

AUTOGRAPHED CRICKET BAT

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The **MODERN BOY**

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S.D.

AN AMAZING SUPER SEAPLANE! See page 3.

The White MAN of AAO!



As Ken turned, the black was in the very act of throwing the knife at Kit—a more deadly weapon in the hands of a South Sea Islander than any firearm!

No Pilot.

“THAT’S the island!” exclaimed Ken King, the boy trader of the South Seas.

Kit Hudson, the young Australian mate, standing by the side of his skipper on the deck of the Dawn, shaded his eyes with his hand against the glare of the westering sun and looked.

Clearly outlined against the sunset lay the atoll of Aao.

A ring of coral reef, two or three miles in circumference, broke the waves of the Pacific in a circle of white spray. Only in one spot, where the reef passage lay, was there a gap in the circle.

Within, the lagoon lay like a sheet of molten gold, and tall palms stood black against the sunset.

From the sea no buildings could be seen. To Hudson’s eyes it looked as if the atoll was uninhabited. There was nothing to distinguish it from a thousand other atolls upon which his eyes had rested in the wide spaces of the Pacific.

“So that’s Aao?” he asked.

“That’s it,” said Ken. “About the loneliest spot in these seas, I should say. Three hundred miles from any

other land, dropped down and forgotten in the middle of the Pacific.”

“Any natives?”

“None.”

“And one white man—”

“And his house-boys,” said Ken, with a smile. “Poynings has two house-boys with him—two Nuka-hiva boys, I believe. Except for them he has the island to himself.”

“Sort of Robinson Crusoe life,” remarked the mate of the Dawn, staring curiously at the island. “What does he stay there for?”

“I believe not. At any rate, Poynings isn’t known to have sold any. Of course, he might keep it dark if he found any. It would be safer to keep a secret like that. Nobody ever takes the trouble to come out to this atoll, but if Poynings sent off a consignment of pearls, I fancy he would have plenty of visitors soon enough. He is said to have bought the island in Sydney; but there are plenty of beach-combers and skippers, too, who wouldn’t take much notice of that.”

“Lots,” agreed Hudson.

CHARLES HAMILTON—

invites you to an adventure-packed voyage with young Ken King—skipper and owner of the ketch Dawn—to a tiny coral island where lives a very strange man of the South Seas. Long and complete, this splendid story is full of dramatic surprises!

“Nobody knows.”

Kaio-lalulalonga, otherwise Koko, the giant Kanaka bo’sun, chimed in.

“Feller brain belong him no walk about any more, my word!” he said.

King of the Islands, to give Ken his nickname, laughed.

“He’s not mad,” he said. “He’s got a reason for sticking on that lonely island. Nobody knows for certain what his game is, but it’s generally suspected to be pearls.”

“Any pearls found?” asked Hudson.

The atoll looked absolutely deserted as the ketch glided round the reef towards the passage which opened on the southern side.

“I should want a thumping lot of pearls to pay me for living alone on that speck,” said the mate of the Dawn. “How often does he get a caller?”

“Exactly once in six months, when Belnap sends him supplies from Lalinge,” answered King of the Islands. “This time he’s sending the stuff in the Dawn, so we’re going to make the acquaintance of Mr. Poynings.”

“You’ve not made the trip before?” King of the Islands shook his head.

"No. This is the first time I've seen Aao, and I've never seen Poynings. I'm rather curious to see him."

"You're sure this is the atoll?" asked Hudson, with a smile.

"Unless my reckonings are out, it is Aao. But we shall see the house when we get to the reef entrance. It's a dangerous passage, and Poynings will come off to pilot us in."

The red rim of the sun was dipping to the horizon in the west. The ketch glided on and turned towards the gap that opened on the southern side of the circle of reef.

Most of the coral reef was low-lying, washed over by the tide at high water. But here and there great jagged, irregular rocks rose high.

According to scientific theory, those vast masses were built up by the industrial coral insect, labouring century after century from the depths of the sea. According to the same theory, that laborious insect's labours cease at the surface. The coral insect, therefore, could not have been responsible for the masses that jutted ten or twelve feet over the level of the Pacific. Some ancient submarine convulsion, perhaps, had forced those masses above the water.

The reef passage ran between high rocks, honeycombed with hollows and echoing strangely to the wash of the waves.

Between the rocks the shipmates looked across the inner lagoon to the interior beach of the atoll.

Backed by a grove of nodding palms, a bungalow stood well above the white shelving beach of the lagoon—a bungalow of palm poles and pandanus thatch, half hidden by masses of creepers.

In front was a wooden veranda, and a figure could be seen there standing and staring across the lagoon towards the reef.

"That will be Poynings," said King of the Islands. "He can see us. Why the thump doesn't he come off in his boat?"

"Better give him a signal," said the mate of the Dawn.

Ken nodded slowly, his face puzzled.

Once in six months, regularly, supplies were taken to the lonely pearler on Aao, and he must therefore have been expecting a sail from Lalinge.

Poynings was well known not to welcome chance callers on his atoll. But the supply ship was a different matter. It might have been expected that the lonely islander would be glad to see white men—that at least he would be glad to see his supplies coming in. But the white man at the bungalow gave no sign. He was leaning on the rail of the veranda, staring directly towards the ketch outside the reef, making no movement.

He did not stir as a signal fluttered from the mast of the Dawn.

Ken was more and more puzzled.

The ketch was quite near the opening of the reef now. The sun was close to the horizon. There was little time left for the pearler to come off in his boat and pilot the ketch in.

But he did not stir, only gazing fixedly towards the ketch as if quite indifferent to her arrival.

"My sainted Sam!" ejaculated King of the Islands. "Is the man day-dreaming, or what? We can't run

that passage without a pilot. Not before daylight, at any rate. Why doesn't he come?"

"Give him a gun," suggested Hudson.

Ken nodded and called to Lompo to bring up a rifle. Several shots cracked off into the air as a signal to the white man of Aao.

Still he did not stir.

From the bungalow behind him two blacks came out on to the veranda, evidently having heard the signal shots. They, too, stared towards the ketch waiting outside the reef.

But that was all. Neither white man nor black left the veranda to go down to the beach. Obviously, the man of the island did not intend to come off in his boat.

Ken levelled his binoculars. The distant bungalow rushed into close view in the powerful glasses. He made out the face of the white man clearly now. It was a dark, tanned face, burned by the tropic sun, with a livid scar running across one dark cheek, mouth and chin hidden by a thick, black beard.

The expression on the tanned face was grim and forbidding.

The two black boys in the veranda were grinning. The white man was seowling.

Ken lowered the glasses, utterly perplexed.

"I can't make it out," he said. "If Poynings takes us for a strange sail, he may not want us in the lagoon—but he knows the supplies are due from Lalinge, and he must guess that we're here to land them. He looks a tough customer. Belnap described him as a rather good-looking man—dashed if I can see his good looks. He must have changed his house-boys, too—those two yonder are blacks, and his house-boys used to be Nuka-hiva boys. Bother the man!"

"Feller sun he no stop!" remarked Kao-lalulalonga.

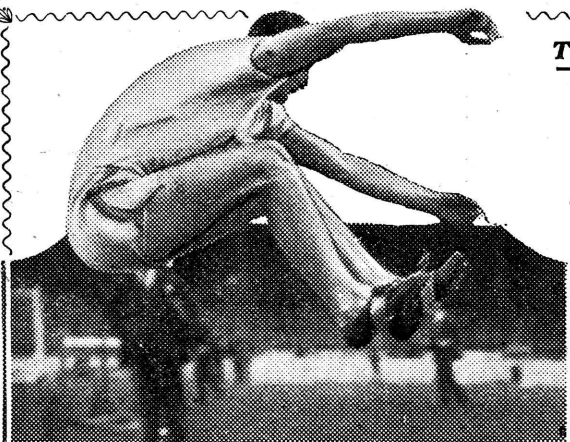
The rim of the sun had dipped to the water. The swift shadows of the tropic night were stealing over the sea.

"You won't risk the passage without him?" asked Hudson.

Ken shook his head.

"Not at sunset. We shall have to stand off the island, and tow into the lagoon in the morning, if he

(Continued on the next page.)



Training for
School
Sports.

THIS WEEK:

The
LONG
JUMP.

LONG jumping is quite different from any other form of jumping, both in principle and practice. If you would excel in the long jump there are three points to which you must pay particular attention—the speed of the run, the height of the spring, and the point of the take-off.

The run for a long jump begins with short and fairly slow steps, and gradually increases in speed and length of stride until by the time you are ready to leap you are racing forward at your fastest pace. Your practice in this will consist in drilling yourself to get to that fastest pace within a run of a certain length, and the length best suited to your own requirements will be discovered by experiment.

Next come the height and the force of the spring. There is scarcely a more common fault, in the long jump, than insufficient height. Generally the unskilful jumper rises rather less than half as far as he should. If you just think of the way in which a gun has to be elevated if it is to fire a long distance you will understand how the same principle applies to long jumping. The upward spring will not, of course, be sharp and vertical, as in the high jump. Its highest point may be ten feet forward from the take-off point. Practise, therefore, to get sufficient height.

And now for the point of take-off. Many jumpers, in their anxiety to be safe, leave the ground a foot or so before the line. But there is no need to waste even two inches in that fashion. Concentrate your attention during several jumps each day on this matter of so fitting in your run that you get a smooth take-off dead on the line.

There are several other general points to be observed if you are to be successful with long jumps. Swing your arms strongly forward to get extra impetus. Lean the body forward also; and draw the knees up high, retaining them firmly in this position until the landing is made. Remember that if your legs are allowed to hang down straight the feet will touch the ground much sooner than if they were drawn up. Always alight on the balls of your feet—this, with the bent knee position, will take out the jar of landing. And use spiked shoes!

(Hurdling will be the subject of our expert's next training chat.)

The White Man of Aao!

doesn't come off for us. I'm more than half inclined to make sail and leave him without his supplies. But I suppose we can't do that."

"Hardly," said Hudson, with a smile. "We've got to land the stuff booked for Aao. Poynings can't know that we're the ship from Lalinge with his supplies. He takes us for some craft in search of wood or water, and doesn't want us at his island."

"But he can't have forgotten that his supplies from Lalinge are due," said Ken.

"No; it's queer."

Ken gave a keen glance at sea and sky. If rough weather had threatened, it would have been impossible to stand by the rocky atoll till morning. But the vast Pacific was almost as calm as a pond, the sun going down in a glory of crimson and gold. King of the Islands rapped out an order to the Hiva-Oa crew, and the ketch stood away from the reef. Looking back through the binoculars at the white man of the island, it seemed to Ken that he read relief in the man's face at the sight of the ketch receding.

It seemed that Hudson's suggestion must be right, and that Poynings took the ketch for some strange sail that had no business at the island. Yet, unless the solitude of life on the lonely atoll had crazed him, he could not have forgotten that the supply ship from Lalinge was due. The whole thing was perplexing to Ken, and as irritating as it was perplexing.

But there was nothing to be done, and the ketch hove to, to wait outside the reef till morning.

Mysterious!

"FELLER shell!" said Kaio - lalulalonga, sniffing.

King of the Islands sniffed, too, and nodded.

The sun was gone, and the vast Pacific heaved under the glimmer of the stars, bright in the heavens as points of fire.

Off the island a breeze blew, wafting spicy scents from the tropical groves.

But it brought another scent; a scent that King of the Islands knew, as every sailorman in the South Seas knew it.

It was the scent of rotting shell.

Somewhere on the atoll pearl-shell was being rotted out for the oysters' strange treasure.

From what King of the Islands had heard from Mr. Belpap, the Pacific Company's manager at Lalinge, Poynings had been on Aao

for years and years, and in that time, if he had found any pearl oysters, had told the secret to no one. And the atoll was so far off the beaten tracks of sail and steam that such a secret would be easy to keep.

But that searching smell that stole from the atoll on the evening breeze told the secret to anyone that might be within its radius.

It might not mean, of course, that Poynings had found pearls. It might only mean that he was rotting out oysters in the hope of finding them.

But it demonstrated, at least, what his occupation was. Whether he had found pearls or not, it was pearls of which he was in search, and for which he had located himself on that solitary atoll.

The secret was safe with King of the Islands, so far as that went. He was not the fellow to talk about another man's business.

There were plenty of reckless adventurers in the islands who would think little of running down to Aao with an armed crew, and clearing out

the place if they expected to find pearls there.

Kit Hudson, coming up from his watch below, sniffed as he set his foot on the teak deck. The scent on the off-shore breeze struck him, as it had struck his shipmate.

"Rotting out shell!" he said.

"Ay, ay!"

"Then that's his game, anyhow," said the Australian. "But he can't do much in the way of diving, with only his two house-boys to help."

"Slow and steady, perhaps," said King of the Islands, with a smile. "He's been long enough on Aao to have gone over the lagoon with a small comb by this time."

The boy trader yawned, and went down the companion to his bunk in the state-room below.

Hudson watched the island idly. It was a dark blur now on the dark of the sea.

It was eight bells when the Cornstalk came on deck; and at that hour it was to be expected that the men on the island would be asleep.

No light was to be seen burning at the bungalow. From where the ketch lay the upper part of the building could be seen, across the reef and the lagoon. No doubt Poynings and his black boys were in the arms of Morpheus.

But suddenly, as Hudson watched the shadowed island, a glimmer of light struck on his eyes.

A door had been opened, letting out a stream of light from an illuminated interior. It was closed immediately, and all was dark again.

Hudson rubbed his eyes. The white man of Aao was, after all, stirring, and it was now three bells—half-past one in the morning.

The light had vanished, but the Australian's keen eyes picked up a glimmer moving away from the house.

A man carrying a lantern was leaving the bungalow, by the path that would through the palm grove behind it. For several minutes the moving light glanced and twinkled like a firefly. Then it vanished in the trees.

"My hat!" murmured Hudson.

It was not, perhaps, a matter of any consequence, but in the blank idleness of a night watch at sea, his thoughts followed it.

It was Poynings, of course. The black boys would not have been likely to light their way through the palm grove with a hurricane lamp.

Behind the palm grove lay a thick wood, which extended across the belt of land as far as the outer

(Continued on page 22.)

"CRICKETPICS"

 The **FIRST PRIZE!**

THIS SPLENDID

CRICKET BAT

made by a famous firm,
**AUTOGRAPHED BY ALL
THE SOUTH AFRICAN
TOURING TEAM!**

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The
COMPETITION 

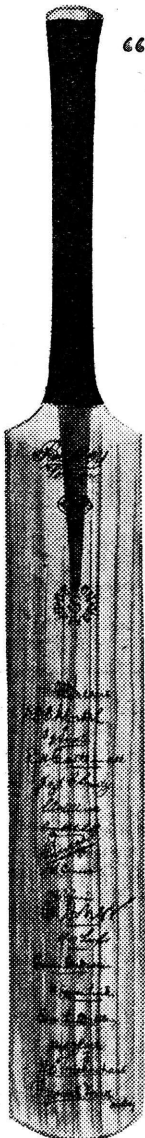
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Consolation Prizes:

**12
MATCH BALLS!**

—:—
NEW READERS—

byobtaining a copy of last week's **MODERN BOY**, which contained the first set of "Cricketpics" and a full list of names, which contains the solution to every puzzle throughout the competition, you can

START TO-DAY!



The White Man of Aao!

(Continued from page 20.)

reef of the atoll, where the open sea broke in an endless murmur of surf.

Why Poynings, who had endless tropical days at his disposal, should be going through the wood at night with a lantern was rather a mystery.

Having nothing else to occupy his thoughts, Kit Hudson kept his eyes on the island, idly watching for the return of the light.

It was more than an hour later that a twinkle in the palm grove caught his eyes. It approached the house. There it vanished. Poynings had returned from his mysterious excursion, and gone into the bungalow again.

From then till dawn there was no sign of life on Aao.

From the east at last came a glimmer of rosy light. It was followed by the leap of the sun, and it was day. The blue Pacific rolled shining under the rising golden ball; and from the island burst the chorus of wild birds, welcoming the day.

King of the Islands came on deck.

It was over breakfast that the mate of the Dawn told him of the incident of the moving light in the night.

Ken shrugged his shoulders.

"Can't make it out!" he said. "Poynings seems to be a queer fish all round. A man might easily go crazed, living in that solitude for years on end. Perhaps Koko was right when he said that brain belong him no walk about any more."

"We'll soon see now what sort of a bird he is, anyhow," laughed Hudson. "Will you take the Dawn in, or make the passage in the whaleboat first?"

"The boat," answered Ken at once. "That passage is said to be one of the most dangerous in the Pacific. According to Belnap, Poynings is the only man who knows it. He always comes off in a boat to take the supply ship in. I'm not risking the ketch till I've been through."

"Right," agreed Hudson.

"I'll leave you in charge of the ship, old man. It looks like fair weather, but if a blow should come on, you'll have to run and come back for us when you can. I'll bring Poynings back in the boat to pilot the ketch in, if all's well."

The whaleboat was lowered. Kaio-lalulalonga and Lompo took the oars, and Ken sat in the stern.

The two Kanakas pulled for the reef passage.

It was, as Ken had said, a dangerous passage, as was easily to be seen when the whaleboat pulled in through the jagged teeth of the coral.

It was narrow and tortuous, and sharp rocks cropped up on either hand, like the teeth of a beast of prey lying in wait.

Ken steered the boat through, his eyes well about him. It was only prudent to explore the coral passage before taking his ship in; and Poynings' conduct hitherto had been so unaccountable that Ken was not certain that he would return in the boat to pilot in the ketch.

"My word, this feller passage he no good, sar!" Koko remarked. "He plenty bad along feller ship, sar. S'pose we comey in along night, sar, feller ketch he walk about along bottom sea."

"Likely enough, old coffee-bean," agreed Ken.

The whaleboat pulled on into the lagoon. Ken's eyes were fixed on the bungalow, as soon as he was through the narrow passage.

The white man of Aao was on the veranda, leaning on the front rail, and watching the whaleboat as he had watched the Dawn the previous evening.

In front of the bungalow the beach shelved down to the lagoon, and from the house a path of coral led down to the beach, where there was a tiny quay built of coral blocks.

The whaleboat pulled on towards the little quay.

Suddenly, from a window of the building came a puff of white smoke. The crack of a rifle followed.

King of the Islands jumped as a bullet glanced on the gunwale of the whaleboat, tore off a splinter, and ricocheted across the shining waters of the lagoon. The report of the rifle echoed far and wide in the silence of the atoll.

Ken leaped to his feet.

"My sainted Sam! What——" he stuttered.

Kaio-lalulalonga stared round at the bungalow. Lompo almost dropped his oar in amazement.

King of the Islands jerked the revolver from his hip. The white man of Aao was still at the veranda rail. It was someone else, within the building, who had fired. Unless Aao was tenanted by lunatics, it was unimaginable why the boat had been fired on. But King of the Islands was taking no more such chances.

Standing up in the boat, he swept up his revolver, aiming at the white man of Aao.

"Give way!" he snapped. "You feller boy, you washy-washy debblish quick, too much quick altogether."

"Yes, sar!" gasped the amazed Kanakas. They bent to the oars, and the boat fairly flew towards the coral quay.

Ken shouted to the white man. The bungalow was a good distance from the beach, but the boy trader's powerful voice easily carried.

"Ahoy, there, Poynings! Are you mad? Are your niggers mad? Another shot and I pull trigger!"

The man stirred. He waved his hand in what seemed a reassuring manner to the boy trader, and went to the open door at the back of the veranda as if to see who had fired that astonishing and unexpected shot. Then he came down the steps, and advanced down the coral path to meet the newcomers, as the boat thudded on the quay and King of the Islands jumped ashore.

Ordered Off.

KING OF THE ISLANDS stood on the coral quay. He had replaced the revolver in his belt now; but his hand was very near it,

and his eyes were suspicious and watchful. The bullet from the bungalow had struck the boat, and had been intended for its occupants. Such a reception from the white man at Aao was astonishing enough; for though it was not Poynings who had fired, it was evidently one of his house-boys, and it seemed incredible that the black boy could have loosed off the rifle without instructions.

Ken was utterly at a loss what to make of it. But it was borne in upon his mind that there was something wrong on the atoll, and he was very much on his guard now. It might be that the lonely man's brain was crazed by solitude—though, looking at his scarred face, Ken thought he had seldom seen a harder, cooler, more determined fellow. But unless he was crazed, or one of his house-boys was crazed, the whole thing was inexplicable.

Ken waited on the quay for the man who was now hurrying down from the house to join him; meanwhile he kept the tail of his eye, as it were, on the bungalow; but there were no more shots.

The white man had a revolver in his belt; but he did not touch it. His manner, as he hurried down to the quay, expressed a sort of rough friendliness.

"Nobody hurt, I hope?" he exclaimed, as he came up.

"No—only a splinter from the boat," said Ken curtly. "You're Poynings, I suppose?"

"Yes. I'm sorry that fool of a nigger loosed off the gun," replied the man, holding out his hand. "I'll give him the sting-ray tail for his carelessness. The swab was cleaning my rifle, and didn't know it was loaded—you know the ways of the niggers."

"Oh!" said Ken, taken aback.

The man of Aao laughed.

"Did you think someone was pot-shooting at you?"

"I certainly did," answered Ken, rather dryly. "The bullet came unpleasantly close for a chance shot."

"Proof that it was an accident, if you knew that boy Lua," said the white man of Aao, laughing again. "He couldn't hit the side of the house if he tried. I'll take the skin off his back for it, and you shall see me do it."

"If it was an accident, let it drop," answered Ken, eyeing Poynings doubtfully.

The explanation seemed plausible. Ken knew, as every white man in the South Seas knew, the utter carelessness of Kanakas with firearms and explosives. A black boy was as likely as not to start cleaning a rifle without looking to see whether it was loaded.

In the absence of any conceivable motive on Poynings' part for attempting his life, Ken felt bound to accept the explanation.

But he did not feel wholly satisfied. Some sixth sense told him that there was something wrong, something strange, on this atoll of Aao.

And he noticed, too, that Kaio-lalulalonga's dark eyes were fixed on the white man of Aao with a

strangely intent expression. The Kanaka said nothing, and his brown face expressed little, but Ken knew that he was watching Poynings with deep distrust.

"I'm sorry," repeated the white man of Aao. "Luckily, there was no harm done. I'll make that careless swab squirm for it, I promise you. You've left your ketch outside the reef?"

"Ay, ay; I want a pilot in," said Ken.

"You won't get one here, shipmate. I don't want to be inhospitable, but I reckon you've heard of me and my island, and you know I don't welcome strangers here." The pearler spoke with a rough bluntness. "No offence, but that's that. I bought this island in Sydney, and paid for it in hard cash, and right's right! If you're after wood or water, I've none to spare. And I'm not open to trade. I'm speaking plainly—it saves time."

Ken stared at the man almost blankly.

He looked cool and collected enough, hard, set, and determined. But it seemed to have passed from his mind, without leaving a trace behind, that a supply ship came regularly from Lalinge to land a consignment on Aao for him.

"No offence!" repeated the pearler.

"I reckon you've not come here to hunt for trouble, Captain—" He paused.

"King!" said the boy trader.

The man of Aao started a little.

"Not King of the Islands?" he exclaimed.

Ken smiled faintly. The name of King of the Islands, which had been given to the boy trader of the Pacific, was known from the Marquesas to Honolulu and the Solomons. Evidently the lonely pearler knew it.

"Ay, ay," answered Ken.

The man glanced out across the reef.

"Then that's the Dawn?" he said.

"That's it."

"I've heard of you, King of the Islands," said the pearler. "You and your ship, too. I've no quarrel with you. But I'm a plain man, and I tell you plainly I don't want you or your ship at my island."

"You've forgotten something, I think," said Ken coldly.

"Give it a name."

"How about supplies?"

"Supplies? Oh, I can manage. I've nothing to trade off for supplies," answered the pearler.

"Not pearls?" asked Ken, with a touch of sarcasm, remembering the strong scent that the evening breeze had wafted from the atoll.

The owner of Aao started, and a gleam came into his eyes that gave his tanned face a very unpleasant, threatening look. But the next moment it vanished as he laughed.

"Oh, you've heard the yarn they tell on the beaches," he said. "You reckon I'm pearling here. I'd make you a present of all the pearls I've ever found on Aao."

"No luck—with all the shell you've rotted out?" said King of the Islands, his eyes on the tanned, scarred face.

The pearler started again.

"Oh!" He grasped it at once. "You've smelt the shell! Of course! I've rotted out a few oysters—more to pass the time than anything else—but, as you say, no luck. When I bought this island I was told that there was a good pearl-bed here, but I reckon they were pulling my leg in Sydney. Look here, Captain King, that's a dangerous reef for your ketch to lie off if there should be a change in the weather—and a change comes suddenly hereabouts. One minute the sea's like a pond—the next, boiling like a cauldron."

Ken watched him, nonplussed. The anxiety of the lonely pearler to get rid of a chance visitor he could understand, though it did not tally with his story that he had had no

(Continued on the next page.)

CAPTAIN CAMPBELL'S ACHIEVEMENTS!

EVERY fellow will sympathise with Captain Campbell, who arrived in England from Cape Town a short time ago, on account of the bad luck by which this great racing motorist was dogged in his gallant attempt to make a new world's land-speed record on Verneuk Pan, South Africa.

He made his speed bid too late. By the time conditions were ready for the run, Segrave in the Golden Arrow had already raised the record to 231 miles an hour, and the best that Campbell could get out of his Blue Bird was 218 miles an hour.

If only Captain Campbell

could have got his African speedway ready for the attempt before Segrave made his record at Daytona Beach, he would have had the honour of breaking Day Keech's 207 miles an hour record and setting up a new one 11 miles an hour faster.

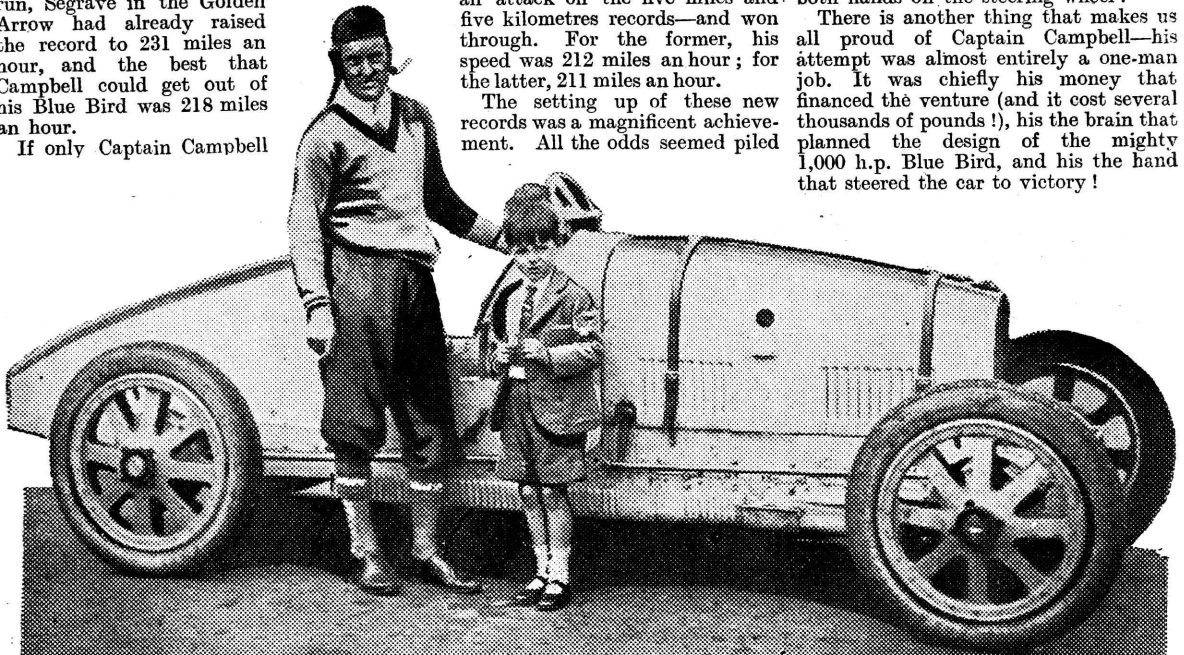
Still, Campbell was by no means entirely unsuccessful. His gallant attempt on the flying mile having failed, he made an attack on the five miles and five kilometres records—and won through. For the former, his speed was 212 miles an hour; for the latter, 211 miles an hour.

The setting up of these new records was a magnificent achievement. All the odds seemed piled

up against him—the track could not be got into proper condition owing to lack of funds, the perfect weather conditions that were needed obstinately held off, and during the actual speed-burst the gears were so hard to operate that Captain Campbell had to use both hands to shift the lever!

That meant that the car was hurtling along at full speed while the driver had both hands off the steering wheel!

There is another thing that makes us all proud of Captain Campbell—his attempt was almost entirely a one-man job. It was chiefly his money that financed the venture (and it cost several thousands of pounds!), his the brain that planned the design of the mighty 1,000 h.p. Blue Bird, and his the hand that steered the car to victory!



Captain Malcolm Campbell and his son Donald, with his Bugatti racer. Like the better-known Blue Bird it has figured in many sensational speed events. Donald has a Bugatti of his own—an exact miniature copy of the original. Lucky young fellow!

The White Man of Aao!

luck with the oysters. But it was inexplicable that the man had forgotten that his supplies were due from the Pacific Company's agent at Lalinge.

"Well, I'll say good-bye, Captain King! I reckon you'll be getting back to your ship. Sorry I can't ask you into the house, but I'm not fixed for visitors. And I make no bones about telling you, or any man, that I prefer to keep my island to myself."

"You can have your island to yourself just as soon as I've landed my consignment," answered Ken curtly. "I didn't come here for hospitality, but on business."

"Your consignment?" repeated the pearler.

"Look here, what do you mean, Mr. Poynings?" broke out Ken abruptly. "I'm here to bring your regular supplies from Lalinge. Belnap always sends them along in some trading craft—as you can't have forgotten—and this time he's sent them on the Dawn. I reckoned you'd guess that that was it when you saw my ketch outside the reef last night."

If the man of Aao's apparent forgetfulness had surprised Ken before, the expression on his tanned face surprised him more now. Anyone looking at him would have said that the consignment of supplies from Lalinge came as news to him.

He was staring quite blankly at King of the Islands.

"Mean to say you weren't expecting a ship?" demanded Ken. "So far as Belnap knows, at any rate, there's no change in the arrangements. I've got your stuff on board."

"I—I see!" stammered the man of Aao.

He had recovered himself now.

"I reckon a man loses count of days in a place like this, Captain King," he said apologetically. "You know what it's like in the tropics—one day's exactly like another. You might live a week on this island and fancy a year had passed—or you might live on it a year and fancy it was only a week. I—I'd clean forgotten! That is, I wasn't aware that the time had come round. Thinking of other matters, I reckon."

"Well, now you know what we're here for," said King of the Islands, "are you coming in my boat to bring the ketch into the lagoon?"

"I reckon that ain't necessary. You can land the stuff in the whale-boat. How many trips'd it make?"

"Two or three," answered Ken coldly. "But I'm not making one. Mr. Poynings. I'm landing that stuff from my ketch on the quay here, and I'm bringing the ketch into the lagoon to land it."

"Come down to brass tacks, Captain King," said the pearler roughly. "Supplies or no supplies, I don't want any ship in this lagoon, and I'm not going to pilot her in."

"Suit yourself. I can bring her through the passage without your assistance," answered Ken.

"It's a dangerous passage," growled the other.

"I know that; but I reckon I've got the bearings of it now. If you refuse to come out, I'll be getting back."

The pearler glowered at him. It was evident that his temper was rising and that he had to make an effort to keep it in check. His anger puzzled the boy trader, but it had no other effect on him. Black looks were not likely to disturb the equanimity of King of the Islands.

"Look here," said the pearler at last, "you're taking a lot on yourself, Captain King, on another man's island. I've more'n half a mind to refuse to take the consignment off your hands at all."

Ken laughed.

"Suit yourself about that, too," he said. "I'm going to land the stuff here on the quay, because I'm scheduled to land it here. You can leave it there if you like, Mr. Poynings. But I'm not taking it away on the Dawn. I'm not drumming round the islands with a consignment for Aao cluttering up my trade room. The stuff will be landed here to-day, and it will be landed from the ketch, not by making two or three long and unnecessary trips in a boat."

The owner of Aao scowled.

"Have it your own way!" he snapped. "Land your cargo and clear—that's all I want!"

And with that he turned, and

(Continued on page 26.)

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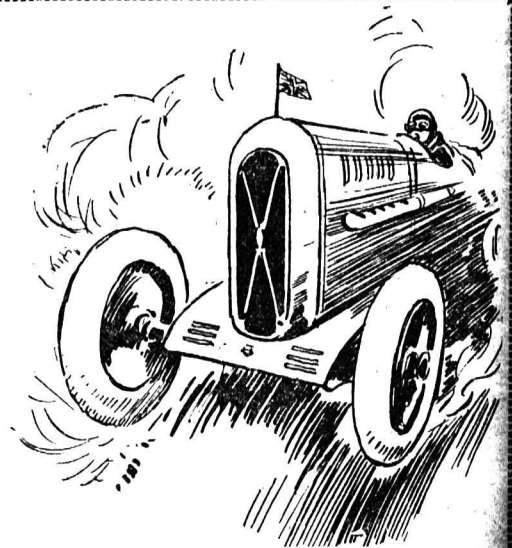
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The White Man of Aao!

(Continued from page 24.)

tramped up the coral path to the bungalow.

Treachery.

"LOOK out, sar, eye belong you!" murmured Kaio-lalulalonga. The whaleboat was pulling back to the reef passage.

The owner of Aao was on the veranda of the bungalow again, watching the boat pull away, with a sullen scowl on his scarred face.

To a man who had been six months on a solitary atoll, it might have been expected that the arrival of supplies would be very welcome. But it was strangely clear that the man of Aao would willingly have dispensed with the supplies, for the sake of seeing the Dawn make immediate sail and vanish over the sea-line.

That, however, was no business of Ken King. Poynings had made his arrangements with the agent of the Pacific Company at Lalinge; and Ken was paid to bring the consignment to Aao and land it there. That he intended to do, whether Poynings had changed his mind or not.

King of the Islands glanced at Koko, as the latter muttered his warning, with a smile.

"What name me look out, eye belong me, old coffee-bean?" he asked.

Koko made a gesture towards the house over the beach.

"Feller Poynings he plenty bad feller," he said.

"He looks a hard nut to crack," agreed the boy trader.

"You look out, eye belong you, sar," said Koko. "Feller Poynings he plenty glad s'pose you kill-dead along this boat."

"You don't believe that that shot from the bungalow was an accident, Koko?"

Kaio-lalulalonga snorted contemptuously.

"That feller he tell plenty big lie, mouth belong him, sar," he answered. "That feller bullet he comey along this boat along kill-dead this feller, sar."

"But why?" said Ken. At the bottom of his heart he believed that the Kanaka was right, though, if so, the murderous attempt was a mystery to him. "What name that feller he wantee kill-dead this feller, Koko?"

Koko shook his dark head.

"No savvy, sar! All samee, me plenty sure he wantee kill-dead this feller, sar. He no wantee white feller along island belong him. S'pose you no look out, eye belong you, sar, p'laps 'nother feller bullet he comey along this boat."

Ken glanced back at the receding bungalow.

It was not a pleasant thought that a treacherous shot might suddenly ring out and crash into the open boat.

His face set grimly.

Not only the smell of the rotting pearl-oysters, but the evasive manner of the man of Aao, convinced King of the Islands that pearls had been found on the atoll. If the pearler had made a rich find, it was very

likely that he was unquiet and uneasy, and that the arrival of white men filled him with fears. That was no excuse for an attempt at assassination; but it was a reason.

Not knowing that the Dawn was the supply ship from Lalinge, the white man of Aao must have regarded Ken as a skipper who pushed in deliberately where it was made clear that he was not wanted. To enter into open conflict with the ketch and her crew would have been too dangerous for a single man—and it looked as if he had tried to serve his turn by treachery.

But why had he not guessed that the Dawn was the supply ship? Why had the news of the consignment from Lalinge startled and surprised him? And how was it that the man of Aao differed so strangely from Belnap's description of him? Belnap, the agent of the Pacific Company, had stated that he was a civil-mannered, rather good-looking man, and had said nothing of a scar on his face. The white man of Aao was neither civil-mannered nor good-looking, and the scar on his cheek was so prominent that it could hardly have been forgotten by anyone who had ever seen him.

Ken was puzzled, and more and more it was borne in upon his mind that there was something strangely wrong on the atoll of Aao. The man might be crazed. But he did not look crazed. There was something wrong—something that the boy trader could not as yet understand.

But Koko's suspicion that another "accidental" shot might come from the bungalow was, at all events, unfounded. That might only mean that the man of Aao was wary. A second attempt could scarcely be explained as accidental; and even if he got King of the Islands, the mate and crew of the Dawn would remain for him to deal with.

The whaleboat pulled back to the waiting ketch.

"You haven't brought Poynings?" said Kit Hudson, as the boy trader stepped on board.

Ken told his shipmate of the interview with the man of Aao while the ketch ran down to the opening of the reef passage. There the whaleboat was manned, the tow-rope run, and the Kanakas towed the little craft through the reef. Between high, jagged rocks, by shallows where sharp teeth of coral showed like fangs through the water, the ketch crawled on her way, Hudson at the wheel, King of the Islands standing in the bows and calling directions to him.

In the narrowest neck of the channel, Ken could have touched the rocks on either side from the rail, as the Dawn slid through. It was such a passage as few skippers would have cared to attempt without a pilot. Ken King's sunburnt face was set and serious as he made it.

Suddenly, from Kaio-lalulalonga in the boat, pulling with the Kanaka crew, came a shout.

"Little white master! You look out, eye belong you, sar! Black feller, he stop along reef."

"What?" exclaimed Ken.

All his attention was needed for his task; but he glanced round sharply as Koko shouted.

In a hollow of the rock, not six feet off the starboard rail of the Dawn, a black man in a loin-cloth crouched.

The bows of the Dawn had passed him as he lay there, and Ken had not seen him, his eyes intent on the passage; but the hawk-eyes of Kaio-lalulalonga had picked him out.

As Ken turned his head to look, a naked black arm was raised, and there was a shimmer of bright steel in the sun.

The black was in the very act of throwing a knife—a more deadly weapon in the hands of a South-Sea Islander than any firearm.

It was not at King of the Islands that the missile was aimed. It was upon Kit Hudson, standing at the wheel, that the eyes of the black were fixed, and it was at the Australian that he was aiming the knife he was about to hurl.

But for Kaio-lalulalonga's warning, the knife would have whizzed with deadly aim, and the mate of the Dawn, whether killed or only wounded, would have fallen, loosing the wheel, and the chances were a thousand to one that the crash of the ketch on the sharp coral would have followed.

Ken had but an instant in which to act. The destruction of his shipmate, the destruction of his ship, hung by a hair. But the boy trader was used to swift action.

Even as he swung round from the bow, even as Koko's warning shout still echoed on the reef, Ken flashed the revolver from his belt and fired.

He was barely in time.

There was a wild yell from the black man as he staggered under the shot. The whizzing knife flew, but the pistol-ball was in the brawny black shoulder as the weapon was hurled, and it fell short and dropped under the rail of the ketch.

Yelling wildly, the wounded islander scrambled away over the reef.

Crack, crack!

Ken, his eyes blazing over the revolver, fired twice as the knife-thrower fled. There was another howl from the black, and he staggered. But he recovered himself again, plunged into the lagoon, and swam.

"My hat!" Kit Hudson, his hands steady as rock on the wheel, spoke with perfect coolness. "Good shot, old bean—good shot!"

Ken breathed hard and deep.

His glance sought the hollows and recesses of the reef; but there was no other ambush. A few minutes more, and the ketch glided through the last winding of the passage into the lagoon. In the distance, on the shining water, a black head was seen—that of the black boy, swimming desperately. King of the Islands was tempted to send another bullet after him, but he refrained.

He joined Hudson aft, as the Kanakas towed on towards the coral quay.

"Is our friend Poynings going to explain that knife-throwing as an

accident, like the shot from the bungalow?" Kit asked.

Ken set his lips.

"The scoundrel!" he said. "He will have some lie ready; but that was an attempt to wreck the ketch in the reef passage, Kit."

"No doubt about that."

"The scoundrel!" repeated Ken between his teeth. "Kit, what's going on on this island to make that villain so desperately anxious to get rid of us—even at the cost of murder?"

"Ask me another!" said the Cornstalk. "Something—and not only pearls. Now he knows who we are, he knows his pearls are safe, if he's got a sea-chest full. There are plenty of South Sea skippers who would rush his bungalow and lift his pearls; but he must know that King of the Islands is not one of them. He has nothing to be afraid of, if he's square."

"There's something—something I can't get hold of," said King of the Islands. "What is it, Kit, that he is afraid that we may find out—for that's what it amounts to."

"Goodness knows."

Ken's face hardened. Looking across the shining lagoon, as the ketch floated on towards the quay, he saw the swimming black boy drag himself on to the beach, run across it, and disappear into the pandanus woods at a distance from the bungalow. He had not returned to the house, and no doubt Poynings would be prepared to assert that he knew nothing of the knife-throwing—perhaps to tell some plausible tale that the black had been touched by sunstroke, and had "run amuck." But now Ken knew exactly how much to believe of what the white man of Aao might tell him.

He signalled to the Kanakas to cease pulling.

"There's deep water right up to the quay," said Hudson.

"Ay, ay; but I think we'll anchor well out from the beach, all the same," said Ken. "I've no fancy for knife-throwing at close quarters—not to mention accidental shots from a nigger cleaning a loaded rifle."

"That scoundrel has attempted both our lives, whatever lies he may choose to tell about it—and before we up hook, I'm going to know the

reason why. We anchor here—to stay!"

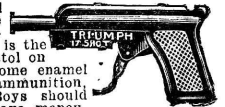
"Good!"

The cable rattled out, the anchor dropping into sixty feet of water. Not until Ken knew the truth, whatever the truth might be, was the Dawn's anchor to be lifted from the coral bottom of the lagoon. The mystery of Aao was a mystery of crime; of that Ken was fully assured. But in his darkest surmises he did not—as yet—dream of the strange and terrible secret of the white man of Aao!

(Ken sets to work to get to the bottom of this mystery in next Monday's yarn, and his discoveries, told as only Charles Hamilton can tell them, make grippingly interesting reading!)

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