a little trip, Sarson!" he answered. "I shall have the pleasure of your company on the outward voyage—but not coming back!"

The ruffian's tanned face became pale as death.

"You'd send me to Davy Jones?" he breathed hoarsely. "Dog-gone you, Sam Sparshott, you couldn't do it!"

"Right on the wicket!" agreed Dr. Sparshott. "You deserve it, and more, but, as you justly remark, I couldn't do it! But there are more ways of killing a cat, my friend, than choking it with cream. I cannot trust you on Castaway Island—you are too dangerous, and the lives of my boys are in my care! You will never step on our island again."

"Durn you, what's the game, then?" muttered Sarson.

Dr. Sparshott made a gesture seaward.

"About five miles away there is a small islet—where I hope you will find sufficient food to support life. I have examined it very carefully through my glasses, and I believe there are some coconut palms, and certainly there will be shellfish. Later, I will bring you what I can spare in the way of tools and utensils—for the present, my object is to place you where you can do no further harm."

A string of muttered curses fell unheeded on Dr. Sparshott's ears, as he ran the boat out to sea.

Marooned!

"SAMMY!" yelled Ginger Rawlinson.

At the first gleam of dawn the school-boy castaways were out of the hut.

They were intensely anxious to know what had happened in the night. The rising sun showed them the bare beach. No sign of the boat, and no sign of their headmaster. But Ginger Rawlinson, looking out across the bay, was the first to spot the boat, tacking in from the sea.

Jim Dainty & Co. rushed down to the margin of the water, watching the boat with anxious eyes. There was one man in it—and evidently he spotted the juniors on the beach, for he lifted his hat and waved it in the air.

"It's Sammy!" said Jim. "But what—"

"Did Sarson turn up, I wonder?" said Dick Dawson.

"Goodness knows!"

"Anyhow, Sammy's all right!" said Ginger.

That, at least, was assured. Sammy was all right! The juniors watched the boat as it came swiftly in, and when it was close at hand, they rushed into the water, knee-deep, to beach it. Sammy jumped out, with a smile, and lent a powerful hand dragging the boat on the sand. Fritz Splitz rolled out of the hut.

"Vat apout brekker?" he called out.

But nobody heeded Fritz.

"What's happened, sir?" exclaimed Jim Dainty.

"Our friend Sarson," said Sammy, "happened! Probably, by this time, he wishes that he hadn't happened."

"He came!" exclaimed Ginger.

"He came!" assented Sammy.

"Then—where is he now?"

Dr. Sparshott pointed to the speck, far out to sea, dimly visible from the waves in the rising sunlight.

"That," said Sammy, "is where Sarson is now. And unless he develops swimming powers far in excess of Leander's of ancient times, we shall see nothing more of him."

"Mein gootness!" said Fritz Splitz, "I tink tat—"

"Well, what do you think, Splitz?" asked Dr. Sparshott, with a smile.

"I tink tat ve petter have brekker!" said Fritz.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Grimsdale castaways enjoyed their breakfast all the more, from the knowledge that their deadly enemy, at long last, was safe away from Castaway Island.

(Mystery on Castaway Island! Amazing things happening to the Grimsdale castaways! Make sure you read next week's thrill-story of Jim Dainty & Co.)

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