

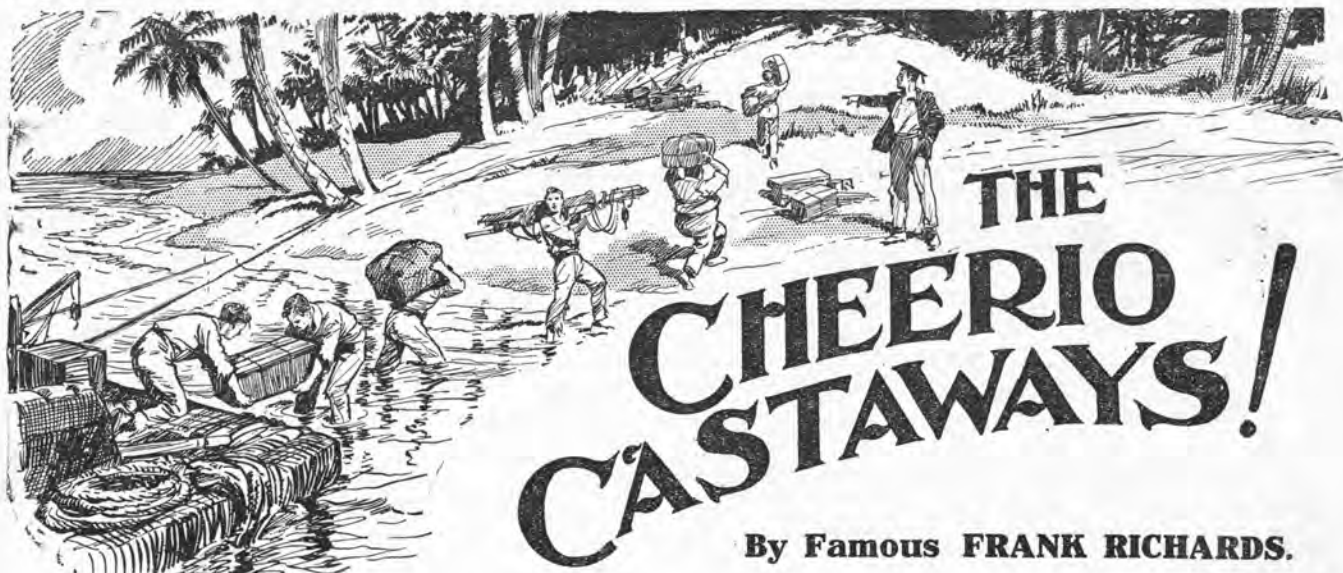
"THE WHITE INDIAN!" AMAZING YARN OF THE WILD WEST READ IT IN THIS ISSUE

The RANGER²



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By Famous FRANK RICHARDS.



Land!

AND!"

"Hurrah!"

Jim Dainty & Co. fairly let themselves go. Far and wide the shout rang, over the blue waters round the floating raft.

Dr. Samuel Sparshott, headmaster of Grimslade, grinned cheerily.

Sammy Sparshott, with his hat on the back of an untidy head, an unshaven chin, and a sun-blister on his nose, did not look much like the headmaster who had walked the quadrangle at Grimslade School.

Neither did the fellows on the raft look much like Grimslade juniors—they looked rather like a crew of ragamuffins. But it was a real Grimslade yell they gave at the sight of the island rising from the sea—land at last after their perilous voyage on the raft from the wrecked Spindrift.

"My giddy goloshes! A jolly old island!" yelled Ginger Rawlinson, clapping Streaky Bacon on the back in his exuberance, and nearly pitching Streaky off the raft.

"Ow! Chuck it, fathead!" gasped Streaky.

He grabbed at Sandy Bean to save himself from falling, and they tumbled over together—on to Fritz von Splitz, who had not got up yet. The yell of Fritz von Splitz as he received them rang louder than the cheering of the Grimsladers.

"Ach! Mein gootness! Vat vas tat?" yelled Fritz. "Vy for you gum down pang on me, peasts and prutes and pounders?"

"Land!" yelled Jim Dainty. "Land, you old Boche bloater!"

"Ach! I vas tamaged mit meinsel! I have yun bain in mein bread-basket!" gasped Fritz. "Vill you peasts get off mein dummy? You giff me a colossal bain in mein dummy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Land!" chuckled Dick Dawson. "And we're running right down to it! Fritz, old bean, I can see the coconuts, all a-growing and a-blowing!"

Fritz sat up and took notice.

"Gokernuts! Tat is goot! Gokernuts are goot to eat!"

Nearer and clearer the island rose before the gladdened eyes of the shipwrecked schoolboys. The sun, now high in the east, shone brightly on the shelving beach of a wide blue bay, backed by thick green jungle, with wooded hills rising beyond.

With the wind abaft, filling the sail, the raft floated on towards the island, Sammy Sparshott steering with the sweep. Eagerly the schoolboys watched the island shore. There was no sign of life to be seen there—no sign of a building of any kind. So far as they could see, the island was uninhabited. But, inhabited or not, it was land—terra firma at

last—and a joyous sight to the shipwrecked Grimsladers.

Indeed, just then Jim Dainty & Co. hardly regretted the wreck of the Spindrift, on which they had been taking a holiday cruise with their headmaster. Camping on an unknown island in the vast spaces of the South Atlantic rather appealed to them as a first-class way of spending school holidays!

"Vat island is tat, sir?" asked Fritz Splitz, getting on his feet at last, and blinking at the shore with his saucer-eyes.

Dr. Sparshott smiled and shook his head.

"Probably a West Indian island, Splitz!" he answered. "That is the nearest we can guess. All we know for certain is that we are somewhere near South America. There are innumerable small islands in these seas, many of them uninhabited, or inhabited only by a few blacks."

"Mein gootness! Perhaps we had better keep on, sir, and giff tat island a miss," suggested Fritz. "Tere may be gannibals tere."

"My giddy goloshes! A cannibal would be

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jolly glad to see you, Fatty!" grinned Ginger. "You would last him weeks and weeks."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Peast and a prute!" howled Fritz. "I vill not be eaten by gannibals to please you."

"You need not be afraid of cannibals in this part of the world, Splitz," said Dr. Sparshott, smiling. "I do not imagine that we shall meet with any danger on that island. If we do, we shall face it, I hope, with courage."

"It's no end of a lark to land on a desert island, Fatty!" said Jim Dainty.

The raft surged on. All through the night, and since dawn, the wind had been freshening, and there was now a stiff breeze blowing. The juniors were glad of it, as it drove them on all the faster towards their destination. But Dr. Sparshott's face grew graver, as he watched the island intently.

It lay to the west—and the wind came out of the north-east. From a distance, it had looked as if the raft would float before the wind into the blue bay that opened on the shore. But as they drew nearer the schoolboys could see that there was danger of missing the island altogether and floating past the southern extremity.

Sammy Sparshott rapped out orders to his schoolboy crew, and the sail was trimmed. He leaned hard on the steering-sweep. The raft came round a little, but there was no doubt that it answered badly to the improvised helm. It floated well, and sailed well before the wind; but tacking was another proposition with such a craft. And the exuberant glee of the crew died down as they realised that they might never make the island at all.

"Get out the oars!" barked Sammy.

There were half a dozen spare oars, brought from the wrecked Spindrift. The juniors seized them, and paddled. The head of the raft swung round a little more to the north.

Once past the island, the Grimslade crew would be lost on the open ocean again. Southward, long, low rocks ran out into the sea from the island, edged with creamy spray. The tide was running into the bay.

"We shall make it!" said Sammy. "The tide will help us! Keep going."

The six schoolboys paddled with the oars, while Sammy steered with one hand and handled the sheets with the other. There was only one idle pair of hands on the raft, those of Ezra Sarson, the rascal who had scuttled the Spindrift, and who was a prisoner, bound to the mast.

Bump! The raft shivered.

"My giddy goloshes! She's aground!" panted Ginger Rawlinson.

The raft bumped on a rock, and edged off again. The juniors shoved with the oars, and shoved clear. Their hearts were beating hard.

"That's saved us!" said Sammy coolly.

He was right, for the rock against which the raft had bumped was the outermost, stretching south from the edge of the bay. Had they missed it, they must have gone whirling on past the island.

Now the tide caught the raft, and dashed it along the line of rocks into the bay. Instead of paddling, the juniors fended with the oars, keeping their clumsy craft from going aground. The sail was dropped, and the rising tide carried the raft onward, deeper into the blue bay, with the shelving beach ahead.

"All right now!" said Sammy Sparshott cheerfully.

"Hurrah!"

Bump! This time the bump was on soft sand.

"Take a line ashore, Dainty!"

Jim Dainty grasped the rope, and jumped on the sand, the tide washing round his knees. He ran up the sloping beach, and made fast the rope to a tree-stump beyond high-water mark. The raft was safely moored at last, and the Grimsladers scrambled gleefully ashore.

On a Desert Island!

"ANYBODY at home?" roared Ginger Rawlinson.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ginger's powerful voice echoed up the sandy beach and thundered back in a

thousand echoes from the jungle and the hill. From the trees a swarm of birds rose in startled flight, calling and screaming. But there was no other answer to Ginger's stentorian hail. There was, evidently, "nobody at home" on the desert island.

If there were inhabitants, they were not on the eastern side of the island, where the castaways had landed. What might be on the other side of the wooded hill they could not tell.

"Mein gootness! You will bring those gannibals down on us, you Chinger!" moaned Fritz Splitz. "Vat shall we do if te gannibals gum?"

"We'll give you to them as a peace-offering," suggested Jim Dainty.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ach! Feast and a prute!" Fritz blinked at the dark jungle, back of the beach, with uneasy, saucer-eyes. He could not get the idea of natives and cannibals out of his podgy mind.

Dr. Sparshott stood on the soft sand, surveying the beach. Here and there great rocks cropped up from the sand. One huge rock had a side almost as perpendicular as the wall of a house. Sammy walked across to it.

"What about exploring the place, sir?" asked Jim Dainty.

All the juniors were eager to get going and explore their new and strange territory. The unknown lay before them; and the unknown had a great attraction for the schoolboy mind. Dr. Sparshott smiled and shook his head.

"Plenty of time for that, Dainty!" he answered. "We shall not be taken off this island in a hurry. First of all, we must build a shelter for the night. All hands!"

Fritz Splitz groaned. It was now past noon and the heat of the tropical day was terrific. Fritz would have preferred to creep into the shadow of a rock and sleep. Working under that blaze of heat had no appeal for Friedrich von Splitz.

"Buck up, Fatty!" said Ginger encouragingly. "We've got to get the things off the raft. Feel as if you can't walk down to the raft?"

"Ach!" groaned Fritz. "It is ferry hot, and I vas ferry dired! I tink tat I gannot walk at all!"

"I guessed that one!" agreed Ginger. "You men, poor old Fritz can't walk down to the raft, though it's only a dozen yards. Let's let him off walking. Lucky there's a slope on the beach, and we can roll him, like a barrel!"

"Hear, hear!"

Ginger grasped the fat Rhinelander and upended him on the soft sand. All the fellows lent a hand, and Fritz rolled. He rolled over and over down the beach, letting out a shrill squeal at every roll.

"Ach! Peasts and prutes! I vill walk!" squealed Fritz. "Ach! I have no more te breff! Tat you leaf off! Yaroooooh!"

Fritz rolled, and rolled. He reached the water's edge, and rolled in with a mighty splash.

"Urrrrgh!"

He sat up in shallow water, the Atlantic Ocean flowing round his fat neck, and spluttered.

"Ach! Peastly pounders! I am ferry vet! Urrrrgh!"

"Like any more help?" asked Ginger.

"Ach! Nein! Nein!"

Hot as it was, the juniors worked cheerily. The other fellows felt the heat, as well as Fritz, but they made light of it. Sammy Sparshott set them a good example, working like three men rolled into one.

Spars, and canvas, and boxes were taken ashore and carried up the beach towards the high rock, which Sammy had selected as the site of the hut which was to be built. Up and down the hot, glistening beach the juniors tramped, bedewed with perspiration and blistering in the sun.

"I guess you're going to let me loose out of this!" Ezra Sarson spoke at last, breaking the long, sullen silence.

Dr. Sparshott looked thoughtfully at the rascal who had scuttled the Spindrift. It had been impossible to leave the 'Frisco tough to drown on the sinking wreck; but he was rather a problem on the hands of the castaways.

"I shall let you loose, my man!" said Dr.

Sparshott, at last. "You've had a lesson, and if you've learned to toe the line and behave yourself you'll be treated like the rest. If you give trouble, look out for squalls!"

He signed to Jim Dainty, and the juniors untied the ruffian. Sarson staggered up, his limbs cramped by the bonds in which he had lain for many long hours. He plunged through the lapping tide to the beach, where he sat down on the sand, rubbing and chafing his aching limbs.

"Ten to one he will bolt, sir!" said Dick Dawson.

"It will not be a great loss if he does, my boy," said Dr. Sparshott.

The materials for the hut having been landed, the building commenced. Sammy Sparshott wielded the hammer, which rang and echoed merrily up the lonely beach. The framework of the hut was completed as the sun sank westward behind the hill.

"Later, we shall break up the raft and use the materials," said Sammy. "For the present, canvas will suffice. All hands!"

All hands turned to, unrolling sailcloth and stretching it over the wooden framework for walls and roof. The edges were pegged down securely. Busy and hard at work, the castaways forgot the existence of Ezra Sarson. They were suddenly reminded of him by a howl from Fritz Splitz.

"Ach! Look! Tat prute go away mit te raft mit himself after!"

"What?" roared Sammy.

He spun round and stared down the beach. The tide had long since turned, and was flowing out of the bay. The raft, securely moored, had been safe enough. But it was loose now, and floating out to sea. Standing on the raft was Ezra Sarson, with an oar in his hand, paddling and steering. And he was already a hundred yards out when Fritz spotted him.

"My giddy goloshes!" gasped Ginger.

"He's got the raft!" The juniors stared in dismay. Little had been landed, so far, except the building materials. Almost all the supplies were still packed on the raft. The desperate rascal had crept on the raft while they were too busily engaged to think of him and cast off the ropes and floated out on the receding tide. Sammy Sparshott's teeth came hard together.

"My fault!" he muttered. "I should have expected treachery from that villain!"

"Ach! Now we shall have nothings to eat!" wailed Fritz Splitz. "And I vas alretty so hungry as neffer vas before!"

"He's done us!" muttered Jim Dainty, his eyes gleaming at the ruffian on the raft.

They ran down to the water's edge. Sarson was working desperately with the oar, and already the raft was some distance from the shore. Dr. Sparshott stood still, watching him and calculating. Then he threw off his coat and boots.

"Stay here!" he barked.

And he plunged into the water and swam.

Sammy's Fight!

JIM DAINITY & CO. watched breathlessly. With long, powerful strokes Sammy Sparshott cleft the shining waters of the bay. The sun, low now in the west, crimsoned the water, and it rippled away from the swimmer like ripples of fire. Sammy was a splendid swimmer, as the Grimslanders well knew. But the raft had a long start, and was going on a strong tide.

Sarson, as he watched the swimmer, grinned evilly, showing his brown teeth. Evidently he had no fear of the pursuit. The juniors stood in a breathless group, watching with their hearts almost in their mouths.

"Sammy's gaining on him!" breathed Ginger Rawlinson.

Sarson, standing on the raft, had a hand on the steering sweep. With the other he grasped an oar, paddling. The wind, fortunately, was unfavourable till he was clear of the almost land-locked bay; and he had not hoisted the sail.

Steadily, swiftly, borne on the outgoing tide, the raft glided towards the sea. But steadily, and more swiftly, Sammy Sparshott was coming on astern with mighty strokes, his face set like iron, his eyes like cold steel, his lips a hard line. He was gaining—slowly,

but he was gaining. And the mocking grin died off the 'Frisco tough's tanned face as, with a sudden spurt, the headmaster of Grims-lade reached the raft and managed to grip the edge.

Releasing the sweep, Sarson grasped the oar with both hands. It swept above his head, aimed at the man clinging to the edge of the raft.

Far off as they now were, the juniors on shore could see the whole scene clearly. Their hearts almost stopped beating as the oar swung over Sammy's unprotected head in the desperate hands of the scuttler.

Crash!

They did not hear, but they saw the crash as the oar came down, splintering with the force of the blow, on the timbers. Sammy's head vanished under the waters, and for one terrible second it seemed to the watching schoolboys that that savage blow had crushed in his skull and sent him to the bottom.

But it was only for a second. Sammy's wet head bobbed up again, a yard or two from the raft. He had ducked under as the blow came, and the oar had only splintered on the timbers, leaving Sammy untouched. He closed in and grasped hold again.

"Bravo, Sammy!" gasped Ginger.

"Oh, good man! Good man!" panted Jim.

But Sarson was quick as a cat. On his knees, he aimed a fierce blow with the broken oar, and Sammy, dodging it, fell back into the sea. He went right under with the fall, the waters closing over him; and Sarson gained his feet and stood panting. Sammy's head was a dozen feet astern when it came up again. The ruffian yelled to him savagely.

"I guess you can come on again, doggone you! I guess you'll be food for the fishes when we're through, Sam Sparshott!"

Dr. Sparshott did not waste breath in replying. He swam on after the raft, the ruffian watching him, ready to strike. Down came the broken oar, as Sammy laid hold. Again he dodged and ducked, and went under.

It seemed to the juniors that he slipped under the raft as they watched; and they gazed, almost in agony, to see his head reappear. But this time it did not reappear. The water astern of the raft was smooth, unbroken, gleaming in the sunset, and Sarson burst into a rasping laugh of triumph, which the strong wind from the sea carried to the ears of the juniors far away on the shore.

"Is he—is he gone?" breathed Sandy Bean.

"Sammy—"

It looked like it! The faces of the juniors were white. Sammy had slipped beneath the raft when he went under; and if he came up under the timbers, he was hopelessly trapped, to drown like a rat. Sarson, evidently, believed that he had seen the last of the schoolmaster. Grinning like some savage gorilla, he waved the broken oar at the juniors on the beach in mocking farewell.

"Oh! Look!" breathed Jim Dainty.

Ahead of the floating raft, a dark, wet mop of hair rose from the water. Sarson, standing at the steering-sweep, and glaring back at the beach, did not see it. But the juniors looking across and past the raft saw it, and knew that it was Sammy. And they knew that Sammy had swum under the raft, to get ahead of it; it was by intention that he had gone under the timbers when he ducked. His face gleamed wet in the sun as it came up. His hands grasped at the edge of the raft, behind the back of the man standing on it; and they saw him plant a knee on the timbers, and then another knee, and draw himself from the water.

He was on the raft now, and Sarson was still looking back. But he turned his head and gave a convulsive start at the sight of the man he had believed already drowned, standing dripping with water before him. For a second Sarson stared at the headmaster of Grims-lade with almost unbelieving eyes. Then, with a yell of rage, he bounded across the raft towards him, uplifting the broken oar to knock him back into the sea.

But Sammy Sparshott had a safe footing on the raft now. He was breathing in great gulps; his exertions had told even on Sammy's great strength. He made a sudden spring and dodged round the mast as the ruffian rushed on him.

Sarson, gritting his discoloured teeth, bounded after him, and his descending blow

missed the schoolmaster by inches. Sammy leaped aside, dodged the panting ruffian, and ran along the raft. He stooped as he ran, and snatched up a loose oar. He whirled round, with the oar in his hands, and lunged at the pursuing ruffian. The oar crashed on Ezra Sarson's chest, and sent him staggering backwards.

Before he could recover himself the oar was lunged again, taking him under his stubby chin. The ruffian went backwards over the edge of the raft, falling into the sea with a resounding splash.

Sammy stood panting. The tousled head of the 'Frisco tough rose from the water, and he swam. As he approached the raft Dr. Sparshott stepped to the edge, with the oar uplifted. He did not speak, but the icy glint in his eyes was enough for the ruffian. Ezra Sarson sheered off in haste. The tables were turned now, and the game was up for the 'Frisco tough.

Dr. Sparshott gave him no further heed. He dropped the oar and grasped the sail. Almost at the mouth of the bay the raft was in danger of whirling past the outermost rocks and drifting out on the open sea. Sammy had only minutes, but he made the most of them.

He was so far from the juniors now that he seemed toy-like in the distance; but they saw him get the sail up, they saw it fill in the stiff wind that was blowing into the bay, and they saw the seaward course of the raft arrested. The wind was strong, and it beat the drag of the tide; and Dr. Sparshott, standing at the steering-sweep, steered the raft back slowly but surely to the beach.

Fearful for Fritz!

"BRAVO, Sammy!" The juniors yelled in chorus as the raft, slowly but surely, came surging back to the shelving sands. Even Fritz gave a fat squeal.

"Pravo! Mein gootness, tat Sammy is almost as prave as a Cherman! Pravo!"

The juniors rushed into the water up to their necks to drag the raft ashore. More than a mile away, on the rugged rocks at the mouth of the bay, Ezra Sarson was dragging himself exhausted from the sea. The ruffian sank down, utterly spent, and lay like a log where he fell. The Grimslade fellows did not see him, and did not know whether he had escaped with his life or not—and little cared! The rascal had been defeated, the raft with its supplies, on which their lives might depend, was recaptured. Ginger Rawlinson came very near thumping his headmaster on the back! They had always admired Sammy at Grimslade School; but on the desert island they admired him more than ever.

"Tank gootness you have gum pack safe, sir!" said Fritz Splitz.

"Thank you, my boy!" said Dr. Sparshott, smiling.

"Pecause if you had not gum pack tere would be no grub," said Fritz, "and I am derribly hungry."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Sammy.

He jumped ashore.

"Now, my boys, we're taking no chances," he said. "Get everything ashore from the raft. All hands to work! Nothing to eat yet, Splitz—nothing till we've unloaded."

"Mein gootness!" groaned Fritz.

"Leave it to us, sir!" said Jim Dainty. "You've been through it, and we've had a rest!"

"Rot!" said Sammy tersely. "Get to it—all hands! Here, Splitz, carry this box! Buck up!"

The raft was drawn close in and moored, and the outgoing tide left it stranded. It lay on the sands, and all hands set to work unloading. Up the beach went the schoolboys, one after another, carrying goods of all sorts and descriptions that the careful Sammy had packed on the raft from the wrecked Spindriff. Up the beach and back again—to and fro—incessantly, as the sun dipped behind the hill and the short tropical twilight faded into night. Boxes and bags, kegs and sacks, were stacked inside the hut or round its walls.

When the sun was gone the bright stars that came gleaming out in the deep blue vault of the sky gave them light enough for the work.

Tired to the bone, but still cheery, the Grimslade juniors kept at it. As Ginger remarked, there would be plenty of time to rest in the days that were to follow.

That, however, was not good enough for Friedrich von Splitz. Fritz wanted a rest, and he wanted it now! If Fritz took a seat on the sands the next fellow who passed him was sure to stir him into activity with a hefty kick, and the hapless Rhinelander, for some time, collected more kicks than rests. Then his fat brain evolved an idea. He was carrying a roll of blankets up to the hut when he suddenly staggered and fell and gave a loud squeal.

"Ach! Help! I have sprained me to ankle!"

The juniors ran to him. If Fritz had sprained his ankle they were ready to help and sympathise. But they knew their Fritz, and they doubted. Dr. Sparshott laid down his load, came across to the sprawling German,

Lie still immediately, sir! You must not put a strain on a sprained ankle," barked Dr. Sparshott. "If he gets up, knock him down again at once."

"Yes, rather, sir!"

"Mein gootness!" groaned Fritz.

Work was suspended for supper. There were plenty of provisions, and hard work had given the castaways excellent appetites. All of them punished that supper—excepting Fritz. They sat down before the hut and ate—while Fritz, not daring to move from where he lay, watched them from a distance with longing eyes. A dry ship's biscuit and a tin pannikin of pure water did not comfort him very much when Jim Dainty brought them to him.

"Tainty, mein goot Tainty," groaned Fritz, "pring me some of te canned peef—joost a few pounds of peef, mein goot, tear Tainty!"

"Head's orders!" chuckled Jim. "You're ill, you know!"

"But I vas not ill!" wailed Fritz. "I vas



"He's done us!" muttered Jim Dainty, his eyes gleaming at the ruffian on the raft. But he had reckoned without Dr. Sparshott, who was throwing off his coat and boots. "Stay here!" he barked. Sammy was not beaten yet!

and looked down at him in the starlight. Fritz's fat face was twisted into an expression of fearful anguish.

"Hurt?" barked Sammy.

"Ach! Ja! Ja wohl!" groaned Fritz. "I suffer derribble bains! I put te foot into vun hole in te sand, and I fall and sprain him! I tink tat I preak me a pone! I cannot move!"

"Very well," said Dr. Sparshott. "We will now knock off for a little supper, my boys, and finish our work afterwards. As Splitz cannot help himself you must help him, Dainty."

"Oh!" said Jim. "Yes, sir!"

"You will give him a little dry biscuit and some water," said Dr. Sparshott. "In a hot climate like this it is necessary to be very careful with diet when one is ill. Just a small portion of dry biscuit."

"Oh! Yes, sir!" chuckled Jim.

Fritz sat up.

"Ach! I tink tat I am petter now," he gasped. "I tink tat I am ferry mooch petter! I tink—"

"Nonsense! Remain where you are, Splitz!

mooch petter! And I vas so hungry as neffer vas before! Tat Sammy is a peast and a 'prute!"

"There's your rations, old podgy bloater." And Jim went back to the supper-party, leaving Fatty Fritz groaning over his rations.

Supper over, the castaways resumed carrying the remainder of the raft's cargo up to the hut. Fritz Splitz lay where he was and groaned. He was getting a rest; but he did not want a rest now so much as he wanted supper. Hoping to escape observation in the dimness, he picked himself up at last, and started for the hut—and the provisions. But there was no escape for Fritz. Ginger Rawlinson spotted him, and did not forget to carry out the Head's orders. A punch on his podgy chest laid Fritz on the sand again.

"Ach! Peast and a prute!" he yelled.

"Head's orders!" grinned Ginger.

After that, Fritz remained where he was. The work was over at last, and the raft

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Suddenly he paused, wheeling towards the door with head thrust forward, for heavily booted feet were again hurrying up the staircase, and in answer to the knock which ensued, Tanquer positively yelled the word:

"Enter!"

It was the Citizen-sergeant who strode into the room again.

"Well?" Tanquer shot at him.

"The prisoner persists in his statement that he is none other than the Citizen-agent Moricaud," reported the sergeant, rigidly at the salute. "So, in accordance with your instructions, the Citizen-governor has sent him here under escort!"

"Where is he, then?" blazed Tanquer. "Where is he, you fool?"

"Downstairs in a cabriolet," replied the sergeant. "It was necessary to bring him in such a conveyance, as, owing to his attire, he could not be mounted on a horse."

"What?" guffawed Santerre. "Is he still in female garb, then?"

The veriest shadow of a grin hovered for an instant about the sergeant's lips.

"Yes," he answered. "He has been very violent in his cell, and because of that, and in view of your opinion that he is a liar and an impostor, the Citizen-governor did not feel disposed to provide him with a change of garb, but thought it better that you should see him as he is."

"The Citizen-governor shall dine with me to-morrow night," said Santerre. "A man of such infinite wisdom cannot be cultivated enough. Well, bring the fellow up!"

"Yes, let us have him up!" babbled Tanquer. "Let us see him!"

"Without delay, Citizen-commissioner!" responded the sergeant, and, turning smartly on his heel, he strode from the room and down the stairs.

There followed then a few moments of waiting during which none of the four spoke. Santerre, lolling on his back-tilted chair, was grinning broadly. Heron was obviously nervous; Corbeau, cold and collected. Tanquer, his eyes on the door, was strangely pale, and it was very evident that he was dreading what he was about to see.

"Here they come!" muttered Heron, as a rumble of voices, a clump of feet, and one shrill and very angry voice sounded on the stairs.

The angry voice grew louder as it ascended and the four members of the Committee of Public Safety exchanged glances. There was no need to question further. They knew that voice.

It reached the top of the stairs, then came a sudden rush of feet, and the pseudo Duchess of D'Ocken burst furiously into the room.

What Santerre and his companions had been expecting to see is problematical; but certainly in their wildest imaginings they could never have pictured so dreadful an apparition as that which appeared so suddenly in their midst.

With wig dishevelled and awry, painted face bedaubed and smeared with mud and filth, bodice and wide skirt torn and bedraggled, the creature who stood glaring at them with blazing eyes caused Tanquer to back hastily away and effectively wiped the smile from off the bearded lips of Santerre.

"Moricaud!" gasped Heron.

(Look out for more thrilling chapters of this magnificent French Revolution story in next week's bumper issue of the RANGER.)

THE CHEERIO CASTAWAYS!

(Continued from page 53.)

stripped to the bare timbers. It was rather a late hour for the schoolboys, and they were more than ready to turn in. Sammy Sparshott looked down at the dismal Fritz with a grim smile.

"Splitz must be taken up to the hut," he said. "He cannot walk—"

"Ach! I can walk!" wailed Fritz.

"Nonsense! You cannot walk with a sprained ankle! And you are too heavy to be carried! Pull him along!" said Sammy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors were tired, but not too tired to pull Fritz up to the hut. They grasped him in many places—his large ears, his hair, his collar, his fat arms—and lugged. Squeals of anguish came from the fat Rhinelander.

"Ach! Peasts and prutes! You vas pull out to hair—vill you leaf go mein ears! Ach himmel! I tells you tat I can walk—I vill not be dragged about like tat! Ach! Whooooo!"

But the injured Fritz was not allowed to walk. He was dragged all the way, and deposited in the hut in a gasping heap.

"And now to bed!" said Sammy.

The juniors rolled themselves in blankets on the floor of soft sand. Sammy fastened the flap of canvas across the doorway. Jim Dainty & Co. were so tired that they dropped off to sleep almost the moment they lay down.

An Alarm in the Night!

Fritz Splitz could not sleep. Probably it was the first time in his fat life that Fatty Fritz had remained awake while other fellows slept. Now he simply couldn't help it. There was an aching void inside Fritz. It was hours and hours since he had eaten. One hour after a meal, Fritz was hungry; two hours after, he was famished; in three hours he was ravenous. And now it was more than twice three hours since his last meal!

Suddenly he gave a start. There was a faint sound, a slight movement, outside the canvas wall at his side.

Fritz sat petrified, with terrifying thoughts of hungry cannibals, and wild lions and tigers, racing through his podgy brain. To his amazement, a gleam of starlight came through the canvas wall at his side—and he realised that it had been slit from without; his saucer-eyes caught the gleam of shining steel in the glimmer that came through the gash.

The sleepers in the hut did not stir; there was no sound to awaken them. Only Fritz was awake—and he stared at the tousled head and stubbly face that appeared at the gap in the cut canvas. He could not recognise it, even so close at hand, in the dimness; but he knew that it must be Ezra Sarson's. The ruffian had been disarmed when he was made a prisoner; but evidently he had got possession of a knife while he was on the raft. Knife in hand, the 'Frisco tough stared into the darkness of the interior of the hut. There was a faint sound as he extended the cut in the canvas wall, making the opening large enough for him to creep through.

Fritz's fat heart almost died within him. A few moments more and the desperado would be within the hut—the knife in his hand—the suddenly awakened sleepers at his mercy! The excess of terror lent the fat German a kind of courage. The stubbly face peering in was not three feet from him. Hardly knowing what he did, Fritz Splitz grabbed a can of beef from the stack in the hut and hurled it full at the savage face. The sound he made as he moved caused the ruffian to start, but

before he knew what was happening the missile crashed in his stubbly face. There was a startled yell from Sarson, and he reeled over backwards under the sudden blow. His yell was echoed by Fritz Splitz, shrieking at the top of his voice.

"Ach! Vake up! Mein gootness! Ve shall all be murdered and dead! Vake up mit you before! Ach! Help!"

Sammy Sparshott was on his feet in a twinkling.

"What—" he barked.

But he did not need to ask. The gap in the canvas wall was wide, the starlight streaming in, and in the starlight he saw a savage face, and caught the glitter of a knife.

Sammy had grasped a boat-hook that lay by his side as he leaped up. With that weapon in his hand he plunged across to the gap, heedless of the sleepers he trampled on, and who gasped and howled as they suddenly awoke. Hardly a moment more and the ruffian would have come plunging in—but the crash of Fritz's missile in his face had given Sammy time to act. The lunging boat-hook met the ruffian as he came, and he backed away again with a yell of agony.

Sammy followed him up, plunging through the gap in the canvas and swiping fiercely with the boat-hook. For a moment the ruffian faced him, backing away as he did so—then he turned and ran desperately to escape. After him came Sammy, swift as a deer, and twice the boat-hook crashed on the ruffian, and he yelled before he darted into the jungle and escaped.

A lantern was gleaming in the hut, shining on the startled faces of the juniors, as Sammy came striding back. Sammy's face was grim.

"Who—What—" panted Jim Dainty.

"Sarson!" said Sammy laconically.

"Oh, my giddy goloshes!" murmured Ginger. "Did you wake up?"

"Splitz seems to have been awake!"

"First time on record!" grinned Jim Dainty. "And jolly lucky! How on earth did you come to be awake, Fritz?"

"Ach! I vas so derrribly hungry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is not for to laugh!" groaned Fritz. "I vas so hungry as neffer vas before! Also I tink tat I safe you te life, when I trow tat can of beef at tat peast and a prute!"

"We must keep watch!" said Dr. Sparshott quietly. "It seems that we are not done with that scoundrel yet."

"Fritz is a good watch-dog—if he's kept hungry!" grinned Ginger.

Sammy smiled.

"Fritz shall feed, as a reward," he said. "Help yourself, Splitz! Turn in, my boys; I shall keep watch."

Fritz Splitz did not need a second bidding. While Dr. Sparshott kept watch, and the juniors slept, there was a steady and incessant sound of champing jaws in the hut. It lasted for a good hour—during which Friedrich von Splitz enjoyed life! And when he had finished—which was not till his extensive inside could not hold any more—Fritz rolled himself in a blanket.

The rest of the night passed without alarm. Ezra Sarson did not return, but if he had Fritz Splitz would not have heard him. But if he was anywhere within a cable's length of the hut he must have heard Fritz—whose deep snore rumbled on till long after the sun had risen on the desert island.

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