

“LOSING MOTOR-CYCLE AND 100 OTHER PRIZES!
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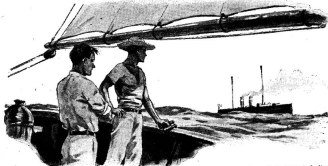
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GATEWAY TO THE SEVEN SEAS! (See page 3.)

The Guns of Guvunuka!



Captain Peek's Cargo!

"NOTHING!" explained Ears Peek, gauging the length of the polished, glistening deck of the *Down*, the ketch belonging to the boy skipper, Ken King—known far and wide as King of the Islands.

King of the Islands had not many American skippers in drumming about the South Seas, so he needed an interpreter. He knew what "nothing" were.

"Guanzooks!" snapped Captain Peek. "Koochee! Mashed-beans! Monkeys—on a—pale! Bolls and trumps—and sick!"

"I know," asserted King of the Islands. He knew all about the various trade goods that were supplied to the natives of the islands in exchange for copra and pearl-shell.

"And here am I," said Captain Peek, with a wave of his bony hand to indicate the lagoon of Ava, with its coral reefs, palm-wooding island, and blazing beach—"here I am, within a day's steam of Guvunuka, hung up by them pesky engines, and old Tamingo comin' down to the beach at Guvunuka on Friday for the goods. And if the goods ain't there, back he goes to the jungle, and the deal's off. And me with a cargo of notions left on my hands that I've humped as far as this all the way from 'Frisco!"

"Guvunuka?" repeated Ken thoughtfully.

Ken King knew all about Guvunuka, a savage island on the fringe of the Solomon. He had heard about Tamingo, the most ruthless old cannibal in the South Seas. Traders went to Guvunuka; but they went

from the deck of the ketch *Down*, Ken could see an officer aboard the greatest commanding steam through binoculars. "They'll know as well as time!" exclaimed Madson.

with barbed wire rigged round their ships and rifles served out to their crews, and a dynamite stick within reach of the captain's hand.

There was a trading station on Guvunuka, and a few copra plantations, but the white men there slept with loaded revolvers under their pillows. A dozen times at least Tamingo and his blacks had come out the beach and attempted to wipe out the white settlement. A trader on Guvunuka could never be quite certain whether his head would be on

grass I wouldn't have took it on, owners or no owners, if they'd wanted me to interview Tamingo. No, sir!" Captain Peek shook his head decidedly.

"It sounds easy enough," said Ken. "Easy as pie," said Ears Peek. "I'd wait till my engines was fixed, if the date wasn't settled for delivery. But it's Friday or nothing. Friday, the old deck needs a nigger down to the beach on Guvunuka to see if the stuff's there. If it ain't, the deal's off. That means trouble for me with my owners. They got a big idea of working up trade with Guvunuka—they figure that there's pearls there. I guess it's pearls they're getting for these hyer goods. But that ain't my business."

"I ain't buying there's some sick," said an Ears Peek. "Some of the niggers on Guvunuka have got old Sanders and Brown Hess wankets, and when a thick man's got a gun he just can't help loading it off. But they don't hit nothing, as a rule, I guess."

"That's so," Ken agreed.

"They say that old Tamingo has been trying his hardest to get hold of white men's guns, and some cannibal traders have tried to run Winklestons and Martins on the island. But the British gunboats have been too wary for them."

Captain Peek drew in his breath rather quickly, and for a moment his keen, penetrating eyes were fixed on Ken's face as if he suspected that there was something suspicious behind the young skipper's remark.

But there was nothing like suspicion in the boy trader's face; and the next moment Captain Peek was as cheerful as ever.

YOUNG KEN KING

owner and skipper of the ketch *Down*, trading in the South Seas, carries a strange cargo to Guvunuka—much to his own surprise! Read how a wily old salt tricks King of the Islands into a wild adventure in this exciting, complete story, by

CHARLES HAMILTON.

Complete in This Issue.

his shoulders next day to seeking in a native canoe-house.

"I guess I know it's an all-fired, nasty spot," said Captain Peek, coolly divining the boy trader's thoughts; "but the pay's good for landing these boxes of notions there. Tamingo is sure a pesky old fire-bag; but he ain't after heads this time—he's after those here goods. You don't have to see him, either. It's been fixed up about the payment all by my owners. My orders is to land the them boxes at a certain place on the beach, at a certain time, and leave them for the niggers to collect. I

"My owners," he remarked, "figure that that darned old cannibal is changing his ways some. This here order for notions such as gramophones and dancing dolls looks like it. I reckon he's wiser to it that the head-busting game is pretty near played out in these arcs. He's had his villages shelled from a gunshot once's more."

"I know all about the shelling," said Ken. "Yamingo's people cheer off into the bush so long as the gunshot's there, and their grubs heters go up in smoke. Next day they're rebuilt, and nobody's a penny the wiser. Shelling from a gunshot won't teach Yamingo anything. Still, he's getting old these days, and he may be able to understand that the white men are on the island for good, and that he can't shift them."

"I guess he's got enough savvy for that," said Captain Peck. "He rose from the deckchair, cut a quid of tobacco, and jammed it into his capacious mouth. "What do you say? You can run down to Guvunuka easy in your windjammer in the time. The pay's good, allowing for the risks—though I guess they don't amount to much. Is it a trade?"

"It's a trade," said Ken. "Then I reckon I'll get those boxes hoisted out of the hold," said Captain Peck. "It'll be a loss to me—only a day's steam from old Yamingo's beach. But then engines on my boat, the *Silas K. Skate*, are a cuttin'—and that Dutch engineer of mine is the worst I've ever shipped."

"If you want a good engineer to look them over, my mate, Kit Hudson, knows the game as well as I know windjamming," said King of the Islands, with a smile. "He'd be glad to lend you a hand."

"Pleased!" said Kit Hudson, who was sitting on the rail of the *Down*, listening to the talk between his shipmate and the Yankee skipper.

For a moment Kara Peck stared. Obviously he was taken by surprise to learn that there was an engineer on board a trading ketch. There was quite a pause before Peck answered.

"I guess I won't trouble you none," he said. "That Dutchman of mine reckons he knows his business, and he will sure get his back up if I bring another man to ship in. Thanks all the same. When'll you be ready to list them cases on board your ketch, Mr. King?"

"As soon as you like. I'm finished here at Ava."

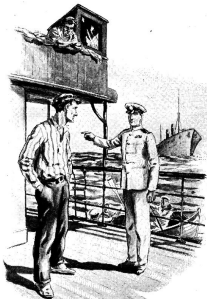
"Then I reckon I'll be getting."

And with a nod Captain Peck walked to the side, stepped into his waiting wheelboat, and was pulled back to the tramp-steamer that lay at anchor on the other side of the lagoon.

Bound for Guvunuka!

WHEN sails set to a fair wind, the *Down* glided out of the lagoon of Ava and broadened the rollers of the Pacific. King of the Islands set the course for Kaiti-lahitahaga, the Kanaka before, who stood at the wheel, and then stood looking back over the taffrail at Ava.

Across the reefs that barred the lagoon he could see the American steamer, and Captain Peck, tiny in



"What's the game?" demanded Peck. "I guess it's something new, shipping a powerful trader in these waters!"

"I'll see your papers," answered the naval officer curtly, "if you please!"

the distance, spitting tobacco-juice. On Ava there were no white men, no trading station, though often there were two or three white men's legs or shoulders in the lagoon trading with the natives—a peaceful Polynesian trade. King of the Islands had called there for a day only, and he had found the American tramp-steamer anchored in the lagoon when he arrived.

Captain Peck, he had learned, had anchored to take on board water and fresh food, while his Dutch engineer was tinkering with the engine. Peck talk among the natives, Ken had heard, without being particularly interested, that the Yankee steamer had been there a good many days. Apparently, the trouble in the engine-room, whatever it was, was keeping the Dutch engineer busy for a long time.

Ken, as a fellow-skipper, had naturally sympathized when he learned how Kara Peck was "hung up" with his boxes of "notions" for Guvunuka. With her engine disabled, the *Silas K. Skate* was as helpless as a windjammer in a dead calm. While the steamer lay helpless in the lagoon, the sailing-ketch could run

down easily to Guvunuka before the wind. One man's bad luck was another man's good luck, for the pay on the transport of the boxes of "notions" from Ava to Guvunuka was good.

Captain Peck had been so anxious to get his consignments landed on the beach of Guvunuka on time that he had not bargained about the cost, which was annual enough in a Yankee skipper. His anxiety was easy to understand, if his owners had made arrangements with Yamingo for delivery on a certain date. The old chief, treacherous as a snake himself, would be prompt to suspect double-dealing in others; and if the consignments was not there when he came down to the beach for it, it was very likely that all trade would be at a/nd between him and Captain Peck's owners. Kara Peck had been obviously relieved to see the cases shipped on board the *Down* for the run down to Yamingo's island.

Six large wooden cases had been hoisted on the ketch in the lagoon at Ava. They were heavy cases, screwed down, and similar in appearance to other cases on board. Stencilled on the outside were the names of their

The Guns of Guvunuka!

various causes, such as "Gravimensions," "Mechanical Belts," and so forth. The cases had been stacked in the main cabin of the Dawn, and Ken gave them no further thought.

Leaning over to the beams, the ketch cleift the blue rollers of the Pacific.

Kit Hudson joined Ken at the tiller, stepping back at the stall of Ava as it sank down below the sea-line. Only a bunch of fanthary palms, black against the azure of the sky, marked where the stall lay.

There was a thoughtful shade on the Australian's face.

"I reckon I'd have liked to look at the Yankee's engines, Ken!" he said, after a long and thoughtful silence.

Ken smiled. All that the boy trader wanted were "a wet sheet and a flowing sea, a wind that followed fast." But Hudson's thoughts ran always on engines.

"I mean, I'm not so jolly sure that they were cranked as he told us," said Hudson. "He didn't want my opinion on them, anyhow, and I fancy he's not the man to care much for his engineer's feelings if he really wanted to get going."

"But why should he lie to us?" asked King of the Islands. "According to the niggers, the steamer has been hanging up there for days. He wouldn't want to waste his time for nothing."

"Unless he was waiting for a trader to drop in at Ava to take his Guvunuka cargo off his hands," said Hudson.

Ken looked at his shipmate. "That doesn't seem to make sense," he said. "The steamer could run down to Guvunuka in well under a day. He'd had to pay us well for taking Tamingo's stuff to the island. Why should he do that if he could carry out the contract himself?"

"Guvunuka has an unhealthy reputation," Hudson laughed. "Old Tamingo is quite capable of cutting off the ship with a fleet of war-canoes if he saw half a chance. Captain Peck would rather that somebody else took the risk."

"Well, if the Yankee skipper was afraid of Tamingo, all the better for us," Ken said. "We've got good pay for an easy run. We're not afraid of Tamingo."

"Hardly. But it may mean that the danger is greater than he let on; old Tamingo is as treacherous as only a South Sea cannibal can be—which is saying a lot. We shall have to be on our guard."

"It's understood that we find the beach clear, and that the niggers don't come down for the stuff till we're clean off," said Ken. "I wouldn't trust the ketch within Tamingo's reach, of course. If we pick up a sign of the niggers on the beach, we don't land the stuff. I made that quite clear to Captain Peck, and he's taking the risk. We land it by Thursday, and the blacks come along some time on Friday to pick it up."

"I know. But—" Hudson

paused. "With this wind, Ken, and going all out, we can raise Guvunuka by Thursday morning. I admit I shall feel easier in my mind when we're well clear of the place. Peck had some reason—not connected with engine trouble—for giving us the job; I feel it in my bones. The only reason I can think of is that there's risk of treachery from the cannibals—which Peck did not care to mention lest we should refuse the job."

"He looks a hard nut, and I dare say he doesn't care if the cannibals cut off the ketch, so long as his cases of notions are landed on time," said King of the Islands, laughing. "You're right, Kit; we'll make the run down to Guvunuka in record time, and if old Tamingo has any trap laid ready, we'll be too early for it."

King of the Islands looked up at the masts, heaving under the canvas that bellied in the trade wind.

"The sticks will stand a little more," he said. "We'll shake out the spinnaker."

The four Hiva-On boys who formed the crew came promptly at the call of the boy trader, and the spinnaker-sail was set. The ketch was fairly flying through the water now, leaving a long, glistening wake in the sunlight astern.

"I fancy the Silas K. Skate would find us hard to beat now with her engines in top-notch order," said King of the Islands.

"If we put in that little petrol-engine I've talked to you about—"

interrupted Hudson. "Never mind Lizzie!" Ken exclaimed. "We shall raise Guvunuka soon enough. And I'm glad that old Tamingo is taking to gramophones and trade bells instead of head-hunting. It's a sign of grace in the old rascal that I never expected to hear of."

Koko—as Kato-lalulalunga was called—who was at the helm, put in a remark. He had been listening thoughtfully to the talk of the white masters.

"Mellin feller, he plenty had feller, ar!"

"How do you know, old coffee-bean?" asked Ken.

"Koko savvy," answered Kato-lalulalunga. "Ma watache, eyes belong me, all time he talk about King of the Islands. He tinker plenty to me say."

"Likely enough," said Ken, with a smile. "Your watch, Kit."

And King of the Islands went below to turn it.

The Landing!

FELLER gumbot he comey!" It was the following afternoon, and the Dawn was ripping through the Pacific rollers like a racer. The ketch had made great speed, and early in the afternoon the hills of Guvunuka had been raised above the blue horizon. Far in the distance, a bar as yet on the sea-line, rose Guvunuka, one of the Solomon far to the east of the main group.

The eastern side, which the ketch was approaching, was Tamingo's land; the white settlement was on the western shore. Only the forest-clad

hills could be seen so far, but in a short time the white beach and the palms would be raised. Out of the blue south came a rolling bar of smoke, and Koko's keen eyes picked up the vessel from which it came.

King of the Islands leaped out of his deck-chair as Kato-lalulalunga announced the gumbot in the distance.

"The glasses, Loupo!" he said to one of the black crew.

Loupo handed the boy trader the binoculars, and Ken fixed the glasses on the distant vessel. It was a British gumbot, and it was coming up from the south at full speed, and heading to cut in between the ketch and Guvunuka.

"It's the patrol," said Ken, as he lowered the glasses. "They've been watching those waters pretty closely ever since the time Hully Samson tried to run a cargo of guns to old Tamingo."

"More power to their elbow!" said Kit Hudson. "If Tamingo ever gets a cargo of Winchester for his backs, it will be all up with the settlement on the west side of Guvunuka."

"But it's not likely to happen," said Ken. "I suppose there are a good many traders who would smuggle guns to Tamingo for the sake of the profit on the deal; but it would be rather too dangerous a contract for most skippers."

The ketch stood on towards the island, while the gumbot from the south drew nearer and nearer, till every detail of the craft could be picked up by the naked eye. Ken watched her, with a smile on his face.

No doubt there were a good many skippers in the South Seas who would have disliked the idea of being stopped and searched by a gumbot, but King of the Islands was not one of them. There was nothing on board the Dawn that he would not have been willing to show up for an official inspection.

The gumbot was still distant when he saw an officer standing with binoculars to his eyes scanning the ketch.

"They'll know us next time they see us," said Hudson, with a grin, when that careful inspection had lasted more than a minute.

"They know us now," answered Ken. "The Dawn is pretty well known in these seas, and I fancy that Johnny knows that it would be a waste of time to stop us."

Ken was right. The naval officer, having finished his inspection, evidently recognized King of the Islands' ketch, and King of the Islands himself, standing by the helm.

The gumbot slowed down and changed her course.

"Not speaking to us, after all," said Hudson.

"No; they're looking for gun-runners, and they know the Dawn isn't likely to do anything in that line."

The ketch kept on towards Guvunuka, and the gumbot disappeared below the blue horizon, the long trail of smoke dying out on the sky.

"That's the advantage of a good reputation," said King of the Islands, with a laugh. "We should have lost

a lot of time if they'd thought it necessary to overhaul us and make a search. But as soon as they recognized the Dawn they were satisfied. We've plenty of time now to make Gatuwaka before sundown."

The gustboat had vanished almost as swiftly as she had appeared. It occurred to Ken that she had been looking for some other vessel and had lost time in giving chase to the Dawn, a vessel known all through the South Seas as being above suspicion.

"Looks as if gun-running to Gatuwaka is suspected," remarked Kit.

"It does. If there's a gun-runner in these waters I hope the gustboat will get him," said King of the Islands.

Under the westerling sun the ketch bow angled towards the purple blue on the blue sea to the westward. Gatuwaka rose more and more clearly against the blaze of the sunset.

With the bigestars to his eyes, King of the Islands scanned the beach, from the lapping waves to the fringe of palms far back from the sea. There was no sign of life to be seen, save for the crowing land-crobs. Lurking savages might be hidden behind the fringe of palms, but on the open sandy beach there was no life.

"Looks all clear," said Ken, lowering the glasses at last.

"Clear enough," Hudson asserted. "It beats me why Captain Peck didn't see the signs of notions down here himself."

"Must have been true about his engines, old man," answered King of the Islands. "Anyhow, it looks all clear, and we shall land the cases at the first glimpse of dawn. We anchor here."

The ketch's cable ran out, the anchor dropping sixty feet to the bottom of the lagoon. The sun dipped below the western sea, and all was dark.

Ken and his crew slept on deck that night, with loaded rifles by their sides. Careful watch was kept, and keen ears listened for the sound of a paddle. But there was no alarm, and at the first gleam of sunrise in the eastern sky the crew of the Dawn were busy.

The six cases of notions taken

from the Silas K. Skate were brought on deck. Three of them were lowered into the whaleboat, and the boat pulled for the beach, Ken sitting in the stern with a loaded Winchester across his knees, Koko standing in the bows with a rifle under each arm. On the ketch Kit Hudson stood watching over the rail, rifle in hand, ready to fire over the heads of the boat's crew if natives appeared on the beach.

But there was no sign of an enemy. Either no treachery was intended by the Gatuwaka chief, or else the early arrival of the ketch had disconcerted his plans. Tappings was not expecting the cases of notions till Friday, and it was possible that no watch was as yet kept for a vessel. But though all looked clear, the boy trader was not of his guard for a single moment, for too well he knew the evil reputation of Gatuwaka.

The whaleboat grounded on the beach, and the three heavy cases were lifted ashore by the Kanakas and carried up beyond high-water mark. There they were placed by the side of a tall, pointed rock which had been described to Ken by Captain Peck.

Ken returned to the ketch, and the remaining three cases were ferried to the beach and carried up to the same spot. All the time the beach remained lifeless, and there was no sign of a savage in the distant palms.

Nevertheless Ken was glad enough to get the whaleboat off and pull back to the Dawn. He had carried out his contract, and was only too glad to get clear of Gatuwaka without trouble. It was a relief to tread the deck again.

"And now for the sea!" he said.

"And the sooner the better," said Hudson, his eyes on the solitary beach of Gatuwaka.

The Dawn glided out through the reefs in the ray sunrise and breasted the Pacific rollers, tacking to the east. Hudson stood watching the six great wooden cases that lay by the pointed rock above tidal reach. Gatuwaka might have been an uninhabited island, so silent and still was the beach and the palms beyond. The beach faded at last in the distance and dropped from sight, the palms faded from view, and at long last the forest-clad hills dropped into the azure sea. Hudson turned away and gave a perplexed grunt.

"What are you thinking now, old man?" asked Ken, with a smile.

"I can't make it out. No savvy, as Koko would say. Why did Captain Peck pay a stiff figure for that easy job?"

"His engines!"

"Hiss his engines! I tell you he was lying about his 'engines,'" snapped Hudson.

"It must have been that he feared danger on Gatuwaka. And yet he didn't look like a man easily frightened. I'm puzzled, Ken."

"Give it a miss, old chap, and sit down to breakfast," said King of the Islands. "Captain Peck seems to have got your goat, as he would say in his own weird language. Darnay's turned out a uncommonly good breakfast, and I'm ready for it, for one."

"Same here," said Kit.

He sat down to breakfast, but while he ate, his face was still thoughtful, and his glance continually turned to the west, towards the blue sea beyond which Gatuwaka had disappeared.



Steaming In!

—About a very common "howler" which we all ought to heed down!

"As the train leaving its Royal Highness steamed into the station and came to a standstill alongside the platform, the band struck up the National Anthem and a roar of cheering burst from the waiting crowds."

The above is copied from an account which appeared a little time ago in the columns of one of our big daily papers. It contains a "howler," often made in the description of the arrival of a train. Have you spotted it?

What would happen if one of our modern locomotive engines actually were to steam into a station? Imagine it. A great engine steaming in, exerting its enormous power to pull the train along. Think of the weight! The engine alone weighs anything up to a hundred and fifty tons, and of course the total weight of the whole train is very much more. The momentum would be enormous, and it is absolutely certain that, if the engine really were steaming when it entered the station, it would be quite unable to stop in time, and would either overshoot the platform, leaving the playing band and cheering crowds forlornly behind, or, if the station were a terminus, crash into the buffer-stops with disastrous results.

No. You may be quite sure that if a train is to stop at a station it does not steam in. The engine-driver, being a careful man, the world not be an engine-driver (otherwise) it shuts off steam in good time and lets his train RUN in, with the brakes grinding hard to bring it to a standstill at its appointed place.

When a train leaves a station it is quite another matter. Then the engine does steam with a vengeance, scolding up clouds of water-vapour as great bursts from the funnel as it steams to get the huge dead weight behind it on the move again.

If any of you ever have the job of reporting the arrival or departure of Royalty or other distinguished people by train, you will remember to avoid this particular "howler," for you may know that a train always "runs" into the station and "steams" out of it!

The Guns of Guvunuka!

ERRA PECK, standing on the bridge of the *Silas K. Skate*, squirted tobacco juice down on the main deck.

"That Australian guy," said Captain Peck thoughtfully to his mate, "was spy. He's as cute as they make 'em. But I guess the weed was pulled over his papers just as complete as it was pulled over the papers of that innocent kid they call King of the Islands. I sure guess so."

The mate grinned. The *Silas K. Skate* was steaming steadily westward through the Pacific rollers. There was nothing wrong now with her engines. Immediately the *Flava* had disappeared under the sea-line from *Ava*, the Dutch engineer had been remarkably successful with that crooked machinery.

Captain Peck was in a happy and satisfied mood. He had got rid of the case of notions for Guvunuka, and he had pulled the weed over the eyes of a "son of John Bull"—two causes of satisfaction for the "Prize skipper."

"I guess we'll hit that gunboat afore we raise Guvunuka," the mate remarked.

"I guess so," assented the skipper. "And they can sure search the *Silas K. Skate* from trunk to keel and they can't find anything contraband as I heard this here hecker. I guess I'll welcome a search. I reckon it will make it clear that this hecker ain't stood up in my gun-running to the niggers on Guvunuka."

And Erra Peck chuckled.

"That windjammer ketch will make Guvunuka easy by Thursday," went on Peck. "Earlier, 'p'haps. She's a stiffer, she is, though she's only a meekly windjammer. Tamingo will collect them cases on Friday, according to contract. Mister King will be clear of the place long afore that, and he won't see a cove come off to us, I reckon. He won't never dream that the consignment ain't yet paid for, and that we're collecting the payment in pearls. I guess it would surprise him if anybody told him so."

"Tamingo's a sly old snake, I guess," said the mate. "What if the old thief bags the cases and forgets payment?"

"The owners have got all that fixed," Erra Peck answered. "They bid enough in advance to see them clear if Tamingo let them down after. But he'll pay all right. You see, this is only the first consignment. There's more to follow. Tamingo won't quarrel with the fact that's going to keep him in guns and cartridges. He can afford to pay—he's got the pearls. And he wants guns."

"The next lot won't be run so easy," said the mate. "King of the Islands won't drop in at *Ava* again to take them of your hands."

"I guess I'll find some other trader to do the trick, with the same yarn," said Captain Peck coolly. "But I've got up a feel a little uneasy about that Australian guy. He's—ajay, he

is. If he should have the curiosity to break out one of them cases to see what's inside—" He paused. "That was why I started one of the cases in the boat and let a granite phone trumpet tumble out, for them all to see. I reckon it satisfied them that the case of notions was O.K. I sure reckon it's all right."

Captain Peck swept the sea with his binoculars. He fully expected to be stopped by the British gunboat before he raised the hills of Guvunuka, and he looked forward to the meeting with equanimity and, indeed, relish now that the "case of notions" had been transferred to another craft.

Peck knew that gun-running was suspected by the authorities, and knew that his own craft was regarded with a suspicious eye. But he cared nothing for that. King of the Islands had taken the danger off his heavy shoulders.

"I guess that's John Bull," said Captain Peck, later in the afternoon, as a cloud of smoke darkened the blue sky ahead.

He slicked his glasses shut and grinned. It was the gunboat! Headlines of a signal to hoist to, the *Silas K. Skate* kept on her way. As Captain Peck, since his stop at *Ava*, courted inquiry and had nothing to fear, it rather amused him to irritate the British commander.

Boop! The report of a gun rolled across the blue water, and a shell whizzed past the beam of the tramp steamer from San Francisco. It was a warning that was not to be disregarded.

"I guess they're anxious for our company, same!" grinned Captain Peck; and he signalled to the engineer-room.

The *Silas K. Skate* gave to.

A boat dropped into the water, manned by blue-jackets, and pulled to the Yankee steamer. The boat ranged alongside, and a naval lieutenant stepped on board.

Captain Peck saluted him nonchalantly.

"What's this here game?" he demanded. "I guess it's something new, stopping a peaceful trader in these here waters?"

"My orders are to look for this steamer," answered the naval officer curtly. "I'll see your papers, if you please!"

"I guess you're welcome."

Captain Peck led the way to his cabin. His papers were in perfect order, and Erra Peck was willing—perhaps too willing—to answer questions. He was in the happy position, since his stop at *Ava*, of having nothing to conceal.

But the gunboat's officer was obviously suspicious.

"Any guns on board?" he asked.

"I guess you've got my cargo lists under your eyes," answered Captain Peck slyly.

"Anything for Guvunuka?"

"Guvunuka! I guess you've had this here craft within ten miles of Guvunuka any time," Peck grinned. "I guess Guvunuka ain't a healthy spot. No, I ain't nothing for Guvunuka."

"Where are you heading now?"

"La'u, figure on leaving Guvunuka ten miles to starboard when I pass that punky island."

"Any objection to a search?"

Captain Peck was well aware that if he stated an objection it would be disregarded. But he had no objection to make.

"Search all you want," he said.

"If anybody has tipped you that the *Silas K. Skate* is running guns, I sure reckon he was stringing you sure. I ain't no objection."

"I'll take you at your word."

"Do" smiled Captain Peck.

The examination of the *Silas K. Skate* was more thorough than Erra Peck had expected. But it did not trouble him at all. Excepting for his own and the mate's revolvers, there were no guns on board the *Silas K. Skate*—nothing but trade goods and notions.

Had these "cases of notions," which had been transhipped at *Ava*, been found on board the steamer, vessel and captain and crew would have been taken away in custody. But by this time they had been landed on the beach of Guvunuka by King of the Islands, and the boy trader was, according to Erra Peck's calculations, too far away to be asked questions.

The search revealed nothing.

The gunboat's officer did not seem satisfied, and Erra Peck could guess that he was acting on precise information. But the examination of the cargo had cleared Captain Peck, and there was nothing more to be done.

When the naval officer and his men returned to their boat, Erra Peck waved them an ironical adieu. The *Silas K. Skate's* engine whirled again.

"I guess something has leaked out," remarked Captain Peck. "Them Britiders ain't always the fools they look! But I guess that guy didn't get much change out of us."

"No sure did not!" chuckled the mate.

The steamer thrashed on her way, still at half-speed, Peck showing no hurry whatever to get out of sight of the gunboat. But the gunboat dropped below the horizon at last, and Captain Peck was glad to see the last of her. The course of the *Silas K. Skate* had been for La'u, which would have left Tamingo's island ten or twelve miles to the starboard. But now that he was secure from observation, Captain Peck changed the course, and the steamer headed direct for the eastern shore of Guvunuka.

It was under the faint beams of the Southern Cross that Captain Peck picked up the forest-clad hills of Guvunuka, a black mass against the western sky.

Then the engines were shut down. Peck had no intention of raising the reef in the darkness. And there was no haste, for it was not till the following day that he was to collect payment from Tamingo. The *Silas K. Skate* let go a sea-anchor, and remained outside the reef under the stars.

Captain Peck went down to his bunk in a drowsy frame of mind.

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The Guns of Guvunuka!

(Continued from page 8.)

When he came up at midnight to take his watch on deck, he sat in a deck-chair and calculated his profits on that successful gun-running trip. To what would happen on Guvunuka, when the rifles and cartridges were in the hands of Tamingo, Era Peck gave no thought. That was not his concern.

But suddenly Era Peck started from his chair, and wrinkled his brows as he stared through the dim glimmer of the starlight. From the cabin, silent sea, he thought he heard a sound—some sound of rattling blocks or a swinging boom.

He stared intently. Some trading windjammer, perhaps, passing him in the darkness. Captain Peck was bearing no lights, he did not want his vessel to be picked up from the shore. In dealing with treacherous savages he could not be too careful.

But if a sailing-vessel had passed him in the darkness, neither was that vessel bearing lights. It passed—if it passed at all—in darkness.

"Gee!" murmured Era Peck. He was puzzled. It wanted an hour to dawn; and he could have sworn that some vessel under sail had passed in the night. Yet what shipper in his senses could be heading for Guvunuka, rounding the reef in the darkness, and without burning a light?

Era Peck shook his head. It was impossible. He settled down in his deck-chair again, and chewed tobacco and squirted tobacco-juice, and waited for sunrise. But his mood would not have been so contented could he have known how near, in those moments, he had been to King of the Islands!

Tricked!

"FOOLS!" Hudson fairly shouted out the word.

The sun was setting, and the ketch was many a long mile from Guvunuka. King of the Islands had dismissed Guvunuka and Captain Peck from his mind. He was sitting on the hatchway combings, with a pencil in his hand and a paper spread on his knee, calculating.

Ken, deep in his calculation of items of cargo, was giving no attention to his shipmate, who had been pacing the deck with a frowning brow. All that day Hudson had been like a bear with a sore head, as Ken described it. He had a worry on his mind—the worry of not understanding. Somehow, the Guvunuka trip, easy and successful as it had been, did not satisfy him—and he was worried.

His sudden exclamation drew every eye on him. Even Danny, the cook, looked out of his little galley.

"What's biling you now, old chap?" Ken asked good-humoredly.

"Fools!" repeated Hudson bitterly.

"Who—which—and what?" asked Ken, laughing. "You, or me, or the Hiva-Oa boys?"

"Us two—born fools, played like silly fishes by a cute Yankee!" said Hudson. "I've got it now."

"And what have you got?"

"Guns!" said Hudson.

King of the Islands stared. He had been good-humoredly tolerant of Hudson's worried frame of mind all day. But it really seemed to him now as if the Cornstalk was wandering in his mind.

"Guns?" he repeated blankly.

"Guns—guns!" said Hudson. "And we were fools—brightest fools—not to think of it at the time. That's why that thief from 'Prisco had about his engine! That why he hung up at Ava, waiting for the Dawn to come in, because there's no white men on Ava to spot his game; because the Dawn is well known to be above suspicion. That's why! Oh, Ken, if we can't undo what we've done, we've got the blood of every white man in Guvunuka on our hands."

"Kit! Have you gone bally, or what?"

"Guns!" roared Hudson. "Can't you see, now that I tell you? It wasn't old Tamingo—it was the gunboat! Ken, can't you see? Those cases of notions—marked grammophones and what not! Guns, you see—guns! We've run a cargo of guns to Guvunuka—and if old Tamingo gets hold of them he won't leave a white man alive on the island within three days."

King of the Islands leaped to his feet. Pencil and paper went flying.

"Kit! You're dreaming—it's impossible—"

"I tell you, that villain Peck has fooled us into running six cases of rifles and cartridges to Guvunuka!" said Hudson, with deep conviction. "He knew the gunboat was on the water—and he knew that the Dawn would never be suspected."

"Impossible!" repeated King of the Islands.

But his face was white now.

The bare possibility was terrible. A cargo of up-to-date rifles and cartridges in the hands of Tamingo and his horde of head-hunters meant a sudden and fearful outbreak on Guvunuka. It meant the wiping-out of the plantations and the trading station there—it meant that the blood of every white man on Guvunuka would be smeking in Tamingo's cannibalism before the week was out.

Koko gave a thoughtful nod.

"Tinker white matter Hudson talks good feller talk!" he said.

"Savvy plenty Mellan captain talk plenty he no say along King of the Islands."

Ken caught his breath.

"You think so too, Koko?"

"Yesser! Me tinker plenty!"

"It's impossible!" muttered Ken.

"He would never dare to make use of me and my ship—"

"And the good reputation of both!"

said Hudson bitterly.

"He would never dare! I'd hunt him the length and breadth of the Pacific and wring his scallyneck!" exclaimed King of the Islands, his eyes blazing.

"It's impossible!"

"Ken, impossible or not, I tell you that that Yankee has fooled us into running guns to Guvunuka! Best ship at once, for goodness' sake—ship at once, for goodness' sake—we've got to get hold of those cases

if we can before Tamingo does—if it costs the life of every man on board."

Ken stood silent.

"Do you hear?" The Australian caught him by the shoulder and shook him in his excitement. "We may have time—the wind that we're tacking against now will carry us down to Guvunuka under full sail—and Tamingo is not due to collect the cases till to-morrow. If we won't watch landings there, we've a chance to get hold of them again—a chance, at least. It's a chance that's worth all our lives."

"I can't believe it, Kit!" said King of the Islands slowly. "Look here, one of the cases because unshipped in Peck's whistboat, and a grammophone trumpet tumbled out. I saw it—"

"So did I!—and we were meant to see it!" snapped Hudson. "That was a clever stunt to pull the wool over our eyes in case we had any curiosity to look out the cases and see what was inside."

"It's possible—"

"It's true!" yelled Hudson. "I can't believe it! But the bare chance is enough!" said Ken. "Best ship for Guvunuka!"

The Hiva-Oa boys rushed to stern and halcyard. The Dawn swung round. All through the long day the ketch had been tacking eastward against the wind. Now, with the wind astern, she rushed through the water.

King of the Islands paced the deck. He did not, and could not, believe that he and the good name of his ship had been made use of by an unscrupulous Yankee for so instantly a purpose. Yet he knew that for years old Tamingo had been seeking to get guns for his tribe; and the profit on such a transaction would be enormous. He knew that Billy Sanson had made such an attempt—and the watchfulness of the patrolling gunboat showed that some further attempt was suspected. Even with guns and crews and old traders the Guvunuka savages had made more than one attack on the white settlement. If Tamingo had succeeded in arming his men with repeating-rifles and plenty of cartridges—

Ken shuddered at the thought. To go ashore on Guvunuka, if the savages had come down to the beach for the cases, was asking for death, whatever the cases contained. And Ken did not, and could not, believe that they contained guns. But Hudson was convinced; and the chance was enough for King of the Islands. It might mean the smoking-crens for every man on board the ketch; but it was a risk that had to be taken.

The sunset deepened into night, and the ketch was still rushing to the west, under full sail. But Guvunuka was still far distant. Under the scintillating stars the ketch sped on. Hudson peered impatiently through the shadows of the sun.

Black against the sky rose, at last, the woody hills of Guvunuka. It wanted an hour to dawn!

"Enough Justice!"—a signal to this agricultural guru appears in next week's MODERN BOY. It's great! Don't miss it through neglecting to order next Monday's copy in advance!