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No. 1 of the Book Every Boy has been Waiting For!

The MODERN BOY

EVERY MONDAY.
Feb. 11th, 1928. No. 1.

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THE MOST UP-TO-DATE BOYS' PAPER IN THE WORLD!

"King of the Islands"

by
Sir Alan Cobham &



The running Kanaka was staggering on the coral beach . . . behind him came two pursuing floures with spears upraised.

CAP'N KEN "AT HOME."

KING OF THE ISLANDS raised his head lazily from the hammock, shaded his eyes with a brown hand, and stared shoreward.

The ketch was anchored between the shore and the outer reef. From the reef came the low, steady boom of the Pacific rollers; but the lagoon within was smooth as glass. The ketch, anchored in sixty feet of water, stirred not an inch; her cable hung down as straight and still as a bar of iron.

The hammock was slung aft, under an awning that shut off the burning blaze of the sun. King of the Islands stretched in it. He was the only white man on the ketch, and a man he was, though his age could not have been more than sixteen, and his handsome, sun-browned face was very boyish. He wore duck trousers and a silk shirt without sleeves; his muscular arms were bare and brown, and his feet were bare, though a pair of canvas shoes that lay under the hammock showed that he wore footgear when he was not taking his ease.

The five black men chewing betel-nut forward were much more lightly clad than their skipper; they wore only loin-cloths, and not much of them. But King of the Islands, though his life was passed mostly among men black and brown, never forgot that he was a white man, and on the hottest days, when the sun was like burning brass, and the sea reflected a blaze of heat, he never descended to the native rag of tapa, like so many South Sea traders.

His name was Kenneth King; and his black crew called him Cap'n Ken.

But as "King of the Islands" he was known to all the traders and beach-combers from the Marquesas to the Solomons. The nickname had been given him half in jest, but it had clung to him, and he liked it. The islands were his world, and he had never known any other; but the islands he knew, and knew thoroughly.

His eyes were closed as he lay in the hammock under the awning, and he seemed asleep; but his eyes opened quickly enough as a yell sounded from the beach, and he raised his head and looked to the shore.

From the edge of the lagoon, a dazzling beach of white sand and powdered coral ran to a fringe of palm-trees. The beach baked in the sun, aching to the eye. Not even a land-crab was stirring in the tropical heat; even the parrots were silent. But from the feathery screen of palms a running figure had suddenly burst. Ken stared at it.

The man was a Kanaka, clad in red-striped calico shorts, the rest of him bare, save for the tattoo-marks which, at a distance, looked like a shirt. Only his thick black hair protected his head from the blaze of the sun. He was running as if for his life, the perspiration streaming down his brown face and his powerful limbs.

King of the Islands watched him as he broke from the palms, and watched for his pursuer or pursuers to appear; for it was plain that the man was being chased. As he watched, he rapped out: "You feller Lompo!"

One of the black men jumped up. "Yes, sar."

The loud yell that had rung across the lagoon, the fleeing figure racing and panting in the blazing sun, had not disturbed the black crew of the ketch. They appeared ~~and chased~~ betel-nut regardless. It was no business of theirs, and the South Sea Islander gives no attention to anyone else's business, and very little to his own. A man running for his life was of no more concern to the ketch's crew than were the mosquitoes that buzzed round them—rather less, for the mosquitoes were bloodthirsty and irritating, and occasionally a brawny black hand would smash a dozen of them with a mighty smack.

But Lompo jumped up actively enough at his skipper's call. King of the Islands never had to give an order twice on board the Dawn.

"You bring my feller Winchester quick."

"Yes, sar."

The black sailorman dived below into the tiny cuddy of the ketch, and reappeared almost in an instant with the repeating rifle.

Quick as he was, King of the Islands was out of the hammock when he returned, and standing by the teak rail, his face set and tense as he watched the scene on the shore.

The running Kanaka was making great efforts, but he was spent with his exertions. He was slackening, and staggering on the coral beach, and his breath came in great agouised gasps.

Behind him, from the palms, two pursuing figures had emerged. They were fuzzy-haired, brawny black men whom Ken knew at once to be Solomon Islanders—the fiercest race in the South Seas.

Islands!

Charles Hamilton



Sir Alan Cobham, the great British airman, whose premier feat was his flight from England to Australia and back.

Opening chapters of a story which will thrill you! A yarn of stirring adventures by air, land, and sea.

Their heavy, black faces were lighted up with murderous ferocity as they gained on the Kanaka, and their spears were lifted to strike him down as soon as they drew nearer.

"Him rife, sar," said Lompo. Ken took the Winchester without looking round. With the rifle in his grasp, he watched intently.

Lompo looked at the scene with idle interest.

"Him dead man, sar," he remarked. "Him make kai-kai along of Malaita boy! Him feller all up!"

Ken did not answer; he watched. The running Kanaka was between him and the pursuing Malaita men, and he hesitated as yet to shoot.

But the rifle was at his shoulder, and his eye glancing along the barrel. Lompo looked at his master with a trace of anxiety.

"Cap'n Ken no shootee," he said. "Malaita boy bad man—make enemy, my word! Kanaka feller no belong Cap'n Ken."

Captain Ken smiled grimly.

He knew the native mind too well to expect any of his black crew to take the slightest interest in the Kanaka who was about to be butchered under their eyes, if King of the Islands did not save him.

"Neither did he expect them to understand in the least why he was going to intervene.

Between the mind of the white man and that of the black man there was a great gulf fixed, never to be bridged by mutual understanding.

Unheeding the black seaman's remonstrance, he watched and waited.

The rest of the crew were now staring shoreward, without so much interest in the wild scene as they might have shown in a scene at a theatre.

"Him down!" said several voices at once, and one of the black seamen laughed, as at a comic episode.

The Kanaka, catching his foot on a coral rock, staggered forward, and fell at full length on the beach.

He made an attempt to rise, but fell again, evidently utterly exhausted.

Loud and savage sounded the triumphant yells of the Malaita men as they raced on with spears upraised to impale the fallen man.

Crack!

The field was clear now for Ken to fire, and he pulled trigger. The crack of the Winchester rang across the silent lagoon with a crash almost like thunder.

One of the Malaita men was a pace or two in advance of the other, and it was upon him that King of the Islands had fired. The running man ran on a few paces after he was struck, and then suddenly crumpled up and rolled on the beach.

The other halted.

With almost stupid surprise he stared at the ketch, and the white man with the rifle standing at the polished teak rail. Hitherto, his eyes fixed on his intended victim, he had not even seen the vessel.

Ken took aim, but he paused. The Malaita man whirled round to run; and King of the Islands would not fire on a fleeing man.

Lompo, in his excitement, touched his master's arm.

"You killee now!" he exclaimed. "Him bring other feller Malaita you no killee!"

"Talkee too much along you!" rapped out Ken.

"Yes, sar."

"Get out the whaleboat," said Ken curtly.

"Yes, sar."

The fleeing Malaita vanished into the palms.

The man who had fallen to the bullet lay still. He did not stir; he was never to stir again of his own volition.

The sprawling Kanaka lifted his head, staring round him. He had expected instant death under the spears of the Malaita men, and he did not yet comprehend how he had been saved. The tiny whaleboat of the Dawn dropped into the water, and, with two black men pulling, shot towards the beach, King of the Islands sitting in the stern with his rifle between his knees.

KAIO-LALULALONGA!

KEN KING'S brow was thoughtful and rather dark as the whaleboat bore him to the coral beach.

The island where the Dawn lay at

anchor was known to few, and marked on no chart. Whether it was inhabited or not, Ken did not know. He had intended to land in the cool of the evening, hoping to light upon a native village and trade for a few tons of copra. That any other vessel was at hand, in that lonely corner of the Pacific, he had not dreamed.

But he knew now that there must be some vessel anchored along the coral shore. The Kanaka had come from somewhere, and the men who had been pursuing him were Malaita men, from the Solomon Islands; and the coral isle was five hundred miles from the Solomons. It was unlikely that Solomon Islanders had voyaged so far in a canoe; and if not, they belonged to the crew of some white man's vessel anchored off the isle. Ken frowned at the thought. The coral isle was his find, and he did not want rival traders there—especially a trader with a savage Malaita crew. Traders' methods in outlying corners of the South Sea Islands had little regard to the law, and many a time blood had been shed like water for the prize of a ton of copra. King of the Islands carried his life in his hands, as he well knew, when he sailed off the track of the big ships.

The whaleboat grounded on the sand, and Ken stepped lightly ashore. Leaving the black seamen in the boat, he tramped up the shelving beach to the spot where the exhausted Kanaka lay.

The brown man had risen to a sitting posture, and he sat, breathing in great gulps, as he watched the white man coming up the beach with his rifle under his arm.

Ken stopped within a few paces of him, looking at him keenly. The Kanaka was a powerful man, almost a giant; mighty muscles rippled under his brown skin. His broad, brown face was good-humoured, and there was already a grin on it. The fearful danger through which he had passed had left absolutely no impression on the infantile mind of this child of the careless South.

"You white marster shootee deblish good!" he said, ducking his

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head to Ken. He spoke in the beche-de-mer English which is the common language of the Pacific Islands. "Me deader you no shootee!"

Ken smiled.

He rather liked the looks of the brawny Kanaka, and certainly he was glad that he had saved him from the murderous spears of the Solomon Islanders.

The Kanaka looked at him intently. "Me know white marster plenty," he said, with respect and admiration in his look and voice. "Me see white marster one time on beach at Nukahiva. White feller marster King of the Islands."

Ken nodded.

The Kanaka rose to his feet, and, taking Ken's hand, placed it on the top of his black mop of hair.

"You wantee good sailorman," he said. "You wantee plenty good boat-swain. Feller Kanaka sail along white marster."

"I've got a full crew," said Ken, smiling. "As many as my trade will carry, I reckon. But you can berth on



A brief chat about the author of our serial story "King of the Islands!"

The photo shows Sir Alan Cobham standing on the tail of the flying boat "Singapore"—the very latest in all-metal seaplanes.

FROM ploughing the soil to ploughing the skies! Somewhere between those extremes the ordinary fellow sooner or later finds his life's job, without a great deal of roving. It has fallen to the fortune of very few to travel so far or so fast between those limits as Sir Alan John Cobham—or plain "young Cobham," as he was when they tried to make a farmer of him, fifteen years ago!

It was to farming that the future champion of the air was pupilled when he left school. A year of that was enough, and young Cobham found a job in a City office. That, too, began to pall. Then came the Great War, and Cobham promptly "joined up."

The rough-and-tumble of three years in the fighting zone prepared him for a commission in the Royal Air Force. Then came the real beginning of things. "Demobbed," he took up civil aviation—and found his niche in life!

Ten thousand people trusted their lives and limbs to the young air pilot during 1919. With all that human cargo he had not a single mishap! A sideline in aerial adventuring attracted him—taking photographs from the air, securing in pictures views that, except from an aeroplane, were, and still are, hopelessly inaccessible to man.

He flew round Europe—5,000 miles—in 1921, did pioneer work in the establishment of a Spanish air line to Morocco, and when that job of work was accomplished set off on another flying tour, this time round Europe and North Africa, covering 8,000 miles. One of his records, in 1922, was a flight from Belgrade to London in one day!

Then he began to do things in a manner fast and furious. He flew 12,000 miles over Europe, North Africa, Egypt, and Palestine, and added laurels to Britain's air fame by crossing the Channel in a light aeroplane—the first Britisher to do so. Later he flew from England to Zurich and back in twenty-four hours!

Awards came thickly. He won the King's Cup Race, gained the Britannia Trophy and the Royal Aircraft Medal. And then, in 1926, he broke every record for long-distance flying—from London to Cape Town and back; and, three months later, to Australia and back, setting up the first record for the double journey. That history-making Australia-and-back flight ended in brilliant sunshine on the Thames on October 1st, 1926, to the accompaniment of the Empire's cheers and the congratulations of the whole world.

Sir Alan is now engaged on a 20,000 miles survey flight round Africa, to prepare the way for a proposed Empire air route between Cairo and the Cape and to size up the possibilities of a regular flying boat service from the Cape to England. His Short Singapore machine is the very latest in all-metal seaplanes, and has been specially lent to him by the British Admiralty. The fine quality and dauntless optimism of this great young air pioneer—he is only thirty-three years old—is well summed up in one of his recent speeches, when he hinted at the time when we shall be able to circle the globe by air in twenty-four hours! And Sir Alan is confident that Britain will prepare and lead the way!

*Wishing success to "The Modern Boy"
Hoping the modern boy will take
up my old motto of "Keep a Flying"
Lully.
Alan J. Cobham*

A message to YOU from Sir Alan Cobham, written the day previous to the start of his great 20,000 miles survey flight round Africa.

the ketch. What name belong feller Kanaka?"

"Name Kaio-lalulalonga."

Ken chuckled.

He was well acquainted with the lengthy and musical names of South Sea natives. Those names were generally cut very short by the white "marsters." His man Lompo's name was Lompulokono, but on the ketch it was cut down to Lompo.

Kaio-lalulalonga grinned. He was quite well aware of what the white men thought of the unending names of the Kanakas.

"White marsters call um Koko," he explained.

"I fancy I'll call you Koko, too," grinned Ken. "Got into the boat."

Kaio-lalulalonga, or Koko as the white men called him, tramped down the beach to the whaleboat. Ken

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"King of the Islands!"

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followed him, after a keen glance towards the fringe of palms. There was no sign of the Malaita who had fled. The two black seamen in the whaleboat grinned at the Kanaka.

"My word! You mighty near makee kai-kai along Malaita boy," said Lompo.

"You makee plenty kai-kai," said the other seaman, who was called Danny on the ketch, because his native name was too long for human remembrance.

He glanced at the Kanaka's great limbs as he spoke, appreciatively. Possibly Danny himself had joined in feasts of "long-pig" in his time.

"No makee kai-kai this time," said Kajio-lalulalonga coolly. "Sail along white marster King of the Islands."

"Washee-washee!" rapped out Ken, as he stepped into the whaleboat.

Lompo and Danny pulled back to the ketch.

King of the Islands stopped on board, and the Kanaka, fatigued as he was, clambered lightly enough up the side. The little whaleboat was slung up again. On the dazzling beach which had been lifeless before the Kanaka had appeared from the palms, there was now a stirring of life. From innumerable holes and crevices land-crabs were crawling towards the still form of the dead Malaita man.

Ken leaned on the teak rail, his eyes thoughtfully on Koko, the Kanaka.

"You can berth on the ketch, and pull and haul for your keep, Koko," he said. "But I reckon I want to know what you were doing on this island. What ship belong you?"

"Him name Shark."

Ken started.

"The Shark! That's Bully Samson's ship!"

"Yes, sar."

Ken knitted his brows.

Bully Samson, pearler, blackbirder, trader, kidnapper, and, according to rumour, pirate, was not a neighbour that King of the Islands wanted in a lonely anchorage.

"Where's the Shark now?" asked Ken abruptly.

Koko waved his hand to the island.

"Other side feller island, sar."

"You shipped with Bully Samson?"

"Yes, sar, along Malaita boys and Tonga Island boys. Me boatswain," added Koko proudly. "No common sailorman. Boatswain."

"Then why havé you deserted?"

"No savvy, sir."

"What made you cut and run away feller Samson's schooner?" asked Ken, putting it in South Sea English.

"No like feller Samson," answered Koko. "No likee see white marster prisoner on feller marster prisoner, and Bully Samson shootee." Koko put his hand to a gash that ran under his thick black hair. "No shootee straight like feller King of the Islands," he went on cheerfully. "Me run debblish quick, and Bully Samson sendee Malaita boys after."

Ken stared at him.

"You mean that Bully Samson has a white man a prisoner on his schooner?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sar."

"Who is it?"

"No savvy. Him killee plenty soon," said Koko. "Me hear. Tie um to palm-tree and land-crab makee kai-kai."

"My sainted Sam!"

Ken King stared questioning and doubtfully at the Kanaka.

He had heard many a wild and dark tale of Bully Samson, whose schooner was well known in the South Seas to be what the sailormen called a floating hell.

But it was difficult to believe that even Samson of the Shark was cap-

able of inflicting South Sea native tortures upon a fe'low white man.

"You talkee straight talk along me, Koko," he snapped.

"Talkee straight talk, sar," said Koko. "Night he come, Bully Samson givee white man prisoner to him land-crab. Tie um to tree, and land-crab him eatee, piecee-piecee."

Ken shuddered.

"But why?" he demanded. "What name Bully Samson he givee white man to land-crabs?"

"No savvy."

"And you tried to help him escape?"

Kaio-lalulalonga nodded.

"Koko him good Kanaka boy," he said. "All samee white men. No common Kanaka."

Ken knitted his brows in thought.

He judged that the Kanaka was speaking the truth; and what he told was more or less in keeping with the character of Bully Samson, the grim, black-bearded skipper of the schooner Shark. Samson was one of the skippers who lived up to the old ruffianly traditions of Bully Hayes and the old South Sea freebooters.

If the ruffian had some rival lawless trader or pearl-thief in his clutches, it was no business of King of the Islands. But he could not dismiss the matter for his mind.

"You no savvy what name prisoner him call?" he asked.

"No, sar."

"What is he like—a sailorman—a trader?"

"Him boy."

"A boy?" exclaimed Ken in astonishment.

"All samee King of the Islands."

Ken whistled.

"English?" he asked.

"Tinkee Australian man—a ll samee."

"How did he get on Bully Samson's ship?"

"Pickee off wreck—cattle-boat. Hia, ship with cattle. Carry long whip like Australian cattle-mans."

The Kanaka rose to his feet and, taking Ken's hand, placed it on the top of his black mop of hair. "White marsters call um Koko!" he explained.



Ken was more and more puzzled. He could not imagine why an Australian cattle-man should have incurred the deadly hatred of Bully Samson. Samson's lawless ruffianism was generally reserved for rival copra traders and pearl poachers.

"I reckon I'm looking into this game," said Ken. "Bully Samson isn't giving a white Australian to the land-crabs if I can stop him. You can beat it, Koko."

Kaio-lalulalonga went forward to join the crew, leaving King of the Islands in deep thought. Ken King had dropped anchor at that little unknown coral isle to trade for copra, and generally, when he was in the way of trade, he dismissed other matters from his mind. But he could not help thinking of the prisoner in the ruthless grasp of the skipper of the Shark, and his mind was already made up to attempt the rescue of the Australian.

BULLY SAMSON!

BULLY SAMSON jerked the black cheroot from his mouth, and spat on the dirty deck of the schooner. The burly, black-bearded skipper of the Shark was wearing nothing but a dirty sarong, but he heaved with heat in his canvas chair. He cursed the sun, and cursed the sea, and cursed the island, with a fluent and extensive vocabulary of expletives. The black crew of the schooner—Malaita and Tonga men—eyed him uneasily, and kept their distance, evidently in great fear of the savage-tempered skipper.

Samson heaved up his heavy bulk from the creaking chair and stared at the shore. The schooner lay anchored in a little inlet among the reefs, scarce a mile from where the Dawn lay; but the island was between, and lava rocks and palm-trees shut off the view beyond the dazzling beach. So far Bully Samson had no suspicion that King of the Islands had anchored on the other side of the coral isle.

The schooner lay basking in the heat, which drew a variety of offensive smells from every part of the vessel.

The Shark had carried many and varied cargoes in her time, and every cargo seemed to have left its own peculiar smell to mingle with the rest.

The decks were dirty, the ironwork rusty, the brass unpolished.

Bully Samson drove his crew hard in his own way; but he cared nothing for such things as that. His ship was the foulest in the South Seas.

He tramped down from the deck into the low-ceiled cuddy.

If it was hot on deck, it was like an oven in the cuddy, and added to the heat were the stale fumes of liquor and tobacco. Cockroaches crawled unregarded, and a myriad of mosquitoes buzzed and hummed.

In a corner of the stuffy, dirty room a lad lay, with his arms and legs bound with knotted ropes.

He lay leaning back against the wall, in the angle of the corner, resting his head against the dirty wood-work.

His face was blistered with count-

less mosquito bites, and the cockroaches crawled over him as he lay.

Bully Samson stopped before him and stood staring down at him with a grim and savage face.

The boy returned his look with steady coolness.

"I reckon you find it warm here, Kit Hudson," said the skipper of the Shark.

"I'm not exactly freezing," admitted the Cornstalk.

"Do you know what's happened to that nigger who tried to let you loose?"

Kit Hudson's brow darkened.

He did not answer; but the anxiety in his face brought a jeering grin to Bully Samson's black-bearded visage.

"He got away," said Samson, "and I sent two of my Malaita boys after him. I reckon they'll make kai-kai of him in the bush."

"I hope he'll get clear," said Hudson.

"You can lay it to that he won't!" jeered Samson. "And if he did, you won't. I reckon I've got you tight."

"You needn't trouble to tell me that, skipper. If I'd known this craft was the Shark, I wouldn't have let you take me off the cattle-boat when she went down."

Bully Samson grinned.

"I reckon I was glad to see you," he said. "And what was you doing, working on a Sydney cattle-boat, when you could find your way blind-folded to John Chin's pearl island?"

"I'm not a pearl-thief like you, Bully Samson."

"You could lay your hands on a big fortune," said Samson, between his blackened teeth. "You could make yourself rich, and me, too. Say the word now, and I'll take you on in equal shares."

"Equal shares in another man's pearls? Not good enough, skipper."

"Keep that talk for a Sydney-side Sunday-school!" growled Samson.

"It don't go down in the South Seas." Kit Hudson did not answer.

"You're keeping your mouth shut, then?"

"Yes."

"Look here," said Samson, with a black scowl at the Australian. "I've been looking for years for a chance to lay hands on one of John Chin's men. Now I've got you. If you don't talk, I reckon I'll find another man some day who will talk. You savvy that? But you'll be a dead man when that happens."

Kit Hudson did not answer.

"You know these islands," went on Samson. "Arter sundown the beach will be crawling with land-crabs. What will happen to a man tied to a stump at high-water mark?"

"You've told me that before," said Hudson. "Whatever happens, you won't get me to help you to rob John Chin."

"A swab of a Chink!" growled Samson.

"Think or not, you won't rob him with my help."

Bully Samson looked round the cuddy, and picked up a long-thonged whip from the rickety table. It was an Australian stock-whip, and Kit Hudson's eyes lingered on it as the brutal skipper handled it. It was his

stock-whip, and he had the almost uncanny skill of the Australian stock-man in handling it. But it was strange to the grasp of the Shark's skipper, and he handled it clumsily enough.

With a malevolent glare at the bound youth, the skipper struck full at him with the stock-whip.

The result was unexpected, to Bully Samson.

The immensely long whip curled in the most unlooked-for manner, and the end of the thong stung across the skipper's own cheek, almost drawing blood as it struck.

Bully Samson started back with a yell.

Hudson grinned.

Samson pressed his hand to his burning cheek.

"By hokey!" he panted. "By hokey! I—I'll—"

A sudden shouting from the deck of the schooner interrupted the skipper. There was a sound of splashing, and of a man crawling up the side. A moment later a Malaita man, dripping from the sea, panting for breath, appeared at the cuddy door. It was one of the Solomon Islanders who had been sent in pursuit of Kaio-lalulalonga.

The skipper swung round towards him.

"You got him?" he snarled.

"No, sar."

"What?" roared Bully Samson. The Malaita man trembled.

"No could help, sar," he babbled.

"You let that nigger get clear?" snarled Bully Samson, with a deadly glare at the shivering black man.

"Where's Kuno?"

"Him dead!"

"Dead?"

"White marster him shootee!"

"You lying dog!" roared Bully Samson. "There's no white man on the island!"

"White marster King of the Islands, sar," panted the Malaita.

"Him shootee Kuno, him deader. Him take Kaio-lalulalonga on him ketch."

Bully Samson gritted his teeth.

"You saw the ketch?"

"Yes, sar. Him anchor in lagoon."

"By hokey! He's taken that nigger on his ketch? And what did you do, you black lubber?"

"Me run, sar."

"Take that, you swab!"

The skipper reversed the stock-whip, and struck at the Malaita with the heavy butt. The black man reeled under the blow, and fell with a crash among the cockroaches on the floor.

"That'll larn you, you swab!" raved Samson. "As for King of the Islands, I reckon I'll deal with him!"

He flung down the stock-whip, and buckled a belt round the sarong he wore, and examined a heavy Navy revolver before he thrust it into the holster. Then, paying no further heed to the prisoner or to the stunned Malaita on the floor, the skipper of the Shark tramped heavily up to the deck and roared for a boat.

(Further amazing adventures await the King of the Islands, as Sir Alan Cobham will reveal to you in the thrilling chapters of next week's instalment. Order No. 2 of "The Modern Boy" NOW.)