

FLYING CINDERS!

**DIRT-TRACK
RACING
AT ITS BEST.**

COMPLETE STORY.

The **MODERN BOY**

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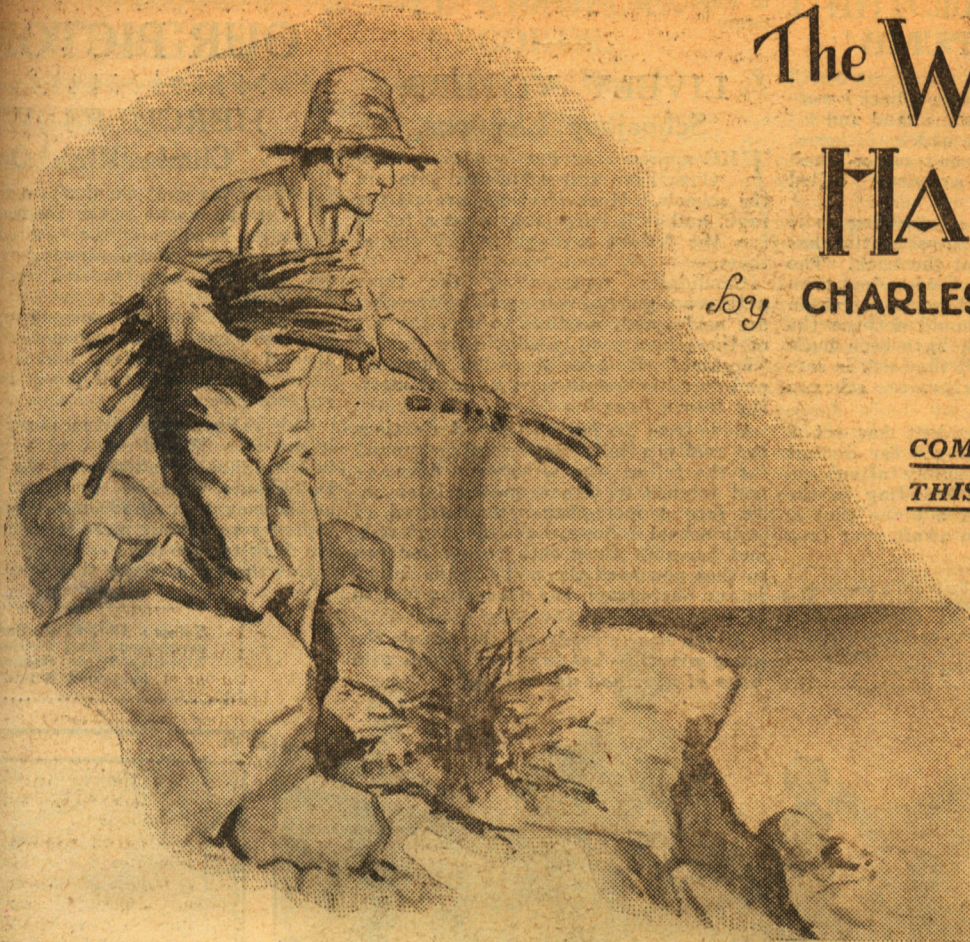


A SHIP THAT SWALLOWS WHALES! (See page 9.)

The WHIP HAND!

By CHARLES HAMILTON

COMPLETE IN
THIS ISSUE.



On the highest part of the cliff Ken lighted a fire . . . soon a tall column of smoke was rising to the blue sky.

The Black Man's Way!

PREECE, the Yankee mate of the pirate brig *Mary Belle*, of Frisco, came out of the bungalow on the lone island in the Pacific where the sea-thieves had their headquarters, and stood staring seaward with a scowling brow.

The sun was rising over the hill, shining on the waters of the little land-locked bay and the blue Pacific beyond.

Under the shadow of the tall, basaltic cliff at the entrance of the bay the masts of the *Mary Belle* rose from the water where she had been sunk by dynamite the previous afternoon.

Now that the tide was out, the brig was uncovered almost to her bulwarks. Tops and cross-trees stood out high from the calm water. The night had been calm, and the *'Frisco* brig still lay where she had sunk.

From the wrecked brig the Yankee mate's glance swept up the high cliff to the rugged summit, seventy feet above. On it stood a boyish figure, watching the sea. It was Ken King, the boy trader of the Pacific, more familiarly known as King of the Islands. Ken's ketch, the *Dawn*, had been raided by the sea-thieves and he had been tossed overboard. Clampering on to a log, he had drifted to this unnamed, uninhabited island.

He had been hounded by the Dutchman and his black servant the pirates had left in charge of their hoard. The Dutchman had perished in attempting Ken's life, and Pipaio, his servant, had rejoined the brig when she appeared off the island. Ken had warned Hartz, the pirate chief, that he would sink his boat with dynamite if he attempted to enter the harbour. The warning had been ignored, and Ken had carried out his threat. Later, Hartz had

Preece's glance left him, and turned to the strip of sandy beach below the bungalow. On the sand lay the whaleboat of the *'Frisco* brig, and near it the crew of Solomon Island boys were grouped.

Preece watched them morosely. The blacks were talking together, and glancing towards the bungalow as they talked. One of them, Pipaio, made a gesture towards the Yankee mate, standing scowling in the veranda and grinned. The grin was reflected on the dozen faces that surrounded him.

Preece scowled more blackly, but there was a tremor of uneasiness in his breast. He wondered whether the blacks knew that not a single cartridge remained to the white men at the bungalow. If they knew that—and they were sure to know it soon—there was likely to be trouble

with the black boys

The bungalow had been cleared of stores and ammunition before the pirates returned to the island. All that they had carried with them had gone down with the *Mary Belle*. Numbers were still on the side of the sea-thieves—if they could have reached the boy trader. But King of the Islands was impregnable in his rocky eyrie.

As he looked at the jabbering,

(Continued on page 16.)

BESET WITH PERILS

on all sides, Young Ken King, boy trader of the Pacific Islands, stirs up a regular hornets' nest of pirates! With the odds heavily in their favour, the pirates are out for vengeance . . . You will feel a longing to go to Ken's side and give him assistance in his lone-hand fight!

been killed in attempting to turn the boy trader out of his stronghold on the cliffs.

Preece muttered, and shook a knucky fist at King of the Islands.

Ken King's back was turned to him. He was watching the Pacific in the sunrise, searching the wide waste of waters for a sail. But there was no sail on the unending blue. The waste of waters stretched to the western horizon, unbroken by sail or smoke.

The Whip Hand!

(Continued from page 13.)

grinning blacks, it was borne in upon the Yankee mate's mind that he was in greater danger than the boy trader on the cliff. Only by force and fear was such a crew to be ruled; and the skipper whom they had dreaded lay dead at the bottom of a chasm in the cliff, and Preece and his comrade, Frenchy, were unarmed, save for their empty revolvers.

Preece gritted his teeth and stepped back into the bungalow. On a heap of tapa mats the second mate of the Mary Belle lay, still sleeping. He stirred him with his foot.

"Wake up, you loafing swab!" he growled.

The Frenchman opened his sleepy eyes and rubbed them, and sat up on the mats.

"What's the trouble?" he grunted.

"You pesky swab!" growled Preece. "I guess if you sleep now, you ain't likely to wake any more. The boys are going to give trouble!"

"Parbleu!"

Frenchy rose lazily to his feet, still rubbing his eyes. He jerked aside the pandanus screen at the door and looked out into the blinding sunlight.

The blacks, who had been sprawling on the sand, had risen to their feet now.

Pipaio was addressing them in the dialect of Lu'u, and the islanders were grinning and nodding.

The sight alarmed Frenchy.

"Mon ami, it is we who are in danger, not that trader on the cliff," he remarked. "The blacks have guessed that we have no cartridges. Pipaio was here with the trader, and he has told them that King looted the house before we came. It is us for what you Yankees call the long jump."

"D'you want to make kai-kai along of a crowd of Solomon Island cannibals?" snapped Preece. "Pull yourself together, you fool! Get hold of your gun."

"What is the use—it is soaked with sea-water—"

"I guess we may bluff them. By hokey, if I had a single cartridge, I'd bring the black scum to heel yet! That confounded trader has got the lot, and we can't reach him—and that fool Hartz had to run the brig under the cliff and get her sunk! I guess it's us for the cooking-pot if we don't show a bold face. Pull yourself together, you dago!"

"They come!" said the Frenchman, as many footsteps sounded on the steep coral path that led up from the beach to the house.

"Get hold of your gun, you swab, and come out and face them!" snarled Preece.

Frenchy nodded, and followed the burly Yankee into the veranda. The crowd of blacks reached the coral platform on which the bungalow stood, and halted there. Preece glared at them over the rail of the veranda. His hand was on the butt of the revolver in his belt.

"You feller boy, what name you come along house?" he roared.

Pipaio stood out before his companions.

There was a jeering grin on his black face. Evidently his fear of the mates of the Mary Belle was a thing of the past.

"We come along house, sar, along we wantee come along house," he answered insolently. "S'pose you say no come along house, us feller come along house all samee."

"You black scum!" roared Preece. "You talk bad feller talk along me, me knock seven bells outer your black hide!"

Pipaio laughed. The bullying tones of the bucko mate of the Mary Belle had no terrors for him now.

"No can, sar," he answered cheerfully. "Us feller plenty feller, my word. You white feller two feller. How you two feller knock seven bells outer plenty too much black feller? No can, sar!"

Preece jerked the revolver from his belt.

There was a backward movement among the blacks. At the sight of a gun in the hand of the Yankee mate they were wont to cower. But Pipaio stood his ground.

"Feller gun he no talk, sar," grinned Pipaio. "Me savvy plenty, sar! No thing walk about inside feller gun, sar! Me savvy plenty."

Preece glared at him over the revolver. Had the weapon been loaded, he would have shot Pipaio dead as a warning to the rest. A single cartridge would have saved the situation. But in the swim from the wreck his revolver had been soaked in water, and it was useless.

And the Solomon Islanders, realising that he did not fire for the simple reason that he could not fire, rallied again at once, and pressed on behind Pipaio. Preece eyed them savagely, calculating the chances of a rush at them with the revolver clubbed. But there were sixteen of the brawny blacks, and he knew that there was no chance of beating them into submission.

Only the spell of fear had ever kept them to obedience. Now the spell was broken.

"Don't get their backs up!" muttered the second mate in his ear.

"Belay it, you durned dago!" snarled Preece. "You homing for the cooking-pot, you skunk? Keep a stiff upper-lip!"

The blacks were coming forward. Two or three of them had clambered on the coral platform, and the rest were pressing to the edge of it.

"You feller plenty bad feller!" said Preece, in a less bullying tone. Bullying would not serve his turn now. "What thing you want along this house?"

"Want plenty kai-kai, plenty all thing belong house," answered Pipaio coolly. "Wantee takee whaleboat along sea. Us feller no stop along island. S'pose you say no, you white feller, us feller kill-dead you two feller altogether too quick."

There was a nodding of black fuzzy heads in assent.

"Us feller belong Lu'u," went on Pipaio. "Us feller go along Lu'u along whaleboat. You white feller stop along island. You savvy?"

"You want to desert, you black scum?"

Pipaio pointed to the masts of the wrecked brig.

"Feller ship he no stop any more," he said. "Feller Captain Hartz he no stop. What name us feller stop along island? No, sar! We go along Lu'u, along whaleboat. We takee all thing us feller want! My word! Us feller rich feller along Lu'u."

Preece's square jaw set hard, and his eyes glittered under his beetling brows. He grasped the heavy Navy revolver by the barrel, savagely tempted to try the chance of a conflict. The look on his face daunted the blacks a little, and some of them drew back a pace or two. But the Frenchman caught him by the arm.

"If they want to desert, let them go!" he snapped. "We are safer without that crew of savages!"

"We've got no chance against King of the Islands without them!" muttered Preece. "And if they take the whaleboat, we're marooned here. If we beat that trader, we might raise the Mary Belle at low water with the help of the niggers. We could—"

"You talk of beating King of the Islands when our own lives are in the balance!" hissed Frenchy. "Name of a dog! Let them go before they think of making a barbecue of us!"

Pipaio broke in.

"What talk you white feller talk?" he demanded. "You two feller, us plenty feller! All thing along this place belong us. Gun he no talk. Us feller savvy plenty! My word, you givum trouble along us, we plenty kill you feller."

There was a struggle in Preece's mind. It went sorely against the grain with the Yankee mate to yield to the blacks. But there was no help for it. Already Frenchy was moving along the veranda, to drop from it at the end farthest from the blacks. Preece followed him.

There was a howl of jubilation from Pipaio and his crew. They swarmed on to the platform and into the house.

Frenchy was making for the palm-grove on the slope of the hill. Now that the blacks were in open mutiny, he considered it safer to keep out of sight till they were gone. Preece, scowling like a demon, followed. The mutiny of the black crew dashed all his remaining hopes.

Without their aid, there was no chance of beating King of the Islands; no chance of refloating the brig. And the taking of the whaleboat meant that the two mates were marooned on a solitary island, with no hope of escape. But there was no help for it; and he knew, too, that it was wise to let the mutinous blacks go without delay before their fuzzy thoughts turned from mutiny to murder.

From the shelter of the palms, Preece watched them.

They ran and scurried through the bungalow, shouting and yelling and looting. Such stores as remained

were carried down to the whaleboat. Trade goods were sorted over, and every Solomon Islander loaded himself with plunder. In an hour's time the black crew had loaded the boat and pushed her out into the water.

The mast was stepped, the sail set, and Pipaio steered across the bay to the passage under the cliffs, the whaleboat dipping almost to the gunwale under the weight of her swarming crew and the plunder they had taken. Pipaio, looking back, waved a mocking black hand at the scowling face of the Yankee mate watching from the palms.

Master of the Island!

KING OF THE ISLANDS looked down from the summit of the rugged cliff as the splash of oars floated up from below.

The breeze off shore had brought the whaleboat across the little bay to the passage between the two tall cliffs that stood like a gateway on the sea.

Under the shadow of the cliffs the sail dropped, and the Solomon Islanders put out the oars.

Every black face was turned anxiously upward as the whaleboat glided into the passage. Kanaka memories are short, but only the day before King of the Islands had sunk the 'Frisco brig in the channel, and the masts stood up from the shining water to remind them of the catastrophe. Every black man in the boat was uneasy lest the "feller white master along rock" should serve the whaleboat as he had served the brig.

To that possibility the blacks had not given a single thought when they mutinied and seized the boat and stores to leave the island. But they gave it thought now as they floated in the shadow of the high cliff, and saw King of the Islands standing on a ledge of rock near the summit.

Ken looked down at the boat's crew. His first thought when he saw the boat coming across the bay was that his enemies were about to attempt an attack on the sea-face of the cliff—the attack from the landward side the previous day having been a disastrous failure. But he soon discerned that there were only black men in the boat.

He held up his rifle as the black crew drew near.

"You feller boy, you stop along boat!" he shouted; and the Solomon Island crew ceased to row.

Pipaio stood up in the stern of the boat and grinned up at the boy trader ingratiatingly. For many days before the return of the pirate brig Pipaio had served the little white master on the lone island, and he had found him very different from the white masters on the Mary Belle. Pipaio was not feeling very uneasy; though he was anxious to get out of range.

"You feller white master, sar, us feller good boy along you, sar!" called out Pipaio.

The New Stamp Collecting.

AIRCRAFT ON STAMPS.

By DOUGLAS ARMSTRONG.

THE appearance of the first aeroplane upon a postage stamp adds another enthralling chapter to the story of the conquest of the air as told in stamps.

The original aeroplane in which the Wright Brothers accomplished the first heavier-than-air flight at Kitty Hawk, Carolina, just over twenty-five years ago, and now reposing in the South Kensington Museum, London, was in reality little more than a glider, and its first successful flight lasted for only 12 seconds!

It is this machine that is pictured on a 2 cents stamp of the United States, recently issued to commemorate the International Civil Aeronautics Conference held at Washington. By way of contrast, the companion stamp of 5 cents value shows a modern monoplane flying over the world—a token of the advance made by aviation in a quarter of a century! Fellows who are keen on flying

1919, is seen taking off from Lester's Field, near St. John's, in the design of the present 15 cents postage stamp of Newfoundland.

The most celebrated flying machine the world has known—Colonel Lindbergh's "Spirit of St. Louis"—so much a part of himself that he invariably speaks of "US" in referring to it, is the subject not only of an American air mail stamp issued in honour of his great solo flight from New York to Paris in 1927, but also



Above is the original Wright plane, and below a modern monoplane, on two recent postage stamps of the U.S.A.

of a number of other commemorative issues that marked the trail of his flight through Central America

and the West Indies early in the following year.

Spain has perpetuated in postage-stamp form the memory of Commander Franco's sensational Transatlantic flight (Palos to Buenos Aires, 1926), as well as the machine used by the Spanish pilots Loriga and Gallarga when they flew from Madrid to Manila (Philippine Islands) in May of that year.

Many and varied types of aircraft may be recognised upon the world's air stamps. Albania has a clumsy-looking Junker; China, a Handley-Page flying over the Great Wall; Cuba, a Curtiss hydroplane leaving Havana for Key West; and Egypt, a De Havilland crossing the Nile delta. Aeroplanes of the Fokker class figure in the designs of the air post issues of the Dutch Indies, Lithuania, and Russia, whilst French Morocco has a Spad circling over Casablanca and Peru.



have but to turn to certain of the special stamps that are being issued in ever-increasing numbers expressly for use in the air post service, to see for themselves some of the famous aeroplanes which have helped to make aerial history by carrying their pilots upon epoch-marking flights in various parts of the world.

The first aeroplane to cross the Atlantic, the Vickers-Vimy machine with which the late Sir John Alcock and Sir J. Whitten Brown won the "Daily Mail" £10,000 prize in June,

"You feller stop!"

"Yes, sar, us feller stop along you say stop, sar," answered Pipaio.

"Very good feller, us feller, sar!"

"What name you come along cliff, along boat?" demanded Ken.

"No come along cliff, sar, go along sea!" explained Pipaio. "Us feller take boat, along run along sea, sar, along island belong us. Us feller go along Lu'u, sar, along Solomon Islands, sar."

"Oh!" ejaculated Ken. He guessed what had happened now.

"Us feller no likee stop along white master along house, sar," said Pipaio. "Feller Cap'n Hartz he dead feller, he no stop any more altogether. We no flaid along that feller any more. Feller Preece, feller Flenchy, him no good, sar! Feller gun belong that feller no talk any

more. We laugh along that feller, sar!"

And Pipaio showed all his white teeth in a derisive grin.

"We good feller along you, sar," went on the black boy. "S'pose you likee come along sea, along us feller, you come along boat, sar, us feller plenty glad!"

Ken smiled. Pipaio's offer was made in good faith, but the boy trader was not likely to put to sea in a boat crowded with Solomon Island cannibals. In case of a shortage of provisions—likely enough to happen with a crew of unthinking, improvident natives—the fate of the white man on board would have been assured—and unpleasant.

King of the Islands remained silent for some moments, while the black crew below watched him and waited for him to speak.

The Whip Hand!

He had already surmised that the two white men at the bungalow had no ammunition. He knew that he had left none behind at the house, and they had had no time to save anything when the *Mary Belle* went down. Now he knew it for a certainty. And so the departure of the black crew meant that he was master of the island once more. So far, it was all to the good; for so long as that numerous and savage crew remained with Preece and Frenchy, Ken could not have ventured to leave his retreat on the cliff-top.

But glad enough as he would have been to see the backs of the Solomon Islanders, he was reluctant to see the whaleboat go. It was the only means of leaving the island. But so long as the swarm of blacks remained with the mates of the *'Frisco* brig, Ken had little enough chance of getting possession of it. He decided that it was wiser to let the black crew go, while they were in the mood. Their departure relieved him from a swarm of enemies whose presence on the island would have kept him penned up in his rocky fastness.

The black boys waited and watched anxiously. They dared not dip an oar till the white master gave leave. A stick of dynamite dropped from above would have made an end of boat and boat's crew, and put a sudden termination to their hope of sailing back to their own island.

"Us feller stop, sar, s'pose you sing out stop!" called up Pipaio anxiously. "What thing white master he say?"

Ken made up his mind.

"You black feller go along sea, s'pose you likee," he called back.

The blacks took instant advantage of that permission. The oars dipped again, and the whaleboat shot through the narrow channel between the cliffs.

Ken smiled as he watched. The black crew were rowing hard, evidently anxious to get clear, lest the white master above should change his mind about allowing them to escape.

The whaleboat raced seawards. She sped past the forlorn mastheads of the sunken brig and glided out into the reefs, pulling fast.

Outside the reefs, the blacks drew in their oars, and the sail was hoisted again. The offshore breeze filled it, and the whaleboat, crowded and overloaded with black humanity and loot, danced away on the Pacific.

Ken watched it till it was but a speck on the horizon.

It vanished at last below the skyline. Pipaio and his companions were gone. Whether they would succeed in reaching their native island was a question with a very doubtful answer. But, at all events, they were gone; and they would never return to the lone island that had been the pirate brig's headquarters.

Ken was master of the island now. Preece and Frenchy had no crew to support them, and he would not have hesitated to tackle them had they been armed. But they were un-

armed, so far as firearms went, and he had nothing to fear from them.

He needed to remain no longer in the fastness he had prepared while waiting for the return of the pirate brig.

But Ken was in no hurry to descend from the cliff. He had much to do before he left his eyrie. He selected a deep fissure among the rocks, and stacked in it his whole supply of ammunition, except the cartridges he packed in his belt, and with it he placed all the firearms excepting his rifle and revolver. He piled rocks in the fissure till it was filled. There was little chance of the cache ever being discovered.

Then he gathered a stack of firewood that had been stored in a hollow of the rock, built a pile of it on the highest point of the cliff, and lighted a fire.

Very soon a tall column of smoke was rising to the blue sky—a signal to any sail that might pass far out at sea.

The sun was near the zenith by this time, the rocks baking with heat. Taking his rifle in the hollow of his arm, King of the Islands began the descent of the cliff on the landward side. Scrambling over rugged rocks, leaping fissures and chasms, he made his way down to the strip of beach before the bungalow.

Taming the Yankee Mate!

"THAT durned trader!" growled Preece.

Frenchy shrugged his shoulders.

The mates of the *'Frisco* brig were lounging in the veranda of the bungalow when King of the Islands appeared in sight, coming up the coral path towards the house.

The Yankee mate eyed him savagely; the Frenchman with cool indifference.

"If a man had jest one cartridge—" muttered Preece.

King of the Islands reached the coral platform, and leaped lightly up it, and came to the veranda steps.

His rifle was under his arm, ready for instant use if the two mates showed fight. But the Frenchman had no intention of drawing the fire of the best shot in the islands, and Preece, savage and surly as he was, was not thinking of hostilities. He knew that he was beaten; and that the boy trader was master, unless he could be defeated by treachery. And for the present, at least, there was no chance of that.

Ken stepped into the veranda. He eyed the two sea-thieves grimly.

"Bonjour, monsieur!" said the French mate. Preece scowled at him like a demon.

"I guess you're wise to it that we ain't got a shot in the locker, durn your hide!" he growled.

"Ay, ay," answered Ken. "I know that; though I should have come all the same. I fancy I could handle two rascals of your calibre, with guns in your hands. But I'm glad not to have to shoot you as you deserve."

The Frenchman grinned, and Preece growled.

"But belay jaw," said King of the

Islands. "I haven't come here to talk. I am master here—are you going to dispute it?"

"Not so long as you carry the gun," grinned Frenchy.

"You're heeled, and we ain't," snarled Preece. "You're cock of the walk so long as you've got the shoot-irons. But I guess if I pick up an odd cartridge—"

"You won't have the chance," said Ken. "Drop your gun on the floor, and kick it across here. You, to, Frenchy."

The second mate obeyed at once. But the Yankee stared defiantly at Ken, without stirring.

"I guess I'm keeping my gun, you swab!" he growled.

Ken's eyes glinted.

"Understand me," he said quietly.

"I give orders here, and you obey them. Kick your gun across here. I'm not taking the chance of your picking up a loose cartridge and shooting me in the back."

"Waal, I won't!" snarled Preece.

Ken lifted the rifle to his shoulder.

"I give you ten seconds!" he said.

With a growl, the Yankee mate grabbed the revolver from his belt, dropped it, and kicked it across to the boy trader.

"That's better!" said Ken, lowering the rifle. "And after this, Preece, I warn you that you'd better jump to orders. I'm sparing your lives, but I'm taking no chances with you, and no back-chat. You are a mate, and you're talking to a skipper; remember that when you speak."

With the butt of the rifle, he smashed the two revolvers as they lay at his feet.

"Skipper!" jeered Preece. "Skipper of a ten-cent yawl!"

"That's enough!" snapped Ken.

"I've found stored here the cargo that was looted from my ketch. You're one of the thieves who looted her. You two swabs are pirates, and liable to be hanged if the law gets hold of you."

"We're pretty fur from the law here," sneered the Yankee mate. "I guess the High Commissioner ain't likely to drop in at this god-darned island. We're all here for life—you as well as us; and that's a comfort, hang you!"

"Perhaps! But so long as we're here, I'm captain, and you take your orders from me," said Ken coolly.

"I guess I see myself doing it!"

"You'll see yourself doing it soon enough. I'm going to occupy this bungalow," said King of the Islands. "You two will stop on the top of the cliff and attend to the signal-fire. You will carry the stores down to the house, keeping only enough for your own rations. You will keep the signal-fire burning night and day—if the fire goes out, your rations stop!"

"You reckon—" hussed Preece.

"Don't talk—listen!" interrupted Ken. "You're going to make yourselves useful on this island—more useful than you've ever been in your lives before. I reckon attempt any trickery either of you, and I'll shoot you like the dogs you are!"

"You reckon we're going to quit

this bungalow to you, and camp on that cliff?" said Preece, between his teeth.

"Ay, ay, the minute I give the order," answered Ken.

"You got another guess coming, durn your hide."

"We shall see! First, I want what news you can give me of my ketch," said King of the Islands.

"Hang your ketch!"

"What is the use of disputing when our lives are in the boy's hands?" said Frenchy. "Monsieur, we saw your ketch in the lagoon at Oua, two weeks ago. Your mate, Hudson, was refitting her for sea."

"You saw Hudson?" asked Ken eagerly. He was keenly anxious for news of his shipmate.

"Mais oui! He came aboard the Mary Belle in search of news," grinned Frenchy. "He had a fancy that you might have been picked up at sea, monsieur, and even that the Mary Belle might have picked

you up. It was curious, n'est-ce pas? He did not know that it was our skipper who had flung you into the sea that dark night. Mais parbleu—we laughed at his fancy that you might survive—yet he was right, for here we see you alive. The bon garçon told us that he would search the Pacific for you, as soon as the ketch was ready for sea, and would not give up the hope of finding you."

Ken's face brightened.

He had felt assured that his shipmate would seek him; that Kit Hudson would not believe him dead, and abandon the search, so long as a vestige of hope remained. Little enough hope could the Australian have of finding him alive, it was true. But that Hudson would search Ken had been sure; and the news the Frenchman gave him was pleasant to hear.

"I guess he won't find you here, King of the Islands!" grunted

Preece. "He was at Oua; and this island is a hundred miles from Oua. Satan only knows how you got here alive. We all reckoned you'd gone to the sharks when Hartz chucked you overboard that night."

"I had luck," said Ken, "though I very nearly went to the sharks. If Hudson is searching, he may sight this island."

"One of a hundred scattered in these seas," sneered Preece, "and a hundred miles from where you was chucked overboard. Likely, ain't it?"

"Likely or not, it may happen," said Ken, "and if the Dawn passes within a score of miles, my shipmate will see the signal smoke."

He slung the rifle on his back. "That's enough talk! Now get to work!"

"At your orders, monsieur," said the Frenchman, with one of his incessant shrugs.

(Continued on the next page.)



A G.P.O. linesman, perched precariously at the top of a telegraph pole, mending broken wires in a mile-a-minute gale!

The Other Fellow's Job.

RISKING DEATH ON THE WIRES!

By a Telegraph Linesman.

A FIERCE gale had been blowing all night, and telegraph wires had been damaged to the tune of hundreds of pounds. It was my unenviable job, as a telegraph linesman, to go out at once directly the damage was located and execute repairs as swiftly as possible!

A very dangerous task, I assure you! A short while ago a telegraph pole was badly damaged, the force of the wind having caused a wire stay to snap. I was sent up the swaying pole to carry out repairs—seventy-five feet above a railway track, in a mile-a-minute gale!

If a wire breaks during the night, as it may do on occasions of extreme cold or in extra violent wind, the local maintenance man is first sent for by the exchange, for it is his job to locate the breakage. He goes up the line with a portable telephone, and as he comes to each pole he examines it, climbs up it, and calls up the exchange.

He proceeds in this fashion until he fails to "get through." Then he knows between which two poles the breakage has occurred, and returns to wake up the gang.

They come out to the spot with all necessary tools, and execute the repair as quickly as it can be done. If it is a pole or a stay that is damaged, the job may be performed in the dark. But in the case of the wire itself it is often necessary to wait until daybreak before anything can be done.

There is now in use a remarkable instrument which enables an operator at the exchange to tell with surprising accuracy where the damage has occurred, and so save the local maintenance man his adventurous journey up the line. While undergoing a test, this ingenious device located a break seventy-nine miles distant from the exchange!

As the current does not normally exceed sixty-five volts there is little danger of the linesman receiving a shock—provided he keeps clear of the earth wire, which runs down one side of the pole. If, however, the repairs are being carried out near any overhead power system, such as the tramways or electric trains, the telegraph linesman wears rubber gloves, in case any portion of the wire he is holding comes in contact with the live wire.

We are always having to run risks, of course—doing repairs over a hundred feet above a city street, for instance. The wonder is that no more accidents happen than is actually the case.

One of the most terrible of accidents on record was when a rotten pole, with a number of men strapped to it, crashed on to the railway at Fenchurch Street, London, but cases like this are fortunately rare. In my district there has been only one fatal accident during a period of fifteen years, marvellous to relate, and that was the case of a man who fell ten feet—and broke his neck!

The Whip Hand!

"I guess I'm taking no orders from a son of John Bull!" snarled Preece savagely. "I'm staying here!"

Ken drew the revolver from his belt.

"Get out of this veranda!"

"I guess not!"

Bang! Preece gave a fearful yell as a bullet gashed along his bronzed cheek. He staggered against the veranda rail, his hand going to his face. His fingers came away crimsoned.

"By hokey!" he gasped. He glared like a demon at the boy trader.

"That's a scratch—and a warning," said Ken coolly. "The next shot will go closer. Do you want it?"

"Wait till my chance comes!" roared Preece. "I guess I'll——"

"That's enough!" rapped out Ken. "Silence! Are you jumping to orders, or do you want a bullet through your fool head?"

The revolver, still smoking, bore full on the Yankee mate's savage face.

"Sharp's the word!" snapped Ken. His eyes glinted over the levelled weapon.

"I guess you've got the whip-hand," muttered Preece hoarsely. "I guess I'll take orders so long as I've got to. But——"

"That's enough! Get out of this veranda!"

Preece tramped savagely down the steps. Frenchy followed him down, and King of the Islands brought up the rear.

"Get up to the cliff! You're going to carry down the stores! Get a move on!" said Ken.

Preece gave him a savage glare, and obeyed. The Frenchman lounged away indifferently. Ken followed them.

During the hot afternoon King of the Islands and his two unwilling men were busy. Stores were carried down the steep cleft to the bungalow, leaving only a day's rations for the two mates. Firewood cut in the bush was carried up the cliff in loads, to feed the signal-fire.

By the time the work was done, the sun was sinking into the distant west, and the mates of the Mary Belle were worn down with fatigue. The last load of firewood was landed on the cliff summit, and Preece and Frenchy threw themselves down on the rock to rest.

"Keep the fire going!" said King of the Islands. "Take it in turns to sleep and tend the fire. And if you think of coming down to the bungalow after dark, remember that I shall be on my guard, and that I will shoot you as I would a wild beast. That's all!"

And King of the Islands descended the cliff, leaving the Frenchman already asleep, and the

Yankee scowling after him with evil eyes.

A Night Attack!

WITH the night came the wind.

For more than three weeks, while Ken King had been on the island, the days had been a blaze of sunlight, the nights soft and starry. Now, with nightfall, came one of the sudden storms of the Pacific. Rain was falling before Ken reached the bungalow, and a gusty wind blew from the west, rattling doors and shutters, and bringing down coconuts from the tall palms with an incessant plop-plop.

The land-locked bay, which had been calm as a pond ever since Ken's eyes had first fallen on it, now surged and roared. Heavy surf thundered on the strip of beach, and roared and dashed on the high rocks that encircled the bay. The narrow sea-passage, between the cliffs at the entrance, was one mass of foam—a thundering maelstrom.

Ken looked from the window of the bungalow as the sun sank red and angry in a tossing sea. The masts of the sunken brig, in the passage, were hidden by foam and spray. Before morning he knew the wreck of the Mary Belle would be dashed to fragments.

His thoughts turned to the whaleboat, in which Pipaio and his crew were at sea, running westward to make the Solomons. That fierce squall from the west would drive them back from their course, though they were not likely to make the island again. More likely than not, the whaleboat would be capsized before the night was out.

For the savage crew, Ken could not feel much concern; but he felt a pang of regret for Pipaio, who had served him well on the island before the pirates returned.

The sun disappeared, and blackness overspread sea and land, without the gleam of a single star.

Ken closed and secured doors and shutters.

The bungalow, lightly built of pandanus, thatched on palm poles stuck in the coral platform, rocked in the storm. Incessantly from the blackness came the plop-plop of falling coconuts, and the crash of surf on the rocks.

Ken ate his evening meal in the glimmer of a lamp. He thought of the two mates on the summit of the cliff. They had plenty of shelter in the caves among the rugged rocks, and they were provided with blankets and tapa mats for sleeping. But Ken was by no means certain that they would remain in their camp on the cliff.

In the darkness of the night, and the roar of the storm, it was likely enough that they would make some attempt to turn the tables on him. He was prepared for it.

The boy trader's mood was cheerful enough when he turned out the

lamp at last and turned in for the night.

He had learned from the mates of the 'Frisco brig the position of the island—a hundred miles from Oua. At Oua Kit Hudson had been refitting the ketch to take up the search for him. Hudson would know that Ken, if he lived, must have been swept westward by the current that set to the west from Oua; and it was to the westward that he would seek him.

It was not impossible that the ketch might sight the island sooner or later, in the course of the search. The signal-fire was extinguished now by the rain, but when the storm was over it would burn again—continuously; a blaze by night, a column of smoke by day, visible for many miles over the sea.

Hudson, if he sighted it, would run down to the island to investigate, that was certain.

The certainty that his shipmate was seeking him had filled King of the Islands with new hope. There was a chance, at least, that Kit would find him and rescue him. So it was in a cheerful and hopeful mood that the boy trader turned in.

The howl of the wind, the dash of the rain on the thatched roof, and the roar of the storm did not disturb him. He slept soundly enough, with his revolver by his side.

In the incessant din of the wind and the surf, and the groaning of trees bending before the gale, he was not likely to hear the sound of a stealthy tread in the veranda.

Through the rain and the darkness two shadowy figures, slinking through the night, crept into the veranda and groped their way to the wall of the bungalow.

"I guess the swab's asleep," Preece whispered hoarsely. "I guess he ain't looking for us on a night like this."

"Ecoutez! That was a sound!"

"Only the wind," muttered Preece. "Belay your jawing-tackle and help me!" His clasp-knife was already at work on the pandanus.

Between the upright poles of the wall was nothing but the plaited and laced pandanus leaf, easy enough to hack away. Two keen knives went steadily to work.

The sounds that were made were drowned by the wild wind. The flimsy building almost rocked as the gusts struck it from the sea. Every pole was creaking. At moments it seemed as if the whole building would be torn from its foundation by the gale.

Preece grinned savagely as his knife cut and sliced through the flimsy wall. He knew the building well, and he had selected a spot where there was a good space between two of the palm poles—space enough for a man to squeeze through when the pandanus was cut away.

Once within the building, at close quarters in the dark, a knife was as useful as a gun—perhaps more useful. The mate of the Mary Belle was more than willing to take the

(Continued on page 22.)

The Whip Hand!

(Continued from page 20.)

chance. King of the Islands might awake and fire; but a shot fired in the dark could only be fired at random, and his enemies would be two to one, hand to hand.

"Ma foi!" the Frenchman whispered. "The fellow is a fool—he should have left a lamp burning. In the dark—a thrust of a knife—" His eyes glittered like a cat's in the gloom.

"Quiet!" breathed Preece.

He thrust his wet, tousled head through the opening he had cut between the palm poles, and listened intently.

There was no movement within. King of the Islands was sleeping.

"Come!" whispered Preece huskily.

"I follow you, mon cher."

Preece forced his bulky body through the narrow space. Frenchy, slimmer and more lithe than the burly Yankee mate, followed more easily. They stood in the darkness within the bungalow.

Where was King of the Islands? The Yankee had matches in his pocket, but he dared not strike a light. A flicker of light might have drawn a shot.

He groped across the room in the blackness. Softly as a cat his comrade followed him. They were in the living-room of the bungalow. There were several more rooms, partitioned off by screens of laced pandanus. In which of them was the boy trader sleeping?

It was futile to listen for a sleeper's breathing; the storm filled the bungalow with incessant sound. Preece groped his way in the darkness from door to door of the ad-

joining rooms. Several times he collided noisily with articles of furniture, but the storm covered all noise. All the doorways but one he found open. One was secured—and he knew now in which room the boy trader lay.

He groped over the door. One blow of his brawny fist would have smashed through the flimsy screen of plaited leaf; but there was no doubt that the sleeper would awake.

"Frenchy!" breathed Preece. He peered round for his companion; but in the blackness he could not see an inch.

A hand touched him.

"Yes!" breathed Frenchy.

"Here's the room—it's the only fastened door." Preece's whisper was husky with tense excitement. "I guess he'll wake when we smash through—you savvy? The second the door's down, rush in with me—and get him."

"Mais oui!"

"Ready, then?"

"Ready!" breathed Frenchy. "Parbleu, it is, after all, easy!"

For a moment they paused. Then Preece, setting his teeth, drove his burly shoulder against the flimsy door. Under the fierce impact it crashed open, and the way was clear.

Preece and the Frenchman rushed in together. There was a crash and a yell as they stumbled in the darkness over a bench placed inside the doorway. King of the Islands had not been so careless as they had hoped. From the farther side of the room, where the boy trader had leaped up from his bed on the tapa mats at the crash of the door, came a flash and a shot.

The bullet flew over the two unseen figures sprawling in the dark. Preece scrambled up furiously and rushed on, knife in hand; and knife

in hand his companion rushed with him. The flash of the shot guided them to the pile of mats where the boy trader had been sleeping, and they reached it in a few seconds.

But King of the Islands had not waited there. He was gliding round the wall of the room in the darkness, and the two ruffians groped for him in vain.

Bang! From another direction came the report of the boy trader's revolver, and the bullet grazed Preece's shoulder.

"This way!" roared Preece, guided by the shot. He swung round and dashed across the room.

But King of the Islands was wary. The instant he had fired, he had glided along the wall and reached another side of the room. Preece came up against the wall with a rush, and his knife gashed the pandanus.

He swung round desperately, searching for his enemy in the baffling darkness. He crashed into an unseen body, and struck savagely, ruthlessly, and a yell of triumph pealed from him as he felt the blade sink home. There was a fearful cry in the darkness, and his unseen victim crumpled up, as Preece struck again. Only that one cry came from the man he had struck down.

"Get a light!" roared Preece. "I've got him—I guess I said I'd get him, Frenchy! Get a light—all clear now, you lubber! A light!"

A match scratched in the darkness, a candle was lighted. The glimmer illuminated the room.

The Yankee mate, grinning with savage glee, looked round—and his jaw dropped, his eyes started from his head. The candle stood on a bamboo table, burning with a clear flame. Behind it stood King of the Islands, a levelled revolver in his hand, his eyes gleaming over the barrel.

"Drop that knife!"

Preece stared at him, unbelieving. It was King of the Islands, unhurt. Yet a dead man lay at his feet.

From the boy trader's stern face Preece's glance dropped to the figure that lay on the floor.

"Frenchy!" he muttered hoarsely.

The knife dropped from his hand. The wretch staggered back, overcome with horror and dismay. It was his comrade whom he had stabbed in the darkness.

"You dog!" King of the Islands watched him grimly over the levelled revolver. "You dog! Get out! I give you one second!"

The ruffian, trembling in every limb, staggered away. King of the Islands took up the candle, and followed him. At the gap in the pandanus wall Preece looked back—at the levelled revolver and the stern face behind it. Then he plunged through, and tramped desperately away in the darkness and the rain!

(There are many perilous situations in next week's stirring yarn of King of the Islands. Don't forget your copy of MODERN BOY is reserved for you if you Order It In Advance!)

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