

14 FREE GIFT COLOUR PICTURES INSIDE AND 7 SUPER STORIES!

The RANGER 2^D

New Series No. 24. Vol. 2.—Every Saturday.
Week Ending January 20th, 1934.



*Boys
will be
Boys!*

THE CHEERIO CASTAWAYS!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

Fatty Knows How!



FRITZ SPLITZ grinned. He grinned from one fat ear to the other. Had Jim Dainty & Co. observed Fatty Fritz at that moment, they might have wondered at what the fat German was grinning. But they were not bothering about Fritz Splitz.

It was going to be a busy morning on Castaway Island. Dr. Samuel Sparshott, headmaster of Grimslade, was running the boat out into the bay. He was going across to the rocky islet, five miles seaward, where Ezra Sarson, the seaman who had scuttled the Spindrift, had been marooned out of harm's way.

Jim Dainty & Co., after watching their headmaster scud out to sea, walked back up the beach in a cheery bunch. Leaving Fatty Fritz sitting in the shade by the hut, they went on towards the palm-grove, and the jungle that lay beyond.

And Fatty Fritz's expansive grin extended from ear to ear, as he watched them go. Great thoughts were working in Fritz's podgy brain. He saw the five juniors halt under the shady branches of the big ceiba tree near the palms, and stare up into its mountain of foliage. Then they went on, and disappeared into the jungle. Fatty Fritz chuckled.

He knew, of course, where and why they were gone. A mischievous monkey, whom they had nicknamed Tarzan, had lately been purloining things from the castaways' hut. Cans of beef had disappeared—and Fritz, of course, had been suspected of raiding the stores. But it had turned out to be the playful monkey that dwelt in the big ceiba tree.

It was Ginger Rawlinson's idea to catch that monkey and make a pet of him. The other fellows were quite keen. But Tarzan, it seemed, wasn't! Tarzan had deserted the ceiba tree, and vanished.

Now Dainty and Dawson, Ginger and Bacon and Bean, were going further afield to hunt for him, while Sammy Sparshott was gone in the boat. Fritz, of course, was left behind—he was too lazy to help in hunting Tarzan. But it was not only laziness that kept Fatty Fritz from going in the hunt.

"Mein gootness!" murmured Fritz, as he stretched his lazy fat limbs in the soft warm sun. "Tey vas all dummkopfs, and tey vill never guess! I tink dat I pull tem to leg, and tey try to eat me! I tink dat I pull tem to leg, and tey try to eat me! I tink dat I pull tem to leg, and tey try to eat me! I tink dat I pull tem to leg, and tey try to eat me!"

The fat German remained sprawling in the sun, to give Sammy Sparshott time to get out of sight in the boat, and Jim Dainty & Co. time to get a good distance in the jungle. But he stirred at last, and lifted his weight from the sand. Having blinked round cautiously with his saucer-eyes, the fat Rhinelander rolled into the hut.

Stacked in the corner were the three dozen cans of beef which were kept as a reserve of stores. Every day—nearly every hour of every day—the fat Fritz Splitz eye those cans of beef with hungry eyes. There was plenty to eat on Castaway Island—tropical produce of all kinds, and ample supplies of fish from the stream and the bay. But the fat soul of Friedrich von Splitz longed for meat. Now he had his chance!

Taking a can from the pile, Fritz sorted out a tin-opener, and got busy. His fat jaws champed with beef. He grinned ecstatically.



"Mein gootness! Tat is goot!" gasped Fritz, with his mouth full. "Ach! I tink tat I tie, if I do not have somethings goot to eat. Tat is ferry goot peef—tat is poofful peef!"

There were three pounds of solid beef in the can. Every morsel vanished down the fat gullet of Friedrich von Splitz. He grinned over it—he beamed over it. For the first time since the Grimslade party had started on the holiday cruise with their headmaster, Fritz Splitz was really happy!

He ate and he ate and he ate! When it was all gone, the fat German eyed the stack of cans. But he shook his head. He had eaten enough for six, and he still felt hungry.

"Nein! Nein!" murmured Fritz. "Tat is enoff—and enoff is as goot as a veast! Anodder time I vill eat anodder—and tey vill tink tat it was tat monkey gum again!"

THE FAT BOY WHO ATE ENOUGH FOR SIX—AND THEN FELT HUNGRY!

And Fritz chortled. He carefully cleaned the tin-opener and put it away. He carried the empty can to a distance, and buried it in the sand. Then, feeling the need of rest after his exertions, he sat down in the shade by the hut, closed his saucer-eyes, and snored.

He did not awaken at a sound of trampling footsteps and voices. But he awakened when a foot lunged into his fat ribs.

"Urrgh!" gasped Fritz, opening his eyes, and blinking up at Jim Dainty & Co. "Ach! Have you gum pack? Vy for you gum pack so soon?" Fritz was not aware that he had slept for two solid hours.

"Tiffin, fathead!" said Jim Dainty. "It's nearly noon! Have you been asleep here all the while we've been gone after Tarzan?"

"Ja! Ja wohl! I glose mein eyes, and I tink I fall asleep mit meinsel! I have not stir vun stump!"

"You'd better stir one now, you fat slacker!" growled Ginger Rawlinson. "You might have got the grub ready. We've been miles and miles, hunting for that blessed monkey!"

"You vind him not?" grinned Fritz. It had not seemed likely that the juniors would catch the elusive Tarzan; and evidently they hadn't!

"If we had, fathead, we should have brought him home!" said Dick Dawson. "Haven't seen a sign of him. What are you grinning at, you fat bloater!"

"I tink tat tat monkey have not go ferry far away," said Fritz, shaking his head. "I tink he look apout for anodder chance to pag te peef and te odder tings from te hut."

"Rot! Look here, you've been slacking all the morning, so get up and get dinner!" said Streaky Bacon.

Fritz went into the hut. Ginger crammed chips of wood into the cooking-stove. He blew carefully on a lingering ember to ignite them. Matches had to be very strictly economised on Castaway Island. Ginger was interrupted by a yell from the hut.

"Mein gootness! Gum here, you yellows!" yelled Fritz Splitz.

"My giddy goloshes! What——"

The schoolboys rushed into the hut. Fritz Splitz was standing there, pointing with a fat finger at the stack of cans. There were six rows of six cans—or had been! Now one was missing from the top row.

"Tat monkey gum again!" exclaimed Fritz.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Jim Dainty. "You blithering Boche! Mean to say that you squatted there snoring and let that dashed monkey snaffle the stores again!"

"How gan I see him, ven I glose mein eyes in slumper?" demanded Fritz. "Anodder time, I geep mein eyes vide open before! I tell you two times tat tat monkey he is not gone away after! He hang apout because he vant to steal tings like before! Vat I tell you!"

Jim Dainty & Co. looked at Fritz Splitz. The same suspicion was in all their minds. But they felt that it was unjust. On a previous occasion, there was no doubt that the playful monkey had annexed the cans of beef while Fritz was sleeping at the hut. It looked as if the same thing had happened over again.

"Anyhow, it's all your fault!" grunted Ginger. "Why couldn't you stay awake and watch? Kick him!"

"Mein gootness! Leaf off to kick me on mein trousers!" yelled Fritz. "Ach himmel! I have a colossal bain in mein trousers; Yarooooooh!"

Fritz flew out of the doorway, and rolled on the sand. He rolled like a barrel, and roared like the Bull of Bashan. And Jim Dainty & Co., leaving him to it, proceeded with tiffin.

Caught in the Act!

DR. SPARSHOTT stepped from the boat-moored it to the post in the beach, and walked up to the hut. He was in time to join the shipwrecked schoolboys at dinner.

The loss of the can of beef was reported to him at once, and Jim Dainty & Co. watched him rather curiously, wondering what view the Head would take of the incident. They saw Sammy's eyes dwell, for a second, very keenly on Fritz's fat face. Fritz was scoffing dinner at a great rate; if he had already scoffed the beef, it did not seem to have affected his appetite to any great extent.

There was a lingering doubt in the minds of the juniors, but Sammy did not seem to share it. Fritz had been unjustly suspected once, when Tarzan was the culprit, and Sammy was not going to suspect him again without clear evidence.

"We must find that monkey!" was Dr. Sparshott's comment. "I believed that he had cleared off to another part of the island, after he was hunted for. But if he is hanging about and still playing tricks, we must certainly find him. That shall be the job for the afternoon, my boys."

"And this time Fritz can lend a hand!" said Jim Dainty.

"Certainly!" said Dr. Sparshott. Although he was not going to suspect Fritz, Sammy was not going to leave him alone with the stores!

"Tat is all right," said Fritz Splitz. "I gum mit bleasure! But subbose tat monkey gum again, while tat ve vas all away from te hut?"

"I shall secure the door!" said Dr. Sparshott.

After the usual rest in the heat of the tropical day the castaways prepared for the hunt, and Dr. Sparshott fastened the door of the hut. Locks and keys there were none on Castaway Island. Within the door could be barred, which made it quite secure at night. Outside, it could not be secured against a human hand. But there was no human hand to meddle with it—unless it was Fritz's fat paw!

Dr. Sparshott knotted a cord from the door-handle to the door-post, which should certainly have made it safe against any animal, even a sly and cunning monkey. But Fritz shook his head.

"I tink tat tat monkey is ferry glever," he remarked. "I tink he ferry likely to unfasten tat!"

"Nonsense!" said Dr. Sparshott.

Having finished securing the door of the hut the castaways started. Fritz Splitz rolled away with them cheerfully. Perhaps he realised that he had better have an "alibi" ready when the next can of beef disappeared! And perhaps he did not intend to go very far! Anyhow, there was a cheery grin on his podgy visage as he started.

The ceiba tree, formerly the home of Tarzan, was visited first. Jim Dainty & Co. clambered into the great branches to search it. Dr. Sparshott went on through the jungle. He was not thinking only of the monkey; he took a bag with him, to gather roots of sweet potato for transplanting in the garden cultivated by the castaways near the hut.

The juniors, however, gave all their attention to the hunt for the elusive monkey, and they spent a good hour in the great branches of the ceiba without discovering a trace of him. Fritz Splitz sat in the grass below and watched them, which was apparently his way of lending aid.

"No sign of him here!" said Ginger Rawlinson, sitting astride of a high branch to rest, and mopping his perspiring brow. "Blessed if I half-believe it was Tarzan at all who bagged the beef."

"Well, we're bound to give Fritz the benefit of the doubt," said Dick Dawson, laughing. "It was Tarzan last time."

"That fat Boche may be banking on that!" growled Ginger. "Pretty lot of asses he must think us, if we're hunting for Tarzan and all the while he has parked the beef under his waistcoat."

"I wonder!" said Jim Dainty. He glanced down through the foliage at Fatty Fritz. There was a grin on the podgy face of the fat German. His thoughts, whatever they were, seemed to be amusing him.

"If he's taking us in——" muttered Jim. "Look here, we'll jolly well put it to the test!

If that Boche bloater gets away with it once, he will try it on again—that's Fritz all over! Let's get further afield, and if we miss him we shall know what he's after."

The juniors slithered down the tree. Fritz heaved himself out of the grass.

"Gum on!" he said.

The schoolboys followed the track through the jungle, taken an hour ago by Dr. Sparshott. Suddenly Fritz caught his foot in a trailing root and bumped down. There was a yell.

"Ach! Mein gootness! I twist me te ankle!" groaned Fritz. "Ah! Tat bain was derrible! Ach!"

Jim Dainty & Co. halted, exchanging glances. "Can't you come on?" demanded Jim.

"Nein! Nein! I gannot put tat foot to te ground!" groaned Fritz. "I gum after you ven tat bain he is smaller!"

"Oh, come on and let him rip!" said Jim Dainty, and the juniors tramped on and disappeared in the jungle.

Fritz's deep groan followed them. But when the tramping of feet and the rustle of the jungle died away, Fritz ceased to groan, and he grinned.

"Ach! I tink tat tey vas all dummkopfs!" murmured Fritz. "I tink tat it is ferry easy to put tem te leg! Also I vas ferry hungry before!"

And without a sign of damage in his podgy ankle, Fritz picked himself up and rolled away down the path, heading for the hut.

But if Fritz had only known it, the juniors had not gone very far! A score of yards away they came to a halt.

"Wait here!" whispered Jim Dainty.

Dropping on his hands and knees Jim crept back through the jungle, keeping clear of the path. It was slow work through the thick jungle, and more than ten minutes had elapsed when Jim at last looked out of the undergrowth at the spot where Fatty Fritz had been left. That spot was vacant now! Fatty Fritz had gone!

"The Boche bloater!" breathed Jim.

He ran up the path and rejoined the waiting juniors.

"He's gone!" he said.

"My giddy goloshes! Didn't I jolly well say so!" growled Ginger. "Let's get back, but don't let the fat blighter see us—he would have some jolly old whooper to tell! If he's after the stores, we've got to catch him in the act!"

"What-ho!"

The juniors trod softly down the jungle path. They reached the edge of the jungle whence they could see the hut in the distance. Keeping in cover, they looked.

In the bright sunlight a fat figure was rolling on towards the hut. They had a back view of Fritz von Splitz!

"Looks as if he's sprained his ankle, what?" growled Ginger.

They watched Fritz Splitz reach the hut, and there he gave a cautious blink round from his saucer-eyes. But the juniors were in cover, and he had no suspicion that they were anywhere near at hand. He grinned, unfastened the knotted cord on the door, and entered the hut.

"My giddy goloshes! That's why he said Tarzan was clever enough to untie knots!" breathed Ginger. "By gum, we'll scrag him!"

The juniors burst from the jungle and raced towards the hut. They reached it very quickly. Jim Dainty flung the door wide open.

There was a startled yell within.

Fritz Splitz was standing at the table. He had a tin-opener in one fat hand, which he was about to plunge into a can of beef! As the door flew open and five wrathful faces glared in at him, Fritz stood transfixed, his fat jaw dropping and his saucer-eyes almost popping from his podgy face.

"Caught, you bloated brigand!" yelled Ginger.

"Ach! Mein goot Chinger, I—I take not te peef!" gasped Fritz Splitz. "I—I—I gum here to—to see tat it is safe mit itself after——"

"Bag him!"

"Ach! Himmel! Yarooop!" roared Fritz Splitz, as the juniors collared him and he smote the hard earthen floor of the hut with a resounding smite. "Ach! Pang me not on te pread-pasket, peasts and prutes! Pump me not, you prutal pounders! Ach! Himmel! Urrrrrrgggh!"

Breath failed Fritz von Splitz. He sprawled and gurgled frantically for wind, wishing, from the bottom of his podgy heart, that he had not thought of that wonderful scheme for snaffling the stores and laying the blame on Tarzan!

Marooned!

"GET up!"

Fritz Splitz sat up, still gasping and blinking uneasily at Jim Dainty. The juniors had gone out of the hut, and Fritz had heard them consulting in low voices.

He waited in terror, equally alarmed at the prospect of being dealt with by the juniors and of being handed over to Sammy's tender mercies. Of the two he dreaded the latter more; he could guess how Dr. Sparshott would deal with the purloiner of stores.

Jim Dainty came back into the hut at last, and Fritz peered at his grim face in deep apprehension.

"Tat you tell not Sammy!" he gasped. "Sammy neffer know if you tells him not, mein tear Tainty! It vas sneaking also if you tells Sammy!"

"We're not telling Sammy, you bloated bloater!"

Fritz brightened a little. That assurance relieved him of his deepest dread.

"Get up!" snapped Jim.

"Ach! I have no more te breff, and—ach! Kick me not, you peastly prute—I vill get up ferry quickly mit meinsel before!" yelled Fritz.

Another kick helped Fatty Fritz out of the hut. He blinked round at five grim, wrathful faces in tense uneasiness. Sammy was not to be told; but that meant that the shipwrecked schoolboys were taking the pilferer's punishment into their own hands. Fritz was very anxious to know what form his punishment was going to take.

To his surprise, Ginger and Jim Dainty took his arms, and walked him down to the beach, the other fellows following in grim silence.

"Mein goot Tainty—mein tear Chim!" murmured Fritz.

"Shut up, you pilfering porker!"

"Mein tear Chinger, you vas not such a peast and a prute as Tainty—mein good, prave Chinger——"

"Cheese it, you guzzling gobbler!"

"But vat you go for to do?" squealed Fritz Splitz. "Vat is it that you tink for to do? I vill not be kicked on mein trousers—I vill not be bunched in mein pread-pasket! I tink——"

"Here we are!" They reached the boat. Dawson, Streaky Bacon, and Sandy Bean jumped into the boat, which floated at the end of the mooring-rope. Ginger and Dainty pitched Fatty Fritz in to them over the gunwale. The fat German sprawled in the boat, roaring. Ginger jumped in after him, and Jim cast loose the rope and followed. The boat, shoved off from the beach, ran out on the calm blue waters of the bay.

Fritz Splitz sat up gasping. He could not imagine why the juniors were taking him out in the boat; but his terrors were intensifying. Ginger and Jim stepped the little mast, and ran up the sail. The canvas filled with wind, and the boat ran swiftly. Dawson sat at the tiller, steering. Jim and Ginger, handling the sheets, headed out to sea.

"Vat is it tat you go for to do, peasts and prutes?" yelled Fritz Splitz. "Mein gootness! I tink tat you neffer, neffer tink to trow me into te sea after!"

"You jolly well deserve it!" growled Ginger Rawlinson. "But we're not giving you what you deserve, any more than Sammy did with that brute Sarson. You're going to be marooned like that villain. That's what we've settled on; and you're getting off cheap."

"Marooned all alone mit meinsel?" shrieked Fritz. "Mein gootness! Neffer! Take me pack to Sammy! Sammy is petter tan tat!"

He stared across the calm blue sea, at the speck of rock in the far distance, which marked the little islet where Ezra Sarson was marooned. Then he blinked round at the grim faces of the schoolboy castaways. He read no compassion there.

"Mein tear, goot, prave jums!" groaned Fritz. "I vill neffer, neffer snaffle te stores vunce more after——"

"We're taking care that you don't," said Streaky.

"But if you maroon me on tat leedle island, tat peast and a prute Sarson vill knock me on te head mit himself before!" howled Fritz.

"That's all right—you're not going on the same place as Sarson! There's another island we know about."

That, at least, was a comfort to Fritz! The bare idea of being landed on the islet with the ruffian Sarson made his blood run cold.

"But—but I do not want to be marooned, all alone mit meinsel!" he wailed.

"You should have thought of that before you stole the stores!"

The boat danced merrily on, further and further out on the broad bay, nearer and nearer to the open, rolling waters of the Atlantic.

"Better blindfold him, I think," said Ginger. "Safer for him not to know where we stiek him."

"I will not be blindfolded!"

"You will!" said Ginger; and Fritz was. The red-headed junior wound a strip of canvas over Fritz's sauger-eyes, and knotted it behind his bullet head. Fatty Fritz groaned dolorously.

Sitting in the boat he waited in horror and despair for the arrival at the unknown islet where he was to be marooned. He could not see, but he could hear the creak of the mast, the rustle of the sail, the wash of the waves. Minutes, that seemed hours to the unhappy pilferer, passed—the voyage seemed to him endless. He had no doubt that the boat was running far out to sea; far beyond the islet where Sarson was marooned.

Bump! The boat's nose ran on sand at last. Evidently it had arrived at its destination.

"Here we are!" The trembling Fritz heard Jim Dainty's voice. "How many miles have we come, do you think, Ginger?"

"Not more than twenty!" answered Ginger. "Shove him out!"

Hands grasped the blindfolded German on all sides. Fritz struggled wildly and yelled frantically.

Bump! Fritz landed on soft sand. He sat and roared; and then clutched the bandage from his eyes. Silhouetted against the glowing sunset, he stared after the boat. He could hardly believe, even yet, that the Grimsladers were in earnest.

But it looked like it! The boat, with bellying sail, was running before the wind, leaving him behind.

"Help!" roared Fritz. "Tat you gum pack! Leaf me not alone mit meinsel. Peasts and prutes and pounders, gum pack!"

The boat ran on, dancing over the waves. Fritz, with starting eyes, watched it till it was merely a dancing speck on the waters. It vanished from his gaze, and he was left alone!

Home Again!

ALONE!
Fritz groaned deeply. For a long time he nourished the hope that the juniors would return. But that hope died away.

The sun was sinking in the west; shadows lengthening on the shore; dusk stealing over the sea.

Groaning, Fritz Splitz dragged himself to his feet at last, and peered dismally round him. He had been landed on the shore of a bay, very like, in outline and extent, East Bay on Castaway Island. Inland, tall palm trees nodded, and several big ceibas topped the shadowy jungle. Darkness was falling.

Marooned—on some desolate isle, twenty miles from the Grimslade castaways! Sammy, in his most drastic mood, would have been preferable to that! The most terrific whopping Sammy could have administered would have been joy in comparison.

"Peasts and prutes!" groaned Fritz.

Suddenly he started. Through the gathering darkness there came a glimmer of a fire. Fritz caught his breath. He stared blankly. There was no doubt of it. At a distance of less than a quarter of a mile, a camp fire was burning, ruddy flames dancing against the dusk. Fritz watched the ruddy light between the trunks of palms, and gasped.

"Mein gootness! Tere vas beoples on tis

island!" he gasped. "It is vun camp-fire, and tat mean tat tere vas beoples."

Fatty Fritz started tramping along the beach, in the direction of the fire. If this island was, after all, inhabited, the Grimsladers had saved him from Crusoe life, instead of marooning him all on his lonely own! That was a happy thought to Fritz!

He tramped on hopefully, drawing nearer and nearer to the camp-fire; and at last he was able to discern moving figures round it. It was burning at some distance from the beach; and now he was nearer, he could discern the outlines of a hut. There were five figures round the camp-fire; and on the wind a smell of cooking was wafted to the fat German, that made his hungry mouth water.

As Fatty Fritz turned from the beach, to tramp up the sand towards the fire, he almost ran into a tall, shadowy form going in the same direction.

"Ach! Who vas tat?" gasped Fritz, peering up at the face that stared down at him in the dusk. "Mein gootness! Tank gootness it vas a white man! Safe me! Oh, safe me!"

"What the dickens!" exclaimed a deep voice. "What do you mean, Splitz? Save you from what?"

TO READERS IN THE IRISH FREE STATE.

"Readers in the Irish Free State are requested to note that when free gifts are offered with this publication, they can only be supplied when the article is of a non-dutiable character."

Fritz Splitz almost fell down in his astonishment. For that deep voice was the voice of Dr. Samuel Sparshott!

"Ach gootness! Is tat Sammy?" gurgled Fritz.

"It is your headmaster!" said Dr. Sparshott sternly. "Where have you been? [What is the matter with you?"

"But—but—but vat is tis island, ten?" gasped the amazed Fritz. "Vere vas ve pefore?"

Dr. Sparshott looked at him keenly, grasped him by the shoulder, and walked him on to the camp-fire. As he came into the circle of firelight, Fritz's saucer-eyes almost popped from his head as he recognised the five fellows round the fire. Jim Dainty and Dawson, Streaky and Sandy and Ginger looked at him with grinning faces.

"What is the matter with Splitz, my boys?" asked Dr. Sparshott. "He seems to be alarmed about something."

"Peasts and prutes!" yelled Fritz Splitz as the truth dawned on him. He realised that he had been "marooned" on the shore of the bay of Castaway Island, hardly a quarter of a mile from the hut, and in sight of the camp-fire when it was lighted at dusk! "Prutal pounders, you pull me te leg! It is not tat I vas marooned at all mit meinsel, you plithering plockheads!"

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

"Have you been joking with Splitz, or what?" asked Dr. Sparshott with a sharp glance at Jim Dainty & Co.

"Sort of, sir," said Jim. "Tell the Head all about it, Fritz!"

But that Fritz had the best of reasons for not doing; and to his great relief, Dr. Sparshott asked no further questions. Fatty Fritz had had the scare of his life, and it was probable that, for some time at least, Fritz would not "snaffle" another tin of beef!

(There's trouble in store for the Grimslade castaways when Ezra Sarson lays a trap for Sammy Sparshott. Read all about it in next week's exciting story of Jim Dainty & Co.)

THE FLIP-FLAP TAXI BOYS!

(Continued from page 68.)

seconds start of Punch and made use of it to get halfway down the stairs.

"So that's your game!" Punch yelled, and bounced down the stairs after him.

In a case like this Punch's plumpness told against him. His more nimble quarry gained four stairs in the first flight, and it looked as if he was going to get away.

"But he won't!" Punch panted, as he raced to the head of the next flight.

Punch threw himself astride the banister-rail and shot down at breakneck speed, the weight that had hampered him before now carrying him down three times as fast as the crook.

Luckily for Punch the end of the banister curled downward, and with a screech of panic speeding over polished wood, he shot off the end just as the crook reached the bottom stair and raced round towards the door.

Crash!
The crook got the full impetus of Punch's weight fair and square in the back, and they went down together like a ton of bricks with the crook underneath.

Punch was winded, but the crook was in a far worse state. The youngster got to his feet after a second or so, but the other lay upon the floor with all the breath knocked out of him.

"That's a pity," Punch muttered. "I expected to get a crack at your jaw, but I'm thinking you don't need it now. Better get you upstairs and see what Jim says about you. Come on!"

Never one to stand on ceremony, Punch yanked the groaning fellow—who thought the whole house had dropped on him—to his feet and half-dragged, half pushed him up to the top landing.

"Good biz, Punch," Jim said, as he met them on the top landing. "We've got the lot now."

"Where's the others?" Punch demanded, looking round and seeing nothing of the bogus baronet and his equally bogus butler.

"In the Flip-Flap," replied Jim cheerily. "I've tied 'em up. You do the same with this one while I get out of this armour; then we'll move."

"Where to?"

"Police station," Jim said shortly. "I was just coming to look where you'd bolted to after I'd put that altimeter right, when I heard 'em telling you who they were. When I heard 'em talking about swag I guessed the rest, an' slipped in that room where I spotted the armour. It came in mighty useful, eh?"

"You bet! But before we go hadn't we best give them folks downstairs their jewellery back?" asked Punch.

"And have 'em scrambling over it? Not likely. This is a job for our old friend Sergeant Billings—we're having nothing more to do with it."

Ten minutes later, the fog having cleared now, the Flip-Flap left the roof of Lumbley Hall, and half an hour later Police Sergeant Billings, who was a friend of the chums, was congratulating them on their neat capture.

"These guys," he said, "are three of the cutest crooks we've had to deal with, and you've been real clever to nail 'em like you did."

At that Punch grinned.

"Nail 'em?" he said. "Why, sergeant, we didn't nail 'em—we mailed some of 'em an' then we hammered the rest!"

(Watch out in next week's RANGER for the opening chapters of "Skull of the Skies!"—the greatest story of modern piracy ever written!)

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