

Jim Meets with a Surprise 373

rush; but though the enemy massed at times, and seemed on the point of charging, they never actually came into the open. They contented themselves with more or less continuous firing.

"Which don't hurt a fly, and only makes a chap hungry," said Tomkins, as he lay on his back in the shelter cast by a boulder. "But guess we shall want to be careful once the darkness comes. If there's a bright moon it'll be right enough; if not, there'll be ructions.

The hours dragged by slowly, and at length evening arrived. Jim looked overhead anxiously, and noted that thick banks of clouds were floating in the sky, while the moon would not rise for two hours.

"It'll be dark in an hour," he said, stretching himself beside Phineas and his brother. "I've been talking to Tomkins, and he agrees with me that the most dangerous time will be before the moon rises, which means that the enemy may attack immediately night comes. Have either of you a suggestion to offer?"

"Just this," answered George. "As soon as it is sufficiently dark we'll send my fellows into the jungle across there. They'll be back within five minutes with as much firewood as we want. Then we'll lay a pile some twenty yards from our position, and so all round this eminence. Once in position we'll set fire to them, and the glow should last till the moon helps us."

The scheme found approval with Jim and Phineas at once, so that, as soon as it was dark enough, George sent a dozen of his natives creeping into the forest. They were back within a few minutes, and at once others helped them to place the wood they had