

The MODERN BOY

EVERY MONDAY.
Week Ending March 31st, 1928.

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2^d



THIS WEEK'S GREAT BOAT RACE. (See page 5.)

King of the



Koko grovelled on all-fours. "Him aitoo! Him debble comes out of sky!"

By SIR ALAN COBHAM and C. HAMILTON.

FLIGHT!

MORE by instinct than by thought Kit Hudson's arm jerked, and the long lash of the stock-whip flew. The lash curled round the knife in Tokaloo's claw, and jerked it away as if an invisible phantom hand had plucked at it.

A moment before, and the weapon had been at the throat of King of the Islands; the next, it lay in the ashes at Kit Hudson's feet. Tokaloo stared at his empty hand with dilated eyes full of terror. He had not even seen the flashing lash that had torn the knife from his grasp.

"Aitoo!" he panted.

Like many a wretch who trades on the superstition of others, the devil-doctor was not free from supernatural terrors himself. To

his benumbed mind, it seemed that an invisible "debble" had torn the knife from his gnarled claw.

Ta'a'ava started forward.

His amazement was as great as that of the devil-doctor.

Tokaloo stared round as if in search of the vanished knife. His black face was grey with fear, and his shrunken knees knocked together. Ta'a'ava's look was startled and fearful.

A moment more and Kit Hudson was rushing forward. Then Ta'a'ava and the devil-doctor understood.

"Papalagi!" croaked Tokaloo.

Ta'a'ava grasped his spear and raised it. Before he could use it the heavy butt of the stock-whip crashed on his head, and he rolled in the ashes under the banyan.

Tokaloo leaped back with a croak of terror as the Australian turned on him. But his leap did not save him.

The heavy metal butt crashed on his head, and the devil-doctor sank to the ground, his long career of cruelty and wickedness ended by that one terrible blow.

"Kit!" panted King of the Islands, hardly knowing whether he was awake or dreaming.

Hudson turned to him.

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 funks going forward, but Ken goes on and is captured by natives. The natives attack the Dawn, but Kit beats them off, and, under cover of gun fire from the ketch, goes ashore to the rescue. He finds Koko, who leads him to the Place of Skulls where King is a prisoner. They arrive to find Tokaloo the witch doctor, about to kill Ken, with Ta'a'ava, the chief, looking on. Kit has his stock-whip in his hand, and at once brings it into play. (Now read on.)

Islands

Are YOU Reading
SIR ALAN COBHAM'S
Great Story?

You can start it TO-DAY!

sooner we're clear of this fearful den the better, Ken."

A loud and savage yell from the bush followed the Cornstalk's words. King of the Islands nodded. No more was said. The brawny Kanaka lifted Ken to his broad shoulders as if the skipper of the Dawn had been an infant, and they plunged into the high bush, while behind them and round them rang the vengeful yells of the Faloo cannibals.

THE MAROONI

BULLY SAMSON shaded his haggard eyes with his hand and stared away seaward. Sky and sea, sea and sky met his weary eyes as for days and days past—years and years it seemed to the freebooter, marooned on the lonely coral atoll in the trackless waste of the Pacific.

How many days had passed since King of the Islands had marooned him there, with the survivors of his savage crew, and sailed away in the ketch to drum round the islands?

Samson did not know. He had lost count.

The Dawn had vanished across the sea, and since then no sail had approached the lonely isle, and Bully Samson had almost given up hope of seeing again a white man's sail.

Day after day the skipper of the Shark tramped the coral beach, and ever his eyes turned to the sea; and many a time an albatross, gliding afar, even a seagull skimming the waves, had raised a false hope in his breast of a sail—a transitory hope that, when it died away, left blacker despair behind it.

The Solomon Islanders who had been marooned with him accepted their fate in a very different spirit. On the atoll were coconuts in abundance, yams growing wild, a few bread-fruit trees, and ample water. With their wants thus provided for by the hand of Nature, the blacks loafed and lounged the idle days away, eating, drinking, and sleeping and quarrelling, careless of the morrow, careless of the future as of the past.

Bully Samson saw little of them. On the atoll they were able to give their savage skipper a wide berth, and they kept their distance. Samson was glad enough to let them go; for the Malaita men were cannibals, and had the whim moved them to turn on their skipper, he would have had little hope of escaping the cooking-pot.

By this time Samson had almost forgotten their existence. For days and days he had not seen them. The blacks had no interest for him now, unless they should take it into their kinky heads to attack him.



"Koko, your knife!"

Koko slashed at the boy trader's bonds. Stiff and cramped, King of the Islands rose to his feet. He stood dizzily, and Kit Hudson caught his arm to support him. Kaio-lalulalonga gave a chuckle of glee.

"Feller King of the Islands no kill dead. Him head no smokee along fire! Koko plenty too much glad."

King of the Islands leaned on the huge parent trunk of the banyan, breathing hard and deep. The sudden turn of fortune almost dazed him. On his sun-browned neck was the charcoal circle that Tokaloo had traced, the circle that the knife had followed in mockery, and that it would have followed in murderous earnest but for his comrade's arrival. For several minutes King of the Islands leaned on the banyan, dizzy, breathless, while the restored circulation in his cramped limbs racked him with pain. Ta'a'ava raised his head—the chief had been stunned, but the skull of the Melanesian islander was thick, and he had escaped the fate of Tokaloo.

He fixed one savage look at the group by the great trunk of the banyan, and then leaped up and dashed for the bush. Koko turned, knife in hand, a moment too late. The chief of Faloo was gone, the crashing in the high bush telling of the haste of his flight. Kit Hudson did not even heed him—his eyes were

fixed anxiously on King of the Islands.

"You're not hurt, Ken?"

Ken panted.

"No—only cramp! It will pass! But—but—but—you've saved me, old man! Saved me from—" He shuddered, as his glance went to the swinging heads on the banyan branches. "God bless you, Kit! It was a lucky day for me when I got you away from Bully Samson!"

He glanced at Tokaloo.

"Him deader," said Koko, with a grin. His terrors of the devil-doctor were gone now. "No smokee head belong King of the Islands. Him own head smokee bimeby. S'pose we stop, head belong us smokee allee same. Plenty nigger he come."

"That's sense," said Ken, with a faint smile, "but I can't use my legs yet. I'm cramped and numb—"

"S'pose you no walkee—Koko carry."

"Where's the ketch, Kit?"

"Out in the lagoon, pumping old iron at Faloo," answered Hudson. "That brass gun you shipped at Lalinge for Thursday Island—"

"I guessed it was that. You're some shipmate, old man!" said King of the Islands. "But we're not out of the wood yet."

"S'pose feller Koko carry little white marster," said the Kanaka anxiously. "Black feller he come plenty quick!"

"Better," said Hudson. "The

King of the Islands!

(Continued from previous page.)

Of King of the Islands, of Kit Hudson, the ruffian thought with unavailing rage. He knew that he had escaped cheaply in being marooned on Talopa. He had intended a harder fate for King of the Islands. But sometimes as he tramped the beach, or lay in the shade of a rock—always watching the sea—he wished that Ken King had driven a bullet through his heart instead of marooning him on the atoll.

Ships, he knew, seldom or never came within sight of the atoll. It was one of the thousand unknown, uninhabited specks on the Pacific, in the waste of waters between Tahiti and the Solomons. The chance of rescue was so faint that Bully Samson hardly counted upon it at all. Yet he dared not give up hope. All his thoughts, all his energies, were concentrated on the faint hope of seeing a sail break the monotony of the boundless blue.

So many times had false hopes deceived him that when, in the golden sunset, a gleam of white showed from the blue of the sea, Bully Samson stared at it with dull, stoney eyes, haggard and hopeless. It was a sea-bird again, skimming the Pacific rollers—an albatross winging its long flight far from land. But the white gleam became clearer and nearer, and Samson started convulsively and clenched his hands till the nails dug in the palms. It was no sea-bird this time! It was a sail!

The skipper of the sunken Shark stood dazed for some minutes. The sudden revulsion from the depths of despair almost overcame him. Then he shaded his eyes with his hand and stared seaward—stared hard, with a fixed, desperate gaze. Yes, it was a sail, and it was drawing nearer, heading for the atoll.

He watched and watched. The rig of the vessel, as it came closer into view, was that of a brig—and a swift sailer, as he could see. To the eyes of a landsman, a brig is a brig, and a schooner a schooner. To a sailor-man's eyes every vessel has its own individuality, and Samson, brute and ruffian as he was, was a sailorman born and bred. He soon knew that he had seen that craft before, and ere long he knew what craft it was. When it was a mile distant he could have picked it out from a hundred other craft of the same rig.

"John Chin's brig!"

Often enough he had seen that brig in the lagoon at Lalinge, moored off the coral wharf opposite John Chin's line of copra warehouses.

He had traded with the Chinese merchant of Lalinge, and he knew John Chin well. The Chin was a friend of King of the Islands, and if Chin learned, if he knew, that Samson had attempted to sink the Dawn, John Chin would not save him; he would leave him to his deserved fate.

But did he know? It was more likely not, if John Chin's brig had

come up from Tahiti. Samson, at least, would not tell him. Then, with a curse, he remembered the Solomon Islanders. They would chatter at once. The whole story would come out.

The brig hove-to at last, and Samson saw a whaleboat drop into the water. Six Kanaka seamen, armed with rifles, pulled it to the beach, and in the stern sat a little, slim, neat man in white ducks, with an almost expressionless yellow face and almond eyes—John Chin, the Chinaman. There were casks in the boat, evidently for filling with water on Talopa.

Bully Samson tramped down the beach as the boat nosed into the sand. The Kanakas stared at him in amazement, chattering with excitement at the sight of the wild-eyed, haggard man. John Chin looked at him without a change of expression, his yellow face impassive as the visage of an image carved in ivory.

"Cap'n Samson?" he said.

"Ay, ay!" muttered Samson hoarsely.

"Your ship here?"

John Chin's face was still impassive, indifferent, but his slanting eyes shone with wariness. Many tales were told at Lalinge of what had happened to traders who had encountered the Shark in lonely seas.

Bully Samson shook his head.

"My ship went down in a hurricane." The bully of the Shark had already decided upon the tale he would tell, desperately hoping that the black crew, sprawling in the shade on the other side of the atoll, would not observe the brig till she had sailed again.

"I got ashore on a spar," muttered Samson.

"Alone?"

"As you see, John Chin."

The slanting eyes watched him keenly.

"I'll pay for a passage to Lalinge," said Samson huskily. "I guess you can name your own figure, John Chin."

The Chinaman flushed faintly.

"Askee nothing savee shipwrecked sailorman," said John Chin. "You steppee in boat, takee to Lalinge, velly welcome, Cap'n Samson."

The bully of the Shark breathed hard.

It was escape—it was freedom and the hope of vengeance—if only John Chin sailed again without seeing the Solomon Islanders.

"You're after water?" asked Samson.

The Chinaman nodded. John Chin was a man of few words.

"I guess there's water a-plenty on this side."

"Savvy velly well," said John Chin. "Knowee Talopa. Cap'n Samson steppee in boat."

The freebooter tramped into the whaleboat and sank down on a seat, almost giddy with mingled relief and anxiety. John Chin's slanting eyes still watched him. He might have had some suspicion that Samson's savage crew were ambushed at hand; he did not trust Billy Samson farther than he could watch him, if as far as that. But he seemed satisfied now that Samson was alone, and that

treachery was not intended. He gave the Kanakas an order, and they rolled the casks along to the fresh water from which Bully Samson had drunk for so many weary days. John Chin stood by the boat, a rifle under his arm, watching the beach for a sign of danger, and with the corner of a slanting eye on Bully Samson.

Samson watched the Kanakas at work with open impatience, obvious to the eyes of John Chin. His impatience to be on board the brig was natural enough in the shipwrecked sailorman that he represented himself to be, and it finally removed John Chin's lingering suspicions. The casks were rolled back to the boat at last, John Chin stepped in, and the Kanakas shoved off and took the oars.

Bully Samson clambered up the side of the brig, still trembling between hope and fear. If one of the Malaita men wandered round the atoll and saw the brig in time, John Chin would stay to take him off—Samson knew that he would have stayed, had he even suspected that there were other castaways on the atoll. He panted with relief when the casks were slung on board the Pagoda.

"Now for Lalinge!" he breathed.

John Chin smiled.

"Little timee yet," he remarked.

"Wantee mole watee."

Bully Samson choked back a curse.

The whaleboat made another trip to the atoll, the black-bearded ruffian watching almost with anguish in his eyes. Every moment that the brig lingered in sight of Talopa was an hour of bitter anxiety to him.

But the Malaita men, on the other side of the atoll, were sleeping in the shade, utterly unconscious how near rescue was, had they only known it. Again the whaleboat came off, and this time, to Samson's intense relief, the boat was swung up to the davits.

A minute more, and the brig made sail, and was running swiftly before the trade wind.

Bully Samson leaned on the rail, clutching it with his brawny hands, staring back at Talopa. His thoughts were travelling faster than the brig, fast as she flew before the south-east trade to Lalinge, and to revenge upon King of the Islands.

IN DIREST PERIL.

THE sun that blazed down on the lonely atoll blazed with equal fervour on the cannibal island of Faloo in the Melanesian sea. In the high bush of Faloo, the heat was stifling, and in the sickening heat, flies innumerable and countless mosquitoes buzzed and hummed, and bit and stung.

The sweat rolled down the brawny limbs of Koko the Kanaka as he bore King of the Islands on his broad back, away from the banyan-tree. Kit Hudson tramped ahead, his coiled stock-whip stuck in his belt now, and his rifle in his grasp. In the distance the comrades of the Dawn could hear the yells of the cannibals, seeking them in the bush. Twice Hudson had fired at a black face glaring from the tangle of scrub. The Corstalk came to an abrupt halt.

"What name feller Hudson he stop?" panted Koko. "Feller black mans foller plenty too quick."

"Feller black man ahead, too!" snapped Hudson.

"Aie, aie!" gasped the Kanaka,

King of the Islands slipped from the brawny Kanaka's back. His cramped limbs were recovering now from the grip of the tapa cord.

"I can walk now," he said. "Give me my rifle, Kit."

Hudson had picked up Ken's rifle from under the banyan, and slung it over his shoulder. He handed it to King of the Islands.

"You'll want it," he said grimly.

Through an opening in the bush, where at some time a bush-fire had burned away the thickets, he had sighted the beach and the lagoon, and the ketch lying far out towards the outer reef. The long gun on the ketch was silent at last; either Lompo and his comrades had exhausted their ammunition, or something had gone wrong with the six-pounder—likely enough in the careless hands of the Hiva-Oa men. He could see the trader's bungalow near the beach, and could guess that Gideon Gee was watching anxiously from the shuttered window. But what fixed his attention was the swarm of savages that cut off the retreat to the beach of the lagoon. Between King of the Islands and the sea were more than a hundred foes.

"Back into cover!" muttered Hudson.

The three stood panting in the moist heat of the bush. Retreat towards the sea was cut off, even if they could have hoped to cross the beach and reach the ketch, under whizzing spears and arrows from the Faloo blacks. Trade guns—old muzzle-loaders charged with big round bullets—were banging in the bush, loosed off in wild excitement by the men of Faloo. Kit Hudson gave a grim laugh.

"We came here for old Mafoo's treasure," he said. "It looks as if we've come to stay, Ken. The black demons are all round us in the bush."

"We killy plenty too much black feller before we makee kai-kai along Faloo-cooking-ovens," said Koko.

King of the Islands glanced at him with a faint smile. Kaiolalulalonga, who had been "plenty too much flaid" of the "debbies" in the bush the night before, had no fear of the swarming cannibals, though he had given up all hope of escaping the cooking-ovens of Faloo.

"We're not in the cooking-ovens yet," said Ken.

"Not yet," said Hudson. "But we can't make the ketch."

"No."

"You know this devils' island, Ken. Is there any place where we can stall off those black demons?" muttered Hudson. "If they rush us in the bush we're done for."

"We can't make the beach," said King of the Islands. "We've got to strike inland."

Hudson looked round him blackly. The high bush, far higher than a man's head, cut off all view, save at that one opening where they had a

glimpse of the shore and the sea. Hudson had been used to the bush in Australia, but he felt himself baffled now. High thickets and tangled creepers hemmed them in, shutting off even the sun, though not the heat of the sun.

"You can steer a course?" he asked.

King of the Islands nodded.

"Beyond the bush is the forest, on the slopes of the mountain," he said. "That's our way, and we may dodge those demons yet. They will be looking for us to make for the sea."

"Good!" said Hudson. "Bom, as that Portugee trader says. Sure you can walk now?"

"Plenty sure."

King of the Islands led the way now. At intervals, where the high bush cleared a little, a glimpse could be had of the mountain that rose in the centre of Faloo—the ancient volcano that had been silent for centuries.

(Continued on page 16.)



"Feller Koko carry little white marster!" said the Kanaka. The brawny native lifted Ken to his shoulders, and they plunged into the bush.

King of the Islands!

(Continued from page 13.)

The mountain towered some hundreds of feet over the island, the sides thickly crusted with streams of ancient lava—hardened by age to the hardness of coral rock.

Through the thick bush they tramped, Koko's heavy knife hacking a way where the thickets seemed impenetrable.

Behind them they could hear the yells of the savages, and on all sides, as it seemed, as the echoes of the bush multiplied the savage voices a thousandfold.

Bang!

King of the Islands lifted his rifle and fired, as a black, tattooed face glared between two futu saplings, and the savage went with a crash to the ground. A spear whizzed from the bush and passed within an inch of Ken's shoulder. He fired again, and there was an answering yell from the bush. A sound of running feet followed.

"Quick!" panted Ken. "They've spotted us now! There'll be a swarm of the demons upon us soon."

They hacked and tore a way through the high bush, scratched by thorns, streaming with perspiration. The ground was rising under their feet now, the bush was thinning, and here and there, dried streams of ancient lava showed among the tangled roots. The high bush was left behind at last, and they came into the shade of a belt of tall trees. Without a pause they tramped onward and upward.

"At last!" panted King of the Islands.

He almost staggered into a rocky gully thick with lava streams, hard as iron, glistening in the sun. His throat was parched and dry with thirst, and his breath came in gasps. In the lava-ridged gully the sun blazed down from a sky of cloudless blue, and the rocks were hot to the touch. Hudson stared round him.

"We stop here?" he asked.

"Higher," said King of the Islands. "I came up here shooting with Gideon Gee once, and I know the way. This is the only known path up the mountain."

"We may die of thirst here—"

"Plenty too much water ahead," said King of the Islands. "Follow on—the old crater is a huge lake."

Hudson's face brightened. He was aching with thirst.

"Good man!"

With wearied limbs the comrades of the Dawn tramped up the rocky gully.

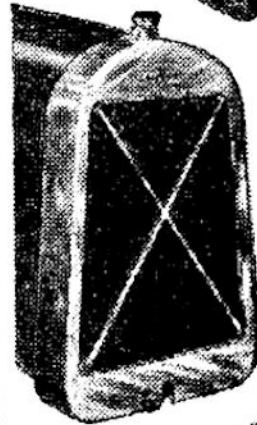
By winding paths up the rocky acclivity, from rock to rock, King of the Islands led the way where even the Kanaka's eye could trace no path.

Broken masses of lava, like giant steps, were clambered over, and the three climbed at last out of the gully, upon the summit of the volcano.

There they halted at last—five hundred feet above the level of the sea, with all Faloo spread round them, circled by the coral reefs and the blue rollers of the Pacific.

What Car Was That?

Beardmore.
16-40 horse-
power, four
cylinders.
British
make.



Salmson.
10-20 horse-
power, four
cylinders.
French
make.

Bayless-
Thomas.
12-27 horse-
power, four
cylinders.
British
make.



Berliet.
14-40 horse-
power, six
cylinders.
French
make.

Recognising cars is a fascinating pastime. This feature will help you to know the different makes by the radiator.

THE STRANGER FROM THE SKY!

KIT HUDSON stared round him in the glare of the sun.

He was standing on the lava-crusted rim of an ancient crater, almost circular in form.

What had once been a lake of fire was now a lake of fresh water, with thick reeds growing round the edges and a swarm of waterfowl fluttering over the shining surface.

"Plenty too much feller water!" gasped Koko in great relief as he plunged his burning brown face into the lake.

Ken and Kit drank deeply.

"By gum, that's good!" gasped Hudson.

"Plenty fine!" gurgled Kaio-Lalulalonga.

"We shan't want for water, at least," said King of the Islands.

Ho looked away towards the lagoon.

Far out from the beach the ketch Dawn lay, and in the clear air he could see the Hiva-Oa men on deck, reduced to the size of Pygmies by the distance.

"The Dawn's safe, at all events," said Hudson.

Ken nodded.

"But getting to her is another matter," he remarked.

Clink! Clink!

The sound of a falling pebble on the path up from the gully warned them that pursuers were close at hand.

But an attack from the Faloo cannibals had no terrors for them now. At the head of the steep path three men would have held hundreds at bay.

On the steep path up the hillside, winding among the rocks and broken lava, appeared the fuzzy heads of the islanders and the flashing points of spears.

Crack! Crack!

The two reports sounded almost as one.

There was a burst of savage cries and a scuttling of running feet. In a minute or less the path was clear and the savages were crouching among the lava in the bottom of the gully.

Ken and Kit held their fire. There were hundreds of the cannibals by this time swarming in the trees at the foot of the hill, and escape was cut off. It was useless to waste lead. Every cartridge might be wanted if another attack came.

"They won't come again in a hurry!" said King of the Islands.

He was right.

Ta'ava and his savage horde were well aware of the strength of the position held by the two Papalagi. So long as the cartridges held out the blacks had no chance of getting to close quarters.

The sun was past the zenith now, and the heat that blazed down on the unsheltered summit of the hill was almost intolerable.

There was no shade of any kind. The tallest shrub that grew there was not more than a foot high. The lava rocks were almost burning to the touch, and radiated heat.

The long, hot hours wore by.

Food and water there were in

plenty. The cannibals were held at bay. But as the hours dragged on King of the Islands almost regretted that he had taken refuge on the old volcano. In sight of the besieged comrades the ketch floated idly on the lagoon—near, and yet impossibly far.

"They may clear off at night and give us a chance to slip our cable," Hudson said hopefully.

"It's a chance," said Ken.

Night fell—the soft, starry night of the tropics. Darkness was a boon to the comrades, tormented by heat and glaring light. They watched in turn, though there was little danger of the superstitious savages of Faloo attacking before sunrise. But the hope of escaping during the night died away, for at the foot of the hill watch-fires twinkled in the velvety darkness, showing that the savages were on the alert.

A new day dawned upon Faloo.

An hour after dawn the lava-crusted plateau was hot, and as the morning advanced the sun blazed down with pitiless heat.

"Another day of this blaze, Ken, and we shall be sorry we missed the cooking-ovens yesterday!" muttered Hudson.

Ken wiped his streaming brow.

"We take our chance to-night," he said.

Hudson nodded.

In the hot, shimmering air the buzz and drone of countless mosquitoes was incessant. It seemed to Ken, as he sat wearily, dazedly, waiting for the heat to pass, that a deeper drone mingled with the unceasing hum to which his ears were accustomed. For a time he took no heed of it, but at last he sat upright and listened intently.

"My sainted Sam! You hear that, Hudson?"

Kit Hudson, lying beside a rock, stirred his head a little.

"What?" he asked.

"That drone—"

"Only the confounded mosquitoes," said the Cornstalk.

"More than that! Is the old volcano waking up again, I wonder?" said King of the Islands.

There was a sudden wild yell from Koko.

"Aitoo!"

"What?" ejaculated Ken.

The Kanaka came running to the two white men, his brown face wild and panic-stricken. His dark eyes bulged as if they would burst from their sockets.

"Aitoo!" he yelled. "Him debble! Debble comey out of feller sky!"

Ken leaped to his feet.

That deep drone, as he now realised, came from above. He shaded his eyes with his hand and stared upwards. A glistening shape glanced against the cloudless blue. Koko fell on his trembling knees, babbling with terror. But the strange shape in the sky had no terrors for King of the Islands. His face lighted up as he shouted:

"A seaplane!"

(Sir Alan Cobham gets lots of aerial adventure into next week's thrilling instalment, and you'll thoroughly enjoy every word of it!)

CAREERS IN THE MAKING.

If You Want to be A Royal Air Force Pilot.



Testing a would-be pilot's lung pressure!

There are big plums to be plucked from the Air, says R.A.F. Pilot!

"JOIN the Air Force and see the world." That is enough to attract any young fellow in search of a career of adventure! Nowadays, in spite of the fact that we are so used to flying machines in our everyday life the opportunities for boys to become pilots are still limited to a certain extent, and by far the greatest field open to the young fellow who has a fancy for "taking the air" is that offered by the Royal Air Force.

Boy mechanics are enlisted through competitive examinations held twice a year. They must be between the ages of fifteen and sixteen-and-a-half. The examinations are held on January 1st and July 1st, and the subjects include mathematics, experimental science, general paper, and English composition. The Air Ministry wants boys to enter for commissioned rank, so that they may have before them a definite and remunerative career. The period of training is three years, during which instruction is given in one or other of the skilled trades required in the Force, as well as in general educational subjects, and some of the prospects opened up are:

A. That those who have qualified at the end of the course may be promoted to leading aircraftsmen.

B. Certain lads who showed the necessary ability may be selected for an additional course lasting four months, and promoted to corporal.

C. Boys from B (above) will be selected for commissions and will pass to the Cadet College for training as flying officers, and in any case, those still in A may rise to be officers.

D. Special facilities for general education throughout the period of service to fit boys for a civilian career later if they wish it.

A test of medical fitness is required to be passed, and successful candidates at the entrance examination are sent to the Air Force establishments at Halton Camp and Cranwell for the three years, where they are provided with uniform and kept free of cost, with a daily pay of 1s. 6d.

When they become 18 years of age, they either become skilled craftsmen or, as stated above, are selected for commissioned rank. A non-commissioned craftsman's pay may be anything from 4s. to 18s. per day.

Commissioned officers receive pay as follows: pilot officer £480 per annum; flying officer £608 a year; flight lieutenant £699 yearly; squadron leader £841 per year; wing commander £926 to £1,108 yearly; group captain £1,275 to £1,440 with air commodore and air marshal (both very high rank) on top of that. So there are very well-paid and important posts awaiting the lad who takes the air seriously as a career. The scale for married officers, moreover, is higher than that quoted above.

Commissions may, of course, be obtained direct through an examination at the Cadet College, Cranwell, where a fairly stiff examination must be undertaken, including such subjects as English history and geography, mathematics, English, and one of a number of languages such as French, German, etc.

Those who do not wish to make the air a permanent career may apply for "short service" commissions, which entail no entrance examination other than a medical one. The period of service for this type of entrant is five years, at the end of which time they pass into the reserve. From this point they may either be transferred to the permanent officers list, or they may turn their eyes towards civil aviation, for they will have behind them a knowledge of aeroplane engines and mechanical engineering which could only have been gained at great expense in the ordinary way.