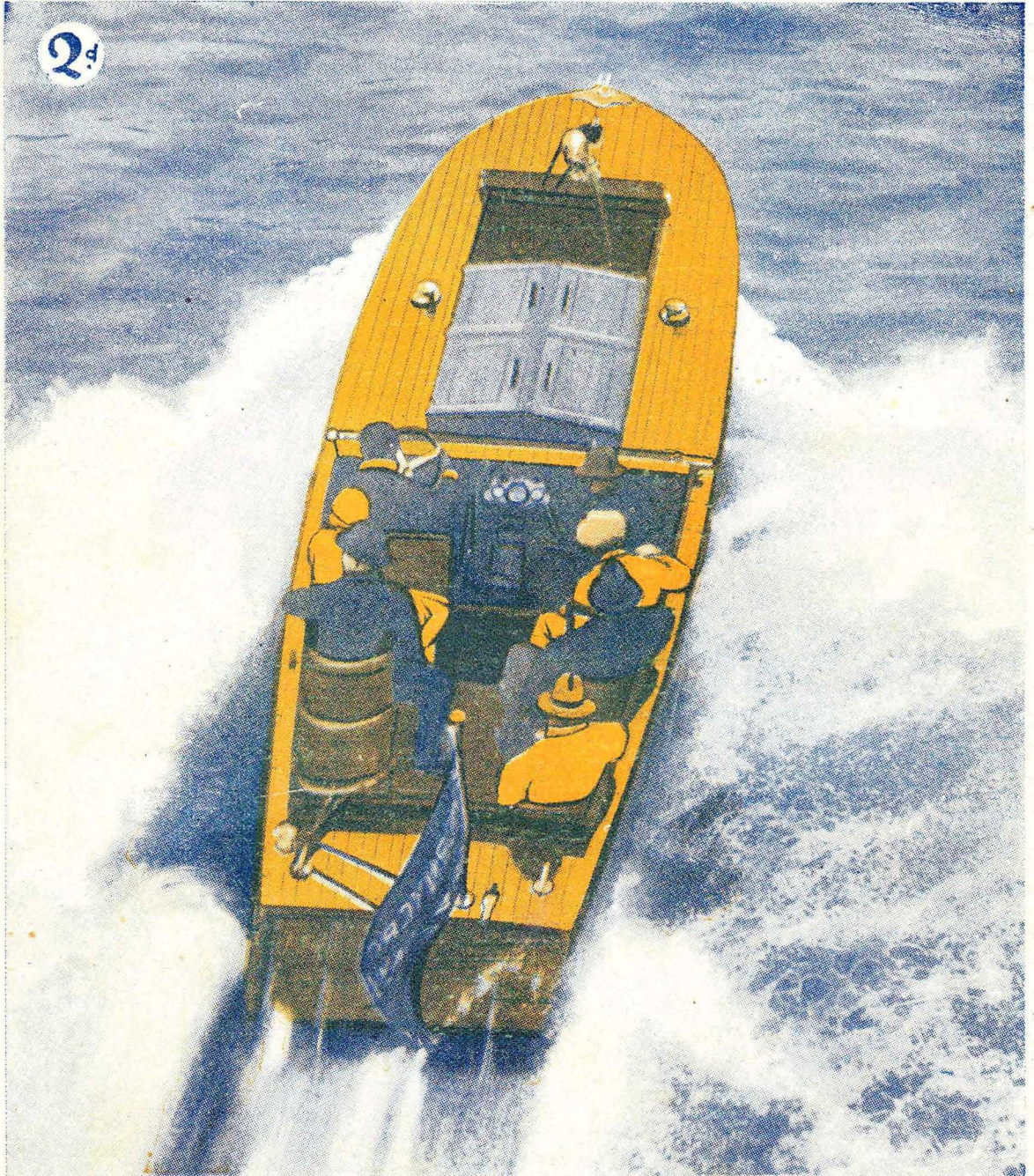


POWER! SOMETHING NEW AND DIFFERENT **ALFRED EDGAR.**
IN COMPLETE YARNS BY

The **MODERN BOY**

EVERY MONDAY.
Week Ending June 29th, 1929.

No. 73.
Vol. 3.



SPEED-THRILLS AT THE SEASIDE! (See page 9.)

**COMPLETE IN
THIS ISSUE.**

With weary eyes, Kit Hudson, the young Australian mate of the ketch Dawn, watched the shadows of night creeping from the lagoon of Aao. King of the Islands, his skipper, had vanished in the bush on the island the previous day. With the approach of daylight he could act! It was open war between him and the rascally pearler ashore!

Vigorous, exciting South Seas adventure,

BY
**CHARLES
HAMILTON.**

There was a shriek from Bransom. Koko had stepped into the canoe and caught the pearl-poacher up in his arms with the intention of pitching him to the sharks. "Stop!" shouted Ken.



GUARDIANS of the CAVE!

Prisoners!

FAINTLY to the ears of Ken King, the boy trader of the Pacific, familiarly known as King of the Islands, came the sound of a paddle dipping into the shark-infested pool that lay dark and still before the sea-cave on the island of Aao in which he was a prisoner—a cave from which he could not escape, although he was unfettered. Swimming was the only way to freedom, and the sharks were too alert to allow of that.

Ken was not alone. With him were Mr. Poynings, the owner of the island, and the latter's two Nukahiva boys. The boy trader had come to Aao in his ketch, the Dawn, with supplies for the owner, and, suspecting that the white man who had met him was not Poynings, and that something underhand was going on, had determined to remain until he had cleared up the mystery.

Going ashore to investigate, he had fallen into a man-trap. The fall had knocked him unconscious, and he had awakened to find himself in this sea-cave prison, guarded by man-eating sharks.

As the sound of the paddle reached him, the boy trader stepped quickly to the mouth of the cave.

Night was giving place to day. The sea-cave was on the eastern side of Aao. Beyond the pool, blocked in by high rocks, stretched the wide Pacific, and over the rolling waters a glimmer of light was stealing. Faintly, in the shadows, the shape of a canoe appeared.

Four black boys were kneeling in the canoe paddling. In the stern sat the white man of Aao. In the bottom lay some dark object that Ken King could not make out in the dimness. The boy trader's heart beat faster.

He stepped back from the cave-mouth. Poynings, the pearler, was at his elbow. Back in the cave, in the darkness, were the two Nukahiva boys.

Ken touched Poynings' arm. "He's coming!" he breathed. "Bransom—the sea-lawyer who seized my island—" "Ay, ay! Stand ready!" muttered King of the Islands. "If he sets foot in the cave—"

Poynings shook his head. "He won't enter the cave—he dare not. I've been a prisoner here for a week—he has come three times to bring me food; each time he stands off in the pool at a safe distance. And we can't reach him—the sharks—look!"

He pointed to the dim pool.

The splashing of the paddles had been enough to disturb the watchful guardians of the pool. From the dim water a black fin rose, and then another. For a moment a hideous snout came into view. The tiger-sharks were wary.

"We're safe here," muttered Poynings bitterly. "He picked out a safe prison for us. We can't touch him."

Ken was silent, watching. The swift dawn of the tropics was already banishing the shadows on the pool. More clearly the canoe came into sight as it glided towards the coral cave.

The pearl-poacher was watching as the canoe advanced, a revolver in his hand. The dawning light glimmered on his tanned, bearded face, with its livid scar.

"Stop along here, you feller boy!" snapped the white man of Aao, and the blacks ceased paddling. The canoe came to a stop at two fathoms' distance from the shelf of coral at the mouth of the cave.

The pearl-poacher stood up, scanning the dark interior. A derisive grin came over his face as he discerned the prisoners of the coral cave lurking within.

Guardians of the Cave!

"You're awake?" he jeered. "Looking for a chance to jump my canoe? You're welcome to all the chance you'll get."

Ken set his lips.

There was no chance. The wary rascal did not intend to come within reach. King of the Islands might have reached the canoe with a desperate leap; but only to be struck back into the water. And to enter the water, where the tiger-sharks glided, was death.

"You scum!" said the boy trader, between his teeth. "You've got us; but you're nearly at the end of your tether. My ketch is still in the lagoon—and you have the mate of the Dawn to deal with—"

"I'll deal with Kit Hudson fast enough—as I've dealt with you and your boatswain."

Ken started.

"My boatswain? You'll never get Kaio-lalulalonga—"

The pearl-poacher laughed harshly.

"Your boatswain fell into the snare I laid for your mate. Hudson's turn will come next. You'd have done better, King of the Islands, to sail when I ordered you away from Aao. I gave you the chance to go. You stayed on and hunted trouble—and now you've got it. Your Kanaka boatswain is here, in the canoe."

"My sainted Sam!" muttered Ken, and his heart sank. He could make out now the dark object that lay in the bottom of the canoe. It was a Kanaka, bound hand and foot with tapa cords.

He knew now that it was Kaio-lalulalonga. Koko, as the bo'sun was called, had fallen into the hands of the pearl-poacher.

Bransom stooped, a knife gleamed, and the cords that bound Koko's feet were cut. He dragged the Kanaka up. Koko's dark eyes turned on him, burning with rage. But his hands were bound behind his back, and he was helpless.

"You plenty too much bad feller," muttered Koko. "S'pose me get feller hand belong me along neck belong you, you dead feller."

"Silence, you!" snarled the pearl-poacher, and he struck the Kanaka boatswain savagely across the face. "I don't take back-talk from niggers!"

Koko's white teeth gleamed in a savage snarl.

"Now jump, you black scum!" snapped the pearl-poacher. "Get into the cave, along with your master. You were hunting him—well, you've found him now, and you're going to join him."

Koko looked across two fathoms of water to the cave. Dimly below the surface showed the shape of a swimming shark.

"No can jump!" he said. "Feller shark he get this Kanaka."

"Stop!" shouted King of the Islands, his face tense. "Come nearer, you scoundrel, and give him a chance."

"And you a chance at the same time?" sneered the poacher.

"We'll go back up the cave—and

you've got your gun, you cowardly swab."

"Go, then—and quick!"

King of the Islands and Poynings retreated up the coral cave. Not till they were lost in the darkness of the deep interior did Bransom give the word to the Santa Cruz boys to approach the landing-place. Then the canoe glided near enough for Kaio-lalulalonga to make the jump.

"Jump, you black scum!" snarled Bransom, and he followed the words with a blow from the barrel of his revolver.

Koko leaped into the cave, staggered, and fell in the sand on the coral floor. King of the Islands rushed forward. The canoe backed instantly into the distance.

"No chance for you, Ken King!" jeered the pearl-poacher.

Ken's eyes blazed at him.

"My mate will deal with you!" he said. "Kit Hudson will not fall into your hands, you scoundrel."

"Wait!" said Bransom grimly. "I've got you, and I've got your boatswain. I warned you off the island, and you've stayed here to find your death. You'd have gone to the sharks already, but—"

"But you dared not while Hudson lives!" cried Ken contemptuously. "Your life would not be worth much if he found that you had shed our blood, you villain!"

"You get me!" said Bransom coolly. "If I fail with your mate, I'd rather he found you alive than dead. But I shall not fail—don't reckon on that. I've only the mate of the Dawn to deal with now—the Kanaka crew won't trouble me. I'll be glad to get them to help in the pearl fishing—I've plenty of use for niggers on Aao."

"Now I've only Hudson to handle, I reckon I'll get him with a bullet—no need any longer for beating about the bush. Man to man, I can handle any man in the Pacific, I reckon."

Ken did not answer. His heart was heavy. Man to man, he could have trusted Kit Hudson to deal with this scoundrel. But it was treachery that the mate of the Dawn had to fear.

Taking no further heed of the pearl-poacher, Ken stooped to release Kaio-lalulalonga from his bonds. Bransom rapped out an order to his black boys, and the canoe shot away, disappearing from sight round the base of a surf-beaten coral cliff.

Coming to Grips!

KIT HUDSON, with weary eyes, watched the shadows clearing from the lagoon of Aao, from the shelving beach and the clustering palms. A new day had come on the lonely atoll. All through the night the mate of the Dawn had watched with unflinching vigilance while the five Hiva-Oa boys who formed the crew slept on their tapa mats.

With the dawn of day, Lompo and Lufu and the others yawned and stretched themselves, and rose, blinking at the white master who had remained awake while they slumbered. Danny, the cooky-boy, brought food and steaming hot

coffee from the little galley for the weary mate.

"White master King of the Islands he no comey along ketch, sar?" said the cooky-boy.

Hudson shook his head.

"Kanaka feller Kaio-lalulalonga he no comey, sar?"

"No."

"That feller he plenty dead along bush," said Danny. "Feller Santa Cruz boy belong pearler, sar, he plenty bad feller. He throw knife belong him, along other feller, sar. Kill-dead other feller along bush, sar, plenty too much quick."

Hudson did not reply, but the cooky-boy's suggestion chimed in with his own forebodings.

King of the Islands had vanished in the bush on Aao the previous day. Kaio-lalulalonga, following the pearler into the bush in the night, had vanished as completely as the boy trader of Lalinge.

What had happened? The dark and mysterious bush, stretching before his eyes beyond the bungalow and the palm grove, told no tale. Its dim recesses hid the fate of King of the Islands and the faithful Kanaka who had sought him.

Weary as he was from his long watching, the mate of the Dawn did not think of closing his eyes. Now that the daylight had come, he might have trusted the Poynesian crew to keep watch while he slept. But sleep was not in his thoughts.

Now that there was daylight, he could act. He had to solve the mystery of Ken King's disappearance and to rescue him if he yet lived. That he lived Hudson felt certain. He did not believe that the pearl-poacher would dare to take his life so long as his comrade lived to avenge him. But to seek him meant leaving the ketch in the care of the Kanaka crew, exposed to the danger of a treacherous attempt from the pearler. Hudson grimly resolved to deal with the pearler without delay.

He had no proof of the white man's treachery, but the vanishing of Kaio-lalulalonga, following that of King of the Islands, amounted to a moral certainty. Hudson made up his mind to take no further risks with the mysterious man of Aao.

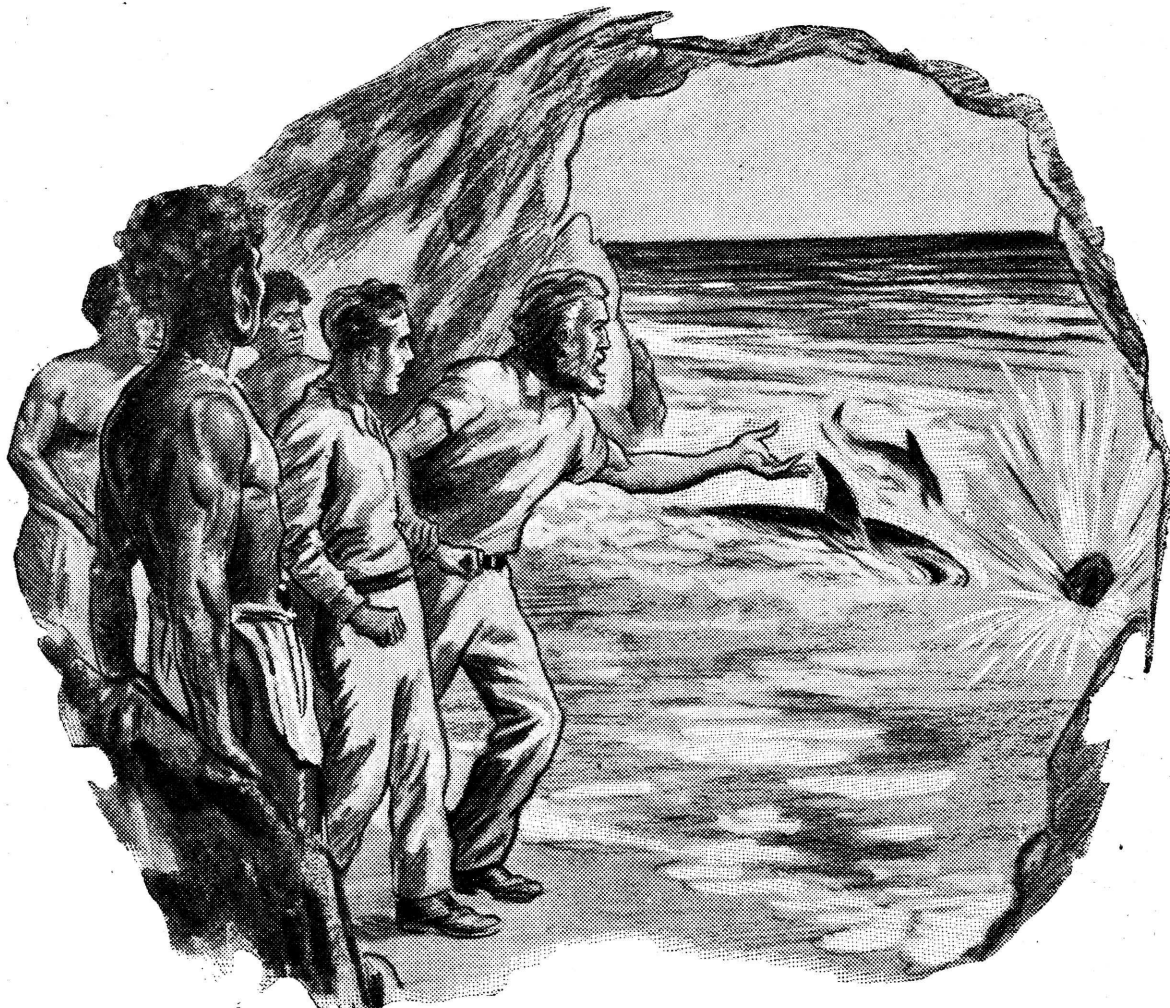
Crack! The ring of a rifle from somewhere along the beach awoke the echoes of the atoll.

The mate of the Dawn started. From his hand, as he was raising it to his lips, the tin pannikin of coffee had been suddenly spun across the deck. It had been struck away by the whizzing bullet!

"My hat!" ejaculated Hudson. There was an excited jabber from the Hiva-Oa boys. They dodged down into the shelter of the low rail. Hudson gripped his rifle and stared round him with blazing eyes. Then he dropped on his knees, realising that he was exposed to the fire as he stood on the deck under the rising sunlight.

Crack! A bullet flew over his head.

Hudson smiled grimly. He had made up his mind to come to grips with the white man of Aao, and evidently the pearler had come to the same resolve.



Poynings laid a detaining hand on Ken's arm and tossed a fragment of coral into the pool. Instantly the sharks were on the alert, hungry for prey!

He had been lurking on the beach, hidden by some ridge of sand, watching for a chance to take a pot-shot at the white man on the ketch.

Hudson had reason to bless the foresight of King of the Islands in anchoring the ketch out in the lagoon, instead of mooring at the coral quay. The bullet had gone near enough, and at a closer range the pearler would have got his man.

Peering over the teak rail, Hudson watched for a sign of the man who had fired.

It was open war now! He understood that. The pearler had rid himself of King of the Islands and Kaio-lalulalonga, and now that he had only one white man to deal with he had come out into the open. That treacherous shot from the beach might have ended the conflict, with luck.

The white man of Aac, as if he had read Hudson's thoughts, had known that with the new day the fight must come, and he had given up all pretences and started it, with the advantage on his side.

"Feller smoke he stop along beach, sar!" called out Lompo. "Along big rock he stop, sar."

Hudson's eye picked up the little faint curl of smoke that rose from the rock on the sandy beach, mark-

ing the spot where the pearler lurked in cover, watching for a chance for another shot.

Hudson fired, and his bullet splattered chips of coral from the rock that hid the white man of Aao. For an instant a grass-plaited hat showed by the rock as the hidden man moved. Hudson fired on sight, and saw the hat spin. But the man kept carefully in cover, and silence settled down again over the lagoon and the atoll.

Hudson felt something like elation. It was open war at last, and his course was clear. There was no further doubt—no need for hesitation. It was a fight now to the death between himself and the white man of Aao—and the Australian did not fear the outcome.

"You feller Lompo!" he called out.

"Yes, sar."

Lompo crawled aft, taking care not to expose himself to fire from the beach.

"You go below, break out feller rifle, feller cartridge, bring feller gun along deck along crew."

Lompo went down the companion, and returned with rifles and cartridges for the crew. Hudson had decided on his plan of action. He had to get ashore. To pull to the

coral quay was to expose himself to the fire of the man on the beach, but it was easy enough to land at some other point of the shelving beach that circled the lagoon and work his way round.

"You listen along me, you feller boy," said the mate of the Dawn. "Me go along island, you stop along ketch. S'pose white feller he comey, you shoot along gun, kill-dead white feller."

"Yes, sar."

"S'pose you shut eye belong you, white feller he comey, Santa Cruz feller he comey, makee kai-kai along you feller," said Hudson.

"No shut eye belong us feller, sar," said Lompo. And Hudson hoped, at least, that the danger of being "kai-kai-ed" by the Santa Cruz blacks would keep the crew watchful and alert.

"You lower feller boat along lagoon," said Hudson.

Lompo blinked.

"Feller pearler he kill-dead us feller along gun, sar," he muttered. "He watchee us feller plenty, eye belong him."

"Lower the boat!" snapped Hudson.

Leaning his rifle on the teak rail, Hudson opened fire on the coral rock that sheltered the man on the beach.

Guardians of the Cave!

(Continued from page 22.)

"The dog!" repeated Poynings. "If I'd known—if I'd only put a bullet through him when he first landed on Aao—"

Ken glanced at him. He had wondered a good deal what had happened on Aao before he arrived there.

"How did he get you in this fix?" he asked.

"He came in a whaleboat with his black crew. He told me a tale of being driven out of his course, and being in want of food and water. I did not trust him, and I kept a gun handy; but one of the blacks got me from behind with a lump of coral—and the next thing I knew was, I was tied up hand and foot in my bungalow, and that villain was master of Aao!"

The pearler gritted his teeth.

"If he had found my pearls I should have been thrown to the sharks in the lagoon, I reckon. But I'd got them safely stowed away; not even the Nuka-hiva boys knew where, and he will never know. I've taken a fortune from the lagoon in the last five years. He found a handful of seed pearls in the house; that was all. He knew there must be more, and he offered to give me a share, and his whaleboat to get away in. I was not likely to take his word!

"He kept me a prisoner, and set his black crew to the pearl-fishing, my boys along with them. One day a sail was sighted. It never came near the island, but it was enough to alarm him, and he had us carried to this cave for safety. I reckon it was his idea to pass himself off as me, if a skipper looked in.

"Not one skipper in a hundred would be likely to know me by sight. He knew nothing of the regular supply ship that came from Lalinge, and that was my only hope, and it failed. You've come, King of the Islands, and here you are, as deep in the mud as I am in the mire."

"While there's life there's hope," said Ken. "He won't find it easy to get the upper hand of my mate."

Poynings shrugged his shoulders.

"Anyhow, he won't get the pearls," he said savagely. "I'll keep the secret, if I die in this cave keeping it. He has brought us rations in the canoe several times. The last time he came was by night, and I reckoned from that there might be a ship in the offing."

"My ship!" said Ken, with a sigh.

"It was decent of you, King of the Islands, to stand by and try to find out what had become of me," said Poynings. "I'm sorry I've landed you in this mess. Hark!"

Through the hot tropic afternoon stillness came a sudden report of a rifle. Faint and distant as it was, it made the listening white men start with a catch of the breath.

"That's nearer," said Poynings. "The firing before was at the lagoon. This comes from the bush."

"Feller Hudson he stop along bush!" muttered Kaio-lalulalonga.

Ken's heart beat painfully. He listened intently, but there was no further shot. The single report had

died away, and silence, deep and still, settled on the atoll.

"My sainted Sam!" muttered King of the Islands. He passed his hand across his brow to wipe away the perspiration. Again his glance sought the pool where the sharks lurked.

"No use," said Poynings grimly. "We've got to wait."

They waited in tense silence. The suspense was intolerable. That single shot, echoing from the bush. What could it mean? Who had fired, and who had fallen? Ken pictured his shipmate tramping the shadowy runways of the bush, fired on from the thickets, falling to the treacherous shot, and the thought was anguish to him. He could not keep still. He rose and approached once more the edge of the cave-mouth, where the sharks lurked in the still waters.

"No go along sea, sar," said Kaio-lalulalonga anxiously. "Feller shark he stop, sar!"

"No use," repeated Poynings. "If he's got the upper hand of your mate he will come—"

He broke off as the splash of a paddle sounded in the silence of the tropic day.

Outwitted!

"At last!" breathed the pearl-poacher.

Bransom's eyes were blazing. He stopped, silent in the grassy, shadowy runway, his grasp almost convulsive on his rifle. Through the long, hot, tropical day, in the dim, simmering heat of the bush, that strange hunt had gone on, and now, it seemed, success smiled at last on the white man of Aao.

That Kit Hudson would follow him into the bush the pearl-poacher had had no doubt. And it had not taken him long to learn that Hudson was in the bush, hunting him.

At the deadly game of bush tag Bransom counted all the advantages on his side. He had been long enough on Aao to have learned his way in the intricate paths, while Hudson was a stranger on the island. And he had with him six or seven Santa Cruz blacks. Not the men to stand up to an armed white man in a struggle—especially to the mate of the Dawn in his present mood—but expert in bush-fighting, in throwing the knife, in all the tricks of savage island warfare.

Before the white man's rifle they were certain to run, but in the tangled depths of the bush a knife thrown from a thicket was likely to be as deadly as any firearm. And Bransom had posted his blacks among the runways, with the promise of a great reward to the one who should get the mate of the Dawn with his knife.

It seemed to him almost a certainty that before an hour had passed Kit Hudson would be stretched in death, with a knife in his back.

He knew nothing of Hudson but that he was the mate of the Dawn, a man of the sea. Almost any sailor-man wandering in the intricate bush where the savage blacks lurked would have fallen a victim. He did not know that the mate of the Dawn was an Australian, that he had lived in the bush of the great Island Conti-

nent, and that there was no trick of the bush that he did not have at his finger-tips.

Lurking in the dusky runways, listening for the death-cry of the mate of the Dawn, Bransom had heard a cry; but it came from one of the blacks—the howl of Tuto as he went down under a crashing rifle-butt.

The savage, as he crouched in cover, knife in hand, had heard a step behind him and turned in time to meet the crashing butt. Hudson went grimly on his way, watchful as a cat, and the black man rolled senseless in the bush path. When he came to himself and crawled away, his groans reached Bransom's ears and the ears of the other black boys.

And the white man of Aao, as he picked his way in the bush-paths, suspected that Tuto's fate had been a warning to the rest and that they had scuttled for safer quarters. He saw and heard nothing more of his Santa Cruz crew, and realised that he was left, after all, to deal single-handed with the Australian.

That was not what he had intended, but the desperate man did not shrink from the contest.

Man to man, he counted himself a match for Hudson. He had captured King of the Islands by trickery, and Kaio-lalulalonga had fallen into his hands in seeking his master. Now that there was but one foe left for him to deal with, the pearl-poacher was prepared to make a fight for it if treachery would not serve his turn.

So the strange contest went on, two desperate and determined men seeking one another in the intricacies of the bush, sometimes hearing one another's movements, but never, for a long time, coming in sight.

And now at last Fortune seemed to smile on the man who had seized Aao. A rustling had warned him that his enemy was near, and he crept by a winding track in the bush on tip-toe, rifle in hand, eyes eager and wary, teeth set in a savage snarl. Once behind his enemy and in sight of him—

"At last!" he breathed.

He was aware, before this, that Hudson had not kept to the runways. He had penetrated the almost impenetrable tropical thickets like one born to the bush. Before him, behind him, on either side of him, the desperate man had to watch, and a fear had come upon him that he would be beaten at this deadly game. But now—

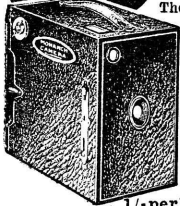
Now he sighted his enemy. Close by the dusky runway he was treading, through a narrow opening of the thick bush, he sighted the silk shirt worn by the mate of the Dawn.

Hudson was there, watching another runway or resting for a few minutes in the sickening heat, his back to his foe. Bransom's blazing eyes gloated at the sight. He dropped silently on one knee and aimed his rifle with care. He knew that he would have time only for one shot.

If he missed he would have no other chance, and the desperate game would begin again. But he was not going to miss!

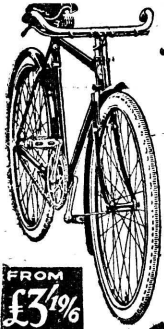
He dwelt on his aim, though the shirt that glimmered through the opening of the bush was less than fifteen feet away. He fired.

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Guardians of the Cave!

(Continued from previous page.)

"Kit, old man!"
"Ken!"
"This feller plenty glad!" chuckled Kaio-lalulalonga. "This Kanaka feller he plenty too much glad altogether, my word!"
"I reckon I'm glad to see you here, Mister Mate," said Poynings, shaking hands with Hudson.

"It's Poynings, Kit," said King of the Islands. "That swab in the canoe is a pearl-poacher—he robbed Poynings of the island, as we suspected."

There was a shriek from Bransom. Kaio-lalulalonga had stepped into the canoe, and he was lifting the pearl-poacher in his strong arms. His intention was only too plainly to be read in his face, and the white man of Aao shrieked in fear.

"Stop!" shouted King of the Islands.

"Plenty shark stop along this place, sar—this Kanaka tinkee plenty good this feller he makee kai-kai along feller shark!"

A black fin glided by the canoe. Bransom shrieked again.

"Stop!" repeated Ken, and he jumped into the canoe and dragged the pearl-poacher from the grasp of the Kanaka.

Kaio-lalulalonga grunted. "Much better that feller makee kai-kai along feller shark, sar. He plenty too much bad feller."

King of the Islands smiled and shook his head. Bransom lay panting in the bottom of the canoe, his face white as chalk. Hudson and Poynings stepped in, followed by the two Nuka-hiva boys.

Koko and the Nuka-hiva boys paddled away; and King of the Islands looked his last upon the coral sea-cave that had been his prison, and but for the devotion of his shipmate might have been his tomb.

By the time the Dawn sailed Poynings and his Nuka-hiva boys were at work on the pearl-fishing again, and the familiar smell of rotting shell hung over the lagoon and the atoll.

Of the lone pearler's hoarded store the shipmates saw nothing, but to each of them Poynings insisted upon handing a handsome pearl before they sailed; and from those specimens they could guess that the hidden store was worth a fortune.

The white man of Aao, who had made a desperate bid for that fortune, sailed in the Dawn—a prisoner under latches, with irons on his limbs. He was going back to Lalinge on the ketch—with the prospect before him of being kept out of mischief for many years to come!

(Charles Hamilton contributes another of these famous yarns to next Monday's MODERN BOY. He makes you see the sun-splashed waters of the romantic South Seas and feel the thrill of adventure that comes to young Ken King and his Australian chum!)

Cloyne of Claverhouse!

(Continued from page 16.)

From the box on the table he took a plain muffler, peaked cap, and long rope ladder of the finest manila. Donning muffler and cap, he turned to Buller.

"Now the table," he said.
"You're determined to go?" questioned Buller protestingly. "I tell you it's dangerous, man, now that you've quarrelled with D'Aubrey!"

Scaife's only reply was an impatient gesture, and without further protest Buller helped him to carry the table to the window. Scaife slipped a loop at one end of the ladder round a table-leg and tested it with a vicious tug.

Satisfied, he crossed the floor and turned down the gas-jet until the room was almost in complete darkness.

"I'll be back in about two hours," he said, gently raising the bottom sash of the window. "I can rely on you, I suppose?"

"Yes!" grunted Buller.
There was no moon, and the shrubbery below the window was scarce visible in the darkness. Nothing disturbed the stillness, and carefully

Scaife sent the light ladder dropping down into the night.

He stood a moment listening intently, then slithered one leg over the sill.

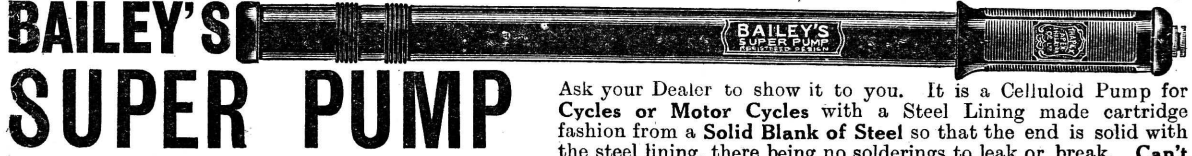
"Right-ho! I'm going!" he whispered. "It's all clear!"

Standing by the open window in the darkness, Buller heard the creak of straining rope as Scaife descended. There came to his ears, also, the faint rustle of disturbed ivy, and he knew by that that Scaife was half-way down. He waited until the faint sounds had ceased, then groped for the top of the ladder which lay across the sill and gave it a tentative tug.

It came up slackly in his hand. Scaife had safely accomplished the descent and had gone. Buller commenced to haul in the ladder. Suddenly he started and froze into tense immobility.

Someone had knocked sharply and imperatively on the door of the study!

(Mr. Hammond keeps things moving briskly in next week's instalment—full of dramatic surprises. Are your friends reading this fine yarn? If not, put them on to it without delay! They'll thank you!)



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