

FREE GIFTS and BIG PRIZES! — See ¹⁰⁵ *Inside.*

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FREE!
**2 COLOURED
PICTURES**
of Famous British
AEROPLANES
INSIDE!

5c



GIANT LOCOS GO TO SEA!—See page 3.



The SECRET of THE DAWN!

A wildly-excited crowd swarmed into the launch, eager to join in defeating the desperate gang who were cutting out a moored vessel in a peaceful harbour.

A Surprising Offer.

MOORED to the coral wharf at Lalinge, the ketch Dawn was the centre of bustling activity. Ken King, its boy owner and skipper—known throughout the South Seas as King of the Islands—after two days at his home port was preparing for sea again.

Perspiring coolies were carrying bales and cases of trade goods down from John Chin's warehouse to the wharf.

Aboard, Kit Hudson, Ken's young Australian mate, was overseeing Kaio-lalulalonga—Koko for short—the giant Kanaka bo'sun, Lompo, Lufu, Kolulo, Tomoo, and Danny the cooky-boy, the Hiva-Oa boys who formed the crew, as they stacked the goods on deck.

Kaio-lalulalonga paused to wipe a stream of sweat from his dusky brow. Across the shining waters of the lagoon his eyes fell on a graceful little cutter that was threading its way through the reef passage from the open sea.

"Feller Sea-Cat come along Lalinge, sar," announced the bo'sun, staring at the tall sail that glimmered over the reef.

King of the Islands looked across the lagoon.

On the deck of the little cutter he could see the dapper, dandified figure of Peter Parsons, otherwise Dandy Peter, her skipper. With him were

the three Lukwe boys who manned the boat.

Emerging from the reef passage, the cutter stood across the lagoon towards the wharf.

Dandy Peter, the biggest ruffian who ever sailed out of Lukwe, had his eyes fixed on the ketch. As he recognised King of the Islands, he raised his Panama hat in a half-mocking salute.

The boy trader frowned.

"Dandy Peter's evidently looking

mediately the master's eyes were off them, resumed their labours.

It was a busy time for the boy trader of the Pacific, and there was, as he had said, no time to waste on the Lukwe sea-lawyer. Unheeded by the captain and crew of the Dawn, the Sea-Cat glided to the wharf, dropped her sails, and made fast.

Dandy Peter stepped ashore on the coral, and walked along to the Dawn's moorings. For a few minutes he stood there, cigar in mouth, a smile on his handsome, wicked face, watching the busy scene. Then, making his way through the piles of trade goods stacked on the wharf, he approached the ketch.

"Coming aboard, captain!" he called out.

Ken King looked round impatiently. Standing on the coral wharf, Dandy Peter looked over the low rail of the Dawn and nodded to him in a friendly way. No one would have guessed, from his look and manner, that at Lukwe he had been tossed overboard from the ketch, for releasing a prisoner named Egan from his irons, to swim back to his own vessel. If Dandy Peter remembered that incident, and resented it, no sign of it showed in his smiling face.

But there was no smile on Ken's face. Whether the man came as friend or foe, Ken had no use for him.

"Keep where you are, Peter Parsons," he answered curtly. "You're not wanted on this hooker, and you know it." And he turned away.

Why does Peter Parsons, ruffian of the South Seas, offer to buy from young Ken King the ketch Dawn—at a price far in excess of her actual value? There's a very big reason, unguessed by King of the Islands: a reason that causes tremendous excitement and leads to very lively adventures in this Long and Complete Story by . . . CHARLES HAMILTON

for more trouble, Ken," remarked Kit Hudson.

"If so, we'll give him all he is looking for, and a little over," said King of the Islands, frowning. "I'm half sorry that I did not give him three dozen with the lawyer-cane, for meddling on this hooker at Lukwe." Then the boy trader smiled. "No time to bother about Peter Parsons now. You feller boy, you look alive along that cargo!"

The native crew, who, in the Kanaka way, had slacked down im-

The Secret of the Dawn!

Dandy Peter put his hand on the rail.

Kaio-lalulalonga stepped towards him, a grim expression on his brown visage.

"You feller Parsons, you stop along wharf," said the Kanaka bo'sun. "You hear that feller thing King of the Islands he say, ear belong you? S'pose you come along ketch, you go along lagoon plenty too quick altogether."

"Stand back, you nigger!" snapped Dandy Peter, his dark eyes glinting angrily at the Kanaka.

"Captain King!" called out the Lukwe skipper. With the brawny Kanaka standing in the way, he did not venture to step over the teak rail.

"Keep your distance, Peter Parsons!" answered Ken, without turning his head. "You're not wanted here."

"It's a matter of business."

"I've no business with you."

"I'm here to trade," said Dandy Peter.

"We're getting ready for sea, and we've no time to cut to waste," exclaimed King of the Islands impatiently. "You can see that."

"You mayn't want to go to sea in this hooker after I've talked business with you," said the Lukwe skipper.

"What?" Ken and his shipmate stared at the dapper figure on the wharf. Dandy Peter had succeeded, at least, in surprising the shipmates.

"Give me five minutes of your valuable time, captain," said Parsons. "I'm here to talk business—good business for you. I'm not kicking over our little trouble at Lukwe. I've got a proposition to put up to you—and it will be worth more to you than drumming round the islands for copra and pearl-shell."

Ken hesitated a moment, and then made Koko a sign to allow the Lukwe skipper to step on board.

"I'll give you five minutes," he said gruffly.

"More than enough," said Dandy Peter, and he stepped lightly over the rail. Kaio-lalulalonga drew back, eyeing the Lukwe man with deep disfavour.

Ken pointed to a wicker chair, and the visitor sat down. The boy trader eyed him, rather curious now to hear what Peter Parsons had to say. Kit Hudson continued to superintend the stacking of the cargo, but he kept one eye on his shipmate and the man from Lukwe.

"Heave ahead!" said Ken briefly.

Dandy Peter was silent for a moment, pulling at his cigar. Then he spoke abruptly—and his words made the boy trader jump.

"I'm here to buy your ship! What's the figure?"

Nothing Doing.

KING OF THE ISLANDS stared blankly at the Lukwe skipper. For a moment he could not be sure that he had heard aright.

"Buy my ship! Is this a joke?" asked Ken blankly.

"Not in the least! I'm here to buy the Dawn. Name your figure. You're a trader, Ken King, and you won't refuse a good trade."

"My sainted Sam!" said the boy trader, in amazement. "You've rather taken the wind out of my sails, Parsons. If you're in earnest—well, there's no need to waste time over my answer. This hooker isn't for sale."

"I expected that," replied Parsons. "I reckon I've surprised you. But I mean business. I want the ketch. I reckon eight hundred pounds would buy a craft like this in any port in the Pacific."

"Likely enough," assented Ken; "but it won't buy the Dawn."

"I'll go to a thousand. You could get a schooner for the money," said Peter Parsons. "This ketch is a good little craft, and a regular water-witch—but you could do better trade with a schooner."

"Then why not put the money into a schooner yourself?" asked Ken.

"I want the ketch. I've got a trip on among the Solomons, and the ketch will suit me down to the ground," said Dandy Peter.

"Ketches aren't scarce in the Pacific," said Ken. "You will easily pick up a ketch at a lower figure than the one you've named."

"Not one like the Dawn," said the Lukwe skipper.

Ken smiled. He was proud of his beautiful little craft, and any word in praise of her was sure to reach his heart.

"That's so," he said. "The Dawn's a good boat. But she's not for sale, Peter Parsons; and there's an end!"

"Name your own figure, then!"

"Nothing doing!" Ken answered. "We're wasting time—and I've told you that I'm busy!"

Dandy Peter did not stir from the deck-chair. His face was still smiling; but there was a hard glitter in his eyes. He leaned forward a little towards the boy trader, the smoking cigar in his slim fingers.

"I want this ketch, Captain King. I've a reason—a good reason—for going to a big figure—more than she's worth to any man but me. She'll serve the purpose I have in mind—and I can make the money out of her. I'm not offering to throw money away—"

"I know you too well to suppose that," said Ken. "I can't imagine why my ketch should be worth a big figure to you; but I don't suppose for a moment that you're offering to throw money away. But you can't have the Dawn, Captain Parsons; and that's flat!"

"I'll go to two thousand," said Parsons.

"My hat!" ejaculated Kit Hudson. In his interest in this strange conversation, the mate of the Dawn had taken his eyes off the Kanakas. "Two thousand pounds for a ketch, Dandy Peter!"

"I've named that figure, and I'll stand to it," said the Lukwe man. "Is it a trade, Captain King?"

"You've named two thousand pounds, Peter Parsons—but I fancy

you'd find it hard to put up the money," replied Ken. "You don't handle sums like that trading at Lukwe."

"Five hundred down—and good paper for the rest," said the skipper of the Sea-Cat. "Is it a trade, Captain King, if I make my words good? If I put up the money, is the ketch mine?"

Hudson stared at the Lukwe skipper in silence. It was easy to read in Dandy Peter's face that the offer was made in earnest. But why any man in his senses should offer such a price for the ketch was beyond the Australian's understanding.

That there was something behind it—that Dandy Peter was playing some deep game—that he saw his profit ahead on the transaction—was certain. But it was a mystery to the shipmates of the Dawn.

"No!" said Ken quietly. "Even if you could make your words good, Parsons—no! I'm not parting with my ship!"

Dandy Peter drew a deep breath. Ken made a gesture to intimate that the interview was at an end. But the Lukwe skipper did not heed it.

"You're a good man at a bargain, Captain King," he said. "You know that I want the ketch, and you're banking on that. But I've a good thing ahead, and only this ketch will see me through—for reasons I don't feel inclined to tell you. What do you say to three thousand?" asked Dandy Peter slowly.

"I should say that you couldn't raise the money," said King of the Islands.

"In cash, no! But I can give you five hundred in cash—and a mortgage on the Dawn for the rest. Within three days of the sale, I will hand over the balance. And during those three days the Dawn shall remain at Lalinge, under your eyes. I undertake not to sail her out of the lagoon until you are paid in full. And if I fail, the ketch is yours again, and no harm done."

Ken stared at the Lukwe skipper, utterly astonished. Hudson's eyes were very keenly on the sea-lawyer's face.

"It's a good offer," said King of the Islands slowly. "You seem to be in earnest, Parsons. And if you want my ketch so much as all that, I'm sorry you can't have her. But you can't!"

"You fancy this hooker is worth anything like the figure I've offered, Ken King?" Dandy Peter demanded.

"No—not to anyone but myself," answered King of the Islands. "I don't doubt that you mean business, Parsons, but there's no business doing! If I were selling the Dawn, I'd take a lower figure than that. I would not rob you because you're keen on her. But I'm not selling. It's not a matter of money with me. I'd refuse five thousand, or ten thousand, for the Dawn, if any man were fool enough to offer it. I'd as soon part with my right hand as with my ship!"

Dandy Peter's well-cut lips set hard, and he drew a hissing breath. His bitter disappointment was visible in his face, and he was evidently

hard put to it to control his rising temper.

The shipmates watched him coolly. They were quite prepared for an outbreak of the Lukwe skipper's savage, passionate temper. Dandy Peter was feared on the wild and lawless island of Lukwe, where he was the most reckless and desperate adventurer in a reckless and desperate crowd. But he had no terrors for the chums of the Dawn.

"Then," asked Dandy Peter at last, speaking calmly, "will you charter the ketch? Name your own figure—and name any security you choose."

"The Dawn's not for hire," said Ken curtly. "She's no more for hire than for sale."

"I want this ketch!" said Dandy Peter, in a choking voice, rising to his feet. "I've offered you fair terms—more than fair. Look out for squalls if you refuse, Ken King."

"There's something behind this, Peter Parsons," said Ken, eyeing him steadily. "You're not offering a fancy figure for my ship for nothing. Even if I were willing to sell, which I am not, I would not let you have the ketch without seeing your cards on the table. Why do you want the Dawn?"

"That's my business!"

"Keep your business to yourself, if you like!" answered Ken. "We've wasted enough time, Dandy Peter, anyhow. You'd better get back to your cutter!"

"Hang you!" shouted the Lukwe skipper, his rage breaking out of all control. "I'll have the ketch, in spite of you, Ken King! You think yourself safe here, in Lalinge, but look for me on the high seas. I'll get you yet, you dog, and you'll repent this!" And the enraged sea-lawyer shook a clenched fist in the face of the boy trader.

Ken's hand shot up and struck the threatening fist aside with so sharp a rap that it brought a gasp of pain from Dandy Peter. The Lukwe skipper leaped at him like a tiger. At the same moment Kaio-lalulalonga's powerful grasp closed on him, and he was wrenched back from King of the Islands.

"You plenty bad feller, you go along feller wharf!" exclaimed the Kanaka boatswain.

Dandy Peter, with a yell of rage,

struggled in the grasp of the giant Kanaka. Kaio-lalulalonga grinned, and with a swing of his mighty arms lifted the dapper figure of the Lukwe skipper into the air.

"Koko!" exclaimed Ken, starting forward. But before he could intervene, Kaio-lalulalonga had swung Dandy Peter bodily over the rail. The dapper figure of the dandy of Lukwe went whirling through the air, to land with a crash among the piles of trade goods on the wharf.

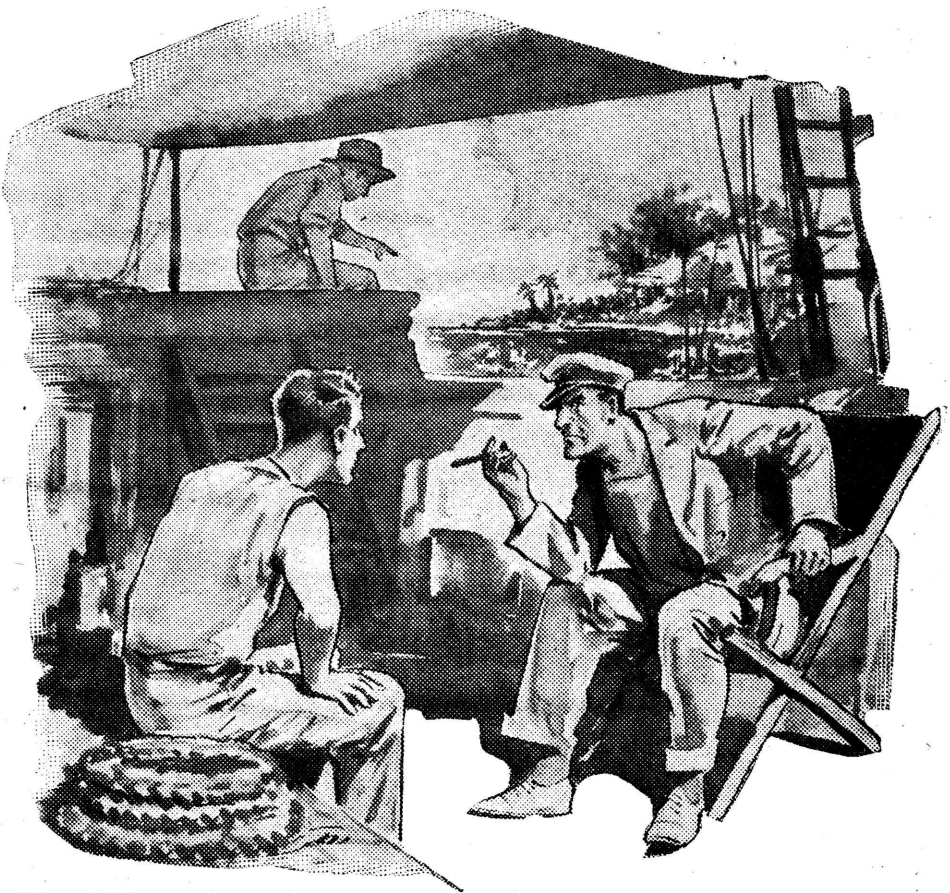
There was a cackle of merriment from the Kanakas and the coolies on the wharf, as the Lukwe skipper sprawled among the bales and cases, yelling.

Dandy Peter picked himself up, and glared round furiously at the ketch, and at the grinning Kanakas. Then

day, stowing cargo on the ketch. Work was over, and all was ready for the ketch to cast off her moorings and sail at sunrise. A dip in the lagoon and a change of clothes had transformed the boy trader into his clean, handsome, natty self again.

He stepped across the cabin to the companion, and joined his shipmate on deck. Hudson was also in his best bib and tucker, as he expressed it. The chums were joining a party at the bungalow of Mr. Belnap, manager of the Pacific Company at Lalinge, and staying there to supper.

The crew were on shore leave. From under the palm-trees at the back of the beach came strains of music, and natives in white lav-lavas could be seen dancing, with the scarlet blossoms of the hibiscus



"I want this ketch!" said Dandy Peter, a cigar in his slim fingers. "I've a good reason for going to a big figure—more than she's worth to any man but me. I'll go to two thousand!"

he turned and limped painfully along the wharf to his cutter.

Raided.

SIX bells struck on board the Dawn, and Kit Hudson called down the companion:

"Below there! Show a leg, Ken!"

"Ready!" called back the boy skipper of the Dawn.

King of the Islands gave a final glance in the mirror in the little state-room. In white drill, silk shirt, loose blue tie, and pipeclayed shoes, the boy trader made a handsome figure. He did not look now as if he had been working like a Kanaka all

twined in their dark hair. Among them were the Hiva-Oa crew of the Dawn. Only Koko, the boatswain, remained on the ketch.

King of the Islands cast a glance towards the Lukwe cutter moored at a little distance. A boy could be seen on watch. The other two were ashore, with the crowd of island dancers, and Dandy Peter was not to be seen. It was probable that he was at Kelly's store along the beach.

"You keep feller eye open belong you, Koko," said King of the Islands.

"Feller eye belong me he never shut, sar," said Kaio-lalulalonga. "S'pose feller Parsons he comey along

The Secret of the Dawn:

this ship, me knock seven balls outer that feller plenty too quick."

Hudson glanced at his shipmate.

"You don't think—" he began.

"I don't know," said Ken. "Dandy Peter has some pretty strong motive for trying to get hold of the Dawn, though what it is I can't imagine. He was in earnest in offering to buy the ketch at more than double her value. And I don't trust him an inch."

"I've been thinking it over," said Hudson, "but it's got me fairly beat, Ken. What can he want with the ketch—at such a price?"

"I give that one up," said the boy trader, with a smile. "It's too deep for me. But there's no doubt that he does want the ketch—badly. You keep feller eye open along that feller cutter, Koko."

And King of the Islands stepped on the wharf, followed by his shipmate. They walked along the wharf, and followed the beach to the bungalow of the Pacific Company's manager.

Koko, the Kanaka, sat on the hatchway coamings, with his ukulele across his knee. The sun sank lower over Lalinge, dipping behind the hills in the west, turning the wide lagoon into a sheet of molten gold.

As the stars came out in the cloudless sky, more and more natives joined in the dancing under the palm-trees, and lights gleamed from the bungalows along the beach.

Kaio-lalulalonga rose from the hatchway and stood looking towards the native dance. He would have been glad to join the happy throng, but duty held him to the ketch.

After watching the dance for some time, Kaio-lalulalonga glanced towards the Lukwe cutter. There was no sign of life about the Sea-Cat. The Lukwe boy on watch was sleeping now, and in the silence Koko could faintly hear the sound of his snoring. Dandy Peter was not to be seen.

Dandy Peter's keen desire to get possession of the ketch, at a price wildly in excess of her value, and his fury at his failure had made King of the Islands vaguely uneasy. Knowing as he did the desperate and reckless character of the Lukwe skipper, he had impressed upon Koko to keep a careful watch. And the Kanaka boatswain was not likely to fail.

Sitting on the hatchway coamings again, twanging the ukulele, Koko sat so that his eyes rested on the wharf and the cutter. No one could have approached from either direction without giving him the alarm.

Out on the lagoon, dim under the starlight, fishing canoes glided, with a light plashing of paddles. To them the Kanaka gave no heed. But while he watched the wharf and the cutter it was from another direction that danger threatened—a danger of which neither Koko nor his white master was aware.

From the reef passage a large whaleboat glided into the lagoon, with four roughly-dressed, bearded, sea-weary men in it—Black Furley of

Lukwe, and his villainous crew of pearl-ers.

In the bows stood a black-bearded, black-haired, burly man. As the whaleboat glided towards the wharf, his eyes roved over the vessels moored there. King of the Islands' ketch, Dandy Peter's cutter, and a couple of luggers. It was upon the ketch that the black-bearded man's eyes fixed.

"We've run him down, mates!" said Black Furley, in a hoarse whisper. "That's King of the Islands' boat! We're in luck. If Jim Egan's still on board—"

"More likely cut his lucky, Furley," muttered one of the pearl-er crew. "He knows we'd follow him for the big pearl—and we found that he never went ashore at Lukwe."

"If he's cut his lucky, Dick Finn, we'll make King of the Islands tell us where he's gone, or—"

"We ain't at Lukwe now, Furley," muttered another of the crew. "This is Lalinge, old man, and there's a magistrate ashore, and native police—"

"We're after Jim Egan and the big pearl," cut in Furley roughly. "I'd board that hooker if she was anchored in Sydney Harbour with the police boat lying alongside. Stow the gab."

Standing up in the bows of the whaleboat, Black Furley watched the ketch with gleaming eyes as he drew nearer. In the glimmer of the star-shine, he could make out that there was only one figure on deck—that of a Kanaka sitting on the hatchway aft, looking towards the wharf.

"They're ashore," muttered the pearler. He glanced round, and made a gesture towards Manager Belnap's bungalow, blazing with lights, that shone out far across the dusky lagoon. "There's some jamboree going on there, and I reckon they're along. There's only a Kanaka left keeping watch."

"It's Egan we want—"

"If he's aboard we'll get him. If he's not, we'll make that nigger talk fast enough." Black Furley touched his sheath-knife. "Leave it to me, mates—put her alongside."

The whaleboat ran in alongside the moored ketch. As the vessels touched, Black Furley caught the low teak rail and swung himself on to the Dawn.

As his heavy sea-boots clamped down on the deck, Kaio-lalulalonga started and jerked round on his seat. He peered at the bulky figure of the Lukwe pearler, and the ukulele dropped from his hand.

"Quick, mates!" breathed Black Furley.

He leaped on the bo'sun and grappled with him. The burly ruffian expected to throw the brown-skinned man to the deck with a swing of his powerful arms, but there were few men in the Pacific capable of handling Kaio-lalulalonga single-handed.

"You bad feller, what you want along this ship?" panted Koko, as he returned grip for grip.

And Black Furley, much to his surprise, found himself swept off his feet and flung headlong on the teak deck.

"Bear a hand, mates!" he panted. The three pearl-ers had clambered over the rail now, and they leaped on Kaio-lalulalonga together.

Powerful as he was, the Kanaka boatswain went down under the rush of the three Lukwe ruffians, sprawling on the deck, but still struggling furiously.

Black Furley staggered to his feet. The crash on the hard teak of the planks had almost stunned him, for a moment. But he was very quickly himself again. Three to one as the pearl-ers were, they had their hands full with the giant Koko.

Furley threw himself into the fight. Koko had opened his mouth to shout, when Furley's arm was thrown round his neck from behind, choking his utterance, and dragging him backwards. An open sheath-knife was in Furley's other hand, and he pressed the keen edge to Kaio-lalulalonga's bronze throat.

"Give over, you durned nigger!" hissed Furley. "Give over, hang you, or you're a dead nigger. You wantee this fellow cut off head belong you, all same Solomon Island boy?" he added, in the *beche-de-mer*. "You give this feller trouble, you kill-dead plenty too quick."

Kaio-lalulalonga ceased to struggle. He was in the grasp of four powerful ruffians, and the keen edge of the knife was at his throat. He lay panting in the clutching hands of the Lukwe pearl-ers, his black eyes rolling with excitement and rage.

Furley's eyes gleamed down at him with a murderous light in them.

"That's better, durn your black hide!" growled Furley. "Keep quiet—you ain't going to be hurt. Who's on board this hooker beside you?" He dropped into the *beche-de-mer* again. "What feller he stop along this ketch?"

"This feller he stop!" panted Kaio-lalulalonga. "No other feller he stop."

The Kanaka had recognised Black Furley now, and knew that he was in the hands of the Lukwe pearl-ers. It was not from Dandy Peter that the attack had come.

"Nobody else on board?" growled Dick Finn.

Koko shook his head. The edge of the sheath-knife pressed harder on his brown throat, almost severing the skin.

"The truth, you dog!" hissed Black Furley. "King of the Islands had a passenger—the man he picked off Lotu when the cannibals were after him. Robinson he called himself—Jim Egan was his name. The cur who double-crossed us, and scuttled with the big pearl. We know he never landed at Lukwe—we know that King of the Islands came straight on to Lalinge. Tell me the truth, you black hound. Where is Egan?"

"What place that feller Egan he stop?" said Dick Finn, putting it in the *beche-de-mer* English, more easily understood by a Kanaka.

"He stop along Lalinge?" hissed Furley.

"No, sar! That feller Egan he stop along sea—stop along feller shark, sar," said Koko. "That feller

he, walk about along bottom sea, sar!"

"Dead?" gasped Furley.

"He plenty, too much deader, sar."

There was a muttering among the Lukwe pearlers. Black Furley bent his head to scan Koko's face more closely in the starlight. He made a gesture with the knife.

"The truth," he hissed, between his teeth. "I reckon I know you now—I saw you on this ketch when we spoke her with Lotu in the offing. You heard what I said to King of the Islands—Egan robbed us of a big pearl—he had it with him when he was taken off Lotu. I tell you he had the biggest pearl in the Pacific in his rags when King of the Islands took him on board. Did your skipper find the pearl?"

"They searched him for it, and never found it, Furley," said Finn. "We saw them search him for it that day—"

"He had it!" hissed Black Furley. "If King of the Islands found the pearl on him, and put him over the side—"

Furley turned to Koko again.

"Tell me what happened on the ketch, after you left Lukwe!" he asked. "The truth, you durned nigger!"

"Me tell plenty feller truth, sar," said Koko. "That feller pearler, Egan, he shoot along this ship.

along revolver. He plenty kill face along this feller Kanaka—" Black Furley's eyes lingered on the half-healed gash of a bullet on Koko's brown cheek. "He plenty bad feller, my word! Me fight along that feller, fall into sea along that feller—"

"You fell in together?"

"Yes, sar! Me pick up along rope. That feller pearler, Egan, he stop along sea—stop along shark!"

"Then he never came on to Lalinge in this ketch?" exclaimed the black-bearded pearler.

"No, sar! He stop along inside feller shark."

"And the pearl?"

"No savvy feller pearl, sar. S'pose that feller pearl stop along him, feller pearl stop along shark along Egan, sar!" said Koko. "Eye belong me no see feller pearl. Me no savvy."

Furley's eyes searched the Kanaka's face. From it, it was easy to read that Kaio-lalulalonga was telling the truth, so far as he knew it.

Something like a groan of disappointment broke from Furley, echoed by his comrades. They had followed the Dawn to Lalinge in the hope of finding Jim Egan on board, or at least learning where he had gone. That he had gone to his last account, in the depths of the Pacific, was a stunning blow to them.

"He had the pearl!" muttered

Furley. "—we saw King of the Islands have him searched for it—but he had it, all the same—it's proved. If he broke out on the ketch as the nigger says, it shows he still had it—he must have reckoned on getting hold of the ketch, and getting away with it. He had the pearl—and it went to the sharks with him."

"And we left Pedro Prado and his boat-steerer to die, for that pearl!" muttered Dick Finn.

"Hang Prado and his boat-steerer!" snarled Furley. "That pearl was worth a hundred lives! But it's gone—gone—it went with Egan to the sharks!"

"Not on your life, Furley!"

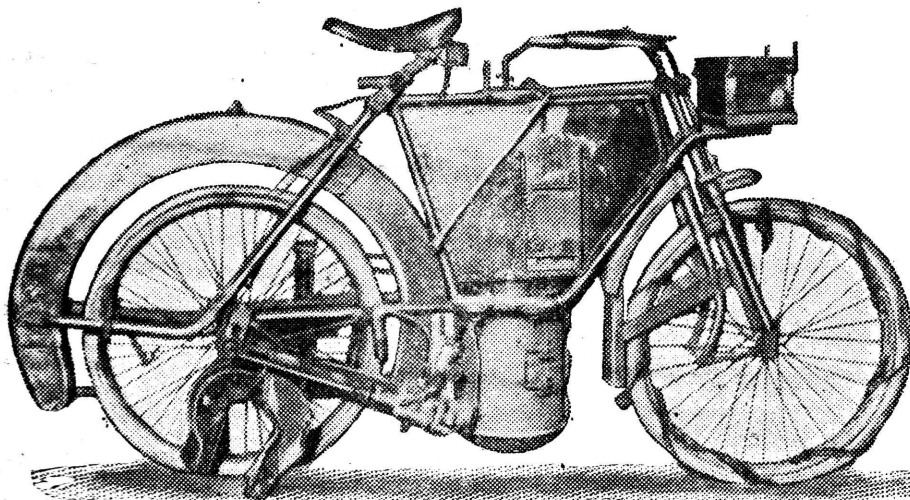
Black Furley spun round at the sound of the soft, silky voice. Dandy Peter had stepped on the ketch from the wharf. His soft footsteps had made no sound on the deck. He stood watching the group of pearlers gathered round Kaio-lalulalonga, a derisive grin on his face.

"What are you doing here, Peter Parsons?" demanded Furley. "If you're meddling with us, I'd as soon drop you in the lagoon as not."

"Rope up that nigger, gag him, and pitch him into the forecabin," replied Parsons. "I'm here on the same game as yourselves."

Black Furley gave him a searching,

(Continued on the next page.)



Gallant Old Crocks

A steam cycle of 30 years ago, ridden in a run to Brighton. It was fed with coke, spare fuel was carried on the handlebars, and the rider had to dismount to stoke his grate! Compare it with our First Prize REX-ACME MOTOR-BIKE, page 6!

ON Sunday next, February 9th, a bunch of the oldest motor-bikes in existence will start off from Croydon Aerodrome on what will be called the Pioneer Run to Brighton. Those riders who get their rickety machines safely to the seaside town will be awarded cups, medals, and certificates.

What a sight it will be for fellows living near the Croydon-Brighton road to see the old machines toiling along at a snail's pace and to compare them with the modern motor-bikes of to-day! It is up to them to give the gallant Old Crocks a rousing cheer!

More than thirty years ago, when inventors first started thinking about mechanically-propelled bicycles, the appearance of one of them with his weird creation was invariably the signal to those standing near for a bolt to cover. Only a few of the more daring onlookers stayed to watch the fun.

Such fun as they got was of a very lively kind. First the rider would stoke up the furnace that heated the water in the boiler—the oldest machines were steam-cycles, you must understand—and as soon as a good head of steam was raised he'd jump into the saddle and start off.

Weaving from side to side of the road with the bike travelling in a series of jerks that threatened every moment to unseat him, the pioneer had a very sorry time. He was lucky if he travelled a mile without serious trouble: either the front forks would snap when the machine went over a pothole or, worse still, the driving shaft would break. Not infrequently the boiler blew itself to bits—hence the reason for the spectators' hurried bolt!

Hill-climbing on these queer old boxes-of-tricks that the pioneer motor-cyclists made the pride of their hearts was right out of the question. As soon as you came to a gradient you had to dismount and shove the machine up-hill, the only consolation being the thought of the coast down the slope on the other side. But some of these old machines could go fast enough on a level or downhill road, doing as much as 40 m.p.h.

Petrol-engined motor-bikes were not invented till about five years after the first steam-cycles, but when clever engineers got working on them improvements came with a rush. New ideas like gear-boxes, chain-drives, pneumatic tyres, and better carburettors worked wonders and soon made the motor-bike practical and reliable.

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distrustful look. Then he signed to his followers. Koko struggled fiercely as a rope was run round his brawny limbs. But he was bound, hand and foot, and a gag of tapa thrust into his mouth. The pearlers dragged him along the deck to the forecabin and closed the scuttle on him. Then the Lukwe crew gathered round Dandy Peter.

"The pearl?" said Black Furley hoarsely. "If you know something, Peter Parsons—"

"We stand in together?" said Dandy Peter, looking round at the rough, eager, greedy faces.

"Share and share alike," said Furley, and his followers nodded assent. "There's enough for all, if we get the pearl. What do you know?"

"I know what Egan told me at Lukwe," answered Parsons quietly. "He threw the pearl into the hold, before they collared him—that's why the mad swab tried to seize the ketch. The pearl's still on board—dropped down somewhere among the water-casks."

There was a deep-drawn breath from the pearlers.

"Still on board!" breathed Furley. "Still on board this hooker."

"Somewhere in the bilge," said Dandy Peter. "It won't be easy to find. But it's there—and we stand in together to get it."

"And you came to Lalinge after it?"

"I came here to buy the ketch—at any price. But King of the Islands refused to sell at any price. He knows nothing! There's a fortune under his deck, and he has never dreamed of it."

"By hokey!" muttered Furley. "Down in the bilge—a pearl worth ten thousand pounds! By hokey!"

Dandy Peter glanced across the dusky lagoon, towards the bright lights that shone from Manager Belnap's bungalow in the distance.

"They're there," he said. "The niggers are at the native dance. I've been keeping my eyes open. They won't be back till late. We've got some hours—"

"What's the big idea?" muttered Finn.

"Cut her moorings, and tow her out of the lagoon with your boat. Once on the open sea—" Dandy Peter's eyes gleamed. "There are enough of us to sail her. Once at sea, we can take our time—"

"Piracy!" breathed one of the pearlers.

"Once we've got the pearl, we can leave her adrift—King of the Islands can have his ketch back, if he wants her, when we've found the pearl."

There was a brief hesitation among the Lukwe crew. Rough and lawless as they were, the sea-lawyer's proposition startled them. But Black Furley was quick to make up his mind.

"We've got to do it—if we want the pearl. It may take days to find it.

Lose no time!" He seized an axe and started towards the mooring-rope.

Baffled.

KING of the Islands stepped out on the veranda of the bungalow and looked across the lagoon. The coral wharf was at some distance from the office and bungalow of the Pacific Company's manager, but in the shining starlight it was visible, with the vessels moored to the bollards.

The eyes of the boy trader rested on his ketch. Kit Hudson joined him. He looked across at the ketch, and then at his shipmate, with a smile.

"Thinking of Dandy Peter, Ken?" he asked.

"Well, yes, Kit," he replied slowly. "Why does that swab want so much to get hold of the Dawn?"

"It's got me beat," answered Hudson. "But—you're not thinking that he might try on the freebooter's game here at Lalinge? We're not at Lukwe—and that game's a back number."

"I don't feel easy," said Ken. "Koko's on board—on the watch, and—"

"I know. But—"

King of the Islands did not finish the sentence. A vague uneasiness was in his breast. For some reason—utterly inexplicable to the boy trader—Dandy Peter desired to gain possession of the ketch. The fantastic price he had offered, his fury at its refusal, revealed his determination to get hold of the Dawn if he could.

That even the reckless sea-lawyer could dream of piracy, in a peaceful and law-abiding harbour like Lalinge, seemed wildly improbable. But Ken was not easy in his mind. If the ketch, for some unknown and mysterious reason, was worth three thousand pounds to Peter Parsons, it was worth some attempt, however desperate, to steal it.

"There's a whaleboat moored alongside the ketch now, Kit," Ken exclaimed, as he scanned the vessels at the wharf. "That wasn't there when we left."

"No harm in a whaleboat mooring at the wharf," said Hudson.

Manager Belnap, plump and portly, looked out into the veranda.

"You boys coming in to supper?" he called.

"Come on, Ken—the ketch is all right," said Hudson, smiling. And Ken, with a nod, turned to follow his shipmate into the bungalow.

All was quiet on the wharf, and the watchful Koko was on board the Dawn. Still the uneasiness lingered in Ken's mind, and he made up his mind to leave the hospitable Pacific Company's bungalow as early as possible and get back to his ship.

As he was following Hudson into the house, he turned his head for a last glance at the ketch. What he saw made him give utterance to a startled ejaculation.

"The ketch!" shouted Ken.

"By gad!" ejaculated Manager Belnap. "Your ketch is going adrift from her moorings, Captain King—your Kanakas have been careless—"

Ken, without replying, rushed across the veranda, Kit Hudson at his heels. The ketch was leaving the wharf. The

moorings had been cast off or cut. Under his startled eyes, a number of dark, shadowy figures swarmed over the low rail into the whaleboat alongside. A tow-rope trailed down from the stem of the Dawn, and was caught by one of the men in the boat.

One look was enough for King of the Islands. Under his eyes, his ship was being taken from the wharf, and those shadowy figures that moved in the starlit distance were preparing to tow her out into the lagoon.

What he had vaguely feared was happening, and he had no doubt that Dandy Peter of Lukwe was at the bottom of it, though evidently the sea-lawyer had obtained help from somewhere.

But even in that moment of excitement and rage, King of the Islands was swift to recover his coolness. His first impulse was to rush to the wharf. But he realised instantly that the ketch would be far out of his reach before he could arrive at her moorings. He turned back on the veranda steps.

"Belnap," he shouted, "give the alarm—they're stealing my ship! I'm taking your launch—follow me with help! Come on, Hudson!"

They raced down the beach to the little coral quay of the Pacific Company, where Mr. Belnap's petrol launch was moored. It had brought some of his guests that evening from plantations on the other side of the lagoon, and was intended to take them home again at a later hour. Almost in a twinkling, the shipmates of the Dawn ran out on the Pacific Company's quay, and leaped into the motor-launch.

"Quick, Kit!" panted Ken. "You can handle the engine—"

A startled Sulu boy, half-asleep in the launch, stared and blinked at the white men. They did not heed him. Hudson lost no time in starting up the engine. Ken, standing in the launch, stared across the starry waters at the ketch.

The tow-rope ran from the Dawn's stem to the Lukwe whaleboat, and Black Furley and his crew were bending to their oars. In the wake of the whaleboat, the ketch glided away from the wharf. In the uncertain light, Ken could not recognise any of the crew, but he made out a dapper form at the wheel of the ketch, and he had no doubt that it was that of Dandy Peter.

Down to the coral quay, with a wild buzzing of excitement, came Manager Belnap and a crowd of his guests—planters and traders of Lalinge. Twenty men or more arrived as Hudson got the engine going. Manager Belnap thrust a Winchester rifle into Ken's hands.

"All aboard!" shouted Hudson. "She's going!"

A wildly excited crowd swarmed into the launch. Some of them had caught up weapons—all were eager to join in defeating the desperate gang who were cutting out a moored vessel in a peaceful harbour.

Chug-chug-chug! The engine roared, and the launch shot out into the starry lagoon.

From across the water came a shout of alarm from the whaleboat. The

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four Lukwe pearlers were tugging desperately at the oars, towing the ketch across to the reef passage.

The motor-launch shot across the shining waters like an arrow. At the wheel of the ketch, Dandy Peter bit his lips with rage. In the whaleboat, Black Furley and his crew tugged frantically at the oars. The motor-launch shot across their course, and Ken, standing up in the bow, threw the Winchester to his shoulder.

Crack! Crack! Crack! The bullets splashed up water all round the Lukwe boat.

"Cast off that rope!" roared Ken. "Cast off, you sea-lawyers, or I'll riddle you with bullets!"

Three or four revolvers cracked from the crowded launch, and the lead whistled over the Lukwe boat. Black Furley, mad with rage, snatched a revolver from his belt and glared round. Finn struck it from his hand.

"Stow that, you fool!" he snarled. "The game's up! Cast off, and run for it!"

Without waiting for a word from his leader, Finn seized an axe, and with one desperate stroke cut through the tow-rope. The whaleboat shot away, leaving the Dawn adrift.

"Black Furley!" shouted Ken, recognising the Lukwe pearler. "You thief, you shall pay for this! Run her alongside, Kit."

The launch ran alongside the ketch. The Lukwe crew, rowing desperately, made for the reef passage and the open sea. They were thinking only of escape now.

The sea-lawyer's hand was on his revolver. But he did not draw it. The game was up, and he knew it.

"You win, King of the Islands," he said, with a lightness that was belied by the deadly glitter in his eyes.

King of the Islands strode towards him. He did not speak, but with all his strength drove his clenched fist into the face of the Lukwe sea-lawyer. There was a gasping cry from Dandy Peter as that terrible blow flung him across the taffrail. He pitched headlong into the lagoon.

King of the Islands did not give him a glance. At that moment he cared little whether the sea-lawyer swam or

sank. He was thinking of the faithful Kanaka he had left on board.

"Koko!" he shouted. There was a sound in the forecabin. Hudson tore open the scuttle, and Kaio-lalulalonga, bound and gagged, was revealed. He staggered on deck when the mate had released him.

In the distance, Dandy Peter dragged himself on the coral wharf. King of the Islands did not heed him. Kaio-lalulalonga was safe and sound, the ketch was saved, and the boy trader was satisfied.

The Dawn sailed from Lalinge at sunrise. Many times, as the ketch glided under sunny skies and glistening stars, the shipmates discussed the strange affair, and wondered—but never once did they dream of the strange truth. While the Dawn drummed for cargo among the islands, a fortune lay hidden below—undreamt-of by captain or crew!

(There's another of these grand yarns of Ken King in next Monday's MODERN BOY—one more reason why you should give your newsagent that standing order. Do it NOW, before you forget!)

THE EDITOR TALKS

Address your letters to—
The Editor, **THE MODERN BOY**,
Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

All letters must bear full name and address of the writer.

IT'S YOUR TURN TO WIN a MODERN BOY prize, you're thinking. Well, what's to stop you? Faint-Heart never won a grand REX-ACME MOTOR-BIKE or one of FIFTY MODEL FLYING AEROPLANES, so don't jog through our "Who's Who" Competition with a faint heart. Make up your mind most definitely that the First Prize is going to be dispatched to your address. Put your whole heart and your entire wits into solving the puzzle-pictures, and the Rex-Acme Bike may easily be yours!

Start This Week if you haven't already commenced to tackle our competition. If you have mislaid the two previous issues of MODERN BOY, which contained the first two sets of puzzle-pictures, or if you are a new reader, ask your newsagent to get you a copy of last week's number. It contains not only the second set of pictures and the first set reprinted, but also a full list of names wherein you can find all the answers to all the pictures. Thus you will be able to start the competition this very week. Only be quick about it, for there is only one more

set in addition to the pictures in the present issue. *There is no time to be lost!*

Our Coloured Pictures.—Our Free Coloured Pictures are creating a tremendous sensation. Newsagents are being worried out of their wits to obtain sufficient "rush" supplies of MODERN BOY each week. And they are asking me to ask you to help them meet the colossal demand by ordering your copies of MODERN BOY well in advance. The only fellows who are CERTAIN of obtaining their weekly Free Gifts are those whose names are down in the newsagents' books as *regular* readers. If you register yourself as such AT ONCE you have nothing to fear. If you do not—well, you'll be extraordinarily lucky to get hold of a copy of MODERN BOY at all during the next few weeks! You simply *must* complete your set of MODERN BOY coloured pictures—get the fourteen!

NEXT WEEK!

2 MORE FREE PICTURES, in FULL COLOURS, of FAMOUS BRITISH AEROPLANES. Unobtainable elsewhere, these magnificent reproductions are presented **FREE TO ALL READERS** of next Monday's MODERN BOY. Six have already been given away. Including next week's pair of pictures there are **EIGHT MORE** for you to collect!

THE FROZEN FIRE

By **ALFRED EDGAR**

Where the flames spun roaring upwards stood a bare-headed man, mouth open wide as he laughed, eyes blazing with a lurid, maniac glitter. . . . The mysterious and elusive Red Stranger, haunter of fires, diabolical foe of the men of the Ludgate Brigade! . . . Swift, exciting, **COMPLETE**.

LIFEBOATS OF THE AIR

An aerial lifeboat, hurtling at 100 m.p.h. through rain and storm on its heroic errand. . . . An all-metal, strong hulled flying-boat which can go to the aid of a distressed cross-Channel air-liner almost before the latter has touched water! You can read all about this latest great idea in next Monday's **MODERN BOY**.

THE COOKY-BOY'S FIND

By **CHARLES HAMILTON**

Danny, the native cooky-boy aboard Ken King's South Seas trading ketch, is honest as cooky-boys go. But never for a

moment does he dream of handing over the little object which he finds in the ketch's hold. And thereby comes tremendous commotion in the South Seas, landing King of the Islands in all sorts of desperate adventures. Long and **COMPLETE**.

THE ESCAPADES OF ESMÉ

By **A. M. BURRAGE**

Under Esme's skilful tuition, young Clarence—the milk-and-water kid—is beginning to "come out" surprisingly. He has never been allowed to do anything robust, but now he is beginning to think how nice it would be to get young Herbert Gudgeon, who has been very rude indeed to him, down on the ground, kneel on his stomach, and see if his nose can be pulled off. . . . You'll chuckle and laugh to your heart's content at next Monday's splendid instalment of our champion new serial.

And other bright features far too good to miss—including the FINAL SET OF PICTURES IN OUR "WHO'S WHO" COMPETITION.