

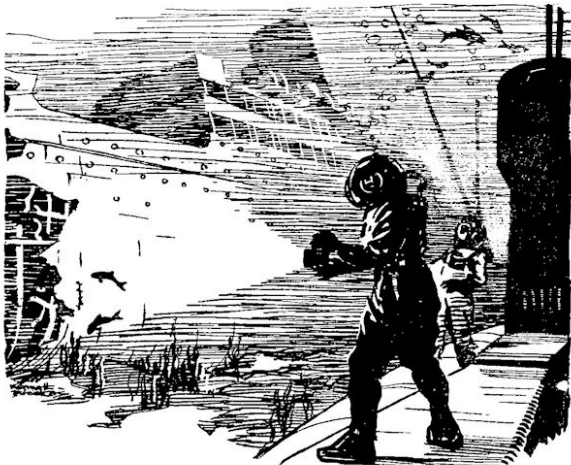
CHUMS OF CASTAWAY ISLAND

BY
FRANK
RICHARDS



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CHUMS *of* CASTAWAY ISLAND!

by
FRANK RICHARDS



Stranded on an uncharted island with no hope of rescue . . . Menaced by an unscrupulous ruffian seeking the treasure which the island holds And the chums of Grimslade carry on school as usual.

CHAPTER 1.

What Fatty Fritz Saw!

"FRITZ!"

"Splitz!"

But answer came there none. The golden beach of Castaway Island, shimmering under the blaze of the West Indian sun, echoed the voices of Jim Dainty & Co. But only echo answered. The fat squeal of Fritz von Splitz was not to be heard.

Dr. Sparshott, headmaster of Grimslade School, came down from the castaways' hut, with a book in his hand.

There was only one Latin book on the island, and sometimes the shipwrecked schoolboys rather wished that there was none. Dr. Sparshott had not brought a cane with him on the holiday cruise which had ended in shipwreck

and a Crusoe life for the Grimsladers, but he found that bamboo answered the purpose admirably—and so did the juniors when Sammy had occasion to administer "six."

"Where is Splitz?" barked Sammy Sparshott, as he arrived under the shade of the palms, where the castaway schoolboys were accustomed to taking their daily lesson.

"Echo answers where!" murmured Jim Dainty.

Dr. Sparshott glanced up and down the beach, at the shadowy jungle that clothed the sides of the island mountain, at the tall cliff behind the hut. He did not glance at the bay. Fritz was not likely to be there. The other fellows enjoyed revelling in the blue waters that lapped the sandy beach, but not Fritz. Bathing was too much

like washing to have any appeal for Friedrich von Splitz!

The headmaster's face set grimly. Fritz was dodging class again. At Grimsdale School, on the moors of far-off England, Fritz hated class, but never dreamed of dodging it. On Castaway Island the matter was different. Fritz could always tell a tale of having missed his way in the jungle, or slipped down a rock, or forgotten the time. Naturally, there was no bell to ring for class.

Sometimes Fritz got away with it; but rarely, for Sammy Sparshott was too wary a bird to be caught with chaff. The look on Sammy's face at the present moment told that Fritz was for it when he did turn up.

For the present, however, as Fritz was not there, Dr. Sparshott proceeded to deal with a class of five—Jim Dainty, Dick Dawson, Ginger Rawlinson, Sandy Bean, and Streaky Bacon.

With the sea murmuring on the beach, the wind rustling the branches of the trees, the five rather envied Fritz his freedom, though there was a whopping to follow. They wondered where he was, not expecting to see him again till class was over for the day. But it was the unexpected that happened.

Latin verbs were suddenly interrupted by a shout from the top of the cliff behind the hut. It was a shout from Fritz Splitz.

"My hat!" exclaimed Jim Dainty. "There he is!"

The cliff was high—a good sixty feet. It was not like Fritz to clamber up anywhere if he could help it. Evidently, he had taken a lot of trouble this time to keep out of sight of Sammy. The juniors stared up at the fat, tubby figure that suddenly rose into view. Dr. Sparshott stared up at it.

Why the fat junior, safe in hiding, had shown up when the lesson was not yet over was a puzzle to both headmaster and pupils. But there he was, waving his fat hand, gesticulating wildly, in a state of great excitement,

and shouting at the top of his squeaky voice.

"What on earth's the matter with him!" murmured Dick Dawson, in wonder.

"Balmy!" suggested Streaky Bacon. "Looks it, and no mistake!" said Jim Dainty.

At the distance Fritz' excited shout could be heard, but the words could not be distinguished. Dr. Sparshott shouted back, and his voice carried better than Fritz' fat squeal.

"Splitz! Come down at once!"

Fritz continued to shout and gesticulate. With a fat hand he pointed in the direction of the sea. The bay on the coast of Castaway Island faced the east and the rolling Atlantic. At the southern end great rocks and reefs were piled, stretching far into the sea, broken with rugged channels and clefts.

In that direction the view of the sea was barred from the beach. It seemed, from Fritz' frantic gesticulations, that he had spotted something seaward to the south, which was hidden by the rocks from the fellows on the beach. Dr. Sparshott laid down his book and the bamboo.

"Splitz has apparently seen something," he said quietly. "Possibly it is a sail. We must hope so."

"A sail!" repeated Jim Dainty, with a deep breath. Except for the visit of a schooner, which had brought a gang of lawless treasure hunters to the island, the castaways had seen no sail since their raft from the wreck had landed them on that lonely island. The cheery castaways enjoyed their Crusoe life on the tropical isle, but the thought of a sail made their hearts beat.

"Dismiss!" barked Dr. Sparshott.

Never had a class at Grimsdale dismissed so rapidly. The five fellows fairly bolted. It was a race to the cliff to meet Fritz on his downward path. Excited as he was, and for once in a great hurry, the fat German's descent was laborious and slow. Climb-climbing was not Fritz' long suit.

In a joyous, whooping bunch, the juniors passed the hut, reached the

cliff, and started scrambling up. Sammy Sparshott was following them with long strides—probably as excited as the schoolboys, though his calm, cool face did not reveal it.

Jim Dainty was first up, Ginger Rawlinson close behind him. After them went the other three. The face of the tall cliff was steep, but they clambered up like monkeys. Fritz was half-way down when the juniors were half-way up, and Jim Dainty grabbed him by a fat arm.

"Ach! Mein gootness! Careful!" squealed Fritz. "Make me not to fall mit meinsel, you dummkopf Tainty!" "What's the row?" demanded Jim. "Quick!"

"Ach! It is vun sail!"

"A sail?" roared Jim.

"Ja! Ja woh! I see vun sail on te sea!" gasped Fritz. "I see tat sail gum towards tis island! Now ve shall be daken off tis peastly prute of an island, and ve shall have some goot grub, instead of tose peastly gokernuts and pananas."

"Come on!" yelled Jim.

He scrambled on, the other fellows after him. Fritz, gasping for breath, wiped the streaming perspiration from his fat brow. A stone, dislodged by a clambering foot from the cliff above, hurtled down and tapped Fritz Splitz on the spot where he had recently packed away his breakfast. He gave a gasp and a jump, and rolled.

"Ach! Help!" yelled Fritz. "I fall mit meinsel after—Yaroooh!"

He clutched and grabbed, in vain. Down the steep cliff went the fat German, rolling and howling. It was fortunate, or unfortunate, according to the point of view, that Dr. Sparshott was following the juniors up and was below Fritz. It was fortunate for Fritz, whose fall was broken as he landed on the headmaster of Grimslade. It was unfortunate for Sammy, who went rolling, with Fritz rolling after him. Sammy gave a roar and Fritz a squeal.

Sammy landed first on the beach. Fritz landed on him. Between the

beach and Fatty Fritz, Dr. Sparshott felt rather like a pancake.

"Ach! Mein gootness!" gasped Fritz. "I fall! I vas injured! I vas all proken into leedle bieees, mit meinsel after!"

"Get off!" gurgled Sammy.

Fritz, too breathless and confused to stir, sprawled on Sammy's crimsoned face. But a shove sent him rolling off, and Dr. Sparshott staggered to his feet. He glared at the gasping Fritz.

"Splitz!" he roared.

"Ach! It vas a sail! I see vun sail tat gum!" gasped Fritz. And Sammy, leaving him to gasp, scrambled up the cliff again.

The juniors were already at the summit. They leaped to the rugged top of the cliff, and turned eager eyes to the south. From that height they could see over the high rocks at the southern end of the bay.

Far and wide, the glimmering sea, shining in the tropical sun, met their eyes, but no sign of a sail. Right and left they searched the sea with their eyes, but no sail, no boat, no ship, broke the blankness of the horizon. And from all the disappointed juniors, at once, came the exasperated yell:

"Spoofed!"

Dr. Sparshott joined them on the cliff-top. He gave one long, searching glance across the wide, empty waters, and his lips set hard. Without a word the headmaster of Grimslade started to descend the cliff again. And, exasperated as they were with Fatty Fritz, the expression on Sammy's face made Jim Dainty & Co. sorry for him at that moment.

CHAPTER 2.

A Surprise for Sammy!

FRITZ SPLITZ grinned. Fritz looked bucked.

He was still rather breathless from his tumble. He still gurgled a little. Otherwise Fatty Fritz seemed pleased with himself, and with things generally. Which was rather remark-

able, if Fritz had been pulling the leg of so tough a customer as Dr. Samuel Sparshott.

Fritz watched the headmaster descend the cliff. Dr. Sparshott reached the beach and came towards him, with a deadly glint in his keen, grey eyes.

"Splitz," he said quietly, "go and fetch the bamboo I left under the palms."

"Tat pampoo," repeated Fritz, blinking at him with his saucer-eyes. "Vy for you vant tat pampoo, sir?"

"Fetch it at once!" barked Sammy; and Fritz Splitz jumped in alarm, and scuttled away to fetch the bamboo.

Jim Dainty & Co. were coming down the cliff. They came down much more slowly than they had gone up—reversing the usual order of things. The disappointment was keen and bitter. Only when, by chance, a sail came by that solitary island in the Atlantic wastes could they hope to get into touch with civilisation again. And there was no sail. Not a fellow doubted that, having cut class, Fritz had spun this yarn, as he had spun many a one before, to avert wrath. If it was a lie, it was a clumsy one; but then all Fritz' many lies were clumsy.

The juniors reached the beach as Fatty Fritz came back with the bamboo in his podgy hand. He came slowly. No doubt he guessed to what use Dr. Sparshott was going to put that bamboo, and was not enthusiastic. He handed it to Sammy at last, and the headmaster of Grimslade made it whistle in the air.

"Bend over, Splitz!" barked Sammy.

No Grimslade man ever disobeyed an order of Sammy's. Fritz Splitz was the least likely to venture to do so. Yet for once an order of Sammy's was disobeyed, and it was Fritz who did it. Instead of bending over as commanded, Fritz backed away, blinking in surprise and indignation at the grim face of the headmaster.

"Vy I pend ofer?" squealed Fritz. "Vat have I tun pefore? I see tat a sail gum—"

"You have cut class," said Dr. Sparshott quietly. "For that I should give you six, Splitz. But you have also made a false announcement, and raised hopes of rescue from this lonely island without grounds. You have inflicted a bitter disappointment on your school-fellows. For that, Splitz, I shall give you such a thrashing that you will never be likely to commit such an unfeeling prank again. Now bend over."

Fritz backed farther away instead of bending over. There was no sign of a grin on his face now. Deep alarm was pictured there. From old Fatty Fritz knew how Sammy could lay it on, when he considered that a severe punishment was merited.

Dr. Sparshott followed him up as he backed away. Jim Dainty & Co. looked on in silence.

"I have ordered you to bend over, Splitz," said Dr. Sparshott, in a deep voice.

"But I will not be vhopped!" gasped Fritz. "I tell you tat I see vun sail tat gum—"

"You young rascal!" roared Dr. Sparshott. "Do you dare to repeat that statement, when I have myself ascertained that there is no sail in sight?"

"Vat!" Fritz jumped and blinked at his headmaster in amazement. "You see no sail, sir? Are you blind?"

If Fritz was acting, he was doing it uncommonly well. His fat face registered astonishment as perfectly as any film actor's. He still backed away from his advancing headmaster.

"I tell you tat tere vas a sail!" howled Fritz. "I see him after from te top of te cliff. He gum towards tis island. I tink tat you must be blind pefore if you see him not. You go oop and look again, sir. Mein gootness, I see tat sail so blain as neffer vas."

"If any of the other boys told me such a story, Splitz, I should think that he had made a mistake," said Dr. Sparshott quietly. "But I have heard too many false statements from you to give you the benefit of the doubt. You did not see a sail."

"But I see him!" wailed Fritz. "I see him. Perhaps he put down to sail, sir. Perhaps he run among te rocks and lower te sail."

"Likely," murmured Ginger Rawlinson.

And the juniors grinned.

Any sail making for Castaway Island was surely certain to head for the bay, where there was a safe anchorage. Any boat's crew that ran a craft into those dangerous channels among the sharp rocks would take their lives in their hands.

Even if the lawless crew of treasure-seekers had returned, with Ezra Sarson, the old enemy of the castaways, they would have had nothing to fear from sailing into the bay—the unarmed castaways would have had to flee from an armed crew. Fritz' suggestion sounded simply incredible.

Dr. Sparshott, out of patience, made a stride towards the fat German to grasp his shoulder. Fritz made a swift backward jump and avoided the grasp.

As he did so his feet caught in trailing seaweed on the beach. He staggered backwards, and sat down with a bump.

"Ach!" gasped Fritz.

"For the last time, Splitz, I order you to bend over!" said Dr. Sparshott.

"But I tell you te troot!" howled Fritz. "I vill not pe peaten because I tell te troot!"

"That is enough!"

Dr. Sparshott, with the bamboo in his right hand, stooped over Fritz Splitz, and grasped him by the shoulder with his left, to heave the fat German to his feet.

What happened next was a surprise to Sammy, and utterly amazing to Jim Dainty & Co. Fritz, as if in sheer desperation, lunged out with a fat fist that caught Sammy under the chin as he stooped. Taken by surprise by the sudden thump the headmaster of Grimslade toppled over, and sat on the sand.

For a split second Fritz sat and blinked, petrified with terror at what he had done. Then, with a bound, he was on his feet and running. Dr. Sparshott sat on the sand for a moment or two, too astounded to move. But Fritz was moving. Never had Fritz been seen to move like this before. He fairly flew; his feet hardly seemed to touch the ground. Heading for the jungle Fritz covered the ground like a scared rabbit.

"Great gad!" ejaculated Sammy, at last. He leaped to his feet. "Splitz!" His roar woke most of the echoes of Castaway Island. "Splitz, come back at once!"

Fritz flew on. Really it was no wonder, for the look on Sammy's face at that moment was truly terrific. Sammy made a stride in pursuit. Then he stopped as the flying fat figure vanished into the jungle.

Jim Dainty & Co. looked at their headmaster in awe. They had seen Sammy Sparshott punched—actually knocked over before their eyes. After that it seemed to the Grimslade juniors time for the skies to fall. What was to follow they could hardly imagine.

To their surprise, though they need not have been surprised, knowing their Sammy as they did, Dr. Sparshott resumed at once his habitual calm, dismissing the matter on the spot. He glanced at the juniors, and spoke in his usual calm, half-drawling tone.

"Class has been interrupted! We will now resume!"

And the juniors went back to the shade of the palms—which was the class-room of Castaway Island—and Latin verbs were resumed, just as if nothing had happened.

Not a sign on Sammy's face indicated that he gave a single thought to Fritz von Splitz, or remembered the incident of that amazing punch. But nobody doubted that the warmest of warm times awaited Fatty Fritz when he turned up again.

CHAPTER 3.

A Fearful Discovery!

"MEIN gootness!" groaned Fritz Splitz.

The afternoon sun slanted across Castaway Island. Fritz Splitz, from the cover of the jungle, had taken several surreptitious peeps at the castaways on the beach; but he had not ventured in sight. For his fat life he dared not face Sammy and the consequences of having punched Sammy!

He found forgetfulness of his dire position in a long nap in the shade, in the heat of the day. That was all very well; but when he woke he was hungry—fearfully hungry. He gobbled coconuts and bananas, which grew in profusion on Castaway Island; but these were trifles to Fritz! He wanted solid food, and he wanted it badly—and he wanted a lot of it. He fancied that he could scent the aroma of boiled fish when the castaways lunched, and it was terribly tantalising. But he dared not approach.

After the tropical heat of the day had passed Dr. Sparshott and the juniors worked in the garden the Head had laid out near the hut, which they were going to cultivate to supply many of their needs. Jim Dainty & Co. laboured cheerfully under the eyes of Sammy, who worked the hardest of all.

Fritz certainly had no desire to share in the work, as he would have had to do had he turned up. Neither did he desire to share the swim in the bay that followed work. But supper was the next item on the programme, and Fritz longed, yearned, and pined to share in that!

"Mein gootness! Vat gan I do?" groaned Fritz. "I gannot go pack, or tat peast and a prute Sammy vill vhop te skin off mein pones! I like not to have te skin vhopped off mein pones! But I must eat—gootness, how I vish to eat! I would gif all te treasure tat tose peastly prutes tink is on te island for vun goot Cherman sausage!"

And Fritz groaned again at the tan-

talising thought of the rich, fat sausages of his native land.

Half a dozen times at least he almost made up his podgy mind to go back and chance it! But not quite! He dared not—and that was that! But in this awful extremity—the dreadful prospect of missing supper spurring on his podgy intellect—Fritz did some thinking.

The whole trouble had arisen because Dr. Sparshott did not believe he had seen a sail from the cliff-top. And Fritz had seen that sail! For once he had not been lying!

Now a glimmer of an idea came into his mind. If he could prove that he had told the truth, surely that proof and the happy news of a sail in the offing would earn his pardon. And when that idea had fairly penetrated Fritz' rather fat head, he decided what he was going to do—and did it!

He was certain that he had seen a boat's sail dancing across the water towards the island, and as it had disappeared before the other fellows climbed the cliff, the only explanation was that the boat had run in among the rocks and dropped the sail. Why, Fritz could not begin to guess; but the fact seemed certain to him.

Fritz clambered over the rocks, waded through shallow water on reefs, stumbled over seaweed, trod on crabs, slipped into channels and spluttered out again, with a determination very unusual in the fat German. He did not like it, but anything was better than taking a terrific whopping from Sammy Sparshott.

"Ach! I vas derribly dired!" groaned Fritz, sitting down to rest on a rock and mopping his perspiring brow. "I vas so derribly dired as neffer vas before! Vere vas tat peast of a poat? I see him—das ist gewiss! But vere and oh vere gan he be, mein gootness?"

The sun was sinking behind the hill, and shadows lengthening on Castaway Island. The shipwrecked schoolboys would be sitting down to supper now, and Fritz groaned at the thought.

There was no supper for Fritz, unless he could take back news of a sail as a peace offering!

Suddenly, as he sat resting, he jumped at the sight of a dingy Panama hat rising into view from behind a rock not ten yards away. His fat face brightened. All he could see was the hat—but the hat, evidently, was on a head—and the head belonged to some man who was standing up in a boat floating in a water channel by the rock, with mast and sail lowered.

Joyously Fritz blinked at it with his saucer-eyes. Here was proof positive to take back to the doubting Thomases at the camp. He jumped up, waved a podgy hand, and squealed:

"Ach! Mein goot man!"

He saw the man in the dingy Panama give a violent start. Then the face under the hat was turned on Fritz, and he saw it—hard, bony, tanned, with glittering sunken eyes and a gash of a mouth. And a shudder of utter terror ran through Fritz' fat limbs!

For he knew that face—the face of Ezra Sarson, the 'Frisco ruffian who had scuttled the Spindrift on the holiday cruise, and had been a bitter enemy of the castaways on the island, till he had gone off in a schooner in the midst of a violent hurricane.

If the schooner had gone down, evidently Sarson had not gone down with it, for here he was, back on Castaway Island! And now the disappearance of the boat from sight was explained, for assuredly Ezra desired to keep his return a secret from the castaways till he could deal them some treacherous blow; and that was why he had approached the island on the southern side, where no foot ever trod, and run his boat as soon as possible out of sight among the dangerous rocks. But for the chance that Fritz Splitz, dodging class by climbing the high cliff, had seen him from the summit, no eye would have beheld the 'Frisco ruffian's return.

With a shriek and a squeal of terror the fat

German bounded away like a frightened rabbit, and fled across the rocks to the shore. Sammy, and Sammy's whopping, would have seemed a blessing to Fritz Splitz now could he have got back to them!

"Stop!" came a husky, savage shout behind him.

Friedrich von Splitz was not likely to stop. With an activity of which no one who knew him would have dreamed that he was capable, he leaped from rock to rock, bounded across chasms, plunged through heaped sand. Sarson, pursuing him with savage hurry, hardly kept pace with him. But desperate as Fritz was, wind failed him, and the ruffian began at last to gain.

Up the rugged, broken shore went Fritz, leaping, bounding, spluttering, gasping, squealing; after him rushed the 'Frisco ruffian, gaining now hand over hand.

"Mein gootness!" gurgled Fritz. "I vas vun tead Cherman! Ach! Help! Help! Gum! Oh, gum!"

But he was too far from home for the loudest shout to be heard by the castaways, and all that Fritz could utter was a breathless squeal. Tramping feet behind him grew closer.

The terrified Fritz put on a desperate spurt. If he could but have gained the cover of the jungle!

But a heavy hand clawed his fat shoulder from behind.

"I guess I got you!" hissed the hoarse voice of the scuttler. "I guess you ain't singing out that you seen me — Oh, great horned toads!"

Fritz, in utter desperation, clutched up a lump of rock, turned, and struck. The blow landed on Ezra's brawny chest, sending him spinning backwards. He gave a howl of pain and rage as he went down; and in a split second Fritz was bounding on again.

Sarson scrambled to his feet, spitting with fury. Fritz had a chance now—a chance of reaching the jungle, of dodging out of sight of his pursuer. The ruffian gritted his teeth, and he, in his turn, clutched up a fragment of rock.

With all the strength of his arm he hurled it at the fleeing Fritz. It struck the fat German behind the knees, and knocked his legs from under him. With a shrill squeal Fritz von Splitz crashed down on his podgy back, bowled over like a shot rabbit.

Ezra came tramping on. Fritz was still gasping on his back when the ruffian reached him. A grasp on his fat shoulder dragged him, shuddering with terror, to his feet. He was not thinking of resistance now. He sagged in the ruffian's sinewy grasp.

And Ezra Sarson, with a savage grin on his stubbly face, his knuckles grinding into Fritz' fat neck, marched him back down the rugged shore, back to the rock where the boat was moored out of sight, and with a swing of his arm tossed the fat German like a sack of yams into the boat. And Jim Dainty & Co., waiting for Fritz to return to camp, were likely long to wait!

CHAPTER 4.

Fritz in a Fix!

FRITZ!" roared Jim Dainty.

"Mein gootness!" groaned

Fritz Splitz, under his breath. He dared not answer.

It was almost dark on Castaway Island. The sun dipped behind the island hill; the brief tropical twilight was about to fade into night. Standing on a rock on the southern shore of the lonely island, Jim Dainty was shouting at the top of his voice. From other directions other voices were calling.

Dainty's shout came clearly to the fat ears of Fritz von Splitz, huddled in the boat among the reefs; he heard, but he dared not heed. Crouching in the boat beside him was Ezra Sarson with a knife in his bony hand. One glimmer of the steel was enough for Fritz! He did not need the whispered threat of the Frisco ruffian:

"Jest one yaup, and I guess you'll never yaup again!"

Fritz shuddered and was silent. The boat, with the sail dropped and the mast lowered, lay out of sight under the lee of a great rock. Jim Dainty was not thirty yards away; but he saw no sign of it. He shouted again and again, and then his trampling footsteps were heard coming nearer.

Ezra Sarson's sunken eyes glittered, his gash of a mouth set in a hard, savage line. His grip on the knife tightened. But Dainty stopped again and shouted:

"Fritz! You Boche bloater, are you anywhere about?"

There was a trampling on the rocks again, and Ginger Rawlinson joined Jim. Fritz heard the voice of the red-headed junior of Grimslade.

"My giddy goloshes! He's vanished! No good looking for him here—he wouldn't have come this way!"

"We've looked nearly everywhere else."

"He's hiding," said Ginger. "Sammy's got a whopping ready for him when he comes back. Fritz isn't in a hurry to turn up."

"He's too big a funk to stay out of camp after dark if he could help it. He's lost!" said Jim Dainty. "Sammy Sparshott's told us to find him, and we've got to do it if we can."

"The fat, frowsy fathead!" growled Ginger. "All this trouble because he pretended he saw a sail, just to get out of class with Sammy! Sammy will take the skin off him when he turns up, and serve him jolly well right! Let's get back—he's not here, anyhow."

Trampling footsteps again! The two juniors were going up the shore, little dreaming that they had been within earshot of the missing German junior.

Fritz suppressed a groan of disappointment.

Ezra drew a deep breath of relief. His return to the lonely island was a secret from the castaways, so far, and he desired to keep it a secret—till he could deal with them by treachery. The schoolboys he did not fear, but his fear of Dr. Samuel Sparshott was deep and deadly. Not till Sammy had fallen

under a shot from ambush would the ruffian dare to make his presence known.

"Gone!" muttered Ezra. "They won't find you in a hurry, you fat gink. Say, what did that young geck mean about you seeing a sail?"

"I see tat sail tis morning," groaned Fritz. "But te odders see him not, and tey tink it vas vun lie, because I dodge te class. So I gum here to find out vat pecome of tat sail, so tat I tell Sammy, and he vhop me not!"

Sarson chuckled hoarsely.

"I guess you never reckoned it was my sail!" he said. "They don't know I've come back. They won't know till I've got that gink Sparshott where I want him, either. Say!" He bent over Fritz, his eyes gleaming. "Have they been looking for the treasure—have they found it?"

"Nein!" gasped Fritz. He realised that it was for the lost treasure of Cast-away Island that the ruffian had come.

A Portuguese captain named Luz had some time back landed on the island, and searched for treasure which a king of Hayti was believed to have concealed in a cave. Sarson had joined forces with Luz, and had been on board his schooner when it was carried away from the island by a hurricane, and wrecked.

"I reckon it's in the cavern up the ravine," muttered Ezra. "That's where we found the skeletons—that's where the Black Marquis hid it. We'd have had that treasure but for the hurricane. The schooner went down, and Captain Luz is ashore at Martingue now, a ruined man—but I guess I knew how to get hold of a boat, and I guess I knew how to run back to this island—and if Luz tries it on again I calculate he's going to be too late!"

The Frisco ruffian chuckled again. Captain Luz, rascal as he was, had saved him from the solitary island; but there was little gratitude in Ezra's composition. He was stealing a march on the other treasure-seekers, returning alone to the treasure island in a stolen boat.

"If it wasn't for that gink Sparshott —" he muttered. His sunken eyes glittered at Fritz. "You flabby geck, do you savvy why I don't drop you into the water this minute? I got to deal with Sparshott first. He may get the upper hand of me—he's the man to do it, dog-gone him. And if he does he's the man to string me up on the first tree if I've hurt any of his gol-darned schoolboys—I reckon I'm wise to that!"

He turned away from the fat German with a muttered imprecation. Fritz trembled in every podgy limb. His fat life hung on a thread, and he realised it very clearly.

Sarson rose to his feet, his head coming over the level of the rock under which the boat was moored. He stared across rocks and reefs and tangled seaweed up the shore. Jim Dainty and Ginger Rawlinson had disappeared, and all was deserted and silent. Far away on the east side of the island by the bay, there was a distant ruddy glare—the camp-fire lighted by the castaways near their hut. Ezra watched it, with scowling brows, while Fritz huddled, trembling, in the boat.

The ruffian threw himself down at last. He opened a can of beef and a tin of biscuit, and began to eat. Fritz watched him in the deep gloom with hungry eyes. Fritz had had no supper and he was famished. But he did not dare to speak. When his meal was over Sarson threw himself on his blankets and lighted a pipe, taking no further notice of the fat German. He was waiting—for what? Fritz did not know—and he could only wait—watching the ruffian with bulging, terrified eyes.

It was a late hour when Sarson stirred at last. The midnight stars were glittering in a sky of deepest blue. In the star-shine, Fritz saw him examine a revolver and thrust it back into his belt. Then he took a cord and knotted one end to Fritz' fat wrists.

"Get a move on, you fat geck!" he muttered. "And chew on this—if you

make a sound where we're going, you'll never make another!"

"Ach! I make no sound mit meinself pefore!" groaned Fritz as the ruffian picked up a heavy dunnage bag and slung it over his shoulder.

Sarson stepped from the boat, holding the cord. Fatty Fritz followed him. Hardly glancing at the terrified German, Sarson tramped away up the rocky shore, Fritz Splitz after him.

Sea and reefs were left behind, and Sarson plunged into the jungle. In the darkness, Fritz had no idea whither he was being led; all was dark and trackless to him. But Sarson, in his previous visit to the island, had learned his way about, and he kept on steadily, without a pause.

Fritz tottered and panted behind him, his fat limbs aching with fatigue, but not daring to utter a word. They came out of the jungle at last, on the bank of the stream that flowed down from the island hill. Through the palm-trees the ruddy glare of the camp-fire danced; it was still burning, as a beacon to the lost Fritz. Sarson stared towards it for some moments, and then turned to the stream.

He tramped up the stream to the cascade and clambered up the rocks through the falling water, Fritz panting and clambering after him, drenched to the skin. He guessed now where the ruffian was making for—a cavern in the ravine, where the skeletons had been discovered, and where there was little doubt that the treasure of King Christophe of Hayti had been hidden. Ezra had waited for midnight in order to make the trip unseen by the castaways.

By the rock-shelf beside the tumbling stream they reached the dark mouth of the cavern. Ezra plunged into it, dragging the fat German after him. The starlight faded behind as they tramped under the arched rock. Ezra halted at last and flung down his bag of dunnage, scratched a match and lighted a lantern.

Fritz Splitz, sinking with fatigue and

terror, blinked at him. Ezra knotted the loose end of the rope to a high point of rock. Then, lantern in hand, he went farther up the cavern, leaving Fritz Splitz a prisoner in the dark.

CHAPTER 5.

Trapped!

DR SAMUEL SPARSHOTT came out of the castaways' hut at dawn with a knitted and troubled brow. He looked along the beach, glistening white in the rising sun; at the palm grove towards the stream; at the shadowy green jungle and the wooded slopes of the island mountain.

Nowhere was there a sign of the missing German junior.

The camp-fire was still smouldering; it had burned all night as a guide to Fritz, if he was seeking his way back to camp. He had not come, and the Head of Grimslade was deeply perturbed and anxious. A whopping awaited Fritz when he showed up, and for that reason Sammy was not surprised at his failure to return the day before. But at sunset he had expected to see him—and now it was sunrise, and he had not come!

What had happened to Fritz? Angry as he was, Dr. Sparshott was, by this time, more anxious than angry.

Of the presence of his old enemy on the island he knew and suspected nothing. He could only believe that Fritz had lost himself, and as the camp-fire had failed to guide him back, it looked as if he had wandered far afield. Dr. Sparshott dreaded that he might have wandered into the swamp on the northern side of Castaway Island, from which it was very unlikely that he would find his way again unaided.

Jim Dainty & Co. turned out. They took their usual dip in the bay before breakfast, but there was not the usual cheery larking this morning. All of them were anxious about Fritz. They sat down to breakfast on the beach before the hut, almost in silence. The

meal was brief. Dr. Sparshott was very soon on his feet.

"Fritz must be found!" barked Sammy. "There will be no lesson this morning; all of you will search for him. I shall take the direction of the swamp, you will take other directions. Return to this spot at midday."

"Yes, sir!" answered the juniors.

Dr. Sparshott started off and disappeared towards the northern swamp. The five juniors discussed their plans for a few minutes, and then took various directions.

Jim Dainty tramped up the shallow stream to the waterfall, and clambered up the rocks, drenched to the skin, which mattered little in the hot sun-glare of the tropic island. He clambered out of the water above the cascade and trod along the rock shelf towards the cavern. The steep ravine was almost like an oven in the blaze of the sun.

But the cavern, when Jim reached it and looked into its dark mouth, was gloomy and shadowy and chill. Outside there was no sign of Fritz, but Jim half-suspected that the fat German, in his dread of Sammy's whopping, was in hiding. Standing at the dark opening in the rock, he shouted.

His voice rang and echoed through the cavern. Booming echoes answered him, but otherwise there was no response.

"Fritz!" roared Jim.

"Fritz!" boomed back in a thousand echoes.

Dainty tramped up the cave, peering about him in the shadows. From the silence there came a sound, and he started and listened. He was certain that it was the sound of a movement, farther on up the cave. He knitted his brows. He had little doubt now that the elusive Fritz was there, dodging back as he advanced, in dread of being taken back to Sammy and Sammy's whopping.

"Fritz!" yelled Jim. "You blithering Boche, show up! I'll jolly well kick you all the way back to camp when I get you! Do you hear, you podgy oyster?"

Only the echoing of his voice

answered. He tramped on angrily. The dimness deepened as he went, till he could barely see his way. Suddenly he halted, with a stare of blank amazement.

"Fritz!" he gasped.

Fritz von Spltz was before his eyes! The fat German, his face white with fear, sat on a boulder, staring straight at him. He did not speak—he only stared straight at Dainty, as if paralysed by some unknown dread.

"Fritz!" repeated Jim, hurrying on towards the fat German. "Why—what the thump—" In utter amazement Jim discovered that Fritz' fat, white wrists were tied together with the end of a rope, of which the other end was fastened high up the rocky wall. "Fritz—what—"

There was a sudden footstep behind the Grimslade junior. He spun round—and then his eyes almost started from his head at the sight of a bony, tanned, evil face, with sunken eyes and a gash of a mouth—a face that he had never expected to see again, but which he had never forgotten.

"Sarson!" panted Jim.

With a savage grin the ruffian rushed at him. Staring spellbound with amazement at the sight of him, Jim did not stir till the 'Frisco tough's outstretched fingers were touching him. Then, as if electrified by the touch, he bounded backwards.

Sarson was between him and the cave-mouth. The other outlet to the cave was blocked. He was trapped, and it flashed into his almost dizzy brain that Ezra, hearing his shouting, had lain in hiding and cut him off from escape, and Spltz, who could have warned him of his peril, had been silent from terror.

But there was no terror in Jim Dainty's heart. He was in desperate danger, and he knew it, but his courage rose to meet it. Barely eluding the clutch of the ruffian, he bounded back and back, Sarson following him up.

"Burn you!" snarled Sarson, between his teeth, and his bony hand clutched

at the revolver in his belt. But he did not draw it. The shot would have betrayed him, and he dared not kill! For his life he dared not kill one of the schoolboys while Dr. Sparshott was alive and free. Relinquishing the butt of his revolver, he leaped after Jim again like a wild beast, clutching with clawing hands.

"Help!" roared Jim Dainty, in the faint hope that there might be ears to hear. "Help! Help!"

Again and again he dodged the savage rushes of the ruffian. But the fierce grasp closed on him at last, and he was dragged over.

For a long, long minute Jim Dainty fought, but it was in vain. He was dragged to the rugged floor and a sinewy knee planted on him, pinning him down. Ezra groped for his wrists, grasped them, and dragged them together. Still resisting with his last ounce of strength, Jim's hands were bound, and he lay, panting and helpless, at the feet of the ruffian.

CHAPTER 6.

In Darkness and Despair!

DR. SPARSHOTT came tramping back to camp, muddy and miry from the swamp. It was past midday and four juniors were already there. The headmaster of Grimslade glanced sharply at Ginger & Co. and Dick Dawson.

"You have not found him?"

"No, sir!"

"Where is Dainty?"

"He went up to the cave in the ravine to look for Splitz, sir," answered Dawson. "He hasn't come back yet."

The castaways sat down to a silent meal. The mystery of the disappearance of Fritz Splitz was deepening and growing alarming. There was now a lurking fear in their hearts that the fat German might have tumbled into some crevice on the hill, or from a cliff, and that he did not appear because he could not!

The meal over, Dr. Sparshott directed the juniors to separate, each taking a section for searching—an order that he certainly would not have given had he dreamed that an enemy had landed on the island. But of that enemy nothing had been seen or heard; and the castaways had no suspicion of his presence.

While the anxious headmaster and Ginger & Co. went various ways, Dick Dawson went up the ravine to look for Jim Dainty as well as Fritz. It was very unusual for Jim to disregard the instructions of the Head, and Dawson hoped that it meant that he had found some clue to the missing Fritz.

Dawson clambered up the rock of the waterfall, and followed the ravine to the cave. He was thoroughly wet, and left a watery trail on the sun-baked rocks as he tramped on to the cavern. At the mouth of the cavern he stopped, looking into the gloomy depths. It was—or seemed—impossible for Jim to have lingered there so long—he must have gone on. But as he stared in at the gloomy opening, Dawson gave a start. From the deep darkness in the depths of the cavern there came a light.

He rubbed his eyes and stared again.

He was not mistaken; there was a light moving in the cavern. Evidently it was a lantern-light—it was continuous and could not have been the striking of matches. So far as Dawson knew, Jim had taken no lantern with him; but he could scarcely doubt that it was Jim Dainty there, searching the depths of the cave for Fritz von Splitz.

"The silly ass!" muttered Dawson. "It's hours since he came here—if Fritz was here he must have found him long ago. Fritz would never have the nerve to go so far from the daylight, either."

He tramped into the cavern, making for the distant light. It was moving slowly, as if the one who held it was in search of something. Dawson was more and more puzzled as he tramped on. That it was Ezra Sarson, searching for a trace of the treasure of King

Christophe, in those shadowy depths, naturally never crossed his mind.

"Jim!" he shouted.

The light was suddenly still.

"Jim!" yelled Dawson.

No answer came back, save the echo of his voice. More and more amazed, the Grimslade junior tramped on.

He could make out the lantern clearly now, and saw that it stood on the cavern floor. No one was to be seen near it. So far as he could make out, Jim Dainty must have set it down and stepped out of the radius of its light into the surrounding darkness—why, Dick could not even begin to imagine.

With a vague feeling of alarm in his breast for which he could hardly account, Dawson tramped on till he reached the lantern. Standing in its light, he stared round him into the black shadows of the mountain cave.

"Jim!" he shouted.

The lantern stood by one of the rugged boulders with which the floor of the cavern was strewn in places. Dawson stared round him. Suddenly, from behind, a grip was laid on him, and he gave a gasping cry.

"Jim! You dummy—" It was his thought that Dainty had crept out behind him to startle him with that sudden grip. But the next moment the words died on his lips. That iron grasp was not a boy's; it was a man—a powerful man—who had so suddenly seized him. With a rush of terror at his heart, Dawson strove to turn, but he was helpless in that gorilla-like grasp.

"Help!" he shrieked, wildly struggling.

"Can it!" came a hissing voice in his ear. "Can it, you young gink, afore I twist your neck like a chicken's!"

Dawson's brain seemed to spin. He knew the savage, husky voice of Ezra Sarson. He made a wild, terrible effort to tear himself loose, but it was unavailing.

With cruel force, the ruffian twisted

the schoolboy's hands together, and bound his wrists. Then, taking Dawson's arm with one hand, and picking up the lantern with the other, Ezra tramped up the cavern.

"You villain!" groaned Dawson. "What have you done with Jim?"

"I guess you'll soon see!" chuckled the ruffian.

He stopped where a great rock stood close by the wall of the cavern. Setting down the lantern, and releasing Dawson for the moment, he grasped the rock with both hands and pushed it aside. In the lantern-light, an opening in the cavern wall was revealed—a split in the rock not more than two feet in width and hardly so high. Ezra pointed to it, and as Dawson did not immediately understand, he grasped the schoolboy and thrust him head first into the tunnel.

"Crawl, you gink—crawl!" he snarled. "I guess I found that outfit when hunting for the treasure, and you'll be safe here till I get Sam Sparshott! And I'll get him, you can bank on that! Crawl, you geck!"

It was difficult enough for Dick to crawl along the rock tunnel, with his hands tied. But a savage kick from the ruffian's boot drove him on, and he plunged forward into the darkness. There was a heavy thud as the rock rolled into place behind him, shutting him in.

"Oh, heavens!" panted the junior.

He lay blinded by the darkness, panting. For the moment, it seemed to him that the merciless ruffian had imprisoned him in that narrow den to perish. He drove at the rock with his feet, but it was immovable; its weight had taxed all the ruffian's strength, and Dawson could not make it stir.

He crawled on, feeling the tunnel widen as he went. He came suddenly into contact with something warm and soft, and there was a startled gasp.

"Ach! Vat was that? Mein gootness!"

"Fritz!" panted Dawson.

"Is that Dawson?" came the voice of Jim Dainty from the blackness. "Dick, old man, has he got you, too?"

"Jim! You're here! Can you get me loose?"

"My hands are tied." Jim Dainty was hardly two yards from his chum, but neither could see the other; the darkness was intense. "We're helpless—and that fiend in the shape of a man is going to keep us here till he gets a chance of handling Sammy."

"Ve vas lost!" moaned Fritz Splitz. "Neffter—neffer shall I see mein pelofed Chermany again! And I vas hungry—ach! I vas so hungry as neffer vas before!"

And a deep, deep groan from Fritz Splitz followed.

Dainty and Dawson did not groan. They had no use for groaning. But their hearts were heavy with despair.

"He'll never get Sammy!" said Dawson, at last. "Sammy's too good a man for that villain. He'll never get Sammy!"

And that was the only comfort the imprisoned juniors had as the weary hours wore away in the blackness of their prison.

When the sun was setting over Castaway Island, Ginger & Co. came back, tired from a long hunt, and found Dr. Sparshott already at the hut. But Dainty and Dawson had not come back; and with the fall of night Sammy Sparshott's face took on a sombre shade of anxiety.

Ginger & Co., tired and weary, slept in the hut, but Sammy did not sleep. Through the long watches of the night he waited for the missing juniors to return; but they did not return. It was with a grim brow and a heavy heart that the headmaster of Grimslade saw another sun rise over the wide Atlantic.

Three of the castaways were missing now—how and why? Dr. Sparshott did not know—but he was going to know!

CHAPTER 7.

The Mystery!

"LOST!" said Ginger Rawlinson. "Silly asses!" remarked Streaky Bacon.

"Sammy's worried!" said Sandy Bean.

Ginger & Co. looked at their headmaster. It was not like "Sammy" Sparshott to reveal his thoughts and feelings in his face. But he was worried now, and he looked it.

Standing before the hut built by the Grimslade castaways on the shore of the unknown island in West Indian seas, Dr. Sparshott's glance swept over the white beach, the shadowy jungle, the leaping stream, the wooded slopes of the island mountain, in the rising sunlight. His brows were knitted over the searching eyes. Sammy was puzzled—hopelessly puzzled—and the schoolboys knew it.

The disappearance of three of the shipwrecked schoolboys on Castaway Island was a problem that Sammy could not solve.

Had Ezra Sarson, the old enemy of the castaways, been still on the island, Sammy would have known what to think. But Sarson had sailed away weeks ago in the schooner that had gone down in the hurricane. Sammy doubted whether he still lived, and certainly did not guess that he had returned secretly to the island.

"We'll find them, sir!" said Ginger Rawlinson confidently. "It's rather like those White's duffers to lose themselves."

Even on Castaway Island, Ginger did not forget that he belonged to Red-mayes House at Grimslade School.

Sammy smiled faintly.

"We must find them!" he said. "I cannot account for their absence. They must have wandered far afield. Possibly Splitz may have wandered to the other side of the island; and Dainty and Dawson may have picked up some trace of him, and followed it, and been overtaken by night. At all events, they must be found without delay. I shall

cross the island to the western side; you three boys will search on this side. Take food for the day with you, and return here at sunset. Keep together."

"Yes, sir."

Dr. Sparshott followed a jungle path round the southern side of the great hill that filled the centre of the island. He disappeared from sight in a few minutes. Ginger & Co. packed rations in their rucksacks and started for the stream that ran down through the palm grove from the hill. It was shallow enough to be easily forded.

As they stepped into the water, Sandy Bean stopped and looked up the stream towards the waterfall in the ravine. There was a thoughtful expression on Sandy's face.

"Come on, fathead!" said Ginger.

"No time to waste!"

"I've been thinking," said Sandy. "I believe Dainty had an idea yesterday of looking for Fritz in the cavern up the ravine. I wonder—"

"Well, if he did, he can't be there now!" said Ginger, staring. "It's not two hundred yards away. He could have come back to camp if he liked. Even a White's House fathead couldn't lose his way following the stream down, I suppose."

"Sammy seems to think that something's happened to them," said Sandy. "And I'm blessed if it doesn't look like it! If they went rooting about in the cavern, there's a lot of holes they might have tumbled into."

"All three of them—one after another?" grinned Ginger. "They're not such silly owls as that!"

"Well, it won't take long to go up to the cavern and have a squirt," argued Sandy. "I think—"

"You think too much, old Scotch bean!" said Ginger. "Leave the thinking to me and come on!"

And Ginger Rawlinson marched on across the stream, and Streaky went with him. Instead of following them, however, Sandy Bean turned upstream and reached the cascade. It was easy to clamber up the bulging rocks, in spite of the falling water. The juniors

had done so many a time. Sandy was clambering actively up, when Ginger looked round and missed him.

"My giddy goloshes!" exclaimed Ginger, exasperated. "That silly ass has gone off on his own, and Sammy told us to keep together! Sandy, come back, you fathead!"

Sandy Bean vanished in the spray of the waterfall. Ginger and Streaky halted on the bank, staring the way he had gone.

"Going after him?" asked Streaky.

"What's the good of getting soaked for nothing?" growled Ginger. "We'll wait for him here. He won't be long. It's only a step up to the cave past the waterfall. And I'll jolly well kick him when he comes back!"

"Same here!" agreed Streaky.

They sat down on the rocks by the stream to wait for Sandy to return. Above the waterfall they could see nothing but the high, rugged sides of the narrow ravine. Just above the tumbling water a rocky shelf ran along one side of the ravine to the cave where the skeletons had been found, and where it was believed that the treasure of King Christophe of Hayti was hidden. It would not take Sandy long to reach the cavern and come back, and they waited.

Suddenly Ginger bounded to his feet, with a startled cry. From the dark ravine above the waterfall came a ringing shout:

"Help!"

"My giddy goloshes! What—"

"Help! Rescue, Grimslade!" came the desperate shout again.

"What the giddy thump—" gasped Streaky.

In utter amazement, the two juniors stared up the ravine. The shout was not repeated again. Silence followed, broken only by the murmur of the tumbling water. Ginger caught his breath.

"Something's happened to Sandy!" he breathed. "Come on!"

He raced up the stream, with Streaky at his heels. They clambered recklessly

through the falling water of the cascade.

"Sandy!" panted Ginger, dreading he knew not what as he reached the rock ledge above the cascade.

There was no answer. Ginger dashed the water from his eyes and stared blankly along the narrow path. No one was in sight.

"Where's Sandy?" panted Streaky Bacon, joining him on the ledge, dripping water.

"Must be in the cavern! Come on!"

They raced up the rugged ravine towards the cavern's mouth. They reached it and stared into the gloomy opening. The light of the sun penetrated only a short distance; beyond was darkness.

"Sandy!" yelled Ginger.

Only the echo of his voice replied. There was no sign of Sandy Bean; neither within nor without the cavern was there a trace of him. Ginger and Streaky stared at one another with startled, amazed faces. Sandy Bean had vanished! He had been within hearing—they had heard his desperate cry for help—but he was gone, vanished as if the earth had opened and swallowed him up. What did it mean? What could it mean?

CHAPTER 8.

No Go!

"MEIN gootness! I vas so hungry!"

"Oh, shut up!"

"But I vas so hungry as neffer vas before!" wailed Fritz Splitz. "If I do not have sometings to eat mit meinsel I shall be vun tead Cherman!"

"Do you think we're not hungry?" hissed Jim Dainty.

"Peast and a prute!" moaned Fritz.

No doubt Friedrich von Splitz was hungrier than Dainty or Dawson. He had more space to fill—and that space was terribly empty. Anyhow, Fritz was not worrying about the other two

prisoners; he was fully occupied worrying about his podgy self.

How many hours had passed since Ezra Sarson had imprisoned them in that den of darkness the three prisoners did not know. It did not seem like hours; it seemed like days, weeks, years.

Whether it was night or day on Castaway Island they could not tell. Not a glimmer of light came to relieve the blackness in that rocky tunnel in the wall of the cavern. In darkness and despair the long hours passed; but to Dainty and Dawson, at least, the darkness and hunger were not the worst.

They knew—what Sammy Sparshott did not yet suspect—that Ezra Sarson was waiting and watching for a chance to "get" Sammy by trickery; and they feared for the life of the headmaster of Grimslade. They knew, too, that if Sammy fell their own lives were not worth a rush. It was only his fear of Sammy Sparshott that held the ruffian's hand.

But the juniors had not been idle during those long, long hours. Jim Dainty had found Dawson's bonds with his teeth, and had gnawed and gnawed at the knots, with aching jaws, till at last they were loosened. Sarson had bound their hands securely before driving them into the dark den, and had left them bound; but time and patience had done their work, and Dick Dawson, at last, had his hands free.

He was rubbing his numbed, aching wrists, while Fritz moaned and groaned and mumbled, and thought with anguish of the fat sausages of his native land.

"That villain may come back any minute and shift the rock he's blocked us in with," muttered Jim. "With our hands free we might have a ghost of a chance. If you've got your penknife, Dick—"

"I've got it!" Dawson fumbled in his pocket. "Roll this way, old chap. I'll get you loose quicker than you did me."

In the darkness the penknife sawed at the cords. In a few minutes Jim

Dainty's hands were loose. He took the penknife and groped for Fritz Splitz. The fat German was released in his turn.

It was something to have the free use of their limbs. Fritz rubbed his fat wrists and mumbled.

"Mein tear Tainty, if you have some-thing to eat in your buckets——"

"Nothing!" growled Jim.

"Mein tear Tawson——"

"Oh, dry up!"

"Peastly prute! I was so hungry—neffer have I had so colossal a hunger!" groaned Fritz. "I tink tat I tie!"

Leaving the fat German to groan, Jim Dainty crawled along the narrow tunnel that led to the cavern. He groped with his hands over the great rock with which it was blocked. Dawson crawled to his side, and together they exerted their strength, pushing at the rock. But it was immovable.

They remembered that the Frisco ruffian had had to exert all his strength to shift it from outside. From within it was impossible to shift it a fraction of an inch.

"No go!" muttered Dawson at last, panting from his efforts.

Jim gritted his teeth.

"He'll come back sooner or later! We know his game—getting the fellows one after another till he gets Sammy alone. That's what he's after. If he gets another prisoner he will bring him here, and then——"

"It's a chance!"

How long they lay there, waiting, with Fritz mumbling in the darkness behind, they never knew. But suddenly there was a glimmer of light in the dense darkness.

It came from the cavern. Closely as the great rock closed the opening of the tunnel, there was some space left. Through that little rift came the glimmer of lantern-light. Jim caught his breath.

"He's coming!"

Faint sounds reached them now from beyond the rock—shuffling footsteps and the murmur of a voice. They

caught the husky, savage tones of Sarson.

"I guess I got you safe! You give another squeal, you gink, and you won't know what hit you!"

"You rotten rascal!" They recognised the voice of Sandy Bean.

"You've got me, but wait till Sammy Sparshott spots you!"

"I reckon I'll be getting a bead on him about the same time!" chuckled Sarson. "Stand there, you gook."

There was a grinding sound as the great rock moved in Sarson's grip. Dainty and Dawson shut their teeth hard. Once the rock was moved they had a chance now that they were free—a desperate chance, but they were ready to take it.

But the ruffian was on his guard, as wary as a fox. The great rock shifted slowly, inch by inch, Sarson panting as he shifted it. But he did not roll it wholly aside. When it had moved about a foot he ceased, picked up the lantern from the floor of the cavern, and flashed the light into the tunnel. No doubt it had occurred to him that the prisoners might have released themselves from their bonds by that time, and he was taking no chance.

"By the great horned toad!" snarled the ruffian as the lantern-light gleamed on two white and desperate faces in the tunnel in the cavern's wall. He whipped a revolver from his belt. "Get back. Get back to the end of the tunnel, you ginks, or I'll riddle you!"

Sandy Bean stood in the lantern-light, his hands tied behind him. He could not help. The ruffian's eyes blazed with ferocity as he aimed the revolver at the two juniors crouching in the tunnel. Jim Dainty's eyes gleamed at him.

"Fire, if you dare!" he said between his teeth. "Sammy will hear the shot, and know that you're here!"

But Sarson did not pull the trigger. He reversed the revolver in his hand, reached into the tunnel, and struck with the butt. The savage blows drove Dainty and Dawson back. They scrambled back hastily out of reach,

panting with rage. Had the ruffian moved the rock wholly aside, as they had hoped, they would have had a chance. But there was no chance—the rascal had been too wary for them.

Thrusting the revolver back into his belt, Ezra shifted the rock a little farther, leaving barely space for Sandy Bean to crawl in. He stood beside the opening, the clubbed pistol in his hand again, ready to strike if a head appeared from within. With his free hand he grasped Sandy by the back of his neck, and thrust him into the tunnel.

"Crawl, you gook—crawl!" he snarled.

A savage kick from his heavy sea-boot drove Sandy in. He crawled up the tunnel out of reach of the ruffian, Dainty and Dawson backing to make room for him; and there was a heavy thud as the great rock rolled into place again. In bitter silence the three juniors crawled to the wider space at the end of the tunnel, where Dainty cut Sandy's bonds.

"We're done!" muttered Dawson. "Unless Sammy gets the upper hand of that scoundrel, and—"

"He will!" said Jim Dainty.

CHAPTER 9.
Face to Face!

"MY giddy goloshes!" murmured Ginger Rawlinson, mopping the perspiration from his heated brow.

It was high noon on Castaway Island.

It had been an anxious morning for Ginger and Streaky. The disappearance of Sandy Bean utterly confounded them. Dr. Sparshott was not at hand; he had crossed to the western side of the island, and they were not to see him again till they met at the hut at sunset. There was no help from Sammy. All that the two juniors could do was to search for their missing chum, utterly in the dark as to what had become of him. That he had gone

into the cavern and stayed there seemed impossible; and that he had not gone down-stream they knew.

So they proceeded up-stream, the only direction in which, so far as they could imagine, he could have gone. He had shouted for help—yet why, when there was no enemy on Castaway Island? What danger could he have been in to cause him to utter that desperate shout?

It was a mystery to Ginger and Streaky; and as they went up the rocky ravine they scanned every fissure and chasm among the rocks into which he might have stumbled. But they found no sign of him.

They emerged from the ravine at last on the upper hillside. In the blaze of noon they were glad to throw themselves down in the shade of a tree. There they unpacked their rations and ate, at the same time keeping their eyes open for a sign of Sandy.

"My giddy goloshes!" repeated Ginger. "I'm beginning to think that this dashed island must be haunted, Streaky. What on earth's become of the fellows?"

"Ask me another!" said Streaky Bacon.

They finished their rations, and lay in the shade, waiting for the fierce heat of noon to pass. Streaky's eyes closed, and he dozed; but Ginger did not close his eyes. He was trying to worry out the problem of Sandy's disappearance, and the more he pondered on it, the more it worried him. He rose at last, and moved about restlessly among the trees, gathering fallen coconuts under the palms. Streaky dozed on.

He awakened suddenly at the touch of a hand.

"Ready, old bean?" he murmured. "I'm ready if you are! Let's get on! Why, what—who—"

It was not Ginger who had touched him. The grip of the hand closed on him like a steel vice. Startled and amazed, Streaky Bacon sat up and stared with almost unbelieving eyes at a fierce, stubby face with sunken eyes and a gash of a mouth. Ezra Samsol

grinned at him like some mocking demon.

"Don't yaup!" he muttered. "I got to get the other gink yet! You give jest a yaup, and—"

"Ginger! Look out!" yelled Streaky desperately. "It's Sarson—he's come back! Look out—oh!"

He sank down under a savage blow the next second. Stunned by that fierce, crashing blow from a knucky fist, Streaky was stretched on the ground, and Sarson, gritting his teeth, bent over him and dragged his hands together and knotted a cord round his wrists. There was a sound of running feet as the red-haired junior of Redmayes House at Grimslade came tearing back. Ginger had heard the warning cry.

"Sarson!" panted Ginger. "My giddy goloshes! That villain!"

As the ruffian rushed at him, Ginger made a backward jump, eluded him, and dodged round the thick trunk of the tree under which the juniors had camped for noon. The panting ruffian pursued him in savage haste.

His fierce grasp barely missed the Grimslade junior as he dodged round the tree. To run was hopeless—and once in the ruffian's powerful grasp, Ginger would have been helpless. He did not pause to think. He clutched at a low branch of the ceiba tree, and clambered up desperately.

A clutching hand touched his foot and grasped his ankle as he went. With his free foot, Ginger kicked backwards and caught the ruffian on the jaw. With a howl of pain, the ruffian released him, and Ginger shinned up the tree at lightning speed.

With his hand to his jaw, Ezra Sarson stood staring up after him. Twenty feet from the ground, Ginger Rawlinson stopped astride of a branch, panting for breath, and looked down at his enemy. Then, standing on the branch, holding to one higher, he swept his eyes round over the slopes of the hill and the island beach.

From that height he had a wide view of the eastern and southern shores of Castaway Island, and he had a des-

perate hope of catching sight of Dr. Sparshott in the distance. But there was no sign of Sammy; he was far away on the western side.

"Come down, you gink!" Ezra dragged the revolver from his belt, and took aim at the junior in the tree.

"Come down, or by the great horned toad I'll drop you with a bullet through your cabeza."

"No, you rotter!" retorted Ginger. "Shoot if you like, and be blowed to you! Come up after me, you rascal!"

For a moment it seemed that the enraged ruffian would pull trigger. But he knew, as Ginger knew, that a shot ringing over Castaway Island would warn Dr. Sparshott of the presence of an enemy. That was all that saved Ginger Rawlinson at that terrible moment. Slowly Ezra put away the revolver and clambered up the trunk of the ceiba.

Meanwhile, Ginger climbed out farther towards the end of a long, almost horizontal branch that sagged a little under his weight. Sitting astride of it, holding with his legs, Ginger faced the trunk, swinging with a cool head twenty feet above the ground.

The 'Frisco ruffian reached the branch where it jutted from the parent trunk, and began to climb out along it. Five feet from the trunk his weight told, and it sagged under him with a creaking sound. Sarson stopped. Ginger grinned at him breathlessly.

"Come on!" he jeered. "Come on, you rotter, if you dare! It'll break—and we'll go down together! Come on!"

Ezra gritted his teeth and came on a few feet more. But the sagging of the branch stopped him again. It was clear that it would snap from the trunk under his weight, added to Ginger's, before he could reach the schoolboy. Holding on to the swaying branch like a jaguar, Ezra glared along it at the red-headed junior of Grimslade, breathing fury.

Ginger began to rock the branch, pitching his weight first to one side,

then to the other. His heart suddenly leapt with fierce hope as Sarson suddenly slipped and rolled off. But the ruffian was holding with his hands, and he hung from the branch, swinging over empty space.

Ginger rocked harder, heedless of the creaking and groaning of the straining wood. If the ruffian dropped he could scarcely fall the distance without severe injury, and the tables would be turned on the enemy.

With his teeth set, his savage face white, Ezra was clambering back along the branch to the trunk, hand after hand. He had more than one narrow escape of a fall before he reached the trunk. But he reached it, and clambered into safety and lodged himself there, panting and exhausted by his efforts. Ginger, sitting at the end of the swaying branch, watched him, ready for another attempt.

But Ezra did not venture on the branch again. For long minutes he remained where he was till he had recovered from the strain on his arms. Then he drew a long, broad-bladed knife from his belt and began to hack savagely at the branch near the trunk. Great splinters of wood flew under the slashes of the keen knife, and the branch began to sag lower and lower under Ginger's weight.

"Oh, you rotter!" panted Ginger.

He was barely ten feet from the ground when the weakened branch suddenly snapped. There was a heavy bump as Ginger landed on the ground, and he rolled over and over, half-stunned by the shock. He was scrambling up dizzily as Ezra came slithering down the trunk of a tree, and in a moment more the grasp of the ruffian was upon him.

"I guess it's a cinch, dog-gone you!" muttered Ezra between his teeth. "I guess I got the whole crowd now, and only Sam Sparshott left—and I'll sure get him!"

The sunset was red on Castaway

Island when Dr. Sparshott tramped back to the hut on the shore. But he found no one there to meet him. Sunset deepened into darkness, and the Head of Grimslade was still alone. And, with a chill at his heart, he knew what had happened—what must have happened!

Ginger & Co. had disappeared, as the others had disappeared before them—alive or dead, they were gone—and Sammy Sparshott alone was left—to solve the strange mystery and save them, or to follow them and share their fate?

CHAPTER 10.

The Unseen Foe!

"BEATEN!" muttered Sammy Sparshott.

Dr. Samuel Sparshott's square jaw set grimly. The headmaster of Grimslade was not a man to be beaten—he was the man to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat. And yet—

The mystery of Castaway Island baffled him. Jim Dainty & Co. had disappeared, and he did not know how or where, or why!

The more he tried to think it out, the more hopeless it seemed. Swinging to the slanting trunk of a palm-tree, sixty feet from the ground, with the activity of a monkey or a school-boy, Sammy Sparshott scanned the island, north and south, east and west, in search of a sign of the missing schoolboys.

Eastward lay the wide bay and the rolling, endless Atlantic; southward long lines of rocks and reefs stretching into the sea; northward, the swamp; westward, the great hill that filled the centre of the island.

Sea and sky, woods and jungle, chattering parrots and clambering monkeys met Dr. Sparshott's searching, scanning eyes in the bright sunlight. But not a sign of the six schoolboys.

Hanging to the high palm, swaying

in the wind, Dr. Sparshott searched with his keen eyes and found no sign, and wondered. If there had been some enemy on the island—

But there was no enemy. The Grimslade castaways had the solitary island to themselves. It was long weeks since their enemy, Ezra Sarson, the man who had scuttled the Spindrifft, had gone. He might have returned, drawn by the legend of the treasure hidden on the island, but nothing had been seen or heard of him—by Dr. Sparshott, at least.

But a conviction was growing in Sammy's mind that there must be an enemy of some kind on Castaway Island; in no other way was it possible to account for the disappearance of the schoolboys. Yet what unknown and unseen enemy?

"Beaten!" muttered Sammy again, between his teeth.

He scanned the sea. There was no sign of a sail; no sign of a ship. If Captain Luz and his crew had come back, and Sarson with them, they would have been seen. There was no anchorage save in East Bay, in sight of the castaways' hut.

A small boat might have run in along the rocks on the south shore and hidden there. But who could have sailed endless miles across those lonely waters in a boat? But it was in Sammy's mind that Fritz Splitz had declared that he had seen a sail, which nobody else had seen, and nobody believed.

Was it possible that the fat German had been right, and that an enemy had run in secretly, unknown to the castaways?

If that was it, all the boys had fallen into his hands—dead or alive! Dr. Sparshott alone was left, and it was easy to guess why the unknown foe had left him to the last. Even unarmed he was a dangerous man to tackle, and he was to be tackled alone, unaided.

Sammy set his teeth hard.

He had to solve the mystery of the schoolboys' disappearance. He had to find the hidden enemy—if there was

an enemy—and deal with him. From the tall palm he could see nothing that gave him a clue. Solitude, silence save for the chattering of the monkeys and the boom of the eternal surf on the rocks. It seemed to the headmaster of Grimslade, as he clung there, that he was alone in an unpeopled universe.

Something brushed by his cheeks.

For a fraction of a second he fancied that it was an insect, stinging as it passed. Then, from the silence of the hill, came the echoing crack of a firearm.

Crack-ack-ack!

It rolled away in a thousand echoes. It was a bullet that had grazed him as he hung on the high palm. It resolved all his doubts on the instant. There was an enemy on Castaway Island, and that enemy was watching him from cover, and had fired at him.

Sammy was swift to act.

Even as the echoing report of the revolver reached him he slithered down the slanting trunk of the palm.

Crack! came again from the depths of the green jungle, where the sniper was hidden. The bullet crashed on the palm a yard above the schoolmaster's head. But for his prompt action it would have crashed through flesh and bone.

Like a streak of lightning he shot down the slanting trunk, and landed rolling on the earth. Crack, crack, crack! Three swift bullets were searching, and, swift as he was, they went very close. A second more and he had rolled over into a thicket, and lay panting—in cover.

"By gad!" breathed Sammy.

He had not seen his enemy. Whether it was Sarson, or another, he had no means of guessing; but he knew that the man, whoever he was, was armed and ruthless—that his life hung on a thread, and the lives of the boys whose safety depended on him. The enemy had shown his hand at last.

Sammy gritted his teeth. He was warned now; he knew what he had to

look for. If he had only been armed! If he had had but a single cartridge for his revolver! With one shot at his disposal he would have hunted the ruthless rascal like a wild beast in the jungle. Even as it was he was strongly tempted to seek him out and come to conclusions. But other lives depended on his, and he shook his head as he lay in thick cover and listened.

There was a rustling sound at a little distance. The hidden enemy was coming—creeping like a jaguar, with wary eyes and ready revolver. Sammy breathed hard through his nose. It went against the grain to retreat, but he had to retreat. It was not for him to hunt. He was hunted. He was hunted for his life, with sudden death his portion if the desperado sighted him.

On hands and knees, wily as a snake, the headmaster of Grimslade crept away through the bushes. Again and again he heard a rustle—now nearer, now more distant. Twice he heard the ring of the revolver as the unseen man fired—perhaps at random, perhaps at some moving shadow. But neither bullet went anywhere near Sammy.

For long hours that silent but terrible hunt went on, and it was not till the hot sun of noon was blazing down on Castaway Island that Dr. Sparshott's keen ears picked up no longer a sound of his enemy.

CHAPTER 11.

Hunted in the Jungle!

EZRA SARSON gritted his tobacco-stained teeth. Hot and weary, stung by mosquitoes, the Frisco ruffian was still hunting for the man who had eluded him in the jungle. Now that he had at last made known his presence on the island, he dared give Sammy no rest.

His fear of the headmaster of Grimslade was deep. It was only fear of Sammy that had caused the ruthless

ruffian to spare the lives of the school-boys who had fallen into his hands. Well he knew how dearly he would have to pay for harming them if Sammy survived.

But he was sure now that the headmaster was unarmed. Armed, Sammy Sparshott would never have fled before him. Even with a loaded six-shooter in his grip he feared Sammy at close quarters. He was not going to get to close quarters if he could help it. All he wanted was a clear sight of the headmaster—a chance to pitch lead at him.

Once he had that chance he would be master of the island—free to search for the lost treasure of King Christophe of Hayti, free to carry it off, when found, in the boat he had hidden among the rocks on the south shore.

His prisoners would not trouble him, once the headmaster had fallen; the desperate rascal would leave them to perish in the tunnel in the cavern wall, where he had blocked them in.

Savage as a jaguar of the South American wilds, and as watchful and wary, Ezra hunted through the steaming jungle for the man who had escaped him.

"Dog-gone him!" muttered Sarson. "I reckon he's this way!"

He paused, and scanned a footprint in the soil. It was clearly marked—as clearly as if it had been left intentionally to guide him. A jungle spider was spinning a web across the depression; it was some time since the headmaster of Grimslade had trod there. But it was an unmistakable sign—and the ruffian crept on with renewed hope.

Dark shadows fell on the steaming jungle, and he looked up at the branches of a great ceiba tree. Vast masses of foliage shut off the blaze of the sun, and Ezra gasped with relief from the glare. But he was silent—very silent! If the hunted man had stopped to rest it was likely that the shade of the ceiba might have tempted him—he might be close at hand. Fingers on trigger, the ruffian crept on.

The jungle thinned away near the massive trunk of the ceiba. He could now see more than a yard or two between the high stalks of the great tree-ferns. Watchful as a cat, silent as a serpent, he crept on—till suddenly he stopped, catching his breath.

"By the great horned toad!" breathed Ezra.

His eyes fixed on the trunk of the ceiba—on a figure that sat, drooping as if with utter weariness, against the trunk.

His eyes blazed.

Well, he knew that figure—the torn cotton shirt, the dingy duck trousers, the worn shoes, the mortar-board which Dr. Sparshott always wore, even on Castaway Island. The mortar-board, tilted on one side, concealed the head and face of the figure sitting against the trunk—the head seemed to have fallen forward on the breast in slumber.

For a full minute Ezra Sarson crouched motionless, watching, scarcely believing his good luck. Many a weary mile had the headmaster of Grimslade wound through the trackless jungle, and then, no doubt, he had believed that he had thrown his enemy off the track, and had ventured to stop and rest in the pitiless blaze of tropical noon.

But his enemy was more tireless than he had dreamed. Savage eyes were on him now—and a revolver was lifted, taking careful and deadly aim, the ruthless eyes of the 'Frisco tough gleaming along the barrel. He pulled the trigger.

Crack!

At the same moment Ezra leapt to his feet, rushing forward and firing again and again as he ran. Bullet after bullet smashed into the slumbering figure under the ceiba, through head and body and limbs, riddling it with lead. Ezra's yell of triumph rang far through the jungle.

"I guess I got you, Sam Sparshott! By the great horned toad, I guess I got you!"

Six shots in swift succession crashed into the figure under the ceiba in less than as many seconds. Not a bullet missed as the ruffian ran up, pumping lead as he came. Riddled with bullets, torn by the whizzing lead, the figure crumpled against the tree, and Ezra reached it and shot out his foot in a brutal kick.

But it was not a dead body that rolled over from the kick. The mortar-board pitched off, revealing a stick on which it had been lodged. The cotton shirt and the duck trousers sagged over, revealing that they were stuffed with grass.

And at the same moment a stalwart figure, clad only in singlet, leaped on Ezra Sarson, and he went crashing to the ground in the sinewy grasp of Dr. Samuel Sparshott, headmaster of Grimslade School!

CHAPTER 12.

The Upper Hand!

"MY turn!" said Dr. Sparshott coolly.

A yell of mad rage broke from Sarson.

He was down on the earth, the stalwart Sammy over him, his wrist grasped, the revolver wrenched away and thrown aside.

In rage, in amazement, in terror, he glared up at his enemy, knowing—too late—how he had been tricked! Knowing—too late—that the hunted man had left sign for him, to lead him on, and had stuffed his clothes with grass and left the figure sitting under the tree, to meet his eyes and draw his fire, and then—

Sammy grinned down at him.

"My turn—what?" he said cheerily.

"Dog-gone you! You've double-crossed me, you geck!" snarled Ezra hoarsely. "I guess—"

He broke off; he needed all his breath for the struggle. Desperately, madly he strove. But the grip on him

was like iron; strong as he was, the headmaster of Grimslade was stronger. Coolly, grimly, mercilessly Sammy crushed him down, planting a knee on his chest, pinning him to the earth. Wildly and savagely the ruffian struck at the face above him; like a madman he struggled to tear himself free.

For ten minutes and more it went on—struggling, panting, straining in the tropical heat—till Ezra, exhausted at last, lay helplessly under the knee that ground into his chest. Helpless, panting, streaming with perspiration. He lay; and he could make no resistance when Dr. Sparshott dragged his thick wrists together and bound them with his own neckcloth. Then the Head of Grimslade, breathing hard after his exertions, rose to his feet, leaving the ruffian lying.

"Grimslade wins, I think!" said Sammy genially.

Sarson panted.

Coolly the headmaster wiped away the streaming perspiration, shook the stuffing out of his clothes and put them on, then placed the shady mortar-board on his head.

Ezra watched him with burning eyes. Tricked—tricked and beaten—and the game was up! There was a bullet-hole through the crown of Dr. Sparshott's hat; there were five bullet-holes in his clothes. Not a shot had been wasted, had it only been Sammy Sparshott that received the fire!

Dr. Sparshott picked up the revolver and put it in his belt. He unfastened Sarson's cartridge-belt and slung it on himself. The ruffian watched him in bitter silence.

"And now," said Dr. Sparshott quietly, "where are the boys?"

Ezra snarled.

"You figure that they're alive?" he hissed.

"Yes." Dr. Sparshott nodded. "I think that you would not have cared to harm them, you scum; for you knew what to expect if you did if I gained the upper hand. If you have hurt them, Sarson, I am going to hang

you from a branch of the tree under which you lie!"

The headmaster of Grimslade spoke quietly, but his quiet tone sent a shiver through the ruffian at his feet. He meant every word he uttered, and from the bottom of his savage heart Ezra was glad that he had not harmed the prisoners in the cave.

"They live?" barked Dr. Sparshott.

"Yep!" muttered Ezra.

"I thought so—and it is well for you! Where are they?"

"Find them!" snarled Sarson. "They're alive, dog-gone you—and I guess they're powerful hungry by this time! Find them, you geck!"

"I will proceed to find out without delay," said Sammy Sparshott.

He unbuckled the ruffian's belt and took it off. Ezra, wondering, watched him as he jumped up, caught the end of a bough of the great tree and dragged it down. Over the end of the branch he looped the belt.

"What the great horned toad—" muttered Sarson.

Dr. Sparshott did not speak. Holding the belt on the branch with one hand, he stooped and grasped Ezra's left ankle with the other. Then slowly and carefully he thrust Ezra's ankle into the belt, and buckled it tight and hard to the end of the branch.

Understanding was dawning on the ruffian's mind now, and his face grew white under its tan, but his teeth remained shut hard with savage obstinacy.

Dr. Sparshott released the bent branch. It shot up again, dragging the ruffian by one leg into the air. Ezra's body dangled some eighteen inches above the ground, the branch sagging under his weight. His left leg was secured in the buckled belt, his right crumpled. Upside down, he glared in mad rage at the headmaster of Grimslade.

Dr. Sparshott stepped back and looked at him quietly but mercilessly, then he threw himself into the grass and rested his head on his arm.

"In tropical climates," remarked Dr. Sparshott casually, "the midday sleep, or siesta, is not merely a luxury, but a necessity. And I have had quite a tiring morning. I am going to sleep now, Sarson. When you are tired of your present position, and have decided to guide me to my missing young friends, you may give me a call."

The headmaster of Grimslade closed his eyes; in less than a minute he was sound asleep. As he had said, he had had a tiring morning.

Dr. Sparshott slept peacefully—while the desperado swung on the branch, head down, with aching limbs, steaming with heat, the centre of a swarm of biting mosquitoes. Minute after minute, till the wretch—desperate as he was—could endure it no longer. He yelled and howled for release.

The headmaster's eyes opened; without stirring he looked at the sweating, squirming ruffian.

"Is that surrender?" he asked calmly.

"Dog-gone you, yep!" howled Ezra. "I guess I'll make it a trade. Let up on a goloote, durn your hide, and I'll sure do what you want! Let up, you dog-goned geck!"

The Head of Grimslade yawned and rose.

"I'll give you a chance," he said. "Waste one minute after I free you, and I will not give you another!"

He unbuckled the belt from the branch, and Ezra thumped on the ground, gasping and groaning. Dr. Sparshott swung him to his feet.

"March!" he said tersely.

One bitter look of hate the ruffian gave him, and then he marched. With bound hands and scowling face he tramped away by the weary, hot jungle, Dr. Sparshott following him. They reached the stream and tramped up the shallow water to the cascade in the ravine. By that time Dr. Sparshott guessed.

"In the cavern?" he asked.

"Sure!" snarled Ezra.

"Lead on!"

CHAPTER 13.

Rescued!

"LIGHT!"

"What?" gasped Ginger Rawlinson.

"That villain coming back!" groaned Dick Dawson.

Jim Dainty clenched his hands.

"Ach!" groaned Fritz Splitz faintly. "I vas so hungry neffer before! Neffer, neffer vas I so derribly hungry! If he bring us somethings to eat I forgiff him eferytting!"

In the dense darkness in the rock tunnel the dizzy eyes of the prisoners caught a glimmer of moving light. It came through some rift where the great rock closed the mouth of the tunnel and barred them in. Weak and hungry as they were, they were desperate, and ready for the most reckless attempt if it was Sarson coming back. There was a grinding sound as the great rock rolled aside.

"My giddy goloshes!" gasped Ginger Rawlinson. "The way's open, you men! We've got a chance! We—Why, what—Hark!"

A deep voice rang down the rock tunnel.

"Hallo, Grimslade!"

It was the familiar old hail of Grimslade School! It was the voice of Dr. Samuel Sparshott, headmaster!

"Sammy!" yelled Jim Dainty.

"Sammy!" roared Ginger.

"Mein gootness! It is tat Sammy!" gurgled Fritz Splitz. "Tat Sammy has safed us—safed our lifes! Mein gootness, I hope tat he have something to eat in his bockets!"

In wild haste the juniors crawled and scrambled along the rock tunnel. Even Fritz Splitz was quick and active. The rock was rolled away, the opening was free; and as they emerged they saw Dr. Sparshott standing there, lantern in hand, and Ezra Sarson, scowling and gritting his teeth, with his hands bound behind his back. Dr. Sparshott's stern face relaxed as they came into the light.

"All safe?" he barked.

"Yes, sir! Hurrah!" roared Ginger.

"You've saved us, sir!" gasped Jim.

"I knew you would! I told the fellows you would!"

"What-ho!" chuckled Dawson.

"I am glad," said Dr. Sparshott, "to see that you had so much confidence in your headmaster. I am glad that it has proved to be justified. Are you hungry?"

He threw off his rucksack and opened it.

"Mein gootness! I vas so hungry tat I tink tat I die!" gasped Fritz Splitz, and he made one jump for the food.

But the other fellows were very quick after him. And in the shadowy cavern there was a sound of champing jaws, much too busy for speech—and Ezra Sarson looking on with a scowl, and Dr. Sparshott with a smile.

CHAPTER 14.

The Hidden Boat!

"SPLITZ!"

"Ach, I vas so dired—"

"You will stay here."

"Oh, goot!"

"And keep watch over the prisoner!" said Dr. Sparshott.

"I will keep vatch ofer tat peast and a prute mit colossal bleasure!" beamed Fritz Splitz.

It was a sunny morning on Castaway Island. Seldom had the Grimslade castaways looked so merry and bright as they looked that morning. Dr. Samuel Sparshott had a cheery smile on his bronzed face. Jim Dainty & Co. were in great spirits. Even Fritz Splitz was not grouching for once. The only gloomy face was that of Ezra Sarson—who wore a black and savage scowl.

A palm pole had been driven deep into the sand near the castaways' hut. Ezra Sarson was bound with his back to it. He had been freed to eat his breakfast, Sammy Sparshott sitting by

him with a revolver in his hand—Ezra's own revolver! After that Sammy had bound him securely again, and he sat in the soft sand, leaning back against the post, scowling like a demon.

But his black looks had no effect on the cheery Grimsladers. They had been through terrible peril at the hands of the 'Frisco tough; but their headmaster had pulled them through, and now they had the upper hand. They were now going to hunt for the boat in which Ezra had come to the lonely island—with great hopes that it might prove possible to sail away with it and reach some inhabited island on the West Indian Seas.

Dr. Sparshott looked down at the scowling face of the rufian.

"Where did you hide the boat, Sarson?" he asked.

"Find out!" grunted Ezra.

"That," said Dr. Sparshott, "is what we are about to do. Rawlinson!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"Please fetch the pincers from the hut."

"The—the pincers! Oh, yes, sir."

Ginger went into the hut, in which were packed the stores and utensils and tools which had been saved on the raft from the wreck of the Spindrift. He came out with a pair of pincers in his hand and a surprised expression on his face. What Sammy wanted the pincers for was rather a mystery.

"Now," said Dr. Sparshott calmly, "take Sarson's nose in the pincers—"

"Wha-a-t?" gasped Ginger.

"His nose!" barked Sammy.

"Oh! Yes! Right!"

Ginger Rawlinson approached the ruffian and adjusted the pincers on his beaky, bony nose. Then he looked to Sammy for further instructions. The other fellows looked on, grinning. This, apparently, was Sammy's way of persuading the freebooter to give the required information.

Sammy could be as gentle as a cooing dove, but he could also be as hard as a rock. And it was his rocklike quality that he was displaying with the

ruffian who had brought the castaways within the shadow of death.

"Will you kindly tell me where you parked your boat, Sarson?" inquired Dr. Sparshott politely.

"Nope!" hissed Sarson. "I guess you can hunt for it if you want it, and I guess you won't find it soon. And if I get loose, Sam Sparshott, I'll get the cinch on you yet, and I—"

"Rawlinson, kindly compress the fellow's nose with the pincers!" ordered Sammy.

Ginger obeyed at once. He put on a gentle pressure, and there was a gasp from Ezra. The pressure intensified, and there was a howl from the ruffian. Jim Dainty and Dawson, Streaky Bacon and Sandy Bean looked on, feeling no pity whatever for the desperate rascal. They had no doubt that Sarson would soon come to terms.

"Let up!" bellowed the ruffian. "By the great horned toad, I guess I'll put you wise! Let up!"

At a sign from Dr. Sparshott Ginger released the pincers. Sarson, wriggling in his bonds, gave the headmaster of Grimslade a glare of deadly hate.

"I am waiting, my good fellow!" said Sammy gently.

"I guess you'll find the boat on the south shore," yelled Sarson. "It's hidden under a rock, the highest rock on the shore—you'll raise it easy enough!"

"Thank you!" said Dr. Sparshott. Ginger, grinning, took the pincers back into the hut, and Dr. Sparshott turned to Fritz. "Splitz, I shall allow you to indulge your laziness this morning, as you have lately been through such exhausting experiences. You may remain here and rest—but you will keep a sharp eye on Sarson. He is securely bound—but if he should make any attempt to free himself you will thrash him with that bamboo until he desists. Do you understand?"

"Ja! Ja wohl!" grinned Fritz. "I tink I like to thrash tat peast and a Prute! Leaf him to me, sir!"

"Very good! Now follow on, my boys!" said Dr. Sparshott; and he

tramped away along the sand, with the juniors at his heels.

Ezra Sarson stared after him with bitter rage on his face. Fritz Splitz sat down in the shade of a boulder with a bunch of bananas. In a few minutes the castaways were out of sight.

The south shore of Castaway Island was a wilderness of rocks and reefs, with chanfiefs of the sea running among them. Somewhere in a channel among the rocks was hidden the boat that had brought Ezra to the island, but a search for it might have lasted for days without a clue to its hiding-place. Ezra—under the persuasion of the pincers—had provided the clue!

Dr. Sparshott swung on with his long, springy strides—and the juniors, in merry mood, jumped from rock to rock, and raced one another over stretches of sand and seaweed. They were very keen to discover the boat—it was a chance, they hoped, of getting away.

Not that they were dissatisfied with Castaway Island—in spite of many perils, and many hardships, they agreed that it was rather a lark living like Robinson Crusoe on a lonely island in tropical seas. Still, there was England and home and Grimslade School to be thought of.

High over the low reefs and scattered rocks, one tall rock towered, far out from the shore. Dr. Sparshott headed for it, and smiled as the eager juniors raced ahead. Splashing through salt pools, stumbling over tangled seaweed, slipping over wet rocks, and picking themselves up again, the cheery castaways raced for the high rock, on the other side of which they had no doubt they would find the boat.

"Beat you to it!" yelled Ginger Rawlinson.

"Rats!" retorted Jim Dainty.

Jim was the first to scramble on the high rock. Ginger was only a second behind him. They ran across, Jim a yard ahead, to the farther side, where it dropped sheer to the water. Looking over the edge, Jim spotted a boat,

with mast lowered and sail furled, half-hidden under a bulge of the rock, and moored with several ropes.

Disappointment swept over him as he saw it, however. The boat was a small one, and at a glance Jim saw that the castaways would never be able to sail from Castaway Island on that craft.

He was about to jump down into it, when Ginger caught him by his back hair.

"Ow!" yelled Jim, as he staggered back under that sudden grasp.

Bump! He sat down on the rock, and Ginger, grinning, passed him.

"Beat you!" roared Ginger.

"You silly ass!" gasped Jim Dainty. "I'll jolly well——"

He scrambled up, and grasped after Ginger, but the red-headed junior of Grimslade was already jumping down into the boat.

It rocked as he landed in it, and Ginger rolled over. As he rolled, he grinned up at Jim's wrathful face. But the next moment the grin was washed from Ginger's countenance, and every vestige of colour went with it. Jim, about to jump down, stopped.

"What——" he stuttered.

"Help!" shrieked Ginger. "Oh, help!"

CHAPTER 15.
In Direst Peril!

HELP!"

Ginger Rawlinson shrieked wildly. Dr. Sparshott, still at a distance, heard that fearful cry, and bounded on like an arrow. The juniors, only a few moments behind Jim, joined him on the edge of the rock, staring down in amazement and alarm at Rawlinson.

He was rolling and struggling frantically in the bottom of the boat, and for some seconds they could not see the cause. It seemed to them as if Rawlinson had suddenly gone mad.

"Help! Oh, help!" shrieked Ginger.

"Oh, look!" panted Jim.

He saw it now—a whip-like thing

that was curled round Ginger's leg. It came over the boat's gunwale from the sea. It looked like the thong of a whip. But as Jim spotted it he knew what it was, and his heart almost died within him as he realised Ginger's peril. It was the tentacle of an octopus!

For a second Jim stood spellbound with horror. Evidently the octopus, below the surface of the water channel in which the boat was moored, had found it there, and was groping over it with a long tentacle, in search of prey. And Ginger, jumping down recklessly into the boat, had landed on the groping tentacle, which had instantly gripped him.

Under the horrified eyes of his friends, Ginger was being dragged from the boat with a force that no human strength could have resisted. And as Jim realised it, he leaped down into the boat, dragging the knife from his belt as he did so.

"Hold on, Ginger!" he panted.

The tentacle came from the sea over the port gunwale. Ginger had got a grip on the starboard gunwale, and was holding on with all his strength. But the draw of the octopus was dragging him across the boat—to be dragged over the side into the water. Jim flung himself on the hideous thing, hacking madly with his knife.

"Jim—look out!" shrieked Rawlinson, from the rock above. But even as he called, another tentacle whipped round Jim's waist, and he was dragged over.

A terrible cry left Jim Dainty's lips. Wildly he clutched at a thwart, and saved himself from being torn overboard. But the tentacle dragged and dragged with fearful force. And now another and another shot up from the sea, winding, groping, feeling for prey!

"Stand back!"

It was Dr. Sparshott's voice. He reached the spot, and one glance was enough for him. With a backward sweep of his arm, he pushed back the horrified juniors, who would have leaped into the boat to the help of their comrades.

"Stand back! Leave this to me! Keep back, I tell you!" roared Sammy.

And the schoolboys obeyed as the headmaster of Grimsdale leaped down into the rocking boat.

Sammy's axe was in his hand. His face was white and tense. As he swung the axe, Ginger, with a shriek of despair, let go his hold, his strength failing under the terrible pull. Another moment, and the red-headed junior would have gone over the side. But in that moment Sammy's axe came down in a terrible stroke, and the keen edge drove through the tentacle, cutting it clear. Ginger fell in the bottom of the boat with the severed tentacle writhing round him, vitality still strong in the hideous thing.

"Sammy!" shrieked Jim Dainty.

He did not even know what he called in the wild horror of the moment. The tentacle was round his body, thickening under the pull till it was like a cable. Frantically, desperately, he clung and resisted the pull. He knew that he was going, and in utter horror he shrieked to Sammy.

But Sammy was there! The glistening axe was whirling aloft in both Sammy's strong hands, and it came crashing down, and the second tentacle parted like a taut rope. Jim Dainty, released, sank down, with the tentacle still wriggling round him.

A hideous, almost shapeless thing was floating just under the surface beside the boat; the octopus was rising. Sammy had a glimpse of it, and of two saucer-like eyes, as two tentacles thrashed at him, one gripping his leg, the other his left arm. Even as that fearful hold fastened on him, and death looked him in the face, Sammy shouted hoarsely to Dainty and Rawlinson.

"Get out of the boat! Dainty—Rawlinson—go!"

He struck with the axe! The grip on his leg loosened as the whip-like thing parted. But that on his arm intensified in force, and he was dragged over. He had to drop the axe to catch

hold, barely in time to save himself from going over the side.

Jim Dainty struggled up, casting aside the horrible thing that writhed round him. Ginger lay face down, panting with exhaustion. Sammy, holding on fiercely, resisted the pull of the octopus—and Jim Dainty stumbled to the fallen axe and grasped it with shaking hands.

Another tentacle was groping over the side, and it touched him, but he did not heed it. Grasping the axe with both hands, and exerting all his failing strength, he struck at the tentacle that held Sammy where it was taut over the gunwale! Once, twice, he struck with all his strength, and Sammy rolled free.

"Out of the boat!" yelled Sammy.

This time Jim obeyed. He leaped for the rocks and scrambled up. Sammy caught up Ginger Rawlinson in his strong arms and scrambled after him. Another and another tentacle thrashed behind blindly. Jim sprawled on the high rock, and Dawson and Streaky seized him and dragged him farther. Sammy staggered after him with Ginger in his arms.

"All right, sir!" gasped Ginger. Sammy set him on his feet. "I'm all right! Oh, my giddy goloshes!"

Dr. Sparshott stood breathing in great gulps. Even Sammy's iron nerve seemed shaken. In a silent group the castaways stood watching the tentacles that whirled and thrashed in the air. Four tentacles had been chopped from the monster of the deep; but the others were still lashing and winding for an enemy. But they failed to reach, and at last they dropped back.

Then Dr. Sparshott stepped to the edge of the high rock again. He looked down at the hideous shape floating on the water beside the boat. Taking the revolver from his belt, he aimed at one of the great, glaring, saucer-like eyes and pumped out bullet after bullet. Six shots cracked off in as many seconds, and Sammy leaped back.

"I think," said Dr. Sparshott calmly, "that that will finish our friend."

For a few moments the tentacles lashed wildly, and then disappeared under the water as the octopus sank. Whether it was dead, or whether its tenacious vitality could survive such injuries, the castaways could not tell; but, at all events, it was gone. The rippling, bubbling water calmed, and when Dr. Sparshott looked down again there was no sign of the demon of the deep.

CHAPTER 16.
Fooling Fritz!

POSH!" said Fritz Splitz, shaking his bullet head.

Fritz addressed the stubbly, scowling ruffian who sat bound against the palm-pole before the hut. He did not mean that Ezra was "posh"—the dingy, unshaven "Frisco tough looked anything but posh! It was Fritz's way of saying "Bosh!"

"Jest a drink of water!" muttered Ezra.

"Posh!" repeated Fritz. "It is not because I was too comfortable to move mit meinself, but because you was a peast and a prute! Go and eat goke!"

Fritz had had a happy morning! He had been eating most of the time. Part of the time he had been napping. He had hardly stirred for hours, save to supply the inner Fritz with provender.

It was warm on Castaway Island; too warm for Fatty Fritz to move, if he could help it; though had the temperature been down to zero probably the fat German would not have moved if he could have helped it.

With a pile of tropical fruits on one side of him, and a stack of drinking-nuts and a can of cool water on the other, Fritz saw no occasion to move. And most decidedly he was not disposed to shift on the prisoner's account.

"Jest a drink!"

Ezra's eyes glittered at the fat German under his beetling brows.

Fritz grinned.

"Vat did you gif me to eat when I

was brisoner?" he demanded. "Notings! You leaf me to starve mit meinself! I will not stir vun stump for such a prutal peast! Vait till Sammy gun pack!"

Sarson's eyes wandered over the beach and the bay. He expected that Dr. Sparshott would sail the boat home when he found it. But, so far, there was no sign of a sail on the wide blue bay that opened on the Atlantic.

He was bound fast—Sammy had taken care of that. He had not the slightest chance of getting loose, and Fritz was watching to see that he did not make the attempt. Yet a desperate scheme was working in the ruffian's mind. If he could induce the fat, obtuse German to come within reach—

"Say, bo," he muttered at last, "you give me a drink of water, and I'll make it worth your while. You won't be always on this island, and I guess a hundred dollars would be useful to you when you get away."

Fritz sat up and took notice at that.

"I've got a hundred-dollar note in my pocket," muttered Sarson. "I ain't asking you to let my hands loose. You can take it out."

Any of the other Grimslade fellows would have taken the trouble to give the ruffian a drink of water, brutal as he had been when they were in his hands; but certainly the offer of a bribe would not have tempted them. But it was not like that with Fried, rich von Splitz.

His round eyes gleamed with greed.

"A huntret tollars!" he repeated. "Mind, I will not let you loose—I know vun trick vorth two of tat! But I will gif you vun trink of vasser."

It was worth the trouble, for a hundred-dollar note. Fritz heaved himself to his feet, took a tin pannikin, and filled it and approached the ruffian. He had no fear of him; his arms were bound down to his sides by the rope that wound round him again and again, knotted behind.

Ezra was certainly thirsty, after sitting for hours in the tropical heat, and

he leaned back his head as Fritz held the pannikin to his dry lips, and drank the water to the last drop.

"Now, where vas tat hundert tollars?" asked Fritz, laying down the pannikin. "Inside pocket," said Ezra, his eyes gleaming.

Fritz Splitz thrust a fat hand into the dingy shirt. As he did so the ruffian bent his head and seized the fat wrist with his teeth.

He dragged frantically at his hand. "Yaroooooh!" roared Fritz.

But the strong jaws were closed on his wrist, holding him fast.

With his free hand the fat German struck frantically at the stubby face. The grip of the teeth tightened. Ezra, tightly as his jaws were fastened on the fat wrist, contrived to speak, in a hissing mumble, through the closed teeth.

"Get me loose, or I'll bite to the bone! Get me loose!"

Fritz ceased to hammer at the savage face. The pain in his wrist was more than he could endure.

Too late he understood why Ezra had wanted to get him within reach—this had been in the villain's mind all the time. And Fritz was caught—like a rabbit in a trap.

"Get me loose!" hissed Ezra, through gripping teeth. "Get me loose, you gink!"

"Mein gootness!" groaned Fritz.

He knew that the ruffian would carry out his threat if he refused. Fritz was not of the stuff of which heroes are made!

He howled with pain. Fritz Splitz never could bear pain, and the pain was terrible; and the thought of his bones crunching under the gripping teeth made him sick with terror. He reached behind Sarson with his free hand, and began to fumble at the knots.

Slowly and clumsily, in spite of the urge of the pain in his wrist, the fat German loosened the knots. Not for a second did the grip of the teeth relax.

Squealing with the pain, Fritz worked as hard and fast as he could.

and Ezra felt the rope loosening at last. A fierce, savage wrench, and it came loose, and Ezra rolled away from the palm-pole, releasing the grip of his jaw on Fritz' wrist.

Fritz bounded away from him like an indiarubber ball the instant that grip was gone. He raced away as fast as his podgy little legs would carry him, only anxious to get out of reach of the desperado now that he was free. But Ezra was not quite free yet. His ankles were tied together. He sat in the sand, tearing at the knotted cord round his ankles, while Fritz ran for his fat life.

Free at last! The ruffian leaped to his feet! His savage glance swept the bay. It was high noon—surely time that Dr. Sparshott came back with the boat. The escaping freebooter had no time to lose. But he was relieved to see that the wide bay was still bare of a sail.

He dashed into the castaways' hut. Food, and what weapons he could find, he needed, if he were to keep the freedom he had gained. And as yet he had time, though every moment, he knew, the sail might come dancing round South Point.

Hurriedly he seized a rucksack from a nail in the wall, and dragged out the stores. Cans of beef, cans of biscuit remaining from the stores saved from the Spindrift, a few cooking utensils, were hastily packed in the bag. He picked up an axe and a knife, and thrust them into his belt. But a firearm was what he most desperately wanted.

Sammy Sparshott had gone, with a revolver in his belt; but there was a second one, which he must have left in the hut. If it was loaded—

In fierce haste the ruffian rooted through the hut, throwing stores, utensils, blankets, boxes, right and left in wild disorder in his desperate search. But if Sammy had left the revolver there, he had not left it where it could easily be found.

The interior of the castaways' hut looked as if a hurricane had struck it; but still Ezra had not found what he

sought. And suddenly through the open gateway he glimpsed a brown-patched sail that danced before the wind on the bay.

Sammy Sparshott was coming!

He leaped to the doorway and fixed his eyes with bitter rage on the boat.

It was his own boat, and it was packed with Grimslade juniors, Dr. Sparshott at the tiller. The wind from the Atlantic was almost directly astern, and the patched sail bellied out before it, the boat shooting into the bay like an arrow.

He heard a shout from the sea, borne on the wind. He was seen; every eye in the boat was on the gaunt figure that ran from the hut on the open beach. He caught Jim Dainty's voice:

"It's Sarson! He's loose!"

Dr. Sparshott's tall figure stood up in the stern of the boat. There was a revolver in his hand. He stood erect in the boat, and threw up his arm. His voice came clearly on the wind:

"Stop, or I'll shoot!"

Ezra bounded away desperately.

Crack! came ringing from the sea. Crack, crack, crack! came again and again. The headmaster was shooting, and the lead knocked up the sand at the feet of the ruffian as he ran for the jungle.

Even from the distance, and from the dancing boat, the shooting was good. Spouting sand splashed over the running desperado from the shots as they struck round him. And then suddenly he gave a yell as he was hit.

But it was only a graze; the bullet tore a strip of skin from his shoulder. One last desperate bound, and he was in the cover of the jungle, running with his head low.

The boat bumped on the sand. Fritz Splitz, squealing with excitement and terror, ran to meet it. Jim Dainty & Co. leaped ashore, but Sammy Sparshott was first, splashing through the shallows, and running up the sand, the smoking revolver in his hand.

But Ezra Sarson was gone, swallowed by the thick jungle. Once more the bitter foe of the castaways was loose on Castaway Island!

CHAPTER 17.

The Big Idea!

"F' tat 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.

"Neff'er 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. Streaky 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 on which they had lived the life of Crusces.

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! Naffer 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 Rawinsson. "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 mean 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 bleasure of knowing that 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 snap, and stepped down from the rock. He came striding down towards 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!

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

CHAPTER 18.

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 stubby, 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 boathook.

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 geck! Get going, durn 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 firearms, 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. He 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 boathook, 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.

"Sock 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 mi/meinself?" 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."

CHAPTER 19.

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 schoolboys 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.

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' 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 would 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 Grimslade 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-goned 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.

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

Then the headmaster of Grimslade 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 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, 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.

CHAPTER 20.

Marooned!

SAMMY!" yelled Ginger Rawlinson.

At the first gleam of dawn the schoolboy 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 we petter have brekker!" said Fritz.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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

CHAPTER 21.

The Hidden Hand!

"YOU silly ass!" roared Jim Dainty.

"What the—"

"Who's got my hat?"

Jim Dainty & Co. had been gathering coconuts on Castaway Island. Now they had sat down to rest under a thick, shady tree.

They had pierced the shells of some of the young nuts, to refresh themselves with the milk. Jim was leaning back against the trunk of the tree with a coconut to his mouth, letting the liquid from the interior trickle down his throat. It was very grateful and comforting on a blazing, tropical day.

But suddenly he gave a jump, as his hat was snatched from his head, and the coconut milk, instead of flowing down his throat, flowed down his neck. Which was neither grateful nor comforting. Taken internally, it was nice and refreshing. Taken externally, it was sticky and horrid.

Jim glared round wrathfully.

"What silly chump—" he roared.

"Not guilty!" said Dick Dawson, laughing.

Ginger and Bacon and Bean stared at him. Only Fritz Splitz took no heed. Fritz was guzzling coconut milk, and was too busy to take heed of trifles.

"My giddy goloshes!" ejaculated Ginger Rawlinson. "Where's your hat?"

"Which of you silly chumps snatched it off?" demanded Jim.

"Haven't moved," said Ginger. And Streaky Bacon and Sandy Bean shook their heads.

"Fritz, you burbling, bloated Boche—"

"Mein gootness!" said Fritz, putting down an empty coconut. "Tat gokernut milk is ferry goot! Vat you say, Tainty?"

"You've bagged my hat, you Deutsch dummy!"

"I have not pagged nottings but a gokernut," answered Fritz, blinking at

him. "Vy for I want your hat, you dummkopf? I have a hat of mein own or mein kopf."

Jim Dainty rose to his feet. A joke was a joke, but trickling milk down a fellow's neck was more than a joke! Besides, he wanted his hat. A fellow could not go about hatless, under a burning West-Indian sun, without danger of sunstroke.

"Where's my hat, you blithering Boche?" he demanded.

"Ich weiss nicht! Flow your silly hat!" retorted Fritz. "Pother your hat! Giff me anodder gokenut, and shut up! I tink— Ach! Himmel! Led go mein ear, you peast and a prute!"

Jim Dainty gripped a fat ear. Somebody had snatched off his hat while he was busy with the coconut. The other fellows had denied it; and their word was as good as gold. Fritz had denied it, too—but Fritz' word was good for nothing! So there seemed no doubt that it was Fritz!

Jim Dainty gave the fat ear a long, strong pull, and Fritz' roar rang and echoed over Castaway Island and the blue waters of the Atlantic.

"What have you done with it?" demanded Jim, as he pulled.

"Ach! Nottings!" roared Fritz. "I touch him not, peast and a prute! Mein gootness, if you vill not led go mein ear I vill peat you till you pellow like a pull!"

"Can't see it!" said Dick Dawson, staring round. "The fat frump must be sitting on it."

"I'll jolly soon shift him!" growled Jim Dainty, and another pull on Fritz' fat ear shifted him very quickly. Friedrich von Splitz rolled over, roaring.

But the hat was not revealed. Unless Fritz, after grabbing it, had tossed it away among the trees, it was a mystery what had become of it. And it was odd if nobody had observed such an action. "Where the thump—" exclaimed Jim.

"Perhaps it vas Sammy!" gasped Fritz. "Perhaps tat Sammy gum behind te tree and snatch off your hat after."

"You howling ass!"

It was hardly likely that Dr. Samuel Sparshott, the headmaster of Grims'ade, had played such a trick. Besides, Sammy Sparshott was at the hut, on the beach facing the bay.

"If it was not Sammy, who vas it?" gasped Fritz. "Tere is nopoddy else on te island, now tat peast Sarson is gone. I tink—"

"My giddy goloshes!" roared Ginger Rawlinson suddenly. "Look!"

He pointed upward into the thick, low branches overhead. The juniors stared up. It was a ceiba tree under which they had sought shade; and the branches were thick and massed in foliage.

"Oh, my ha!" gasped Jim.

Sitting on a branch, a dozen feet over the heads of the juniors, was a black-faced monkey. On his head was a hat! It was Jim Dainty's hat! The monkey looked down at them, grinning and chattering. The schoolboy castaways stared up at him, dumbfounded.

Evidently it was not Fritz who had bagged the hat! That mischievous monkey had reached down and grabbed it, and escaped with it! Now he was sitting high above, sporting his prize on his head. For some moments the juniors stared at him. Then they burst into a laugh. The aspect of the grinning ape, with the hat on his head, was funny.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Ginger Rawlinson. "Your relation's got your hat, Dainty. You never told us you had any relations in the West Indies!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go up after him, Dainty!" suggested Sandy Bean.

"Well, I've got to get growled Jim.

He stepped to the thick trunk to clamber up the tree. Immediately, with an excited chatter, the black-faced monkey clambered higher. By the time Jim reached the branch where he had been squatting, the monkey was a dozen feet higher up, swinging by his tail on a long branch, the hat still jammed on

his head, and held there by a paw. In a group below the juniors watched with laughing faces.

"Go it, Dainty!" chuckled Ginger. "Go it, Tarzan!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jim clambered higher. Tarzan, as Ginger had named the mischievous simian, swung on the branch, grinning at him, out of reach. That branch was too slim for Dainty to venture his weight on it, and he had to stop at a distance from the monkey, shaking a wrathful fist at the grinning, chattering creature.

"Tarzan win" yelled Ginger Rawlinson.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My dear boys!" It was the deep voice of Dr. Sparshott. The headmaster of Grimslade had strolled up unnoticed. "What is the trouble?"

"Tarzan—I mean that monk—has got Dainty's hat, sir!" grinned Ginger. "Look!"

Dr. Sparshott glanced up, and smiled. He stopped, and picked up a coconut. Whiz!

The nut, with a true aim, tapped the black-faced monkey on the hairy chest. There was a squeal from the ape. Had it been a palm-tree, Tarzan would have grabbed a coconut and hurled it back. As it was, he snatched the hat from his head and pitched it at Dr. Sparshott in return for his missile. The Head of Grimslade caught it as it came whirling down.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Jim Dainty. He slithered down the tree.

"My giddy goloshes!" exclaimed Ginger Rawlinson. "I never thought of that dodge, sir!"

Sammy smiled.

"A pelted monkey will generally pelt back, Rawlinson," he said. He held out the recovered headgear to Jim. "Your hat, Dainty."

"Thank you, sir!" gasped Dainty.

From the high branches the black-faced monkey squealed and chattered, evidently in a state of great annoyance. The juniors walked back to the hut

with Sam carrying the collected coconuts.

One or two of the nuts were left in the grass, and, glancing back from a little distance, they beheld Tarzan slither down the tree, grab one of the nuts, and scamper up the ceiba with it again. They chuckled as they watched him. Evidently Tarzan fancied that he was stealing something—and was happy. This time, however, he was left in peaceable possession of his prize.

CHAPTER 22.

Who But Fritz?

"PEEF!" said Fritz Splitz.

"Rats!" said Jim Dainty.

"I was so hungry as neffer vas before," said Fritz. "I tink that I tie if I do not have sometings to eat. Neffer—neffer shall I see mein pelofed Chermerny vunce more after!"

"Shut up and get on with the cooking!" said Jim.

"Prute!"

It was hard lines on Fritz. Had there been no food on Castaway Island, except the natural products, it would have been easier to bear. But there was other food—quite a lot of it, and Fritz' fat heart yearned over it.

On the raft that had carried them from the wrecked Spindrift, the shipwrecked Grimsladers had packed plenty of provisions. Quite a lot remained stacked in the hut. But Dr. Sparshott kept a very careful eye on it. There were some dozens of cans of beef, but it was very rarely that one was opened and disposed of.

For the hope of getting away from the solitary island never left the castaways, and if they contrived to make a voyage it would be necessary to carry provender. So the canned beef was very scrupulously rationed, and the usual food of the castaways was what the island produced.

Really there was plenty of that. Bananas and coconuts grew at their

very door, and rich, juicy plantains. They had discovered a species of sweet potato that grew wild in great quantities. The bay swarmed with fish, and there were fish in the stream.

Every day they did some fishing from the boat that had been captured from Ezra Sarson. Even Fritz von Spitz had enough to eat. But the fat German yearned for solid meat, and of meat there was little or none.

Often and often he eyed the canned beef with longing eyes. On one occasion he had ventured to bag one of the tins—without leave. "Six" from a thick bamboo in Sammy's hefty hand had rewarded him, since when Fritz had left the provisions alone.

Fritz got on with the cooking for supper. Fritz did most of the cooking. He seldom did anything else; and he ate the lion's share of what was cooked, so that was only fair. And cooking was the form of labour that Patty Fritz disliked least.

Boiled fish and potatoes made an excellent supper, to which the shipwrecked schoolboys and their headmaster sat down on the beach in the sunset.

After supper Dr. Sparshott and the juniors went down to the boat, which was upturned on the beach to be scraped and cleaned. The cool of the evening was the best time for work. Fritz could do with any amount of sleep—and sleep, at least, he could have as much of as he liked.

When the sun dipped behind the hill, Jim Dainty & Co. came up to the hut to go to bed. Dr. Sparshott was taking a stroll along the beach, chewing an empty pipe. There was no tobacco on Castaway Island, and perhaps Sammy missed it a little. Still, he took the cheerful view that, as smoking was bad for the health, an empty pipe was really better than a full one. Sammy always looked on the bright side of things.

Snore! That rumbling sound greeted the juniors as they came up to the hut. They grinned at the sight of Fritz Spitz sprawling with his eyes shut and his mouth open. Ginger kindly awakened

him with a lunge in the ribs, and the fat German ceased to snore, and gurgled instead. His saucer-eyes opened, and he blinked wrathfully.

"Peastly prute!" grunted Fritz. "Vy for you wake me, ven I tream of Chermany, and lofely Cherman sausages?"

In the hut Jim Dainty lighted the hurricane lamp that swung from a beam in the roof. There was still light outside, but within the hut it was dark. He stumbled over something on the floor, and when the lamp was alight he looked to see what it was. It was a can of beef.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Jim.

Four or five of the cans of beef were scattered from the pile stacked against the wall.

"Hallo! Has Fritz been at the grub?" exclaimed Dawson.

"Looks like it. I'll count them," said Jim. "There were three dozen left—Sammy keeps the tally." He rapidly counted the tins. "Thirty-five!"

"One gone!" said Dick.

"That bloated Boche!" exclaimed Jim Dainty. "He's pretending to be asleep, of course. He's snaffled one of the cans." He grabbed at the sleeping German. "Fritz, you fat villain!"

"Vat? Vy for you call me tat?" demanded Fritz. "Vat is te madder? Mein gootness, kick me not on mein trousers, peast and a prute!"

"Where's that can of beef you've snooped?" roared Jim.

"Peastly pounder!" yelled Fritz. "Vat do you mean pefore? I have had noddings to eat since supper pefore."

"There's a can of beef gone!"

"Posh! Ruppish! I know notting of it! Mein prain is a perfect plank."

"Snaffling the grub again!" said Ginger Rawlinson. "Sammy will be wild. Look out for the whopping of your life, Fatty!"

"I tells you two times tat I snaffle him not! I vas ferry hungry, but I touch not te peef. Geep off, peastly pounders!" gasped Fritz, in alarm, as the juniors gathered round him with grim looks.

"He's scoffed the beef, and hidden the can!" said Streaky. "Let's make an example of him!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Leaf me in beaces!" yelled Fritz, jumping away. "Oh, peasts and prutes and pounders! Leaf off to kick me on mein trousers! Yaroooh!"

Fatty Fritz ran for his life! After him ran Jim Dainty & Co. "Snaffling" the slender store of provisions was a serious matter for the castaways. Fatty Fritz had sinned before, and now, it seemed, he had sinned again. This time he was going to have a lesson.

"Dribble him!" yelled Ginger.

"Ach! Mein gootness! Stop tat!" shrieked Fritz, as he ran, with the juniors running behind, dribbling Fritz like a fat football. "Ach! I have vun colossal bain! I have several colossal bains! Yoop!"

The juniors took it in turn, keeping pace with the fleeing Fritz, landing kick after kick on his fat person. With a wild howl at every step, the fat German fled down the beach in the thickening darkness. There was a sudden crash as Fritz hurtled into a tall figure coming up the beach in the gloom.

Crash! Bump!

"What the dooce!" gasped Sammy Sparshott, as he went over headlong under Fatty Fritz' charge.

"Mein gootness!" spluttered Fritz, as he sprawled over Sammy.

"Oh, my giddy goloshes!" gasped Ginger Rawlinson.

The pursuing juniors came to a sudden halt.

Dr. Sparshott pitched the gasping fat German off, and rose to his feet. He was panting a little, and his face was stern.

"What does this mean?" he barked.

"What are you chasing Splitz for?"

Jim Dainty & Co. were silent. Wrathful as they were, they did not want to tell Sammy that the fat Rhinelander had been raiding the provisions. To their astonishment Fritz gave answer.

"Ach! Geep tem off! I have not snaffled to peef! I touch not to peef!

It is veeks and veeks since tat I have eaten peef! Geep tem off!"

Dr. Sparshott's brow grew very grim.

"Splitz, have you been taking the reserve of provisions?"

"Nein!" yelled Fritz. "Nein! Neffer! Nottings!"

"Is anything missing, Dainty?"

"One of the cans of beef, sir," answered Jim.

"I dakes him not!" gurgled Fritz. "I tink tat vun of te odders takes him mit himself pefore."

"The others can be trusted, Splitz," said Dr. Sparshott quietly. "You, I am sorry to say, cannot be. You have purloined from the stores before."

"Ja, ja wohl!" groaned Fritz. "I dakes vun pefore, but I dakes not vun after. Mein brain is a perfect plank!"

"Nonsense!" barked Dr. Sparshott. "If a can of beef is gone, there can be no doubt of the guilty party. I shall make sure."

Sammy Sparshott strode away to the hut, followed by the juniors. Fritz, still gasping from the collision, tottered after them. By the light of the swinging lamp Dr. Sparshott counted the cans. He turned a grim frown on the trembling Fritz.

"Where is that can of beef, Splitz?"

"Tat I know not!" groaned Fritz.

"I snaffle him not, I know tat."

Dr. Sparshott looked at him long and hard. There was a ring of almost tearful earnestness in Fritz Splitz' voice; but it was impossible to believe him. Fritz' disregard for the truth was as well known as his deep, deep regard for the beef!

"Very well," said Dr. Sparshott. "As you seem to have been pretty thoroughly kicked, Splitz, I shall not give you the thrashing you deserve. I will give you this warning. If you touch the reserve of food once more I shall turn you out of the place, and you may shift for yourself the best you can."

"Mein gootness! But I tells you two times, tree times——"

"Enough!"

The castaways turned in for the night,

but it was a good deal later than usual before Fritz Splitz' deep snore was heard. Sammy's dire threat seemed to worry the fat Rhinelander.

CHAPTER 23.

Get Out, Fritz!

"**R**ACE you to the sea!" shouted Ginger Rawlinson. Bright morning sunshine streamed down on Castaway Island. Dr. Sparscott, the earliest riser on the island, was already up and out when the juniors awakened. He had had his dip in the bay and gone out in the boat to fish, when the schoolboys turned out, though the hour was still early. Jim Dainty gave Fatty Fritz a shake.

"Coming, Fatty?" he asked.

"Urrgh! Leaf me alone, vill you?" grunted Fritz. "Go and eat goke mit you!"

And, leaving the fat German in his bunk, Jim followed the other fellows from the hut. They raced down to the sea for their morning dip, scampering with cheery shouts over the knolls and ridges of golden sand, and plunged merrily into the blue waters of the bay.

Early as it was, the sun was already bright and warm, and they sported in the water like so many dolphins. Cast away as they were on an unknown island, there was no doubt that the cheery Grimsladers kept up their spirits.

When they came back to the hut, glowing from the swim, Fritz Splitz was up and broiling fish on the stove, helping himself to tasty morsels while he cooked. He was shiny and greasy, but he did not look merry and bright, as he generally did when he was handling foodstuffs. He gave the cheery juniors a dark look.

"Peasts and prutes!" said Fritz sourly. "I like to know vich of you dakes tat peef and pretends tat I dakes it before?"

"You burbling, blithering Boche!" said Ginger Rawlinson. "What's the

good of that gammon, when we all know that you bagged it."

"Tat is vun lie!" snorted Fritz.

"What?" roared Ginger.

"It is vun ferry pig lie!" said Fritz. "I dakes him not! I dinks tat you dakes him mit yourself! Geep off, you peast!"

Ginger, his face as red as his hair with wrath, advanced on the fat German, and Fritz swung up the frying-pan to bar him off. There was a yell from Jim Dainty as a spurt of hot grease from the pan splashed on him, and another from Streaky, as a hot fish shot out and landed on his face. Heedless of fish and grease, Fritz brandished the frying-pan at Ginger.

"Geep off!" he yelled. "Geep off, you peastly pounder, or I prains you mit tat frying-ban after!"

"My giddy goloshes! I'll scrag him!" gasped Ginger, and he rushed into close quarters, heedless of the frying-pan.

Crack! Fritz was desperate, and he landed a loud crack from the frying-pan on Ginger's red head.

"Take tat, you prute, and—yaroop!" roared Fritz, as Ginger grasped him and up-ended him. "Ach! Mein gootness! Leaf me in beaces, you pruta pounder!"

"You burbling Boche!" roared Ginger, catching up the frying-pan with one hand and rolling Fritz over with the other. "Take that!"

Whack, whack, whack! Ginger laid on the frying-pan with a heavy hand, and Fatty Fritz' frantic yells rang far and wide. They reached Dr. Sparscott, sitting in the boat out in the bay, and caused him to cast a glance shoreward.

"There!" gasped Ginger, at last. "That'll teach you to call a fellow a liar, you bloated Boche! Now own up that you bagged the beef!"

"Peastly prute, I pag him not!" howled Fritz. "I tink tat you pag him yourself after, and make out tat it was me."

"Oh, my giddy goloshes! You want some more!" roared Ginger, deeply in-

censed by that accusation. And the frying-pan rose and fell again.

"Hold on!" gasped Jim Dainty, and he grasped Ginger and dragged him away from Fritz. "Enough's as good as a feast! You'll wear out his bags at this rate, and there aren't any tailors on Castaway Island."

"Ow! Wow! Yow! Ach, gootness! Ooooooop!" yelled Fritz.

Ginger Rawlinson panted.

"Well, perhaps he's had enough," he said. "Let's have brekker. Keep your cheeky mouth shut, you fat Boche, if you don't want any more!"

The juniors ate their breakfast, Fritz giving them sour and savage looks. Fritz seemed to be labouring under a sense of injury, though why was a mystery to the other fellows, who were not likely to believe that one of themselves had "snaffled" the missing can of beef, and left the fat German to bear the blame. They had finished breakfast by the time Sammy Sparshott came in. The Head of Grimslade glanced at them rather sharply.

"More trouble, what?" he barked.

"That blithering Boche!" growled Ginger.

"Peastly prute!" hooted Fritz. "I tells te Head vat I tells you. Tat peast Chinger, sir, I tink tat he pag tat peef vile tat I vas asleep."

Ginger Rawlinson jumped up, his face aflame and his fists clenched. Dr. Sparshott waved him back.

"Keep your temper, Rawlinson! Splitz, how dare you make such an accusation! Nobody here will believe a word of it."

"Rather not!" said Jim Dainty hotly.

"If it vas not Chinger, perhaps it vas Tainty," said Fritz. "I tell you two-free times tat I dakes him not! I vas asleep ven tat he vas daken! I giff you mein word it is drue!"

"That is hardly good enough, Splitz!" said Sammy dryly, and he went into the hut, leaving Fritz snorting and Ginger Rawlinson looking at the fat German as if he could have eaten him.

A few moments later the juniors

heard a sharp exclamation in the hut. Dr. Sparshott reappeared in the doorway with a face grimmer and sterner than they had ever seen it before since they had been on the island.

"Another can of beef has gone!" barked Sammy.

"Oh, my giddy goloshes!"

"Splitz—"

"I know nottings! I dakes him not! Mein gootness, mein prain he is a berfect plank!"

"Has Splitz been alone in the hut?" asked Dr. Sparshott grimly.

"We left him there asleep when we went down to swim, sir," answered Jim Dainty. "He was cooking brekker when we came back."

"I touches him not!" shrieked Fritz. "I tink tat vun of tem gum pack ferry quietly and take him vile tat I vas asleep mit meinself, te same as yesterday before."

"Very well," said Dr. Sparshott grimly, "we shall see! Did any of you boys leave the others?"

"No, sir!" answered all the juniors at once.

"We all came up from the beach together, sir," said Streaky. "Not one of us has been out of sight of the rest."

"I think," said Dr. Sparshott, "that it is a clear case! Have you anything to say, Splitz?"

Fritz von Splitz goggled at him with saucer-eyes.

"I know nottings!" he wailed. "If it vas not vun of tose peasts, perhaps tere is somepody else on te island after I vas fast asleep mit meinself till I get up for prekker. I touch not te peef!"

"My hat!" murmured Dawson. "How the dickens can a fellow tell such barefaced whoppers? Nobody but Fritz can have bagged it. Nobody else was here!"

Dr. Sparshott stepped from the doorway of the hut. Fritz von Splitz backed away from him in terror. The Grimslade headmaster's face was set and stern.

"The matter is quite clear, Splitz!" said Dr. Sparshott. "You were alone in the hut—"

"I was asleep mit meinsel—"

"And the others were all at a distance. A can of beef has disappeared. All our lives may depend some day on a reserve of provisions. I warned you yesterday what to expect!" Dr. Sparshott raised his hand and pointed to the open beach. "Go!"

Fritz stood goggling at him.

"Mein gootness! But vere I go?" he groaned.

"Anywhere you choose!" said Dr. Sparshott icily. "I warned you, and I am a man of my word. You cannot be trusted here, and you must go. Boys, if Splitz comes within a hundred yards of the hut again, I order you to kick him—hard! The harder the better. Begin now, unless he starts at once."

"Mein gootness!" gasped Fritz Splitz.

He started at once. He started quite rapidly. But at a dozen paces he slowed down, and looked back over a fat shoulder. His saucer-eyes blinked appealingly at the castaways. But he saw only the grim, stern face of Dr. Sparshott and the averted faces of the juniors.

A deep, dismal groan came from Fritz Splitz, and he tramped miserably on and disappeared from sight.

CHAPTER 24.
Fritz in Exile!

"TAINTY—"

"Hook it!"
"Tawson—"

"Bunk!"

"I vill not punk!" roared Fritz Splitz. "I was hungry, and I vant some tinner, and I vill not punk mit meinsel after."

"Sammy's orders!" said Jim Dainty. "Now then, you fellows—all of you kick him together!"

Fritz von Splitz jumped back. Five fellows drew back their right feet, as if moved by the same spring. Fritz dodged in time. But he did not hook it! He did not bunk!

There was a delicious smell of cook-

ing at the castaways' hut on the lonely island. Ginger Rawlinson was making a stew for dinner. It was simmering on the stove, and Ginger was stirring it with a long tin spoon. The scent of cooking drew the fat German junior like a magnet. He could not tear himself away.

"Mein tear jums!" wailed Fritz. "I have had nottings tis morning since prekker, except a tozen pananas and some gokenuts! I must have some tinner, or I tink tat I tie!"

"Better ask Sammy!" grinned Dick Dawson.

"Tat Sammy is a peast and a prute!" groaned Fritz. "All of you vas peasts and prutes! I tells you vunce more tat I did not dake te peef yesterday before! Mein prain is a perfect plank."

"Who did, if you didn't?" demanded Ginger Rawlinson.

"Das weiss ich nicht—I know not, unless it was vun of you fellows. Perhaps it was you, Chinger—"

Ginger Rawlinson drew the long tin spoon from the stew he was stirring. He reached out and tapped Fritz' little fat pimple of a nose with it. There was a fearful yell from Fritz. The spoon was hot!

"Ach! Yaroooh! Peastly prute!" yelled Fritz. "Vy for you punn me te poko? Take tat, you peastly pounder!"

Fritz had a coconut under his fat arm. He slid it into his hand, and hurled it at Ginger. There was a loud crack as it landed! Ginger's nut was hard; but the coconut seemed harder! The red-headed junior of Grimslade roared.

"My giddy goloshes! I'll—I'll—"
He jumped at Fritz Splitz.

The fat Fritz fled—but not in time. Ginger's boot landed on him as he went, and Fatty Fritz flew. There was a bump and a yell as he rolled over in the sand.

"Well kicked!" yelled Streaky Bacon.

"Goal!" chuckled Sandy Bean.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ach, himmel! Mein gootness!"

gaped Fritz, and he rolled away, scrambled up, and ran for it.

Ginger brandished the spoon after him.

"Come back and have some more!" he roared.

But Fatty Fritz did not come back! He did not want any more! Even the smell of cooking could not tempt him near the hut again.

"The blithering Boche!" growled Ginger, resuming the stirring of the stew. "He can't have much space to fill if he's scoffed those two cans of beef he snaffled yesterday. I'm jolly glad Sammy's turned him out, and I jolly well hope he'll keep him turned out."

"Hear, hear!"

There was no sympathy for the hapless Fritz among the Grimslade castaways. Nobody doubted for a moment that Fatty Fritz had been at the stores. The fact that he denied it only made it more probable that he had done it. Besides, if Fritz hadn't, who had?

There was nobody on the island except Dr. Sparshott and the six juniors who was cast away with him. Ezra Sarson, their old enemy, had been taken out to a rocky islet five miles seaward, and marooned there, out of harm's way. Certainly he was not the guilty party. So it was Fritz or nobody! And the shipwrecked schoolboys fully approved of Dr. Sparshott's sentence on the grub-raider.

Fritz von Splitz was turned out of the little community on Castaway Island—to shift for himself! No doubt, sooner or later, Sammy Sparshott would allow him to return. But not till he had learned his lesson!

Friedrich von Splitz groaned dismally as he waddled away. His exile had lasted only since breakfast that morning; but it already seemed very long to Fritz! He had stuffed liberally on the tropical fruits of Castaway Island. But any number of bananas and plantains were merely trifling snacks to Fritz Splitz! He wanted something solid! He would have given the hidden treasure

of Castaway Island for a dish of the sausages of his native land.

Dr. Sparshott was hoeing in the cultivated patch near the hut, which the industry of the castaways was turning into a fruitful garden. Fritz Splitz blinked at him from a distance dubiously, and then approached the Head of Grimslade.

"If you please, sir——" he mumbled.

Dr. Sparshott glanced round.

"Be off!" he barked.

"But I vant to gum pack to tinner, sir!" wailed Fritz.

Dr. Sparshott laid down his hoe and picked up a bamboo. He stepped towards Fritz von Splitz. Fritz turned to depart—in haste, and the bamboo whistled in the air, and caught him across his trousers as he departed.

With a yell, Fatty Fritz broke once more into flight, and Dr. Sparshott calmly resumed his hoeing.

"Mein gootness!" gasped Fritz. He stopped in the shade of the big ceiba tree, near the palm-grove, and mopped his perspiring fat brow. "Mein gootness, vat gan I do when I vas so ferry hungry! Peasts and prutes and pounders!"

Dismally the fat Rhinelander gathered coconuts. He sat down under the shady tree, with a little heap of the nuts beside him, and cracked them one after another. With gloomy eyes he watched the juniors at the hut in the distance. Munching coconuts, he saw the castaways sit down to lunch and Sammy Sparshott join them. Fritz' wide mouth watered for the stew! What was the good of coconuts to a fellow who was really hungry?

But a dozen or so of the nuts took the keenest edge off Fritz' appetite. He leaned back against the trunk of the ceiba and drew his hat over his fat face. There was always sleep—and Fritz liked sleep!

Full of coconuts, the fat German closed his eyes under the shade of his hat, and a rumbling snore awoke echoes round the ceiba tree. Then, just as he was slipping on to an en-

trancing dream of Germany and its sausages, something jerked off his hat.

"Leaf me in beaces, peasts and prutes!" mumbled Fritz, and grabbed at his hat, which was just leaving his head, and gave a startled howl as he found himself looking into a black, hairy face only a foot away!

The monkey, perhaps, was as startled as Fritz Splitz, for he gave a squeal, and leaped into the branches overhead, where he clung out of the fat German's reach, chattering at him in great excitement.

"Mein gootness! It vas tat peastly monkey!" gasped Fritz.

He glared up at the chattering, grimacing monkey on the branch. He knew that mischievous animal! There were plenty of monkeys on Castaway Island—the woods swarmed with them—but most of them were small. This monkey was a large fellow—almost as tall as one of the juniors—his face black as the ace of spades.

Fritz had seen him before. He had bagged Jim Dainty's hat yesterday, just as he had now tried to bag Fritz'. The juniors had nicknamed him Tarzan, and Ginger Rawlinson had mooted the idea of catching him and making a pet of him. But Tarzan was not likely to be easily caught.

Like all monkeys, he was imitative. He had seen the schoolboys' hats on their heads, and he wanted to put a hat on his own. Fritz Splitz shook a fat fist at him. Under Tarzan's hairy arm was a coconut, which he did not drop as he clambered into the tree. It was one of Fritz' nuts—the monkey seemed as unscrupulous a grub-raider as the fat German himself!

"Peastly prute of a monkey!" roared Fritz. "You tink to dake away mein hat, isn't it, and you dake away vun of mein nuts? I tink tat I knock you off tat tree after!"

Fritz grabbed a coconut. Taking careful aim, he hurled it up at the grinning monkey. It missed Tarzan by about a yard. Fritz hurled another,

which missed him by about two yards! Fatty Fritz was not a good shot!

But the monkey was! Tarzan grabbed the coconut from under his arm and pitched it in return at the fat Rhinelander. Perhaps Tarzan thought it was a game, and that it was time for him to play up!

Crack!

"Whoooooop!" roared Fritz Splitz as the coconut landed on his bullet head. The nut cracked, and Fritz felt as if his head had cracked, too. "Ach! Mein kopf! Peastly prute! Whoooooop!"

There was a squeal of delight from the monkey. Tarzan was enjoying this game if Fatty Fritz wasn't. Tarzan skipped gaily along the branch, swung himself by his tail from a neighbouring palm-tree, and grabbed nuts therefrom.

Whiz, whiz, whiz! Crack, crack, crack!

Three more coconuts rained down on Fritz Splitz' head with painful force, to an accompaniment of happy chattering and squealing from the monkey.

"Mein gootness!" gasped Fritz, and he fled from the fusillade. Tarzan, squealing with glee, was left in possession of the field of battle.

CHAPTER 25.

For Life or Death!

MY giddy goloshes!" yelled Ginger Rawlinson.

He lifted his spade and pointed.

The fierce heat of the tropical day was over, and the castaways were working in the cultivated field by the hut. There were wild potatoes on the island, and Dr. Sparshott was planning to plant out tubers, and get a potato field close at hand.

The juniors worked with a will under the direction of their headmaster. Weeds on Castaway Island grew with tropical luxuriance; cultivation was an unending battle with weeds.



As Dr. Samuel Sparshott stretched out his hand to open the door of the hovel, the ground suddenly gave way beneath his feet and he shot downwards! A savage yell of triumph broke from the lips of the relentless ruffian who had trapped him!

Ginger, his hat on the back of his head, his face as red as his hair with exertion, stopped to mop his perspiring brow, and his glance happened to fall on the beach and the bay. Then he roared, and pointed with his spade.

"The boat!" ejaculated Jim Dainty. "Fritz!" yelled Dawson.

Work in the field ceased at once. The juniors stared—and Dr. Sparshott stared, his tanned face growing grim. The boat which the castaways had captured from Ezra Sarson was beached at night, out of reach of the tide. During the day, however, it was moored to a palm-pole driven into the sand and left afloat, being very frequently in use for fishing. It was in no danger—the castaways had the island to themselves. Certainly it had occurred to no one that it might be in danger from Fritz Splitz!

But it was. The fat German had got into it and cast off the mooring-rope. He was sitting at the oars when Ginger spotted him, pulling out into the wide bay that fronted the Atlantic. His saucer-like eyes were fixed on the group near the hut, and he was seen to grin as he observed them strike work and stare at him.

"The cheeky Boche!" exclaimed Dawson. "He's bagged the boat! What on earth is his game?"

Dr. Sparshott dropped his spade and started for the beach at a rapid run. Jim Dainty & Co. followed him at once. Fritz Splitz, grinning, pulled at the oars. Fritz rowed about as well as he did everything else. But the bay was as calm as a pond, and even Fritz succeeded in getting the boat going.

It went slowly, for though it was too small to carry the castaways from the lonely island, it was too large for the fat German to handle with ease. But it moved—and it was a good many fathoms out by the time Sammy Sparshott trampled on the margin of the sea and shouted to Fatty Fritz.

"Splitz, bring that boat back at once!" shouted Sammy.

Fritz von Splitz rested on his oars

and grinned back at his headmaster. He was out of reach, and safe from reprisals. When he was out of danger Fritz could be as bold as brass.

"Posh!" he answered coolly.

"What?" barked Sammy.

"Posh! Biffle!" said Fritz. "I pring him not pack! I dakes him and I geeeps him! I pring him pack if you vill let me gum pack mit meinsel after. Oddervise I pring him not pack vunce more at all!"

"My giddy goloshies!" murmured Ginger. "The fat villain's trying to make terms with Sammy!"

"Sammy's getting waxy!" murmured Streaky Bacon.

Dr. Sparshott, ankle-deep in lapping water, stood staring across at the fat German in the boat with knitted brows. Had Fritz been within reach he would have had "six" from a bamboo on the spot. But Fatty Fritz was safely out of reach, and could keep out of reach. The podgy grin on his face showed that he considered himself master of the situation.

"You are in danger in the boat, Spltz!" rapped Sammy. "As soon as the tide turns—and it is on the turn now—you will be carried out to sea! Come back at once!"

"I tink tat I can sail a poat!" said Fritz Spltz disdainfully. "Tainty sail tat poat, and Chinger sail him, vy for I not sail him?"

"Because you are a clumsy, foolish, incapable young ass!" answered Sammy. "I order you to bring that boat in immediately!"

"Can I gum pack to te hut?"

"No!" roared the Head of Grimslade.

"Ten I geeeps tat poat!" said Fritz. "If I leaf you I dakes de poat mit me after. I vill go along te coast in tat poat if you vill not let me live in te hut! And ven tat you vant te poat you make signal tat I gum pack mit meinsel after!"

The oars dipped again, and Fatty Fritz pulled away. Dr. Sparshott clenched his hands hard. There was

no doubt that, as Sreaky had remarked, the headmaster was waxy.

Defiance from Fritz von Splitz was rather hard to bear with patience. But, angry as Sammy was, he was more anxious than angry. Fritz might believe that he could handle the boat—but nobody else on Castaway Island believed so. The tide was on the turn, and Fritz, though he was unaware of it, was in great danger of being carried out into the boundless Atlantic.

But the fat German was in deadly earnest. If he was going to be turned out of the little community on Castaway Island, he was going to take the boat with him. His idea was to run it into some sheltered cove along the shore, and used it to camp in. Also, as Fritz well knew, some provisions were kept in the lockers in case of need—enough to last the fat exile a day or two at least.

And the loss of the boat was a serious matter to the castaways—serious enough, Fritz considered, to force Sammy to come to terms. Fritz had thought it all out in the depths of his podgy brain, and had it cut and dried.

Jim Dainty & Co. watched their headmaster in silence, wondering what Sammy would do in these peculiar circumstances. They, as well as Sammy, realised the fat Rhinelander's danger, though Fritz was quite blind to it. Fritz intended to pull in to the shore at a distance, far along the curve of the wide bay; but when he came to do so he was likely to make the startling discovery that it was impossible. They could imagine his feelings when he made it!

"The blithering, burbling, babbling Boche!" breathed Ginger Rawlinson. "If a chap was near enough to kick him—"

"Sammy's off!" muttered Dawson.

Dr. Sparshott had made up his mind. He started running along the beach to the south. At the southern end of East Bay a long spur of rock ran into the sea. If Sammy could reach that

point before Fritz passed in the boat he had a chance of intercepting him. The juniors stared for a moment or two, and then they understood.

"Come on!" exclaimed Jim Dainty. "After Sammy!"

And the schoolboys raced after their headmaster. They were all good at sprinting, but Sammy Sparshott soon left them behind. Sammy's feet seemed scarcely to touch the sand as he ran. At Grimslade the juniors had seen him on the cinder-path, but they had never seen him running as he was running now.

It was not only the loss of the boat, though that was serious enough, but it was the life of the fatuous Fritz that was in danger. It was for Fritz' life that Sammy was running. And he ran like the wind.

Meanwhile, Fritz Splitz was resting on his oars. A little pulling at a heavy boat went a long way with Fritz. Besides, the tide, now turned and gathering strength, floated him on his way. All he had to do was to steer, and consider where and when he should run in to the shore. There were a good many little coves and inlets along the shores of East Bay, and Fritz had only to make his choice.

He grinned as he noted Sammy racing along the sandy beach, and out on the long spur of half-submerged rock at the mouth of the bay. Even Fritz' podgy brain jumped to it that Sammy was there to intercept him; but that mattered little, as he did not intend to go so far as that.

He was not going out of the bay at all; he was going to select one of the coves along its circling shores. As Sammy had reached the southern extremity of East Bay Fritz decided on the northern shore, and, taking up the oars again, he started pulling in.

"Mein gootness!" murmured Fritz.

A startling discovery made him jump. The outgoing tide carried him onward. To reach land he had to pull across the current, and he could not even keep the boat broadside to the tide. It

whirled round again and ran on seaward.

Startled terror leaped in Fritz' saucer-eyes. For two or three minutes he struggled frantically with the oars, by which time he was breathless and exhausted, and in a state of dire funk. For every fathom he made shoreward he made a dozen fathoms seaward, and it rushed into his podgy brain that he never could reach land.

A squeal of terror left his lips. Panting for breath he dropped the oars into the boat, and blinked round him dizzily. There was a wind from the sea which met the outgoing tide and ruffled the water, and the boat was rocking rather wildly.

A handy fellow like Jim Dainty or Ginger could have got up the mast and set sail and put the boat before the wind, and defied the pull of the tide. Fritz Splitz was anything but a handy fellow, but he realised that his fat life depended on stepping the mast and setting the sail.

He tried to pull himself together to make the effort, but as he moved a ruffling wave rocked the boat, and he pitched over. His weight as he pitched rocked the boat dangerously; it shipped water, and a few gallons of the Atlantic washed over Fritz.

"Ach, I vas tead!" shrieked Fritz.

He huddled in the bottom of the boat. His nerve was gone, and he dared not even get on his feet lest the boat should capsize and leave him in the water. Huddled in water, squealing with terror, the fat German drifted helplessly on.

Dr. Sparshott had now reached the extremity of the spit of land that ran out like a breakwater at the mouth of the bay. He was ahead of the boat, but it was drifting down fast on the tide, unguided, rocking and wallowing in the ruffled water.

One moment the Head of Grimslade paused to draw a deep breath and kick off his shoes; then he dived in and swam. If he reached the course of the drifting boat before it drifted past

Fritz was saved; if not, he was lost, and, in all likelihood, Sammy was lost, too, for he knew only too well that it might be a task beyond his powers to fight his way back against the tide.

Jim Dainty & Co., breathless, with beating hearts, ran out on the spit of land. On the last rock they gathered in an anxious group, watching Sammy.

"Will he do it?" breathed Jim.

"Trust Sammy," murmured Ginger; but his face was pale and set as he watched.

Sammy Sparshott was swimming strongly, desperately. Every ounce of strength he had was put into those long, strong strokes. If the drifting boat passed before he could intercept it—

But it did not pass. Sammy Sparshott, straining every nerve, was ahead of it, cutting it off from the open sea. And as it drifted down on him the juniors saw him reach for the gunwale, grasp it, and drag himself on board. And from every throat came a yell:

"Good old Sammy! -Bravo!"

CHAPTER 26.

An Amazing Mystery!

"MEIN gootness! Vat was tat?" squealed Fritz Splitz.

Something heavy bumped on him as he huddled in terror in the bottom of the boat. He blinked with terrified saucer-eyes while the boat rocked violently and shipped a wave. It was Sammy Sparshott who sprawled over him. Sammy was up in a second, leaving Fritz gasping and gurgling.

Fritz sat up dizzily. He realised that it was Sammy who was on board, and half his terrors left him. Sammy was there—Sammy was there to save him. The fat Rhinelander squealed wildly.

"Ach! Safe me—safe me! Safe me, or I vas trowned and tead!"

Sammy paid him no heed. He was grasping the boat's mast and getting it into position. It did not occur to the

dazed Fritz to attempt to lend him a hand. He sat and blinked and gurgled in six inches of water.

Up went the mast, stepped and stayed in rapid hands. Up went the sail, flapping and belying in the wind from the Atlantic. Sammy had spun the boat's nose round to the tide, and as the canvas caught the wind the drift out to sea was stopped.

Sammy Sparshott sat on the stern lockers, the sheet in his right hand, his left arm over the tiller. And the boat, no longer dragged by the tide, spun before the wind from the sea, Sammy handling it with a master hand.

"Mein gootness!" gasped Fritz, wiping salt water from his eyes. "I was safed! Ach, dake me pack to land! Only dake me pack to try land, and I vill neffer, neffer dake tat poat vunce more after! Mein gootness! I tink two times before I dakes tat poat vunce more!"

Dr. Sparshott did not even glance at him. He trimmed the sail and ran the boat to the inner side of the spit of land, where the juniors were grouped watching him. They waved their hats to him, and Sammy gave them a cheery nod and a smile. The boat ran in, and Jim Dainty & Co. rushed down to meet it—ran waist-deep into the water and grasped the gunwale.

"What about sailing home, sir?" gasped Ginger Rawlinson.

They were more than a mile from the hut.

Sammy nodded.

"Exactly!" he said. "Get out, Splitz!"

"But I gum pack in te poat also before!" gasped Fritz.

"Get out!" roared Sammy.

"Ach himmel!" groaned Fritz.

A lick from Sammy's foot started him. He clambered out of the boat and splashed to the rocky reef. Dismally, though thankful to find himself on terra firma again, Fritz Splitz started tramping along the rocky spit

to the beach. Jim Dainty & Co. clambered into the boat, Jim handing over Sammy's shoes, which he had picked up where the headmaster had left them.

Dr. Sparshott put the boat before the wind again, and ran up the bay for home. In spite of the tide the wind from the Atlantic drove the boat merrily along, deeply laden as it was with five schoolboys and their headmaster. On the shore of the bay the figure of Fritz Splitz could be seen tramping wearily along in the sunshine.

"I fancy Fatty won't try to bag the boat again in a hurry," chuckled Ginger Rawlinson as the schoolboys landed.

Dr. Sparshott moored the boat and walked up the beach to the hut. The juniors followed him. They were going back to the potato patch to resume their interrupted labours when Sammy uttered a sharp exclamation, and ran towards the doorway of the hut.

"What the dooce—" barked Sammy.

"Oh, my giddy goloshes!" exclaimed Ginger Rawlinson! "Who's done this?"

The castaways stared into the hut. The stack of canned beef by the wall was disturbed—five or six of the tins lay scattered over the floor. Sammy, with a rapid eye, counted the tins.

"Thirty-two! Two more are missing! What—" He broke off in blank amazement.

"My only hat!" gasped Jim Dainty. "It's not Fritz this time! But who—what—"

In utter amazement the castaways stared; they almost gaped. They were alone on the island. There was no other human being within hundreds of miles save Ezra Sarson, marooned on the rocky islet five miles out to sea. Yet the hut had been raided during their absence.

It was an amazing, an unnerving mystery. It was seldom that Sammy Sparshott was beaten, but he was

beaten now. He could only stare, like the juniors, utterly at a loss.

"I begin to think," he said quietly, "that Splitz was not the guilty party yesterday. Someone else——"

Sammy Sparshott broke off. Was there "someone else"? What did it mean? Sammy stepped from the hut and swept the beach and the jungle with his eyes. A black-faced monkey grimaced at him from the ceiba tree by the palm-grove; but there was no other living thing in sight. It was a hopeless puzzle.

Sunset was red at Castaway Island, and Ginger was cooking supper outside the hut, when a weary, dreary fat figure came tottering up. Fritz Splitz blinked at the Grimsladers with dismal saucer-eyes.

"Blease I have gum pack!" he groaned. "I vas so ferry hungry, and vunce more I say tat I neffer, neffer did dake tat peef yesterday pefore! Ach, I vas so dired and so hungry tat I tink tat I die!"

"Is that Splitz?" barked Sammy from the hut.

"Ja—ja wohl!" groaned Fritz. "I tink tat I tie if you vill not led me gum pack!"

"You may come back."

"Ach, goot!"

"I think, Splitz," said Sammy, looking out of the hut, "that you were telling the truth when you stated that you did not take the stores. Let this be a warning to you not to tell lies, Splitz. It may be a valuable lesson to you. Now you may sit down to supper."

Fritz' fat face beamed. He sat down to supper, and soon demonstrated that his day of exile had given him a tremendous appetite. Over supper the other fellows discussed the strange mystery of the vanished stores, but Fritz did not join in the discussions. For a long, long time his podgy jaws went too busy for speech.

CHAPTER 27.

Who?

"S OMEBODY——"
"Who?"
"Goodness knows!"

"It peats me!" declared Fritz Splitz. "Also Sammy is peaten after! Tere is nopoddy on te island, and yet tere must be somepoddy!"

Jim Dainty & Co. were puzzled. And looking at Dr. Samuel Sparshott, their headmaster, the castaway schoolboys could see that he was perplexed also. The mystery of the island had Sammy beaten.

Dr. Sparshott was standing under the shady branchès of the big ceiba tree, by the palm-grove on the beach of Castaway Island. His brows were wrinkled under the shadow of his tattered mortar-board. He was evidently thinking deeply.

His glance roved up and down the beach, over the wide blue bay, over the jungle and shadowy woods that clothed the slopes of the island hill. Sammy was thinking out the mystery—but not even getting anywhere. It had him beaten.

Outside the hut, the shipwrecked schoolboys were hunting for "sign." At Grimslade School, in far-away England, Jim Dainty & Co. had been keen Scouts. They had not forgotten their Scout-craft on the lonely island in West-Indian waters.

Dainty and Dawson, Ginger and Bean, scanned the ground for a trace of a foot-print. But there was little hope of any luck; for Sammy had already been over the ground and discovered nothing. Fritz Splitz sat on a rock and watched the juniors, not feeling disposed for exertion himself.

"My giddy goloshes!" said Ginger Rawlinson. "I begin to think that the dashed island is haunted! We jolly well know that there's nobody on the island but ourselves! That brute Sarsen is marooned on a rock five miles away, and he can't have swum back to

snaffle our stores. But—the stores have been snaffled!”

“There’s the rub!” said Streaky Bacon. “They have!”

“And you have tunk tat I dake tose peefs!” said Fritz Spltz indignantly. “I tells you not vunce but many dimes tat I dake tem not—but you tink tat I dake tem!”

“Of course we thought you’d bagged the grub, you fat bloater,” said Jim Dainty. “And we should still think so, if some more hadn’t been bagged while you were a mile off!”

“I tink tat you vas vun peast, Tainty! You have tunk——”

“It’s a giddy mystery!” growled Ginger. “There’s four cans of beef missing, and they’ve been snaffled from the hut at different times. That shows that there must be somebody on the island. Only—there isn’t!”

“No sign here!” said Jim Dainty. “Whoever it was never left footprints! But who——”

“Oh, my hat! Look!” ejaculated Dick Dawson suddenly, pointing to the tall figure of the headmaster of Grimslade under the spreading branches of the big ceiba tree.

The juniors forgot, for the moment, the mystery that worried their minds. They grinned. Sammy Sparshott, deep in thought, did not heed a rustle in the thick foliage over his head. He did not see what the juniors, from a distance, saw!

A black-faced monkey was grinning on the branch over Sammy’s head. The juniors had seen that monkey before—he dwelt in the big ceiba, and they had nicknamed him Tarzan. He was rather a playful and mischievous monkey, and had a fancy for snatching off fellows’ hats when they passed under the tree.

Now he seemed to be after Sammy’s hat! He swung on the branch by his tail, which brought his paws within reach of the Grimslade headmaster standing underneath.

“Look out, sir!” shouted Jim Dainty,

Dr. Sparshott started and glanced round as the shout reached his ears. At the same moment the mortar-board was snatched from his head; and he gave a jump in his surprise.

Tarzan, chattering with glee, scrambled up on the branch, with the mortar-board in his possession. The expression on Dr. Sparshott’s face as he stared up, hatless, brought an involuntary yell from the schoolboys.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Ach! Tat vas vunny!” chuckled Fritz Spltz. “I tink tat tat vas ferry vunny after!”

“Upon my word!” ejaculated Dr. Sparshott; and then he laughed.

Tarzan, sitting on the branch out of reach, was putting the mortar-board on his head, in imitation of Sammy!

The juniors roared. Tarzan squealed and chattered in great excitement. Sammy made a dive at the monkey; but Tarzan was too quick for him. He whisked away up the tree-trunk, still with Dr. Sparshott’s mortar-board perched on his head.

“Ha, ha, ha!” yelled the juniors.

“You’ve lost your hat now, Sammy!” chuckled Ginger.

Dr. Sparshott was looking grave as he made his way back towards the hut. But he was not thinking of his lost mortar-board. The mystery of the missing stores was still a worry on Sammy’s mind.

“My boys,” said Dr. Sparshott, “we shall cut our usual lesson this morning——”

“Oh, goot!” ejaculated Fritz.

“It is clear,” went on Dr. Sparshott, after withering Fritz with a look, “that the missing stores were not taken by Spltz, as we at first naturally supposed. Someone else must be on the island! If there is another castaway, it is amazing that he has not made his presence known. But that seems to be the only explanation. Obviously, the matter must be cleared up. I shall make an extensive search this morning for traces

of him—you boys may make a closer search at hand. You, Splitz—"

"Ach! I vas ferry tired tis morning!"

"You, Splitz, will remain on watch at the hut—"

"Oh, goot!"

"You are too lazy to join in the search, and would slack at once as soon as you were out of my sight. I do not, however, approve of laziness, Splitz, and for that reason I shall leave you my Virgil—"

"Oh grumbs!"

And you will learn twenty lines by heart—"

"Mein gootness!"

"Which you will repeat to me when I return for lunch—otherwise, you will have no lunch!"

"Ach himmel!"

"Now, my boys, let us lose no time," said Dr. Sparshott. "If there is some unknown person on our island, we must find him!"

"We'll root him out, sir!" said Jim Dainty.

Dr. Sparshott strode away along the beach. Jim Dainty & Co. scattered in various directions, in cheery spirits. Hunting for the unknown purloiner of the stores from the hut was rather more entertaining than the usual morning lesson with their headmaster.

But Fritz Splitz, left at the hut with a volume of Virgil to keep him company, and twenty lines of Latin to learn by heart, did not look cheery! He looked dismal.

"Ach!" groaned Fritz. "I tink tat tat Sammy is a peast and a prute! I vish I vas pack in Chermany! Oh grumbs! I vish tat tat peastly pook had gone down in te Spindrift like te odder peastly pooks. I have vun pig mind to trow tat pook into te sea! Prute of a Sammy!"

And Fritz von Splitz comforted himself with a bunch of bananas and a few coconuts before he opened the volume and started on his task.

CHAPTER 23.

Fritz the Fighting Man!

SNORE!
Jim Dainty grinned as he looked into the open doorway of the hut.

It was getting towards noon, and the growing heat of the tropical day put an end to activity on Castaway Island. Jim was the first to return to headquarters, and the deep and echoing snore of Fritz von Splitz greeted him as he arrived.

Fritz sat in the shady interior of the hut, leaning against the wall, his eyes shut and his mouth open. There was a heap of banana-skins on one side of him, and some empty coconut shells on the other. Fritz, plainly, had tired of learning Latin by heart, and had allowed himself a little rest and refreshing slumber.

Jim Dainty proceeded to awaken him. He picked up a coconut and tossed it across the hut. The nut dropped on Fritz' bullet head with a gentle tap, and the fat German came out of the land of dreams with a jump.

"Mein gootness! Vat vas tat?" gasped Fritz Splitz. "Tat peastly roof fall in on mein head, isn't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jim Dainty.

Fritz blinked at him with his saucer-eyes.

"Peast and a prute!" he roared. "You trow vun gokernut at mein kopf, and I tink tat te roof fall on me after! Vy for you trow vun gokernut at mein kopf, peastly prute and pounder?"

"Sammy will be back soon," grinned Jim Dainty. "How many lines have you learned, old fat Eoche?"

"Mein gootness! I go to sleep mit meinsel, and forget ten peastly lines;" groaned Fritz. "I have learn vun line, tat is all. Vere is tat pook? Tat prutal peast Sammy say tat I have no lunch if I learn ten not, and I shall have to puek oop. Vere is tat pook?"

Fritz Splitz blinked round for the volume he had laid down, when he went to sleep. It was not to be seen. He

blinked this way, and he blinked that way; but there was no Virgil.

"Vere is tat pook?" he demanded.

Jim Dainty chuckled.

"That won't wash with Sammy, old fat bloater!" he said. "No good making out that Virgil's walked away. Better get it, and get on."

"But tat pook has disappeared——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Jim.

"Vy for you gackle?" demanded Fritz angrily. "I lay tat pook town peside me, and now he is gone! Peast and a prute, giff me tat pook! I must learn tose lines or tere is no lunch!"

Fritz' saucer-eyes gleamed with wrath as he came towards Jim Dainty, with a fat hand outstretched. Jim stared at him. He had not the slightest doubt that Fritz had put the book out of sight, or thrown it away altogether. Once before Fritz had been caught in an attempt to make away with the only school-book on Castaway Island!

"You blithering Boche!" exclaimed Jim Dainty. "You'd better find that book—Sammy will skin you if you've chucked it away, as you tried to do that day in the cave! Don't play the goat!"

"I tells you two times tat I lay him down, and I tink that you gum and take him while I sleep mit meinsel' after!" hooted Fritz. "You vant me to lose mein lunch, peast and prute! I vill not lose mein lunch to blease you, Tainty! Giff me tat pook!"

"Hallo! What's the row?" asked Dick Dawson, coming up to the hut with Ginger & Co.

In the distance, Dr. Sparshott's tall figure could be seen approaching along the beach. All the castaways were returning from an unsuccessful morning's hunt. The juniors stared in amazement at Fritz' red and wrathful fat face.

"Tat peast Tainty take away mein pook!" roared Fritz. "He hide tat pook, to make me lose mein lunch! I vill not lose mein lunch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gackle away!" snorted Fritz. "But I vill not lose mein lunch! If Tainty

giff me not tat pook I vill peat he mellow like a pull!"

"You Boche bloater!" roared Jim. "I haven't seen the book! You know jolly well you've chucked it away, you spoofing porker!"

"You haven't been larking, Jim?" asked Dawson. Fritz' frantic excitement rather gave the juniors the impression that he was telling the truth, for once. If he was playing a part, he was doing it uncommonly well.

"O! course I haven't!" snapped Jim. "I got here only a few minutes before you chaps, and I never saw the book—— Oh, my hat! You potty Boche!"

Fritz Splitz was not a fighting-man! He was anything but a fighting-man! But the prospect of losing his lunch roused all the fighting-blood of the Von Splitzes in Fritz' veins! With his saucer-eyes gleaming wrath, the fat Rhinelander hurled himself at Jim Dainty, hitting out with both fat fists.

"Take tat!" roared Fritz. "And tat! Till you giff me tat pook, I beat you till you pellow like a pull!"

"Yaroooh!" spluttered Jim Dainty. Taken by surprise, he went down under that sudden attack, and sprawled in the sand. "Why, I—I—I'll——"

"Giff me tat pook!" roared Fritz, and he hurled himself on Jim.

With his podgy knees planted on Jim's chest, his weight did the rest. Jim Dainty gasped and gurgled under the fat German. The other fellows stared on blankly. Seldom, or never had Fritz von Splitz been seen in this fighting mood. Taking a grip on Jim's hair with one fat hand, Fritz banged his head on the beach.

Bang! Bang! The beach was hard! Jim Dainty struggled and roared. Dr. Sparshott, witnessing that remarkable scene from a distance, hastened his footsteps. Dick Dawson jumped forward to drag the enraged German off his victim. But an upward drive from Jim Dainty catching Fritz Splitz where he hoped to pack his lunch, dislodged the podgy Rhinelander.

Urrrrrrghh!" gurgled Fritz, as he

rolled off. "Urrrgh! Peastly prute—urrgh! I have no more te breff! Wurrghh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jim Dainty sat up dizzily, rubbing his damaged head. Fritz rolled and gurgled. Dainty gained his feet, crimson with wrath, and Fritz, still gurgling, got upright again. Jim made a jump at him, and Fritz, amazing to relate, did not dodge. He met Dainty halfway, and they closed and struggled.

"Peastly prute!" gurgled Fritz. "I peat you till you pellow like a mat pull! I tink—yaroooooooooh!"

Bump! Fritz landed on the beach with a terrific bump. He sprawled, gasping.

"Now, you fat frump, I'll jolly well bang your silly head!" roared Jim Dainty, and he grasped Friedrich von Splitz by his fat neck.

"Stop!" Dr. Sparshott came striding up. "Dainty—Splitz! What does this mean? Cease this at once!"

Jim Dainty let go Fritz' neck, as if that fat neck had suddenly become red-hot.

"Oh!" he gasped. "Yes, sir!"

CHAPTER 29.

The Mystery Clears:

"PRUTAL peast!" roared Fritz Splitz. "Peastly prute and pounder! I was pumped so hard on te peach tat I tink tat I tie! Peastly prute—"

"Splitz!" barked Sammy. "Get up!"

"Ach! How was I get up mit meinself ven tat I have no more te breff?" gurgled Fritz.

Dr. Sparshott grasped the fat German and heaved him to his feet. Fritz spluttered for breath.

"Now, what is the matter?" barked Sammy.

"Tat peast Tainty take tat pook!" yelled Fritz. "He make me miss mein lunch after before!"

"The book! Is the book gone?" de-

manded Sammy sharply. "If you have been playing tricks again, Splitz—"

"I blay no dricks!" yelled Fritz. "Tainty blay him pefore! Tat pook —"

"I haven't touched the book!" roared Jim Dainty.

"Tat is vun pig vhooper! Vere is tat pook if you touch him not?"

Dr. Sparshott bent a severe, searching look on Fatty Fritz. He knew his Fritz only too well, and how probable it was that the fat slacker was playing a trick to escape a task. But there was something convincing in Fritz' wild excitement. Also, the Head of Grimslade had to remember that Fritz had been unjustly suspected of "snaffling" the stores.

"Let the book be searched for!" barked Dr. Sparshott.

A search in the hut was made immediately. Fritz pointed out where—according to him—he had laid the book. Certainly it was no longer there. The juniors rooted through the hut; but P. Virgilius Maro was not to be found. Wherever that volume was, it was not in the hut.

The search over, Fritz Splitz regarded Sammy with anxious saucer-eyes. He was thinking about lunch. That was a matter of great urgency.

"I am not at all sure, Splitz, that you have not concealed the book!" said Dr. Sparshott. "But it is possible, at least, that it was taken by the same person who has purloined the cans of beef. I shall give you the benefit of the doubt."

Fritz gasped with relief. He was to have his lunch!

That important point being decided, Fritz ceased to bother about the missing book. The longer it remained missing, the better Fritz liked it, in fact.

He still half believed that Jim Dainty had hidden it for a lark, and Jim more than half believed that Fritz had hidden it to escape learning his lines.

Dr. Sparshott was very silent over lunch. The strange mystery of the island was evidently on his mind, and it puzzled and worried him. Lunch

over, Fritz Splitz rolled away for a nap in the shade of a tree, leaving the Head still thinking the matter over, and the juniors making plans for a more extensive hunt, when the heat of the day was over, for the unknown "snaffler."

The search, so far, had only seemed to prove that there was no one on Castaway Island but themselves; yet even while it was going on, the book had vanished from the side of the sleeping Fritz! Who had taken it?

Quite heedless of the mystery, and not in the least perturbed by the loss of the volume of Virgil, Fritz Splitz rolled past the nodding palms to the circle of deep shade cast by the ceiba tree. That was a very shady spot for a nap, and as cool as any spot on the island.

Fritz sat down in the deep shade, with his podgy back against the great trunk of the tree, and was about to pull his hat over his eyes when he remembered the playful tricks of Tarzan, and gave an irritated grunt.

"Mein gootness, if tat peastly monkey vake me up vunce after, I preak him te pones!" murmured Fritz, and he blinked up at the thick branches overhead, to see if the playful simian was about.

The next moment Fritz forgot that he was sleepy.

He jumped to his feet, his saucer-eyes almost bulging from his fat face. It seemed as if Fatty Fritz could not believe those saucer-eyes. He fairly goggled!

Sitting on a branch of the ceiba was Tarzan, the monkey, Dr. Sparshott's mortar-board still perched on his head. It was not surprising to see him there, as he appeared to have his home in the ceiba's mountain of foliage. What was surprising was his occupation.

He was sitting with an open book in his hands, gazing at it with all the seriousness of an ape imitating a human being, looking for all the world as if he were reading it!

"Mein gootness!" gasped Fritz.

There was only one book on Castaway Island—the one that was missing! Evidently it was the missing book that was now in Tarzan's paws!

"Tat monkey!" gurgled Fritz. "Mein gootness, it was tat monkey all te time pefore! Himmel!"

Fritz forgot his intended nap! He rushed back in the direction of the hut in great excitement. He shouted and waved fat hands as he approached the group before the hut.

"Ach! Gum!" yelled Fritz. "Gum! I have find him out mit himself after! Now I know apout it pefore! Gum!"

"My giddy goloshes!" ejaculated Ginger Rawlinson, staring at him. "Is the fat Boche batty?"

Dr. Sparshott rose from the log on which he was seated. He fixed his eyes on the wildly excited German.

"What——" barked Sammy.

Fritz, gesticulating wildly, came on with a rush. He stumbled over a rock, which he was in too great a hurry to see, and took a header for Sammy!

"Ach! Himmel!" spluttered Fritz, as he flew.

"Boy!" gasped the Head of Grimslade, as Fritz crashed on him. "Splitz, you utter young ass—— Ooooh!" He grasped the fat German by the collar and shook him. "Now, what does this mean?"

"Urrrghh!" gurgled Fritz spasmodically.

Shake, shake, shake!

"Explain yourself!" barked Sammy. "Speak!"

"Tat monkey!" gasped Fritz. "Tat monkey—groogh!—tat peastly monkey tat tey call Tarzan—— Yoooooggh! Led go! He take tat pook. He read tat pook in te tree pefore——"

Dr. Sparshott stared at him blankly for a moment; then, with long strides, he started for the ceiba tree. Jim Dainty & Co. rushed after him. Fritz, gurgling for breath, tottered in their wake.

In a few minutes they reached the

ceiba. The expression on Dr. Sparshott's face was extraordinary as he stared up at Tarzan, who was now dangling from the tree by one arm, with Virgil clasped firmly between his two feet.

The monkey, grave as any school-master, with the mortar-board perched on his head, was blinking at the printed pages of the open book, evidently as he had seen the castaways doing—probably Fritz that morning in the hut.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Jim Dainty. "Tarzan's got the book—that's the book all right. Can it have been that dashed monkey all the time?"

"My giddy goloshes, that's it!" yelled Ginger. "He tried sneaking our hats, and he's been sneaking things from the hut! There isn't anybody else on the island, after all. It was that jolly old monk!"

"But what the thump did he want cans of beef for? He couldn't get the tins open."

"Just mischief!" said Sammy, his astonished face breaking into a smile. "I fancy we have caught the culprit at last!" he chuckled. "That rascal of a monkey has been rooting in the hut. He has seen us carrying cans of beef, and he did the same. I think we have solved the mystery at last, my boys. And this is where I get back my hat!"

Sammy Sparshott stepped towards the monkey and made a grab. Tarzan immediately scrambled up on to the branch. Ceasing to hold the book to his eyes, the ape suddenly hurled it at Dr. Sparshott, catching him on the back of his head as he commenced to climb up the trunk of the tree.

"Oh!" roared Sammy.

"Good shot!" breathed Streaky, and the juniors chuckled.

Jim Dainty fielded the Virgil.

"I've got the book, sir!" he called out.

But Sammy did not heed—he wanted his mortar-board, and he climbed on. Tarzan, chattering excitedly, retreated

into higher branches. Sammy followed up.

The monkey disappeared into the foliage, and the next moment something hard and heavy whizzed through the leaves. It was a can of beef! But Sammy was watching, and he dodged the missile.

Two more cans of beef came whizzing, but Sammy ducked his head, and they shot past and dropped. Then came another, and, with all Sammy's watchfulness, it grazed his shoulder as it shot by.

"That's the lot, sir!" bawled Ginger.

Sammy was aware of that. All four of the missing cans of beef had now come to light—proof that Tarzan was the culprit!

There was still Dr. Sparshott's mortar-board, however, and that came next. Having returned all the cans of beef, Tarzan snatched the mortar-board from his head and hurled that, too. The monkey scored a bullseye. It landed right on top of Sammy's head, and stayed there!

The headmaster of Grimslade slithered lightly down the tree and rejoined the juniors with a smile on his face. Tarzan, screaming with wrath, scampered away in the branches and disappeared from sight.

The mystery of Castaway Island was solved, and the solution of the mystery made the castaways roar with laughter. It was only a mischievous monkey that had caused all the trouble.

Ginger had already mooted the idea of catching him, taming him, and making a pet of him, and as that seemed a good way of keeping him out of further mischief, all the fellows agreed that it was a good stunt. And that afternoon they tried it on! But the big ceiba was deserted, and Tarzan apparently had changed his residence to another part of the island, where he would not be bothered by human neighbours.

CHAPTER 30.

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 ruffian 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' expansive grin extended from ear to ear, as he watched them go. Great thoughts were working in Fritz' 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 pilfering things from the castaways' hut.

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 joining in the hunt.

"Mein gootness!" murmured Fritz, as he stretched his lazy fat limbs in the soft warm sand. "Tey vas all dummkopfs, and tey vill neffer guess! I tink dat a pull tem te leg, and te leg of tet peast and a prute Sammy. Also for vun time I have vun goot feed to meinself after!"

The fat German remained sprawling in the sand, 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 Rhineland-er 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—did 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 solid 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 solid beef. He grinned ecstatically.

"Mein gootness! Tat is goot!" gasped Fritz, with his mouth full. "Ach! I think tat I tie if I do not have sometings goot to eat! Tat is ferry goot peef—tat is pootiful 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 vas tat monkey gum again!"

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 slack-in 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 gooloshes! 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 geeep mein eyes vide open before! I tell you two times tat tat monkey he is not gone away after! He hang apout because he want 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! Yaroooooooooh!"

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

CHAPTER 31.

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' 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 was 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' 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 hunt-

ing 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' 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 a!! dumm-kopfs!" murmured Fritz. "I tink tat it is ferry easy to pull tem te leg! Also, I vas ferry hungry pefore!"

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 whopper 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 drooping and his saucer-eyes almost popping from his podgy face.

"Caught, you bloated brigand!" yelled Ginger.

"Ach! Mein goot Chinger, I—I take not to 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 to 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 snaffing the stores and laying the blame on Tarzan!

CHAPTER 32.

Marooned!

GET up!"

Fritz Splitz sat up, still gasping and blinking uneasily at the door. 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 tell 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 will get up ferry quickly mit meinself pefore!" 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 Chum!" 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 will 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 to 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!" growned 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 vant 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 stick him."

"I vill not be blindfolded!"

"You will!" said Ginger; and Fritz was. The red-headed junior wound a strip of canvas over Fritz' saucer-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 belling 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 round a headland, and he was left alone.

CHAPTER
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 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 gamp fire, and tat means 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 out-

lines 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?"

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 before?"

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' 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 meinself, 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!

CHAPTER 34.

The Sleeping Beauty!

"**W**HERE'S that blithering Boche?" growled Ginger Rawlinson. "Shirking, as per usual!"

Fritz Splitz was not to be seen on the beach of Castaway Island. That was not surprising. Fritz was always missing when there was work to be done.

Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson, Ginger and Bacon and Bean, had been gathering tropical produce under the direction of their headmaster, Dr. Samuel Sparshott. There was an immense stack of coconuts, and bunches of bananas and plantains, and a heap of glowing oranges. That cargo had to be carried down to the boat and packed on board.

"The lazy lump of lard!" grunted Jim Dainty. "No good calling him—he would make it a point not to hear. Get going!"

Heavy-laden, the juniors tramped down from the palm grove, across the burning beach, to the margin of the wide bay that fronted the Atlantic. There floated the boat that had been captured from Ezra Sarson, the rascal who had scuttled the Spindrift. It floated close in to the shore, moored to a palm-pole planted in the sand.

Splashing the shallow water with their bare feet and their trousers tucked up, the juniors carried their loads to the boat. Boots and shoes were reserved for special occasions. There was no renewing the supply of those useful articles on a solitary island

inhabited only by the Grim-lade castaways.

That morning Sammy Sparshott was going to run the boat across to the little rocky islet five miles out to sea, where Ezra Sarson had been marooned out of harm's way. What grew on that speck of rock and sand was barely sufficient to support life, and there was no doubt that Ezra had a hard time of it. But he could not be trusted on Castaway Island, and he had got what he had asked for!

Dr. Sparshott, however, occasionally made a trip to the rock with a boat-load of supplies, receiving only black and savage looks from the ruffian by way of thanks. Black looks did not affect Sammy in the least, only he was always careful to stick a loaded revolver in his belt when he started for Sarson's rock. He had left Ezra various tools and utensils that could be spared, and he was well aware that Ezra would have been glad of a chance to "get" him with a spade or a saucepan.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Jim Dainty suddenly as the juniors came to the boat. "Listen to the band!"

Snore!

Fritz was discovered!

From the interior of the boat came the snore of the fat German. Evidently Fatty Fritz had hidden himself in the boat to keep out of his share of the work, and that snore indicated that he had gone to sleep there.

"My giddy goloshes!" growled Ginger. "I'll wake him up with a coconut on his fat head!"

"Hold on!" said Streaky Bacon. "Don't wake the sleeping beauty! Shove the stuff on him! Let him wake up on his own, and find himself buried!"

"Good egg!" chuckled Jim Dainty.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Ginger. "Good! Go it!"

Ginger's roar would have awakened any fellow but Fritz Splitz! But Fritz, when he was once asleep, was not easy to wake! He snored on regardless.

He was lying amidships, where the juniors had to stack the cargo. They

proceeded to stack it. Gently they laid huge bunches of bananas and plantains over the sleeping beauty, till the rotund form of Fritz disappeared from sight.

Jim Dainty, grinning, up-ended a large basket over the fat face, to give Fritz space to breathe. He did not want to suffocate Fritz. Over the basket more and more bunches were piled. Buried in plantains and bananas, with coconuts and oranges piled round him, Fritz was invisible, and even his snore was muffled by his coverings.

"That's the lot!" chortled Ginger. "My giddy goloshes! What a surprise for jolly old Fritz when he wakes up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Leaving the fat German buried, the grinning juniors carried the empty baskets up the beach. Dr. Sparshott was in the hut, loading the revolver he intended to take with him. The junior's work being over, they rambled away up the stream, to catch fish for lunch.

It was later that Jim Dainty, glancing down to the beach, beheld a brown-patched sail dancing on the bay. Sitting aster in the boat, Dr. Sparshott had the sheet in his hand and one arm over the tiller. Sammy had started on his trip to the rock out at sea. Jim Dainty dropped his net and stood staring.

"Oh, my hat!" he exclaimed.

"What's up?" asked Dick Dawson.

"Sammy's gone!"

"Well, we knew he was going, fat-head!"

"But Fritz——" gasped Jim.

"Oh, crikey!"

There was no sign of Fritz on the sunlit beach! It had not even occurred to the playful juniors that Fatty Fritz would remain asleep under the pile of tropical fruits when Sammy went aboard and ran the boat out into the bay. It occurred to them now!

"My giddy goloshes!" yelled Ginger.

"Fritz has gone for a sail with Sammy—without knowing it!"

"And Sammy doesn't know, either!" gasped Sandy Bean. "My hat! Sammy will be waxy!"

"Let's hail Sammy!" said Jim Dainty, and he started running down to the beach.

The other fellows dashed after him at top speed.

The juniors stood on the margin of the sea, waved their hands and shouted. But there was nothing doing! The wind from the sea blew their shouting back, and not a sound of it reached Sammy. He saw them waving, for he released a hand and waved back for a moment, doubtless supposing that the juniors were waving good-bye. The boat danced on and became a speck on the blue, sunny waters.

CHAPTER 35.

Trapped!

"BY the great horned toad!" muttered Ezra Sarson, between his clenched, tobacco-stained teeth.

Standing on the shore of the little rocky islet, the Trisco ruffian watched a sail that danced and glanced on the sunlit sea. His stubbly, bearded face expressed savage hostility, though he knew that Dr. Sparshott was coming with kind intent.

Life was hard enough on the rock for the ruffian who had been marooned there, but it had only served to increase his hatred of Sammy. Every day he watched the dark mass of Castaway Island in the distance to the west, and shook his brawny fist and muttered oaths. Yet when Sammy came all his desperate schemes faded away—he dared not look the headmaster of Grimslade in the face, let alone tackle him.

But long weeks of scheming had had their result. This time he had laid a trap against Sammy's next visit, and hope and fear mingled in his look as he watched the approaching boat from behind a cluster of rugged rocks.

As usual, Sammy Sparshott came along in the boat. At all events he was alone so far as Sarson could see. Hidden every now and then by the brown sail, then coming into view

again, he could see the stalwart figure of the Grimslade headmaster. Nothing else was to be seen in the boat save the great stack of tropical produce that Sammy was bringing with him.

Sarson was not likely to guess—what Sammy did not even suspect—that a fat German schoolboy lay fast asleep under that fruity stack, his snore drowned by the wash of the waves and the creaking of mast and rope.

Dr. Sparshott ran the boat in to the sand at the foot of the rocks. He dropped the sail and stood looking for the maroon. Generally Ezra was in sight when Sammy came. This time he was not to be seen.

"Ahoy! Sarson! Ahoy!"

Only the echo of his shout answered Sammy. He stepped on a high rock and glanced about him. Lower the hidden ruffian crouched in his cover, his heart throbbing. He was well hidden, and the Grimslade headmaster's keen eyes did not pick him out.

Dr. Sparshott jumped down and strode up the path to the hut which Sarson had built in the centre of the islet. He noticed the sand that was strewn thickly on the path—a new thing since his last visit. That looked as if the idling outcast was beginning to bestir himself a little, and Sammy took it as a good sign.

But he was carefully on his guard as he strode up the path, and his hand was very near the butt of the revolver in his belt. He would not have been surprised to discover an ambush, or to hear the whizzing of a hurling rock.

But there was no sign of the marooned man. It crossed Sammy's mind that he might be ill, and lying in the hut. If that was the case, Sammy Sparshott was the man to do the best he could for him.

He tramped on and reached the door of the hovel, made of broad plantain leaves pinned on a rough frame with thorns. Sammy lifted his hand to push it open, and at the same moment the

earth beneath his feet gave way, and he shot downwards!

From the distance, among the rocks, came a yell—a savage yell of triumph!

CHAPTER 35.

In the Shadow of Death!

CRASH!

Sammy Sparshott struck the earth at the bottom of the pit with his feet and rolled over. For a moment he lay dizzy and breathless. Then he leaped up, his eyes ablaze.

He had been trapped—trapped like a wild pig in the bush! Now he knew, in a flash, why the ruffian had been out of sight, why the path had been thickly sanded! The layer of sand hid the trap! In front of the doorway the rascal had dug that deep pit, with the very spade that Sammy had provided him with for cultivation; covered it with branches and leaves, and screened it from sight with sand. As the natives trapped the wild pig in the bush, so had Ezra Sarson trapped the headmaster of Grimslade!

Dr. Sparshott set his teeth. He heard the triumphant yell of the 'Frisco tough; he heard the heavy footsteps running up the path. He jerked the revolver from his belt.

He was trapped. Whether he would ever get out of that pit alive was a very doubtful question. Ezra had the boat. He could, if he liked, leave Sammy marooned in his place, and run across to Castaway Island. And the juniors, taken by surprise by the sudden and unexpected arrival of their bitter foe—what would happen to them?

"By the great horned toad, I guess I got you, Sammy Sparshott!" came a yell from above.

Dr. Sparshott uttered no sound. If the ruffian believed that he was dead or disabled by the fall and looked down—that was all that Sammy asked! His eyes burned over the uplifted revolver. Life or death for himself weighed little so long as he protected the boys in his

charge from this deadly and relentless enemy.

"Say, you broke your neck, schoolmaster?" roared the triumphant ruffian. Silence!

A ragged hat came over the edge of the pit. Crack! rang the revolver, and the bullet went through the hat. Had Sarson's head been in it, he would have plunged headlong after his victim, with a bullet in his brain. But a howl of mocking laughter told that it was only a trick to draw the headmaster's fire, if he was still able to pull the trigger. The hat, lodged on a stick, was jerked back.

Sammy Sparshott ground his teeth. There was no chance! The ruffian was too wary for him.

"Say, I guess you can loose off all the lead you want!" yelled Ezra.

Dr. Sparshott had no hope now of hitting the ruffian above. But with the wind blowing strongly towards Castaway Island, there was a bare chance that the schoolboys might hear a sound of the shooting, distant as the island was. And if they heard firing on the maroon's rock, they would know that there was trouble, and be put on their guard. It was the faintest of chances of warning them, but it was the only chance Sammy had!

Crack, crack, crack, crack, crack! rang the remaining five shots in the revolver, so swiftly that the reports were blended almost into one. Far and wide the firing rang and echoed, wafted far across the sea by the wind, though whether even an echo reached Castaway Island was very doubtful.

"Blaze away!" yelled Ezra, in jeering mockery. "Loose it off, schoolmaster! I calculate I ain't giving you a chance to throw lead at my cabeza, not by a jugful! Guess you're trapped in that pit, and there you stay, dog-gone you!"

"Sarson! Listen to me!" Dr. Sparshott spoke desperately. "I have spared your life more than once—I came here to-day to supply your needs! If you have any human feeling in your breast, do not harm the boys! Leave

me to my fate—I ask nothing at your hands! But the boys—"

To save his life a hundred times over Sammy Sparshott would not have asked mercy. But for the sake of the boys he could put his pride in his pocket. But the appeal was in vain, as he knew that it would be when he made it.

Only a hoarse, mocking laugh answered him, followed by the sound of retreating footsteps! Ezra Sarson was gone—gone to seize the boat and sail across to the island.

Sammy groaned.

CHAPTER 37.

A Narrow Escape for Fritz!

"MEIN gootness! Vat te tump!" gasped Fritz Splitz.

Fatty Fritz was awake!

He was not aware of what had awakened him, though it was, as a matter of fact, the rapid fire of Sammy's revolver, fired in the hope that the sound might reach Castaway Island on the wind. It had reached, at least, the fat ears of Friedrich von Splitz, and woke him from slumber. And the fat German, awakening under a pile of tropical fruits, gasped with amazement and alarm.

He had gone to sleep in the boat, he remembered that! Only the blue sky had been over him then. Now he was buried, and it seemed to the bewildered Fritz that he must be still dreaming!

Piles of banana bunches fell over as the terrified, fat German strove to struggle up. His head went into the basket that Jim Dainty had up-ended over his fat face, and he struggled and wriggled out of the stack of tropical fruits with the basket still on his head.

He dragged it off and gasped for breath, staring round with his saucer-eyes in utter bewilderment.

"Peasts and prutes and pounders!" gasped Fatty Fritz as it dawned on his podgy brain what must have happened.

Fritz stared round him. He realised

that the playful juniors had buried him under the boat's load of fruits.

Slowly it dawned on him that this was Sarson's rock, and that the dark mass on the sea to the west was Castaway Island. He understood that he must have remained asleep while Sammy ran the boat out and made his trip across.

"Mein gootness!" gasped Fritz. "Sammy will be colosally vaxy mit me!"

A dingy, tattered figure came striding down among the rugged rocks to the little patch of sandy beach.

At the sight of it Fritz Splitz stared in alarm.

For it was not Sammy—it was Ezra Sarson who was striding down to the boat.

Fritz Splitz' saucer-eyes almost popped from his fat face. The mere sight of the ruffian would have scared him, even in the presence of his headmaster. Now Sammy was not to be seen, though evidently he was on the islet. He would never have trusted the ruffian to come down to the boat unwatched!

Fritz Splitz knew, with a pang of deadly terror, that the marooned ruffian must somehow have got the upper hand of Sammy, and now he was coming to the boat!

Frozen with horror and fear, Fritz gazed at Ezra with starting eyes. He read the grin of savage triumph on the stubby, tanned face. But that grin vanished as Sarson sighted the fat schoolboy standing up in the boat, staring at him.

For a second Ezra hardly believed his eyes—he had been absolutely certain that Sammy had come alone, and he was utterly amazed and confounded by the unexpected sight of Fritz Splitz. But it was only for a split second that he stared, then he broke into a fierce run down the beach.

"Mein gootness!" stuttered Fritz Splitz. The sight of the desperado bounding down the beach towards him woke him to action.

He grabbed for his pocket-knife and,

without even thinking, acting only on the instinct of self-preservation, Fritz slashed at the painter and cut it through. Almost gabbling with terror, but knowing well that his life depended on a few seconds, the fat German grabbed up the nearest oar and shoved frantically at the rock to which the boat had been moored.

Terror gave him desperate strength. The boat shot away from the beach, spinning dizzily across the shining water. Ezra, running at breathless speed, reached the water's edge with the boat spinning away a dozen yards out of his reach.

He was too late! After all his scheming he had captured Dr. Sparshott, but he had failed to secure possession of the boat.

Meanwhile Fritz, out on the open sea, rowed with every ounce of strength that remained in his fat limbs. Then he rolled, exhausted, in the bottom of the boat, and gave himself up for lost!

CHAPTER 38.

Dead or Alive!

"SAMMY!"

"What——"

Jim Dainty panted.

"Something's happened to Sammy!"

Jim Dainty was standing on the high rock close by the hut on Castaway Island. Looking eastward across the wide bay that fronted the Atlantic, his eyes were fixed on a drifting object on the open sea.

The wind came strongly from the east, blowing hard into his face. Before the driving wind a boat was drifting into the bay. The mast was standing, but no sail was set, and nobody was to be seen in the boat.

In the lonely waters that rolled round Castaway Island there was only one boat—the one in which Dr. Samuel Sparshott, headmaster of Grimslade, had sailed out of the bay that morning. Now it was drifting back, at the

mercy of wind and wave—and Sammy Sparshott was not in it!

Early in the afternoon Sammy had been expected back, and Jim Dainty had climbed the high rock to look for the returning headmaster. Sammy was late—and it was unusual for Sammy to be late. Jim's face whitened as he saw the reason—in the drifting, unguided boat. Something had happened to Sammy!

"My giddy goloshes!" exclaimed Ginger Rawlinson. He came scrambling up the rock, followed by Dawson and Bacon and Bean, and stood beside Jim, staring seaward. "What—"

Jim Dainty pointed to the boat

"It's empty!" muttered Dick Dawson "What's happened to Sammy?"

"That villain Sarson!" breathed Ginger.

Far away on the sea was a dark speck, the rocky islet where Ezra Sarson had been marooned. It was to take supplies to the ruffian on the rock that Sammy had gone. What had happened to him there?

"And Fritz?" muttered Sandy Bean.

"Look!" yelled Ginger.

From the apparently empty boat a head rose into view. It was the bullet head of Fritz von Splitz. Apparently the fat German junior had been lying in the boat. Now he sat up, blinking round him with his light-blue saucer-eyes.

The five juniors stared at him. Sammy, it was clear, was not in the boat, but the passenger he had unknowingly taken out with him was there—evidently in a state of blue funk.

"What the thump—" exclaimed Streaky Bacon. "That blithering Boche can't have got off in the boat and left Sammy stranded on the rock with Sarson! But what—"

"Come on!" muttered Jim Dainty.

He scrambled down and raced to the beach, followed by the others. On the margin of the sea they shouted and waved their hands to the fat German in the boat. The wind blew back their voices, but Fritz Splitz saw them. He was kneeling in the boat now, as it

drifted and rocked, and taring blankly towards the island.

"Why doesn't the fat idiot row?" hissed Ginger. "If he hasn't sense enough to get the sail up he can row!"

Fritz Splitz blinked dizzily towards the island and the juniors waving on the shore. Since he had been adrift in the boat, Fatty Fritz had been in a state of hopeless funk, huddled in the bottom, hardly daring to look over the gunwale as the boat rocked and heeled and spun before the wind. But now that he saw Castaway Island close at hand and the Grimslade fellows on the beach, the fat Rhinelander seemed to pull himself together a little.

Very slowly and very cautiously he picked himself up and got hold of the oars. Clumsily—for Fatty rowed about as well as he did anything else—he began to pull into the bay, helped by the strong wind that ruffled the sea behind him.

The juniors watched him with tense anxiety, tortured by the slowness of his approach. Something must have happened to Sammy! The ruffian marooned on the rock in the Atlantic was as treacherous as a snake. The fact that Sammy had gone to take him supplies would not make any difference to the Frisco tough if he had the chance of getting the upper hand. Had he got the better of Sammy Sparshott?

"Buck up, you fat snail!" shrieked Ginger Rawlinson. "Oh, won't I punch you, you potty Boche! Won't I jolly well kick you! Won't I jolly well knock your fat nose through the back of your silly head!"

Perhaps it was just as well that the wind from the sea carried Ginger's voice back, and Fritz did not hear a word. Ginger's remarks might not have encouraged him to hasten! As it was, the podgy Rhinelander was doing his best.

Slowly, clumsily, catching crabs galore, panting and spluttering, Fatty Fritz pulled and pulled, with the perspiration streaming down his fat face in the hot, tropical sunshine. But the juniors were too wildly impatient and

anxious to wait till he reached the beach, and he was still a good distance off when Jim Dainty plunged into the water to swim out to him. The other fellows plunged in after Dainty.

Jim was the first to reach the boat. He grasped the gunwale and clambered in. Fatty Fritz gave a squeal of alarm as the boat rocked.

"Ach! Take gare mit you!" howled Fritz. "Mein gootness, you vill trown me pefore, if you upset tat poat after!"

"Where's Sammy?" panted Jim.

"Ich weis nicht—I know not vat pecome of Sammy!" groaned Fritz Splitz. "I tink that peast and a prute, Sarson, get him pefore. Mein gootness, I tink——"

Ginger Rawlinson clambered in.

"What's happened to Sammy?" he yelled. "You bloated Boche, tell us what's happened before I punch your silly face through the back of your head!"

Fatty Fritz gasped for breath.

"I know not!" he spluttered. "I go to sleep mit meinself in tat poat pefore, and I vake up unter a pig heap of pananas and gokernuts after, at tat rock, but I see not Sammy! I tink tat he fire his revolver mit himself, but I see him not. I see tat peast and a prute, Sarson, gumming to te poat, and I get away as fast as I can after."

"That villain's got Sammy!" panted Jim Dainty. "And you cleared and left him to it——"

"Ach! Vat could I do after?" howled Fritz Splitz. "I vas ferry prave to get away, but——"

"Oh, shut up! Thank goodness we've got the boat!" said Jim Dainty. "We're going to Sammy."

"What-ho!" agreed Ginger.

"We're going over to that rock, now, and we'll rescue Sammy," went on Jim.

Fritz Splitz gave a yell of terror.

"Ach! I vill not go pack in tat blace mit meinself after!" he yelled. "I vill not—yaroooh! Kick me not on mein trousers, you peast Chinger! Ach! I have vun pig bain!"

"You rotten funk, you'll be chucked out before we start," growled Jim Dainty. "Get the boat in, you men, and I'll get the revolver from the hut. Buck up!"

The boat shot in to the beach. Fritz Splitz was the first ashore—helped by a drive from Ginger's boot that sent him rolling on the sand. Fatty Fritz rolled and roared.

Jim Dainty & Co., unheeding him further, made their preparations in hot haste.

Jim eyed the weird-looking catapult which had been mounted on a tripod and erected in the prow of the boat. Originally this outsize in catapults had been designed for the purpose of spearing fish, but Jim foresaw the likelihood of this crude but effective weapon proving useful should Sarson attempt to storm their boat.

"Get a move on, you fellows!" he urged. "Every second counts!"

A terrible fear of Sammy's fate was in the hearts of the schoolboy castaways, but they drove it from their minds. At least, if he lived, they were going to save him!

CHAPTER 39.

In the Trap!

DR. SAMUEL SPARSHOTT called himself every sort of an ass as he stood at the bottom of the pit on the lonely islet. There was no doubt that the headmaster of Grimslade had been caught napping, and taken off his guard. Yet who could have foreseen such a trick?

Half a dozen times before Sammy Sparshott had run across in the boat from Castaway Island to the rock where the desperado was marooned. And Ezra, though he had snarled like a wolf, had been as meek as a lamb. And Sammy, keen as he was, wary as he was, had never suspected the existence of the pit dug in the path from the beach to the ruffian's hovel. It had been too cunningly concealed with branches and palm-leaves covered

with sand for a sign of it to meet his eyes until he crashed through. Then it was too late.

Fairly, he could not blame himself for having fallen into such a gunning trap; but he did slang himself bitterly as he stood there, revolver in hand, his heart like lead with anxiety for the boys in his charge—the boys he had left, all unsuspecting, on Castaway Island while he made the trip to Sarson's rock.

Like a caged tiger Sammy Sparshott moved round the deep pit seeking escape. But there was no escape. Far above his head was the opening, still tangled with broken branches and leaves, where he had crashed through, still dripping with particles of the sand that had hidden it. The steep sides of hard, stony earth gave no hold for hand or foot—a monkey could not have climbed there.

A muttering, nasal voice, a tramping of footsteps, came suddenly through the silence.

Dr. Sparshott gave a violent start. It was more than an hour since Ezra Sarson had left him in the trap. His thoughts had followed the ruffian to the boat. Already the wind from the east should have wafted him across to Castaway Island. Sammy's tortured thoughts had been with the boys—attacked, taken by surprise by the sudden arrival of the desperate ruffian.

And Sarson had not gone. He was still on the rock. Why, Sammy could not imagine. But there was no mistaking the savage voice that growled out oaths as the ruffian tramped up from the sea.

Sammy watched the opening over his head. He twisted and dodged as a rugged boulder came hurtling over the edge and crashed down.

"Try again!" called out Sammy, and he laughed.

He could laugh now. His heart was suddenly light with the knowledge that the villain was still there; that peril threatened only himself, and not the schoolboys on the island.

"Dog-gone you, schoolmaster. came

the husky, savage voice of the ruffian. "I'll sure get you yet! And if I don't get you with a rock, I guess you'll die of hunger there. I reckon I'm fixed here for keeps, unless they come across in the boat, dog-gone them! But I got you fixed!"

Dr. Sparshott listened in wonder. Somehow—he could not guess how—the ruffian had failed to seize the boat in which he had crossed. That was clear from his words, and from his continued presence on the rock. It was unexpected good fortune.

"You've not got the boat, you scoundrel?"

"Don't you know it, dog-gone you? snarled Ezra. "I guess if I'd known that fat boob was in the boat, I'd have got him with a rock afore he saw me. Dog-gone you! You hid him out of sight when you ran across to this hyer shebang! I was watching you all the time, and I never saw him! If I'd known, I——" He broke off with a string of oaths.

"Are you mad?" ejaculated the amazed Sammy. "I was alone in the boat——"

"Aw, can it! You had that fat gink hidden under the stack of fruits, I guess, or I'd sure have got wise to him. If I'd guessed—— But how'd a galoot guess? But I got you all the same, dog-gone you!"

Another rock came hurtling down, and Sammy dodged it.

"My only hat!" murmured Sammy, Sparshott.

The "fat boob" could only be Fritz von Splitz; but if he had been hidden under the cargo in the boat, Sammy Sparshott had never dreamed of it.

Sammy laughed aloud. How it had chanced, how Fritz had managed to get away in the boat, he could not tell; but nothing could have been luckier. Without the boat Sarson could not reach Castaway Island—the juniors were safe. It hardly occurred to Sammy to bother about himself.

His light laugh seemed to drive the disappointed ruffian to fury. There was a volley of fierce imprecations, followed

by another hurtling rock. It missed the man in the pit by inches.

"Dog-gone you! I'll get you!" yelled Sarson.

"Keep it up!" called back Sammy. "The more the merrier! If you fill up the pit, I'll climb out!"

Watching for a falling rock, he also watched for Ezra, revolver in hand. But the villain was too wary to show as much as an eyebrow over the edge of the pit.

Panting with the exertion in the hot sunshine, Ezra rolled rock after rock up from the beach, and hurled them over the edge. All Sammy's wariness was needed to elude them as they crashed down. Wary as he was, he was grazed several times; but the ruffian, keeping back out of range of Sammy's revolver, could only hurl them in at random.

He tired at last, and the rocks ceased to fall. Dr. Sparshott heard him tramping away, snarling as he went, and then there was silence.

Except that he had trapped the schoolmaster, whom he hated and feared, the ruffian had gained nothing by his treachery. Indeed, he was worse off, for the supplies Sammy had brought to the rock were lost to him—the boat had not been unloaded when Fritz Splitz fled in it. Probably by that time the boat, running before tide and wind, was back at Castaway Island.

Sammy wondered whether Jim Dainty & Co. had learned of what had happened at the rock. If so, he had little or, rather, no doubt that they would take off in the boat—to learn his fate, to save him if they could. He hardly knew whether he hoped or feared that they would come.

There were five of them, and they had pluck and determination. And one of them, at least, would be armed with the revolver he had left in the hut—they would not forget that.

The long, long minutes seemed like hours to Sammy—like weary days! Had Fritz Splitz reached the island in the boat? Had the juniors started for the rock in the Atlantic? He could not

tell; he could only wait and wonder and listen.

From the bottom of the pit he could see nothing—nothing but a patch of blue sky, reddened now as the sun sank westward. In the silence, the terrible monotony of suspense, another attack from the 'Frisco ruffian would have come almost as a relief.

If Sarson sighted the boat bearing down on the rock, he would make another attack. Sammy's revolver, if he could get hold of it, would make him master of the situation. Sammy's heart beat faster when at last he heard the tramping footsteps approaching the pit again.

Crash! came a hurtling rock. But Sammy saw it coming, and it crashed a foot from him. He had no sight of the ruffian above, but he loosed off a shot from his revolver, the bullet whizzing skywards.

Loud and sharp the crack of the pistol rang, and as it died away in echoes Sammy listened with intent ears. If the boat was coming the juniors would hear, and surely they would signal with an answering shot.

Crack!

Faintly but clearly from afar came the answering shot. And then Sammy knew.

CHAPTER 40.

Jim Dainty & Co. to the Rescue!

"THAT'S Sammy!" yelled Ginger Rawlinson in delight.
"Hurrah!"

And Jim Dainty loosed off the revolver in his hand in answer to the shot from the rock. His eyes were dancing. Sammy was alive. The chums of Grimslade were relieved of their worst fears.

Four juniors were sweating at the oars under the blaze of tropical sunshine. Jim Dainty steered, while Ginger and Bacon and Bean and Dawson pulled. The wind was dead against them, and the sail was useless. But the Grimsladers were sturdy and

strong, and they put their beef into the rowing.

Castaway Island was a dark mass on the sea, far astern. They were close on the solitary rock now. It was so small that they could see almost the whole of it as they approached—the sandy beach, the rough rocks, the few stunted trees, the hovel that the maroon had built of branches and leaves.

They could see Ezra Sarson appearing and disappearing among the trees and rocks—they saw him leap on a high boulder, shade his eyes with his hand and stare towards them. But they could not see Sammy—there was no sign of the tall figure of the headmaster of Grimslade.

The fear in their hearts had grown sharper and keener—till that shot ringing from the islet told them that he was living. For it was not Sarson who fired, and the shot could only have come from Sammy. He was out of sight—where, they could not guess—but he lived, and they were going to save him!

"Pull on!" panted Jim Dainty.

Four pairs of arms pulled hard and fast, and the boat shot onward. Jim Dainty, revolver in hand, watched the islet.

Ezra Sarson was staring towards the boat, with haggard desperation in his face. The ruffian had courage in his own ferocious way. The watching juniors saw him drag out a sheath-knife and open it. Knife in hand, he tramped down to the tiny beach, evidently with the intention of disputing the landing.

Dainty's eyes gleamed, and his grip tightened on the butt of the revolver. With Sammy's life in peril, he was not likely to hesitate to use it.

The boat bumped on the sand.

Crack!

Jim Dainty fired over the heads of his comrades as the tattered, savage-faced ruffian rushed down the beach, the knife flashing in the sun. The boy's hand was as steady as a rock. There was a yell from Ezra as the bullet tore along his brawny shoulder,

and a spurt of crimson stained his ragged shirt.

Jim could have sent the bullet through his broad chest; but only in the last extremity would he have shot the man down. Ezra came to a halt, clapping the gash in his shoulder with his hand, spitting with fury like a wild-cat. Four Grimsladers swarmed from the boat, the oars in their hands, leaving Streaky on guard.

"Give him beans!" yelled Ginger Rawlinson.

He led the rush towards Sarson, brandishing his oar. The ruffian backed away, his eyes glittering, grasping his knife convulsively. Jim Dainty lifted the revolver to a level.

"Drop that knife, Sarson!" he rapped. "I give you one second before I shoot!"

The ruffian read the determination in the clear, cool eyes looking over the levelled revolver. With a fierce oath, he dropped the knife to the sand. He stood panting with rage.

"By the great horned toad—" he hissed between his teeth.

"That's enough from you!" grinned Ginger. "You're a jolly old prisoner, old man! We've got you. Stop him!" added Ginger, in a roar, as the ruffian spun round and bounded away.

"Leave him to me!" called out Streaky.

With great deliberation he caught up a coconut and fitted it into the catapult. Then, aiming just ahead of the runaway, he let fly. The shock absorber twanged under the strain, and the coconut shot forward straight and true to the mark.

Crash!

"It landed on Ezra's head as he ran, and the ruffian, with a yell, pitched forward on his face, half-stunned.

"Well hit, Streaky!" chuckled Ginger. He leaped on the sprawling ruffian's back and pinned him down, with a knee planted between his shoulders. "Got the beauty!"

Dick Dawson ran to the boat for a rope. Ezra, panting with rage in the grasp of the Grimsladers, was bound

hand and foot. Ginger Rawlinson knotted the rope with great care. The ruffian was left lying on the sand as helpless as a trussed turkey.

"And now—where's Sammy?"

"Sammy!" roared Ginger at the top of his powerful voice. "Sammy!"

"This way!" came back a well-known voice; and for a moment the amazed juniors could not tell whence it came. Then they knew—and they raced towards the pit in front of the maroon's hovel. Five astonished faces stared down at the headmaster below. He looked up with a smile.

"Sammy!" gasped Ginger.

"That," said Dr. Sparshott, "is not the way to address your headmaster, Rawlinson! You will take fifty lines!"

CHAPTER 41.

Saved!

JIM DAINTY & CO. chuckled. That was just like Sammy! Ginger did not care if Sammy gave him fifty lines, or five hundred. He chortled.

"We'll soon get you out of that, sir!" he said gleefully. "We've got that brute Sarson—got him safe and sound! I'll cut down to the boat for a rope!"

"Thank you, Rawlinson!" Ginger dashed away.

"You're not hurt, sir," called out Jim Dainty anxiously.

"Only a few bruises, Dainty—less than I deserve, for my carelessness in falling into such a trap!" answered Dr. Sparshott.

Ginger came back breathlessly with the rope from the boat. It slithered down into the pit, and Dr. Sparshott grasped it. The five juniors, all holding on, braced themselves to pull; and the headmaster of Grimslade was dragged up. He grasped the edge of the pit and clambered out.

"Thank you, my boys!" said Dr. Sparshott quietly. That was all that Sammy said; but it was enough for Jim Dainty & Co. He glanced across at the ruffian lying bound on the sand, and walked over to him, the juniors following.

For a long minute Sammy stood looking down steadily at the desperado. Sammy spoke at last.

"You deserve," he said, "to be thrown into the pit from which my boys have rescued me, and left there to your fate." The ruffian's tanned face blanched. "But I shall not deal with you as you deserve! You will be left on this rock as before—but do not expect another visit from me! From now on you shift for yourself the best way you can."

He signed to the juniors to release the ruffian. Ezra staggered to his feet and stood watching them, with bitter rage and hate, as they pushed off the boat and went aboard. Up went the sail, filling in the strong breeze from the Atlantic; and the boat shot away from the rock.

"Where's Fritz?"

"Asleep somewhere."

"Can't hear him snoring!"

It was a joyous party that landed on the beach of Castaway Island. Sammy was as merry and bright as any of the schoolboys; and, indeed, seemed rather like a schoolboy himself!

Fritz Splitz was not to be seen. The castaways walked up to the hut, expecting to find him there—probably asleep! But Fritz was not asleep! As they approached the hut they heard his voice.

"Mein gootness! I vas derribly hungry! Vat is te use of pananas and gokernuts to me? Ach! Vat would I giff for vun Cherman sausage—vun real, goot, fat Cherman sausage! Tat Sammy is a peast and a prute tat he vill not let me touch te peef! Tree tozzen cans of goot peef—and tat peastly Sammy geeep tem in reserve—te dummkopf! Ach himmel! And I vas so hungry pefore! But if I takes te peef, tat peast peat me till I pellow like a pull!"

And there was a long, deep sigh from the interior of the hut. The castaways, grinning, looked in at the doorway.

Fritz Splitz, munching a banana, was standing before the stack of canned beef in the corner, regarding it with longing, yearning eyes. Evidently, he was not wasting much thought on Dr. Sparshott, or the juniors who had gone to his rescue! When Fritz was hungry, lesser things vanished from his fat mind.

Deep in his contemplation of the pro- vender he dared not snaffle, Fritz did not see the grinning faces looking in. He gazed at the cans of beef, munched the banana, and sighed a deep, deep sigh.

"Ach! And I vas so hungry! I vish tat I vas pack in Chermany, vere te sausages are so goot——"

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

Fritz jumped and spun round.

"Ach! You gum pack mit you!" he exclaimed. "I was tinking of you all te time—I have tunk of you efery minute! And I have not touch te peef——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This evening," said Dr. Sparshott, with a chuckle, "we are entitled to a little celebration. Splitz, you may even open one of the cans of beef!"

"Ach!" gasped Fritz, his saucer-eyes dancing. "Goot! I am so glad tat you are safed, sir—I am ferry glad in-teet tat you are safed! Tat peef is goot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was no doubt that Fritz Splitz was glad—though whether his gladness was due to the safe return of Sammy, or to the beef for supper, was a question. Anyhow, he was glad, and the other fellows were merry and bright; and it was a happy party that sat down to supper on Castaway Island.

CHAPTER 42.
Who's a Funk?

"**B**LOW Sammy!"
Jim Dainty spoke in the heat of the moment.

Jim was as keen an admirer of Dr. Samuel Sparshott, the headmaster of

Grimslade, and had as deep a respect for him as any of the Grimslade fellows who had been shipwrecked on the lonely West Indian island.

But there was an argument in progress, and in the warmth of an argument a fellow does not always say exactly what he really means.

Perhaps the tropical blaze on Castaway Island had something to do with it. It was always hot—but that special day it was specially hot!

Sammy had given the castaway schoolboys a lesson that morning—and it had been "maths." They had enjoyed working out a problem chalked on a flat rock. Fritz Splitz, indeed, had fallen asleep over it, and had had to be awakened by a lick from Sammy's bambooc.

After "class the juniors rested in the shade of the palms, and wondered if they would ever feel cool again. Fatty Fritz fanned himself with a palm leaf, groaned, and wished for the umpteenth time that he was "pack in Chermany." And the other fellows argued.

"Sammy says——" said Ginger Rawlinson.

"Rot!" interrupted Jim Dainty.

"Look here, Jim——" began Dick Dawson.

"Rot!" repeated Jim.

"Mein gootness, it vas more derribly hot tan effer it vas before!" murmured Fritz Splitz. "I vas too dired to fan meinself after! Vill vun of you yellows fan me mit tat palm-leaf?"

"Dainty knows better than Sammy!" said Ginger Rawlinson, with deep sarcasm. "Sammy's only a headmaster—and Dainty's a cheeky tick in the Fourth! I'd like a dip in the sea as well as anybody, but——"

"No jolly fear!" said Sandy Bean. "Sammy knows best."

"Oh, Dainty knows better than Sammy!" said Streaky Bacon. "They all know too much in White's House! Sammy thinks he saw a shark in the bay! What do you really think he saw, Dainty? A kipper?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Or a bloater?" asked Streaky.

"You Redmayes ticks!" said Jim Dainty. "You're all funky, and that's what's the matter with you! Blow Sammy! Let's go and bathe and chance it!"

Ginger & Co. looked at him. They belonged to Redmayes' House at Grims-lade School in far-away England—a fact they never forgot—even on Cast-away Island. Dainty and Dawson belonged to White's House. A House row might seem rather out of place on a desert island in tropical seas, but in the overpowering heat and the baring of the usual morning dip tempers were growing a little short.

"Who's funky?" hissed Ginger, his face as red as his head.

He got on his feet, glaring. As a matter of fact, they were all disappointed and annoyed at not being allowed a swim. Still, if Dr. Sparshott had seen a shark in the bay, evidently swimming was off. Anyhow, Sammy's word was law!

"You are!" retorted Jim. "A funky Redmayes tick—"

He got no further, for Ginger was jumping on him. Any reasonable fellow might have considered that it was too hot for scrapping. But Jim Dainty and Ginger Rawlinson seemed to find energy enough from somewhere. They grappled and punched.

"Go it, Ginger!" sang out Bacon and Bean encouragingly.

Dick Dawson was silent. Dainty was his chum, but for once he was rather ashamed of his chum.

"Take that, you Redmayes rotter!" panted Jim Dainty.

"Take that, you White's worm!" howled Ginger.

Thump, thump! Punch! Bang! Bang!

They were going it hot and strong under the palm-trees. There was a yell from Fritz Splitz as he was trodden on. Three fellows got out of the way of the combatants, but Fatty Fritz was too tired, or, at least, too lazy, to shift. Ginger staggered over his sprawling

legs and stumbled backwards on him, Dainty following him down.

Fritz gave one yell. Then Ginger landed on his circumference, and the air escaped from Fatty Fritz in an agonised gasp as if he had been a punctured tyre! Squeaking feebly, he collapsed.

"Woooooooggggggggghh!" moaned Fritz.

Ginger and Dainty rolled off him. Leaving him for dead, as it were, they got on their feet again, still scrapping.

In the doorway of the hut, at a little distance, appeared the tall figure of Dr. Samuel Sparshott. The headmaster of Grims-lade spotted the row, and he turned a grinny frowning glance on the scrappers. His voice came across to them in a bark:

"Stop that at once! Do you hear? Stop it!"

"Oh, my giddy goloshes!" gasped Ginger. "There's Sammy!"

He released Jim Dainty and jumped back.

Jim Dainty dropped his hands, panting. Then rubbed his nose. A thin stream of crimson exuded therefrom.

"Any more of that, and I'll give you six each!" barked Dr. Sparshott, and he turned back into the hut, disappearing from sight once more.

Jim Dainty mopped his nose. Ginger Rawlinson caressed a damaged eye. They glared at one another. But the scrapping was not resumed. Neither of them wanted six from Sammy's bamboo.

"Peasts and prutes and pounders!" moaned Fritz Splitz. "I have a colossal bain in mein dummy! Vy for you gum pumping down on mein dummy! Ach! I have no more te breff! Oooogh!"

Unheeding the fat German, Jim Dainty stood leaning on a palm, dabbing at his nose and looking down the golden, glistening beach towards the sea. Scrapping with Ginger had not improved his temper. He was powerfully tempted to disregard the strict order of Dr. Sparshott, walk down the beach, and plunge into the inviting waters.

Nobody but Sammy had seen a shark in the bay—sharks had never been seen in the bay before. Very likely Sammy was mistaken. Sammy, it was true, was not the man to make mistakes. But Jim was not in a reasonable mood at the moment.

"Peast and a prute!" moaned Fatty Fritz.

"Oh, shut up, you Boche bloater!" rapped Jim savagely.

"Prutal pounder," hissed Fritz. "I have a bain—a fearful bain in mein pread-pasket! If Sammy vas not looking I would get up and peat you till you yell like a pull!"

"Well, Sammy's not looking now, you blithering Boche!" growled Jim Dainty. "So get up and get on with it—or shut up!"

"It vas too hot to peat you, you peast!"

"You mean you're a fat, fozzling, frabjous funk! Dry up!"

"Talk apout vunks!" sneered Fritz. "I tink tat you vas vun funk pefore! You say plow Sammy, and tat it is all rot apout te shark, but you vas too vunky to go for vun swim, all te same, after."

Ginger & Co. grinned. Jim Dainty's eyes gleamed. Fatty Fritz's jeer touched him on the raw, and Ginger & Co.'s grin finished it. His mind was instantly made up.

"I'm going for a swim!" he said curtly, and he walked down the beach.

"Jim," shouted Dawson after him. "don't be an ass! Jim!"

"Gammon!" grunted Ginger, rubbing his eye. "He's not going! He knows jolly well that Sammy will spot him and stop him! White's House gas!"

Those words reached Jim's ears as he went, and they made his ears burn. He had spoken recklessly, foolishly, but certainly it had not been "gas." He tramped on towards the sea, and an angry shout rang after him from the hut.

"Dainty, where are you going?"

Jim did not answer or turn his head. He broke into a run, and reached the

lapping blue margin of the bay. He was clad only in shorts, and he plunged in just as he was—for once heedless of the voice of his headmaster.

"Dainty," roared Sammy Sparshott, "come back at once!"

Jim Dainty swam out.

"My giddy goloshes!" murmured Ginger Rawlinson, in dismay. "That's torn it!"

CHAPTER 43.

Handling the Rebel!

DR SPARSHOTT strode out of the hut. His brows were knitted and his eyes gleamed under them. Seldom or never had the Grimslade juniors seen their headmaster looking so angry.

Ginger & Co., Dawson, and Fatty Fritz stared at him as he strode down to the sea. By the time he reached the lapping water Jim Dainty was a good distance out. Sammy Sparshott's eyes fixed on the dark head of the swimmer—and then his glance swept the blue waters of the bay anxiously.

He was fearful for the wilful boy's safety, as well as tensely angry at his disobedience. But there was no sign of the shark he had spotted in the bay that morning. Possibly the terrible fish had gone out into the deep sea again. Possibly it was lurking somewhere below the surface.

Sammy put his hands to his mouth to form a trumpet, and roared:

"Dainty, I order you to return at once!"

Perhaps Dainty did not hear with the murmur of the sea in his ears. At all events, he did not heed. He swam on. He did not believe that there was a shark—at least, he was determined not to believe so. And he was not going to be called a funk by a Boche bloater like Fritz Splitz!

Sammy's teeth came hard together. The watching juniors thought, for a moment, that he was about to plunge in and swim after the rebel. But Jim Dainty had too long a start for even

a powerful swimmer like Sammy to overtake him without a long chase. And if the shark was still in the bay, it was a chase from which neither might return alive!

Sammy Sparshott turned to the boat and dragged it down the sand into the water. There was hardly a breath of wind—the sail was useless. He grasped a pair of oars and rowed out after the swimmer.

Jim Dainty had seen that Sammy Sparshott was after him in the boat. He put on speed, swimming with an ease and swiftness that might, in any other circumstances, have drawn commendation from his headmaster. But, swift as he was, the boat was swifter, as Sammy's strong, sinewy arms swept the oars. It rushed him down, and Dainty suddenly dived and disappeared. He came up again astern of the boat, grinning breathlessly.

Dr. Sparshott spun the boat round after the fugitive. There was deadly anger in his look now.

"Dainty," he barked, "get to this boat at once." Dainty was six or seven fathoms off.

"I'm having a swim, sir!" called back the Grimslade rebel coolly. "I'm not afraid of sharks."

The boat rushed him down again. Again the rebellious junior dived, and again he came up astern of the boat. But this time Sammy swiftly backed water, and when Dainty's head reappeared astern he was only a yard from the tiller. And Sammy, reaching over swiftly, got a grip on the wet, dark hair.

He jerked the rebel to the boat, grasped his arm with the other hand, and hauled him bodily in. Dainty went with a bump to the bottom of the boat, where he lay gasping for breath.

The headmaster of Grimslade did not speak a word to him. He picked up the oars again and rowed back to the shore. Jim sat up, dripping with water and panting. He made a movement to get on his feet; and Sammy

released a foot, jammed it on his chest, and sent him sprawling again.

"Keep there!" snapped Sammy.

Jim panted, his eyes blazing defiance. "I'd rather have swum back," he said, with a breathless gasp. "There's no sharks. And I'm not afraid of sharks—if you are!"

Dr. Sparshott gave him one look. A minute later Jim could have bitten off that taunt, and almost the tongue that had uttered it. But the boat bumped on the sand, and Dr. Sparshott jumped out.

"Get out!" he barked.

Dainty got out of the boat.

"Follow me!"

Sammy did not look back to see whether the rebel of Grimslade was following him. Quietly Jim walked behind the headmaster to the hut. Sammy picked up a bamboo from a corner.

"Bend over that rock!" he barked.

For an instant Jim Dainty hesitated. Then, gritting his teeth, he bent over. From a distance the other fellows watched in silence as they heard the ringing swishes of the bamboo.

It was only "six"—but every one of the six rang like a pistol-shot. Never in his study at Grimslade School had the headmaster of Grimslade administered a more severe licking. But Jim Dainty did not, as Fritz hopefully expected, bellow like a bull!

Dr. Sparshott threw down the bamboo.

"Go into the hut, Dainty!" he barked. "You are detained for the rest of the day. Take one step outside, and I will give you twice six!"

Jim looked at him with a black and bitter look. Then he went into the hut.

CHAPTER 44.

A Fight with a Shark!

"VUNK!"

Fatty Fritz was rather enjoying himself!

The hot afternoon hung heavily over

Castaway Island. It was hotter than the morning. Jim Dainty found it very hot and very stuffy in the hut—and quite early in the afternoon he was fed-up to the chin.

From the door he watched Dr. Sparshott and the juniors tramp away along the winding shore of the bay. The headmaster gave him no heed, no glance. He simply ignored his existence. Dawson gave him a nod as he went—but even Dick had to admit that the rebel had asked for what he had got. Ginger and Bacon and Bean did not waste any sympathy on him.

The four juniors followed Sammy, who had a long knife buckled to his belt, and the schoolboys carried axes over their shoulders. They were going to cut sugarcane, which grew wild in patches and clumps in various parts of Castaway Island.

Fritz did not follow the cane-cutters—he kept out of sight till they had started, and then rolled into Jim's view again and sat down in the shade of a rock near the hut.

Fritz was going to join the cane-cutters on their homeward way later—when the work would be over and there would be sweet, juicy sugarcane for him to chew!

From the doorway Jim gave him a glare, and Fritz grinned and called out "Vunk!" Sammy had promised the detained junior twice six if he left the hut; so Fritz considered that he was safe.

"Vunk!" repeated Fritz, grinning. "Mein gootness, you vas not so prave as a Cherman, Tainty! You vas vun vunk! You talk ferry pig before, but you do vat you vas told after! Yah! Vunk! I tink tat you vill not go for tat swim! If I say tat I vill go, ten I vill go, because I vas a prave Cherman! But you vas vun vunk!"

Jim Dainty gritted his teeth. Far away along the shore of the calm blue bay, he could see Dr. Sparshott's hat bobbing among the canes. Every now and then he had a glimpse of the juniors, tiny in the distance.

Certainly there was nothing but re-

spect for Sammy's authority to keep him in detention. Fear of "twice six" did not enter into the matter very much. It was hot and stuffy, he was fed-up, and the calm blue waters seemed to call to him. Why should he not have his swim, after all, and blow Sammy?

The boat was beached, high and dry, close by the hut. Sammy was half a mile away. Obviously he could not get after him in the boat again, as he had done in the morning. Jim was sorely tempted. He was still rather feeling the "six"—and, still more, he felt Sammy's contemptuous indifference. Fritz's fat voice came again, jeering.

"It is ferry hot, Tainty! But I tink tat you have cold feet, all te same! Mein gootness! Vat a vunk!"

Jim Dainty, without stopping to think, leaped out of the doorway, and ran across to Fritz. Fatty Fritz started up with a yell of alarm. He had not expected that! "Twice six" was a risk Fatty Fritz would never have taken. He jumped to his feet, yelling with anticipation—and a hefty kick on his podgy trousers sent him rolling.

"Yaroo!" roared Fritz. "Tat you kick me not on mein trousers! I tink you not a vunk, Tainty! You vas as prave as a Cherman— Yaroo! Peast and a prute, tat you kick me not after! Whoooop!"

Fritz rather wished that he had gone with the cane-cutting party now. He headed for the distant cane-field at top speed, with Jim's lunging boot behind him, helping him rapidly on his way.

Jim Dainty, panting from his exertions, stopped on the beach, and Fritz, still yelling frantically, disappeared along the shore, Jim walked down to the water. He had broken detention now—on account of Fritz—and in his present reckless mood he thought he might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb.

He plunged into the glistening waters and swam out.

It was a delicious change, after the stuffy hut. Without a thought of what was to follow, the Grimslade rebel pro-

ceeded to enjoy himself. Jim was a good swimmer—one of the best at Grimslade. It was sheer enjoyment to revel in the water. Certainly it was more enjoyable than sweating in the hot sun, cutting sugarcane; infinitely more enjoyable than sticking in the hut! He swam out into the wide bay, till the shore where the hut stood was a low, blurred line in the distance.

After a time he raised his head from the water, and looked in the direction where the cane-cutters were at work. He was nearer to them than to the hut.

He saw a tall figure clamber on a high rock and stare in his direction. His lips curled. Sammy Sparshott had spotted him. Perhaps he had learned from Fritz that the detained junior had "cut." Anyhow, there he was, standing on the rock, shading his eyes with his hand, and staring fixedly towards the swimmer in the bay.

Still watching him, Jim saw the headmaster of Grimslade leap from the rock, and stride down to the water. He gave a reckless laugh. If Sammy was thinking of swimming out to him, he hadn't much chance of making a catch this time!

Turning from the direction of the circling shore, Jim started to swim out farther into the wide bay. As he did so, something hard and rough brushed his leg, and he had a throb of sharp pain. It felt as if sandpaper had brushed off a patch of skin.

For a second he did not know what it was. He realised that his leg was bleeding, where it had been scraped. Then he became aware of a dark shape shooting by under the surface of the water.

His very heart sickened within him.

Sammy had not been wrong, after all! It had not been a false alarm! For there was the shark, passing by him so closely that it had touched him, and the rough skin of the monster fish had scraped him till he bled.

For one instant utter horror held the schoolboy in a spell. Then, as he realised that the shark was turning on

him, he pulled himself together. It was death—fearful death—with hardly the remotest chance of escape. He knew it—knew it in his bones—but he braced himself desperately to fight for his life.

Fool, thrice fool that he had been! If he had heeded Sammy—if he had only obeyed his headmaster! It was too late to think of that! Hardly conscious of what he was doing, acting on instinct, he dived desperately as the shark came, and he knew by the darkening of the water that the fearful brute passed over his head.

He came up, breathing hard through shut teeth, staring round with wild eyes. There was a gleam of white in the sunshine on the surface—the belly of the shark, that had turned over to bite. Only that prompt dive had saved him for the moment—the ferocious jaws had snapped on nothing!

His wild eyes stared round. The shore seemed a distant blur. There was no chance of reaching it—no chance! He must be dragged down before he had covered a quarter of the distance. He could only watch, and dodge, and dodge again, till his strength failed him, and then—

What was that dark object on the glistening surface of the water, speeding towards him like an arrow? Another shark? It was the dark hair on a human head—Dr. Sparshott!

"Dive! Dive for your life!"

Jim felt a movement in the water behind him even as his headmaster shouted. The shark was rushing him down again—the fearful brute was behind him. Down shot the junior, desperately cleaving the water, and the dark shadow of the shark passed over the spot where he had been an instant before.

The boy's brain was reeling—his lungs were bursting—this could not go on long! But Sammy was there—Sammy had swum out to save him! Could even Sammy save him?

His face was white as chalk in the tropic sunlight as he reached the surface again. He gasped and groaned

for breath. Where was the shark—where was Sammy? Something gleamed white in the sun a dozen yards from him. It was the shark, but it was not heading for the schoolboy now. It was rushing away from him; and Jim, with a shudder, knew what it was heading for—Sammy! He had an instant's glimpse of a dark head that vanished.

"Sammy!" panted Jim.

He swam, hardly conscious that he was swimming towards the shark. Sammy was gone—the shark was gone. Sammy had dived, and the hideous fish had plunged down after him. Had the shark got Sammy?

The water was agitated, as if by a struggle from below—and a dark stain rolled up through the water—crimsoning the sea round the schoolboy. Blood was reddening the water.

Something was shooting up from the depths. If it was the shark, Jim did not care—if Sammy had died for him, in the depths, in the jaws of the sea-fiend, he cared for nothing! But it was not the shark! It was the dark, wet hair of Sammy Sparshott that rose from the sea. His face was white and set. In his right hand was the long, sharp cane-knife, red to the hilt. He panted and panted for breath.

The shark floated up more slowly, rolling in the sea, and the sun gleamed on white gashed and stained with red. The long cane-knife had sunk deep in the shark's body in that fearful minute under water. The dead shark rolled and pitched like a log on the sunny sea.

"Swim!" barked Sammy Sparshott.

Jim Dainty's brain was in a whirl; the strength was gone from his limbs. Without Sammy's help he could never have reached the shore. But he reached it—hardly conscious of the juniors standing on the beach, watching as they came—till Ginger plunged in and relieved Sammy of his weight, and dragged him ashore.

Dr. Sparshott, dripping, emerged from the water.

"I—I—I'm sorry, sir!" Jim stammered. "I—"

Dr. Sparshott's eyes fixed on him icily.

"You have broken detention, Dainty!" he said quietly. "You have taken the risk of swimming in the bay, in spite of my warning!"

"Yes, sir!" muttered Jim.

"You have not only risked your life," said Dr. Sparshott, "but you have risked mine—much more valuable than yours, Dainty, as it is essential to the safety of your schoolfellows! I shall have to consider how to deal with you. For the present, go!"

And with slow and faltering steps Jim Dainty went.

CHAPTER 45.

A Dozen for Dainty!

"COLLAR him!" roared Ginger Rawlinson.

Jim Dainty's eyes gleamed.

He was standing in the doorway of the hut on Castaway Island, looking out glumly into the red of the sunset. Ginger and Bacon and Bean came tramping along the beach with bundles of sugar-cane on their shoulders. Dick Dawson was following them, similarly laden.

At a distance in the rear rolled Fritz von Splitz, unladen. Fritz had a wonderful skill in dodging his share of a job.

The juniors had been cutting cane, half a mile from the hut along the bay, under the direction of Dr. Samuel Sparshott. But "Sammy," the boyish headmaster of Grimslade School, was not walking back with them. His tall figure was not yet in sight.

Jim was glad to see the fellows coming. He had been left alone for a long time. It was "detention," though detention on Castaway Island was rather different from detention at Grimslade School.

Jim was more fed-up with it than he had ever been at Grimslade, and it was a relief when the fellows came back from the cane-cutting. But his eyes gleamed as Ginger threw down his load,

shouted to Bacon and Bean, and strode towards him with hostile intent.

"You silly ass!" snapped Jim Dainty. "What the thump—— Oh, my hat! Hands off, you red-headed freak!"

"Back up, you men!" roared Ginger, as he collared Dainty, and they reeled, struggling, out of the doorway of the hut.

Streaky Bacon and Sandy Bean promptly added their grasp to Ginger's. Jim Dainty, resisting fiercely, went rolling on the sand. The three juniors rolled with him. But three to one was long odds, and Dainty was soon on his back, with Ginger sitting on his chest astride, and Sandy Bean standing on his legs, and Streaky holding his hair with both hands.

"You potty rotters! Lemme gerrup!" spluttered Jim. "Dawson, lend me a hand, you fathead!"

Dick Dawson looked at him and shook his head. He was Jim's chum in White's House at Grimslade School. But he was as angry with his chum now as Ginger & Co. of Redmayes' House.

"Rats!" he answered. "You've asked for it, you fathead, and the more you get, the better! I've a jolly good mind to give you a few myself!"

"Ach! Ja wohl!" grinned Fritz Splitz. "Tat Tainty is a peast and a prute! Giff him chip!"

"Oh, you rotters!" panted Dainty, wriggling wildly under the three.

"There's a rotter here," agreed Ginger Rawlinson, "and I fancy you're the rotter! You're going to have a lesson, you cheeky tick! You know what you've done, you blighter! Sammy warned us that there was a shark in the bay, and put the stopper on swimming. That wasn't good enough for you. You knew better than Sammy, didn't you?"

"Gerroff!"

"So you had to disobey orders, and go for your swim, and Sammy had to tackle the shark to get you out. It was just a miracle that the beast never got Sammy. What do you think we were feeling like when we were watching Sammy fighting a shark in the water?"

Jim Dainty made no answer to that.

As a matter of fact, he had thoroughly repented of his folly, and he shuddered whenever he thought of the terrible danger in which his reckless rebelliousness had landed his headmaster. But he was not likely to tell Ginger so.

Instead of answering he jerked a hand loose, and hit upwards at Ginger's red and angry face, catching him under the chin.

Ginger gave a roar.

"Oh, my giddy goloshes! Hold him!"

Streaky caught Jim Dainty's wrists and dragged his arms back over his head. He resisted helplessly.

"Now," gasped Ginger, "you're going to have it! Sammy isn't going to whop you; he's too sick with you to do anything. I know that. Well, you're going to get a whopping. Roll him over, you chaps! Fritz, get a bamboo!"

The fat German junior scuttled into the hut, and came out with a thick, flexible bamboo in his podgy hand.

"You yellows hold him," grinned Fritz, "and I vill giff him chip after! I peat him till he pellow like a pull!"

"Keep him steady!" grinned Streaky.

Face down in the sand, Jim Dainty was held by his arms and his legs and his ears and his hair. He struggled frantically, but in vain.

Whack, whack, whack!

The bamboo rose and fell with terrific swipes. There was more fat than beef in Fritz von Splitz, but he found plenty of energy to put into that whopping. Dawson's face clouded; he would not take a hand against his chum, but he was resolved not to intervene. He went into the hut.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Make it a dozen!" said Ginger.

Whack, whack! rang the bamboo, as hard as Friedrich von Splitz could lay it on. Jim Dainty set his teeth and struggled fiercely. But the three held him pinned, and the bamboo whacked and whacked.

In the excitement of the struggle and the whopping none of the juniors noticed the tall figure that came striding up the beach. Dr. Samuel Sparshott, with a heavy load of canes

over his broad shoulder, came up. He stared a little at what he saw; laid down his load, and stood looking on with a rather grim smile.

Whack, whack, whack!

Jim Dainty struggled and panted and squirmed. His face was white with rage.

"That's a dozen!" said Ginger.

"That will do, Fatty!"

"Posh!" exclaimed Fritz. "I tink tat I gif him anodder tuzzen. Tat peast and prute vill—"

"That will do, Splitz!" said a deep voice; and the fat German spun round at the voice of Dr. Sparshott, and dropped the bamboo.

Ginger & Co. released Jim Dainty and jumped up. More slowly Jim staggered to his feet. His hands clenched, and his eyes blazed. He was about to hurl himself at Ginger, when Sammy barked sharply:

"Stand back, Dainty!"

Jim's eyes flashed at him.

"Look here, sir! I—"

"That's enough! You've deserved it, and more! You are a disobedient, rebellious young rascal!" said Dr. Sparshott coldly and contemptuously. "It will do you good to learn what your schoolfellows think of your conduct. Lift a finger, Dainty, and I will give you a dozen myself!"

Jim panted.

He looked at his headmaster's cold and scornful face, at the hostile, contemptuous faces of Ginger & Co., at the averted face of Dick Dawson in the doorway of the hut. His hands clenched convulsively. It seemed to him, at that moment, as if his passionate bitterness was more than he could bear.

"Very well!" he panted at last. "You're done with me—you don't want me here! I'll clear!"

He swung away. A strong hand fell on his shoulder, and he was swung back.

"You will not clear!" said Dr. Sparshott quietly. "You are under my charge, Dainty, rebellious young rascal as you are! Go into the hut!"

"I won't!"

"I think you will!" said Sammy Sparshott; and Jim Dainty did—a swing of Sammy's sinewy arm sending him heading into the hut, sprawling.

CHAPTER 46.

Cut and Run!

NIGHT—starry tropical night—on Castaway Island!

Only the murmur of the tide, lapping on the sandy shore of the bay, came through the silence outside the hut. Within, there rumbled the deep snore of Fritz Splitz.

In the row of bunks along one side of the hut lay the shipwrecked schoolboys, sleeping. Sammy, in his little room at the end of the hut, slept soundly in his hammock. It was midnight; but there was one occupant of the castaways' hut who was not sleeping.

Jim Dainty had turned in with the rest, at the usual time, but he had not closed his eyes. His mood was too black and bitter for sleep. Repentance for his folly had been washed out by resentment. He had done wrong, and he admitted it; but he did not feel that he deserved general scorn and condemnation. So, in spite of Dr. Sparshott's orders, he had decided to leave the little community on Castaway Island.

Sure, at last, that his companions were sleeping, Jim Dainty slipped noiselessly from his bunk and dressed himself. The other fellows slept on, Fritz Splitz snoring with a rumble like distant thunder. From the other side of the thin wall of palm-leaf he could hear the steady breathing of Sammy, fast asleep in his hammock.

But he was very careful to make no sound. Sammy was a light sleeper; indeed, in times of danger, he seemed to sleep with one eye open! If he awoke, the rebel would not be allowed to go; and Jim was passionately and savagely determined to go.

Having dressed, Jim buckled on a knife, hooked an axe to his belt, and put

on the rucksack he had brought from the wrecked Spindrift, with a few utensils in it. His future prospects were extremely hazy, but there was plenty of room for him on Castaway Island, far from the little community that had turned him down.

He could fend for himself—he could show Sammy, he bitterly reflected, that he did not need his protection.

When he was ready, Jim stepped to the door. It was barred on the inside with three strong, wooden bars, set in palm-wood. The bars fitted tightly, and there was a creak as he drew out the top one. He breathed quickly, laid down the bar and listened; but there was no alarm. Jim drew out the second bar with great care and caution, without a sound, and laid it beside the first.

The third bar was tighter than the others, and with all his caution, there was a sharp crack as it was drawn from the sockets. Jim's heart thumped. The sound of steady breathing beyond the palm-leaf wall was interrupted. That slight sound had awakened Sammy! He heard a sudden movement of the hammock.

But the door was unbarred now, and Jim dragged it open. The night wind from the sea blew into the hut. He heard Dr. Sparshott leaping from his hammock. A voice barked:

"What is that? Is that you, Dainty?"

Evidently Sammy was suspicious of him. Jim did not answer or heed. The door was open and he ran out of the hut.

"Dainty!" roared Sammy Sparshott.

A light gleamed in the hut. Jim heard the confused buzz of voices behind him as he ran down the sand. A tall figure darkened the doorway as he looked back. Sammy Sparshott, half dressed, was striding out. Jim heard his voice:

"Remain here! Bar the door after me! Dainty has gone, and I am going to fetch him back!"

"Are you?" muttered Dainty between his teeth. And he ran down the sand, with the sound of pursuing footsteps

behind him, and dodged into the deep, dark shadows of the palm grove.

"Dainty!" Dr. Sparshott's voice came like the crack of a rifle. "Stop! I order you to come back!"

Dainty ran on, winding among the slanting trunks of the palms. In the daylight he would have had no chance in a foot-race with Sammy. But in the uncertain starlight, and the shadows of the night, he had little doubt of being able to dodge away and escape.

Yet Sammy seemed to possess the cat-like gift of seeing in the dark. The running feet drew nearer and nearer, in spite of the shadows and the bewildering trunks of the palms. Looking back, Dainty glimpsed the tall figure of the headmaster of Grimslade in the star-shine, and caught the grim, inflexible expression on Sammy's face—a look that he well knew!

He turned towards the stream, plunged knee-deep in and tramped up to the waterfall. Heedless of falling water, he clambered up the rocks through the splashing, spraying cascades, to the narrow, rock-walled ravine above. If Sammy followed him there, he would get a drenching!

But a drenching was not likely to stop Sammy Sparshott. Jim scrambled from the water on to the shelf of rock that ran up the steep side of the ravine, and ran on, stumbling and panting and dripping. But when he reached the opening of the cave up the ravine and looked back, he saw Sammy's head rising from the waterfall; saw Sammy dash the water from his eyes with the back of his hand, and clamber on to the ledge. And dim as the starlight was in the narrow ravine, it was clear that Sammy's keen eyes spotted him, for his voice came ringing again:

"Dainty! Stop!"

"Likely!" muttered Jim. Apart from his determination to escape, that glimpse of Sammy's set face told him what to expect if he was captured now.

He ran on up the ravine, leaping from rock to rock, over fissures and pits—once slipping and falling into the tum-

bling stream, but so mbling out again, and keeping on.

Behind him, active as a mountain goat, came the headmaster of Grimslade—his wet face grimmer than ever. And he was gaining.

Higher up the ravine broadened out into a valley. Once he reached the open hillside above, Jim felt that he would be safe. But he had not reached it yet—and Sammy was coming up, hand over hand. To be collared, marched back to the hut with a grip on his collar, amid the contemptuous amusement of Ginger & Co., was more than Jim Dainty could have endured.

He turned to the rocky wall of the ravine, and clambered desperately up—climbing where, in a calmer moment, he would have thought that it was impossible for a monkey to climb. Somehow, he managed to find hand-hold and foot-hold, and he was a dozen feet over Sammy's head when the panting headmaster of Grimslade reached the spot.

"Dainty!" There was a note of anxiety in Sammy's angry voice. "Come down at once—you are risking your limbs."

"I don't care!"

"Come down!"

"I won't!"

"Then I shall fetch you down!" said Sammy Sparshott grimly, and he clambered up the steep rocks after the rebel of Grimslade.

An outstretched hand touched Jim's foot from below. Without even stopping to think, acting in sheer desperation, he kicked back. There was a panting gasp, a sound of rolling and brushing, and a bump. That reckless kick had caught Sammy Sparshott's arm—a mere tap, but quite enough to dislodge him from his precarious hold on the steep rocks. He went slithering back, clutching in vain to save himself, and rolled on the bank of the stream with every ounce of wind knocked out of him.

Jim, hanging on to a point of rock with one hand, stared down—for a second, forgetful of himself, thinking only of the possibility that Sammy had

been hurt in the fall. But he saw the headmaster of Grimslade pick himself up to stand panting for breath and rubbing his bruises. He was badly shaken, but he was not hurt.

The rebel's momentary remorse vanished, and he climbed on again. Whether Sammy attempted the climb again, Jim did not know—if so, he came nowhere near the fugitive. Jim Dainty clambered over the rugged summit of the rocky ravine, scrambled away across the rough, irregular hillside, and was gone.

CHAPTER 47.

Caught in a Quicksand!

"O H, crumbs!" gasped Jim Dainty. The white sand, glistening in the rays of the tropical sun, looked firm to the tread, as Jim came down the western shore of Castaway Island towards the sea. But appearances were deceptive. Suddenly, without warning, the sand gave under the Grimslade junior's feet, and he felt himself sinking. It was a patch of quicksand, and Jim Dainty had stepped on it without suspicion.

Almost before he knew what was happening Dainty was down to his armpits. He sank almost as swiftly as if he had trodden on water.

His face whitened with horror. He was alone—far from the rest of the shipwrecked Grimsladers. The sands stretched for miles, broken here and there by rugged rocks. Beyond was the limitless sea.

There was no help. And he was in the grip of the quicksand.

"Oh!" panted Jim.

He was down to his shoulders. His face, drained of colour, stared up at the empty sky, the dazzling sunshine. If he had had time to think, Jim might have repented at that moment of the headstrong obstinacy which had led him to flout his headmaster's authority and clear off on his own. But he had no time to think. He was sinking—and with a desperate effort to save

himself, he threw out his arms on the sand for support.

But his arms sank in the treacherous surface and went under. He was sinking—sinking—and the surface was up to his neck.

Then, suddenly, he ceased to sink. His feet, deep in the quicksand, rested on something solid. His chin was on the surface; but he sank no farther. Another foot of depth, and Jim Dainty would have disappeared from the world of living things.

In the horror of the moment he could hardly believe that he had found support. Then it dawned on him that under the strip of quicksand ran the rock of Castaway Island, and that his feet rested on solid rock.

For a long minute Jim Dainty stood there motionless, buried in sand to his neck, realising that he was, after all, in no danger, but shivering with horror at his narrow escape. Slowly the colour came back to his face.

"My hat!" breathed Jim. "If the quicksand had been deeper——" But he drove that terrible thought from his mind.

It was not easy to stir in the thick clinging sand. He summoned all his strength to struggle his way out of the trap. At a little distance, between him and the sea, was a tract of basaltic rock, cropping up from the beach, and he struggled towards it.

Slowly, foot by foot, almost inch by inch, he forced his way through the sand, and he found his task easier from the fact that the rock sloped upward under him, shallowing the quicksand.

Clear of the clinging sand at last, the junior sank down on the basalt, exhausted by his efforts, gasping for breath. For a long time he lay there, till he had recovered his strength.

He sat up at last, and looked back at the quicksand. Not a trace remained of his passage across it. The soft, oozy sand had closed up, and the surface was as smooth as when he had first stepped on it. Its width, where he had crossed it, was not more than a dozen

feet; but how far its length extended, from side to side, he could not tell.

The junior rose to his feet and turned towards the sea. He had come down to the water for a bathe, and now he ran down to the lapping margin and plunged in.

Jim Dainty was one of the best swimmers at Grimslade School, and he thoroughly enjoyed himself in the water. He swam a good distance out, revelling in the wash of the waves, and it was some time before he looked shoreward again.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Jim, as he lifted his head from the sea and looked. Far away, a tall, active figure was visible against the dark background of the forest, far up the shore. At the distance, Jim could not have recognised his headmaster, but for the tattered mortar-board that Sammy still wore, and from his knowledge that Dr. Sparshott was the only man on Castaway Island.

Treading water, Jim looked at the distant figure. Dr. Sparshott was alone; there was no sign of any of the boys with him.

It was doubtful whether even Sammy's keen eyes would have picked out the dark head on the rolling water; but Jim caught a glittering in the sun, which told him that Dr. Sparshott was sweeping the shore with his field-glasses.

A few minutes ago Jim had been revelling happily in the sunny water, forgetful of troubles and of enmities. But now his face darkened, his lips set, and a glint came into his eyes. Dr. Sparshott was there to take him back—to hand out the punishment he had asked for!

He was not going back—he was not going to take punishment! He was free—and he was going to stay free!

He saw Dr. Sparshott sling his glasses in their leather case, and come striding down to the sea. Jim knew that Sammy had spotted him. He breathed hard.

Good sprinter as he was, he had no chance in a foot race with Sammy. Good swimmer as he was, Sammy would

have overhauled him in the water hand over fist, and he was already getting a little tired from a long swim. But he was not going to be taken back!

The only chance seemed to be to scramble ashore, and dodge among the wild rocks along the beach, and that he determined to do. Jim swam in, scrambled up the sand, and dressed himself hastily. At the same time a mortar-board bobbed into view from beyond a ridge of rocks. Sammy was getting near at hand.

Then suddenly Jim remembered the strip of quicksand. It lay between him and his headmaster, and—though Sammy did not know it—barred him off more effectually than walls of triple steel.

Jim burst into a laugh. There was no danger to life in the quicksand—he had already proved that. If Sammy stepped into it he would simply be bogged till he could scramble out, as Jim had done. But that would take him a long time—plenty of time for the rebel of Grimslade to make his escape.

Instead of scudding away along the margin of the sea among the rough rocks, Jim Dainty walked coolly up the beach, as if with the intention of meeting his headmaster. He stopped on the mass of basalt where he had previously rested, and stood facing Dr. Sparshott as he came.

"Dainty!" Dr. Sparshott stopped, and beckoned to him. "I have found you! Come here at once!"

Dainty did not stir.

"Do you hear me?" the headmaster of Grimslade raised his voice a little. There was a tone in it that told how deeply and intensely angry Sammy was with the rebellious junior.

"I hear you, sir!" answered Jim. "I'm not coming back."

"I am here to take you back, Dainty."

"Why?" jeered Dainty. "You don't want me! The other fellows don't want me—even my pal Dawson! Leave me alone, then."

"You can scarcely expect anyone to want an obstinate, headstrong, rebellious young rascal, Dainty!" said the headmaster of Grimslade coldly and scornfully. "But I have my duty to do as your headmaster, and that is to keep you under my care and control, ungrateful and rebellious as you are. I order you to come to me at once!"

"I won't!"

Dr. Sparshott said no more. With glinting eyes he strode down the beach, straight towards the rebel. Probably he expected Jim to dodge and run; but the junior stood still, watching him, with a mocking grin on his face that Sammy did not understand—till afterwards.

Closer and closer came the tall, striding figure, and then suddenly, swiftly, that tall figure shot down, feet first, through the treacherous surface of the quicksand. A startled cry left Dr. Sparshott's lips as he sank.

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CHAPTER 49.

A Narrow Escape!

HA, ha, ha!" roared Jim Dainty. Sammy's long legs had disappeared. The oozing sand was round him, over his waist. Only for an instant he felt, as Jim had felt, a thrill of horror as he sank in the sand. Then his feet rested firmly on the hard rock underneath, and he realised that he was in no peril; but he was held as if in the grasp of invisible fingers, and he dragged at his legs in vain to free them from the clinging sand.

Sammy's eyes turned on Jim with an expression in them that might well have daunted a less reckless fellow. Jim, standing on the basalt, watched him coolly.

"You young rascal!" panted Dr. Sparshott. Seldom had the headmaster of Grimslade been so angry. "You knew this—you—"

"I've been through it!" answered Jim. "There's no danger, Sammy!"

"What!" roared Dr. Sparshott. Among themselves, the Grimslade fellows never called Dr. Sparshott anything but "Sammy." But they did not call him Sammy to his face, unless they were looking for trouble. "You are asking for the thrashing of your life, Dainty!"

"Come and give it to me, old bean!" chortled Jim.

Frantically the headmaster of Grimslade drove through the clinging quicksand; but every step was hard work, his feet dragging as if from depths of glue. His scarlet face streamed with perspiration.

He was still struggling breathlessly and furiously to draw himself out, when Jim turned away. It was time to go.

"Stop!" roared Dr. Sparshott.

The rebel of Grimslade glanced back. "Sorry, Sammy—can't stop!" he answered. "See you again another time, old tulip!"

"When I catch you—" breathed Sammy Sparshott.

"When do you think that will be, Sammy?"

Samuel Sparshott did not answer that question. He exerted all his strength to get to the rock where the junior stood; but Dainty waited no longer. He started at a run along the beach, keeping clear of the quicksand; and in a few minutes disappeared from the sight of Dr. Sparshott, who was still struggling to free himself.

By the time Dr. Sparshott dragged himself at last from the clinging sand, the rebel of Grimslade had vanished. And the feelings of Sammy Sparshott as he hunted for the vanished rebel along the beach were too deep for words.

Dainty was already off the beach. He was threading his way through the wood, where the ceiba trees grew thickly, laced together with great lianas like ropes, and with huge tree-ferns standing so tall that their tops were lost among the lower boughs of the trees. Here and there grew bananas and plantains, and Jim stopped to pick bunches of the fruit to eat for his lunch.

He sat down on a projecting root of a great ceiba, with a big bunch of bananas on his knee, peeling one after another and eating them with considerable satisfaction, when a sound of rustling reached his ears.

Instantly he was on the alert. He could hardly believe that Sammy had succeeded in tracking him up from the beach; but he was on his guard at once. Hurriedly pushing the bananas into his rucksack, he clambered actively up the massive trunk of the ceiba, and stretched himself on a thick branch—so thick that it hid him from below. Through the foliage, he peered down. A gasping voice reached his ears.

Dainty grinned. It was the fat voice of Fritz Splitz. The voice of Ginger Rawlinson answered.

"Buck up, you Boche bloater! I'd rather have left you behind, but Sammy said you were to come!"

"Tat Sammy is a peastly pounder!" growned Fritz Splitz. "I do not want to look for tat peastly prute Tainty! Also, I vas dired!"

A red head emerged into view from

the undergrowth. It belonged to Ginger Rawlinson. Following him, under the branches of the ceiba, came Bacon and Bean and Dick Dawson. Last of all lagged Fritz Splitz, his podgy face dripping with perspiration, and as red as Ginger's hair. Stretched silent on the branch above, Jim watched them, unseen and unsuspected.

Fritz Splitz leaned against the trunk of the ceiba, and fanned himself with a palm-leaf. With a fat hand he obliterated about a dozen mosquitoes that had taken a fancy to his fat features.

"Ach! It was derribly hot, and I vas pitten all ofer!" he groaned. "Mein gootness! I hope tat Sammy will peat Tainty till he pellow like a pull, for givng us all tis droubles!"

"Buck up, bloater!" said Streaky Bacon.

"I vill not puck up after!" roared Fritz. "I vas dired, and I takes not anodder step mit meinselb pefore! Go and eat Goke!"

"Roll him along!" suggested Sandy Bean.

"Peastly prute!"

"Oh, leave him here!" said Dick Dawson, laughing. "He can follow us down to the beach—even that frowsy foolzer can't lose his way. Take a rest, Fatty, and give us one at the same time."

And the four juniors tramped on, in the direction of the beach, leaving Fatty Fritz to his own devices. Evidently they were going to join Sammy in his search for the rebel; and Fritz Splitz had made a very unwilling addition to the hunting-party.

The fat Rhinelander slid down into a sitting position, leaned back on the ceiba tree, and gurgled for breath, what time he mopped perspiration from his podgy brow, and fanned his burning fat face. Jim Dainty, grinning on the branch above, kept very quiet. He had had a narrow escape; and he listened intently for the sounds of Ginger & Co. to die away.

The rustling, and the mutter of voices

died in the distance; the juniors were gone; but Fritz Splitz remained, squatting in the shade of the big tree. Jim Dainty waited impatiently for him to be gone, too. Certainly, he had no fear of the fat German; but a yell from Fritz might have carried far, and brought the hunters on his track.

But Fritz apparently did not intend to move. He seemed satisfied to remain where he was. Exertion had no appeal for Friedrich von Splitz, and he was not anxious to rejoin the party till it was time for a meal.

He sat and fanned himself and mopped his brow. Two or three monkeys peered down at him from the branches, perhaps wondering what kind of creature it was that was grunting and snorting at such a rate below. Fritz blinked up at them with his saucer-eyes, a little uncasily. He had not forgotten how he had been pelted with coconuts by a monkey.

Neither had Jim Dainty; and it put an idea into his head. Quickly he extracted the bunch of bananas from his rucksack.

Whiz! Plop!

"Mein gootness!" Fritz Splitz scrambled up. "Peastly prutes of monkeys, vill you not let me rest mit meinselb after, ven I vas so derribly dired pefore! Prutes!"

Whiz! Whiz! Whiz! Bananas fairly rained on the fat face of Fritz von Splitz, and he staggered and sat down, roaring. Plop, plop, plop! came the fat, juicy fruit on his podgy features.

"Ach himmel! Peastly prutes!" yelled Fritz, staggering to his feet. "Ach! I vas all sticky pefore! Mein goodness, tat peastly panana go down mein neck itself after! Urrgggh!"

The fat German started at a run. He did not notice as he started that he was taking a direction different from that taken by Ginger & Co. He was thinking of escaping from the pelting of the supposed monkeys.

Jim Dainty chuckled as the fat Rhinelander vanished into the wood,

and his gurgling and spluttering died away in the distance. Then the rebel of Grimslade scrambled down from the tree and resumed his own way.

CHAPTER 49.

A Dodge in the Dark!

"RATS!" murmured Ginger Rawlinson. "Oh, my giddy goloshes!"

Dr. Samuel Sparshott set his lips in a tight line. Streaky Bacon, who was disposed to grin, suppressed that grin instantly. Judging by Sammy's expression, it was no time for grinning.

The sun was sinking to the western sea. Dr. Sparshott had been on the hunt for the rebel of Grimslade since dawn, and but for the incident of the quicksand would certainly have made a capture.

Later the juniors had joined him, after tramping across the island from the hut; and the fact that they had left Fritz Splitz behind them, resting in the wood, did not at first worry Sammy. Even Fritz, it was supposed, would have sense enough to follow the others to the western beach, when he had sufficiently rested his fat and weary limbs.

But he hadn't!

Dr. Sparshott intended to camp on the western side of Castaway Island until the fugitive was captured. Ginger & Co. had carried the necessary things across from the hut. On a level stretch of beach, at a safe distance from the quicksand, the camp had been formed, and the belongings left there, while the Head and the juniors spent the afternoon hunting for Jim Dainty.

They hunted in vain, and came back to camp at sunset, expecting to find Fritz Splitz arrived at last. There was no sign of the fat German, but there was sign that the camp had been visited in their absence.

Traced in the sand, in large capital letters, was the word:

"RATS!"

Dr. Sparshott gazed at it long and hard. Ginger and Bacon and Bean and Dick Dawson gazed at it. They did not need telling, of course, who had visited the camp and left that message in the sand.

Evidently while they had been hunting for Jim Dainty, the hunted junior had coolly come down the beach from the wood, and left that message for Sammy. In huge letters, each a couple of feet long, cut deep in the sand, it stared the headmaster of Grimslade in the face.

Sammy breathed hard and deep. "My giddy goloshes!" murmured Ginger. "Dainty's been here, of course, while we were hunting him in the wood!"

"The cheeky tick!" muttered Streaky. "That's meant for us as well as Sammy. Won't I jolly well alter his features for him when I see him."

The juniors hardly dared to look at Sammy. But after the first moment of deep and intense wrath, Sammy was his calm self again.

"Rawlinson, you will take a stick and obliterate that piece of impertinence," said Sammy quietly. "Bacon, Bean, gather wood for a fire. Splitz has not arrived, and there can be little doubt that the foolish fellow has lost himself. The firelight will be a guide to him."

Ginger lost no time in scraping the sand over Jim Dainty's cheeky message. On the smooth beach, a camp-fire was built and lighted. Hot as the days were on Castaway Island, the nights were generally rather cold, and the Grimsladers were glad of the fire. Dick Dawson sorted out cooking utensils, and there was soon a savoury scent of frying fish.

The castaways sat down on the sand, round the fire, to eat their supper, for which they had very keen appetites after the day's hunting. Logs and branches were piled on the fire, and the blaze leaped up, dancing against the velvety darkness of the sky as the night descended on the island and the sea.

If the lost Fritz was anywhere near at hand, it seemed certain that the glare of the fire would catch his eyes sooner or later, and guide him to the camp. Ginger remarked that the smell of cooking would have done so still more surely could it have but reached Fritz Splitz' fat nose!

But there was no sign of Fritz, and Dr. Sparshott cast more than one anxious glance at the dark wood above the beach. It was clear that the fat Rhineland had hopelessly lost himself.

Dr. Sparshott rose to his feet at last. "I am going to look for Splitz and Dainty," he said. "You will remain in camp. Turn in at the usual time if I am not back."

"Yes, sir!"

When his tall figure had vanished, a figure, that had been lying in cover of a hillock of sand at a little distance from the camp, rose to its knees and crept forward on all fours.

It was Jim Dainty, and he stopped on the edge of the circle of firelight. "Just like that fat bloater of a Boche to lose himself! It's all Dainty's fault. 'What the thump——' ejaculated Streaky Bacon, as there was a sudden whizzing sound in the silence of the beach. "What's that?"

A terrific roar from Ginger Rawlinson announced what it was. He rolled over backwards, roaring, as a whizzing coconut smote him on the chest. Sandy Bean went sprawling over Ginger.

"It's Dainty!" yelled Streaky Bacon, catching a glimpse of a grinning face in the firelight. "After him!"

There was a rush, but only for a moment or two the sound of pattering footsteps was heard on the sand. Jim Dainty vanished into the night, and Ginger & Co., breathing wrath, gave it up and walked back to the fire.

Jim Dainty, chuckling, ran up the sand. His own camp was deep in the tropical forest, and he headed for it, groping his way among the trunks and lianas and tree ferns. He trod cautiously, aware that Sammy Sparshott was somewhere in the wood.

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Jim sud-

denly, as there was a rustle and a foot-step close by him in the dark.

He halted instantly and squeezed himself against the trunk of a tree, blotted from sight in the darkness.

The rustling sound ceased. Sammy stopped, hardly a yard from the junior. Before he could make up his mind what to do a hand dropped on his collar, and fastened like a steel vice.

"Caught, I think!" said Dr. Sparshott quietly.

It was at that moment that Jim had a brain-wave. He was caught—there was no doubt about that. But Sammy could not see him, and Sammy was hunting for the lost Fritz as well as for the rebel.

"Ach! Is tat te Head!" gasped Jim, with a really remarkable imitation of Fritz Splitz' well-known accent. "Mein gootness! I vas safed!"

"Splitz!" exclaimed the Head.

"Ja wohl!" gurgled Jim.

"I am glad I have found you, Splitz. I fancied for the moment that it was Dainty."

"Mein gootness, but I vas derribly hungry!"

"Follow me, Splitz! I will take you back to camp at once. Keep hold of my belt, or you will lose yourself in the dark."

Jim's collar was released. Holding the back of Sammy's belt, he followed his headmaster. Dr. Sparshott headed for the beach, nothing doubting that it was Fatty Fritz who was following him. But a minute later the hold on his belt was released, and there was a rustle as Jim Dainty darted away into the dark forest.

Dr. Sparshott spun round.

"Splitz!" he shouted, but there was no reply.

It was a long time before Dr. Sparshott was destined to lay hands on Jim Dainty again; and even when he did so—but that is another story!

In the meantime, the headmaster of Grimslade and his charges, including the rebel Jim Dainty, were all in the same boat—marooned together on Cast-away Island!

THE END.

MYSTERY HOUSES

STRANGE discoveries are sometimes made when very ancient houses are demolished, and they frequently throw light on the grim events of earlier times. For instance, a very old inn had been left undisturbed for hundreds of years, but at length the demands of ever-increasing traffic necessitated the entire demolition of the village in which the inn stood. The road had to be widened, and modern houses erected farther back from the highway.

When it came to the pulling down of the old Stork Inn, the workmen came on the entrance to what they imagined to be a wine vault. It was nothing of the kind, but the ingress to a tunnel. This passage underground led right beneath the High Street, and to the bank of the local river, where examination showed a long-disused quay. Investigation brought to light the fact that long ago some extensive smuggling had been carried out.

The Death Room.

But this bad record of law-breaking at the Stork Inn was eclipsed in the case of a little hotel in the same village, which had lost its licence many years earlier—and no wonder at that!

Here a small private dining-room, which was reserved for wealthy guests, was found to be equipped with a strange swivel device and a trap-door under the table. The mechanism worked by the pressing of a button in the wall. The unlucky diner, who may have been just taking a sip of old port and meditating on the cosiness of the hostelry, was suddenly precipitated through the yawning trap-door, to break his neck on the stone flags of the cellar. The "kindly" host could

then rob his visitor, and the nearby river finished the tale.

The Secret Lodger!

But another and more modern mystery came to be revealed as the village was taken to bits. One of the residents objected very strongly to the destruction of his picturesque domicile, but the march of progress is not to be held up, and the victim was handsomely compensated. During the work of "housebreaking" the evicted tenant was in the habit of watching the men busy, and at "knock-off" time he liked to linger and brood over the ruin. What was his surprise one night to see a shadowy form emerge from the back and make for the new road where snops had been run up.

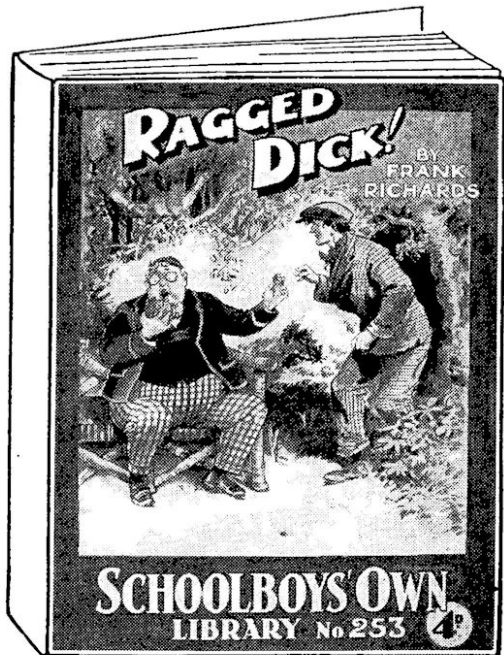
This stranger little realised that his movements were being watched. He bought himself a good supply of groceries, and then, after a stroll, he sauntered back to the dismantled house. The watcher caught the fellow up as he was about to enter the ruin.

"May I ask what you are doing here?" he said. The man replied he did not think he was doing any harm.

The house was old and had several secret rooms, which the rightful tenant had never known about. The secret lodger had been living in one of these chambers for years, paying no rates and taxes, and with nobody a penny the wiser! Unfortunately for those who want free quarters, the old type of house is swiftly vanishing. Modern structures may be convenient, but they tend to be severely simple in style, with no fascinating little cubby holes. Before long no mystery houses will be left.

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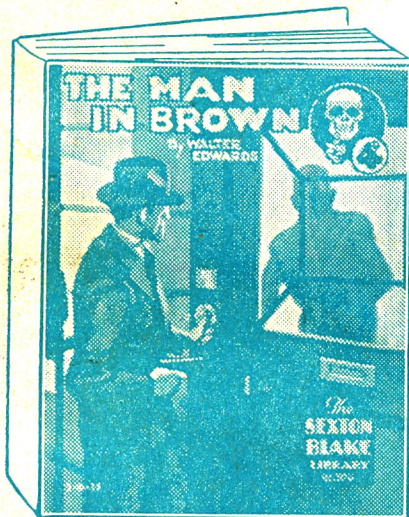
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