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ALL ABOARD
For the MOON!
See Inside

The Most Up-to-Date Boys' Paper in the World!

KING OF THE



"I know where to look for Ken King!" said Hudson. "Follow me, Koko!"

NO SURRENDER!

KIT HUDSON watched Gideon Gee land and approach Ta'a'ava, the tall savage with the brass ring in his nose. Round him crowded innumerable blacks, spear in hand, jabbering with excitement. The man carried his life in his hand at every step he trod, but his manner was easy; he had saved his head for thirty years on Faloo, through times as wild as these.

Hudson watched him for some minutes in talk with Ta'a'ava. Then the trader walked back to the water's edge and stood looking across at the ketch far out on the lagoon.

The distance was too great for a voice to carry; and Gee evidently did not care to visit the Dawn again in his boat; he had to make

it clear to the blacks that he was not on the side of the Papalagi who had come seeking the treasure of Mafoo. He shook his head from side to side to convey Ta'a'ava's answer. The chief refused to give up King of the Islands. Then he hurried into the bungalow, and the door closed.

Hudson set his teeth, and his eyes gleamed like cold steel.

That it was death, according to the native law, to break a taboo, he knew well; and that the Faloo chief would be keen and eager to obtain the head of so well-known a white captain as King of the Islands was certain. A white prisoner to make "kai-kai" for a cannibal feast and the head of a white chief as a trophy in his canoe-house were not lightly to be parted with—and no doubt Ta'a'ava was bitterly enraged by the defeat at the inlet and his failure to capture the Dawn. Hudson hardly expected the Faloo chief to come to terms until he understood what impended in case of refusal—but that he was soon to understand.

The Cornstalk loaded the six-pounder, crammng in a huge charge

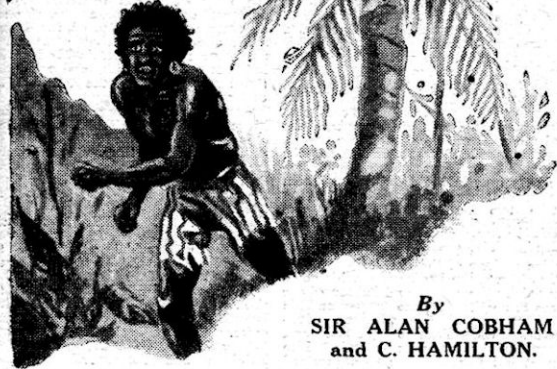
of bullets, shot, and iron fragments. With the Dawn lying almost motionless on the still lagoon, he trained the long gun upon the crowd of blacks ashore. Savage eyes watched him across the expanse of shining water, and knives and spears were thrown, falling far short. Then all of a sudden the blacks seemed to realize what was coming, and the crew broke and rushed helter-skelter away from the beach, heading for the grass houses of the village.

In a wild, yelling mob they poured into the village. Hudson, with a set, grim face, elevated the gun a little, bringing it to bear upon the largest building—the council-house from which Ta'a'ava had emerged a short time ago. The roar of the gun awoke every echo of Faloo, thundering back from the forest and the bush and the land-crust sides of the mountain, and raising away booming across the lagoon and the ocean.

Wild yells and shrieks rang from the native village. The charge, spreading as it flew, tore the council-house to fragments, knocking walls and roofs among the other buildings.

KEN KING, known as King of the Islands, trading in the South Seas in his ketch, the Dawn, rescues Kit Hudson, an Australian boy, from a rascally skipper, Bully Samson, who is trying to wrest a secret from him. Ken takes him aboard, and the two sail to the island of Lalinge. Here they learn of a secret hoard of gold on the island of Faloo. Ken decides to have a shot at getting it. Making the island, the ketch drops anchor. Accompanied by Koko, a native, Ken sets out on his search. Koko junks going forward, but Ken goes on and is captured by natives. The natives attack the Dawn, but Kit beats them off. Gideon Gee, trader on the island, comes aboard to find out what the trouble is. Hudson sends him back with a message to Ta'a'ava, the chief, that unless King of the Islands is delivered up unharmed, he'll blow the village to smithereens. (Now read on.)

ISLANDS!



By
SIR ALAN COBHAM
and **C. HAMILTON.**

**A Thrilling Yarn of Adventure by Land, Water,
and in the Air!**

YOU CAN START READING IT NOW!

"Feller gun him big noise!"
chuckled Lompo.

Hudson watched.
From the grass houses a mob of natives poured, streaming away towards the bush inland.

Hudson gritted his teeth.
He had hoped that the destruction wrought by the six-pounder would bring Ta'ava to his senses, and that he would be willing to yield up his prisoner to save his village. But the chief evidently valued "long-pig" and the head of King of the Islands more than his grass houses.

Kit caught a glimpse of the chief, with the brass ring in his nose, among the mob of fugitives fleeing for the bush. He signed to Lompo to reload the gun, clenching his hands with angry impatience. More and more savages streamed out of the village in frantic flight. Hudson still hoped to see Ta'ava head for the trader's bungalow, to dispatch Gideon Gee to make terms—and there were no terms to which the Cornstalk would not have agreed to receive back King of the Islands alive and safe. But Ta'ava, the slayer of Mafoo, settled on towards the bush with the fleeing mob, and disappeared with them from the sight of the ketch's crew.

Kit Hudson's eyes blazed, and the long gun roared again, sending its charge of shot and iron tearing after the fugitives, answered by frantic yells and howls. From the grass houses smoke and flame began to rise; the Faloo village was burning. If vengeance was what Hudson wanted, he had it now; but he was not think-

ing of vengeance, he was thinking of his comrade. He had taken a chance of saving the prisoner, and he had failed. There was only one way left.

"Lompo!"
"Yes, sar!"

"I'm going ashore. Keep up the fire so long as a house is standing—it will give these demons something to think about."

"You go shore, sar, you make kai-kai along King of the Islands," stuttered Lompo.

"Very likely."

Danny and Lufu rowed the ketch's whaleboat to the beach, and then pulled back to the Dawn. Not one of the Hiwa-Oa men expected to see Kit Hudson again, after he had stepped on the beach of Faloo. For the moment the Cornstalk was safe; the blacks were thinking only of flight from the roaring six-pounder on the Dawn.

He hurried along the beach towards the trader's bungalow, while from the ketch, far out on the lagoon, the six-pounder roared again and again, flinging destruction into the village and filling the forest with thunderous echoes—echoes that rang in the ears of King of the Islands as he lay, a bound prisoner, in the Place of Dead Men's Heads.

TA'AVA'S VENGEANCE!

KING OF THE ISLANDS watched, with almost haggard eyes, the light of the rising sun filtering through the thick foliage of the many-stemmed bayon.

Night had rolled away, but dawn had

brought little hope to the breast of the boy trader.

Bound as he was, his limbs painfully confined by the hard tapa rope, Ken had closed his eyes many times from sheer weariness, and slept in snatches through the night.

Every time that they opened he could discern the shrivelled figure of old Tokaloo, squatting by the wood fire, turning—ever turning—the suspended head that was being smoked for a trophy.

The old devil-doctor seemed tireless; he seemed to need no sleep. At all events, he was wakeful whenever Ken's eyes fell on him in the dusk under the banyan, crouching to himself as he turned and turned and turned the smoking head.

Day came at last, and sunrays filtered down through the innumerable branches of the great banyan tree.

Wearily as he was, and almost in despair, King of the Islands looked about him as the sun revealed his surroundings more clearly.

In the daylight they were less eerie and terrifying, but even, if possible, more hideous to the sight.

Bones, innumerable, were scattered under the banyan. The place of taboo was a veritable charnel-house. And now that it was light, Ken could see that many more heads were suspended from the branches. Within his view were at least six or seven, as well as the one that Tokaloo was turning over the wood fire and the head of Mafoo that swung over Ken as he lay.

It was a place of death and horror—well named, in the native dialect, the Place of Dead Men's Heads. Old Tokaloo, withered, aged, shrunken, hideous, might have been Death himself. His clawlike fingers were still turning the head—the relic of some bushman who had fallen to the spears of Ta'ava's fighting-men. The fearful thought haunted Ken of how soon his own head might be turning in the smoke under the talons of the shrivelled old savage!

Hope there seemed none.

What had happened to Koko the Kanaka he could not guess. It was likely enough that the Faloo bucks had run him down in the high bush and speared him. Alive or dead, he could not help King of the Islands. Neither could Kit Hudson help him. It was more likely that he and the Hiwa-Oa crew of the ketch would fall victims in their turn to the cannibals. Ken gritted his teeth as he thought of that.

It was to this fate that Donlan, the beachcomber, had sent him in his greed for gold, with never a word of warning that the blacks of Faloo were expecting, and on the watch for, an attempt of white men to unearth old Mafoo's buried treasure. But it was useless to repine. And King of the Islands was not the man to repine; he had courage to face his fate, whatever it might be. But there seemed little doubt what it would be.

The crashing of heavy fire that rang from the direction of the inlet soon after dawn warned him that the cannibals were attacking the ketch. He listened in anguish. Whether the attack had succeeded or failed he could not tell—till a reflection came to comfort him.

If it had succeeded, prisoners would have been brought to the Place of Skulls, which obviously was the spot where the Faloo savages smoked the heads of their victims before sticking them up in the canoe-houses. From that reflection Ken drew the hope that the attack on the ketch had failed, and that Koko the Kanaka had eluded his enemies.

King of the Islands!

(Continued from previous page.)

Old Tokaloo glanced up at the sound of the firing, but his attention returned to the smoking head. He seemed to have forgotten even the prisoner lying under the banyan. Ken strove again with his stiffened limbs to wrest loose the tapa cords; but the knots had been too securely tied. A dozen yards from him, leaning against the parent trunk of the banyan, was a Winchester repeating rifle, which he recognised as his own. It had been placed there after his capture, and left. Ken knew that it was loaded; his eyes dwelt on it hungrily. If only he could loosen his hands! If only—

But he could not loosen his hands, and his arms ached terribly with the strain of the vain efforts. He ceased, and lay breathing hard on the ash-covered ground. Higher rose the sun over the wide Pacific and the island of Faloo; higher and higher. From the high bush came the sound of wild birds innumerable, the cackle of the parrots, the throaty notes of the pigeons.

Save for old Tokaloo and himself, the Place of Skulls was utterly deserted; and the men who had seized him in the darkness and gone in pursuit of Koko, not one had returned. But Ken knew that the tabooed den of the devil-doctor was seldom or never visited by any of the Faloo savages, excepting the chief, or by bucks bringing prisoners or the bodies of the slain. Like all the devil-doctors of the Pacific Islands, old Tokaloo laid a "taboo" on his retreat, and surrounded it with the terror of mystery.

How many wretched prisoners had that old shrunken wretch done to death? Ken wondered, eyeing the devil-doctor with loathing. How many heads had he detached with the sharp knife that hung at his girdle, and smoked over the wood fires of which the ashes carpeted the soil under the banyan? Hundreds, perhaps thousands—the long life of evil? Heads of bushmen; heads of shipwrecked seamen—at the order of old Mafoo, King of Faloo; and at long last the head of Mafoo himself, at the order of Ta'a'ava, who had overthrown the old chief.

Ken felt that he could have faced his own doom more easily could he but have driven a bullet through the old wretch who sat crooning by the pungent fire.

The roar of the six-pounder, beating down the grass houses of Ta'a'ava's village, startled Ken, and flushed his face with hope. Old Tokaloo was roused at last from his hideous occupation, and disappeared in the bush, evidently to watch what was transpiring. Yells and howls came faintly from the distance—the direction of the lagoon. Ken knew that the Faloo village was being bombarded. It could not be the Dawn—the ketch carried no guns; save, indeed, the brass six-pounder shipped as cargo at Lalinge for a Chinese trader on Thursday Island. Ken wondered whether some new seeker of Mafoo's treasure had arrived from Lalinge, and had begun by an attack on the village by the lagoon.

But he knew the report of a six-pounder, and he guessed at last that Kit Hudson had rooted the gun consigned to the Chinese merchant out of the cargo and mounted it on the ketch. His eyes gleamed as he realised it. If it was so, it was proof that the Dawn had escaped the cannibals, and that Kit Hudson was still in command of her.

Old Tokaloo came creeping back to the place of death under the great banyan. He caught Ken's eager glance and grinned like an ancient gnome.

"Feller King of the Islands tinkly white man come," he grinned. "No come. Big feller gun on um ketch shoote. Papalagi no can come."

He squatted by the fire again. At intervals the gun still roared. Ken heard sounds from the distance that told him that the Faloo tribesmen had fled from their village on the beach, out of reach of the "big feller gun." But they did not approach the tabooed den of the devil-doctor.

But at last there was a footstep on the bush path, and a tall figure came under the banyan. Ta'a'ava, the chief, with the polished brass curtain-ring gleaming in his nose, strings of coral and carriage-clips clinking in his ears, stood and stared down at the prisoner with a gloomy brow. Tokaloo rose from the fire and bowed low before the chief—the only man in the tribe before whom the devil-doctor bowed his head.

The two blacks muttered to one another in the Melanesian dialect of Faloo, of which Ken understood but few words—it was but one of the thousand native dialects of the Pacific.

Ta'a'ava spoke in low tones, his voice hushed by the gloom and horror of the place of death under the banyan and his lurking fear of the wretched devil-doctor.

Old Tokaloo grinned and showed his yellow fangs of teeth. Ken caught but few words and understood fewer; but he knew that his own fate was being determined. The chief's fierce glances at him told him as much. Ta'a'ava, infuriated by the destruction of his village, and the loss of many of his fighting-men, had remembered the prisoner, upon whom he was able to get his vengeance.

King of the Islands felt his heart sink; but his sunburnt face showed no concern. His days had not been many, but they had been spent in perilous seas, in incessant danger. If it was death, he knew how to face that which he had risked more times than he could remember.

Ta'a'ava turned to him at last.

"Papalagi dog!" he said, showing his white teeth in a snarl. "Tokaloo take head belong you, him head smoke in fire all same Mafoo head." He made a gesture of the hideous object that swung over Ken. "You tinkly come find Mafoo him gold. Head belong you hang in canoe-house belong Ta'a'ava. No keep till feast—kill-dead now."

Kit Hudson had done his best, Ken knew that. But the havoc at the village on the beach had hastened the fate of King of the Islands. He knew now that he was to have been kept alive till the native feast came round, whenever that might be, when "long-pig" fresh from the slaughter would be wanted. But the enraged Ta'a'ava's vengeance would not wait. The white prisoner's minutes were numbered now.

Ken made no answer; his look was steady. He met the cruel, gloating eyes of the savage.

"What name you no speak?" said Ta'a'ava tauntingly. "King of the Islands lost him feller tongue?"

"Feller Ta'a'ava him pig all same pig in bush," said Ken. "Bimeby white feller shoot Ta'a'ava same other pig."

Ta'a'ava's eyes blazed. He gripped the spear he carried in his hand, as if about to plunge it into the breast of the prisoner at his feet.

But he dropped the butt of the spear to the ground again, and grinned evilly.

"Feller King of the Islands likee kill-

dead plenty too much quick," he grinned. "Ta'a'ava savvy. No kill-dead plenty quick—kill-dead plenty slow. Tokaloo him kill-dead long-time."

He stopped back and, resting on his spear, made a sign to the devil-doctor.

Old Tokaloo came creeping forward. His foul hands, grimed with smoke and blood, grasped King of the Islands, and lifted him to a sitting posture. He bared the boy trader's neck, and ran a bony finger round it, as if selecting the circle his knife was to follow. His withered old mask of a face was full of unholy glee. King of the Islands sat motionless, and though he would not allow fear to show in his face, his face grew deadly pale, and a shudder ran through him at the touch of the old, cold finger.

"Thrice that bony finger traced round his neck, the devil-doctor evidently enjoying the horror of the helpless victim. Then, with a charred ember from the fire, Tokaloo drew a circle on the sunburnt skin, completely round the neck. Then, at last, he bared his knife.

King of the Islands involuntarily closed his eyes.

On his skin, which prickled to the contact, he felt the keen edge of the knife tracing round his throat.

But the edge did not penetrate the skin. At that moment, King of the Islands tasted death, but death did not come. His eyes opened again, to meet the grinning, gloating glance of Ta'a'ava and the horrible grin of Tokaloo.

"No kill-dead plenty quick!" said Ta'a'ava.

Again the knife traced round the boy trader's neck, and again it did not pierce.

King of the Islands was white as chalk now, and his breath came in panting gasps. The torture of suspense brought out the perspiration in thick drops on his brow.

Tokaloo chuckled huskily.

"Feller King of the Islands plenty afraid!" he croaked.

A grimmer look came over his gnome-like face, and his claws took a harder grip on the coral handle of the knife. It did not escape King of the Islands, and he knew that the next circling of the blade would cut into his flesh. Tokaloo raised his hand again, and the knife glinted in the sun-rays filtering through the foliage overhead. And then—

The old devil-doctor started back, tottering, stuttering with amazement and terror, as something invisible plucked the knife from his grasp, staring with unbelieving eyes at the elastic fingers that no longer held a weapon.

TO THE RESCUE!

"POR DIOS! I guess that feller door sticks shut."

Gideon Gee, the trader of Faloo, muttered in three languages as the knock came at the door of his bungalow.

The door was bolted; the window shut and cret.

Within, Gideon Gee moved restlessly about, with a rifle under his arm, a revolver stuck in his belt, till the knock came; and then he halted, and peered from a shutter, and watched Kit Hudson, standing on the step of crushed lava.

The half-Yankee, half-Portuguese, mixed with Kanaka, had "no use" for Kit Hudson just then, as he would have expressed it in one of his native languages.

Bribes of tobacco sticks and cases of

he kept Gideon Gee on friendly terms with the Islanders, whatsoever might happen to other white men. But those terms were precarious in days of excitement, and Faloo had never been so wildly excited as by the bombardment of the village along the lagoon by the brass gun on board the ketch *Dawn*. The grass houses were going up in smoke and flame, and the natives had fled for the bush; and the Hiva-Oa crew on the ketch, standing far out in the lagoon, were still pounding away with the gun, hurling crashing charges of old iron and buckshot into the bush after the fugitives.

Gideon Gee trembled for his copra warehouses and his stores of pearlshell, if not for his life; in their rage and fury, the Faloo blacks might turn on him, as he knew, or at least on his property. No doubt his sympathies were with the white men, with King of the Islands, a prisoner among the cannibals, and with Kit Hudson, who was seeking his comrade in the very jaws of death. But business considerations came first with Gideon Gee; he had not lived thirty years on a cannibal island by allowing his sympathies to gain the upper hand of his business instincts.

So he did not approach the door, and Kit Hudson knocked again and again, and received no answer.

Ta'a'ava would not lightly turn on the trader, from whom he drew a regular tribute of sticks of tobacco and square-face and trade-goods—to whom, indeed, he owed the magnificent ornament that decorated his nose. If Gee was killed in an outbreak of the savages, no other trader was likely to settle on Faloo, and the loss would far outweigh the value of Gee's head hanging in a canoe-house.

But if the trader took the side of the white men who had handled Ta'a'ava's cannibal crew so severely, all those considerations would be forgotten, and Ta'a'ava would think only of revenge. So Gideon Gee intended to keep quite clear of the conflict—and to make it plain to the savages that he was keeping clear.

Knock-knock!

Gideon Gee shrugged his shoulders. The Cornstalk could knock as long as he liked—or until an arrow from the bush pierced him between the shoulders from behind. Gideon Gee intended to have nothing to do with him.

Crash!

Kit Hudson drove his boot savagely against the door.

Gee grinned.

The door was strong—no sailorman could have kicked it in. Gee lighted a cheroot, while Hudson kicked and kicked again.

But Gee was dealing with a man who meant business. Kit Hudson was throwing away his life, as he knew, in landing in Faloo to seek King of the Islands amid countless foes, all now savagely exasperated. He was not likely to stand on ceremony with the trader.

"You feller inside!" he shouted fiercely. "You Gee, open the door—I want to talk to you."

No answer.

"You cringing swab!" roared Hudson. "Speak, you fool, or I'll fetch up a lump of coral and beat your damned door into splinters, and then hide you with my stock-whip till you're marked like a tattooed nigger."

Gideon Gee broke his silence at last. Unless he was picked off by an arrow or a spear, the young Australian could

do as he threatened; and Gee did not like the look of the Australian stock-whip that Hudson carried under his arm.

"I guess you can speak to me through the feller winder," said Gideon Gee at last. "I ain't opening that damned door, not by a jugful. Por Dios! The niggers would be smoking my head ten minutes after, if they saw me gamming with you. I tell you, you're putting my head in danger, as well as my copra, by coming here."

Gideon Gee's voice rose in indignant complaint.

"You come to this here istaud kicking

amiably. His blood was so mixed, and his skin burnt so dark by tropic suns, that he was not always recognised as a white man, and Hudson's words had a rather grateful sound to his dusky ears. "Bom! I guess that's O.K.! But I ain't chipping in, you savvy—plenty too much copra in my sheds for me to risk it. But I'll put you wise, senhior. What you want to savvy?"

"King of the Islands is in the hands of those black demons, at some place that's taboo, in the bush. I'm steering straight there. I want you to give me a course."

"Your head will smoke along head



Kit sent the lash of his stock-whip curling towards the native. It caught him across the face, causing him to drop his spear and reel backwards.

up a shindy!" he went on. "You ask for it, and you get it! Por Dios! I guess you can sure leave me out of it! You get me? Bom! What name you mix me up along your feller business?"

"There was justice in what the trader said, and his queer mixture of three languages—American, Portuguese, and heche-de-mer English—was so odd that Hudson could hardly suppress a smile, in spite of his angry excitement. He answered the trader more civilly through the shuttered window.

"Keep your door shut if you like," he said. "I want you to tip me where to look for King of the Islands. You know this island; it's strange to me. A white man ought to stand by another in a fix like this."

"Bom!" said Gideon Gee, more

belong King of the Islands if you butt in at old Tokaloo's den."

"It's my head, not yours!" roared Hudson. "I'm asking you for information, not for advice!"

"Keep cool," advised Gideon Gee. "I guess I'll hand out the news. You want to hit the bush path that runs from the village inland—you can't miss it if you've feller eyes in your head. Right by the big bread-fruit tree. I guess you'll find plenty niggers around."

"Hang the niggers! If I follow the bush path—"

"I guess it will lead you right to the taboo place—the Place of Dead Men's Heads. You hit a big banyan, with heads hanging from the branches. Your own feller head will hang under the rest soon. I guess it's under a mile."

King of the Islands!

(Continued from previous page.)

"You don't want to take a gun and come along and help?"

"I guess not!" said Gideon Gee. "Feller head belong me too valuable, sehior. You hook it—see? Sooner you vamoose, sooner my head's safe on my feller shoulders."

Hudson tramped away without replying.

He had his bearings now, and that was all he wanted.

Gideon Gee watched him from a chink in the shutter as he strode away. A Faloo man, lurking by Gee's fence, leaped suddenly into view, with upraised spear. Gideon caught his breath. For a moment he reached at his rifle, but he did not touch it. One half of his mixed blood prompted him to shoot down the savage and save the white man, the other half urged him to save his own head and his copra and pearl shell; and it was the other half that prevailed. He watched with a clouded brow.

escape from what had seemed certain death. "Bom! Bom!"

And the trader of Faloo lighted another cheroot.

From the ketch out in the lagoon the long gun was still pounding. Lompolokuno and the other Hiva-Oa men were enjoying it as if it had been a game, and they grinned and chuckled as the six-pounder raked the beach, the burning village, and the bush beyond, with all kinds of missiles. Gideon Gee listened to the uproar, and smoked his cheroot, and hoped that no ill-aimed charge of old iron would come crashing through the flimsy walls of his bungalow.

UNDER THE BANYAN TREE!

KIT HUDSON strode rapidly, savagely, on his way. That his life might be counted now by minutes, perhaps by seconds, he knew well enough; but that knowledge did not deter him. If he could not save his comrade, he would die by his side, he was resolved on that.

He knew now where to seek King of the Islands, and that was enough for him. It was easy to find the bush path

The beach and the lagoon, the reefs and the ketch, were out of sight now when he glanced round; the high bush encircled him. Round him dropped the fragments of strange missiles, as the six-pounder continued to roar. It was another danger, but he gave no heed to it. At all events, the long gun on the ketch was scaring away the islanders, leaving the bush path clear.

A rustle in the bush, and Hudson whirled round to face a lurking enemy. "No shoot!" gasped a voice he knew.

"Koko!"
Kaio-lalulalunga emerged from the bush.

His brown face was bedewed with perspiration, his calico shorts torn and rent by the thorns of the bush, his dark skin torn by deep scratches.

"You got away!" exclaimed Hudson, glad and relieved to see the Kanaka alive and free.

"Me run in feller bush," said Koko. "No could comee back along ketch. Plenty too much niggers foller. Hide in bush."

"And King of the Islands——"

"Him, sahony."
"A prisoner?" Hudson had been sure of it before. "You ran into the bush and left him?"

"Koko plenty flaid aitoo debble in um dark," said the Kanaka. "Him debble along banyan. More day he come, Koko comee back lookee along King of the Islands, no can see."

"I know where to look for him if he is still living," said Hudson. "You follow on, Koko."

"Yes, sar!"

Hudson hurried on again along the bush path. Kaio-lalulalunga followed him. In the sunlight that streamed down on the high bush, the Kanaka had lost some of his terrors of the "debble" that had scared him so terribly in the night. But his terrors were by no means quite gone, and it was with deep uneasiness that he followed Hudson deeper and deeper into the bush. Yet, in spite of his superstitious fears, the Kanaka had returned to seek King of the Islands when the new day dawned on Faloo, after hiding in the bush through the night.

The unreal terrors that oppressed the Kanaka were more real to his simple mind than the actual dangers that surrounded him. His rolling eyes watched the shadowy bush, less in search of savage cannibals than of terrifying "aitoos."

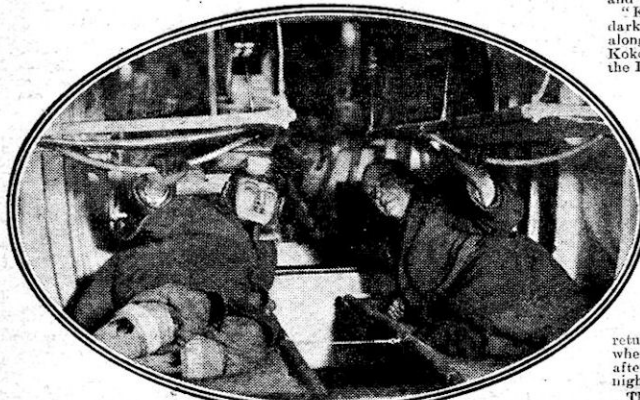
Brave the Kanaka certainly was, but he was almost trembling when he sighted the great banyan looming in the midst of the bush—the great tree that, with its innumerable branches and many stems, covered a quarter of an acre of ground.

Under the banyan the ground was clear of bush and thick with ancient ashes. Kit Hudson trod on, cautiously, winding among the innumerable stems, and suddenly he came on a scene that made him halt and set his teeth.

King of the Islands sat bound and helpless, his face white as chalk, and over him bent the devil-doctor, knife in hand. A few yards distant stood Ta'ava, leaning on his spear, watching the scene of torture with cruel, gloating eyes.

Hudson stood for a moment transfixed with horror. The knife was at the throat of his comrade!

(Sir Alan Cobham continues the thrilling adventure yarn in next week's MODERN BOY. Be wise, and order your copy now!)



Sir Alan Cobham—the gifted airman, and author of our serial story "King of the Islands!"—with one of his companions in their sleeping berths in the hull of the great all-metal flying boat Singapore, now engaged on a history-making survey flight round Africa. Sir Alan is occupying the left berth in the photo.

Hudson's rifle was slung over his shoulder, and it seemed to Gee that the Cornstalk must go down under the lifted spear that was about to whiz through the air from a distance of a dozen feet. Obviously he had no time to unsling his rifle and use it.

But there was a sudden crack as the long stock-whip came instantly into action, and, to Gee's amazement, the black man reeled back, dropping his spear.

"Bom!" gasped Gee, in amazed admiration.

The heavy thong of the stock-whip had struck the Faloo buck across the face, almost stunning him. Hudson's action had been lightning swift, so rapid as almost to escape the eye. The black man lay sprawling and howling on the ground, not even knowing what had felled him. In a moment more Hudson reached him, and the heavy butt of the whip crashed on the cannibal's head, completely stunning him.

Hudson strode on.
"That's some lad!" murmured Gideon Gee, greatly relieved by the Cornstalk's

—a broad, well-trodden track—winding past the big bread-fruit tree into the high bush. Many feet had trodden that path from the village only a very short time before, as the swarm of savages fled from the heavy fire of the ketch. But the fugitives had followed it only a certain distance—they dared not approach the Place of Skulls, taboo to the islanders.

Fortunately for Hudson they had fled fast, and none lingered on the path; and as he tramped along it he saw where they had left the bush path, fleeing into the high bush on either side of the track, in order to avoid the tabooed spot where the dead men's heads were smoked under the banyan.

But every yard of the high bush might hide a lurking enemy, as Hudson was aware, and his eyes were keen and watchful as he hurried on. At any moment a spear, an arrow, or a whizzing knife might greet him from the dusky, tangled cover of the bush.

Headless of the peril, except that he was wary and watchful, the Cornstalk tramped quickly on.