

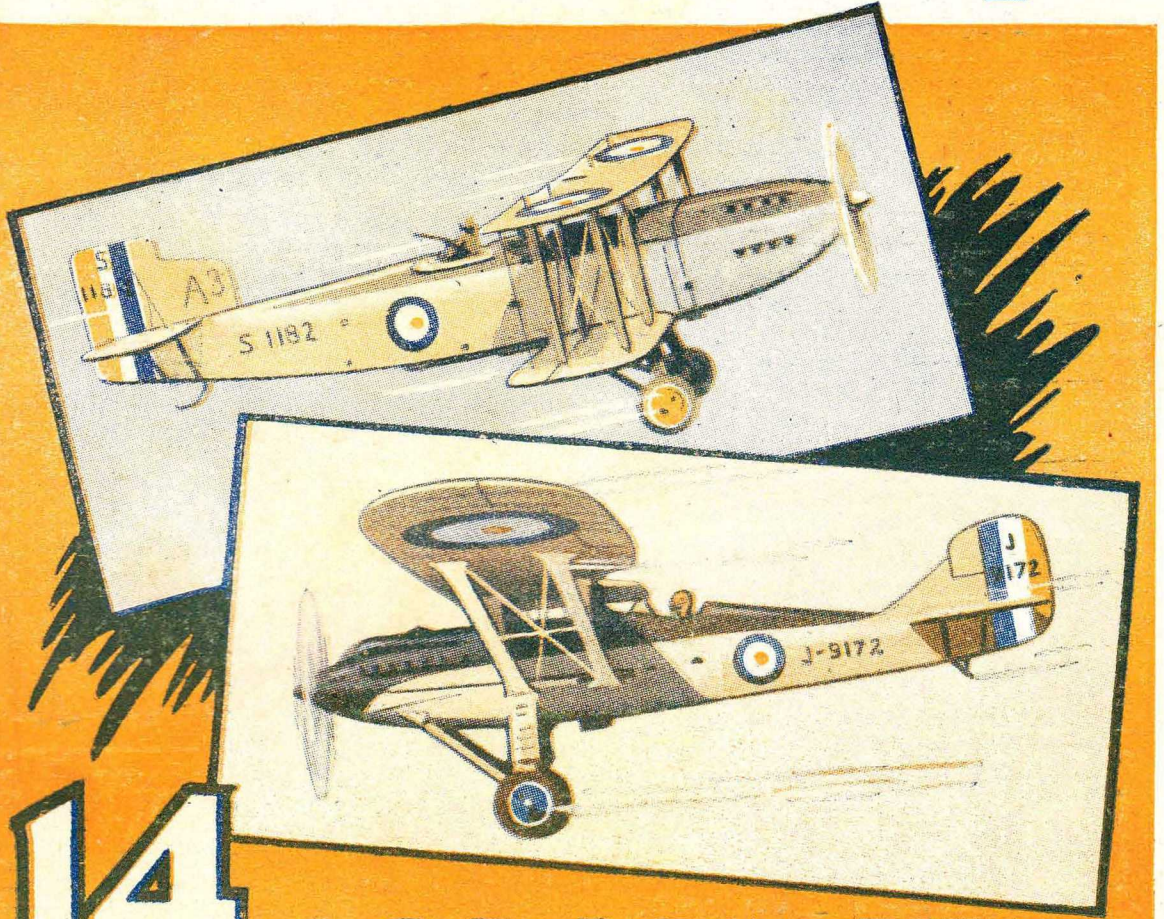
FREE GIFTS FOR ALL THIS WEEK!

The MODERN BOY

EVERY MONDAY.
Week Ending January 25th, 1930.

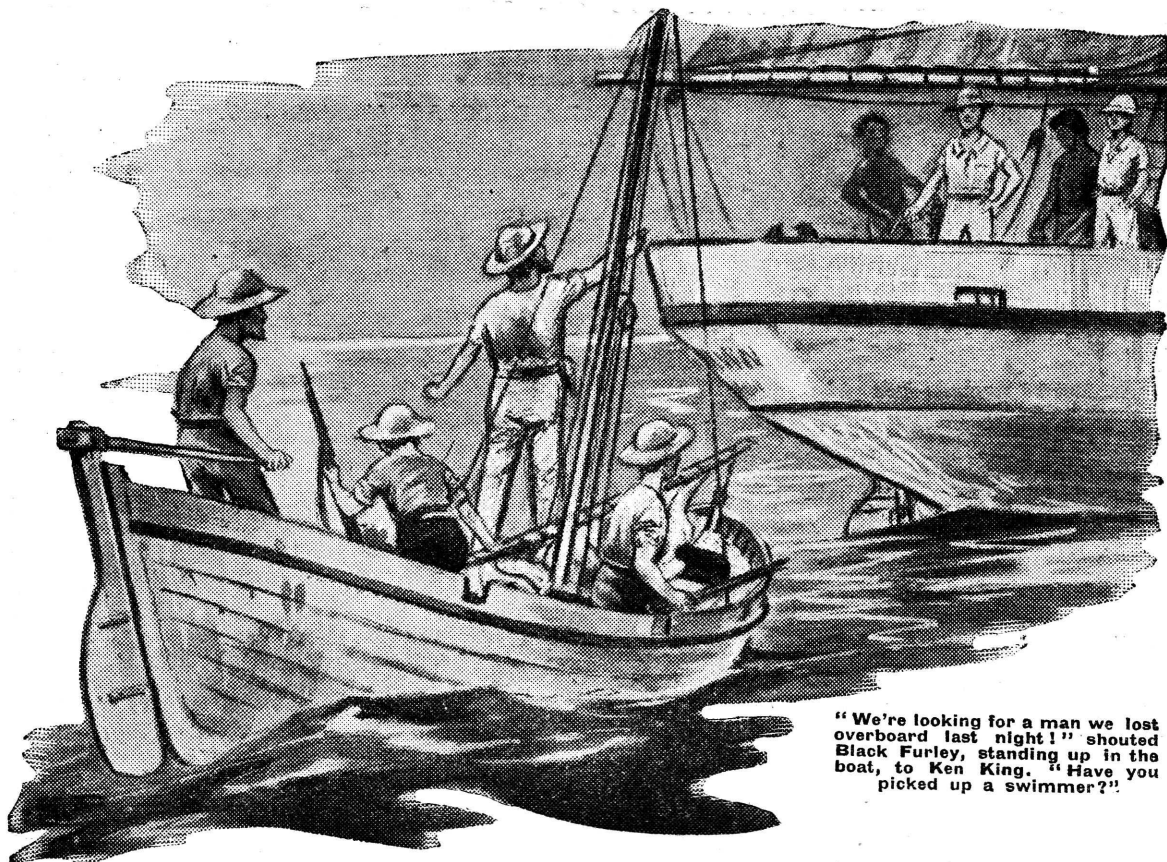
No. 103.
Vol. 4.

2^D.



14 COLOURED PICTURES
with Gummed Backs
FREE

These 2 and
ALBUM
Inside



"We're looking for a man we lost overboard last night!" shouted Black Furley, standing up in the boat, to Ken King. "Have you picked up a swimmer?"

PEARLS and PERIL!

THE FIRST of another splendid series of Complete Stories of South Sea life and adventure, featuring King of the Islands and his crew aboard the ketch Dawn

By CHARLES HAMILTON

Night Alarm!

"BIG feller noise stop along bush, sar!" said Kaio-lalulalonga to his skipper, Ken King

King of the Islands—to give Ken his nickname—nodded without speaking. Standing on the deck of his ketch Dawn, with one hand resting on the teak rail, he looked shoreward in the glimmering moonlight.

The Dawn was anchored between the shore reef and the outer reef of the island at Lotu. Over the island and the wide Pacific the full, round moon soared. On the sea and the lagoon it was almost as bright as day, and the beach of white sand and powdered coral was dazzling to the eye. But back of the beach lay the high bush, dark and shadowy and sinister. Only here and there, in the open runways, the moonlight glimmered; the mass of the tangled bush was black.

The night was hot. Hardly a breath of wind stirred the Pacific. The lagoon lay like a sheet of glass; the Dawn's cable dropped sheer a hundred feet to the coral bottom, and the ketch hardly stirred.

King of the Islands had been idly pacing the little after-deck in the still silence of the tropic night, when the sounds from the bush drew his attention to Lotu. Forward, the Hiva-Oa crew sprawled on their sleeping-mats. Aft, Kit Hudson, the Australian mate of the Dawn, slept in a long Madeira chair, taking his "watch below" on deck, where it was a trifle cooler than in the state-room. At midnight he was to relieve the boy skipper of the Dawn. But eight bells had not yet struck.

Kaio-lalulalonga—Koko, for short—the Kanaka boatswain, sat on the hatchway coamings, his ukulele across his sinewy knee, occasionally plucking at a string with a brown finger and humming a Hawaiian tune. But Koko laid the ukulele down, rose to his feet, and stepped to the side as he heard the noise from the bush.

Strange and eerie, in the silence of the night, came the sounds from the mysterious, trackless bush. Faint at first, but growing louder—nearer.

King of the Islands' face grew grim as he looked and listened. He had put in at Lotu for wood and water, and

the dying down of the wind had left the Dawn captive in the lagoon. He did not want to see anything of the blacks who lived on Lotu—fierce and savage cannibals. For long minutes he listened as the distant, indefinable sounds in the bush drew nearer. At last he turned to Kaio-lalulalonga.

"What you tinkee, head belong you, along that feller noise, Koko?" he asked.

"Tinkee plenty black feller he stop along bush, sar," answered the bo'sun. "Black feller makee plenty noise, mouth belong him."

There was a yawn from the Madeira chair, and Kit Hudson rose to his feet. The noise from Lotu had awakened him. He joined the boy trader at the rail.

"Some sort of a corroboree going on, Ken," he remarked.

"A cannibal feast in the bush, perhaps!" said Ken.

"No tinkee, sar," said Koko, shaking his dusky head. "Black feller he run along bush, sar."

"What name he run along bush?"

"Along some feller he run, sar, me tinkee."

King of the Islands stared at the blackness of the bush that rose like an impenetrable wall beyond the glistening beach. He had little doubt the the Kanaka was right—he could pick up the sound of crackling branches amid the discordant cries and yells. It could not mean an intended attack on the ketch—the savages would not have given voice while still out of sight of the ship. Doubtless some hapless fugitive was fleeing, with a mob of howling savages in pursuit.

The boy trader could picture some panting islander—a prisoner from a rival tribe, escaped from the clutches of his captors—threading the endless runways of the bush, with a horde of demons at his heels!

"If he reaches the beach——" he muttered, picking up his rifle from the rack at the foot of the mizzen.

If the fugitive broke out of the bush into the open, there was a chance to help him, and King of the Islands was the man to give help if he could.

"Plenty soon that feller he comey along beach, sar!" remarked Koko.

The din in the bush was louder and louder. It approached nearer and nearer the open, moonlit beach. Ken and Kit watched anxiously, expecting every moment to see the savage crowd break out of cover. The Hiva-Oa crew—Lompo, Lufu, Tomoo, Kolulo, and Danny, the cooky-boy—were all wide awake now.

"Hark!" exclaimed Hudson suddenly.

Crack! Clear and sharp, amid the howling of the savages and the crackling of the undergrowth, came the ring of a revolver. A yell followed.

"I've never heard of white men on Lotu," said Hudson. "But that was a white man's gun."

"White feller no stop along Lotu, sar," said Kaio-lalulalonga, shaking his dusky head. "Plenty black feller he stop; white feller he no stop."

King of the Islands did not heed as he stared at the blackness of the bush. He had taken it for granted at first that the man who fled was some native prisoner of the Lotu blacks. But the ring of the revolver told a different tale.

"A shipwrecked man, perhaps, as there's no white settlement on Lotu. We've got to save him, Kit."

Following the shot and the death-yell of the wretch who had been struck by it, the howling broke out louder and fiercer. Suddenly, from some opening in the black wall of the bush a figure staggered, panting with exhaustion. The bright moonlight streamed on a white man, clad in torn and ragged ducks, his bronzed, bearded face haggard, his eyes almost starting from his head.

"Lower the whaleboat!" rapped out Ken. "Ahoy!" he shouted, waving his hand to the man on the beach.

His powerful hail carried the distance, and the fugitive from the bush spun round and stared towards the ketch.

"This way!" roared King of the Islands. "Quick with the boat, Kit!"

Hudson was already leaping into the boat. Kaio-lalulalonga and three

of the Hiva-Oa boys bent to the oars, and the boat shot like an arrow towards the beach. King of the Islands remained standing at the rail, rifle in hand, ready to cover the boat's crew with his fire. He shouted again to the tottering man on the edge of the bush.

The tattered white man stood staring towards the ketch without moving. Ken had expected him to dash down the beach towards the lagoon—towards safety. He made a ghastly figure as he stood there in the silver stream of moonlight—tattered, haggard, sweating, trickling with blood from the thorns of the bush. His hesitation mystified the boy trader. Rescue lay before him—a horde of howling savages behind. Yet he did not seize the chance of safety.

From the bush a savage figure leaped, spear in hand. It was the first of the pursuers to break cover.

"Run!" shouted Ken. "This way—run for it!"

Whatever might have been the cause of the man's hesitation, the sight of the Lotu savage breaking out of the bush in pursuit settled the

KEN KING'S RETURN!

After a spell in dock at her home port—the island of Lalinge, in the South Seas—the ketch Dawn is once again sailing in search of trade and adventure, with Ken King—King of the Islands—in command.

Old readers will welcome heartily the return of Ken, Kit Hudson, Koko, and the other members of the Dawn's gallant crew.

NEW READERS, meet them now—these cheery comrades of the best-known ketch in the whole South Seas. Spick and span after her overhaul, the Wind of Adventure is again filling her sails!

COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE.

matter. He started running down the beach towards the water. The whaleboat had almost reached the shore. But fifty yards of shelving beach separated the running man from the water. He was running hard now, but he was evidently exhausted, and he tottered as he ran. Behind him, with uplifted spear, came the brawny black, gaining at every stride.

Ken lifted his rifle to his shoulder. Coolly he glanced through the sights. The uplifted spear was only a yard behind the running man when the boy trader pulled trigger.

There was a yell from the Lotu cannibal, and he went rolling over and over on the shelving beach, the spear crashing down on the coral.

The white man ran desperately on. From the blackness of the bush a crowd of savages emerged. With flashing spears and fierce howls, they sped on the track of the running man. But he was close to the water now.

The whaleboat thudded on the sand, and Kit Hudson leaped ashore,

running to meet the fugitive. Bang, bang! came the roar of the rifle from the ketch as King of the Islands pitched his bullets into the thick of the howling mob of savages, effectively checking their rush.

Kit Hudson reached the staggering man as he stumbled on the coral and fell within a few yards of the lagoon's margin. The Australian grasped him and dragged him on. He was tossed bodily into the boat and Hudson leaped in after him.

Koko and Lompo pushed off with their oars, and the whaleboat shot out on the lagoon.

The islanders rushed again as they saw their victim disappearing, but the whaleboat was far out of their reach when they came howling down to the water's edge. Spears and stones were hurled, but they fell short and splashed into the water. Three or four of the savages plunged in and swam after the boat.

King of the Islands fired fast. Bullets splashed into the silvery water among the swimmers. One of the blacks threw up his hands and disappeared under the water. The rest of the swimmers splashed and scrambled back to the shore.

On the beach the Lotu savages howled and yelled, and brandished spears and trade tomahawks. More and more of the tribe poured out of the bush and joined the howling mob on the beach. Ken dropped his rifle and gave a hand to help the rescued man. The man sank down on the deck, half-fainting.

Lotu was now a hornets' nest to which King of the Islands was anxious to turn the stern of the ketch. The howling horde on the beach was increasing every moment in numbers, and it was obvious that an attack on the ketch would follow as soon as the Lotu blacks could get canoes to the spot. "Up hook" was the next order; and the tow-rope was run from the whaleboat to the stem of the Dawn, the Hiva-Oa boys manned the oars, and the Dawn glided out under the bright moon to the open sea—the howling of the savages dying away in the distance astern.

The Man from Lukwe.

KING OF THE ISLANDS stood by the binnacle, looking curiously at the man he had saved.

Hudson had placed him in a Madeira chair, and Danny, the cooky-boy, had brought him food and drink. The man ate and drank ravenously, and then leaned back in the long chair, resting. All the time his eyes never seemed to rest, but roved about him watchfully, suspiciously. He had spoken hardly a word since he had come on board and, so far, the boy trader had not questioned him.

Lotu now lay a black mass far astern in the moonlight. There was still hardly a breath of wind on the sea. The whaleboat had been swung up to the davits and, at a safe distance from the savages of Lotu, King of the Islands was waiting for a wind.

While he looked curiously at the man in the Madeira chair, he was aware that the man was watching

Pearls and Peril!

him furtively, stealthily. Safe on board a white man's ship, far from the howling cannibals who had hunted him in the bush, the man was still uneasy, as if he doubted whether he was not still among enemies.

Ken was in no hurry to question him. He gave the man plenty of time to recover. It was the rescued man who spoke first.

"What ship's this?" he asked abruptly.

"The Dawn, from Lalinge," answered Ken.

"The Dawn! That's King of the Islands' ship!" exclaimed the man.

"I am King of the Islands," replied Ken. "You've heard of me?"

"King of the Islands!" repeated the man. He sat up in the chair and looked intently at the boy trader.

"Ay, ay, I've heard of you—there's few in the South Seas who haven't, I reckon. What were you doing at Lotu? There's no trade there."

"Wood and water—and waiting for a wind," answered Ken. "But what's more to the point is, what were you doing on Lotu?"

The man did not answer immediately.

"You haven't told me your name yet," said Ken.

"My name?" There was a moment's pause. "Robinson—John Robinson."

Ken made no comment. In the Islands there were plenty of men who had good reasons for not mentioning their real names. And Robinson, as a borrowed name, was almost as overdone as Smith and Brown. What this man's name might be Ken did not know—except that it was not Robinson!

Kit Hudson lounged up and joined his comrade. His eyes were very keenly on "John Robinson." Kaiolalulalonga, sitting on the hatchway once more with his ukulele on his knees, was watching the man, and Ken could read the distrust in the Kanaka's black eyes.

"That's my name!" said the man in the Madeira chair, and his eyes glinted defiantly under his shaggy, beetling brows.

"The Islands are full of them," remarked Hudson carelessly, and the haggard man gave him a black look.

"How did you get on Lotu?"

"I fell overboard," said Robinson at length. "I was on a pearling lugger and I fell overboard. I swam for it, and got on shore at Lotu soon after sundown."

"And your friends on the lugger—did they leave you to it?"

"I reckon they were asleep, and never knew."

"Not even a man at the helm?" asked Hudson.

"I reckon I was the man at the helm."

Ken and Hudson exchanged glances. How much truth there was in this story they could not tell, but it didn't ring true, even if there was a grain of truth in it.

"They'd been drinking," said Robinson, cycling them furtively. "We'd all been drinking, come to that. That's how it happened."

"And you couldn't get back on the lugger—in a dead calm?"

"I was caught in the current—there's a strong current on the other side of Lotu. I swept me away before I knew where I was. I'd been drinking, as I told you."

"Hard luck!" said Hudson, with a whimsical smile.

"I've told you a straight yarn," muttered Robinson, giving him a look that was half-fierce, half-furtive. "Why shouldn't I?"

"I don't know why you shouldn't, but you haven't," answered Kit coolly. "But you've nothing to fear here. If you've deserted from some ship, keep it to yourself. You used your gun when the niggers were after you on Lotu. You must have wrapped it up carefully from the wet, before you fell overboard—by accident!"

King of the Islands smiled, and the man in the Madeira chair scowled fiercely at the young Australian.

"Keep your business to yourself, my man, if you choose," said Ken good-naturedly. "Whatever you are, and wherever you came from, we had to save you from those howling brutes on Lotu. We'll give you a passage on the ketch to the next port, Lukwe!"

"You're stopping at Lukwe?" Robinson ejaculated.

"Ay, ay; after that, Lalinge. You can land at either place."

"I reckon I'd rather keep on to Lalinge," muttered Robinson. "I've got enemies at Lukwe—they're a rough crowd on Lukwe, Captain King."

"Did your lugger belong to Lukwe?" asked Hudson.

"Suppose it did?" snarled Robinson, glaring at the mate. "Anyhow, I don't want to land at Lukwe. I've got enemies there—my life wouldn't be worth much on Lukwe. I'll make it worth your while to land me somewhere else, Captain King. I'm not a beggar—once I'm ashore at a white man's port I can pay my passage. Put me ashore at Kufa—or Piri—anywhere you like."

Ken looked at him curiously. On Lukwe, the most lawless island in the Pacific, the crowd of traders and pearlers were a rough crew. King of the Islands had had his own troubles with Black Furlley, and Dandy Peter, and others of the lawless Lukwe crowd. It was probable

THIS WEEK'S

FREE COLOURED PICTURES

Each of the coloured pictures given away with MODERN BOY will be briefly described, as they appear week by week. Cut out the "chats" and keep them by you for reference in connection with your Album.

THE FAIREY III F. THREE-SEATER.—Our first coloured picture shows the maid-of-all-work of the Royal Air Force—the Fairey III F. There is hardly a thing this machine hasn't done.

It has worn floats and landing-wheels, and even skis. It has been used for coastal patrol, river patrol, reconnaissance, message carrying, and almost everything you can think of. It has been fitted with almost every type of engine—air-cooled and water-cooled, Vee and radial. And it has always flown well.

It would fill an issue of MODERN BOY to describe all the gadgets and fittings with which the Fairey III F. is, or can be, equipped. Bomb racks, wireless, flotation gear, guns, cameras, hundreds of other things, are all tucked neatly away into it.

The Fairey III F. is a little difficult to distinguish from her first cousin, the Fairey Fox, whose picture will be given away with a later issue of MODERN BOY. When you come to compare the two you will soon notice the minor differences in the engine cowling, the tail, the wing-strutting, and the seating. Apart from that, she is like the other famous Fairey machines about the nose. If you can learn to recognise the Fairey "nose" at sight, you will have learned quite a lot about the looks of aircraft.

It was a squadron of Fairey III F.'s which flew in formation to the Cape and back. The four machines covered 11,000 miles in this flight, and kept to their time-table throughout just as if they were trains.

They have made the Cairo-Cape flight again since, and this is probably a record for formation flying over a long distance keeping to a regular time-table throughout. And when the first Premier of England to fly on State business—Mr. Ramsay MacDonald—was supplied with a machine, it turned out to be the same old Fairey III F.!

This plane is just as popular in foreign countries as it is with us. It isn't a fast machine, but it certainly isn't slow. It doesn't carry a huge load, although it carries enough bombs to make things unpleasant down below. For all-round, knock-about utility on land and water, the Fairey III F. is one of the best machines ever built.

THE WESTLAND WIZARD SINGLE-SEATER—is the subject of our second coloured picture. No fighter like the Wizard has ever before been seen in the Royal Air Force. Perhaps one will never be seen again. She is a monoplane.

Look at her broad, thick wing sitting on top of the fuselage, with the wide struts running down from the side. Contrast it with the picture of the Fairey III F., which has two narrow thin wings with complicated bracing between.

For all its strangeness, the Wizard is a wonderful aeroplane. No one is allowed to mention at present the true top speed of the latest Wizard, but if you watch it in flight you can see it doesn't loiter! Its climb is something terrific. Watch it dive from the height of a thousand feet or so and then zoom upwards as the pilot pulls the stick hard back! The Wizard shoots straight up like a lift, standing on its tail as it shoots heavenward. The fixed guns are carried inside the fuselage, so that if the mechanism jams, the pilot can easily get at it. The engine is supercharged and water-cooled, and the radiator can be drawn partly into the fuselage at great heights.

Most monoplanes are supposed to be less easily "thrown about" than biplanes, and that is why biplanes are so much more popular among the skilled pilots of the Royal Air Force. But the Wizard is different. She can bank, loop, roll, and Immelman-turn as fast as anything of her speed. And she has one big advantage over the biplane.

When the pilot is sitting in the sky, 10,000 feet up, waiting for some unsuspecting fighter or reconnaissance aircraft to pass below so that he can pounce on it like a hawk with both guns pumping out lead—then the Wizard has an advantage. For the pilot has a perfectly clear view of the air below on either side, whereas the biplane pilot has the lower wing obscuring his view down and forming a blind spot behind which the enemy might be concealed.

Next week's Free Coloured Pictures will represent the Vickers' Victoria Troop Carrier and the Fairey Long-Range Monoplane.

enough that if Robinson had enemies on Lukwe he might have good reason to fear landing there.

"I'm not changing my course," said the boy trader. "Time's money! But you can keep on the Dawn till we reach Lalinge, if you like."

Robinson nodded, and, rising from the chair, stared round at the sea. Catspaws on the silvery water hinted that the breeze was coming at last. There was a hint of dawn in the eastern sky.

"You'll be getting your canvas on at daylight, Captain King!" he said. "I reckon if those niggers are given time they'll get their canoes round, and the ketch ain't far enough away to be safe. You want to go all out on your course."

"You can leave that to me," said King of the Islands. "If you want to sleep, Mr. Robinson, we can fix you up with a berth on the lockers below."

"I reckon I'd rather stay on deck if it's the same to you, captain. I don't feel safe about the niggers."

"Please yourself," said Ken.

Robinson nodded, and stretched himself in the long chair. His eyes closed from sheer weariness, and in a few minutes he was asleep.

King of the Islands moved away with a thoughtful look on his face. The wind was coming, but it would not reach the ketch till sunrise, and in the meantime there was nothing to do but wait. He sat on the taffrail, at a little distance from the man who slept in the Madeira chair, thinking.

"What do you think of him, Kit?" he asked, in a low voice.

"A tough specimen," answered the Australian. "I fancy he belonged to some craft out of Lukwe, and had his own reasons for deserting. I dare say he's a pearler, as he says—he looks it. They may have found pearls and quarrelled over them. Anyway, he slipped overboard after dark and swam to Lotu—taking the risk of the niggers. That shows that he must have been pretty desperate."

"May have counted on getting hold of a native canoe on Lotu to get away in," said Ken.

"That's it," said Hudson. "But he knew the risk he was running from the blacks, and he must have been desperate. We've got a queer sort of passenger, anyhow!"

"Well, we had to take him off Lotu," replied Ken. "He'd have been butchered if we hadn't picked

him off the beach. We're bound to see him through and land him safe."

"That's so," agreed Hudson.

Many times the rescued man stirred in his sleep. More than once his hand crept to the butt of the revolver stuck in his belt. Once he raised himself on an elbow, half-awake, and groped in the breast of his rough flannel shirt, as if to make sure that something was safe there. But he was still sleeping the sleep of utter weariness when dawn crept over the Pacific and the golden sun leaped up in the eastern sky.

With the sunrise came the wind—a light and fitful breeze, but sufficient to get the Dawn under way. Gladly King of the Islands rapped out orders to the Hiva-Oa boys. Sail

dropped again, and he slept once more.

Desperate Measures.

"FELLER boat he stop along sea, sar!"

King of the Islands followed the direction of the Kanaka's pointing finger. Under the bright sunrise the Pacific rolled blue round the gliding ketch, and Lotu was a purple patch astern on the sea. Against the dark of the island a white sail glanced. It was a large whaleboat, coming down before the wind towards the ketch.

Ken watched it curiously. It had emerged suddenly from beyond the island. There were four men in it—four roughly-clad, burly men in

"Now, Captain King, order your men to clap on sail, or I'll blow your brains out!"



was shaken out, and the graceful ketch glided through the blue waters.

The rattle of spars and cordage, the pattering of bare feet on the teak deck, awakened the man in the Madeira chair.

He started up, and stared round him dazedly, as if uncertain where he was. His left hand went into the breast of his shirt—his right clasped the butt of his revolver. But the busy captain and mate and crew of the ketch gave him no heed. He stared round him for some moments, and his haggard, stubbly face brightened as he saw that the ketch was under way. Then his head

was shaken out, and the graceful ketch glided through the blue waters. The rattle of spars and cordage, the pattering of bare feet on the teak deck, awakened the man in the Madeira chair. Robinson was still asleep.

"They want to speak us, Ken," said Hudson, looking at the approaching boat, and then glancing as Ken had done, at the sleeping man. "That's a signal to us, old man."

"We can let them speak," said King of the Islands. "We won't let

Pearls and Peril!

them board us, though. They look a rough crew—and these are lonely waters."

"I wonder if our friend yonder knows anything about them!" muttered Hudson.

"He told us that he was in a lugger—"

"Which I reckon means that he was in any craft but a lugger."

"Anyhow, we'll let them come up," answered Ken. And he called to the Hiva-Oa boys to shorten sail.

Robinson lifted his head from the Madeira chair and looked round him. He was awake now. He arose, stretched himself, and again his hand sought the breast of his shirt—a half-unconscious, furtive movement that did not escape the eyes of the shipmates.

"The wind at last, Captain King!" he said. "I reckon your sticks would carry more sail, captain."

The man broke off abruptly as his eyes fell on the whaleboat, coming on fast before the wind. For some moments he stood rooted to the deck, his eyes almost starting from their sockets as he stared at the boat.

"Furley!" muttered the haggard man, in low, husky tones. "Black Furley's boat!"

King of the Islands, as he caught the husky mutter, looked round at the whaleboat again. At the distance he had not recognised any of the boat's crew, but now he picked out a burly man with a black beard and thick black hair. He had come in contact with Black Furley of Lukwe before—trader and pearler, pearl-poacher and blackbirder. It was Furley who was waving the cotton rag as a signal to the ketch.

Robinson seemed to awake suddenly from a trance. He ran across the deck to King of the Islands.

"Clap on sail!" he panted. "Clap

on sail, captain! Every rag the sticks will carry!"

"I'm captain of this ship, Robinson," replied Ken icily.

"D'you know who's in that boat?" shouted Robinson. "Black Furley of Lukwe—the blackest scoundrel in the Pacific. D'you want every throat on your ketch cut?"

"Draw it mild, Robinson," drawled Hudson. "If Furley's looking for trouble, he'll get more than he wants on board this hooker."

"You fool!" shouted Robinson. "What use will your niggers be against that crew? Clap on sail, I tell you! This ketch could walk away from that whaleboat, even in this light wind! Clap on sail!"

"You're not commanding this ketch, Robinson; you're a castaway, picked up and given a passage! Belay your jawing tackle!"

"Captain," panted Robinson, "have a little sense! I tell you they're a dangerous crew—the most dangerous crew out of Lukwe—"

"Very likely. Keep cool," said Ken. "They're not coming on board! I don't trust Black Furley so far as that in lonely waters. No harm in letting them speak us."

"No feller here flaid along that feller crew, sar!" said Kaio-lalulalonga disdainfully.

Robinson turned frightened eyes to the approaching boat again. It would have been easy for the ketch to drop the whaleboat hopelessly behind, had her skipper chosen. But Ken did not choose, and Black Furley's boat was coming up fast.

It was clear that Robinson's fear was for himself. The ketch was in no danger, dangerous and ruffianly as Black Furley and his crew might be. The rifles on board could have riddled the crew of the whaleboat had they sought to make an attack. But an attack plainly was not in the minds of the pearl-ers. There were

arms in the boat, but the pearl-ers were not touching them. It was clear that Black Furley only desired to speak the ketch, and that he was not coming as an enemy.

"Will you keep clear of that boat, Captain King?" muttered Robinson huskily. "You can show her a clean pair of heels if you choose."

"I don't choose," answered Ken quietly.

"They're after me!" cried the man. "I tell you my life's not worth a foot of shell-money if they get me! Now will you show them your stern?"

"You told us last night that you fell overboard from a lugger," said Ken, fixing his eyes on the haggard face. "I knew it was not true. Is that the craft you left when you swam to Lotu?"

Robinson licked his dry lips. "I'll own up—it was! Now shake out sail—"

"Not till they've spoken us," said King of the Islands. "You're safe here. No man of that crew will step aboard this hooker. But— My sainted Sam!"

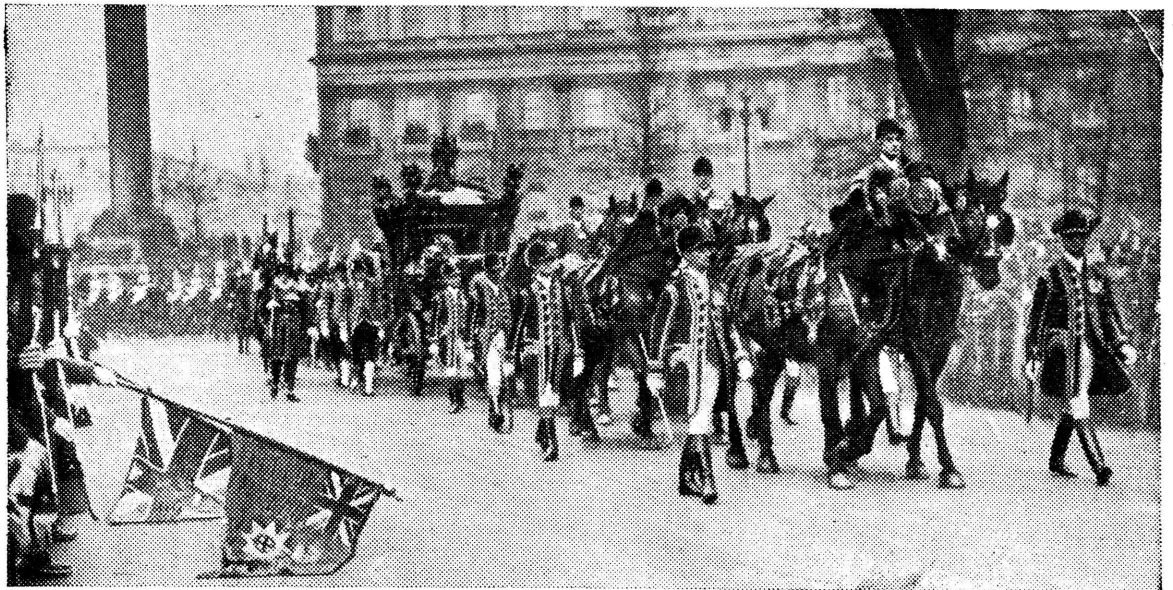
Ken broke off with a shout of surprise as Robinson suddenly tore his revolver from his belt and levelled it. His wild, savage eyes glared at Ken over the levelled barrel of the revolver.

Hudson made a movement, and the desperate man rapped out hoarsely:

"Lift a finger—any of you—and I pull trigger! Take care—you're dealing with a desperate man! Stand back, you! Now, Captain King, order your men to clap on sail and stand away from that boat, or I'll blow your brains out!"

The muzzle of the revolver was not three feet from the handsome, tanned face of the boy trader. The pearler's finger trembled on the trigger.

Ken stood immovable, a smile of contempt on his face. His lips did
(Continued on opposite page.)



When His Majesty the King sets forth to perform the ceremony of the Opening of Parliament, great pomp and ceremony rule the occasion. Tuesday of this week is the day when Londoners are treated again to this always popular "show," immense crowds lining thickly the route of the magnificent

procession, with troops in brilliant uniforms standing stiffly to attention, or presenting arms as Their Majesties pass in their stately carriage. Our photo shows the Guards' Colours being dipped in salute as the King and Queen pass on their way to the Houses of Parliament.

... move to utter the order the ruffian demanded.

Hudson, clenching his hands convulsively, stood back, watching for a chance to act. The man was in deadly, desperate earnest—and the slightest pressure of his finger was enough to carry out his threat. Ken's life trembled in the balance.

"You hear me?" hissed Robinson. "You hear me? Turn your ketch from that boat! Will you save your life? I swear I will drive a bullet through your brain if you do not make sail! Will you?"

"No!" The answer was cold, sharp, and clear. With death staring him in the face, Ken answered with icy coolness. Not to save his life would he have taken orders from this ruffian on his own deck.

Crash! A whizzing block struck the pearler behind the ear and pitched him forward. As he staggered, Kit Hudson leaped, and struck the revolver from his hand. The next moment Kaio-lalulalonga, whose unerring hand had hurled the block, was on the man with the spring of a tiger, bearing him to the deck.

With a choked cry, Robinson crashed on the hard teak, and the bo'sun, his brown face blazing with rage, stood over him. One sinewy hand pinned the man down—the other threw up a knife to strike.

"Koko!" shouted Ken, grasping the Kanaka's arm and stopping the blow.

"Me plenty killy that feller, sar!" panted Koko. "Plenty killy that swab along feller knife, sar!"

"No! Keep him where he is," said Ken. "You save feller life belong me, Koko, old coffee-bean; but no good killy that feller. Belay it."

Kaio-lalulalonga unwillingly sheathed the knife. But his grip was hard and heavy on the pearler.

Robinson lay helpless in the grasp of the powerful Kanaka as the Lukwe whaleboat ran alongside, and Black Furley stood on the thwarts to hail the ketch.

The Missing Pearl.

"AHOY, the ketch!"

"Ahoy!" called back King of the Islands. The startling scene on the Dawn's deck had left the boy trader perfectly cool. That his life had hung on a thread—that only Kaio-lalulalonga's prompt action had saved him—he was well aware. The man who lay writhing in the grasp of the Kanaka had been utterly desperate and reckless, driven by fear of the men in the Lukwe boat. But King of the Islands was cool and calm as he returned the hail of Black Furley.

"That's the Dawn from Lalinge, I reckon!" called out Furley. "I reckon I know you, King of the Islands!" The black-bearded ruffian grinned. "You remember our last meeting, shipmate?"

"Yes, you piratical swab," said Ken. "If you're on the same tack now, look out for squalls!"

"We're not after trouble with you this time, Ken King!" Furley laughed.

The whaleboat edged closer. But the men in it were not handling their weapons.

"Keep off a couple of fathoms, Furley!" called out Ken, gesturing. "We shall fire if you come closer."

"We're not after trouble, King," answered Furley. "We're after information. We're looking for a man we lost overboard last night." Furley was still standing on the thwarts, and trying hard to peer into the ketch.

Robinson, stretched on the deck close to the mizzen, with Koko pinning him down, was unseen by the men in the boat. He had been struggling to rise, but his struggles ceased, and he seemed to be eager to cower out of sight of the Lukwe crew.

"You lost a man overboard?" asked Ken, stepping nearer to the rail and looking at Black Furley. He had no doubt as to the identity of the man of whom the Lukwe pearler was in search.

"Yes. He dropped overboard and

"We haven't sighted a canoe, and we haven't picked up a swimmer, Furley," Ken said. "But before I answer any more questions, tell me what you want with the man."

"Then you've got him aboard?" questioned Furley.

"I'm not answering questions—yet," said King of the Islands coolly. "Who is the man, and what do you want with him?"

"By thunder, Ken King!" said Black Furley hoarsely. "If you're trying to rob us of the pearl, we'll take the chance of rushing you—and if we come to that, we won't leave a soul alive on board your hooker!"

"The pearl?" repeated Ken. "Is the man aboard?" shouted Black Furley, his swarthy features working with rage and excitement.

"I know nothing about a pearl," answered Ken. "We took a man off Lotu last night to save him from the blacks."

"That's the man—that's Egan!" "That's Jim Egan!" said another of the boat's crew. "There was no other white man on Lotu. I knew the niggers were after him—we heard them howling like a pack of demons!" "He gave the name of Robinson," said Ken.

"Robinson be hanged!" snarled Black Furley. "He's Jim Egan—the man who slipped off this boat last night the other side of Lotu. Hand him over to us, Ken King!"

The boat's crew were handling their weapons now. Three of them had picked up rifles from under the thwarts.

"Keep your guns down!" snapped out King of the Islands. "Lift one of them, and we open fire! You know how much chance you've got." His revolver was in his hand now, as he looked down from the rail into the boat.

"We're not after trouble, Ken King," said Black Furley hoarsely. "Egan was one of us, and he's robbed us and bolted. We want him!"

With a sudden wrench the man who called himself Robinson tore away from Kaio-lalulalonga and leaped up. He sprang to the open companion and darted below. There was a yell from the boat, as the pearl-ers caught a fleeting glimpse of him.

Ken glanced round. "That feller he run below, sar," said Kaio-lalulalonga.

"Get hold of him and put him in irons," said Ken.

Kaio-lalulalonga called to Lompo, and went down the companion, followed by the Hiva-Oa boy.

A minute or two later there was the sound of a struggle below. But it lasted only a few moments. There was a metallic clinking as the irons were fastened on Robinson.

"Hand him over to us, Ken King!" Black Furley was shouting. "I've seen him—it's Jim Egan! Hand him over!"

That Robinson, or Egan, was as rashly a ruffian as any in the pearling crew from Lukwe, Ken had no doubt. But it was only too clear what would be his fate if he were handed over to his former comrades. Little as Ken desired his company on board, he could not hand him over to death.

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swam for Lotu," answered Black Furley. "I reckon his game was to steal a canoe and get away in it. Have you sighted a canoe, King of the Islands, or picked up a swimmer?"

"The niggers got him, Furley," said one of the boat's crew. "I tell you, the niggers got him. We heard them howling on the island—"

"Stow it!" growled Black Furley. "You're a white man, Ken King, and I can take your word, if you wouldn't take mine. If you tell me that you've seen nothing of the man, it'll save time. Give me your word."

"Give it him!" came a hoarse whisper from the man stretched on the deck, before Ken could speak. "Give it him—and let him go."

Pearls and Peril!

"I tell you we'll have him!" Black Furley shouted. "What's he to you, Ken King—what's he given you to protect him?"

"Nothing," said Ken. "We saved him from the niggers—and the mutinous dog drew a revolver on me on my own deck. My men are putting him in irons now—and he'll stay in irons till we land him—and that will be as soon as we can. But—"

"Then hand him over. He's robbed us—"

"I shall not hand him over," said King of the Islands quietly. "I'd never give up a man to be murdered. But if he has robbed you, you've only to speak. What has he robbed you of?"

Black Furley did not immediately reply. He turned to his comrades, and they consulted together in low tones. There was a trampling in the companionway, and Robinson, alias Jim Egan, was hauled out on deck by Koko and Lompo. There were irons locked on his wrists and his feet now, and he was a helpless prisoner. He turned a wild glance to the boy trader.

"Keep me from them!" he muttered hoarsely. "They mean murder—they'll send me to the sharks—"

"You're safe here," said Ken curtly. "You'll stay in irons till we can get shot of you, but your life's safe."

"That's all I ask! They—they turned on me—I fled for my life," muttered Egan.

"They say you robbed them!" said Ken, eyeing the man coldly. "If that's the truth—"

"It's false!" panted Egan. "I—I lost the pearl, and was afraid to face them—they'd never have believed unless—"

Ken turned to the boat's crew again. Black Furley and his men were still muttering together, but the

black-bearded ruffian turned to Ken, as the boy trader looked down from the rail.

"We'll trust you, Ken King," he said. "We can't help ourselves, as matters stand—but if you rob us—"

"Belay it!" snapped Ken. "Come down to brass-tacks—I'm not hanging on here long to listen to your palaver. You say the man's robbed you—if so, he's got the plunder about him now. What has he robbed you of?"

"A pearl," said Furley. "A big pearl—a pearl worth thousands—and he's got it in his rags now, this blessed minute! A big pearl, I tell you—a pearl that will make them sit up and take notice when we get it to Sydney," said Furley hoarsely. "It belongs to the whole crew here. We took it in turns to guard it, because—because—"

"Because you couldn't trust one another—I understand," said King of the Islands. "And you say that Robinson—or Egan—slipped away from the boat, taking the pearl with him?"

"That's it! It was his turn to guard it—and we were becalmed within sight of Lotu, on our way back to Lukwe. He got away by swimming when—"

"He shall be searched for the pearl," said King of the Islands. "If he's got on him such a pearl as you describe, I'll take it that you're telling me the truth."

"Hold on!" shouted Black Furley. "Let me come aboard, King of the Islands. Let me search him for the pearl!"

"You are afraid of what might happen if I should see it?" asked Ken.

"Men have been killed in these waters for less," growled the Lukwe pearler. "I trust no man. If you mean a straight game, let me step aboard the ketch and search that swab!"

"Keep your distance," answered King of the Islands coolly. "No man

of your crew shall step on this ketch. Keep that boat away!" he added sharply, as the Lukwe whaleboat edged a little nearer. "By my sainted Sam, if you run us alongside I'll fire a volley into you!"

The whaleboat edged off again, the boat's crew eyeing the boy trader like wolves.

"The man shall be searched—in full sight of you all," added Ken. "Hudson, bring him to the rail. Koko, search this man from head to foot, and see if there is a pearl hidden about him."

It was impossible for the manacled prisoner to resist. But he showed no desire to do so, as Koko proceeded to search him. From their boat the pearl-seekers watched, muttering threats. Even Black Furley had to admit that the search was thorough. Had a pearl been hidden about the man from Lotu it must have been discovered. But no pearl came to light. A clasp-knife, tobacco, matches, and other articles were turned out of the pockets, and a handful of money, but nothing more.

"There is no pearl," said King of the Islands.

"What have you done with it, Egan?" Black Furley shouted fiercely. "Where've you hidden the pearl? Did you leave it on Lotu?"

"Look in Davy Jones' locker!" snarled back the prisoner. "It dropped when I was in the sea—"

"A lie!" yelled Furley. "King of the Islands, hand that swab over to us—we'll make him tell us what he's done with the pearl! Hand him over!"

"Take him below, Koko!" said Ken quietly. And the Kanaka boatswain hustled the ironed prisoner into the companion.

A storm of yells broke out from the boat's crew. The Lukwe men were handling their weapons again.

"Fire a single shot, and you take the consequences!" said King of the Islands. "Whether the man had a pearl about him or not when he deserted you, he has no pearl now—as you have seen with your own eyes. Sheer off!"

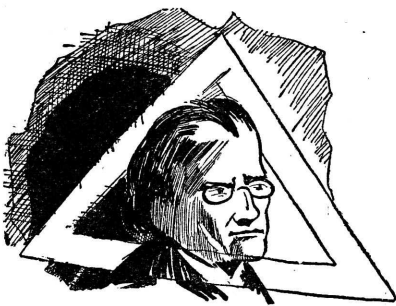
"Hand him over to us!" hissed Black Furley. "We'll make him squeal!"

"Sheer off!" rapped out King of the Islands.

He signed to Lufu, at the wheel, and the ketch stood away from the Lukwe whaleboat. Sail was shaken out again, and the Dawn gathered speed. There was a roar of rage from the whaleboat, and the Lukwe pearl-seekers followed on. Black Furley, still standing erect, shook a furious fist after the ketch. The crack of a rifle followed, and a bullet tore through the mainsail of the Dawn.

But the wind was freshening, and the ketch tore through the waters at a speed that left the Lukwe boat hopelessly behind. The furious voices died away—the enraged faces grew dim in the distance. The ketch rushed on, and the Lukwe boat dwindled to a speck astern on the boundless blue, to finally vanish from sight altogether.

(Ken King and his comrades appear in another vivid and complete yarn of South Seas adventure in next Monday's MODERN BOY.)



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