

FIFTY READERS WIN "SURPRISE-PRIZES"!

Names and addresses inside.



# RANGER

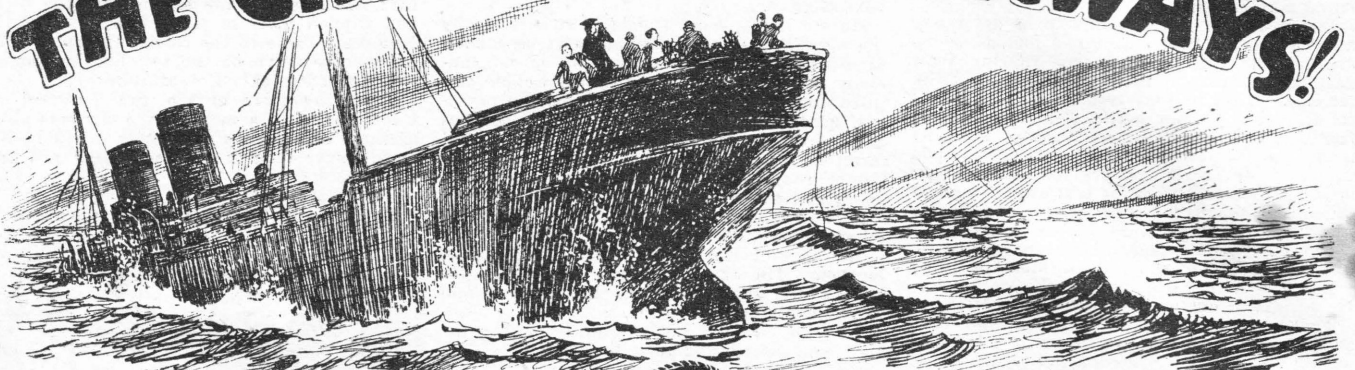
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**"PUPS" OF THE BULLDOG BREED!**  
*Thrilling War-flying Story Inside.*





# THE CHEERIO CASTAWAYS!



**Starring the Chums of Grimslade and Dr. "Sammy" Sparshott—the Head.**



By **Famous FRANK RICHARDS.**

## On a Floating Wreck.



**LINK, clink, clink!**

Dr. Samuel Sparshott, headmaster of Grimslade School, was wielding a hammer—as handily as he had ever wielded the official cane at Grimslade.

Few would have guessed that Sammy Sparshott was a headmaster, looking at him

now. In shirt-sleeves, with a stubby chin, and a hat on the back of his untidy head, Sammy did not look like a headmaster. But he looked like a man, every inch of him. And Jim Dainty & Co. were glad that Sammy was with them, in their present perilous predicament.

Water-logged, deep in the sea, the Spindrift rolled and sagged helplessly, under the blazing sunshine of the South Atlantic. The hurricane that had swept the ocean was gone; a light breeze played over the sunny sea, and at dawn the waves had gone down.

The day before the six Grimslade juniors had been on a holiday cruise with their headmaster—now they were left on the wrecked steamer that rolled and pitched under their feet, and threatened every moment to take the last plunge into the depths of the Atlantic. On the wide waste of waters there was no sail, no trail of smoke from a steamer. The Grimsladers were alone in a world of water. The nearest land, so far as they knew, was the South American continent, hundreds of miles away.

Clink, clink! rang the hammer in Sammy's hand. Since the dawn of the new day all hands had been hard at work. How long the wreck would remain afloat was an unknown problem; and the building of a raft was going on rapidly. Planks and beams were nailed and lashed together; empty casks lashed on to float the raft from underneath.

"Nails!" rapped Sammy. Fritz Splitz was handing nails to the busy Sammy as he hammered. Now, however, Fritz had sat down on the nailbox to take a spot of rest. Sammy glared round at him.

"Ach! I vas dired!" gasped Fritz. "I tink tat mein legs grumple up under me. I vas so dired as neffer vas before."

Crack!  
"Whoop!" roared Fritz, as Sammy tapped with the hammer. "Mein gootness? Vy for you grack me to head mit tat peastly hammer? Yarooop!"

"Nails!" barked Sammy.  
"Ach! Ja wohl! Here vas te nails!" gasped Fritz, in a great hurry. "Ach! I vish tat I vas pack in Chermany!"

"I wish you were," agreed Sammy. "Keep moving!"

"Oh, my giddy goloshes!" ejaculated Ginger Rawlinson, as the Spindrift gave a heavy plunge. "She's going!"

"Not yet!" said Sammy coolly. "We've time. We're nearly through."

The Spindrift was settling deeper and deeper. The hold was full of water, and it was washing through the cabins, and lapping on the slanting deck. Sammy Sparshott drove in his last nail, rose, and wiped the perspiration from his forehead with the back of a grimy hand. Standing erect on the slanting, heaving deck he swept sea and sky with a keen glance.

The ocean was bare of sail or smoke; the only sign of life was a distant albatross, winging afar in the blue. Sammy gave a slight shrug of the shoulders. He knew that there was no chance of being picked off the wreck. "Now for the launching!" said Sammy cheerily. "All hands!"

**WHILE THERE IS LIFE THERE IS HOPE—BUT THERE SEEMS LITTLE HOPE FOR JIM DAINTY AND CO., DRIFTING OVER THE WIDE EXPANSE OF THE ATLANTIC, WITH ONLY THE PLANKS OF THEIR RAFT SEPARATING THEM FROM A WATERY GRAVE!**

With the sinking steamer so low in the water, it was not difficult to slide the raft over the side into the sea. All hands shoved with a will, and the raft floated beside the Spindrift, almost on a level with the rail that dipped to the water. Ropes held it to the rail—a precaution that Sammy had thoughtfully taken, or the heave into the sea would have sent it floating away out of reach.

"She floats!" said Sanly Bean, as if he had not wholly expected it.

"She's made to float, Bean," said Dr. Sparshott. "Now for the loading. Food and clothes first."

"Ay, ay, sir!" said Streaky Bacon, like a seaman answering his skipper; and Sammy grinned.

"Buck up, you men!" said Sammy. "We've got time; but none too much. Dainty, Dawson, jump on the raft, and stand by to take on cargo."

Jim Dainty and Dick Dawson jumped lightly on the raft. Sammy swung kegs of water over to them, and they packed them on the raft as directed, every keg secured with a rope in its place. Bags and boxes of provisions followed, and a large roll of sail-cloth,

and a number of spars, and a tool-chest; clothes and blankets, and all sorts and conditions of things.

A long shudder ran through the Spindrift, and she gave a heavy lurch. The end was not far off now. It was amazing to the schoolboys that she had remained afloat so long. It could only have been due to the shifting cargo blocking the leaks below the water-line.

The steamer had seemed on the point of sinking when Captain Cootie and the crew had gone in the boats. Yet now, twelve hours later, she was still on the surface. Fritz Splitz gave a squeal of terror as the water-logged craft lurched, and a wash of water came right across the deck.

"Ach! I shall be trowned!" squealed Fritz; and he dropped the bag of ship's biscuit he was carrying, and made a wild jump for the raft.

"Steady, there!" barked Sammy.

But the scared Fritz did not heed. He jumped, and landed on the bobbing raft. Fritz stumbled and pitched over, but luckily, for Fritz, he grabbed Jim Dainty with one out-flung arm, and Dawson with the other. The three staggered together across the raft, and sprawled in a heap on the very edge. Fritz's fat legs hung over in the sea; but Dainty and Dawson were still on the raft, with Fritz's fat arms round their necks.

"Ach! Help!" yelled Fritz. "I falls into te sea! I shall trown! Pull me pack, peasts and prutes!"

"You blithering bloater!" gasped Jim Dainty.

He wrenched himself away from Fritz's clinging grasp, and Dawson jerked loose. Fritz grabbed the edge of the raft, and clung, roaring.

"Peasts and prutes! Pull me pack!" he yelled. "I vill not be trowned to blease you! Ach! I have no more te breff!"

"Take his other ear, Dick!" grunted Dainty.

"Ow! Yurrrgh!" spluttered Fritz, as the chums of the Fourth grasped him by his extensive ears. "Led go! Mein gootness! I have vun colossal bain in mein ears. Peasts and prutes and pounders—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With a long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull both together, Dainty and Dawson landed Fritz on the raft. He sat down, clasping his fat ears with his fat hands, his frantic yelling echoing far across the Atlantic. Leaving him to yell, Dainty and Dawson resumed taking on cargo.

## Taking to the Raft!

**A**LL aboard!" barked Sammy. Ginger & Co. scrambled on the raft. It was high time to leave the sinking hulk, for there was danger of the raft being dragged down in the suction

when the Spindrift plunged for the last time. But Sammy Sparshott, standing by the swaying rail after the schoolboys were all off the wreck, seemed to hesitate.

Jim Dainty & Co. knew of what he was thinking.

Locked in the fore-castle was Ezra Sarson, the rascal who had scuttled the Spindrift for revenge on the skipper. He had remained there since Sammy had shut him in, and the shipwrecked schoolboys had given him little or no thought. But now that they were about to quit the wreck, they had to think of him.

It was the 'Frisco "tough" who had caused the disaster, and he richly deserved to be left to go down with the ship he had scuttled. But Jim Dainty & Co. shrank from the thought of abandoning him to drown like a rat in a trap; and they could see that Dr. Sparshott was thinking the same.

"We can't leave the rascal to drown!" said Sammy Sparshott at last, in answer to his own thoughts.

"Plenty of us to keep him in order, sir, if we take him on the raft," said Jim Dainty.

Sammy turned away and strode to the fore-castle. The schoolboys waited rather anxiously for him to reappear. The man who had scuttled the Spindrift was a desperate and dangerous rascal, as savage as a tiger.

They could not see Sammy now, from the raft, and they were anxious so long as he was out of their sight. A long minute passed—and another—and then Jim Dainty made a jump for the swaying rail of the Spindrift and clambered on board again.

"Dr. Sparshott— Oh, my hat!" gasped Jim, as he spotted two grappling figures, rolling and struggling on the slanting deck by the fore-hatch.

He dashed forward. A lurch of the ship sent him stumbling, and he pitched headlong. He scrambled up, close to the two struggling men. It was evident that the desperate rascal had turned on Sammy like a tiger the moment he was let out of the fo'c'sle.

Sammy Sparshott could have handled him easily enough; but his foot had caught in a rope, and he had gone down, and the copper-faced 'Frisco tough had the upper hand. His wiry fingers were on the throat of the Grimslade headmaster, and Sammy was struggling furiously, but in vain, in his desperate grip. Sarson's eyes glittered down at him.

"My turn now, I guess," he snarled. "Dog-gone you, I reckon the schoolboys won't give me much trouble when I've done with you! I guess you've built that raft for me."

Heedless of the fierce blows coming from the man under him, Sarson dragged Sammy's head up, to dash it down on the deck. It was at that moment that Jim Dainty reached him.

He fastened both hands in the ruffian's thick hair, and dragged him backwards with all his strength.

Ezra Sarson gave a fierce yell as he was dragged back from his victim. He turned on Jim Dainty like a wild animal. But that moment's relief was enough for Sammy! He heaved up, hurling the ruffian aside, and gained his knees. The next moment his powerful grasp was on Sarson, and the ruffian was down and under him.

"My turn, I think!" said Sammy coolly. "Thank you, Dainty! But you can leave him to me now."

With an iron grip on the man's brawny neck, Sammy Sparshott marched him away, and Jim Dainty followed. Standing by the dipping rail, over the raft, Dr. Sparshott lifted the ruffian into the air, almost as easily as he might have lifted an infant, and swung him high.

"Stand clear!" he barked.

"Oh, my giddy goloshes!" gasped Ginger. And the fellows on the raft jumped clear as the ruffian came whirling.

Crash!

Sarson landed on the raft with a shock that made it dip, and that knocked every remaining ounce of breath out of his body. He lay where he had fallen, gasping and gurgling.

"Now, Dainty!"

Jim jumped down, and the Head of Grimslade followed him. Several spare oars had been found, and placed on the raft. Taking one of them the headmaster shoved off, Ginger casting loose the rope. The raft slid away

from the dipping, plunging hull of the Spindrift.

Paddling with the oars, the raft's crew drove slowly but steadily away from the wreck. All of them realised that they had to keep clear of the Spindrift when she went down. It was slow work, and hard work in the hot blaze of the tropical sun. The raft showed a tendency to turn round and round instead of progressing; and steering was far from easy. But they gained foot by foot, and yard by yard.

Farther and farther they won their way from the ship that had been their home since Grimslade had broken up for the summer holidays and they had steamed out of the Mersey. At a good cable's length from the Spindrift, out of danger from suction, Sammy Sparshott allowed his crew to rest at last.

Ezra Sarson had sat up by that time, still panting, and his eyes glinting savagely. As the schoolboys laid down the oars at last, Dr. Sparshott turned to the ruffian. Sarson gave him a glare of hatred.

"Now, my man!" said Dr. Sparshott quietly. "You deserved to be left to drown on the ship you scuttled—but we've taken you off, and you've got the same chance that we have! On this raft you're going to toe the line, jump to orders, and behave yourself—till I get a chance of handing you over to the law."

"I reckon not!" hissed Sarson.

"Mutiny," said Sammy calmly, "will be put down with a hard hand! As a beginning, and a warning, I'm going to give you a pretty severe rope's-end for laying hands on me when I let you out of the fore-castle. Get me a rope's-end, Dainty."

"Yes, rather!" grinned Jim.

Sarson staggered to his feet. He glared round as if in search of a weapon; and made a spring at one of the oars. He was quick—but Dr. Sparshott was quicker. Sammy's fist shot out like lightning, caught the ruffian on his stubby jaw, and Sarson went down as if he had been shot.

Sammy took the rope's-end from Dainty and stepped towards him. With his left hand, he turned the ruffian over on the raft. With his right he wielded the thick, knotted rope.

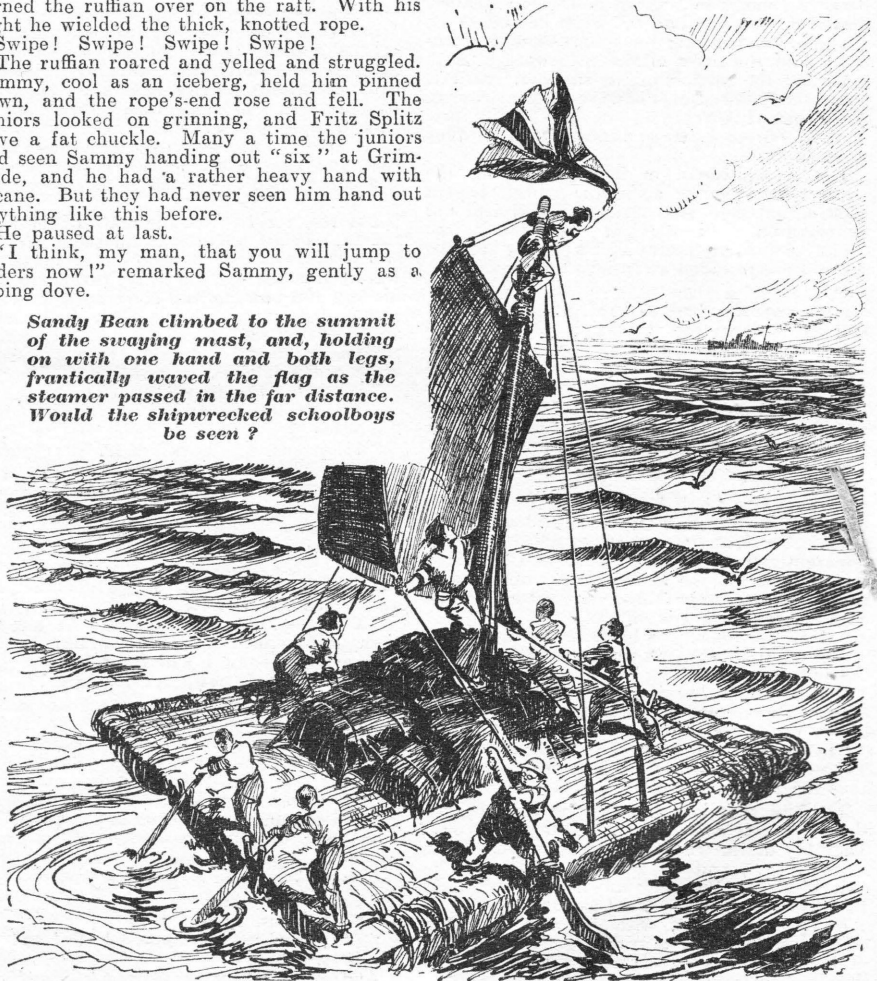
Swipe! Swipe! Swipe! Swipe!

The ruffian roared and yelled and struggled. Sammy, cool as an iceberg, held him pinned down, and the rope's-end rose and fell. The juniors looked on grinning, and Fritz Splitz gave a fat chuckle. Many a time the juniors had seen Sammy handing out "six" at Grimslade, and he had a rather heavy hand with a cane. But they had never seen him hand out anything like this before.

He paused at last.

"I think, my man, that you will jump to orders now!" remarked Sammy, gently as a cooing dove.

*Sandy Bean climbed to the summit of the swaying mast, and, holding on with one hand and both legs, frantically waved the flag as the steamer passed in the far distance. Would the shipwrecked schoolboys be seen?*



A savage curse was the answer. Sammy gave the man one look.

"Silence!" he barked.

And Sarson was silent.

There was a shout from Ginger, and he pointed towards the distant Spindrift.

"She's going!"

All eyes were fixed on the wreck. With a last sullen plunge, what was left of the Spindrift disappeared from sight. The waters closed for the last time over the steamer that had sailed so bravely out of the Mersey. And silence, and a crushing sense of solitude, fell on the crew of the raft—alone on a wide, wide sea!

### The Ship That Passed!

**D**R. SPARSHOTT felt, as the schoolboys felt, the sudden, heavy sense of solitude and desolation as the wreck of the Spindrift plunged and vanished beneath the Atlantic. But he was not the man to give way to it—or to allow others to do so. Briskly he rapped out orders to his schoolboy crew.

"Up with the mast!"

A long spar had been brought to serve as a mast, and it was footed in a space left in the planking. Work was the thing to keep the shipwrecked schoolboys from uneasy thoughts, and Sammy was the man to see to it. Stays had to be rove for the mast, and a spar fitted as a boom, and then a sail shaped from the roll of sail-cloth, and fitted and hoisted.

It meant hours of work—and it kept the crew of the raft occupied. Ezra Sarson joined in the labour—not willingly; but he had had enough of the rope's-end. Every now and then his deep-sunken eyes glinted at Sammy Sparshott—but he jumped to orders.

When the sail was hoisted at last, the raft drifted slowly through the sunny waters. Astern, Sammy rigged a steering-sweep, and though it could not be said that the craft answered handily to her helm, at least she was able to keep to a course. The wind came out



of the north-east—a gentle breeze that wafted the raft along in the direction, as the voyagers supposed, of South America.

What the position exactly was, it was impossible to tell, for, in the hurricane, the Spindrift had driven far and wide; but they hoped, at least, that they were in the track of ships going down to Rio. While they worked, and while they ate their meals, they watched for a sail—and Sammy, who had a pair of field-glasses slung in a leather case over his shoulder, occasionally swept the sea with them. And suddenly, towards sunset, there was a yell from Ginger Rawlinson:

"My giddy goloshes! That's smoke!"

"Smoke!" exclaimed Jim Dainty.

Ginger pointed with a finger trembling with excitement. The sun was deep in the west, the sky a mass of gold and purple. Against the golden glow came a black smudge, which thickened and deepened. Dr. Sparshott jerked out his glasses, opened them once more, and fixed them on the distant smudge. The juniors watched him breathlessly.

"A steamer!" said Dr. Sparshott. "I can make out her funnels. But—" He broke off, and stared up at the mast, swaying under the sail. "Which is the lightest weight among you? You, I think, Bean! Get to the mast-head and wave this flag."

Sandy Bean glanced up at the slender spar that carried the sail. Quietly he took the Union Jack from his headmaster, tucked it under his jacket, and climbed. Sandy was slim, but the mast swayed under his weight. But he climbed steadily to the summit, and, holding on with one hand and both legs, he waved the flag in the air as a signal. Standing below, the other fellows worked frantically at the oars.

The black smudge of smoke deepened and thickened. The steamer was coming down from the north, crossing the course of the raft, but at a great distance. Obviously the raft could not be seen from the ship, as only the smoke could be seen from the raft. But the shipwrecked schoolboys hoped that they would be near enough to be seen before the steamer passed on her way and left them behind.

Thicker and thicker the smoke-smudge blackened, and the crew of the raft were able to make out the funnels of the steamer. Now it was directly ahead of them, crossing the course. After that, if it went on its way, it would draw farther off—and with beating hearts they watched it.

The smoke began to fade. Unseeing the steamer was passing on to the south. It had been a chance—a slim chance—but it had not materialised. In spite of their pluck, the Grimsladers felt their hearts heavy as the smoke-smudge faded away into the sunset.

High over the shadowed raft a light gleamed and shone from the masthead, where a hurricane-lamp burned and swung. The light glimmered on the waters that rolled and washed round the drifting raft.

The night was calm, the raft floated evenly, and the schoolboys tried not to remember how frail were the timbers that were all that separated them from the unplumbed depths of the Atlantic.

Ezra Sarson, half-forgotten by the schoolboys, had thrown himself down, and seemed to sleep. Dr. Sparshott sat at the steering-sweep, apparently tireless. Jim Dainty & Co. talked in low tones—in the hush of night on the sea, they unconsciously lowered their voices. Sammy glanced at his watch.

"Half-past nine!" he barked. "Dorm!"

The familiar word, in such a situation, made the juniors grin.

"What about keeping watch, sir?" asked Ginger Rawlinson. "Ships that pass in the night, you know, sir!"

"Leave that to me," said Sammy. "I'll wake some of you to take a turn later. Now turn in—just as if you were at Grimslade!"

The juniors rolled themselves in blankets, for the night was cold after the heat of the day. They lay down, with the lapping of the water in their ears, and wondered if they would be able to sleep. But they did not wonder long. In a few minutes they were fast asleep.

Dr. Sparshott sat, with his arm over the steering-sweep, and a rather grim expression of thoughtfulness on his clear-cut face. The deadly danger of the position was very clear to

Sammy's mind, though during the day he had kept up an air of the whole thing being rather a lark, for the sake of the boys under his charge.

The raft had been soundly constructed, and floated well; there were ample provisions and water for many days, at least; and, so long as the weather remained fair, and the sea calm, there was a good chance of pulling through. But if a blow came on, it was the end of all things for the shipwrecked schoolboys, as Sammy well knew.

Darkness enwrapped the world of waters, and silence, save for the eternal wash of the waves round the raft.

There was a soft stirring; the head of Ezra Sarson was lifted a few inches, and his sunken eyes gleamed at the man who sat at the steering-sweep. The 'Frisco tough had not slumbered. Alone of the crew on the raft, Sarson had been glad when the passing steamer passed on into space. He had no desire to be put in irons and handed over to the law.

The thought was in his brutal mind, the hope in his savage heart, of being alone on the raft when a ship picked it up. Now, lying with his head on his arm, affecting slumber, he watched the headmaster of Grimslade.

Dr. Sparshott leaned a little forward, and his chin sunk on his breast. Whether his eyes had closed could not be seen under the shadow of his hat. But his whole attitude indicated that a weary man had sunk into slumber. He swayed a little to the motion of the raft, and, in the silence, Sarson could hear his deep and steady breathing.

Cautiously the ruffian crept towards Dr. Sparshott—ferocity blazing in his sunken eyes, his lips drawn back in a snarl from his tobacco-stained teeth. He had no weapon; but one blow would send the slumbering man spinning off the raft—and once he was in the water, Ezra would see that he did not get a footing on the timbers again.

Closer and closer he crept, till he was within reach of Dr. Sparshott—and his sinewy arm was drawn back for the fierce blow that was to hurl him to death.

But that blow was never struck! For even as the ruffian tensed himself to deliver it, Sammy Sparshott's fist suddenly lashed out with lightning swiftness. The apparently sleeping man was transformed into a man very wide awake indeed! Sammy's hard knuckles came like a hammer just above the ruffian's belt, and Era Sarson went over backwards as if a cannon-ball had struck him.

Crash!

The raft rocked with the crash of the falling ruffian. There was a startled shout from the Grimsladers as they jumped out of sleep. Jim Dainty found something heavy sprawling across his legs and pinning him down with its weight, as he tried to struggle up. The next moment he discovered that it was a spluttering, panting ruffian, gurgling for breath. He rolled Sarson aside, and scrambled up, panting.

"What the thump—"

"My giddy goloshes!" yelled Ginger.

"What—"

"All serene, my boys!" said Dr. Sparshott quietly. "That scoundrel fancied that I was asleep—and I let him fancy so! Take the helm, Dainty."

"Yes, sir!" gasped Jim.

Dr. Sparshott stepped to the sprawling ruffian. All the wind had been knocked out of the 'Frisco tough, and he gurgled helplessly at the headmaster's feet.

"You rascal!" said Sammy. "I am more than half-inclined to pitch you into the sea! Lift a finger—and I will do so! I am going to make you safe now, you scoundrel!"

Taking a length of rope, the headmaster of Grimslade proceeded to bind the ruffian's wrists together. He made no resistance—the icy glint in Sammy's eyes told that he meant what he had said. In a few minutes his wrists were securely bound, and Sammy knotted the end of the rope to the mast.

"I think it is my turn to take a spot of sleep now," he said calmly. "I can trust you and Dainty to keep awake?"

"Yes, rather, sir!"

"Rely on us, sir!"

"Keep her before the wind, Dainty! Call me in two hours."

And Sammy Sparshott rolled himself in a

blanket, closed his eyes, and in less than a minute was fast asleep.

### Land-Ho!

"MY giddy goloshes!"

Ginger Rawlinson jumped up with a yell.

"What—"

"Look!" roared Ginger. "A ship!"

Sammy Sparshott was on his feet with a bound. The juniors leaped up. The ruffian tied to the mast raised his head and stared.

Far to the south a red light winked in the darkness. Sammy Sparshott fixed his eyes on it. It was the red port-light of a ship passing in the night. Higher up a white light gleamed. It seemed to the juniors that they could catch a distant throb of engines through the silence of the sea.

"Shout!" said Sammy tersely.

The hurricane-lamp was burning at the masthead. Swiftly Sammy lighted a second lamp and waved it in the air. He shouted, and all the juniors joined their voices to his in a roar.

The ship was distant; but they hoped against hope that the wind would carry their voices the distance—that some watchful eye would spot the lights of the raft gleaming from the sea.

For some minutes it seemed to them that the thrumming of the engines was sounding louder—and they watched with straining eyes.

Minutes—long minutes—passed, and then the red light faded from the black. Their voices had not reached the ship—the glimmering lights low down on the water had not been seen.

"Rotten luck!" said Ginger.

Groan—from Fritz Splitz.

"Better luck next time!" said Sammy Sparshott cheerily. "Really, it seems to be raining ships in these waters, lonely as they look! That's the second—and third time is lucky!"

Sammy spoke as if ships were as thick as blackberries in the South Atlantic, and somehow he conveyed confidence to his crew.

Sammy Sparshott sat on the steering-sweep, while the schoolboys slept, and watched the sea till the waves silvered in dawn. The raft was surging on at a greater speed now; the wind had freshened in the night.

Only Sammy knew, or at least realised, how slight was the hope of being picked up; and during the silent watches of the night he had debated anxiously in his mind how far they might be from the nearest land. As the sun rose higher, the headmaster of Grimslade stood up and scanned the wide-stretching ocean on all sides.

His eyes fixed on a spot on the western horizon. He stood quite still, and for once the colour wavered in his cheeks. Something blurred the blue in the west.

Sammy Sparshott drew out his field-glasses, opened them, and fixed them on the distant object. Then he drew a deep, deep breath. He shut up the glasses at last, and returned them to the case; but he still stood with his eyes on that distant speck.

Over the sea-line it loomed, and it was no longer possible to mistake it for a cloud-bank. Sammy knew! But he knew, too, that it could not be the mainland—many a long mile separated the gliding raft from the mainland. An island—inhabited or uninhabited—land at last!

There was a yawn, and Ginger Rawlinson opened his eyes, sat up, and blinked at Sammy. Dr. Sparshott smiled and pointed. Ginger gave him one look and was on his feet with a bound, staring across the sea. And the next moment Ginger gave a yell that awakened every fellow on the raft.

Jim Dainty & Co. scrambled up. They stared across the glimmering waters. A wooded hill, thick with verdure—a shelving beach, gleaming in the rising sun, a sparkling, cascading stream—a wide, blue bay—seemed to smile at them in welcome. And from all the Grimsladers burst a joyous shout:

"Land! Hurrah!"

*(An island in sight—but will the shipwrecked schoolboys be able to steer their crude raft to safety? Make sure you read next week's amazing story of the Grimslade Castaways!)*