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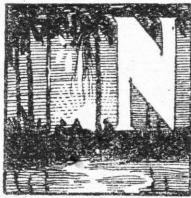


WORLD'S GREATEST THRILL STORY STARTS TODAY!

THE CHEERIO CASTAWAYS!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

Sammy to the Rescue!



LIGHT on Castaway Island.

On the beach, between the palm-grove and the bay, a camp-fire blazed, casting ruddy light along the sands, gleaming on the calm waters. In the bay, the schooner Courlis lay at anchor, but most of the crew had landed, and were gathered round the

camp-fire. After the blazing heat of the tropic day, the night was chilly.

Ginger Rawlinson, and his chums Bacon and Bean, would have been glad to be nearer the fire. They lay on the sand at a little distance, feeling the chill of the night wind from the Atlantic. They lay there because they could not help it, bound hand and foot.

They watched the half-clad figures of the black West Indian crew of the schooner moving in the circle of firelight, and almost wondered whether what was happening was some ghastly dream.

The castaways had been so overjoyed to see the schooner putting into the bay, thinking that it meant rescue from the lonely island, taking it for granted that the vessel was some West Indian trader.

But Captain Luz and his wild crew were evidently not traders, whatever they were. What they wanted at the lonely island, why they had come, Ginger & Co. could not guess. But there they were—and the three juniors of Grimslade School were prisoners, and the rascally crew had taken possession of the hut and the stores.

Their only comfort was that Dr. Sparshott, with Dainty and Dawson, was away, exploring the island, and that Fritz Splitz had bolted and got clear.

Captain Luz, seated on a rock by the fire, was smoking a black cheroot and talking to the mate of the schooner, a half-breed like himself. The firelight gleamed on his hard, dark face. The blacks squatted round the fire were eating and drinking, chattering in their own dialect.

Captain Luz rose at last, and walked across to where the three Grimsladers lay, on the edge of the radius of light from the fire. He stood looking down at them, with glinting black eyes, holding the cheroot between a dusky thumb and forefinger. Ginger & Co. stared up at him grimly.

"Ecoutez! Listen!" said the man from Martinique quietly. "You are not alone on this island. My mulatto, Yap, followed the fat boy when he fled, and was struck senseless. He did not see who struck him down, but it could not have been the fat one. Non! Who else is on the island?"

"Find out!" suggested Ginger.

The black eyes glittered at him.

"You have told me that you are shipwrecked here. Is it true? I see no signs of a wreck."

"We came on a raft from the wreck of the Spindrift, a jolly long way—hundreds of miles, very likely. I don't know."

"Not you boys alone? Who else?"

Ginger Rawlinson did not answer. The half-breed stooped, and placed the burning end of the cheroot to his forehead—so near that the red-headed junior of Grimslade felt the glow of its heat.

"Will you speak before I press it to the



Unknown to the men round the camp fire Sammy, sheltered by the jutting rock, saved Ginger's arm—and then gave Ginger the knife to free his comrades.

skin?" asked Captain Luz. "I have my own ways with those who are obstinate—not gentle ways."

Ginger breathed hard.

"Two other boys and our schoolmaster," he said.

"Where are they?"

"I don't know! They went round the island yesterday, and have not come back."

The keen black eyes searched Ginger's face. "Un maitre d'ecole, a schoolmaster, could not have struck my mulatto senseless with a blow! No one else—personne?"

"There's a man named Sarson—a villain who scuttled the ship we were on—we gave him a passage on the raft," said Ginger. "He's on the island somewhere. I don't know anything about him. He is our enemy."

The captain started a little.

"Sarson! I know the name! Ezra Sarson,

THE SCHOOLBOYS WHO PERFORMED THE VANISHING TRICK!

a man from San Francisco in Les Etats Unis—the United States?"

"That's the man!"

"Ma foi! An old comrade! But it would not be he who struck down the mulatto. If he had seen us he would have joined us! No other?"

"Not another soul on the island that I know of."

Captain Luz took another long, searching look at Ginger. No doubt he could see that the boy was telling the truth. He gave a puzzled shrug of the shoulders, and walked back to his seat by the fire, where he resumed smoking and muttering to the mate.

"My giddy goloshes!" murmured Ginger. "We fancied that a sail meant rescue—and we've dropped into a jolly old hornet's nest instead! Thank goodness Sammy Sparshott is clear of them!" Ginger chuckled. "I told him a schoolmaster—but he jolly well doesn't guess what sort of a schoolmaster Sammy is! If his dashed nigger was knocked out, you men, it was Sammy knocked him out—you

can bet that! Fritz has got away, and he couldn't have got away without help. My beloved 'earers, jolly old Sammy is somewhere in the offing!"

It was a hopeful thought to the three prisoners. But the discovery that Captain Luz was an old comrade of the ruffian Sarson was dismaying.

Lying on the sand, chilly in the night wind, Ginger & Co. watched the half-savage figures round the fire, and wondered where Sammy was, and whether he could help them out of this scrape. It did not seem likely, for the crew of the schooner was numerous, and both the skipper and the mate were armed. But their faith was great in their headmaster. If anything was to be done, Dr. Samuel Sparshott was the man to do it; they had no doubt whatever about that.

"Rawlinson!"

Ginger gave a violent start as his name was whispered. Sandy Bean and Streaky Bacon caught their breath.

"My giddy goloshes!" breathed Ginger. "That's Sammy."

The three juniors stared round in the darkness. They could see no sign of their headmaster; yet they knew that it was Sammy who had whispered Ginger's name.

"Yes, sir!" whispered Ginger. "I hear you."

"Keep quiet!" came the whisper again. "I am only a few yards from you."

The three juniors spotted now where the whispering came from. A rock jutted from the sand at a short distance. Its height was not more than two feet, but it was evident that it hid the headmaster of Grimslade.

Sammy Sparshott had crawled so far on hands and knees; but he could come no farther without revealing himself to the men round the fire.

The juniors' hearts beat hard and fast. Sammy was there to help them, to rescue them, if he could. But any sound above a whisper might have reached the many ears at the camp at a little distance. And they had no doubt that an alarm would draw fire from the revolver of Captain Luz. They had already seen him fire after Fritz Splitz when the fat German was fleeing.

"Keep out of sight, sir, for goodness' sake!" whispered Ginger. "That scoundrel will shoot—"

"I know it! Roll along the sand slowly

until you are in reach of this rock," came the headmaster's whisper.

"Good egg!" murmured Sandy Bean. Ginger & Co. obeyed at once. Already they had been shifting and wriggling incessantly in the discomfort of their bonds. Further wriggling was not likely to attract any special attention—unless they disappeared from sight, in which case the ruffianly crew were pretty certain to rush after them and drag them back.

But that was not the game. Wriggling on the sand, still in full view of the crew round the fire, they came in contact with the low rock behind which the headmaster of Grimslade lay. They sat up, leaning on the rock and facing the camp, looking as if they had shifted their position for ease. They saw Captain Luz glance at them; but he gave them no special heed, and his face was turned away again.

He did not see—no one at the camp-fire could have seen—the arm that reached round the rock. Ginger felt a touch of fingers that groped. Then the hand was withdrawn—to return with a knife in it, and the keen edge of the knife sawed through the rope that bound Ginger's arms. The knotted rope fell apart, and Ginger's hands were free.

He did not need the whisper that came from the hidden headmaster; he knew what was wanted, and he took the knife from Sammy's hand, which was immediately withdrawn.

"My hat!" breathed Streaky, his eyes dancing.

"Careful, old man!" muttered Sandy Bean. "Teach your grandmother!" retorted Ginger.

Ginger was careful—very careful. He curled himself on the sand, a little nearer to the fire, to disarm suspicion. As he curled he sawed with the knife at the rope round his ankles, and it parted. Slowly, very slowly, eager as he was, he wriggled nearer to Sandy Bean and sawed through his bonds. His heart was beating almost to suffocation with excitement. But he knew that he had to keep cool; that a suspicious movement would have spoiled all. His movements were of almost agonising slowness. But at long last the knife sawed through Streaky's bonds, and all three of the Grimslade juniors were free of the ropes.

"We're loose, sir!" breathed Ginger. "Good!" came back Sammy's whisper. "When you move, move quickly. Run for the stream, and clamber up the rocks through the waterfall. You will get wet, but that will not hurt you. Above, you will find Dainty and Dawson and Splitz. Drop the knife as you pass; I may need it to cover your retreat."

"But you, sir—"

"Are you arguing with your headmaster, Rawlinson?"

Ginger grinned. Dr. Samuel Sparshott was headmaster, to be obeyed without question, on Castaway Island, just as if he were in his study at old Grimslade.

"Very well, sir!" murmured Ginger. "Now!" said Sammy.

And Ginger & Co., as if moved all at once by the same spring, leaped to their feet and ran.

A Wild Night!

VOYEZ!" Captain Luz leaped to his feet, with a shout. "They run!"

He flung the stump of his cheroot into the fire, and grasped the revolver from his belt.

Crack! The bullet whizzed over the low rock behind which the headmaster of Grimslade lay in the sand. It was followed by a crash of the crew round the fire. Captain Luz's dark-skinned face worked with rage as he ran, revolver in hand, and the blacks almost gaped with amazement at the sight of the three prisoners, who had been bound hand and foot, leaping up and darting away into the night.

Ginger & Co. did not lose a second. Swiftly as Captain Luz and his crew had spotted their escape and rushed after them, the three Grimsladers had a start. If they needed spurring on, the crack of the revolver behind them would have done it. They raced away across the sand towards the palm-grove, where the stream, from the high hill in the centre

of Castaway Island, glimmered through the shadows. They heard the tramping of feet, and fierce voices, in chase, and ran on desperately, winding through the trunks of the palms. The lawless crew, rushing after them, had evidently passed Sammy Sparshott unseen, as he lay in the darkness behind the rock. They were speeding fiercely on the track of the running juniors.

"This way!" panted Ginger Rawlinson. He remembered Dr. Sparshott's directions and followed them implicitly. The stream was shallow, hardly more than a couple of feet in the deepest place. Ginger plunged into it, followed by Bacon and Bean. They tramped up the stream against the current till the waterfall was falling on their heads. But for Sammy's directions they certainly would not have thought of such a way of escape; now they did not hesitate for a second. Desperately they clambered up the rocks over which the stream cascaded. They had no doubt that Sammy had gone over it before, and knew that the way was practicable. So they found it; for in spite of the falling water that drenched them in a minute to the skin, they found that they could clamber up the rugged, jutting rocks.

Drenched, soaked, half-drowned by the falling water, but desperately determined, Ginger & Co. clambered on and up. Here and there the water ran heavily in channels of the rock; but it was mostly spray that they had to clamber through, and it was not likely to stop them. Swiftly up the rocky slope they clambered, and plunged into the level stream above, not a foot deep above the cascade. "Oooooogh!" gurgled Ginger, resting on his knees and dashing the water from his eyes. "Grooogh! We're through."

Above the fall the stream flowed down a deep, dark ravine, shut in by high walls of rock. On one side was a broad shelf of rock, where it was possible to land. Ginger and Bacon and Bean crawled out of the water, gasping and spluttering. To their surprise, hands reached out of the gloom and helped

them from the water. But they guessed at once whose hands they were.

"Dainty!" gasped Sandy Bean. "Dawson!"

"Here we are!" grinned Jim Dainty. "Jolly glad to see your old fiery mop, Ginger! I knew it was you; it's like a jolly old beacon in the dark."

"You wait till I get my breath!" gasped Ginger. "I'll jolly well—"

"Isn't Sammy with you?" asked Dick Dawson.

"No; he told us to cut, and we cut." "Mein gootness!" came a groaning voice from the darkness. "Ve vas all lost and tead before! I tink tat I neffer see my pelofed Chermany again!"

The fat face and saucer-eyes of Friedrich von Splitz glimmered in the gloom of the ravine.

"Shut up, you babbling bloater!" growled Ginger. "Hark! They're after us."

"They won't get up here in a hurry," said Jim Dainty. "But by gum, I wish Sammy was here with us!"

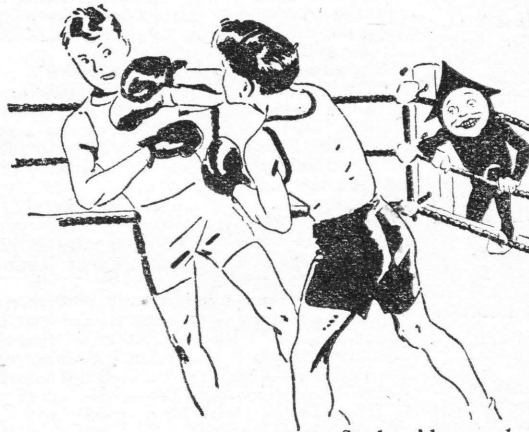
Jim Dainty crawled along to the extreme end of the rocky shelf, which overlooked the waterfall. The fall was not more than ten or twelve feet; and in the shallow stream below, dim in the gloom, he made out a group of figures standing in the water. Five or six scantily clad black men stood round a white, or half-white, man in drenched drill. The voice of Captain Luz reached him.

"Morbieu! They ran this way! They climbed through the cascade! Follow them— you! Yap, follow!"

The brawny mulatto left the group and plunged into the falling water and spray, clambering up the rugged rocks through the drenching water as Ginger & Co. had done a few minutes before.

Jim Dainty's hand closed hard on his cudgel. He watched for the mulatto's head to come within reach. But his intervention was not needed. From somewhere in the darkness a jagged lump of rock came whizzing from down the stream. It struck the mulatto

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on the back of the head as he clambered, and Yap fell backwards as if he had been shot.

He plunged heavily into the pool of water under the wall, struggling feebly. One of his comrades dragged him up. Captain Luz rapped out an oath and stared round into the darkness behind him, whence the missile had come.

"Morbleu! There is another here!" he yelled.

He threw up his revolver and pulled the trigger. But the firearm was drenched, and there was only a click. The next moment the man from Martinique gave a yell as a rock from the darkness struck him on the forehead, and he reeled and fell headlong into the stream.

With a babble of alarm and excitement, the blacks grasped him and dragged him out on the lower bank. The whole crew disappeared from sight.

"Sammy, by gum!" breathed Jim Dainty.

Evidently it was Sammy Sparshott who was in the darkness behind the ruffians, and who had thus effectually covered the retreat of Ginger & Co.

"Mein goodness! Are they gone?" came Fritz Splitz's quavering voice.

"They're jolly well gone!" chuckled Jim Dainty. "Sammy heaved rocks at them, and I fancy two of them will have a bit of a headache. We're as safe as houses here. We could hold this show against the whole gang of them!"

"What-ho!" chuckled Ginger. "We could roll Fritz down on them—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Peast and a prute!" yelled Fritz. "Mein goodness! I wish tat I was pack in Chermany! I wish tat I neffer gum on tat peastly gruisse! I wish tat— Ach! Leaf off to kick me on mein trousers, you peastly pounder!"

"We're all right here," said Dick Dawson. "We've found a cave, farther up the ravine. We've got that villain Sarson there, a prisoner, tied up like a turkey! But my hat! I wish Sammy was here. If those scoundrels get hold of him—"

"They won't get their paws on old Sammy in a hurry!" said Ginger. "Sammy's too good for them."

"Listen!" murmured Jim Dainty.

The juniors listened. Captain Luz and his crew had cleared off from the lower stream, doubtless in search of the unseen enemy who had hurled the rocks from the darkness. Voices could be heard shouting in the distance, and sharp reports rang out, echoing and booming up the rocky ravine. Likely enough, the ruffians were firing at shadows as they hunted for the man they could not find. But the sound of firing made the juniors' hearts beat painfully.

"Here they come again!" breathed Ginger, as there was a sound of a splash in the stream below. "Look out!"

A dark figure showed in the glimmer of the falling water. Jim Dainty, crouching at the end of the ledge by the waterfall, gripped his cudgel. But a familiar voice hailed from the dark.

"Hallo! Grimslade!"

"Sammy!" exclaimed Jim.

The athletic figure of the headmaster of Grimslade clambered up the rocks through the spray. Jim Dainty gave him a helping hand from the water. Dr. Sparshott landed on the ledge, breathing hard. There was a large rucksack on his back, crammed almost to bursting. He slung it down with a gasp of relief. The juniors gathered round their headmaster, deeply thankful to see Sammy again safe and sound.

"They never got you, sir!" chuckled Ginger.

"No; they did not get me, Rawlinson!" said Dr. Sparshott. "They are, I believe, hunting me at a distance—I led them a chase across the sands, and cut back, leaving them to it. While they were at a safe distance I dropped into our hut, and I have brought enough rations to last us for a few days, at least. Probably some of you are hungry—Splitz, I am sure, is a trifle peckish—"

"Ach! I vas so hungry tat I tink tat I tie!" gasped Fritz. "Vere vas tat grub? Giff me some grub! I tink tat I tie if I do not have some grub ferry quick after."

Dr. Sparshott, with a cheery chuckle, passed a can of corned beef to the fat German. And Fritz Splitz could hardly wait to get the can open before he buried his teeth in it.

A Fight Against Odds!

FROM the far Atlantic the golden sun leaped, and it was day on Castaway Island. In the thick woods the twitter of wild birds, the screaming of parrots, woke the echoes. The rays of the sun glimmered on the stream that cascaded down the rocky ravine, and on the tired but indomitable face of Dr. Samuel Sparshott.

Seated on a boulder at the end of the ledge overlooking the waterfall, Sammy Sparshott was keeping watch and ward. The juniors had retired to the cave, farther up the ravine, where they had lighted a fire to dry their clothes, and sleep. They were still sleeping when dawn shone over the lonely island; but there was no sleep for Sammy. He had piled up a stack of loose rocks, to use as missiles, if the enemy attempted to force their way up the ravine; and he waited and watched for them. He had little doubt that he would see something of Captain Luz and his crew soon after dawn; and he was right. As the sunlight strengthened there was a tramping and splashing lower down the narrow ravine, and a broad-brimmed hat appeared. Under its brim Sammy Sparshott had a glimpse of a dark, hard face, and glinting, black eyes, watchful as a puma's. It was Captain Luz, and he was alone. If his men were following him they were keeping out of sight so far. As he spotted the headmaster of Grimslade looking down from the rocky ledge above, the dusky hand of the man from Martinique went to the butt of the revolver in his belt. But he relinquished the weapon immediately; and holding out his hands to show that they were empty, he looked up at the man above.

"Allons! Now I see you, monsieur!" said the captain. "It is to you I owe the lump on his forehead—" est-ce-pas!—and the boy would have me believe that you are a maitre d'ecole—a schoolmaster, morbleu."

Sammy Sparshott chuckled.

"The boy told you the truth," he answered. "I am a schoolmaster, and the boys with me are my pupils. We were on a summer holiday cruise when our ship was wrecked and we got away on a raft. Why you have treated us as enemies I cannot understand—keep your distance, and leave us in peace, and that is all we ask."

The captain's lip curved in a sneer.

"I find you here," he said. "Here on this island a hundred miles from the track of ships! You tell a tale of a wreck and a raft—bah! But I will deal fairly with you. I will give you fair play and a share, since you are here on the same quest."

Dr. Sparshott looked at him keenly and curiously. There was treachery in every line of the dark face, every glint of the black, suspicious eyes. The headmaster of Grimslade answered quietly.

"I caught some words among your men last night, Captain Luz! I learned that you have visited this lonely island in the belief that there is some treasure here. I know nothing of it. Search for it, if you will—I shall not interfere. I shall be only too glad to see the last of you! If I could trust you I would gladly pay for a passage from the island. I cannot—so keep your distance."

"Morbleu!" The man from Martinique gritted his teeth. "I am not an infant to be deceived by words! You are here—where no human foot ever treads—where no foot has trodden since the Black Marquis landed. This is the island to which he sailed from Hayti, a hundred years ago—that much I know! You know it also, or you would not be here."

"I have never even heard of your Black Marquis—"

"Assez! Enough, then! Together, adding what you know to what I know, we may raise what the Black Marquis buried here by the order of King Christophe. Will you join with me, then?"

"I repeat that I know nothing about what you speak of," said Dr. Sparshott. "I am here by chance and shipwreck—"

"Lies! Lies! Will you join with me and seek—"

"I will not trust myself, or my charges, into your rascally hands," said Dr. Sparshott sternly, "and if you attempt an attack the consequences will be on your own head."

"On your own, monsieur le maitre d'ecole, as you will see!" snarled the man from Martinique, and with a sudden movement, he flashed out the revolver and fired. But swift as he was, Sammy Sparshott was swifter. His head was drawn back beyond the jutting ledge of rock, and the bullet whistled away harmlessly along the wall of the ravine. With an imprecation, Captain Luz swung round and splashed away down the lower stream.

"My giddy goloshes!" came a yell from the cave. "They're at it."

The shot had awakened the Grimslade juniors. Ginger was first out of the cave. Jim Dainty after him, and then the others—excepting Fritz Splitz. That fat youth scuttled farther up the deep cave in search of safety. The five juniors came running along the shelf of rock to join Dr. Sparshott.

"Keep back!" barked Sammy. "They are desperate rascals, and they will shoot. Don't show your heads."

"We can stand them off here, sir!" said Jim Dainty.

"I think so!" said Dr. Sparshott coolly. "Once in the water they cannot use their firearms; and they cannot reach us without clambering through the fall! Pick up the heaviest rocks you can throw, and keep watch—you can fancy, if you like, that you are at Middlemoor Fair, playing at coconut-shies."

The Grimsladers waited and watched for heads to appear among the jutting rocks over which the stream cascaded. Every right hand grasped a missile. It was to be a rather deadly game of "coconut-shies"—and the Grimsladers were keen and ready for it.

The sharp, shrill, savage voice of Captain Luz was heard, ordering the blacks to the attack. From the buzz of voices and the heavy splashing, the Grimsladers could guess that almost the whole crew of the schooner had gathered there. Strong as the position was, only a determined defence could hold it against fifteen or twenty brawny enemies.

Up from the rocks jutting in the falling water came a fuzzy head, and a pair of fierce eyes rolled and gleamed. Dr. Sparshott's hand shot forward, a crash, and the black man went over backwards, falling into the water. Wild yelling and scrambling and splashing below told that he had swept away two or three others in his fall.

But head after head rose to view, the blacks clambering through the falling water as active as monkeys.

"Go it!" yelled Ginger Rawlinson.

Crash! Bang! Crash! Whiz! Crash! Crowded on the ledge high above the water, the Grimsladers pelted the clambering enemy with jagged rocks. Head after head disappeared as the blacks went tumbling backwards. Only one dodged the rapid missiles and plunged into the pool above the fall and turned on the Grimsladers, knife in hand, snarling like a savage beast. Dr. Sparshott reached over, cudgel in his grip, and struck, and the black man fell under the crashing blow, stunned. He fell in the waterfall and was swept over and down. Yells and howls came from below, and the crack-crack of a revolver, as Captain Luz fired at the rock wall over the ledge, in the hope that a ricocheting bullet might strike the defenders. Glancing lead grazed Jim Dainty's cheek, drawing a streak of crimson.

Dr. Sparshott grasped the big boulder on which he had been sitting that morning. It weighed a good hundredweight. He lifted it in his powerful arms and hurled it into the falling water. The juniors caught their breath. "My giddy goloshes!" gasped Ginger. "If they get that on their nappers—"

There was a terrible crash below as the huge boulder landed. Yells and screams of terror followed, and the sound of splashing feet in rapid retreat. The yelling voice of Captain Luz died away amid the yelling of the blacks, and the enemy were gone.

"Grimslade," drawled Dr. Sparshott, "wins the first round!"

(Jim Dainty & Co. are in a tight corner, but the Grimslade chaps never know when they're beaten. You'll revel in their amazing adventures, next week!)