

DANGER—10,000 VOLTS! A COMPLETE YARN THAT THRILLS!

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THE MECHANICAL TRACK-LAYER! See Inside.

Instantly the brawny savage's arms were around King of the Islands, pinning his arms to his sides as in a circle of steel.



The Trader of Vana-Vana!

Ken Chips In.

THAT feller boy he sing out plenty too much!" Koko, the Kanaka bo'sun of the ketch Dawn, made the remark dispassionately.

The sight of a black boy writhing and howling under the lashes of a lawyer-cane did not disturb his serenity. Kaio-lalulalonga, as Koko was named in his own language, had seen many such sights, and sights more terrible, on the Pacific beaches.

But Ken King, the boy trader known as King of the Islands, was frowning darkly.

Across the sunlit water, from the distance, the yelling of the black boy came clearly to the gliding ketch.

So far as Ken's native crew were concerned, it fell upon unheeding ears. The five Hiva-Oa seamen looked towards the beach of Vana-Vana, with a mild interest, and that was all.

"The swab!" growled Ken.

King of the Islands, boy as he was in years, had sailed the Pacific long enough to grow accustomed to grim sights and sounds. But he had never grown hardened. There was nothing "soft" about the boy trader, and he was quite aware that sometimes a lawyer-cane or a capstan bar was the

only argument to which a black man would give heed. He could handle both himself, with a vigorous hand, if necessity arose. But there was a limit; and what was happening on the sun-scorched beach was outside the limit, in Ken's opinion.

His brow grew darker and darker as he looked and listened. Kit Hudson, his young Australian mate, joined him as he stood by the rail watching the beach, and smiled faintly.

afford to be too particular; but a line had to be drawn somewhere, and Ken drew it at the Dutchman of Vana-Vana. He was heading for the native village some miles from the Dutchman's station, where he had to pick up bags of copra from the island chief, and it was by chance that he passed so near Vanderbank's station, and sighted the scene on the beach.

A big, fat, muscular man, with a heavy bearded face, now inflamed with fury, the Dutchman was beating a native boy with a thick lawyer-cane. The trader was dressed in little more than a loin-cloth, and was burned so dark by tropical suns that he might almost have been taken for a native himself.

The black boy had flung himself down on the sand, and the blows of the lawyer-cane descended on him in a shower, with a succession of cracks that sounded like pistol-shots. At every blow came a yell from the wretched black. Evidently he was a house-boy who had given offence to his master.

King of the Islands was loath to intervene in another man's business—especially between a white man and a native—but the sight was too much for him.

"Vanderbank's got to stop that!"

By CHARLES HAMILTON.

A magnificent yarn of the South Seas—of Ken King and his shipmates aboard the trading ketch "Dawn"—of adventure and excitement amidst unusual surroundings, where life is lived most perilously!

Complete in this Issue.

"That's Vanderbank," he said, "the trader of Vana-Vana. The toughest brute in the islands."

"He looks it," growled the boy trader.

The Dawn was gliding along the shore of Vana-Vana, hardly a cable's length from the coral beach. Ken had no business with Vanderbank, the Dutch trader. A trading skipper in the South Seas could not

he said decisively. "He will beat the nigger to death at this rate."

"Not a new thing for him, according to what they say on the beaches," remarked Hudson. "But—"

"He's got to stop it," repeated Ken, frowning.

"Feller Dussman he likee kill black boy along stick," remarked Koko. "S'pose feller boy he no likee, he run away along bush, sar."

"My word, that feller boy he sing out, all same feller pig along makee kai-kai," remarked Lompo, one of the crew. "That feller Dussman he kill um plenty."

Ken rapped out an order, and Koko, at the wheel, edged in towards the beach. The yelling of the wretched black boy came more loudly and clearly, and the sound of the crashing blows of the lawyer-cane on his bare back.

Ken put his hands to his mouth, trumpet-wise, and shouted:

"Ahoy! Vanderbank, ahoy!"

The Dutchman ceased wielding the cane for a moment and stared up. So intent had he been on lashing the house-boy that he had not observed the ketch approaching the island.

He stood panting, stick in hand, glaring at the ketch.

"Ahoy!" shouted King of the Islands.

Vanderbank snarled an answer. He did not trade with King of the Islands, and had no civility to waste on him.

"What name you sing out along this feller?" he hooted. The Dutchman knew no English but the "beche-de-mer."

"Stop it!" said King of the Islands.

"You've given that nigger enough — now stop it!"

The ketch was quite close to the beach now, as near as it could edge without running aground. Ken made a sign to the Hiva-Oa boys to stand ready with the whaleboat. He had little expectation that the bully of Vana-Vana would stop beating the black boy at his orders; but he was giving him a chance. If words failed, Ken was ready for action.

The Dutchman stared at him, spluttering, astonishment and rage mingled in his brutal face.

"What name?" he stuttered. "You feller King of the Islands, you sing out along me no kill black feller belong me? Me kill-dead this black feller s'pose me wantee. You go along business belong you. You no talk along me, mouth belong you."

And with the evident intention of demonstrating to the boy trader how little he cared for his intervention, the Dutchman gripped the lawyer-cane hard, and turned to the house-boy again, his brutal face positively fiendish in expression.

But the momentary pause had given the wretched victim a chance. He leaped to his feet, and the slashing cane missed him by inches. A second more and the black boy was running.

A yell of rage burst from Vanderbank, and his heavy footsteps thudded in pursuit of the fleeing boy.

The house-boy was running for the sea, either with some hope of refuge on the ketch, or to throw himself into the water out of reach of his master. Behind him ran the Dutchman, gaining at every stride, for the black boy was staggering with exhaustion after the savage beating.

"Lower the boat!" shouted Ken.

The whaleboat dropped smoothly into the water. King of the Islands leaped into it, his face set and his eyes gleaming. He had to intervene now, for he had only made matters

worse for the house-boy. The boat shot to the beach.

Almost on the margin of the sea the Dutchman overtook the fugitive, and a blow of the heavy lawyer-cane sent the house-boy reeling to the sand. As he shrank and cowered there, the burly Dutchman stood over him, raining lashes. Shriek after shriek came from the cowering house-boy.

The whaleboat bumped on the sand, and King of the Islands leaped ashore. He ran straight at the Dutchman, his eyes ablaze.

The rain of blows ceased as Vanderbank turned on the boy trader, swinging back the cane to strike at him as he ran in. But Ken dodged the vicious slash, closed in, and drove his clenched fist full into the brutal bearded face. The trader went reeling backwards and crashed on the sand.

Thrashing a Ruffian.

"YOU dog!" roared King of the Islands.

He snatched the lawyer-cane from the Dutchman's hand as the ruffian sprawled and spluttered. The next moment it was descending on Vanderbank, swiftly, mercilessly, with all the force that Ken's sinewy arm could put into the lashes.

The ruffian roared and writhed under the lashing.

Kit Hudson looked on with a grin. He had never seen his shipmate in this mood before, and he found it interesting. Koko and the Hiva-Oa boys watched from the ketch, chuckling.

"My word! Feller King of the Islands he plenty mad along that feller Dussman!" chuckled Kaio-lalulalonga.

"He plenty mad too much along that feller!" grinned Danny, the cooky-boy. "He kill that feller along stick altogether."

"That feller Dussman he sing out, all same that black feller he sing out!" chortled Lompo.

The Dutchman was yelling frantically. Twice he strove to scramble up, but the blows of the lawyer-cane sent him sprawling again; the lashing never ceased.

It was such a beating as Vanderbank had, often enough, bestowed on his house-boys. But it was the first time that he had had a dose of his own medicine.

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Ken King in fighting mood!

The Trader of Vana-Vana!

(Continued from page 13.)

While he roared and rolled and howled, the house-boy crawled to a little distance and sat squatting on the sand, watching with distended eyes. His back was raw and bleeding from the beating, but he seemed to forget it in his breathless interest in the beating of the Dutchman. Never before had he seen his terrible master called to account. Even the natives of Vana-Vana, a savage black Melanesian tribe, cannibals every man of them, regarded the truculent Dutchman with fear and dread.

No white man but Vanderbank dwelt on Vana-Vana—but a hundred savage cannibals trembled at his frown. On all the beaches it was said that sooner or later they would have his head, to smoke in the canoe-house of the chief O'otu, but for years his head had remained safe on his shoulders. To Sululo, the house-boy, it was marvellous to see the tyrant yelling and squirming under punishment. His black eyes bulged from his head as he watched.

Not till a score of vigorous lashes had fallen did Ken cease the castigation of the bully of Vana-Vana. Then he tossed the lawyer-cane far out into the shining waters of the Pacific.

"That's a lesson for you, you drunken swab!" said King of the Islands between his teeth.

The Dutchman sat up dizzily.

Slowly he scrambled up, and stood unsteadily on his feet. His eyes fixed on Ken murderously, but for the moment he was too breathless and exhausted to act. He stood swaying on his feet, breathing in great gasps.

Ken turned to the house-boy. But he kept one eye on the trader, however. He did not suppose that the trouble was at an end yet. Vanderbank was about the last man in the Islands to take such a handling lying down.

"You feller boy, what name belong you?" asked Ken.

"Name belong this feller Sululo, sar!"

"You belong this feller island?"

"Yes, sar, me belong Vana-Vana. Feller Dussman he buy this feller along chief O'otu."

"You likee run along bush, along place belong you?" asked the boy trader.

"Me likee plenty, sar!" gasped Sululo. "Me plenty flaid along feller Dussman. He kill this poor feller plenty too much."

Ken waved his hand towards the high, dark bush that filled the interior of Vana-Vana.

"S'pose you likee, you run along bush," he said. "You no house-boy any more along this feller Dussman."

Sululo jumped up, his eyes dancing. But he glanced at Vanderbank, and hesitated.

"S'pose feller Dussman he no likee, sar?" he stammered.

"I'll deal with the Dutchman," said Ken grimly. "You run along bush, along people belong you—feller Dussman he stop along this feller!"

With scared eyes on his master, the black boy backed away. Vander-

bank made no movement to stop him. He hardly seemed to observe him. All the ruffian's fury had been transferred to the white man who had beaten him like a dog.

Sululo paused again, and came back towards the boy trader. Ken glanced at him, wondering what he wanted. From a black boy of a cannibal Melanesian tribe he did not look for anything in the way of gratitude. But Sululo had been greatly impressed by the prowess of his rescuer—the white man who had beaten the bully of Vana-Vana was something like a god in the eyes of Sululo.

He dropped on his knees at Ken's feet, and pressed his black forehead to the boy trader's pipeclayed shoes. It was a sign of submission and devotion. When he rose there was a smear of pipeclay on his black, perspiring forehead, but Ken did not smile.

"You plenty good feller, sar, along this black feller," said Sululo. "This feller he no forget, sar."

Then, as Vanderbank made a movement, the black boy darted away, crossed the beach with the speed of a wild pig, and vanished into the shadows of the bush.

Vanderbank did not heed him—all his attention was fixed on King of the Islands. He had pulled himself together by this time.

He moved towards the boy trader, and his heavy bulk seemed to tower over Ken King, sturdy as he was. Ken did not retreat an inch; his face was cool and contemptuous as he faced the hulking Dutchman. Vanderbank shook a huge, hairy fist within a couple of feet of the boy trader's face, his whole muscular form trembling with passion.

"You beat this feller, along lawyer-cane!" he stuttered. "You kill this Dutch feller along stick!"

A growl of rage followed, and the burly ruffian fairly hurled himself at King of the Islands, striking out with huge, hammer-like fists.

Kit Hudson looked on, his face tense now. He was ready at a sign to go to his shipmate's aid, but no sign came from Ken. King of the Islands was not, perhaps, much more than half the weight of the bulky Dutchman, but in activity, keenness, cool courage, and iron determination, and knowledge of how to use his hands, he had the advantage. And Ken's anger had by no means been all expended by the thrashing he had given the bully with the lawyer-cane. He was more than willing to give him more if he wanted it.

Had the heavy Dutchman's furious blows landed with the force with which they drove at the boy trader's handsome face, Ken would have been swept off his feet, battered, bruised, and beaten. But he side-stepped with the agility of a cat, and the hammering blows did not find their mark. Then the boy trader's clenched fist drove in, crashing under the Dutchman's ear.

Vanderbank reeled and roared, and came on again furiously, and then, for several minutes, it was hammer and tongs. In the blinding sunlight, on the white, dazzling beach, tramping sand and powdered coral under their feet, the bully of Vana-Vana and the boy trader fought fiercely.

But again agility, coolness, and keenness won the advantage, and the Dutchman reeled backwards from a crashing upper-cut that jarred every tooth in his head and made him feel for the time that his jaw was broken. He crashed down on the sand, and lay there gasping, blinking in the blinding sun.

Ken rubbed his knuckles ruefully. They had suffered from that terrific contact with the Dutchman's bearded jaw.

"Good man!" gasped Hudson. "Oh, my hat! That was some jolt!"

The Dutchman gasped helplessly.

"That feller Dussman he no wantee any more altogether!" declared Kaiolalulalonga from the deck of the ketch.

Koko was right! It was several minutes before the dazed Dutchman dragged himself to his feet, and he did not attempt to resume the fight.

He stood panting and sweating, his little piggy eyes glittering like a snake's, and his hand stole to the back of his belt.

That was what Kit Hudson was waiting for. In a moment the Australian had jerked out his own gun.

"Stop that, Vanderbank! Pull that gun, and you go down, you scoundrel!" rapped out the Cornstalk. "Take your paw off it! Sharp!"

For a second the bully of Vana-Vana hesitated to obey. It seemed as if he would pull the six-shooter, in spite of the Australian's levelled weapon, so savage and intense was his rage. But the glint in Hudson's eyes told him what to expect, and his hand dropped to his side.

Turning about, he tramped up the beach towards his bungalow.

Hudson watched him go distrustfully. He would not have been surprised to see the ruffian swing suddenly round and try the effect of a pot-shot. But Vanderbank tramped on without a glance behind, and walked into the bungalow and disappeared.

"That's over," said King of the Islands.

"My hat!" laughed Hudson. "I fancy that swab has never had such a lesson in his life before. It may do him good."

Ken nodded, and walked back to the boat. Sululo had long ago vanished into the bush, and there was nothing to linger for. And there was good reason to go without delay. The beach was under fire from the windows of the Dutch trader's bungalow, and, in his rage and humiliation, there was no telling what the ruffian might or might not do.

The whaleboat pulled back to the Dawn.

Bang!

The Dutchman had disappeared into his house, and now he reappeared in the veranda in front, a rifle in his hands. Standing by the veranda rail, he threw the rifle to his shoulder and pulled the trigger.

The bullet knocked up a spout of water a dozen yards from the whaleboat, and King of the Islands laughed. After the handling he had received, the trader was in no condition for good shooting.

Before he could fire again, the boat was under the quarter of the Dawn. King of the Islands went aboard, the whaleboat was swung up, and the ketch resumed her way.

Bang, bang, bang! came at intervals from the bungalow ashore. The Dutchman was still firing, with bloodshot eyes glaring with rage over the rifle.

The last bullet chipped the teak rail of the ketch, the nearest that any of them had gone. When the trader pulled trigger again, the ketch was out of range of his shooting. King of the Islands rubbed ointment on his bruised knuckles and his other damages, little the worse for the fight, and an hour later he had dismissed Vanderbank from his mind.

But he was destined to be reminded of the existence of the bully of Vana-Vana.

Visitors!

O'OTU, the chief of Vana-Vana, came off in a canoe. Between the beach and the outer reef was a cable's length of calm, smooth water, and there the Dawn dropped her anchor. King of the Islands

anchored well off the beach. He had called at the island many times for copra, and had many dealings with O'otu; but he did not place too much faith in any Melanesian chief. A careless skipper would have been quite likely to have his ship raided by the natives, and to leave his head to smoke in the wood-fires in the canoe-house.

The boy trader was not looking for trouble, but he was always prepared for it in dealing with natives on remote lonely islands, especially in the neighbourhood of the Solomons. Both the skipper and the mate of the Dawn had belted on their revolvers, and rifles had been served out to the Hiva-Oa crew—a necessary precaution. But all was peaceful, and O'otu came on board in high good-humour, evidently pleased to see King of the Islands again.

The chief, like most natives, watered his copra to increase the weight and cheat the white men; but Ken did not, like many traders, employ false scales and weights to set the matter right. O'otu, therefore, found more profit in dealing with Ken than with most traders, and was glad to do business.

O'otu stepped aboard, a fat figure wearing a tapa loin-cloth, the rest of his clothing being composed of innumerable necklaces and armlets of coral, trade beads, bones, and cartridge-clips. In one ear he carried a pipe; in the other, a pocket-knife; and his thick, matted hair was adorned with a broken teacup, a shaving-glass, and the lid of a tin saucepan—adornments of which the chief of Vana-Vana was evidently inordinately proud.

His bare limbs were tattooed in hideous designs, leaving hardly an inch unmarked; his black face a mass of strange tattooing. His cunning eyes shot a searching look round the ketch, and he grinned as he noted the rifles; obviously regarding his own natural treachery, and the white man's distrust of it, as a good joke. Three or four of his chief men were allowed to follow him on the ketch; the rest were told to "stop along canoe." Ken knew better than to allow a crowd of cannibals on board the Dawn.

The chief greeted the boy trader cordially in beche-de-mer English. He grinned again at the sight of

(Continued on next page.)



Riding the surf at 42 miles an hour! The snap was taken at a regatta at Shanklin, Isle of Wight.

THERE is a new kind of thrill awaiting you if you have never tried surf-riding behind a motor-boat!

The movement is really like no other, and the sensation felt when travelling at high speed on a frail board, with the waves doing their best to upset you, is well worth an occasional ducking.

Chances for this comparatively new summer sport now exist all round the coast, and a summer holiday is not complete without having a shot at surf-riding. When once you have tried, it is unlikely that you will be willing to give it up!

The board used for surf-riding varies a good deal in size and material, but is generally two to three feet wide and about four and a half feet long. It is often made of teak, well smoothed, but not polished. A metal ring at one end takes the tow-ropes, and both ends of a thinner rope are attached to two rings at the front corners of the board. There is thus a kind of long "bridle" to hold on by, and assist you in keeping your balance.

Of course, you should be able to swim, and a bathing costume is the only attire permissible.

the motor-boat, which is the usual beginner's method. But it is as well to learn the proper way, for you are almost certain to have tumbles at first.

Take hold of the reins, keeping your hands about a foot apart. The motor-boat will be starting slowly—but you must watch the tow-ropes carefully, prepared for the jerk as the towline becomes taut. This is when good judgment will help, for if the jerk, be it ever so slight, catches you standing up with the lines loose you will probably come off!

Slowly you gather speed, and if it is your first trip you will probably find it extremely difficult to keep your balance, even if you are only kneeling on the board. But sea-legs are soon acquired. The bridle helps you a little, and you quickly learn that its careful manipulation means a lot.

The speed becomes greater, and the front of the board rises more and more. Then it is that keeping the reins short and taut, and leaning back, often saves one from going overboard.

Thirty miles an hour . . . and the board is skimming along and slapping the water like an outboard motor-boat. But the thrill is far greater. Try it!

With motor-boat racing and surf-riding, the seaside this summer is being livened up considerably. If you want a new kind of thrill, try this! You'll find full instructions here.

The Trader of Vana-Vana!

a bruise on the boy trader's cheek; and Ken soon learned that he knew of the fracas at the Dutchman's station, two or three miles away.

"This feller plenty glad see feller Cap'n King, eye belong him," declared O'otu. "Plenty glad along feller white master he stop along Vana-Vana. Plenty glad white feller master he kill feller Dussman. Feller Dussman he plenty too much bad feller altogether!"

"Kill," in the *beche-de-mer*, implies only a beating. In the native sense of the word, King of the Islands had "killed" the Dutchman.

"Feller Sululo he come along this place," went on O'otu. "That feller boy he plenty kill along Dussman. Back belong him plenty too much kill, my word. Feller Dussman he no good feller. He buy feller Sululo along this feller, along plenty bead, five-five fathom shell-money. Plenty good price along that feller Sululo. Now that feller he come along this place, belong O'otu, all same before."

And O'otu showed a flashing set of white teeth as he laughed. Sululo, having run away from the master to whom his chief had sold him, belonged once more to O'otu—possibly to be sold again for beads and shell-money. That state of affairs seemed to please O'otu mightily.

"S'pose feller white master Dussman he come along this place along feller Sululo?" asked Ken, a little uneasy as to what might happen to the runaway house-boy if Vanderbank claimed him.

O'otu grinned.

"Feller Sululo he hide along bush, s'pose feller Dussman he come along this place," he answered. "Us feller say no see feller Sululo, eye belong us—no see Sululo any more altogether. S'pose feller Dussman he wantee findum, he go lookee along bush, eye belong him. Us feller no savvy."

Obviously, O'otu had not been brought up to speak the truth. But Ken was glad to believe that the house-boy would be safe from the vengeance of the bully of Vana-Vana.

There were a crowd of natives on the beach, watching the canoe and the ketch. Among them, as he talked to the chief, Ken sighted Sululo. The native boy, rejoicing in his new-found freedom, was strutting along the beach, his kinky hair adorned with scarlet hibiscus blossoms.

Ken, being ready to bid for all the copra for sale at Vana-Vana, and O'otu in such high good-humour, matters of business were not long in getting settled. Presents of glass beads and gaudy calico were bestowed on the chief and his leading men as a necessary preliminary to business; beads of great value to the untutored islanders, and worth perhaps ten shillings to a white trader.

Then, with many expressions of regard for the white master feller captain, O'otu went down into his

canoe, and was paddled back to the beach.

"Hallo!" ejaculated Hudson suddenly, as he stood watching the chief of Vana-Vana landing. "The Dutchman!"

Ken looked to the shore. The grass-houses that composed the village of O'otu were built above the beach, on the edge of a palm-grove, beyond which lay the thick bush that covered the greater part of the island. From a bush-path a bulky figure had emerged, and was striding into the village, plainly in view from the beach and the sea. It was Vanderbank!

He had changed his dirty loin-cloth for an equally dirty suit of white drill, and a shabby pith helmet was on his head. Under it, his bearded face looked grim and savage, and showed very plainly the marks of the conflict of a few hours before.

"They're afraid of the swab!" remarked Hudson.

That the Vana-Vana natives feared the Dutchman was plain enough. They fell back from his path, watching him uneasily—though there was not a man there who would not have been glad of a chance of detaching his head from his shoulders and smoking it as a trophy over a wood-fire. O'otu, chief as he was, showed signs of uneasiness as he saw the Dutch trader. Ken looked along the beach among the scattered natives, but failed to see Sululo. No doubt the escaped house-boy had fled into the bush at the first warning that the Dutchman was coming.

The shipmates of the Dawn watched the Dutchman curiously. They guessed that he had arrived at the native village to demand back his house-boy, and they hoped that Sululo would find a place of safety in the bush. Certainly a white man had no chance of finding him there, unless the other natives lent aid.

The Dutchman suddenly caught sight of the ketch lying at anchor between the beach and the outer reef, and he came to a halt, fixing his eyes on Ken's craft. For a full minute he stood in his tracks, staring savagely at the ketch, and at the faces of the white men looking over the rail.

Then he strode on his way to the house of the chief; a grass house larger than the rest, with an open space before it.

O'otu, coming up from the beach, met him there. His manner as he saluted the Dutch trader was almost cringing. Somehow or other, the bully of Vana-Vana had put fear into the hearts of the treacherous Melanesian savages. There were a hundred brawny cannibals to be seen, most of them armed, but all of them looked on the Dutch trader with fear and respect.

Outside the house, Vanderbank stood in talk with the chief. Even at the distance, some faint echo of his loud, booming voice reached the shipmates.

O'otu, to judge by his gestures, was endeavouring to pacify the trader, no doubt explaining to him that Sululo was hidden in the bush

and was not to be found. If that was the case, he did not succeed in satisfying Vanderbank.

The Dutchman's loud voice grew louder, his bruised face more distorted with rage, and he shook a clenched fist in the air. His fierce anger evidently scared the natives, for they fell back farther, leaving him alone with the chief; and O'otu glanced to right and left, a good deal like an animal seeking a way of escape. His gestures multiplied, as he sought to pacify the trader; and the shipmates, watching, wondered how the strange scene would end.

The altercation calmed down; Vanderbank lowered his voice, and a grin was seen to appear on O'otu's black, tattooed face. His teeth flashed in the blaze of the setting sun.

The chief waved a hand, and several of the blacks gathered round him, and he addressed them forcibly. There was a jabbering and grinning and waving of spears, and more than a dozen blacks started for the bush at a run.

Ken set his lips.

"Does that mean that they're going to give up Sululo, Kit?" he said.

"Looks like it!"

The shipmates could have little doubt. Obviously, the Dutchman had gained his point, whatever it was, and they did not doubt that he was demanding back his house-boy. That crowd of blacks disappearing into the bush looked as if Sululo was to be sought and handed over.

Ken had intervened between the bully of Vana-Vana and his house-boy, feeling that he had no choice. But it looked now as if poor Sululo's last state would be worse than his first. It was easy to imagine how the Dutchman would deal with him, when no white man was by to intervene.

"My sainted Sam!" he muttered. "The black swabs! But I reckon they'd sell their own fathers and mothers for a fathom of shell money."

"Or cheaper!" added Hudson drily. "Most likely Vanderbank has offered that black thief a dozen yards of calico, or a harpoon, or something of the sort, to hand the boy over. It's all up with him."

"Feller Sululo he plenty kill bimeby, sar," said Kaio-lalulalonga calmly. "That feller Dussman he kill um plenty along stick, my word. Kill-dead that feller boy, plaps, bimeby."

The Dutchman, as if satisfied, continued to talk with the island chief. O'otu was still grinning, and his glance several times wandered to the ketch—to the faces of Ken and his shipmate looking shoreward. Finally, Vanderbank turned and strode away, and disappeared the way he had come. The chief went into his grass-house and also disappeared from sight. A score or more of the blacks, spears in hand, followed those who had gone into the bush. It was scarcely possible to doubt that the hunt was up for Sululo.

The sun dipped below the horizon and darkness fell on the Pacific and the lonely island of Vana-Vana. Ken still stood by the rail, watching the shore as the stars came out in a sky of dark blue velvet. The boy trader was greatly disturbed in mind.

But he was powerless to intervene, for the present at least. He could only hope that in the dark intricacies of the bush, the black boy would succeed in keeping clear of his fellow-tribesmen who were hunting him—if indeed, as seemed certain, it was Sululo they were hunting.

Even to the cunning, stealthy savages, a hunt in the bush after nightfall was a baffling task; and Ken, thinking it over, had little doubt that Sululo would remain free till morning at least. And when the new day dawned, King of the Islands would be able to take a hand in the game again!

The Beach Market.

ON board the ketch watch and ward was carefully kept through the hours of darkness. In the close proximity of a cannibal island, Ken left nothing to chance. He was at Vana-Vana to trade—but he was aware how often and how suddenly, peaceful bartering for copra and pearl-shell turned to fierce and desperate fighting among the treacherous savages of the Black Islands.

In the morning, the boy trader was to go ashore for the weighing of the copra, but the scales would be set up on the beach, under cover of the rifles of an armed boat's crew. King of the Islands, with his kind temper and scrupulously just dealing, had less trouble with natives than many South Sea trading skippers. But he was always prepared for it; for there was little telling what turn the flighty mind of a savage might take.

He was glad when the pearly light in the east announced the coming of a new day. The sun leaped above the horizon, and night rolled away like a curtain that is drawn.

In the rising sunlight, King of the Islands scanned the shore, and the village of grass-houses back of the beach.

Natives were to be seen on the beach and moving about among the houses, but there was no sign of any excitement. Black men on the beach made friendly gestures to the men on the ship; and two or three canoes came off with fruits to sell, piled in glistening heaps. Ken called to one of the islanders who was chaffering for bananas with Kaio-lalulalonga.

"You feller boy, you savvy where feller Sululo he stop?" asked the boy trader.

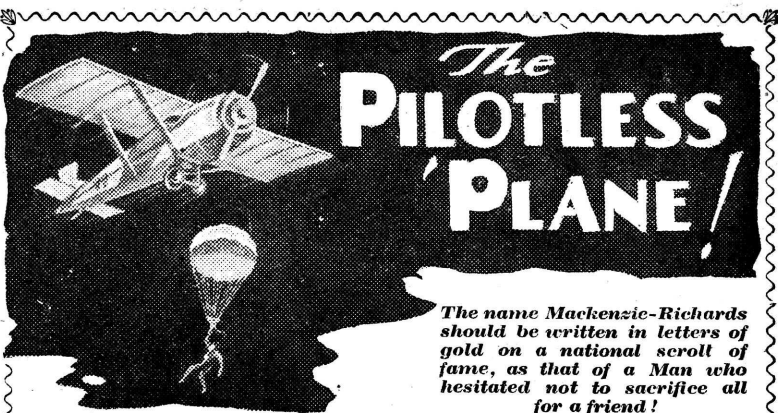
The black man nodded and grinned, and waved a dusky paw towards the distant bush beyond the village.

"Feller Sululo he stop along bush, sar!" he answered.

"What name black feller go along brush, day before?"

"He plenty fright along feller Dussman, sar. Feller Dussman he say, give feller knife, feller pipe, plenty feller tobacco, along big chief O'otu givem feller Sululo along Dussman, sar. Sululo he savvy plenty. He hide along bush. He plenty fright!" And the black man chuckled.

Sululo's lot might have been his own, but ideas do not penetrate



The name Mackenzie-Richards should be written in letters of gold on a national scroll of fame, as that of a Man who hesitated not to sacrifice all for a friend!

THE mettle of Flying-Officer Mackenzie-Richards had already been severely tried. A fearless test pilot, he had startled the world by allowing himself to be cast off in his aeroplane in mid-air from the R.33 while she was tearing through space. That he managed to keep his little Gloster Grebe plane in flight at all then spoke much for his skill, and for a time at least that same skill stood him in good stead on a later occasion.

He and Mr. H. N. Green were flying a Bristol fighter over Sussex, carrying out wireless experiments. It was a bright, starlit, November night, and earlier in the evening they had descended at Croydon to true up their compass, as it had been a number of degrees out. Later, flying over East Grinstead, the compass went wrong again, and they decided to try to find their way back to Croydon by means of wireless signals.

They found this task very difficult, and then came the terrible realisation that they had only sufficient petrol for twenty more minutes! The two men talked the position over through the telephone, as casually as though their lives were not at stake. What a telephone conversation that must have been, with death just round the corner all the time!

They decided that the lesser of two evils was to try to make a landing as soon as possible. The pilot volplaned and came down as low as he dare over the dark countryside. But he could not see a suitable field to land in—not even with the use of a flare.

He noticed a thickly-wooded belt of country, and half made up his mind to crash the machine on the top of the trees and hope for the best. Then another thought struck him, and bringing into play almost the last gallon of petrol in his tank he put the plane's nose up, and called again to his companion.

Not thinking of himself at all, he asked Mr. Green if he had ever jumped out of a machine with a parachute, and finding he had not he gave his companion the fullest instructions he could. Mr. Green got out on to the body of the plane, and clung on.

The pilot throttled down, and turned the plane round. Then, moving round in his seat, he waved to his companion, who let go and immediately began to glide slowly to the ground, the parachute supporting him.

Then Mackenzie-Richards thought of himself. But the experiences of the last few minutes must have told even on his steel nerves. All he could do now was to jump out himself, hoping that the plane would fall somewhere where it would not do any damage. He took his hand off the control, got up out of his seat, and jumped.

But he had forgotten that in shutting off his engine before his observer got away he had lost a great deal of height.

The aeroplane, as though piloted by invisible hands, flew on through the night until the last drop of petrol was exhausted . . . then crashed harmlessly into the middle of a forest!

easily into the fuzzy skull of a Black Islander. Sululo's lot not being his own, the obtuse savage was quite unconcerned about it, except in the way of amusement.

The chaffering over, the canoes paddled back to the beach.

"That makes it clear, Kit," the boy trader remarked to the mate of the Dawn. "O'otu meant to keep Sululo, but the Dutchman has bribed him to give the boy up, and he seems to have offered a tall price."

"That's a game two can play at, Kit. If we draw on the stuff in the trade-room to outbid the Dutchman, I fancy that black scoundrel O'otu will hand the boy over to us."

"I daresay," replied Hudson. "But what will you do with him? We

don't want a black cannibal on this hooker."

"Take him aboard and drop him at another island," said Ken. "Dash it all, old man, we can't leave him to the Dutchman—after having made matters worse for him."

"Right, old bean," said Hudson, with a grin. "I suppose it's no use reporting Vanderbank to a High Commissioner four hundred miles away—when we happen to be anywhere near him. There wouldn't be much left of Sululo by the time the law got going on his behalf. It would take longer than it would take Vanderbank to cut another lawyer-cane in the bush. Let's give him a run on the ketch to Luva."

"That's the idea!"

The Trader of Vana-Vana!

Ken had no doubt of being able to settle the matter in that manner. A little later, the whaleboat was lowered, and the boy trader pulled ashore.

King of the Islands and Kaio-lalulalonga landed. Hudson remained in the whaleboat, with Lompo and Lufu, armed with rifles. On the ketch, three Hiva-Oa boys watched from the rail, also with loaded rifles in their hands.

These were the usual precautions in such circumstances; but there was no sign of trouble. The natives came cheerfully and smilingly down to the beach, where the scales were set up, with their bags of copra. The usual bargaining and chaffering began, but with every cunning and insidious trick of the savage on the part of the Vana-Vana blacks, and cool, firm decision on the part of King of the Islands. Kaio-lalulalonga presided over the scales, towering there like a bronze giant, cheery, and good-humoured, but firm as a rock in the interests of his little white master. Any native caught cheating, only grinned on being detected, and all was good humour and hilarity.

But King of the Islands, though he was attending to business, had not forgotten Sululo and his intention of ransoming him from the chief. Trade goods to the value of a couple of pounds were likely to be quite sufficient for the purpose. O'otu had not appeared on the beach. On inquiring where the big feller chief was, Ken was told that O'otu was still sleeping.

The weighing of the copra was proceeding amicably, amid the chattering and babbling and high falsetto laughter of the natives, when Tamano, one of the chief's leading men, a muscular buck adorned with shark's tooth necklaces and cartridge-clip earrings, came down from O'otu's grass-house. He bowed his fuzzy head to King of the Islands, with a clinking of his many ornaments.

"Big feller chief he say, white master captain he go along house belong O'otu, talk along him," said Tamano.

Ken glanced round. All was peaceful on the beach, and he had noted that most of the natives were unarmed, proof that they were not intending trouble. The whole crowd was under fire from the whaleboat and the ketch, if trouble had arisen. It was the opportunity Ken desired to speak to the chief on the subject of Sululo, and he nodded assent.

"Keep your eyes peeled, Kit, old man!" he called out. "I'm going up to the chief's house."

"Eye belong me he never shut!" grinned Hudson, and Ken laughed and followed the chinking and clinking Tamano.

Hudson's glance followed him, and then turned again on the crowded beach.

He expected to see King of the Islands again in a few minutes; and he little dreamed how long it was to

be before he set eyes once more on his shipmate!

The Unexpected Happens.

KING OF THE ISLANDS followed Tamano up the beach. The village was practically deserted. Almost all the adults were on the beach, taking part in or watching the trading, and many children and dogs sprawled and loafed in the sun among the huts. The house of O'otu, larger than the rest, stood a little apart from the others—a long, low building of plaited grass and pandanus thatch, backing close on the thick palm grove behind the village.

Tamano stopped at the principal doorway, screened with pandanus leaves, and drew the screen aside. He spoke to someone within, in the Melanesian dialect of Vana-Vana; and then stepped back and motioned to King of the Islands to enter. Ken was still in full view of the beach and the boat, and he had no doubts. Merely from customary precaution, he kept the butt of his revolver close to his hand as he entered the house of the chief.

The pandanus screen dropped into place behind him.

It was a flimsy screen, stirring in every breath of wind; but it hid King of the Islands from the beach as effectually as a stone wall could have done.

O'otu was sprawling on a couch of tapa mats. A twilight reigned in this apartment of the chief's house, and the stuffy atmosphere was redolent of trade gin. A square bottle half full, stood by the chief's couch. It flashed into Ken's mind that this was, to some extent, the explanation of Vanderbank's influence on the island. For there was little doubt that it was the Dutchman who supplied O'otu with trade gin.

"This feller big chief plenty glad see feller white master, along house belong him," said O'otu amiably.

"This feller he plenty glad see big feller chief along house," answered Ken gravely. A black boy brought bottle and glass, which Ken politely declined.

"Feller King of the Islands he plenty good feller," continued O'otu. "He no same feller Dussman."

And the chief of Vana-Vana made a grimace of repugnance.

Ken nodded and smiled. He hoped that he compared favourably with the Dutch trader, and wondered whether O'otu had sent for him merely to pay him compliments. No doubt, however, the chief wanted something, and was approaching the subject in the roundabout way of the savage. But Ken, who was anxious to get back to the beach, came down to business without delay.

"This feller he want house-boy," said Ken. "S'pose you sell that feller Sululo, me give knife, trade-box along bell he ring, five-five fathom shell money. All this thing me give along that house-boy Sululo."

"Feller Sululo he hide along bush," said O'otu. "He plenty too much fright."

He clapped his hands, and Tamano

entered the hut. The palm-leaf screen pulled aside for a moment, let in a glare of blinding sunlight. Then it fell into place, and all was dusky again in the chief's house. Ken, whose back was to the door, turned his head as Tamano entered. Even as he turned it, the treacherous savage who had been lolling on the tapa mats, the picture of half-drunken laziness, awoke to sudden ferocious activity. With the spring of a tiger he hurled himself forward, and a violent shove in the back sent King of the Islands staggering against Tamano. Instantly that brawny savage's grasp was on him and round him, pinning his arms to his sides as in a circle of steel.

It came so suddenly that King of the Islands, wary as he was, was taken entirely by surprise. He hardly realised what had happened, when the iron grasp of Tamano closed round him. And at the same moment the hut was full of blacks, swarming from the adjoining apartments. A heavy black hand was clamped over Ken's mouth, stopping the cry he would have uttered to his shipmate on the beach. More hands grasped the boy trader, their grip grinding into his flesh.

For a full minute, that silent, desperate struggle lasted, before King of the Islands was borne down in the filthy reeds on the floor, a gag of tapa forced into his mouth, and his limbs bound with cords of fibre.

"White feller master he plenty big fool!" gasped O'otu. "Me no flaid along him. Me fright along feller Dussman. Me no fright along feller King of the Islands. You no buy feller Sululo along shell money! No, sar! Feller Dussman he buy that feller Sululo. Feller Dussman he buy feller King of the Islands. You savvy plenty?"

The chief of Vana-Vana drew aside a corner of the palm-leaf screen, and peered out into the blazing sunlight of the beach. Then he turned back, and spoke an order in the Melanesian dialect. Two of the blacks picked up the boy trader, and passed out of the back of the hut into the palm grove behind. By that way they were screened from view of the beach and the ship by the building itself. In a few minutes they had traversed the palm grove, and entered the high bush beyond.

From the tangled thicket by the side of the runway, as they passed, a black face stared out for a second. In that second, King of the Islands glimpsed it, and he recognised Sululo.

The black face vanished the next instant, unseen or unnoticed by the bearers. They tramped on along the dark runway, the boy trader sprawling on their shoulders, a prisoner, helpless, far from all help and hope—and yet, even in those fearful moments that glimpse of the staring face of Sululo in the bush had brought a gleam of hope to the heart of King of the Islands.

(Did you ever read a finer adventure yarn than this? There's another of the same high standard in next Monday's MODERN BOY. Make sure of reading it by ordering YOUR copy to-day!)