

A SPORTS MOTOR-CYCLE FREE! See page 23.

The MODERN BOY

EVERY MONDAY.
Week Ending March 30th, 1929.

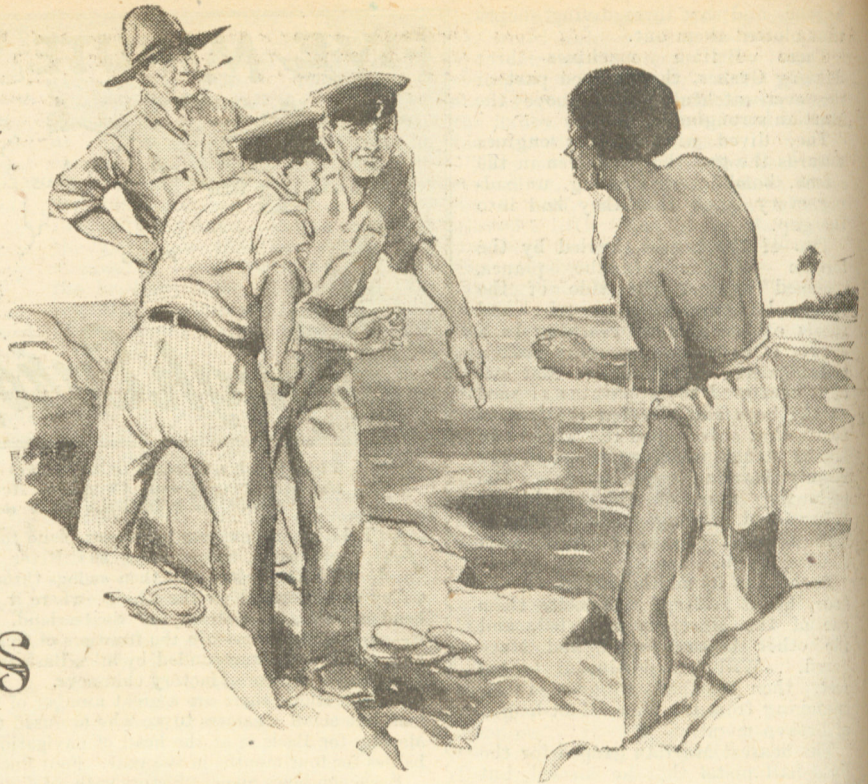
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TWO ENGINES IN ONE—THE GARRATT LOCO. See page 4.

COMPLETE
IN THIS
ISSUE.

Young Ken King—King of the Islands, boy trader of the Pacific breaks into a new line of business, and finds that he has to pay dearly for the privilege! His adventures make Life in the Tropic Seas very real to you.



"Look!" ejaculated Hudson. Between finger and thumb he held up a blue-white gem. "Feller pearl!" Koko stuttered.

The
PEARLS
of
LUKATU

by
Charles Hamilton

A Proposition!

"PEARLS?"

"Jest pearls!"

"And a thousand pounds?"

"Yep!"

"Not in my line," said Ken King, the owner and skipper of the ketch Dawn, with a smile.

"Guess again!" suggested Cyrus Coldedge. He lighted a black Manila cheroot and ejected a thick stream of smoke. "I guess you want to jump into this proposition with both feet. What I'm offering you is a chance of making a fortune."

"Or losing one," remarked Kit Hudson, Ken's young Australian mate.

"Forget it," answered Mr. Coldedge.

Cyrus Coldedge was not the man to take "No" for an answer. King of the Islands—as Ken was known—had already said "No" several times, but it made no difference to the American. He sat tight in the Madeira chair on the deck of the Dawn. Apparently he was there to stay until his pearl proposition had been accepted.

All over Lalinge, where the ketch was anchored, and through the islands of the South Seas it was

known that the shipmates of the Dawn had had a lucky trip. Rumour on the beaches declared that they had sailed into the lagoon at Lalinge with the ketch loaded down deep with gold. Certainly they had done well; though rumour, as usual, was exaggerative.

The crew of five Hiva-Oa boys were ashore, with unaccustomed money to spend. Kaio-lalulalonga—otherwise Koko, the Kanaka bo'sun—had bought himself a new ukulele inlaid with mother-of-pearl. The ketch had been freshly painted and polished and refitted regardless of expense. A handsome donation had been made to the mission-house. A goodly sum had been banked with the Pacific Company. Obvious prosperity smiled on the shipmates of the Dawn.

The natural result followed. Every beach-comber on Lalinge had "touched" King of the Islands for a loan. A dozen chances had been offered him of making easy fortunes. Every delusive tale known on the Pacific beaches had been trotted out in turn. One man knew of a wonderful pearl island—though not its exact bearings. Another knew of a wreck with specie on board, which could be salvaged with immense profit to all concerned. One told of a goldmine in New Guinea. Another of huge cargoes of pearl-shell to be picked up in the Paumotus. Another of an atoll where hawksbill turtle multiplied in unimaginable numbers. Still another of a lagoon where the highly-valued pink coral lay in stacks.

And every one of them required an advance in cash, the sums ranging from five pounds to five hundred.

King of the Islands and his chum listened politely to each tale in turn, and answered in the negative. Ken King was a boy in years, but he was not an infant. And he had heard those tales before! He knew them all by heart, in fact.

The shipmates were not at all surprised when Cyrus Coldedge came on board the Dawn with a tale to tell. He was simply one more. But Cyrus was a little different from the rest. He was the only one of the would-be benefactors who was not in want of an immediate loan. He was well-dressed, smoked expensive cigars, and apparently had money in his pockets. And his manner was brisk and confident.

He was a newcomer to Lalinge, having recently arrived on the steamer. Without being unduly suspicious, Ken wondered whether his arrival was due to the fact that the rumour of the Dawn's lucky trip had reached him.

Anyhow, there he was. His proposition was pearls. In that, Ken thought that the acute Yankee gentleman hardly did himself justice. Pearls was the usual yarn. Pearl propositions were going begging on every beach from Tahiti to the Solomons. On his looks, Mr. Coldedge might have been expected to think of something rather more original.

However, Ken was always polite. He said "No," and he meant no; but he was willing to let the Yankee gentleman run on if he liked. For once, the boy trader of the Pacific was in a position to take things easy, and he was in no hurry to put to sea. He was taking a well-earned rest; and he

had an hour to spare for Mr. Coldedge and his pearl proposition.

Mr. Coldedge blew out black smoke and smiled at the boy trader with a gleam of teeth and gold stoppings.

"You've been offered pearls before?" he asked.

"Lots of times."

"And you calculate that I'm spinning you a beach-comber's yarn? Put it plain. You won't hurt my feelings," he went on. "I guess I'm case-hardened. I'm putting you on to a good thing. Take it or leave it."

"I'll leave it—with many thanks," said Ken politely.

"Don't make up your mind till I've put you wise. When I say pearls, I mean pearls," declared Mr. Coldedge. "I'm not telling you about a wonderful island that's not on the map. No, sir! The island I'm telling you about is Lukatu."

"I know Lukatu," said Ken. "I've traded there. I've taken copra on board at Lukatu. Not pearls."

"There's a spot on Lukatu where pearls can be picked up by the batul," said Mr. Coldedge. "The secret was known to a Jap named Hiroshaki. He's gone—I reckon he was kai-kai'd by some Tonga men. So they say on the beach. Anyhow, he's off the map. But his pearl-bed is left where he left it. I'm not hiding that it will cost money. You will want a diving outfit; and they cost money in Sydney—and they cost more in the islands. My finances won't run to it. I'm looking for a man I can trust to go into the thing with me. You're the man."

"Thanks. But—"

"I'm telling you that I've been on the spot and picked up pearls," went on Mr. Coldedge. "I had to try naked diving, but I went into it to make sure that the pearls were there. I bagged a few. Good specimens. Here they are."

Cyrus Coldedge took a little bag from his pocket. He shot three pearls out of it into his open palm.

Ken and Kit looked at them with interest. They were not, perhaps, judges of pearls, but they knew something about them. So far as appearances went, the three pearls in Mr. Coldedge's palm were good specimens, and worth about thirty pounds each.

This was the first time that actual pearls had been produced to back up a pearl proposition. Generally the pearls themselves were in the background—very much in the background!

"I ain't asking you to go in blind," said Coldedge. "Take them pearls and look at them. Show 'em to any man in Lalinge." He forced the pearls into Ken's hand. "I'm asking a thousand pounds to let you in on fair shares. I'll sail to Lukatu with you in your ketch. You won't pay me a dollar till you've gone down in the diving outfit and seen for yourself."

"What!" ejaculated Ken.

"That surprises you some, I guess!" chuckled the American gentleman. "You figured that I was pulling your leg. I ain't blaming you. A man who believes one per cent of the yarns he hears in

the Pacific is sure a bonehead. Seeing is believing. You ain't handing over a Continental red cent till you've seen the pearl-bed with your own peepers, and hooked out a fistful of pearls. If they ain't up to sample, give me the boot and keep your money. Can't say fairer than that." He rose from the chair, conscious that he had made an impression at last.

"All we stand to lose is the cost of the diving outfit, if the pearls aren't there?" asked Ken.

"Which will sell again," reminded Mr. Coldedge, "and I'll stand the loss on the transaction. You'll keep them pearls as security. Put 'em in your rags now. Leave it at that,

and think it over. I'll see you again to-morrow. So-long!"

With a farewell wave of his cigar, leaving a blue trail in the air, Mr. Coldedge stepped from the ketch to the coral wharf and lounged cheerily away.

Ken Accepts.

PETER PRADO, the little wizened Portuguese half-caste pearl-buyer, was sitting under the palm-tree outside Esau Hunk's store, when King of the Islands came along the beach.

Prado, whose business took him into every corner of the Pacific, was

(Continued on the next page.)

Ju-Jitsu VERSUS BOXING

This week:—THE KNEE AND ANKLE THROW.

By Professor
W. H. GARRUD,
Founder of the
British and
Dominions Ju-Jitsu
League.

GET your friend to make a left-hand lead off at your head, and as soon as he has started his lunge out at you, duck your head smartly to your right side and a little forward. At the same time drop on your right knee (gently) and place your right hand against the front of his leg immediately above his instep.

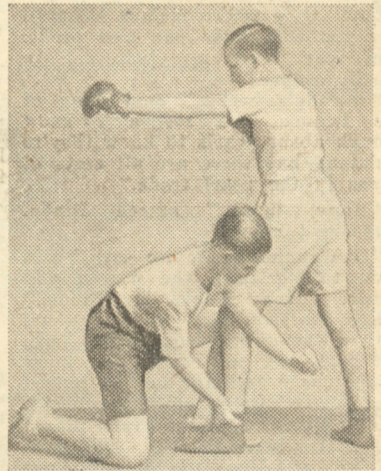
Simultaneously with these movements you must bring your left arm over to the outside of his left leg and give the back of his left knee a sharp jab. This will throw him forward over your left leg on to the ground just at your left rear.

The points to note are:

(1) Do not start your ju-jitsu trick until your friend has actually started his lead. Then he will not have time to jump back out of your reach, as he will already be on the move forward.

(2) Jab his knee with a good jerk with your elbow, and at the same time push forward on his leg with your right hand and with a lifting motion. Also note that your right hand should be turned so

Your right hand must be turned so that your thumb is on the outside of your opponent's left leg, as in the photograph here, with your left arm against the outside of his left leg. Give the back of his left knee a sharp jab—and he will shoot over your left leg to the ground.



that your thumb is on the outside of his leg, as in the photograph.

You must learn to distinguish the difference between a real attack and a feint. Your friend may make a pretence of leading off at your face by making a quick, jerky movement with his left arm and moving his left leg slightly towards you. If he does this manoeuvre do not pay any attention to it. The best way to act, when you have shaken hands with your friend and assumed the orthodox position, is to keep on the move. That is, take a small step to your right, moving the right foot first and following with the left foot.

Vary this with a small step backward, again starting back with the right foot. This will disconcert your opponent, as your being constantly on the move will not allow him to take proper aim at you. Let him make the first two or three leads at you before you attempt to do the ju-jitsu trick. Simply take a step back out of reach. Then when he makes a really good lunge and means to reach your face in a "do or die" attitude, bring in your ju-jitsu, and over he will go!

Next week:—The Armlock over Neck.

The Pearls of Lukatu.

at Lalinge now, back from a trip to Singapore. His brown face wrinkled into a welcoming smile at the sight of the boy trader. *Peter was generally supposed, in the Islands, to be a hard case; but he had never forgotten that Ken King had saved his life at sea. He sat under the palm-tree, extracting sweet music from his violin, which he laid down as Ken came up.

King of the Islands shook hands with the half-caste and dropped into a chair beside him.

"I want you to look at some pearls, Peter," he said.

"You come to the right man!" said Peter, with a grin. "I give you the best price in the Islands!"

Ken took the three pearls from his pocket and laid them in the dusky palm of the Portuguese.

Prado examined them.

"They are good pearls, senhor."

"And worth—"

"I give you fifteen pounds each."

Ken smiled. If Peter Prado offered fifteen pounds each, he had no doubt that the pearls were worth thirty.

"I'm not selling," he explained; "they're not mine to sell. I only want your opinion."

"Bom!" said Prado. "They are good pearls. In Sydney they might fetch thirty pounds for each—perhaps more."

"And they're genuine?"

"Si, senhor!" laughed Prado. "They are quite genuine. They are good pearls. If someone has offered you these pearls, you may buy them safely. Give fifteen pounds for each, and you will make one nice profit. You may trust my judgment in pearls, senhor!"

"Nobody's better," said King of the Islands. "I reckon I know enough about pearls to know they're genuine; but there are all sorts of tricks in the pearl trade."

"Many, many!" agreed Prado. "Do I not know?"

"One cannot make too sure," said Ken, taking back the pearls, and rising. "Many thanks, Mr. Prado!"

Ken walked back to the wharf with a thoughtful look on his face. Although not an expert, he knew pearls fairly well, and he had judged that these were good specimens. The judgment of Peter Prado placed the matter beyond doubt. The most skillful imitation would not have deceived the wary half-caste for a moment.

The pearls were genuine, and he could not help feeling that he had misjudged Coldedge a little. But a trader in the Islands had to keep his eyes open. Now the American's proposition seemed a tempting one.

Hudson, swinging his legs over the rail of the Dawn looked at him inquiringly as he came up.

"What's the verdict?" he asked.

"The genuine stuff!" said Ken. "Prado's word is final on that!"

"Quite!" agreed Hudson. "Looks a good thing, Ken!"

"I think it does," answered Ken. "I know a man over at Kolu with a diving outfit to sell. If we buy it, and have to sell it again cheap, these pearls will cover the loss—and that's Coldedge's offer. We pay him nothing till we've seen the pearl-bed ourselves. If there's a bed of pearls like these on Lukatu, a half-share is worth a lot more than a thousand pounds. It can't hurt us to go into the thing."

After a little further discussion, the shipmates of the Dawn made up their minds. So when Mr. Cyrus Coldedge came back to the ketch for his answer, he found that it was in the affirmative.

He was willing—more than willing—to put the agreement in black-and-white. King of the Islands and his chum were to pay him one thousand pounds for a half-share in the Lukatu pearl-bed, if after personal examination they were satisfied with it. Nothing could appear fairer than that.

Having come to a decision, King of the Islands prepared for the trip. There was no accommodation for passengers on Ken's little craft; but Cyrus was assigned one of the berths in the little state-room amidships, Hudson turning out into the cabin. The ketch left her moorings and glided across the lagoon to the reef passage. Outside the reef Ken set a course for Kolu, where he was to see the man who had a diving outfit on hand.

"We go along Kolu, sar?" asked Kaio-lalulalonga, who was at the helm. "What name we go along Kolu, sar?"

Ken explained. Koko, the boatswain, was a privileged person on board the Dawn.

Koko's eyes dwelt on Mr. Coldedge, lounging in a deck chair, smoking a cheroot. He gave a jerk of his head towards Coldedge.

"No good feller," he said. "Me no likee feller look along eye belong feller Coldedge."

"We don't take on the proposition unless we find the pearls there, Koko. No pay feller money, s'pose feller pearl he no stop"

"Tinkee feller pearl he no stop!" said Koko.

"Well, we shall see," said Ken.

He placed a good deal of faith in the judgment of the Kanaka boatswain. And his own judgment was that in Cyrus Coldedge, cheery, confident, talkative, affable, there was a certain shiftiness. But it was not easy to see how the Yankee adventurer was to profit if he was deceiving the shipmates. Nothing was to be paid him till the pearl-bed had been inspected. If the pearls were not there, he got nothing and lost his time.

The ketch ran down swiftly to Kolu before the trade, and at Kolu there was bargaining for the second-hand diving outfit. That outfit was bought and paid for, and brought on board the Dawn, which then weighed anchor immediately and stood eastward for Lukatu.

Good Specimens.

"LUKATU!" said King of the Islands as a purple hill rose from the shining Pacific. As the ketch ran down to the island, the settlement came into view—white bungalows dotted along a circling beach, and grass houses of the natives beyond.

There were many traders on Lukatu and several planters. But it was only on the south side that the island was inhabited. A ridge of volcanic hills ran across from east to west, dividing the island. The northern portion was barren and uninhabited. And it was for the northern shore that the ketch sailed, passing within distant view of the settlement.

On the north of Lukatu the shore was rocky and wild, and long reefs ran out into the sea. King of the Islands shortened sail and stood in warily. The ketch dropped her anchor at last in a wide bay, from which a shelving beach ran up to the barren interior. Here and there a palm-tree grew, or a flaming hibiscus, but the view was mostly of piled volcanic rocks.

"Lonely enough," remarked Kit Hudson, staring towards the barren, deserted shore.

"All the better, I guess," remarked Cyrus Coldedge. "We don't want any guys rubbering around while we're raising the pearls. We're on the spot now, and I'm telling you that you've got hold of a gilt-edged proposition. This time to-morrow, Captain King, you'll be counting a thousand pounds out of your ash-box, and glad to see me take it."

"Ay, ay, if the goods are there," assented Ken.

"You'll sure find 'em," said Coldedge.

The three white men pulled ashore in the whaleboat. Koko steered, and stepped ashore with them.

Coldedge was obviously eager. He led the way along the beach, and stopped where a sharp reef ran into the water, the sides of it dropping into the depths as abruptly as the wall of a house. Shallow water lapped over the reef.

Deserted and desolate as the place looked, there were signs that it had been trodden before. On the shore, near the reef, was the remnant of a hut built of the native rock. Ken glanced into it, and saw two or three rusty utensils lying about, and a tapa sleeping-rug in tatters. It was long, evidently, since the hut had been occupied, and the pandanus roof had fallen in. But someone had lodged there once.

"That was Hiroshaki's shebang," said Cyrus Coldedge. "He used to come here in a lugger and dive for pearls. He sold them to the traders at Apia. I guess nobody ever knew where he raised them. He was close—they Japs are as close as Chinks. He told me because I saved him from a shark. Now he's gone I reckon I'm free of his pearl-bed."

"And the pearl-bed's here?" asked Ken.

"Just under the reef."

"You've been down?" said Hudson.

"Naked diving," said Coldedge. "I

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The Pearls of Lukatu.

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ain't good at the game, and I didn't stay long—only long enough to grab a handful and make sure that Hiroshaki had told me a straight yarn. I guess in the diving outfit it will be dead easy to clean out the place."

Ken stood on the edge of the reef and looked down. In the clear water it was possible to see down a great distance. Far below, the spider crabs crawled on the sand at the bottom of the bay. There was no sign of sharks—the terror of the diver. There was no sign of the still more terrible enemy, the octopus.

"Looks an easy thing," said Kit.

"Easy as rolling off a log, I guess," said Colledge, his eyes gleaming with excitement.

King of the Islands called to Kaio-lalulalonga.

"Koko, you tinkee pearl-shell he stop along this place?"

"Yes, sar," said Koko. "No tinkee pearl."

"You tinkee go down look-see?"

"Yes, sar."

Kaio-lalulalonga plunged into the clear water without hesitation. "Naked" diving was an old game to the Kanaka. He swam down, a shimmering figure in the water to the eyes of the white men watching from the edge of the reef above.

Ken glanced at the American. Somehow, standing there on the reef over the bed where the pearls were to be found, Koko's distrust of the adventurer seemed to have infected him. But Colledge's keen face showed nothing but eagerness. He seemed to have no doubt of the result of the experimental dive.

Kaio-lalulalonga grew smaller and smaller in the water below. Deep down as he went—full six fathoms—the eyes of the white men could still follow the motions of the sinuous figure. He came shooting up suddenly to the surface. His black hair and brown face emerged, and his broad chest with its blue tattoo marks. He clambered on the reef. In his hand were grasped three or four oysters. He stood on the reef panting, and handed them to Ken and Kit, who took them eagerly. Oysters, at least, were there, and within reach of naked diving—that was proved now. It remained to be seen whether the oysters contained pearls.

Ken and Kit opened them hurriedly. "Rotting" the oysters was the usual process, but the shipmates were in too great a hurry for that. Koko watched his white masters as they cut the oysters, an expression of disbelief on his dripping, brown face. He did not like the "look along eye" of the American.

"Look-see, sar," said Koko. "Plenty pearl-shell he stop, me no tinkee feller pearl he stop."

"Look!" roared Hudson.

His eyes blazed with excitement. Between finger and thumb he held up a blue-white gem.

"Feller pearl!" Koko stuttered.

"My sainted Sam!" said King of the Islands.

He took the pearl from the Australian and examined it, with a gleam in his eyes. "Kit, on Thursday Island they'd give a hundred pounds in this!"

"And make a profit on it in Sydney afterwards, I guess," said Cyrus Colledge.

Ken turned to him.

"Colledge, I've only half believed the yarn up to now. I'm sorry. It's square as a die."

"Forget it," said Colledge. "I reckon a man in the Islands only wants to believe what he sees. I ain't blaming you for wanting to use your own eyes. No, sir. But I reckon you want to come in on the proposition now."

"You bet!" said Ken, with a laugh.

"Let's look at the rest," said Hudson.

Three more oysters were opened. Each of them contained a pearl, though these were smaller.

"We're on to a good thing, Kit," said Ken. "When we get the diving outfit going we shall be raising a fortune here. Colledge, you've offered us a half-share for a thousand pounds. It looks to me as if you'll be robbing yourself."

"A proposition's a proposition," answered Colledge. "I stand by my offer. I'm no good at naked diving, and I can't work the bed without help, and I guess it ain't easy to find a man in the Islands that I can trust. Is it a trade?"

"It's a trade," said Ken, and Hudson nodded a cheery assent.

They walked back to the whaleboat, feeling as if they were treading on air.

Kaio-lalulalonga followed them, a strange expression on his dusky face. The finding of the pearls had quite confounded the Kanaka. They were back on the Dawn as the sun set, and it was arranged for the diving to begin in the morning. After Colledge had gone to his bunk Ken tapped Kaio-lalulalonga on the shoulder.

"What you tinkee now along feller Colledge, Koko?" he asked, with a smile.

"No likee feller Colledge," Koko answered, with a shake of his head.

"You old brown image, we've found the pearls!" exclaimed Hudson.

"No likee feller look along eye belong Colledge," said Koko obstinately.

The shipmates chuckled. Even the finding of the pearls had not eradicated the Kanaka's distrust of the Yankee adventurer. But the shipmates were in great spirits and looking eagerly forward to the morrow and the raising of a fortune in pearls from below the Lukatu reef.

Missing!

SUNRISE lighted the barren shore of Lukatu.

In the early morning there was a busy scene on the deck of the anchored ketch. The diving-suit was unpacked and examined carefully before being put into the whaleboat. The diver's life depended upon its being in perfect order.

There was keen excitement all through the Dawn. The Hiva-Oa boys

jabbered with excitement. Even Kaio-lalulalonga was eager, though his dark eye was still perplexed and distrustful when it fell on the sharp features of Cyrus Colledge. In spite of the fact that his good faith was now proved, Koko still did not like the look of the man.

A little matter of business was attended to before the expedition started. A thousand pounds, in English banknotes, was counted out of the cashbox of the Dawn and packed away inside Colledge's belt. It was not a large payment for a half-share in a pearl-bed which promised such a rich yield as this one.

But Colledge undoubtedly seemed very glad to handle the banknotes, and at the same time he received back the three pearls he had handed to Ken at Lalinge, and which till now had remained in the boy trader's keeping. The American lounged smoking on the deck while the diving-gear was packed in the whaleboat.

"You're coming?" Ken asked him.

"Sure!" said Colledge. And he stepped into the boat after the skipper of the Dawn.

Koko took the helm, Lompo and Lulu the oars, and the whaleboat pulled to the reef.

King of the Islands donned the diving-dress. The diving was to be done in turns, and Ken was taking the first turn. The huge, heavy outfit was fastened on the boy trader, with its heavily-weighted boots to sink him, and the shiny metal helmet over his head. The glass front was screwed in, the air-tube carefully adjusted, and Ken was lowered over the side of the whaleboat.

Colledge threw the stump of his cheroot into the water.

"I guess I'll stretch my legs ashore a piece," he remarked, and leaped lightly from the whaleboat to the reef.

While King of the Islands was deep under water, gathering the pearl oysters from their place, Colledge strolled along the reef to the beach. He sauntered carelessly away along the beach and disappeared from view in the distance. Hudson glanced after him without interest, and watched the figure of the diver deep below in the clear water.

Ken gave the signal at last to be hauled in. The metal head of the diving-suit shot up from the blue waters, and Kit and Koko helped the boy trader into the boat. The glass front of the helmet was unscrewed, and Ken's face, rather red and breathless, revealed.

"What luck, old man?" asked Hudson.

"The place is thick with them," said Ken. "Look at the bag!"

The bag was stacked with oysters. Evidently the bed below the reef was a rich one. Of those opened almost every one held a pearl. More than fifty oysters were spread out on the beach in the sun while Hudson donned the diving outfit to take his turn below. The work went on cheerily. It was hard work and wearing. But that was of little account when a fortune was being raised from the depths of the sea.

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The Pearls of Lukatu.

(Continued from page 22.)

Towards noon the diving ceased. The outfit was laid aside, and the whaleboat pulled back to the ketch. Ken, Kit, and Koko had all taken their turns under water, and they needed a rest. But in the afternoon the work was resumed, and when it ceased at last a big array of oysters lay on the beach.

By that time the bed, thick as it was, was getting cleared. On the morrow Ken expected to finish.

Coldedge had not shared in the work on the reef. He had not even looked on. Since he had strolled away along the beach in the morning the shipmates had not seen him.

His lack of interest in the diving surprised them a little. His faith surprised them more. King of the Islands was called the "whitest man in the Pacific," but Coldedge did not look the sort of man to trust another to handle his pearls without keeping a watchful eye on him. Yet he was trusting the pearling entirely to the shipmates; and nothing would have been easier than for them to secrete a number of the best pearls. Certainly the thought of doing so was not likely to enter their minds. But it was surprising that the acute Yankee adventurer should place such faith in their fair play.

At sundown the American had not returned to the ketch, and Ken became a little uneasy. If Coldedge had gone exploring the interior of the island, it was possible that he had had some accident among the rugged cliffs and the masses of lava. There was a path over the rugged backbone of hills by which the settlement on the south side of Lukatu might be reached; but it was a long and perilous way, and Coldedge had said nothing of any intention of crossing.

As the sun dipped to the western ocean, Ken scanned the island with his binoculars; but he could see nothing of the American on shore. He called to the cooky-boy, who had been left in charge of the ketch during the work on the reef:

"You feller Danny, you see feller Coldedge along island any time?"

"Yes, sar," answered Danny. "Feller Mister Coldedge he go along hill along morning, sar."

"You tinkee Mister Coldedge he go along hill, along go other side feller island, Danny?"

"Yes, sar. He go along hill; no comey back any more."

"He's gone over to the settlement," said Hudson, with a grin. "He's groused once or twice about conditions on the Dawn."

"I suppose that's it," said Ken. "He might have told us he was going. Still, he's his own master."

Soon after sundown the shipmates turned in. Diving was to be resumed at dawn and the remainder of the bed cleared of the pearl-oysters. Ken had already made some investigations farther along the reef, but he had found no trace of any other beds. The pearl-oysters seemed to be all

collected in one spot in the rocky bay. That, however, was not an uncommon occurrence. Certainly it was very convenient for the pearl-seekers, and could not have been more so had the oyster-bed been planted there by human hand.

Early, under the golden sunrise, the whaleboat pulled to the reef, and the diving recommenced. By noon the task was finished. Not an oyster remained in the bed.

Nothing had been seen of the American, and the shipmates could not doubt that he had crossed the island to the settlement. But Ken was not wholly easy in his mind, for there was at least a possibility that Coldedge had come by some accident amid the rugged cliffs and gullies. It was at least peculiar that he should have gone without giving even a hint of his intention.

"Kit, old man, I think we'll run round to the lagoon," said Ken, when the diving was over. "I'm uneasy about Coldedge, and we need not stay here to rot 'out the oysters. We'll leave a couple of men in charge, and take the ketch round the island."

Hudson agreed, and early in the afternoon the Dawn left her anchorage, Lompo and Lufu remaining on shore to guard the oysters that were spread out in the sun on the beach.

The ketch glided out of the bay and stood to the south. In a couple of hours it was gliding into the lagoon on the south side of Lukatu; and the boy trader went ashore in the whaleboat.

Swindled!

KING OF THE ISLANDS' sun-burnt face wore a perplexed frown when he came back to the Dawn in the whaleboat.

Hudson gave him a questioning look as he stepped aboard the ketch. "You haven't found Coldedge?" he asked.

"No. He's been there—and gone. I can't understand it," said Ken. "Coldedge came across the island yesterday, and got in about sundown. This morning he bought a lugger, paying for it in banknotes, hired a native crew, and left. He was gone, so far as I can learn, a couple of hours before we got here. He's left no message, and doesn't seem to have mentioned a word about our being on the island at all. He's just cleared off—goodness knows where, and why!"

"He's left the pearls in our hands," added Ken. "Half the find belongs to him. Of course, he can trust us—but it's queer."

"Queer, and no mistake," said Hudson. "We've already got pearls worth more than a thousand pounds, and if the rest pan out in the same way, it may run to seven or eight thousand. More, perhaps. And the man's riskin' losing his half-share."

"No risk in this case," smiled Ken. "We shall give him fair play. But I shouldn't have taken him for a man to trust a fortune in anybody's hands. I can't understand this, Kit!"

"Same here. If we hadn't found the pearls, I should think——" Kit

broke off. "But we have found them, and it's all square."

"It beats me," said King of the Islands. "But there's nothing to be done—nobody knows where he's gone. I suppose we shall see him again at Lalinge. Anyhow, we may as well get back; we know now that he's safe, at any rate."

And the ketch sailed out of the lagoon and stood to the west to make the circuit of the island again.

The mysterious flight of Coldedge perplexed the shipmates deeply. They could not doubt his good faith now that the pearls were in their hands. But his action was utterly perplexing.

"Feller whaleboat belong feller Prado, sar!" said Koko, interrupting Ken's perplexed reflections.

King of the Islands glanced round. The ketch was making a wide sweep to the west to avoid the reefs of Lukatu before turning to the north of the island. On the sunny waves at a distance a whaleboat danced, and in the stern sat a little dark-skinned, wizened man. Kaio-lalulalonga's keen eyes had recognised Peter Prado, the pearl-buyer.

Prado recognised the ketch, and waved a dusky hand in greeting to King of the Islands. Ken waved back to the Portuguese half-caste.

"We'll run down to him, Kit. Prado's the man we want, now we've pearls to sell."

And the ketch ran down to the whaleboat.

"Ahoy!" shouted Ken. "Come aboard, Peter!"

Koko threw a line, and the whaleboat ranged alongside. The little half-caste jumped lightly on board.

"Pearls to sell, Peter," said King of the Islands cheerily. "We've lifted pearls on Lukatu."

"Muito bem," said Prado. "You have good fortune, senhor. I go to Gola for pearls in my whaleboat, but I will be happy to buy your pearls, and give you a good price."

Ken poured half a dozen pearls from a little bag into his hand. The Portuguese looked at the gems glistening in the sun. He took one of the pearls—a large, round gem with a bluish lustre—and examined it carefully. Then he looked at King of the Islands. There was a change in his dusky face.

"Senhor, faz-me muito favor!" he said sarcastically. "I, Peter Prado, was not born yesterday."

"What do you mean, Peter?" asked Ken, in surprise. "Any dealer on Thursday Island would give a hundred pounds for that pearl."

"Senhor, if you give more than three shillings for that pearl, you are robbed of your shillings," said Prado, grinning.

"Is that a joke?" asked Ken, knitting his brows.

The half-caste shrugged his shoulders.

"Look here, Prado!" said the boy trader quietly. "You know more about pearls than I'm ever likely to know. But I tell you that that pearl was taken from an oyster-bed, six fathoms down. Are you going to tell me that sham pearls are taken from oysters at six fathoms?"

(Continued on page 26.)

My First Voyage!

strength, we couldn't manage to get him out of the water!

Bert was at the end of the rope, near by where it was made fast to the bollard, and as the shark struggled, Bert kept getting entangled with the rope. We who were in front of him couldn't see what he was doing, but Bert took it into his head that it would be easier to handle the rope if it was not fastened to the bollard. So he undid the fastening and threw off the rope. It was the most stupid thing he could have done, for just at that moment the shark darted away and dragged us along the deck with it, almost to the rails.

"Let go the rope!" yelled the mate. "Lively, now, or it'll have you over!"

He sprang clear just as his fingers were about to be trapped by the rope on the top of the rails. Fish and I followed his example and let go. But Bert was not so quick. The shark gave another tug—and, with a shriek, Bert was hauled clean overboard, hanging on to the end of the rope, which cut through the air like a whiplash.

Splash! Down into the water he went. We were aghast, for it seemed that our fishing expedition was to end in tragedy. Bert came to the surface, kicking and splashing and yelling out for help. At any moment the shark, thoroughly maddened now by the steel hook which

had cut into its jaw, might turn and attack him.

"For the love o' Mike, man, splash and kick out!" yelled the mate. "You boys lower a boat at once!"

His hand went to his hip-pocket and came out with his automatic firmly clenched.

Crack, crack, crack! and bullets whacked the water. If you have ever tried to hit a moving object in the sea, you will know how difficult it is. Not one of the mate's bullets struck the shark. As Fish and I hurriedly lowered a boat, the mate expended all the bullets in his automatic, and we heard him yelling for others to come along and bring things which could be thrown overboard to divert the shark's attention. Luckily, there were some pieces of meat still in the pail, and the mate threw these overboard, taking care not to let them fall anywhere near Bert.

After the meat was gone, the mate and the men who had run along in answer to his calls threw overboard anything they could lay their hands upon, to draw the shark's attention from Bert, who had sufficient presence of mind to kick out and make a tremendous splashing in the water. Sharks are great cowards, and this one was no exception. It kept clear of the struggling man, but it was a question of how long Bert could continue to frighten it off. He was fully clothed, and his heavy sea-boots were beginning to weigh him down.

If he gave up his struggles, the shark would immediately turn and make for him. By this time, however, Fish and I had lowered the dinghy, and were sliding down the "falls"—or lowering ropes. Next minute we were in the boat, had cast it off from the falls, and were rowing rapidly in Bert's direction. He was almost at his last gasp, and his struggles were growing less vigorous. "Hurry up there!" we heard the mate shouting. "The shark's after him!"

True enough, the shark, having disposed of all the meat, had turned in Bert's direction!

We rowed with all our might, putting every ounce of energy we possessed into our strokes. Nearer and nearer we drew to him. Fish threw down his oar.

"I'll get him, Jack!" he cried, and ran to the bows of the boat, thrusting his arm over the side and seizing Bert by the collar of his shirt.

I gave a pull on my oar, bringing the boat broadside on to Bert, and Fish tugged violently at the sailor's collar, making the boat heel over dangerously.

Then Bert let out a heartrending cry.

"It's got me!" he yelled. "Gosh, boys, it's got me!"

(You will learn in next Monday's MODERN BOY how the Cockney sailor fares in this terrible predicament, and you will also be introduced to the Man from the Foreign Legion! There are some most exciting episodes for Jack Maxwell to relate next week!)

The Pearls of Lukatu.

(Continued from page 24.)

The Portuguese grinned again; then his dusky face became grave. If a suspicion had crossed his mind, for a moment, that the boy trader was seeking to palm off sham pearls on him, it vanished at once.

"Senhor, it is what they call 'button' pearl—cultured pearls. The Japanese culture them. The cultured pearl is well known to the pearl-buyer. Sometimes only an expert can see that it is not real. Do not blame yourself, senhor—I, Peter Prado, have been almost deceived sometimes. The oyster-bed you have found, senhor, is a bed of cultured oysters."

"Cultured oysters!" repeated Ken, like a man in a dream.

He had heard, of course, of Japanese cultured pearls. But he had never dreamed of this!

"It is a clever trick!" murmured Prado. "Some little thing—a chip of stone, perhaps—is inserted, and the good fellow oyster he does the rest. The Japanese are verree clever at this game. They plant the oyster-bed ready to grow—they leave it perhaps for years—in long time the pearl is ready."

"All that trouble—for a few shillings!" said Hudson.

"Nao, senhor!" chuckled Prado. "Sometimes these pearls are sold as real—and your clever Jap he makes

a fortune sometimes—and sometimes he go to prison. The Japs, they are verree clever."

King of the Islands understood now. Hiroshaki's oyster-bed was a bed of cultured pearls. It had been planted with the intention of a swindle—and left to mature. No doubt Hiroshaki was dead, as Colderge had said—leaving his swindle behind him. And this was the use the adventurer had made of his knowledge of it.

To gather the pearls, and market them as real, might have been profitable, but was exceedingly risky. Colderge had adopted a safer plan. No wonder he had abandoned his half-share in the pearls when he fled. The whole find was worth only a few pounds, except in the hands of clever swindlers. Peter Prado, with many polite expressions of sympathy, but a lurking grin on his dusky face, went back to his whaleboat, and the vessels parted company.

"We've been done!" Ken looked at his shipmate. "That scoundrel has bagged a thousand pounds from us—and got away with it."

"No likee feller look along eye belong feller Colderge!" murmured Kaio-lalulalonga.

"Cultured pearls!" said Ken. "Worth nothing! And we thought we—" He broke off. "Seeing isn't always believing, Kit! But there's a loose knot in that fellow's scheme. He expected us to stay for days rotting out the pearls, and give him

time to get clear. He never calculated that we should find him cut within a few hours after he'd cleared. We've got a chance of running him down. Kit, we're going to hunt that lugger through the Pacific!"

The ketch raced back to the north side of Lukatu, where Lompo and Lufu were picked up—the worthless cultured oysters being left where they lay on the beach.

All they knew of Colderge's movements was that when he had sailed away in the lugger he had steered to the south. The vast Pacific had swallowed him. Somewhere on the boundless ocean the lugger was gliding, the adventurer doubtless chuckling over his success and never dreaming of prompt pursuit. Under full sail, the Dawn stood to the southward, every eye on board scanning the sea for the lugger. The hunt was up! "Cyrus Colderge, had he only known it, was not so certain as he calculated to escape from King of the Islands!"

(A magnificent sequel to this thrilling yarn will appear in next Monday's MODERN BOY. Don't miss it—it's great!)

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