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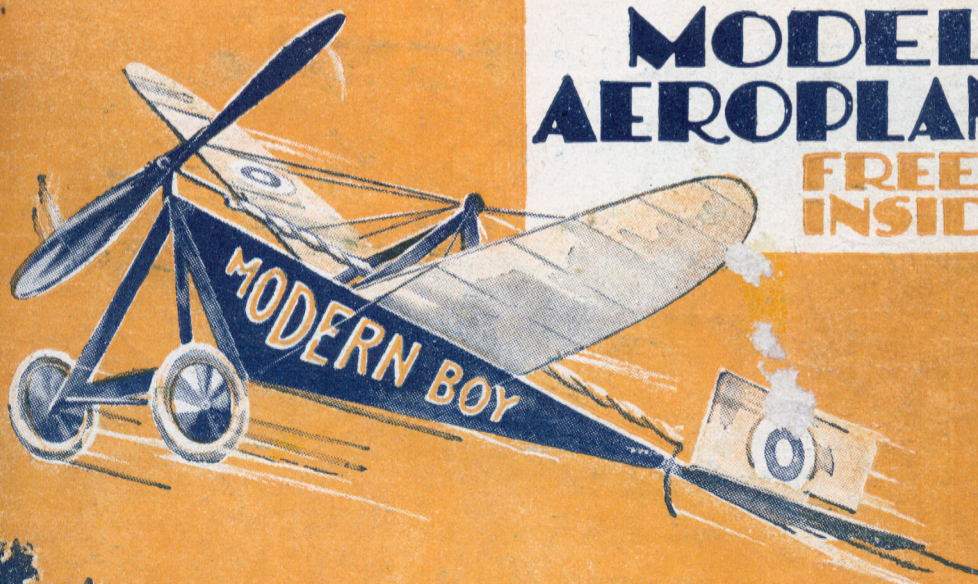
The **MODERN BOY**

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WORKING PARTS of this
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MOTOR-CYCLE AND MANY CASH PRIZES OFFERED TO READERS!

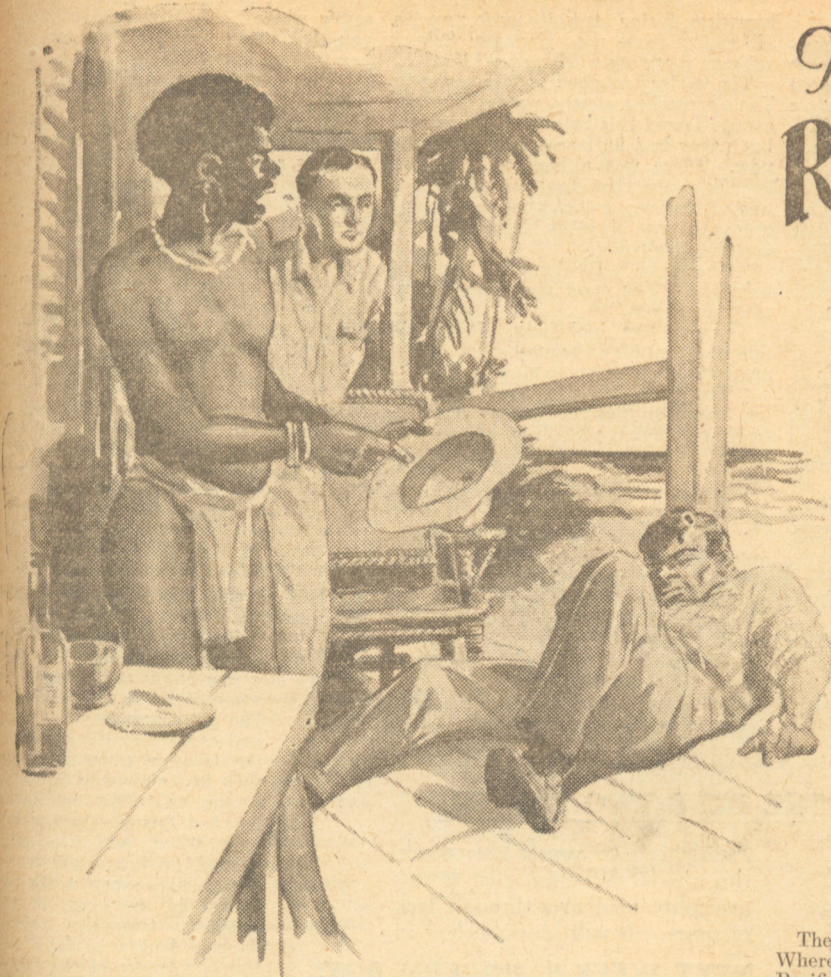
The Little Red One!

Of all the stirring times young Ken King—King of the Islands—has passed through during his career as trader in the South Seas this is one of the briskest!
The author,

CHARLES HAMILTON

spins one of the best yarns of adventure in the tropics that you could hope to enjoy in a twelvemonth!

**COMPLETE IN
THIS ISSUE.**



Schenk struck the floor and lay half-senseless. Koko picked up the Panama hat gingerly. A tiny black thing, its blackness relieved by a single speck of crimson, clung inside the crown.

In Tao's Box!

THE trader of Olulo stepped out into his veranda, blinking in the blaze of the tropic sun and the glare of the Pacific. He passed a shaking hand over his haggard, sunken eyes, and scowled blackly at the graceful ketch anchored in the lagoon.

The black house-boy squatting in the veranda jumped to attention, his rolling eyes warily on Hermann Schenk. The Olulo trader had turned out that morning with the temper of a demon. That was his usual custom. Drink was Schenk's consolation for the solitude of his life on Olulo, where he was the only white man! It had taken its toll—in his haggard eyes, his shaking hands, his demoniac temper.

"You feller Tao!" His voice was a husky growl. "You bring feller bottle plenty quick."

"Yes, sar!" faltered the house-boy. He placed bottle and glass before the Olulo trader, dodged a kick, and retired to the end of the veranda. Hermann Schenk drank, and stood staring at the ketch. His puckered brows grew blacker and blacker.

It seemed as if the sight of the ketch, which belonged to Ken King, the boy trader commonly known throughout the South Seas as King of the Islands, roused all the evil in his nature. Once his hand went straying towards his hip-

pocket, which bulged with the weight of a heavy Colt revolver, as if he were tempted to draw the weapon and fire on the ketch.

The Dawn, as the ketch was named, lay anchored within easy pistol-shot—could the trader have depended on the aim of his trembling hand, and had he dared to follow out his savage impulse. But he did not dare!

He watched the Dawn, scowling. King of the Islands was full in his view, sitting on the taffrail, chatting with Kit Hudson, the mate of the Dawn. Near them the brawny Kanaka bo'sun Kaio-lalulalonga—Koko for short—leaned idly on the mizzen twanging his ukulele, the jingling notes floating to the trader's ears as he stood and watched. Forward on the deck loafed the crew of five Hiva-Oa boys, chewing betel-nut, lazy and contented. There seemed nothing in the aspect of the vessel, its captain and crew to excite the animosity of the most disgruntled man in the Pacific. But there was the bitterest animosity in Hermann Schenk's sunken eyes as he gazed.

Save that the ketch was unusually clean and brightly polished from stem to stern, it looked like any other Pacific trading ketch. Its cargo might have been supposed to be sacks of copra and bags of pearl shell. But Hermann Schenk knew more—and suspected much more. One word hummed in his ears and his brain—"Gold!"

There was gold on board the ketch. Where and how the boy trader of the Pacific had raised a cargo of the precious metal, Schenk could not begin to guess. It was a mystery to him—a perplexing problem but there was no doubt of the fact.

The ketch had sailed into the lagoon from the vast spaces of the Pacific, coming he knew not whence. King of the Islands was in need of food and water, and Schenk gathered that he had had a long trip. He was glad enough to see any white man on an atoll where few ships called; glad enough to trade. But for the discovery that there was treasure on board the ketch, Schenk would have paid her no more heed than he paid to any other Pacific trader.

But he had made the discovery; or, rather, the knowledge had been forced upon him. A bronzed sailorman had come ashore with King of the Islands, and offered him a price for his cutter and the hire of his native crew.

The sailorman, Jim Daunt, was in a hurry to get to the nearest port of call of the Sydney steamer. And as Schenk, who needed his cutter, demurred, the sailorman told him to name his own price. Schenk sardonically named six times the value of the cutter, and to his amazement the price was accepted. And it had been paid down in solid gold—in a bar of the precious metal, which Schenk weighed on his own trading scales.

Within a few hours the cutter had been provisioned, the native crew herded on board, a large chest transferred from the ketch, and the sailorman had sailed out of the lagoon and vanished into the

The Little Red One!

Pacific. Schenk had watched the transshipping of that heavy chest. He knew what it contained. The bar of gold by which he had been paid for the cutter was evidence enough. The sailorman, the cutter, the chest of gold were gone. But King of the Islands remained.

The Olulo trader watched the ketch with burning eyes, in the blazing tropic morning. Gold! Somewhere in the recesses of the unknown ocean, King of the Islands had raised a cargo of gold; and one of his associates was gone with his share. So much Schenk could surmise. Daunt was in haste to get to Sydney; but Ken King was in no haste. He was bound for Lalinge, and in no hurry to lift his anchor from the Olulo lagoon.

There was gold on the ketch, Schenk knew it. Of the three white men on the Dawn, one was gone with his share. Two remained—with their shares! He was sure of it, and the thought of it burned in his greedy mind.

"Mein Gott!" the trader muttered. "Ten years on this island, and nothing to show for it! And gold enough on that ketch to make a man rich for life! If—if—!" It was the drink that accounted for the trader having nothing to show for ten years on Olulo. But he did not choose to think of that.

—Where had King of the Islands raised the loot? Had the skipper of the Dawn been a well-known South Seas ruffian, Schenk would have suspected a robbery as a matter of course. But he knew that there could have been no robbery where King of the Islands was concerned. Some amazing stroke of luck—some wonderful gift of fortune! After all, it mattered little whence the gold had come. It was on board the ketch—if the Olulo trader could but lay his greedy hands on it. His heart ached with hatred of the man who was smiled on by fortune, that had always frowned on Hermann Schenk.

Gazing at the ketch, as if the intensity of his gaze could penetrate the solid teak of the deck to the treasure hidden below, the trader scowled—and pondered. A day had passed since Daunt had sailed away in the cutter, and King of the Islands was not likely to stay much longer. At the thought of the ketch pulling out of the lagoon, with the treasure on board, Schenk felt a contraction at his heart, and again his hand slid towards his hip.

If only he had not been alone on Olulo! With three or four of his own kidney, matters would have been simple. But he was alone, and the nearest man he knew was thirty miles away, on Levy—and he no longer had his cutter. The natives of Olulo could not help him. They feared him and hated him, and islanders who trembled at the frown of Hermann Schenk were not likely to tackle King of the Islands and his crew.

The trader's heart seethed with greed and hatred, but he knew that he was helpless—that King of the Islands would sail away when he chose, taking with him the treasure that lay packed beneath his hatches. Unless—unless—

Schenk turned from his contemplation of the ketch at last, and fixed his eyes on the house-boy at the other end of the veranda.

"You feller Tao!" Tao rose from his haunches, eyeing his white master warily. He seldom came near Hermann Schenk without receiving a kick or a blow.

The trader beckoned to him savagely. Tao approached, slowly, watchfully. He always feared this terrible white master but never had he feared him as he did now. There was a look on Hermann Schenk's face that Tao had never seen upon it before; a look that sent a chill of fear through his black Melanesian skin, deep into his bones.

"You no be 'flaid along me," snapped Schenk. "You good boy, Tao, me no mad along you."

Tao eyed him doubtfully. It was the first time that his white master had spoken any but savage words to him.

"You feller Tao, you house-boy along me," went on Schenk. "How you likee finish rich feller, whaleboat belong you, house belong you, feller gun belong you?"

"Master!" gasped Tao, his eyes opening wide.

"All thing me say belong you plenty quick, s'pose you good boy along me," said the trader, his eyes on the house-boy's astounded face. "New day he come, you plenty rich feller, s'pose you makee like me say."

"Me makee all thing white master he say!" answered Tao promptly.

The native understood that his white master was exacting some service from

THE BEST TWO-VALVER.

Announced to appear this week, this special Wireless chat is unavoidably held over through lack of space. It will be published in

NEXT WEEK'S MODERN BOY.

him—some unusual service, which was to receive an unusual reward.

What it was Tao did not know, and could not guess. He did not care, so long as he could perform it and gain the promised reward—a reward that would make him the greatest man on the island, excepting only the trader himself. His eyes rolled at the bare thought of possessing a whaleboat.

"White master he sing out along me, me makee plenty too quick altogether!" gasped Tao.

Schenk drew nearer to him, and bent his head to speak in a low voice, almost a whisper. It was as if he feared that his words might be heard on the ketch anchored out in the lagoon.

"You savvy plenty beach along Olulo?" he said.

"Me savvy plenty, sar."

"You savvy where feller Little Red One he live?"

Tao started back. The eagerness in his black face changed to alarm.

"Me no savvy, sar," he stammered. "No feller along Olulo he savvy where Little Red One he belong. S'pose feller touchem along Little Red One, feller he finish plenty quick. All Olulo boy plenty 'flaid along Little Red One, sar."

Schenk set his jaw. He knew that the crimson death-spider lurked in the sandy beach of Olulo, for he had himself stamped the life out of one.

"You listen, ear belong you," he said,

in the same low, husky voice. "You no savvy where Little Red One he belong, you look along beach, eye belong you, you findem, savvy?"

"Plaps me findem, sar," faltered Tao. Schenk took a little box from his pocket. It was a cardboard box that contained quinine pills. He threw out the pills, and handed the box to Tao, who took it with a trembling hand.

"You bring Little Red One along me, along little box, you rich man along Olulo, feller whaleboat he belong you, feller gun, feller house," he said.

"White master he touch Little Red One, white master he finish up altogether," warned Tao.

"You findum!" snapped Schenk.

"Me look along beach, eye belong me, me findem," replied Tao. He went down the steps of the veranda, the little box hidden in his loin-cloth, and disappeared along the white beach.

Schenk shivered. The morning was blazing with tropical heat, but he suddenly felt chilled!

Koko's Suspicions.

KING of the Islands, sitting on the taffrail of the Dawn, sipped the lime-juice and soda handed him by Danny, the cooky-boy. The boy trader's face was bright and cheery. Its brightness was reflected in the face of Kit Hudson. The shipmates of the Dawn had cause for satisfaction, for the treasure quest on which they had embarked had been a success. The gold of a wrecked Spanish galleon had been lifted and was safely packed on board the ketch. Long, long weary weeks had passed in the quest of the Spanish treasure, terrible dangers had been faced, but the boy trader of the Pacific had won through.

Lalinge, for which Ken was bound, was many a long league yet distant across the blue Pacific. Water had been running low, and Ken had put in at Olulo for a fresh supply and for fresh provisions. He might have chosen a more populated island, but with the bars of gold on board the ketch he could not be too careful. On Olulo, he knew, there was but one white man, and nothing to be feared even if the precious cargo of the Dawn became known.

Not that King of the Islands had intended to let it become known. Such a secret could not be too warily guarded until the treasure was safely landed at Lalinge. But Jim Daunt, who had first discovered the treasure and had enlisted Ken's aid, had forced his hand. The sailorman was anxious to get back to his home at Sydney with his fortune. To keep on to Lalinge, and wait for the steamer there, was to lose weeks. But a three days' run in the Olulo cutter would land him at Port Wilson in time for the regular call of the Sydney steamer there. So Daunt had bought Schenk's cutter and crew, and gone with his share of the Spanish treasure.

King of the Islands had been down almost to his last sovereign when the Dawn sailed for treasure. The cutter had been paid for with a part of the Spanish treasure, for there was nothing else on board the Dawn with which to pay. And so Hermann Schenk knew!

It mattered little to King of the Islands, however. He would have kept the

secret, from natural caution; but there was no danger, so far as he could see, in Schenk guessing what the Dawn carried. The trader was alone on the atoll, out of touch with other white men, and not a match personally for any man on board the Dawn, so even if greedy thoughts came into his mind he was powerless. And as soon as the water-casks were filled, and fresh fruits and vegetables got on board, the Dawn was to sail, with a favourable wind that would make the run to Lalinge swift.

Ken and his comrade were not thinking of the scowling man on the veranda of the island bungalow. They were thinking of the new prospects opening before them in Pacific trade, now that they had, for once, capital in their hands.

Hudson was talking of his favourite scheme of installing a petrol engine on the ketch, Ken smiling a cheery negative. Hudson was an engineer; Ken was wedded to windjamming. Often enough they had discussed the matter before, but the cost of installing the engine had made the question merely theoretical. Now, as Kit remarked, they could afford to buy the best petrol engine ever.

"This white wings bizney is played out, old bean!" Hudson asserted.

To which Ken replied cheerily: "Gammon!"

"What are you going to do with your old windjammer in a dead calm?" demanded the Australian.

"What are you going to do with Lizzie when she gets a pain in her carburettor?" asked Ken. And both laughed.

Kaio-lalulalonga, twanging his ukulele, with a happy visage, grinned at his white masters. Koko, the Kanaka, was happy; not because the Spanish treasure was packed below hatches, but because his little white master was happy. The expression on Kaio-lalulalonga's brown face was always a reflection of that of King of the Islands.

But the tail of Koko's eye, as it were, was on the slovenly figure at the trader's bungalow, and while he grinned and hummed and twanged his ukulele, the Kanaka was watching Hermann Schenk curiously.

"Little white master," said Kaio-lalulalonga at last.

"Heave ahead, old coffee-bean," said Ken.

Koko made a gesture towards the bungalow on the beach.

"White feller Schenk he plenty bad feller," he said.

"You needn't tell me that, Koko! I've hardly seen a harder case in all the Islands," Ken laughed.

Kit Hudson glanced round at the distant figure. Slovenly, unwashed, unshaven, his face sallow and sunken his eyes bloodshot, his lips loose, Hermann Schenk did not make a pleasant figure to look at.

"A hard case, and no mistake," said Hudson. "I've heard that he's been ten years on this atoll. He ought to have saved enough in that time to get away."

"Plenty too much drink, sar," said Koko.

Ken's glance at the trader was compassionate. He knew how the temptation to strong drink assails white men in the tropics, though he could not understand it. That a man should pour a liquid down his throat, knowing that it poisoned his whole system and put his

nerves on the rack, was difficult for the healthy boy trader to comprehend. Schenk, like many another trader on lonely Pacific atolls, was going the way to nervous breakdown and miserable death, and with his eyes open.

"White men are expected to have a little backbone," grunted Hudson. "That miserable object is asking for the trouble he's booked for. I shan't be sorry to see the last of him."

"Well, we up-hook to-day," said Ken cheerily. "Only one more trip to fill the casks and then for Lalinge."

"Me plenty glad along us feller sail," said Koko. "Me no likee feller Schenk. Feller Schenk he savvy plenty gold along us."

"You old brown swab, do you reckon that lubber is looking for trouble with this hooker?" asked Hudson.

"He no can, but he tinkee plenty," answered Koko. "Me savvy he tinkee plenty along gold along ketch. He tinkee along he lookee."

"The man seems jolly interested in us, and that's a fact," remarked the Cornstalk. "He's been standing there an hour watching us."

"He tinkee along gold," said Kaio-lalulalonga. "He tinkees'pose he killy white masters, gold belong him."

"If he's thinking so, he won't 'killy' us feller easily," chuckled King of the Islands. "I doubt whether he could hit anything with his gun at more than six feet. Why, Danny, the cooky-boy, could handle him like a baby."

Kaio-lalulalonga nodded slowly. His keen eyes had read the evil, greedy thoughts in the trader's face, but the man's powerlessness was obvious.

"Now for the water-casks," said Ken, as he rose from the rail and stretched himself. "We want to wind up here; the book comes up this afternoon."

The Kanakas manned the whaleboat, with the casks aboard, and King of the Islands stepped in. Kaio-lalulalonga took the tiller, and his dark eyes turned on the figure on the bungalow veranda as the Hiva-Oa boys pulled for the beach. Schenk, leaning on the veranda rail, was watching the boat as it pulled in.

Koko, his mind alert with suspicion, would not have been surprised at some sign of hostility from the Olulo trader. But there was no such sign. Schenk did not stir. The whaleboat grounded on the shelving sand, and the Kanakas rolled the casks ashore. Singing and shouting, the Hiva-Oa boys rolled the casks away to the little stream that flowed into the lagoon. King of the Islands sat on a coral rock to wait while the casks were filled with fresh water. From the trader's bungalow, a house-boy came down to the beach. He ducked his head to the boy skipper.

"Feller white master he wantee speak along feller captain," he said.

Ken nodded, and walked up the path of powdered coral to the trader's house.

Koko Savvy!

"PLENTY no good!" growled Kaio-lalulalonga.

The boatswain of the Dawn was superintending the filling of the casks. But his head turned, and his eyes followed Ken as he went up the coral path to the bungalow. From the deck of the ketch, Kit Hudson noticed his dark, suspicious glance, and smiled.

As a matter of fact, Hudson shared the Kanaka's distrust of the Olulo trader, whose character was easy enough to read. But he did not carry that distrust to the length of expecting anything like trouble.

That the man knew or suspected what the ketch carried, that it had roused his greedy cupidity, that he would have hesitated at little to lay his hands on the gold, Hudson had no doubt. But that he would dream of making any attempt seemed to him fantastic. The man might be evil personified, but he was totally without power for harm. Koko's evident uneasiness rather amused the Cornstalk.

He saw King of the Islands seat himself in a long Madeira chair on the veranda, decline the drink that the trader offered, and sip a lime-squash brought by a house-boy. The two were talking—matters of trade, copra, pearl-shell, hawksbill turtle—the usual topics of South-Sea traders. It was easy enough to understand that the lone white man of Olulo was glad of a "gam" with any other white man.

King of the Islands could scarcely care for the company of a man who recked of strong drink.

But he was civil and accommodating, and had no objection to passing an hour or two in talk with the trader, especially as it was through Schenk that he had bought yams and bananas and coconuts from the Olulo blacks. All the trade of Olulo, such as it was, was in Schenk's hands, and there was no object in offending him by stand-offishness.

The casks were rolled down to the whaleboat again by the singing Kanakas and heaved on board. The boat pulled back to the Dawn. Both Hudson and Koko were busy, while the water-casks were slung up the side and stowed away in their tiers in the hold. Two or three canoes, with yams and great bunches of bananas, came out to the Dawn. This was the last consignment sent on board by the island trader.

Hudson stretched himself in a long chair under the awning aft and yawned and closed his eyes.

Koko's eyes did not close. He moved restlessly about the deck, while Hudson drowsed, and the Hiva-Oa boys lolled lazily. Suddenly Koko's look became fixed. He was not looking at the bungalow, where King of the Islands was yarning with the trader. His eyes were fixed on the beach at a great distance along the curving shore of the lagoon, where a tiny dark object moved slowly on the dazzling sand. At the distance, it might have been taken for a crawling



KEN KING—King of the Islands, boy owner and skipper of the ketch Dawn.

The Little Red One!

land-crab. But Koko knew that it was not a land-crab.

Hudson's drowsy eyes opened. Perhaps the fixed stillness of the Kanaka, so restless hitherto, had somehow struck him. He glanced at Koko.

"What you see, eye belong you, Koko?" he drawled.

"See feller nigger he crawl along sand," answered Koko without turning his head, his eyes still fixed on the distant object on the beach.

"What name he crawl along sand?" asked Hudson carelessly.

"No savvy, sar! Wantee savvy," answered Koko. He stirred at last, and took Ken's binoculars. With the powerful glasses to his eyes, Koko watched the distant crawling figure.

Hudson took the binoculars from him and turned them on the tiny, distant object. Instantly the distant beach and the crawling figure on it rushed into near and clear view. Hudson stared. On the sandy beach, far from the trader's bungalow, far from the native village, a black man was crawling on his hands and knees. With the aid of the powerful glasses Hudson could see every detail, even to recognising the man as a house-boy he had seen at Schenk's bungalow the day before.

"Feller Tao, house-boy belong white feller Schenk," said Koko. "What name he look along sand, sar?"

"Goodness knows!" said Hudson blankly.

He was puzzled. It was unlike a native to move thus unprotected in the full blaze of the sun, now almost at the zenith. And what could Tao have lost, so far from his dwelling, on an unfrequented beach distant from the village.

Hudson lowered the glasses at last. It was a puzzling thing, but it did not interest him deeply. The peculiar proceedings of Schenk's house-boy were nothing to him. They seemed to be something to Koko. He took the binoculars from the Australian's hand

and fixed them on the crawling native again. Hudson returned to his chair, smiling. Koko's interest in the movements of Tao was connected with his distrust of the white man at the bungalow, he knew that. Hudson could see no connection.

But Koko remained motionless, like a bronze statue, watching and watching. For a full half hour the Kanaka did not stir, and all that time the distant figure crawled on the sand—seeking, seeking. And then suddenly came a change in the peculiar movements of Tao.

He ceased to crawl on the sand. He made a sudden backward movement, as if in alarm. He had found what he sought and the sight of it scared him.

The Olulo boy remained motionless for a long minute, staring at something in a hollow of the sand which Koko could not see. Then he stirred again.

With the palm twig he raked cautiously in the little hollow. He was feeling with the twig for something that he dared not touch with his hand. Koko, still as a statue, watched.

He watched the Olulo boy raise the twig carefully from the sandy hollow. With his left hand Tao took something from his loin-cloth. With infinite care—the care of one whose life hung in the balance—Tao transferred the tiny object from the end of the twig to the other tiny object in his left hand. He was putting something tiny into a small box.

The twig was thrown aside now. Whatever it was that Tao had found in the sand was now inside the receptacle. Further cautious motions told of a lid being placed on the box.

Then the Olulo boy, as if relieved suddenly of all his fears, leaped to his feet and started along the beach swiftly towards the trader's bungalow.

Kaio-lalulalonga laid down the binoculars. Hudson stared at him in curiosity, almost in alarm. Koko's brown face was pale. The blue tattoo-marks on his forehead stood out against the pallor of his brown skin.

"What the thunder——" exclaimed Hudson.

"White-feller debble!" muttered Koko. "Feller debble he stop along Olulo—white feller debble."

The glare in his eyes startled Hudson. "Koko! You swab—what——"

Splash! Hudson, staring blankly watched the Kanaka plunge into the lagoon. With mighty strokes Kaio-lalulalonga swam swiftly to the beach. In a minute or less he was tramping, dripping, up the beach. Tao, hurrying back with what he had found, was still at a distance when Koko tramped up the coral path to the trader's house and joined his little white master in the veranda.

Black Treachery!

KING of the Islands drew an occasional whiff at the brown cheroot from Hermann Schenk's box. Ken seldom or never smoked; but he had refused the drinks pressed on him by the trader, and he did not wish to seem churlish. Schenk had asked him to stay for tiffin, and he had consented. So he stretched himself at ease in the Madeira chair, and talked and listened, till the talk was interrupted by the arrival of Koko, dripping from the lagoon.

Ken glanced round at the faithful Kanaka, with a faint frown. He could guess that it was Koko's distrust of the trader that had brought him there, and he was displeased; but he could not be angry with Kaio-lalulalonga.

"What name you come along feller house, you feller Koko?" he asked.

Schenk scowled blackly at the Kanaka.

"Comey along house, along waitee along master," answered Koko; and he went along the veranda and squatted down, a little distance behind the back of Schenk's chair.

Schenk's eyes followed him, but only for a moment. The Olulo trader was accustomed to regarding Kanakas as mere chattels, paying them little more heed than he paid to the pigs that wandered about the plantation. A Kanaka's presence was nothing to him.

The two white men, in fact, almost forgot that he was there. Ken was interested in what the trader was telling him, and Schenk was engrossed by black and terrible thoughts behind his talk. It was a quarter of an hour later that Tao came up the palmwood steps.

At the sight of the house-boy, Schenk broke off his talk.

"You feller Tao, you bring feller box along quinine along me?" he asked.

"Yes, sar," Tao grinned.

He handed the pillbox, wrapped in palm leaves, to the trader, passed into the house and disappeared. With a trembling hand, Schenk unwrapped the palm-leaves from the little box.

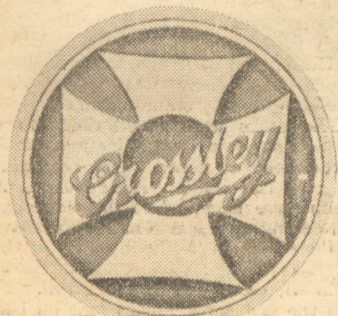
Ken saw, without heeding, the box when it was unwrapped. It was such a box as was generally used to contain quinine tablets, of universal use in the Islands. He expected the trader to open the box and take a dose of quinine. But Schenk did not open the box. He sat with it in a shaking hand, as if half-forgetful that it was there.

In the shade of the veranda roof, Ken had taken off his hat, for coolness, and laid it on a chair near at hand.

Schenk's eyes wandered to it two or three times as he began to talk again. He rose to his feet suddenly.

"I reckon I'll speak to the house-boys about tiffin," he said unsteadily.

(Continued on page 26.)



Given Away

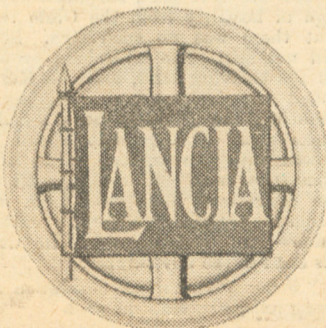
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The Little Red One!

(Continued from page 24.)

Ken nodded, and the trader moved towards the open doorway of the house. He lurched and caught at a chair—the chair on which the boy skipper's hat lay. The chair rocked and the hat slipped to the veranda floor.

With a muttered word of excuse, the Olulo trader picked up the broad-brimmed hat and replaced it on the chair. Ken smiled faintly. Evidently Hermann Schenk had overdone his morning drinks. He did not know that in the moments while the hat was in Schenk's hands the trader had nipped the lid from the tiny box and that something—a tiny black thing with a crimson spot in the black—had dropped into the hat.

Leaving the hat on the chair, Schenk moved on to the doorway of the house. He did not reach it. Like a leaping tiger, Koko the Kanaka launched himself at the Olulo trader and Hermann Schenk went crashing to the veranda floor.

The Shadow of Death!

KEN sprang to his feet. For a second he was too amazed to act. Schenk, squirming and crumpling in the mighty grasp of the Kanaka boatswain,

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screamed and shrieked. He made a frantic attempt to get at the revolver in his hip-pocket. But he was powerless in the iron grasp of Kaio-lalulalonga.

"Koko!" Ken found his voice. "You lubber, what do you mean? What name you lay hands along white feller? Let him go! My sainted Sam—I'll—" He sprang forward to intervene, for once enraged with the faithful Koko.

Koko leaped up, dragging the trader up with grasping hands on his throat. He swung Hermann Schenk clear of the planks and hurled him down again with a crash.

Schenk struck the floor, and lay half-senseless.

"Are you mad?" roared King of the Islands.

"White feller debble!" Koko panted. "He makee kill-dead feller King of the Islands! Kill-dead both white feller, my word! Kill-dead along Little Red One!"

"You're raving, you swab!" exclaimed Ken. He made a stride towards the dazed scoundrel on the floor to help him.

"You look, eye belong you!" panted Koko.

He picked up the Panama hat, gingerly holding it by the extremity of the brim.

"Look, sar—look see, along inside feller hat," he panted. "S'pose you takee feller hat along feller head, you dead feller."

"What?" gasped Ken.

Amazed, impressed in spite of himself, Ken stared into the roomy interior of the Panama. A tiny black thing, its blackness relieved by a single speck of crimson, clung inside the crown.

"Little Red One!" said Koko.

A wave of pallor blotted out the colour in King of the Islands' face. White as death, he stared at the death spider. Many tales had he heard in the Islands of the tiny hideous thing, whose sting was certain death!

"Teller white debble hesendee feller Tao findee Little Red One," said Koko. "Feller Tao bring him along feller Schenk along little box, feller Schenk he makee Little Red One walk about along inside feller hat."

"My sainted Sam!"

Schenk was staggering to his feet. King of the Islands turned on him with blazing eyes.

He understood now. Greed of the gold on board the ketch had driven the desperate rascal to that hideous scheme. But for the watchful and suspicious Koko, the sting of the death-spider would have slain King of the Islands more surely

than bullet or knife; and the chances were a thousand to one that Kit Hudson, tending his stricken chum, would also have been bitten by the poisonous thing, not knowing or dreaming that it was there. The rage in King of the Islands' face drove Schenk from him in terror, and his shaking hand groped for his revolver.

"You dog!" panted Ken. "You unclean seum! You—"

The desperate man's revolver was out. Koko's mighty arm rose and fell, the weapon clattered down, and the Olulo trader fell senseless.

"Plenty good kill-dead feller Schenk!" said Kaio-lalulalonga.

"Leave him alone! Let the dog lie!" said King of the Islands. "Come, get out of this."

"Me tinkee—"

"Come, kill that horrible thing," said Ken, with a shudder. "Take care! Its bite is death, Koko!"

"Me savvy plenty," answered Koko. He went into the house, carrying the hat by the brim. In a few moments Koko rejoined King of the Islands, and handed him the Panama, cleared now of its deadly denizen. But King of the Islands, shivering, scanned the interior carefully before he placed it on his head.

"Come!" he said. With a last glimpse of horror and loathing at the senseless trader, King of the Islands left the bungalow, and Koko followed him down to the beach. The whaleboat came to carry them aboard.

"Up hook!" said Ken, as he stepped on the deck of the Dawn.

"But what—" asked Kit Hudson, in wonder.

"Up hook! I'll tell you later." Ken did not care to tell of the black treachery of the trader till the ketch was clear of Olulo—he did not want Hudson to go ashore with his gun to deal with him.

"Let's get clear of this! Up with the hook!"

The Hiva-Oa boys swung up the anchor, and the Dawn glided out of the lagoon. Once outside the reef, canvas was set to the breeze, and the graceful ketch cut the blue waters of the open sea. Not till then did Ken tell his chum of what had happened at the trader's bungalow. Hudson's eyes blazed.

"And you let him live!" he exclaimed. "By gad, if I'd known before we pulled out of the lagoon—" He stared back at the atoll, sinking to a purple blur on the sea-line. "No good asking you to turn back, skipper?"

"No!" said Ken, with a faint smile.

"Tell me," asked King of the Islands, "what you makee along Little Red One, Koko?"

"Me makee Little Red One walk about along bunk belong feller Schenk," said Kaio-lalulalonga.

The ukulele twanged again, and Koko hummed his song of the Little Red One that dwelt in the hollows of the sand, and of the enemy that was slain. King of the Islands opened his lips—and closed them again. It was useless to speak. He had spared the enemy who had treacherously sought his life: but he had spared him only to fall into his own snare—to perish by the poison of the death-spider!

(Another long, complete yarn of Ken King's South Seas adventures appears in next Monday's MODERN BOY—a real top-notch!)