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The **DESERT /
POLICEMEN!**

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King of the Islands!

SIR
ALAN
COBHAM'S
MASTER-
PIECE!

A rousing yarn of stirring Adventure in
the Tropics by Air, Land, and Water!

By

SIR ALAN COBHAM and C. HAMILTON.

The Missing Trader.

KING OF THE ISLANDS was puzzled. He knew that John Chin had business that day at Kufa, a little coral atoll about five miles outside the bay of Lalinge. He had seen the Chinese merchant rowed away in the morning in his whaleboat. It was quite unlike John Chin to be late for an appointment; and Ken had matters of cargo to discuss with him. From where he sat on Chin's veranda, Ken had a full view of the bay of Lalinge in the red sunset. Five or six fishing canoes could be seen gliding over the still waters; but there was no sign of John Chin's whaleboat.

Ken waited patiently. He wondered what had happened to prevent Chin from returning to Lalinge on time. It was not a matter of business, he knew; the Chinese merchant was as exact as a clock; and no matter of business, no prospect of profit, would have kept him late for an appointment. But it was scarcely possible to suppose that any accident had happened to him, in his whaleboat on a calm sea in a run of five miles.

The sun sank lower behind Lalinge.

Manager Belnap, of the Burns Line, the most important resident on Lalinge, came along and stopped for a few minutes to chat with King of the Islands. A little later a man in ragged cotton trousers and a battered hat lurched unsteadily by, and stopped to grin at Ken before he passed on, mumbling to himself:

"Gooden sovereigns! Oodles and oodles of 'em!"

It was Donlan, the beach-comber, who was spending, in his own way, his share of the treasure that had been lifted on Faloo. Ken's glance followed the wreck of a white man compassionately.

He waited while darkness deepened over Lalinge. The brief tropical twilight changed into deep dusk; fireflies danced in the shadows, glittering stars came out in a velvety sky. King of the Islands grew more and more perplexed, as well as impatient. He

had arranged to weigh anchor at an early hour, and this unaccountable delay on the part of John Chin was likely to disarrange his plans very considerably.

The Eurasian clerk had closed the office now. Ken called to him as he was walking away with elegant, mincing steps, meticulously careful to resemble in no manner whatever the easy roll of a Kanaka—a kind of person much despised by the gentleman who was half a white man.

"No word from John Chin yet?"
"No, sar," answered the Eurasian. "I am giving up expecting to see honourable master this day, and closing office. The delaying of respected John Chin alarmingly perplexes honourable self."

"Something must have happened to the whaleboat!" said Ken uneasily.

"Some accidental happening may be cause of unaccountable delaying," agreed the Eurasian. "But I hopefully wish that the terrible blows

of adversity may be averted by lucky interposition of good fortune."

And saluting Ken politely, the Eurasian gentleman minced off elegantly. It was useless to wait longer, and Ken, in a troubled frame of mind, walked back along the beach of Lalinge to the ketch.

The Kidnapping of John Chin.

CAPTAIN VAN TROMP had made his way across the Bay of Lalinge to the passage of the reefs in the blazing afternoon sunshine; and his grumblings on deck were echoed by a nasal voice in the stuffy cabin below. In that stuffy cabin, aching with heat and crawling with cockroaches, Bully Samson lay sprawled on a bunk, smoking cheroot after cheroot, filling the stuffy room with the potent fumes of Manila. The skipper of the sunken Shark, in his dirty red sarong and with his untrimmed black beard, his rugged face thick with perspiration, looked a fierce and terrible figure as he sprawled there smoking.

It had been necessary for Bully Samson to lie "doggo" while the Dutch schooner was moored at Lalinge. The seizure of Ken's ship at Faloo was a trivial matter to Bully Samson; but it was a matter for which he had to answer—if he was found in a white man's port. His eyes had blazed with rage at the ketch moored at the coral wharf. On Faloo, or Lukwe, or Kusai, Bully Samson would not have remained in hiding.

But there was law on Lalinge, and Kanaka policemen to enforce the law, so the bully of the Shark restrained his desire to come to close quarters with King of the Islands, and remained in the stuffy cabin. Little had Ken dreamed, when he had forced the Dutch captain to return to the wharf, that his old enemy was on board the Oom Pieter. But for the fact that Captain Van Tromp was shorthanded and had shanghaied Koko, he would never have known it. The schooner was out of the reefs

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 called Bully Samson. Ken sinks Samson's boat, and maroons him and his crew on a lonely island. Kit becomes mate of the Dawn. Later Samson is rescued by John Chin, the Chinese trader of Lalinge. Seeking revenge on King of the Islands, Samson steals Ken's boat whilst Ken and Kit are searching for treasure on the Island of Faloo, leaving the young skipper at the mercy of the natives. Thinking Ken will have been killed by the natives, Samson returns, and Ken regains his ship from the Bully. He sails for Lalinge with Samson a prisoner on board. Samson is thrown overboard by the native crew, and vanishes. At Lalinge Ken is held up by the absence of John Chin.
(Now read on.)

at last, the boat was swung up, and the fatigued oarsmen taken on board. Captain van Tromp cursed them volubly, and shouted down the hatchway to Bully Samson.

"You feller Samson, you no stop along cabin."

Becke-de-mer English was the only English that Captain van Tromp had, and Bully Samson had no Dutch.

Samson tramped heavily up to the deck.

Outside the long lines of coral reefs the sea was almost as smooth as glass. Away to the east a speck on the sea showed the low-lying isle of Kufa. A breath of wind came off the shore, and the Dutch schooner was moving under canvas now. Bully Samson breathed hard and deep in the sea wind, and cursed it for blowing so lightly. His savage eyes scanned the sea, and picked up a speck on the water in the direction of Kufa.

"I guess we're on time, after all!" he snarled.

Captain van Tromp nodded. "Why the thunder didn't you drop King of the Islands with a bullet when he hazed you on your own deck?" demanded Samson.

"No want feller rope along neck!" growled Van Tromp. "Lalinge no all same Faloo or Lukwe."

"You mean that you were scared of him?" snarled Samson.

"Feller Samson stop along cabin!" sneered Van Tromp. "What name feller Samson no show a leg?"

Bully Samson muttered under his breath. Less provocation than that would have drawn a fierce blow from him in other circumstances. But the outcast freebooter could not afford to quarrel with Van Tromp. His ship was lost, his crew marooned on a coral atoll, his resources at the lowest ebb. His shattered fortunes were to be restored by his league with the Dutch smuggler, if all went well.

The thought of John Chin's pearl island haunted the freebooter. He had failed to lift the treasure of Faloo; but the pearl island was to be found—if he could find it. His savage eyes turned on the

speck towards Kufa—a speck which he knew was a whaleboat pulled by four brawny Lalinge natives. In the stern sat a quiet and motionless figure, under a wide silken umbrella. If he had not known that it was John Chin's whaleboat, that umbrella would have told him that the boat contained the Chinese merchant. John Chin's vast umbrella, painted with green dragons, with its handle of solid ivory, was famous in the islands.

"We're on time!" said Bully Samson. "I reckoned that we should lose the Chink when Ken King drove you back into the bay."

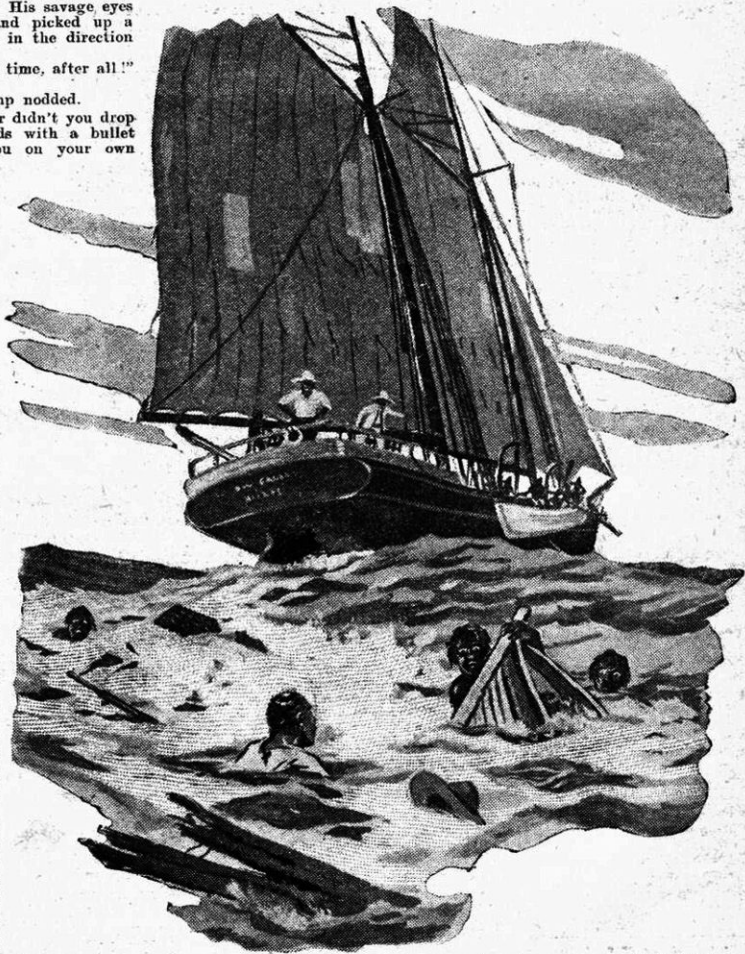
"Plenty much time!" said Van Tromp. "You plenty sure along pearl island?"

"Once that Chink is in our grip

the pearl island is ours for the asking," said Samson. "I had one of his men in my hands—that swab Hudson, who sails now with King of the Islands—I tied him up for the land crabs because he refused to guide me there. I guess they'd have chewed him up piecemeal if King of the Islands hadn't cut in." Samson scowled at the recollection. "John Chin ain't the man to face that! A rope twisted round his neck will make him set a course for the pearl island."

Captain van Tromp nodded again, but his fat face was uneasy. He shared fully the greed of his associate; his little piggy eyes gleamed at the thought of laying his hands upon John Chin's rich store of

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Over the boat loomed the heavy bows of the Dutch schooner, and with a rending crash the whaleboat went under! "Lay to, and drop a boat for the Chink!" Bully Samson snapped.

King of the Islands!

(Continued from page 13.)

pearls. But he did not share the hardy recklessness of the South Sea freebooter. Van Tromp had entered greedily into the scheme for kidnapping the Chinese merchant, but with many doubts and misgivings; greed was stronger than fear, but fear haunted him. He glanced back at Lalinge, and glanced round over the wide sea, as if in dread of seeing a sail, or the smoke of the monthly steamer.

Bully Samson watched his uneasy face with a contemptuous sneer.

The rough and reckless freebooter could hardly understand the weaker nature of the rogue who was eager to grasp at the rich prize, but with hands that trembled while they grasped.

"What are you afraid of?" he jeered. "They will know nothing on Lalinge—and the British Commissioner is three hundred miles away. You're wanted at Port Moresby for smuggling birds of paradise out—you're wanted at Singapore for smuggling rubber to the Yankees. You'll be booked for trouble on Lalinge when that Kanaka tells how he was knocked on the head and shanghaied—they don't stand for shanghaied there. You've got a chance now of making a fortune and getting back to Holland a rich man. John Chin will never tell what happened to him. You can lay to that."

And Bully Samson grinned savagely.

"He can tell his tale to the ground sharks when we've done with him!" he snarled. "We've got a clear course, and a safe course, as soon as we get a sight on that Chin."

It was John Chin who had picked up Samson from the atoll where he had been marooned by King of the Islands. But gratitude for favours rendered was not a strong point in Samson's character.

The whaleboat was more than a speck now.

Four dusky men were pulling stoutly for the bay, while John Chin sat aft, motionless as an ivory statue under his enormous shady umbrella.

The schooner was directly in the course of the whaleboat; there was no escape for the Chinaman, unless Captain van Tromp weakened and gave up the desperate scheme, as his haunting fears of the consequences inclined him to do.

Suddenly the whaleboat changed its course. It was in danger of being run down by the schooner, and doubtless the movements of the latter puzzled the Chinese merchant. Certainly he was not likely to guess that he was the object of a scheme of kidnapping on the high seas. Many a hundred times had John Chin made the passage among the islands in his whaleboat; many a dozen times had he sighted the Dutch schooner. Even if he sighted Bully Samson on the deck—a conspicuous figure in his dirty red sarong—he

was not likely to scent danger—he had met the man more than once in the way of trade, and he had saved him from marooning.

Keen as he was—said to be the keenest man in the islands—John Chin was assuredly taken off his guard now. The movement of the whaleboat was simply to avoid being run down by the Dutch schooner.

Captain van Tromp spat out a surly order, and the course of the schooner was deflected to keep her in line with the boat.

Closer and closer the Dutch schooner drew to her prey, the steersman following, moment by moment, the muttered directions of Van Tromp as the whaleboat shifted her course again and again to avoid a meeting.

John Chin stood up at last, his ivory face still impassive, but his slanting eyes gleaming keenly at the schooner, which now towered almost over the gliding boat.

"Ahoj, the whaleboat!" bawled Bully Samson.

"You wantee speakee?" came back from John Chin, in his soft voice and Chinese pidgin English; and he bade his men lay on their oars.

"I guess we want to gam with you, John Chin!" shouted Samson. "You step on board. Savvy?"

Even yet there was nothing to warn the Chinese merchant of danger. But perhaps his keen eyes picked up a hint in Bully Samson's face, and the sly, uneasy, greedy, fat countenance of the Dutch skipper. Suddenly the four oars dipped again, and the whaleboat shot away from the schooner without an answer to Samson's hail.

"I guess he's wise to it now!" sneered Bully Samson. "But it won't save his yellow skin!"

For some minutes there was a strange and breathless contest between the whaleboat and the schooner.

In a good wind even the heavy, clumsy Oom Pieter would have run down the boat in a few seconds, but the breeze was light and fitful, and the Oom Pieter was slow and clumsy. And the whaleboat was the jaws of a flying-fish dodging the jaws of a shark.

John Chin knew his danger now, that was clear. He could not have known what was intended. But he could see that there was hostility to be looked for from the Dutch schooner, and he was striving hard to escape.

Twice the heavy schooner rushed the whaleboat down, and the little craft escaped the collision almost by a miracle.

The whaleboat danced like a cork in the wash of the schooner. The faces of the four Lalinge rowers were wild and scared. They knew that the Dutch schooner, for some inexplicable reason, was seeking to run them down—in a sea infested by sharks. But John Chin's expressionless face and calm voice kept them steadily to their task. They pulled for their lives. And the whaleboat had eluded the schooner now and was on a clear course for the bay. And it fairly flew over the sea. After

it came the heavy schooner, tacking clumsily; and a stream of fierce threats poured from Bully Samson. He saw his prey escaping under his eyes and his whole scheme going to water. His brawny hand gripped the revolver at the back of his belt.

Van Tromp touched his arm, with a scared look.

"Feller Samson no shoot!" he snapped.

"You cringing s w a b!" hissed Samson. "Do you want to let them get clear?"

"Feller gun they hear on Lalinge. Let them hear!" snarled Samson. "We've got to run that boat down. We've got to haul in John Chin and let the niggers sink!"

Van Tromp shook visibly with uneasy fears, but he said no more. It was, in fact, clear that only Bully Samson's revolver could stop the whaleboat. The breeze, such as it was, was off shore, and the Dutch schooner was slow and clumsy in tacking. Once the Oom Pieter had lost the wind, the whaleboat was able to leave her almost standing.

And the Kanakas were rowing as they had never rowed before. They were pulling to save their lives.

Bully Samson drew his revolver and sighted it carefully. John Chin's life was worth an island of pearls to him; it was not at the Chinaman that he aimed.

Crack!

Over the smooth, silent sea the crack of the revolver rang with startling suddenness, almost like thunder.

One of the black rowers dropped his oar and collapsed into the bottom of the whaleboat.

Bully Samson grinned savagely. "I guess that will stop them!" The freebooter was right.

The oarsmen were thrown into confusion at once, and the whaleboat lost way. Dropping their oars, the islanders crouched low in the boat, seeking cover under the gunwale from another shot. But another shot was not needed.

John Chin's voice had lost its mastery now. The Kanakas crouched in terror. And before he had time even to attempt to get the whaleboat under way again, the crash came.

Over the boat loomed the heavy bows of the Dutch schooner, and, with a rending crash, the whaleboat went under.

Bully Samson grinned with glee. "Lay to, and drop a boat for the Chin!" he snapped.

The schooner's boat dropped into the water. John Chin was pulled on board—his ivory face still calm, his drenched umbrella under his arm. Three of the Kanakas were picked up; but the man who had been struck by Bully Samson's bullet disappeared in the water. A black fin, gliding for a second over the calm surface, showed what had become of him.

Samson tramped to the rail scowling, revolver in hand, as the castaways were handed up the side.

"What name you pick up feller Kanaka?" he snarled. "I guess we

don't want the niggers. Drop them into the sea!"

"Feller schooner short-handed," said Van Tromp. "Feller Kanaka belong crew belong me."

And the three Kanakas were kicked forward to the forecabin. John Chin, dripping with water, stood on the after-deck. Nothing, apparently, could disturb the impassive calmness of his face, but his slanting eyes burned as he looked at Bully Samson and the Dutch skipper.

Before the wind now the Om Pieter glided away from Lalinge, and the island sank lower astern.

Bully Samson grinned at the Chinaman.

"I reckon you know what you're wanted for, John Chin!" he said.

"No savvy!" said the Chinaman.

"I guess you remember Kit Hudson, who sailed with you once on your brig? I had him in my hands, and tied him up for the land crabs because he made a fuss about steering a course for your pearl island. King of the Islands hooked him out of it. But I guess King of the Islands can't help you now, John Chin."

"Kit Hudson he velly good feller, all same Chink," said John Chin calmly. "What you wantee along me?"

"I guess we want you to set a course for that island of yours, that's the talk of the South Seas," grinned Bully Samson. "Get below, John Chin, and think it over. You've got a night before you to think whether you'll set a course for the pearl island, or whether you'll have a rope twisted round your neck till your squint eyes pop out of your yellow face! Get below!"

"Take umbrella!" said John Chin. Bully Samson laughed hoarsely.

"I guess you can take your umbrella if you fancy it! Get out of sight! I reckon we may raise other craft before sundown, and you ain't going to be seen on this schooner."

The Chinaman, calm and unmoved, tucked his drenched umbrella under his arm and went quietly and obediently down the companion. Bully Samson chuckled and lighted a Manila cheroot. Before the wind, freshening more and more as night came on, the Dutch schooner glided out to sea, and before the stars came out she was many a long mile from Lalinge.

No one had seen the Om Pieter run down the whaleboat, and but for the faint chance of the wreckage going ashore there was no clue to the disappearance of John Chin.

Bully Samson had a clear field. All he had to do was to get the whereabouts of the island from the Chinaman—and the pearls were his for the taking!

Meanwhile, the Dawn was tied up at Lalinge, and Ken King, anxious to be off in search of trade, was held up by the strange absence of John Chin!

(You can scarcely wait for next week's MODERN BOY, to see what happens next in Sir Alan Cobham's powerful yarn? Then make certain you get next week's issue, by asking your newsagent definitely to save the MODERN BOY for you EACH WEEK!)

CAREERS IN THE MAKING.

If You want to be a MARINE ENGINEER

Here is
THE
way to set
about it!



The Chief Engineer of the Mauretania in the engine-room.

THE officers in the engine-room of a steamship do not qualify for their work as do the officers on the deck. The latter serve their time either before the mast or as apprentices actually on a ship. Not so the engineers. They have to serve their time in a shipbuilding yard, and, when qualified for the position, they obtain berths as engineers on the ships.

The best way to go to work in applying for apprenticeship to marine engineering is to write to the superintendent of any big shipping firms which build their own vessels. These will have shipbuilding yards on the Clyde or the Tyne or some other ship-building centre. Messrs. Furness, Withy & Co. are such a firm. Then there are the big shipbuilding and engineering companies, such as the Wallsend Slipway and Engineering Co., Wallsend-on-Tyne; Wm. Beardmore & Co., Dalnair, near Glasgow; Vickers, Ltd., of Barrow; J. I. Thornycroft & Co., of Southampton, who supply many engineers for work at sea.

If accepted as apprentice in a shipping and shipbuilding firm, the applicant goes to the place where the yards are and starts right away at his work, which will be in the foundry and machine shop or in the fitting and erecting shops, and for those who have the ability a short course in the drawing offices is often given.

The boys are exceedingly well looked after by the firms. In most cases no premium is asked for, and the boys are paid as well as kept. Shipping firms consider that if a boy is to be useful to them he is worthy of a wage, and if he is not worthy of a wage he is of no use to them. A young fellow of the latter type would never get through his preliminary period of trial.

The right type of fellow is at once considered by the firm as a probable engineer for one of their ships. And they see that he gets the training they want their engine-room officers to have! Hence, there is little chance of a young fellow becoming a marine engineer unless he goes in the yards. For the big firms always have a good supply of youngsters who have got through their apprenticeship for any berths of third or fourth engineer that may be vacant.

The apprentices have their sports clubs and other amusements, their dining hall and dormitories, and altogether it is something like going to a boarding school, except, of course, that you have much hard and dirty work to do, and must do it with cheerful grins if you are to be valued by the firm.

During their training apprentices attend evening or part-time day technical classes, so a boy intent on marine engineering as a profession should apply just before leaving lower elementary school at the age of fourteen. Three years spent at an approved technical day school is considered by the Board of Trade as equivalent to two years' workshop experience.

Once settled on a ship, strict attention to duty and a continuance of advanced studies will enable the young engineer to climb steadily. And every branch of study to do with or allied to his own work of looking after engines should receive his attention.

The pay of assistant engineer varies from about £12 to £16 per month in the cargo services and up to £18 per month in the passenger services, and he is eligible for promotion as soon as he has obtained his second-class engineer's certificate. Certificated junior engineers are paid up to about £20 per month cargo; £28 passenger. Second Engineers are paid up to £34 per month, and chief engineers up to about £47 per month, with prospects of promotion to about £800 per year or more.