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THE TWO-WAY TERMINUS OF THE FUTURE. (See page 9.)

The MAN WHO FLED!

By
**CHARLES
HAMILTON.**



*Chug, chug, chug!
The sound was
music to the ears
of the lean-faced
man at the tiller
of the chugging
launch!*

**A Complete Yarn
of Adventure in
the Tropics.**

Business in the South Seas is largely a matter of trust, and young Ken King—King of the Islands—gets a lively surprise when he goes on a debt-collecting cruise!

Looking in at Lukwe!

KING of the Islands—Ken King, the boy owner of the ketch Dawn—laid down his stump of pencil, yawned, and picked up the long glass that stood on the deck by his side. The Dawn, gliding smoothly over a sapphire sea before a light breeze, seemed scarcely to move. Through the long, hot afternoon the wind had been dying away, and Ken had been glad to see the tall palms of Lukwe black against the sunset. The Dawn would have been helpless in a dead calm, and a dead calm was coming.

King of the Islands drained the long glass of the cooling draught of soda mingled with limejuice. Clad only in shorts and silk shirt, his sinewy limbs glistening in the sun, the boy trader sat on the deck, his back to the hatchway combing, figuring out his accounts.

Kit Hudson, his Australian chum, sat idly on the rail, his long-thonged stock-whip under his arm, occasionally stirring to smash half a dozen mosquitoes with a sounding smack. Kit Hudson—stockman, engineer, and airman by turns, was now mate of the ketch Dawn, and Ken's inseparable comrade.

Koko, the Kanaka bo'sun, was watching his white master with almost awed admiration. The pencilled marks on Ken's account sheet were deep mysteries to Kaio-lalulalonga—to give the Kanaka his full name. Koko could not understand; but he knew that when King of the Islands had finished making those mysterious and apparently meaningless marks on the paper, he would know exactly how much was due to him from Hiram Cook, the Yankee trader on Lukwe, which was a marvelous thing to Koko.

Ken King glanced up, and, catching the expression on the boatswain's face, he grinned.

"Koko no savvy?" he asked. Kaio-lalulalonga shook his dusky head.

"No savvy tinkee on paper," he answered. "Many time see white man tinkee on paper along eye belong me. No can savvy!"

"I'd teach you to write, old coffee-bean, if you'd take the trouble."

Koko shook his head again. "Kanaka no likee work!" he answered simply.

King of the Islands laughed, and turned towards Kit Hudson. The Australian gave him an inquiring look.

"I've figured it out, Kit. We've got three hundred pounds to collect from Hiram Cook."

"And the sooner the better," remarked Hudson. "From the talk among the islands, Cook isn't any too reliable. That's a rather large sum for little traders, Ken."

"Cook has been putting it off, for one reason or another, for a long time," said Ken. "That's why I made up my mind at last to put in at Lukwe and collect it personally. After all, the man can pay if he likes—he has had a big business in pearl-shell and copra for more years than I can remember. He was the richest man in Lukwe when I began to trade among the islands."

"A dozen cocktails a day don't improve a man's business. I've heard in many quarters that Hiram Cook is shabby."

King of the Islands nodded. "They say so at Lalinge," he admitted. "John Chin hasn't allowed him credit for a long time, I believe—and the Chink knows what's what.

All the same, Mr. Cook will have to square when we call on him. He can't put it off any longer when we sit down in his veranda and ask him for the cash."

Hudson glanced at the sea. The wind was dropping more and more, and the Pacific was like glass. Slower and more slowly the ketch glided on.

"We shall make Lukwe, you reckon?" he asked.

"Ay, ay! There's enough wind to bring us to the reef," King of the Islands stood up, shaded his eyes with his sunburnt hand, and stared steadily through the haze of heat towards the island. "We may have to tow in with the whaleboat, that's all. My Sam, it's hot!"

Kaio-lalulalonga, indifferent alike to heat and to mosquitoes, picked up his ukulele, twanged on it, and hummed a Hawaiian tune. Kaio-lalulalonga was enjoying life. Since he had sailed with his "little white master," King of the Islands, the brawny Kanaka's face had been almost continually wreathed in a wide, contented grin. Forgetful of the past, unthinking of the future, living only in the passing moment, like a true child of the South, his brown face never clouded unless there was a frown on the brow of King of the Islands. Koko enjoyed existence to the limit.

"'Ea pipi ka maka o ha hoku."

Koko sang softly to the strum of the ukulele.

King of the Islands was staring steadily towards Lukwe.

He could see the long line of the reefs that barred the lagoon, on the shore of which the traders' bungalows lay, with the pandanus huts of the natives farther back.

The passage of the reefs—a perilous passage in rough weather—was now as smooth as a pond.

In the clear atmosphere his keen eyes could pick up all the buildings, and the figures of dusky natives, clad in the white lava-lava, moving about under the palms.

Lukwe—so far as the natives were concerned—was a peaceful island. Many a long year had passed since the blacks there had sounded the war-drum and hunted for white men's heads to smoke over the wood fires. But so far as the white men were concerned, Lukwe was not so peaceful. They were a rough crew of traders on Lukwe, and sometimes quarrelled fiercely. And one of the roughest of the rough crew was Hiram Cook, the Yankee trader, whose account with Ken now ran into three hundred pounds.

Dawn lay becalmed on a glassy sea. But Lukwe was close at hand now. Ken's voice rang out sharply. The lolling Hiva-Oa men jumped to obey. Lazy, like all Kanakas—lazier under Ken's rule than they would have been under any other skipper in the South Seas—they were prompt enough to obedience, and only the note of command in Ken's voice was needed to make them pull and haul as vigorously as a white crew. The whaleboat dropped into the glassy sea, the long coir rope was rove from it to the bows of the ketch, and the sinewy brown arms of the Polynesian seamen tugged at the oars. Towed by the whaleboat, the Dawn glided into the passage of the Lukwe reef, and surged on slowly and steadily into the lagoon. The biggest warehouse in the row belonged to Hiram Cook; near it stood his bungalow. In the shady veranda of the bungalow a man was sprawled in a long cane chair, a cigar in his mouth, a long glass on the table by his side. But as Ken drew closer he saw that it was not the lean, loose-jointed Yankee trader whom he had come to see.

scintillatingly clad as natives—sat in the shady veranda of the first bungalow that Ken and Kit passed. They were smoking, drinking, and playing poker, but turned their eyes from the game to look at the two shipmates coming up from the beach, and burst into laughter.

One of the card-players, his hand of cards in his brown, tobacco-stained fingers, left his seat, came to the front rail of the veranda, and leaned over to hail the skipper of the Dawn: "Hallo, you!"

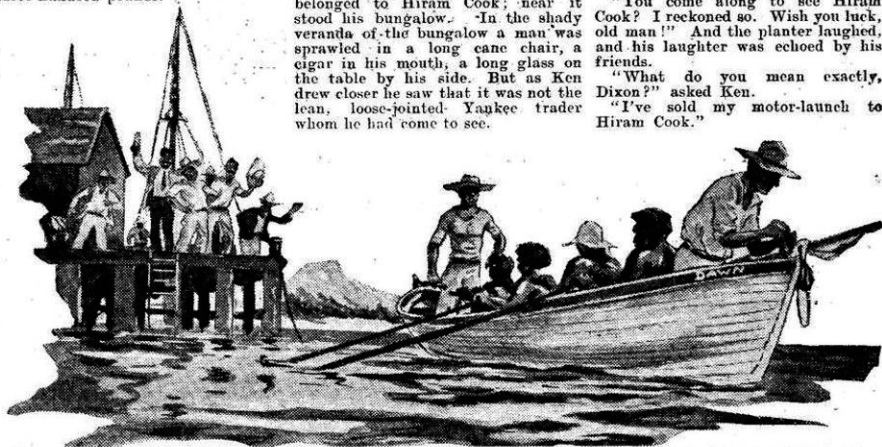
Ken stopped and looked at him. His eyes were glinting a little. That burst of mocking laughter from the poker-players had roused his anger, though he could not guess its cause.

"Well?" he rapped out. The man at the veranda rail grinned.

"You come along to see Hiram Cook? I reckoned so. Wish you luck, old man!" And the planter laughed, and his laughter was echoed by his friends.

"What do you mean exactly, Dixon?" asked Ken.

"I've sold my motor-launch to Hiram Cook."



The oars dipped and the whaleboat shot away from the wharf. Laughter and jeers and the waving of mocking hands followed her. "Let them cackle," said Ken. "He laughs best who laughs last!"

King of the Islands was not accustomed to distrust, but he was growing uneasy about getting his money. John Chin, the Chinese trader, who knew everything in the islands, had given him a word of warning, and that had brought Ken to Lukwe to collect his account personally. He was rather wondering now whether there would be trouble. Hiram Cook was the man to cut up very rusty in a tight corner.

Ken's lips set as he thought of that. He had trusted the man, and he could not afford to lose the sum that was due—almost as much as he had won by risking his life among savage cannibals on the Island of Faloo. If Hiram Cook gave trouble, he was likely to find King of the Islands prepared to give him all he wanted, and perhaps a little over.

The canvas was flapping almost idly now. Lumpokono, sprawling on the fore-castle, chewing betel-nut, raised his head and glanced round, and remarked lazily:

"Feller wind he no stop!" Lompo was right. The last puff of the breeze puffed itself out, and the

Slowly, steadily, the Dawn drifted on to the coral wharf, and made fast.

A group of natives stared at her; a beach-comber sat up in the shade of a palm, gave her a glance, and went to sleep again. That was all the attention the newcomer received. In the blazing heat, not a white man stirred out of the shade of his bungalow.

Ken was about to step ashore over the low teak rail, when Hudson tapped his arm.

"You're heeled?" he asked.

"No."

"Better. This isn't Lalinge. You may want a gun on Lukwe."

Ken nodded.

He went down to the cabin, and came up again with a holster buckled to his belt and a revolver in the holster. Then the shipmates of the Dawn stepped ashore and walked up the white beach.

Bolted!

"KING OF THE ISLANDS!" There was a loud laugh. Four white men—bearded, stubbly, perspiring, almost as

"What about it?" "Keep on, and you'll see!" chuckled Dixon; and, without any further explanation, he returned to his seat and the poker game.

Kit Hudson's eyes sparkled. "There seems to be some joke on here at Lukwe," he said. "I don't like that cackling, Ken. What about stepping in, and cleaning up that crew of boozy blighters? We two could do it easily."

King of the Islands laughed.

"We didn't come here to teach Lukwe manners," he answered. "I'd rather find out what's up with Hiram Cook. Let's get on."

They walked on to Cook's bungalow, which was the last of the buildings. From every veranda they passed someone looked out at them—and always with a grinning face.

Evidently the arrival of King of the Islands at Lukwe struck the traders there as something of a joke. As yet, the shipmates of the Dawn could not imagine why.

They reached Cook's bungalow at last.

The man who was sprawling there

The Man Who Fleed!

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in the long cane chair sat up and glanced at them as they mounted the steps.

Ken recognised him as a trader he had met before—a fat, flaxen-haired German named Schalk. He wondered what the man was doing there, occupying Cook's veranda with the air of a master.

"King of the Islands!" said Schalk, with a fat grin. "You may come in!"

"Where's Cook?" asked King of the Islands.

The German trader chuckled.

"You come to see Herr Cook?"

"Ay, ay!"

The German waved a fat hand towards the glassy Pacific.

"You are too late! Look for him at Tahiti, or in Sydney—I know not. He is gone!"

"Gone on a trip?" asked Ken.

Another fat chuckle from the trader.

"A long trip, my friend—a very long trip! He is not coming back to Lukwe."

"You mean that he's gone to another station?"

"He is gone from the Pacific," grinned Schalk.

Ken's teeth set.

"Cleared out?"

"Ja, ja!"

"And left you in charge of his station?"

"His station? My station!" explained Schalk. "Three days ago, Herr Cook has sold his station to me."

"Sold out—and cleared?" exclaimed Hudson.

"Ja, ja, mein herr!" chuckled Schalk. "On Lukwe he has paid up—he could not have got away alive without that. But if you have one bill for Herr Cook, you are too late! There will be many who will come to see him, but they will be too late!"

King of the Islands understood at last. The rumours as to the shabby state of Hiram Cook's affairs had evidently been well founded. Drink and gambling, and the laziness induced by the tropics, had brought him to the verge of ruin; and he had sold out and gone, leaving his creditors to whistle for their money.

The boy trader's brow grew dark.

He was only one among the many creditors of Hiram Cook. But he was, perhaps, the one who could least afford to lose what was due to him. Had the man failed, even by his own fault, and had nothing left, King of the Islands would have borne his loss with philosophy, and said nothing more about it. But that was not the case. Hiram Cook had anticipated failure by selling out and departing suddenly with a good round sum in his pockets. He had sold his station on Lukwe to this German, and it could not have been sold for less than a thousand pounds. With that sum, at the very least, Hiram had fled, laughing in his sleeve at the boy trader who had trusted him.

"The scallywag!" muttered Hudson.

The shipmates knew now what was the great joke on Lukwe. In the

eyes of the rough crew there, Hiram's "bolt" was a huge jest. They were looking for the arrival of exasperated creditors; and King of the Islands was only the first to come. That great joke was likely to keep Lukwe in hilarity for weeks and months.

"So he's sold this station to you, Schalk?" asked King of the Islands, seating himself on the rail of the veranda.

"Gewiss! I pay him thirteen hundred of pounds in good money!" grinned the German. "It was cheap price. He was in one hurry—you savvy?"

"And his schooner?" asked Ken quietly.

"He sell that schooner to Peter Parsons. That schooner he too slow for Mister Cook." Schalk laughed boisterously. "I tell you he is in one hurry when he go. He sell him for four hundred pounds!"

"When did he go?"

"Four hours ago!" grinned the German. "It is only by that little four hours that you lose him, King of the Islands!"

"We're late!" said Hudson, setting his lips. "If we'd caught the hound before he started—"

"And his cutter?" asked Ken.

"He sell him to Robinson for two hundred of pounds."

"And he cleared in a motor-launch?" asked Ken, remembering what Dixon had said.

"You know? Yes, he clear in the motor-launch," assented Schalk. "That launch he is very fast."

"Alone?"

"Two black boys."

"And he's sold his copra plantation on the other side of the island?"

"He sell him to Devigne for five hundred pounds."

"A nice little sum altogether to carry away with him when he owes money right and left all through the islands!" said Hudson.

The German nodded, and grinned.

"He pay cash for that motor-launch," he assented. "But he take more than two thousand of pounds in his pockets. Much more, I think."

"Of which three hundred belongs to us?" grunted Hudson.

Schalk roared.

"Ha, ha! He dish you for three hundred! But that is nothing. There are men in the islands he dish for twice as much, three times as much."

"What course did he steer?" asked Ken quietly.

"Ich weis' nicht! That I know not," answered Schalk. "He go in the launch, we all hear the motor—zip, zip, zip! But Mister Cook he tell nobody anything. He keep the close mouth."

Ken asked no more questions. Whether Cook's destination was known or not among his old associates, he did not expect to learn the truth on Lukwe. The rough crew there were in sympathy with the absconding rascal; there were few of them who would not have done the same thing in the same circumstances. They had taken care enough that Hiram did not swindle them; but for the outside world, outside the ring of coral reefs round Lukwe, they cared nothing.

In the red sunset Ken and Kit walked back to the beach.

Grinning faces watched them from the long line of shady verandas as they went.

Lukwe was enjoying the joke hugely.

On the solitary island, where news was scarce—where a steamer touched only once in three months, and the newspapers were a month old—older still if rough weather kept ships away—there was at last a new topic! The absconding of Hiram Cook had almost given new life to the little community. It furnished Lukwe with a much-needed excitement. King of the Islands had come, and his coming had given point to the jest. Other traders would follow, prolonging the joke. Lukwe was likely to receive in the next few weeks more visitors than it was accustomed to receive in a whole year. And every newcomer would give new life to the jest.

"Hallo, King of the Islands!" roared Dixon from his veranda.

"Did you find Hiram at home?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

King of the Islands walked on without replying.

Under a fire of laughter and rough badinage from the bungalows, the shipmates returned to the beach and went on board the Dawn.

Ken's face was set.

"The rascal's got a start," said Hudson. "If we could get to sea we might raise him yet in his launch."

King of the Islands gazed out across the glassy lagoon—across the reefs to the wide Pacific, calm as a lake, without a breath of wind stirring. There would have been a chance, at least, with a wind; but there was no wind, and the ketch was as idle as a painted ship on a painted ocean. And the calm might last for days.

"Feller Cook he no stop, sar?" asked Koko, who had been talking to natives on the beach.

"Feller Cook he clear out plenty too quick altogether," answered Ken. "He clear along motor-launch."

"Feller launch he washy-washy along calm," said the Kanaka.

"Feller ketch he no washy-washy. Feller Cook he take money belong King of the Islands?"

"Yes!"

"Feller ketch he no washy-washy, feller whaleboat he washy-washy," suggested the Kanaka.

Ken smiled at the suggestion of pursuing the petrol launch in a whaleboat.

"Feller launch he washy-washy too plenty quick!" he answered. "Too much quick altogether along whaleboat."

He stared out grimly across the glassy sea. The unscrupulous swindle and the mockery of Hiram's old associates on Lukwe stirred Ken's deep anger. Somewhere on the Pacific the swindler was fleeing with seven or eight times as much money in his pockets as would have settled the debt. To let the rogue get away with it was bitter and irksome to the boy trader. Hudson's feelings were the same. And he gripped his stock

whip with a keen desire to lay it round the lean shoulders of Hiram Cook.

"Koko savvy?" murmured the Kanaka.

Ken glanced at him.

Koko, as he often said, was no common Kanaka. Thinking of any sort was not much to any Kanaka's lue. But Kaio-lalualonga had proved more than once that there was some sort of intellect inside his dusky head. On his own account, certainly, Koko would never have taken the trouble to think on any subject whatsoever. But on account of his white master, the Kanaka had many times given his lazy brain unaccustomed exercise.

"What you savvy, Koko?" asked King of the Islands.

"Feller launch he washy-washy plenty quick sea he calm," said the Kanaka. "Big blow he come, feller launch no good; he walk about along bottom sea."

King of the Islands started a little. He caught the Kanaka's meaning at once—that a motor-launch was not likely to be used for a long sea trip. The calm looked like lasting; but if a big blow came on, a launch was not likely to live long in the mighty billows of the Pacific.

"Feller Cook he no stop along launch," said the Kanaka confidently. "Feller Cook he get away along launch, no stop along launch. One day, two day, three day, plaps; no stop along launch altogether. Me tinkee head belong me, sar. Feller Cook he lookee feed ship."

"Koko, old coffee-bean, you're worth your weight in pearl-shell!" said King of the Islands. "Kick me, Kit, for not figuring on that before. The old Mindanao touches at Faiyi to-morrow morning, if she's on time. A yard of shell-money to an oyster-shell that Cook is making for Faiyi to take the steamer for Sydney."

Hudson whistled.

"A thousand to one!" he said. "The rascal will sell the launch at Faiyi easily enough and take the steamer. But we're dished, all the same, Ken. He will easily make Faiyi to-night in the launch. But we can't make it for days to come in this calm."

"Feller whaleboat!" said Koko.

Hudson shook his head.

"We could never make it on time with oars."

The Kanaka grinned.

"Feller steamer he sometime no come," he remarked. "Feller engine on steamer he make plenty trouble sometime. What you tinkee?"

"Koko's right," said Ken. "The steamer's on time sometimes, but more often not. You know the old Mindanao's engines. They ought to have been scrapped before the War! And they're still doing duty. I've known her to be three days late at Lalinge." Ken's eyes sparkled.

"It's a chance," he said—"a small one, if you like—but all the chance we've got of collecting three hundred pounds from Cook before he clears out of the South Seas for good and

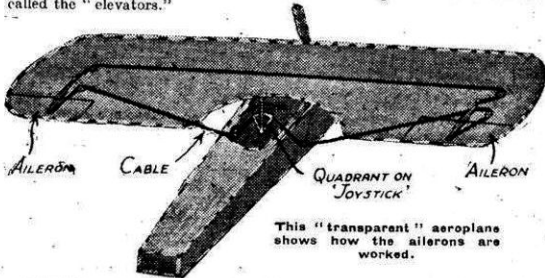
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All About Aeroplanes.

This Week—THE CONTROLS.

WONDERFUL how the pilot manages to control the movements of his aeroplane in the air, isn't it? Of course, this control is much more complicated than that of any other vehicle, for while the direction of a car or ship can only be altered by the steering wheel or rudder to the left or right, an aeroplane can also climb or dive, or roll over and over, and in most "stunts" the aeroplane does a little of each!

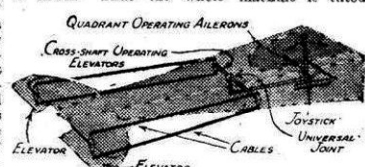
The control that acts like the steering wheel of a car is the "rudder," and is hinged to the fin and connected to a "rudder bar" on which the pilot's feet rest. The controls which make the aeroplane climb or fall are called the "elevators."



This "transparent" aeroplane shows how the ailerons are worked.

What they actually do is to drag down or push up the tail, by increasing or decreasing the "lift" of the tail plane. These are hinged to the tail planes and connected to the joystick, so that pushing the "stick" forward pushes the nose down and pulling it back pulls the nose up. Then there are the ailerons—little flaps on the wing-tips which are also connected to the joystick and which alternately rise and fall in opposition as the "stick" is tilted from side to side.

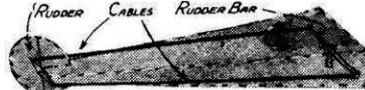
When one falls, it "lifts" the wing that side, while the other aileron rises and drags it down. Thus the whole machine is tilted so in the "joystick" we have two controls in one, and as they are often needed together the movement of the joystick is generally in curves instead of straight backwards and forwards or side to side. Occasionally in big machines, however, the ailerons will be worked by a wheel on the top of the "stick," which can then only be tilted backwards and forwards.



From this diagram you can see how the elevators are controlled by the joystick.

The controls are not quite so simple as the above sounds, however. For instance, you have probably seen how an aeroplane often tilts over on a turn until its wings are almost vertical. The rudder is then horizontal and therefore acting as an elevator, while the elevator is vertical and is acting as a rudder. And, of course, when the machine is not tilted over quite so much the two controls have only partly "changed places."

Again, the controls will act on the aeroplane in puzzling ways. If I want my machine to "roll" I will tilt the joystick sideways in the direction I



The rudder is controlled by a rudder bar, on which the pilot's feet rest.

want to roll. But in doing so I have increased the resistance of one wing, which will drag the machine sideways; so I shall also have to "put on" a little rudder to counteract this, and since this will increase the total resistance of the aeroplane the nose will drop, so I shall have to put on a little elevator. There is also another control—the engine. If I am flying level and I open up the engine without moving the controls, the aeroplane will start to climb, for the "lift" is increased. So I shall have to push the nose down until the machine is flying level once more, though at an increased speed. Therefore there can be only one speed at which the machine will fly level with the elevator control not acting. A device called the tail plane adjuster is generally provided by which the permanent angle of the tail plane can be altered, enabling the machine to fly level at any speed without the use of the elevator control.

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all. If the steamer's late calling at Faiyi, and if that's his game, we shall run him down yet. And once we raise that Yankee's bony figure-head, we'll make him pay, if we have to take the hide off his back with your stock-whip. You're game to try?"

"You bet!" said Hudson tersely. King of the Islands had made up his mind. He was aching for a chance to get at the swindling trader and call him to account. And this was a chance, at least. The slightest chance was better than idleness—better than lying through the calm at Lukwe wharf, the object of the unending laughter and derision of the Lukwe traders.

And once the boy trader's decision was made, no time was lost.

Provisions and water were stacked in the whaleboat for the trip to Faiyi. The two white men and Koko, well armed, took their places in the boat with three of the Hiva-Oa seamen. Lompo and Danny were left on board the moored ketch. From the wharf a Lukwe trader shouted to the boat's crew:

"King of the Islands! You're going after Hiram?"

Ken did not trouble to reply.

But the manning of the whaleboat told the story; and if the affair had seemed a joke to Lukwe before, it was now a real scream. Careless of the heat, the Lukwe traders came crowding down from their bungalows to the beach, to watch the start of the pursuit—an utterly hopeless pursuit, as it seemed to them. They stood in a laughing crowd, calling out ironical encouragements to the Kanaka oarsmen and to King of the Islands.

"We're getting a send-off!" remarked Kit Hudson grimly.

"Let them cackle!" said Ken carelessly. "He laughs best who laughs last! If we run down Hiram Cook, that's all that matters."

The oars dipped, and the whaleboat shot away from the coral wharf. Laughter and jeers and the waving of mocking hands followed her as she skimmed across the shining lagoon towards the reef.

Not till the boat and the boat's crew dropped from sight beyond the reef did the men of Lukwe return to their cheroots and cocktails, and late into the tropic night laughter and jests echoed from one veranda to another, while under the scintillating stars the Dawn's whaleboat pulled steadily over a glassy sea, heading for Faiyi.

"Feller Engine No Stop!"

HUG, chug, chug!

The sound was not musical in itself, but it was music to the long ears of the lean-faced, lantern-jawed man at the tiller of the chugging launch.

Ta'ala and Solimo, the two black boys, lolled and perspired in the heat. Hiram Cook hardly heeded the heat of the tropic night.

The cheery chug of the engine told

him of freedom and fortune in another region—escape from the blaze of the tropics with his pockets full of what did not belong to him.

In the absconding trader's belt were stacked bills and banknotes; in the tapa sack buckled to it were a stack of golden coins. Hiram Cook had done well in his final clean-up at Lukwe.

Three thousand pounds he carried with him—leaving behind him debts for more than twice as much—for which he little cared. Three thousand would give him a start in a new scene of activity—in some land where the sun would not scorch the marrow of his bones, and where he could forget the taste of quinine. Hiram Cook was making his exit in style.

Faiyi was his objective. At Faiyi the steamer *Mindanao* made her last call among the Islands, then stretched for Australia, and a passage on the steamer meant a swift and sudden departure for Hiram from the scenes that had known him.

At Faiyi he would sell the launch, discharge his last two black servants, and vanish, with three thousand pounds left from the wreck of his trade in the South.

Nothing, so far as Hiram could see, could cut off his escape; nothing could prevent the carrying out of his scheme to clear off from the islands with a little fortune in his belt.

So the lean, leathery face of Hiram Cook was wrinkled in a grin of satisfaction, and he listened to the chugging of the petrol engine as if it were the sweetest music.

Early in the morning Hiram figured on raising Faiyi. There had been a light wind when he left Lukwe; but the wind was dropping—it had dropped—only a glassy swell rolled on the Pacific. The calm, which would baffle the pursuit of any sailing vessel, was nothing to the fugitive trader—his craft ran on petrol, and the calmer the sea, the better he liked it. If King of the Islands really was coming to Lukwe after him, if he arrived there and found him gone, Hiram could imagine the feelings with which the boy trader would gaze at a sea of glass, without a breath stirring. That mental picture was distinctly entertaining to Hiram.

Chug, chug, chug!

The launch cut like a knife through long glassy rollers.

Hiram was no engineer, but he knew how to handle a motor-launch so long as it ran sweetly—as his launch was now running. Hiram grinned at the glassy sea, and grinned at the shining stars. He hoped, from the bottom of his heart, that King of the Islands had arrived at Lukwe and found him gone—it gave an added zest to his evasion. He laughed with glee at the thought of King of the Islands scanning the calm sea and whistling for a wind.

The engine coughed, and coughed again, and whirred into silence.

Ta'ala and Solimo exchanged a glance.

"Feller engine he no stop!" remarked Ta'ala.

Hiram Cook ceased to grin.

A rush of maddened rage and chagrin shook him like a fever. He had laid his plans well—thoroughly well. But he had not calculated on this.

Silence—the deep silence of boundless space—succeeded the final cough of the petrol engine.

From Hiram's bearded lips came a cry of rage.

He could handle a petrol engine if all went well. He could fill the tank with gasoline, as he called it; he could lubricate it. At that his knowledge stopped. A hundred times he had made trips in a motor-boat, and never found trouble. Trouble had cropped up just when he least wanted it.

A speck of sand in the carburettor was a knock-down blow for Hiram Cook!

He glared at the two black boys.

"You savvy feller engine, Ta'ala?"

"No savvy feller engine, sar."

"You savvy feller engine, Solimo?"

"No savvy feller engine, sar."

"You black scum!" roared Hiram, in a fury.

The black boys backed away from him. Hiram looked like knocking seven bells out of them, if only to wreak his rage.

Hiram savvied "feller engine" no more than his black boys. He glared at it, he fumbled at it, he coaxed it, he almost begged it to resume. The engine was deaf to him.

The cheery chug, chug was silent now; the engine was a dead thing.

The launch washed helplessly on the long low swell of the calm Pacific.

Hiram rose to his feet at last, grimy with oil, shaking with fury. He raved at the two blacks savagely, and struck at Ta'ala with a spanner, the black man ducking and narrowly escaping the furious blow.

He glared at the sea.

If he could have stepped some sort of a mast, rigged up some sort of a sail, it would have been futile; the calm upon which he had congratulated himself made it futile.

For ten minutes or more Hiram Cook stood, with blazing face, raving against Fate.

Then in sheer desperation he tackled the engine again. He tackled it with ignorant, hasty, and heavy hands. Something cracked—there was a gush of escaping petrol.

"By hokey! That's torn it!" groaned Hiram.

He threw himself down, exhausted by his efforts and his despair. He would never reach Faiyi in time for the *Mindanao* now—indeed, the terrible thought was in his mind that he never would reach land again at all. The stars were paling now at the approach of dawn; a burning day broke on the Pacific, and under the blazing sun the launch lay and rolled to the swell of the sea, and Hiram Cook swept the horizon with haggard eyes, praying for the sight of a sail, even if it was the sail of King of the Islands!

(Hiram "gets his" as the saying is, in next week's thrilling yarn of "King of the Islands"! Be sure and order your MODERN BOY to-day. Otherwise you may miss a treat!)