

"TREASURE HUNT" COMPETITION WINNERS!

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THE ENGINE'S WASH AND BRUSH-UP! See Inside.

The Mystery of the PEARL ISLAND!

By
CHARLES HAMILTON.

"I'm going to comb this island inside out," says young Ken King, boy trader of the South Seas, to the strange white man bossing a lonely coral atoll. "If you're a straight man, you've nothing to fear. If you're not, look out for squalls!" . . . And the squalls are not long in coming! Brisk and breathless South Seas adventure, long and complete.

"What's Your Game?"

FELLER POYNINGS he comey along ship, sar!"
Kaio-lalulalonga, otherwise Koko, the Kanaka bo'sun of Ken King's trading ketch, the Dawn, made that announcement, a huge grin on his brown features.

King of the Islands, as Ken was known, smiled as he turned to look. Kit Hudson, the young Australian mate of the Dawn, followed his glance, and smiled also.

There was no smile, however, on the tanned face of the white man of Aao, as he came down the path from the bungalow and strode along the coral quay. His brows were knitted, and his eyes gleamed under them. There was bitter anger in every line of his face, and it seemed to Ken King that he could read apprehension as well.

The ketch lay at anchor at a good distance from the coral quay of Aao. There was deep water right up to the quay—more than depth enough for the ketch to moor alongside—but King of the Islands had good reason for anchoring out in the lagoon.

The white man of Aao halted on the coral quay and stood staring out at the ketch. Two blacks who had followed him down from the house waited for his orders. He made a gesture at last, and they lifted a canoe from the coral and slid it into the lagoon. The white man took his seat in it, and the blacks paddled out towards the anchored ketch.

It was late in the afternoon and heat lay on the atoll and lagoon



King of the Islands made a desperate leap for life, but he ground beneath him caved in as he leaped!

like the breath of a furnace. Since the ketch had towed in at the reef passage that morning, she had lain idly on the shining water, scarcely moving at her cable. Not a man had gone ashore—no cargo had been broken out. King of the Islands and his mate were idle, under the awning aft. The five Hiva-Oa boys who formed the crew lounged and lolled forward, and chewed betel-nut, or chattered in their own Polynesian dialect.

Koko, the boatswain, twanged his ukulele and hummed Hawaiian songs. To the puzzled eyes of the white man of Aao, watching savagely from his veranda, that scene of idleness was perplexing, disturbing. But no word went to him from the ketch. Now he had come, at last, to see King of the Islands and demand an explanation.

The smile lurked on Ken's sunburnt face as he watched the man in the

canoe, paddled swiftly out by the two black boys. He knew that the man was puzzled, alarmed, and enraged. For his puzzlement and his rage the boy trader cared nothing. But why was he alarmed? That was a mystery that Ken intended to solve before he lifted his anchor from the coral bottom of the Aao lagoon.

"My hat! He looks wrathful!" murmured Hudson. "I suppose he wonders what our game is, Ken."

King of the Islands nodded. "No doubt—just as we wonder what his game is! He looks as if he would be glad to use that Colt he has stuck in his belt."

"I fancy he won't venture on that," said the Australian. "I'll keep a gun handy, all the same."

"Feller Poynings he plenty mad along us feller, sar," said Kaio-lalulalonga. "He altogether too much mad along us."

And the brown boatswain grinned

The Mystery of the Pearl Island!

Koko's opinion of the white man of Aao was that he was a "bad white feller"; and the shipmates of the Dawn fully agreed.

Ken's glance turned from the sullen face of the white man to the black boys who paddled. According to what Mr. Belnap, the Pacific Company's agent at Lalinge, had told him when he had chartered the Dawn to carry supplies to this lonely atoll, Poynings had two house-boys on the island, both of them Nuka-hiva boys. But the natives in the canoe were obviously not from Nuka-hiva, which was an island of golden-skinned Polyne- sians, the same race as Ken's own crew from Hiva-Oa. These paddlers were blacks, of Melanesian race. And from the bungalow up the beach more than one black face was staring towards the ketch—and not one brown Nuka-hiva face.

"Koko, old coffee-bean," said Ken. "You savvy black feller along canoe? What island that black feller belong?"

"Black feller belong Santa Cruz, sar," answered Kaio-lalulalonga at once. Koko could have named the native island of any man in the hundred native races of the Pacific.

"So I reckoned," said Ken. "Some- thing's happened on this atoll since the last supply ship came here from Lalinge six months ago, Kit. I don't know what—but something that will bear looking into. Poynings had two Nuka-hiva boys—he seems to have lost them, and has five or six Santa Cruz blacks in their place. How did they get here—to an atoll two hundred miles from anywhere?"

"Might have got them from some passing ship, to help him with his pearling," hazarded Hudson.

"He doesn't welcome passing ships here. He refused to pilot us into the lagoon, though we've brought his regular half-yearly supplies from Lalinge. Not one skipper in a dozen would have risked that reef passage without a pilot—and a bigger ship than the Dawn couldn't have made it with one. I reckon he never bargained with a skipper for boys, keep- ing him standing off the island on a lee-shore."

"They didn't drop down from the sky," said Hudson, with a grin.

"No. There's something in it I don't get—but I'm going to get it, before we lift the hook."

"Feller Poynings he make plenty trouble, sar, s'pose we stop along lagoon," said Kaio-lalulalonga.

Ken shrugged his shoulders.

"Let him!" he answered. The canoe glided alongside. The white man of Aao stood up in it, while the two natives held on, but he showed no desire to step aboard. Ken wondered whether he feared to trust himself on the deck of the Dawn.

Standing in the canoe, with the shipmates facing him over the teak rail of the ketch, the sullen-faced man of Aao addressed them.

"What's this game, Captain King?" His scarred face was scowling and black. "You've dropped your hook

here—after I told you to keep out of my lagoon. What's your game?"

"I've told you, Mr. Poynings, that I've brought your regular supplies from Lalinge, shipped to you on my ketch by the Pacific Company," answered Ken.

"Supplies or no supplies, I don't want you here. And if that's all, why don't you land the supplies and clear? You've had ample time since you pulled in through the reef."

"Quite!" agreed Ken.

"Get the stuff ashore and get your hook up, then. You can get to sea before sundown."

"I'm not sailing to-day."

The scarred man gritted his teeth.

"You're hanging on here till to- morrow?"

"Ay, ay!"

"You sail at dawn?"

"Perhaps!" answered Ken coolly.

"What's your game, then?" snarled the pearler. "You came here with supplies. Land them, and finish your business. You're wasting your time here. You're a trader, and time's money to a trader. What are you wasting time here for, hang you?"

Ken looked at him steadily.

"I'll tell you, Mr. Poynings," he answered. "When I came ashore, I was fired on—"

"An accident—a clumsy black boy cleaning a rifle—" muttered the pearler. "You know these clumsy swabs—"

"Ay, ay! I took your word for that," went on King of the Islands.

"But when we towed into the lagoon, a black boy was watching on the reef, and he nearly got my mate with a thrown knife. Is that another of the accidents that happen on Aao, Mr. Poynings?"

"A crazed nigger," said the pearler. "That boy Tuto got a stroke of the sun—he's been crazed since, running wild about the island, and I have to carry a gun for my own protection when I leave my house. I'd have warned you to look out for him, if I'd supposed—"

"A crazed black boy running amuck on the island, and you want to get rid of us, all the same," said Ken contemptuously. "You don't want us to stay and help you run him down and secure him?"

"I don't want help from you, Cap- tain King. I can run my own island in my own way."

"That black boy on the reef was no more crazed than you are, Mr. Poynings. I know a crazed nigger when I see one. My mate was steer- ing when the knife was thrown, and it was an attempt to wreck my ship on the reefs—by your orders!"

"I tell you—"

"You need not tell me that that black boy would have dared to act without orders from his master," in- terrupted King of the Islands. "You're not dealing with a fool, Mr. Poynings."

Blacker and more savage grew the tanned face of the man of Aao. The long scar across his cheek stood out livid.

"Come down to brass tacks," he cried savagely. "You're here where you're not wanted. This is my island, and I order you off."

"The island may be yours—I've heard that you bought it in Sydney," answered Ken. "But the lagoon's free to every ship in the Pacific. I'm here to stay as long as I choose."

"What's your game, then?" asked the pearler, his voice coming like a hiss. "Do you reckon that I've found pearls, and are you after them?"

Ken's lip curled.

"Your pearls are safe enough from me, Mr. Poynings. You know that without my telling you."

"Then what do you want?" hissed the man of Aao.

"I'll tell you. Something's going on, on this island, that I'm going to look into before I sail," answered Ken deliberately. "Although the sup- plies come regularly every six months on a ship from Lalinge, you were not expecting a supply ship—and that's queer enough to begin with. As soon as you saw my ship making the island, you made up your mind that I came as an enemy, and one of your blacks fired on me when I came ashore in my whaleboat.

"You refused to pilot my ship in— though you've piloted the supply ship in regularly twice a year, all the years that you've been on Aao. You posted a man on the reef to throw a knife at my steersman, to wreck the ketch if you could. You've got some- thing to hide on this island, Mr. Poynings—something that you want to hide so badly that you're willing to destroy a ship with all hands to do it. It's not your pearls—you know my name and my reputation, and you know I wouldn't touch your pearls if you had a sea-chest full of them. What is it?"

The man in the canoe made no answer. His dark face worked with rage as he stared at the boy trader, who stood looking down at him over the handrail of the Dawn.

"I don't know what it is, but I'm going to know," said King of the Islands quietly. "Your conscience isn't so uneasy about nothing, Mr. Poynings. You've started the trouble—you've got yourself to thank. What have you done with the Nuka-hiva boys who were here?"

The man of Aao started a little.

"A shark got them, diving for pearls," he muttered. "The lagoon's alive with sharks."

"Maybe," said Ken, "and maybe not. I'm going to know before I sail from Aao."

"What does it matter to you what's happened to another man's niggers?" snarled the man of Aao. "You're making excuses for hanging on here and spying into my pearling."

"I don't need to make excuses," answered King of the Islands coolly. "I'm staying at Aao as long as I choose—and that will be until I know what's going on on this island, and what crime you are trying to hide."

The hand of the pearler went towards the butt of the revolver in his belt.

"Better not," said Ken disdain- fully. "You've tried murder twice, Mr. Poynings, and failed. Draw the gun from your belt and you'll be shot like a dog!"

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The Mystery of the Pearl Island!

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A revolver was glistening in the sun-blaze, in the hand of Kit Hudson. The Australian's eye was watchfully on the pearler.

The man of Aao clenched his hands.

"You're staying on my island?" he snarled. "Then look out for trouble, Captain King! You're dealing with a man who will not stick at trifles. Keep anchored here at your own peril!"

"That I'm ready to do," replied Ken.

The man of Aao stood staring at him, sullenly, vindictively, for a few moments. Then he flung himself into his seat and gestured to the Santa Cruz boys to paddle back to the quay.

The Peril of the Night!

AFTER the heat of the tropical day had passed, the consignment for Aao was broken out on board the ketch and landed from the whaleboat. Cases and sacks were piled on the coral quay, to be carried away by Poynings' house-boys. All the time that the landing was taking place, the white man of Aao was to be seen leaning on the railing of the bungalow veranda, watching, with a gloomy brow.

A rifle stood near him; and several times he was discerned to make a movement, as if the temptation was strong upon him to grasp the weapon and open fire on the boat's crew or the ketch itself. But if that thought came into his mind, he dismissed it again.

There were watchful eyes on the ketch. Kit Hudson kept his loaded Winchester at hand, ready to pour a stream of bullets in reply if the pearler opened hostilities. The flimsy pandanus walls of the bungalow would have afforded him little shelter. If shooting had started, the odds and the chances were against the pearler. Ken had no doubt that it was only for that reason that he held his hand, but that he was meditating hostilities the boy trader was assured.

Something had happened on the lonely atoll, during the long lapse of time between the calling of the supply ships from Lalinge. It was Ken's first call at Aao—and he had never seen the atoll or the white man on it before. But he knew that the Pacific Company's agent had a regular contract for the supply of Poynings' needs, and on all previous occasions the skipper who brought supplies had been piloted into the lagoon and treated with civility. It was since the last call that something had occurred to cause this change in the lonely pearler.

At the back of Ken's mind was a vague, half-formed suspicion, which, vague as it was, had determined him more than anything else to remain at the island until he had cleared up the strange mystery. Poynings had been described to him as a good-looking and civil-mannered man—a description that scarcely tallied with the white man of Aao. Mr. Belnap had

not mentioned that he was scarred—yet the long, livid scar on the man's cheek could scarcely have been forgotten by anyone who knew him.

Poynings was accustomed to the regular calls of the supply ships; yet the man on Aao had seemed taken by surprise by the arrival of supplies from Lalinge. And the suspicion that had risen in Ken's mind—was this man Poynings at all?

If he was Poynings, the change in him was unaccountable—all the circumstances were unaccountable. But if he was not Poynings, where was the lone pearler who had lived so many years on the atoll, and what had happened to him?

It seemed a wild suspicion; yet it lingered in the mind of King of the Islands. At all events, he meant to know.

While the Kanakas were unloading the supplies at the quay, Ken told Kit Hudson what was in his mind.

"My hat!" exclaimed Hudson. "I suppose it's possible, Ken—but it sounds rather thick, old man!"

"I know! But everything points to it," said the boy trader quietly. "I don't expect to recognise a fellow by a description given me by a man who hasn't seen him for years. But this swab doesn't tally in the least with what Belnap told me of Poynings. And he never knew that a supply ship was coming. If he's not Poynings, he wouldn't know Poynings' arrangements. If he's Poynings, could he have forgotten?"

Hudson whistled.

"You reckon that some freebooter heard of this island, butted in with a crew of Santa Cruz blacks, and mopped up Poynings and his Nukahiva boys?" questioned Kit.

"I reckon it looks like it—enough like it to make it our duty to clear up what has happened on this atoll," said Ken.

"I'm with you all the way there," said the Cornstalk. "Whatever the truth is, we'll root it out before we up hook."

The supplies had been landed now, and the whaleboat pulled back to the Dawn. Under the red sunset, several of the black boys came down from the bungalow to carry the cases up to the house. Poynings—if the man was Poynings—watched from the veranda.

He was still there, his sullen eyes, under knitted brows, fixed on the ketch, when the sun dipped in the Pacific and darkness fell on Aao.

Careful watch was kept on the Dawn during the dark hours. If Ken's suspicion was well founded, it was easy to imagine the alarm into which the pearl-robber had been thrown by the boy trader's determination to remain at the island. Now that darkness had fallen, King of the Islands was quite prepared for some new and desperate attempt on the part of the white man of Aao.

At eight bells—midnight—Ken came on deck to relieve Hudson. The night was calm and still. No light gleamed from the bungalow up the beach; there was no sound save the lapping of the lagoon on the soft sand.

"All serene, old bean!" yawned Hudson. "No sign from our friend at the bungalow."

Ken looked to the shore. Dimly, under the stars, the bungalow could be discerned, backed by tall palms, and beyond the palms the blackness of the tropical woods that extended across the atoll almost to the outer reef.

Hudson went to his bunk. Kaiolalulalonga was below in his berth on the cabin lockers. Two of the Hiva-Oa crew were in the watch on deck; but they nodded drowsily, and Ken allowed them to nod. He was not likely to trust the safety of the ship in those strange circumstances to the watchfulness of a Kanaka. He paced the little deck under the stars, his own eyes keenly open, and kept watch and ward.

It was in the hour before dawn that a faint sound from the lagoon caught his intent ear. He picked up his rifle, stepped quietly to the rail, and stared out on the dim waters in the direction of the sound.

It did not come from the beach; but Ken fully expected, that if danger threatened it would come from the open lagoon. The white man of Aao would naturally calculate that he had more chance of taking the ketch by surprise on that side.

Ken's face set grimly. He knew that there was a canoe on the dark waters, moving softly, almost silently, with slow, cautious paddles.

It might be merely a fishing-canoe—it was common enough for the blacks to fish in the lagoons by night—but King of the Islands had a shrewd suspicion that in this case the fishers were fishers of men.

With his rifle resting on the teak rail, Ken watched and waited.

Dimly under the stars a dark shape came gliding into view; a low canoe, with two black paddlers kneeling, and sliding their blades into the calm water with barely a sound.

Another figure was in the canoe—dim, half-seen—but Ken did not need telling that it was the white man of Aao.

Ken lifted the rifle to his shoulder, taking careful aim at the canoe. It glided closer, and the white man half rose in his seat. Something was in his hand. So far as Ken could discern, it was not a weapon. It looked like a package—but it was probable that that package contained the most terrible of weapons—dynamite! Dynamite was in common use in all the Islands for fishing, and the white man of Aao was not likely to be without it.

Bang! The sudden roar of the rifle sounded like thunder in the stillness of the night.

There was a yell of alarm from the blacks, and they ceased paddling. But the canoe, still under way, glided slowly on.

A cry from the white man followed. Ken had not aimed at a human target. His shot had been a warning, and the bullet knocked up a spout of water between the canoe and its outrigger. The white

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man was on his feet now, staring with savage eyes at the shadowy ketch.

"Stop!" rapped out Ken. "Burn you!" snarled the voice of the white man of Aao. "What are you firing on my canoe for?"

"Keep your distance, or the next bullet will go closer!" answered Ken. "Drop that packet into the water!"

"What's biting you?" snarled the pearler. "Can't a man fish in his own lagoon by night?"

"Drop that packet, or I'll knock it out of your hand with a shot!" ordered Ken.

There was a howl of alarm from the paddlers as they heard the threat. Evidently they knew what was in the packet, and what would happen to all in the canoe if a bullet struck it.

Splash! The packet slid into the lagoon and disappeared. Ken heard a muttered threat from the pearler.

"What are you afraid of?" he jeered. "Have you never heard of dynamite fish before?"

"Yes, you swab!" answered Ken. "But you were not creeping alongside my ship to dynamite fish!"

"I never saw your lubberly ketch. I'm not a cat to see in the dark!" snarled the pearler. "I'm out after fish."

"Fish at a distance from my anchorage after this," said King of the Islands. "I've warned you! And if you come near my ship again, I shall fire on you! There's another warning—to let you know that you can depend on my shooting!"

Bang! The white man of Aao gave a yell and fell backwards in the canoe as the hat was torn from his head by a bullet that grazed his scalp. The canoe rocked wildly under his heavy fall.

"Now get clear!" said Ken contemptuously. "I give you one minute to get out of range—then I open on you!"

The paddles dashed frantically into the water, and the canoe shot away into the shadows. Less than a minute was enough for the white man of Aao and his black boys. They vanished into the night. Hudson was on deck by that time, in his pyjamas, a revolver in his hand. Kaio-lalulalonga was only a second behind him.

"What—" began the mate of the Dawn.

"All clear," said Ken. "Our friend Poynings was fishing—with dynamite—fishing for this ketch, I reckon. He's thought better of it and gone to fish somewhere else."

"My hat!" said Hudson, staring across the lagoon. The last stroke of a hurried paddle died away in the distance.

"Feller Poynings he plenty bad feller, sar," said Koko. "Plenty much better you send feller bullet along head belong him."

And Ken was rather inclined to think that the Kanaka was right.

But the rest of the night passed without alarm and the sun of a new day rose on Aao, much to the relief of the shipmates. That day, they hoped, was to see the clearing up of the strange mystery of the lonely atoll. They little dreamed what that day held in store for King of the Islands!

The Death-Trap!

THE whaleboat thudded on the coral quay, and King of the Islands stepped ashore. Kaio-lalulalonga followed him, and the boat pulled back to the ketch. Kit Hudson, on the deck of the Dawn, watched his shipmate move along the quay, with rather anxious eyes. King of the Islands was well armed and on his guard, and the faithful Koko was with him; it seemed unlikely that he could be in danger on the atoll. But Hudson was uneasy as he glanced at the scowling face of the pearler watching from the veranda of the bungalow.

But it was impossible for the shipmates to go ashore together. One had to remain to watch over the safety of the ketch. If both had landed, and gone into the woods, it was only too likely that some attempt would have been made on the ketch in their absence; and the loss of the ketch would have meant marooning on the lonely atoll.

King of the Islands had no doubts of his safety ashore. He was at least a match for the white man of Aao, if the pearler gave trouble; and the Santa Cruz boys were not to be feared. Indeed, the boy trader had little doubt that it was only because a conflict was hopeless that the white man of Aao had not already made open attack.

Followed by Koko, King of the Islands went up the beach. The pearler came down from the bungalow with a scowling brow to meet him.

"You've landed, then?" he asked, as he stopped and fixed his threatening eyes on the boy trader.

"Looks like it!" said Ken coolly.

"I've warned you off my island. You're taking the law into your own hands, then, because we're far enough away from any other law."

"Is it your island?" said Ken pointedly.

The pearler stared at him. "I bought this island in Sydney. Any man on the beaches can tell you so."

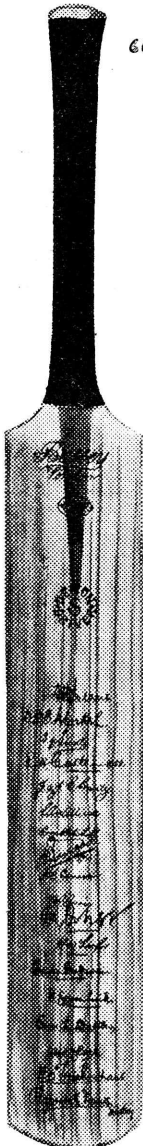
"Any man on the beaches can tell me that Poynings bought it," assented Ken, his eyes fixed on the tanned, scarred face searchingly. "But there's no one to tell me that you are Poynings."

The man started convulsively.


"What do you mean? You know that I am Poynings, and that this is my island," he muttered thickly.

"I know nothing of the sort. I know you said so—and I do not take the word of a man

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out of the close, oppressive bush, even into the blaze of the sun, to draw a breath of the open sea air. He was keen, too, to get to the great coral rocks now in sight, where the surf boomed in hollow caves. It was there that the clue to the secret might lie.

Suddenly, not ten yards from the end of the tunnel-like path, the ground quaked under the feet of King of the Islands.

He gave a sharp cry.

At the first quake of the yielding path he knew what had happened—well he knew the native trick of guarding a path with a hidden pit, covered lightly with soil and herbage over a frail support of twigs.

He knew, with lightning swiftness, that he had walked into a trap—a deadly trap, deadlier than any ambush that the white man of Aao could have laid for him in the bush; he knew, in the same flashing instant, that he was on the track of the secret—that it lay ahead of him in the coral caves, and that the pit of death barred the way to it. With that instant knowledge, King of the Islands made a desperate leap for life, but it was in vain. The ground beneath him caved in as he leaped, and he shot through the flimsy covering of the pit into the depths below.

Crash! Amid a shower of broken twigs and leaves and falling earth, the boy trader shot down into the black depths, and thudded heavily on the bottom of the pit, full fifteen feet below.

He lay where he had fallen, stunned by the crash.

A minute passed, of silence, broken by the light falling of a few fragments on the still form that lay in the bottom of the pit. Then there was a stealthy step on the run-way, and a black, grinning face looked down at the boy trader.

King of the Islands did not stir.

Another black boy crept from the bush, and joined the first. Two grinning gnome-like faces peered over the edge of the pit.

But the boy trader did not see them. Stunned and senseless, King of the Islands lay helpless, at the mercy of his enemies.

Missing!

"LITTLE white master!"
Kaio-lalulalonga called anxiously.

The sun was sinking into the Pacific; and Koko had long waited at the intersection of the run-ways, where King of the Islands was to rejoin him.

But he waited in vain. Again and again the Kanaka called; but no answer came from his little white master; no footsteps reached his anxious listening ears.

Koko's face was dark with anxiety. It was not likely that King of the Islands had returned to the ketch without him. It was incredible that he could have lost his way in the bush. What had happened since he had parted with Kaio-lalulalonga?

Koko fired his rifle into the air at last. It was the agreed signal to call his master if danger threatened. Every ear on the atoll must hear the shot; King of the Islands must hear it, and conclude from it that Koko needed his help. If he lived, he would come.

But there was no answering shot to the signal; and the boy trader did not come.

Twice again Koko fired in the air. But only oppressive silence followed, when the echoes of the reports had died away in the bush.

"Little white master!" called Kaio-lalulalonga, with anguish in his voice.

But there came only the echo of his call.

The swift darkness of the tropics was settling on the bush; the run-ways were already black. A search in the blackness was hopeless, and there was a faint hope in Koko's heart that Ken, for some unknown reason, might have returned to the ketch without waiting for him. He quitted the spot at last, and ran swiftly by darkened paths, fleet as a deer, till he reached the beach.

One glance he gave at the bungalow. A swinging lamp was lighted there, and through the open doorway the light streamed out on the veranda and showed the white man of Aao in his rocking-chair. Koko's eyes blazed with suspicion and hate as he looked, but he did not pause. Swiftly he ran out on the coral quay. At a distance the riding-lights of the ketch gleamed in the velvety gloom.

The Kanaka did not wait to call for the boat. Heedless of sharks, he plunged into the lagoon and swam out swiftly to the ketch. Kit Hudson ran across to the rail as the dripping Kanaka clambered on board. His face was startled.

"I heard shots—what—"

Koko panted.

"Little white master he stop along ketch?"

"What?" Hudson stared. "No! King of the Islands has not come back—"

"He no stop?" groaned Koko.

"No!" Hudson, his teeth clenched, grasped the Kanaka by the shoulder. "What's happened to King of the Islands—what—"

"Me no savvy. He stop along bush. Me plenty flaid he kill-dead along bush!" groaned Kaio-lalulalonga.

Hudson gripped his rifle, and his eyes turned, blazing, on the figure that could be seen in the lamplight on the veranda. He lifted the rifle, and for a second the life of the white man of Aao hung in the balance. But the rifle was lowered again.

"The boat!" shouted Hudson hoarsely.

He could wait till he was sure. But if evil had befallen the boy trader on the atoll, he swore that another life should pay, promptly, for that of King of the Islands!

(Further thrilling adventures befall the shipmates of the *Duon* on this island of mystery in next Monday's gripping yarn—adventures that will hold you enthralled from beginning to end. The title of the story is "The Prisoners of the Coral Cave!")