

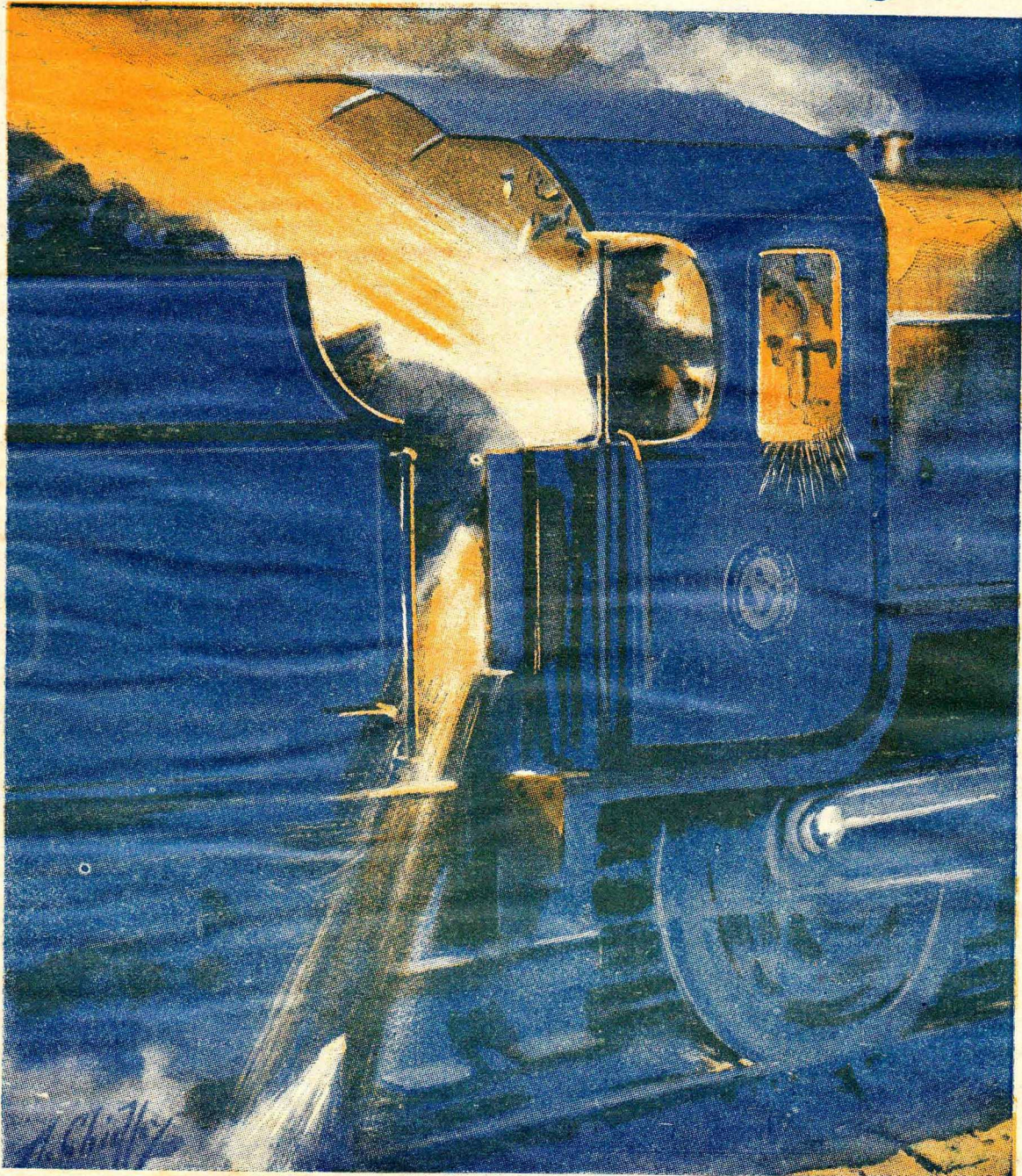
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FREE—SEAPLANE PICTURE IN FULL!  
COLOURS!

# *The* **MODERN BOY**

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**ROARING THROUGH THE NIGHT!** (See page 3.)



Before either Ken or Hudson could touch a weapon they were seized by five armed ruffians.

A breath-catching yarn of Adventure in a part of the world where **Might is Right** and a fellow must fight for all he is worth to keep his end up. . . . **LONG and COMPLETE**

**Ambushed.**

**T**HE ketch Dawn lay at anchor in the lagoon of the island of Ia'o in the South Seas.

Ken King, her young skipper and owner, familiarly known as King of the Islands, together with his young Australian mate, Kit Hudson, sat in the stern of the ketch's whaleboat as it was pulled towards the beach.

At the oars were Kaiolalulalonga — Koko for short—the giant Kanaka bo'sun, and Lompo, one of the crew of five Hiva-Oa boys.

Ta'o lay shimmering under the burning tropic sunshine, and the dazzling beach, shelving up from the edge of the lagoon, was deserted. But by the grass houses at the back of it, in the shade of the palm-grove, a number of natives stood looking at the approaching boat.

Among them, conspicuous by his head-dress of parrot's feathers and his necklace of glass beads and cartridge clips, was Tao'oa, the chief, with whom Ken had called at the island to do business.

Close by the water's edge a great mass of coral rose from the beach, a rugged rock nine or ten feet high. It was close to the landing-place, and almost directly between the whaleboat and the distant group of natives.

Except in that one spot, the whole beach was open to the view of the boat's crew, and it looked utterly deserted. Yet Koko was uneasy. He kept glancing over his shoulder as he pulled his oar, and shaking his head dubiously.

"This feller no likee, sar!" he exclaimed at last.

"What thing you no likee, Koko?"

"Me no savvy," answered Kaiolalulalonga. "But me no likee, sar! Me tinkee some feller thing plenty wrong along that feller island."

King of the Islands stood up and scanned the beach. There was nothing to cause uncasiness, and except in the one spot screened by the great coral rock, he could see the whole of it.

But now that his attention was aroused, he could see that there was something peculiar in the aspect of the natives. There was no sign of hostility, and they were all unarmed. But there was evidently some excitement among them.

More and more of the brown-skinned Polynesians came from among the grass houses, and joined the group staring towards the boat. None of them, however, came down the beach to greet the boat's crew at the landing-place, and that was unusual.

They were jabbering to one another excitedly, and some of them were waving their hands to the boat. Ken King watched them, puzzled, as the whaleboat drew nearer to the beach.

He saw Tao'oa, the chief, leave the group, and make a few strides forward, as if intending to come down to the water. But the Ia'o chief

# TROUBLESOME TREASURE!

By *Charles Hamilton*

asked King of the Islands, with a smile.

So far as the boy trader could see, no danger threatened. Ia'o was a peaceful island, and King of the Islands was well known there. He was on the friendliest terms with Tao'oa, and there had never been any trouble on the atoll.

## Troublesome Treasure!

stopped, and stood where he was, still staring.

"Something's up, Ken!" said Hudson.

"Looks like it," agreed Ken.

The aspect of the natives was unusual and perplexing; but there was, so far as Ken could see, no cause for alarm. Certainly the natives did not look unfriendly. Only Tao'oa and his tribe inhabited Ia'o. No white traders had ever located there.

"I don't quite make it out," said Ken. "But we're going ashore. Washy-washy along beach, you feller boy."

The excitement among the natives seemed to be increasing, but they still remained grouped before the grass houses on the edge of the palm-grove, and made no move to descend the beach.

Koko and Lompo drew in their oars, the whaleboat thudded on the sand, and Ken and Kit jumped ashore.

"You feller boy stop along boat," ordered King of the Islands. And he walked up the beach with the mate, in the direction of the native village.

Lompo sprawled on the sand and chewed betel-nut, with the indifference of a Kanaka to all proceedings but his own. But Kaiolalulonga stood looking after his white master. The bo'sun was, as he often said, no common Kanaka, and his attachment to his white master was deep. There was a cloud of anxiety on his face as he watched the two white men stride up the beach. He sensed something unusual in the atmosphere of Ia'o, and it made him uneasy.

King of the Islands and Kit Hudson advanced up the beach, and in a few minutes came abreast of the great coral rock.

As they passed it, there was a sudden rush of feet—not the pattering naked feet of natives, but the heavy tread of white men in sea-boots.

"Seize them!"

It was the voice of Peter Parsons, otherwise Dandy Peter, that shouted.

"Shoot if they touch a gun!" roared Black Furley, the pearler of Lukwe.

In an instant the shipmates of the Dawn were surrounded. Before either of them could touch a weapon, they were seized by five armed ruffians and dragged down on the sand.

King of the Islands made a desperate effort to reach his revolver as he struggled in the powerful grasp of Black Furley. But the effort was in vain.

He was down on his back, with the pearler's brawny knee planted on his chest, and Black Furley's revolver was jammed in his face.

"Give over!" snarled Furley. "I'd scatter your brains as soon as look at you if you give trouble. Give over, King of the Islands!"

Hudson, in the grasp of two ruffians, was helpless. He ceased to struggle.

From Kaiolalulonga, standing by the boat, came a roar of wrath, as he saw his white master in the grasp of the Lukwe crew.

Lompo sat on the sand and stared.

But Kaiolalulonga came speeding up the beach with red rage in his face and his flashing eyes.

Dandy Peter threw up his revolver to a level.

"I reckon I want to carry this through without bloodshed if I can," he said. "Tell your nigger to surrender, Ken King, before I lay the fool dead on the beach."

Heedless of the levelled revolver, Kaiolalulonga came on, his brown face ablaze with wrath. King of the Islands shouted hastily:

"Koko! You feller Koko, stop! Stop!"

Koko stopped at his white master's order. But it was only just in time, for he was within a dozen paces of Peter Parsons, and the trigger was rising. The eye of the sea-lawyer was cold as ice over the levelled barrel. He laughed lightly as the Kanaka came to a halt.

"You're my prisoner. King of the Islands!" he said.

"I know that, you piratical swab!" said Ken, between his teeth. "What's this game, Peter Parsons? Have you turned pirate?"

"Bind them!" said the sea-lawyer coolly, without answering the boy trader's question.

Tapa cords were knotted round the wrists of Ken and Kit Hudson. It was impossible to resist, and their hands were quickly bound. Then one of the pearlers approached Kaiolalulonga with a tapa rope.

Koko looked at his master.

"S'pose you sing out, sar, me plenty fight along this bad feller swab," he said.

"No can," answered Ken. "You feller prisoner along this feller, Koko."

And the Kanaka submitted to the bonds. Two or three revolvers were ready to riddle him with bullets if he resisted.

"Follow me!" said Peter Parsons.

He ran quickly down to the beach, with two of the Lukwe ruffians at his heels, the other two remaining with the bound prisoners.

Lompo, standing by the whaleboat, stared blankly at the scene. Without a white man's orders, he was quite at a loss. But it was impossible for the Kanaka to resist even if he had thought of it. He was seized and bound with tapa cords, and the whaleboat dragged up on the beach.

From the rail of the Dawn, far out in the lagoon, startled faces were watching the strange scene. Four Hiva-Oa boys, who formed the crew, remained on the ketch—Dandy the cooky-boy and three seamen. With them was Pedro Prado, the half-caste pearl-buyer, and his native boat-steerer, whom Ken had found marooned on his way to Ia'o. In amazement and alarm they watched, but they could give no help.

Dandy Peter of Lukwe had laid his plans well. And he had succeeded!

### Held Captive.

**K**ING OF THE ISLANDS stood leaning against the coral rock, watching Dandy Peter coming up the beach after securing the whaleboat. There was a grin of triumph on

the dark, handsome face of the sea-lawyer.

Ken had been taken utterly by surprise by the attack. Not for a moment had he dreamed that white men—and enemies—were on Ia'o. Even now that the attack had taken place, and he had fallen into the cunning ambush, he could not understand it.

But he understood now the excitement among the natives at the village as they had watched the boat coming to the beach. From the village the natives had seen the Lukwe crew in ambush behind the big coral rock.

To interfere in the quarrels of white men was not the way of Pacific natives. Tao'oa and his tribesmen had stood and watched, with keen interest and great excitement, but that was all. Tao'oa, perhaps, had had a thought of intervening—Ken remembered that he had made a move as if intending to come down and meet the boat. But he had thought better of it. The Lukwe gang, well armed and desperate, were not to be lightly encountered, even by twenty times their number of natives. Like a wise native, Tao'oa left the white men, whose ways were past his understanding, to settle their troubles among themselves.

King of the Islands was as perplexed as Tao'oa must have been. Dandy Peter was his old enemy, and Black Furley and his gang bore him no good will. Yet why they had come to a lonely atoll like Ia'o to lie in wait for him was a mystery to the boy trader.

That Dandy Peter, for some unknown reason, desired to possess his ketch, the Dawn, Ken knew. The sea-lawyer had offered a fantastic price to buy the ketch at Lalinge, and after Ken's refusal to sell had made an attempt to seize it, with the help of the Lukwe crew. Ken had almost forgotten it, in his busy life of seafaring and trading. But he remembered it now. Yet he could hardly believe that this was piracy, and that the Lukwe gang intended to sail a stolen ship. That sort of thing wasn't done these days, and the Dawn was known in all the waters of the Pacific. Ken had to admit that he was hopelessly puzzled.

"What on earth is their game, Kit?" he asked.

"It beats me," replied Hudson. "If it's piracy, they've got us; but—" He broke off, at a loss to find an explanation.

"They tried to get the ketch at Lalinge," said Ken. "But they would never dare to sail her in Pacific waters."

"I can't make it out."

Dandy Peter came up, grinning. He gave Ken a smiling nod.

"What does this mean, you scoundrel?" demanded King of the Islands. "If your game is to steal my ship—"

"Only to borrow it," said Dandy Peter lightly. "You need have no fear, King of the Islands—your life is not in danger, or the lives of your men, unless they're fools enough to give us trouble. We're not looking

for a chance to put the rope round our necks, if we can help it."

"We're after the pearl," growled Black Furley.

"The pearl?" repeated King of the Islands.

Furley gave him a suspicious glare.

"You don't know anything about it?" he asked. "You've sailed your ketch for weeks, without knowing that the pearl was on board?"

"He knows nothing," grinned Dandy Peter. "If he knew of the pearl, he would not be drumming for copra at Ia'o—he'd be at Sydney selling the pearl."

"That's so, I reckon," assented Furley.

King of the Islands stared at them blankly. Every word was a riddle to him.

"You've got me beat," he said. "I trade in copra and pearl-shell, and you're welcome to all the pearls you can find on board the Dawn."

"You remember Egan, the pearler, the man you took off Lotu?" said Dandy Peter.

"I remember. I've learned since that he was one of Furley's gang when they robbed Pedro Prado of a big pearl. They robbed him and marooned him on the Albatross reef."

"And how do you know that, King of the Islands?" demanded Furley.

"Because I was driven out of my course by a gale, and picked up Prado and his boat-steerer from the reef."

"By hokey!" ejaculated Furley. He stared round towards the anchored ketch in the distance. "And you've got Prado on board? By hokey! If he knew the pearl was on board—"

"The pearl is not on board, you swab!" snapped King of the Islands. "When you spoke my ketch that day off Lotu, you saw Egan searched for it, and it was not on him. He left it on Lotu or lost it in the sea."

"Neither," chuckled Dandy Peter. "I got the story from Egan at Lukwe, King of the Islands. He pitched the pearl into your hold, just before your Kanakas seized him—"

"What?"

"It was the only way he could get rid of it—and it lies there now, in the bilge," grinned the sea-lawyer. "You fool! Why do you think Egan attempted single-handed to seize your ketch, and lost his life in doing it? It was because the big pearl was lying below your decks among the water-casks."

"My hat!" ejaculated Hudson.

"Oh!" gasped Ken.

The shipmates understood now. The secret of the Dawn, so long a secret from them, was a secret no longer.

"And you never found the pearl, King of the Islands?" asked Black

Furley, his eyes still fixed on Ken's face with surly suspicion.

"I never knew it was there—never dreamed that it was there," said Ken. "When it was not found on Egan, I believed that he had lost it in the sea, or hidden it on Lotu. But the pearl, if it is there, belongs to Pedro Prado."

Black Furley gave a gruff laugh. "We took it from him once, and marooned him on the Albatross reef," he said. "That little swab of a half-caste won't give us any trouble."

King of the Islands stood silent. Much that had puzzled him was clear now—now that he knew Pedro Prado's Moon Pearl was on board the ketch. But the knowledge came too late to be of any use. Dandy Peter held the upper hand now.

"And that's why you wanted to buy

and marched into the pearl-ers' hut, which stood at a distance from the native village. Lompo was brought in after them.

"You'll stay and guard them, Dick Finn," said Black Furley. "Put a bullet through the head of any swab that tries to get loose!"

"I reckon I want to be on hand when the pearl's found!" grunted Finn.

"The pearl won't be found in a hurry, you fool!" snarled Dandy Peter. "It will take days—perhaps weeks. Shut your head, and obey orders!"

Leaving the scowling ruffian in charge of the prisoners, Dandy Peter and the rest went down the beach to the Dawn's whaleboat. They ran it out, and pulled for the anchored ketch.



Danny slipped the pipe from the lobe of his ear and thrust it out of sight among a heap of banana peelings.

my ketch at Lalinge?" asked Ken, at last. "That's why you tried to seize her at night?"

"You've got it," assented Dandy Peter, "and that's why we've laid in wait for you at Ia'o, Ken King. And when we've done with your ketch, you can have her again, and sail her where you like."

"Take them to the hut," he added, grinning mockingly at the boy trader. "We're sorry to give you this trouble, King of the Islands—but we've got to keep you safe till we've found the pearl!"

The shipmates and Kaio-lalulalonga were hurried up the beach

Ken, from the open doorway of the hut, watched them, his lips set, his eyes glinting. There was no doubt that the Lukwe gang would seize the ketch. The Kanakas on board could give them little trouble.

"So that's their game, Ken!" said Hudson, with a grimace. "If we'd only dreamed that the pearl was on board, old man—"

"Who could have guessed that?" said Ken. "And there's no stopping them now, Kit. Peter Parsons has beaten us this time. The cunning swab laid his plans well!"

"But if the pearl was flung into the hold, Ken, it won't be found in

## Troublesome Treasure!

a hurry, as that rascal said. Our chance may come before they find it."

King of the Islands was silent, thinking. He was helpless in the hands of the Lukwe crew, and his ship was their prize. But if the Moon Pearl was indeed lying in the bilge under the deck of the ketch, it was not likely to be found soon, eager as the search for it would be. And there might be chances yet of turning the tables on Dandy Peter and his crew.

### Danny's Secret!

DANNY, the cooky-boy of the Dawn, gave a squeal of alarm. "Lukwe feller come along ketch!" exclaimed Danny.

The other three Hiva-Oa seamen—Lufu, Kolulo, and Tomoo—stood at the teak rail, staring at the whaleboat. They stared at it steadily, calmly. Had King of the Islands been present, to order them to fetch up the rifles and greet the Lukwe crew with a volley, they would have jumped to obey. But an attack on white men, except at the order of a white man, was not thought of by the Kanakas. Even if they had thought of it, the grim and resolute looks of the Lukwe crew might well have daunted them.

They had seen King of the Islands marched off a prisoner by the pearlers. They waited to see what would happen next. None of the three Marquesas boys showed excitement as the Lukwe crew pulled over the shining lagoon to the ketch. But Danny showed alarm. His jaw dropped, and his dark eyes bulged as he squealed out that the Lukwe crew were coming. Lufu looked round at him.

"What name you feller fright?" he asked. "Lukwe feller no kill this feller Kanaka plenty too much."

Danny did not reply. His hand went up to one of his pierced ears, which was adorned by an old pipe thrust through the hole in the lobe. Lufu grinned.

"Lukwe feller no want feller pipe belong you, Danny," he said. "That feller pipe no good along Lukwe white feller."

Danny, without answering, scuttled away to his galley. The three seamen remained at the rail, watching.

Pedro Prado, the pearl-buyer of Lalinge, did not share their philosophic calm. He clutched at the rail for support, and his eyes rolled wildly, his dusky face almost colourless, as he gazed at Black Furley.

The sight of the ruffian who had robbed him of the great pearl, and marooned him on the Albatross reef, struck the little half-caste with terror. Had he known that Black Furley was on Ia'o, Prado would almost have preferred Ken King to leave him on the lonely reef.

Prado's Raatean boat-steerer showed the same terror. At the sight of Furley's grim, black-bearded face in the boat, he stood as if spell-bound for a time, and then crept into the fore-castle.

The Lukwe pearlery, pulling hard, rapidly approached the Dawn. Black Furley gave a savage grin as he sighted Prado's scared face over the rail. The little Portuguese half-caste had courage in his own way. He made hundred-mile trips in his boat with a single boat-steerer often in dangerous waters, and penetrated cannibal isles in his quest of bargains in pearls. But the mere sight of the bully of Lukwe drove the colour from his cheeks and the courage from his heart. The whaleboat thudded on the hull.

"Throw a rope, you feller boy!" shouted Dandy Peter.

At that the Hiva-Oa boys hesitated.

"You Lukwe feller no come along this ship," ventured Lufu. "Feller white master King of the Islands he no likee."

Dandy Peter snatched the revolver from his belt.

"You feller boy, you throw that feller rope along boat, or you dead Kanaka!" he snapped. And the rope was promptly thrown.

The whaleboat was made fast, and the crew clambered aboard the ketch.

"You savvy us feller master along this ship!" growled Black Furley. "King of the Islands he no stop. You jump to orders, you scum, or, my word, me knock seven bells and a starboard watch outer you!"

"Yes, sar!" gasped the Kanakas.

"The niggers won't give us any trouble, Furley," said Dandy Peter. "And I reckon Pedro Prado ain't hunting for trouble!"

"I reckon not," replied Furley. "You half-caste swab," he called, addressing Prado, "mind your step, or you go over the side. Savvy?"

"Yes, senhor!" gasped Prado. "I do nozzing. I have much fear of you, Senhor Furley!"

"You sneaking, cringing half-caste swab!" sneered Furley. "You never knew your pearl was on board the Dawn, I reckon. The pearl we took off you when we marooned you—Egan chucked it into the hold of this hooker, and we're going to find it!"

And he tramped down the companion.

Prado stood thunderstruck for a moment.

"The pearl!" he stammered. "A perola! My Moon Pearl! You tell me he is on board this hooker, senhor?"

"Ay, ay!" grinned Dandy Peter. "And I reckon you'd better forget that it ever was yours, Pedro Prado, unless you want to go over the side and make kai-kai for the sharks!" And he followed Furley below.

Pedro Prado gave a deep groan. He had had little hope of ever seeing again the great pearl he had lost; but a faint hope, at least, had lingered. The news that it was hidden on board the Dawn, now in the hands of the Lukwe crew, gave the deathblow to that last gleam of hope. The little Portuguese leaned on the rail and groaned.

The peatling crew had gone below, every one of them eager to join in

the hunt for the lost pearl. Nothing now, save a search which might be long and troublesome, stood between them and a pearl worth ten thousand pounds—the great pearl which Prado had named "A Lua," "The Moon," from its size and wonderful beauty.

From the deck they could be heard crowding into the lazaretto aft, and dragging up the trapdoor. Black Furley's hoarse voice shouted for a lantern; and one of the Hiva-Oa boys hastened to provide him with one. Furley led the way down the short, steep ladder into the hold under the lazaretto, where the water-casks were chocked on their sides.

From the galley forward the face of Danny, the cooky-boy, looked out. The expression on Danny's face was strange. He called to the Kanaka who had taken the lantern to Furley.

"What name that Lukwe feller he want feller lantern, Tomoo?" he asked.

"That feller wantee lantern along he go along water-cask," answered Tomoo. "He tinkee findum pearl along hold."

Danny drew back into the galley. "My word!" he murmured to himself. "That feller look findum pearl along hold, my word! That feller he never findum pearl! S'pose that feller he savvy this Kanaka findum feller pearl, he kill-dead this Kanaka, my word!"

And Danny's trembling hand went again to the old pipe that adorned the slit in his ear—in the bowl of which, jammed down under tobacco, was hidden the great pearl, which Danny had found in the hold and kept secret.

### The Search.

"YOU feller boy!" Black Furley's voice came in a roar from below. "You feller boy, you bring plenty feller lantern along this feller place! Look alive!"

The Hiva-Oa boys rushed to obey. Black Furley had a heavy hand with "niggers"—though the native crew did not fear even the burly, bullying ruffian so much as they feared Peter Parsons, the dapper dandy of Lukwe.

The space under the Dawn's lazaretto was confined, and there was scarce room for Furley to stand upright on the orlop-deck without knocking his head on the under side of the lazaretto floor. And the space, confined as it was, was crowded with the water-casks. Every foot of space on a vessel like the ketch was made the most of. Such a place was not easy to search, and the first eagerness of the pearlery died away in angry grumbings.

The Moon Pearl was large; but the largest pearl was only a tiny object in such a space. It might have fallen anywhere when it was flung into the hold, and the search was cramped and difficult, added to which the confined space reeked with heat and the smell of bilge. Angry, sweating, the Lukwe crew rooted among the water-casks, but they very soon realised that a hasty search was not likely to bear fruit.

It did not cross their minds for one moment that the pearl was no

longer there. They knew for certain that King of the Islands and his mate had never found it, or even dreamed that it was on board at all, and that Pedro Prado knew nothing of it. That settled the matter in their minds. That it had been found by the cooky-boy when he went down for water, and kept secret by him, naturally did not occur to anyone.

Had the pearl still been there the search for it would have been long and laborious. As it was no longer there, the Lukwe crew had set themselves a hopeless task.

A half-hour of it was enough for Black Furley, and he roared for the Kanakas.

Lufu and Tomoo and Kolulo hurried to obey his call. Furley glared at them with a scowling, threatening brow.

"You feller boy, you go along hold, along that feller lantern!" he snarled. "Big feller pearl he stop along hold. You savvy? You findum that big feller pearl. You givum that pearl along this feller. S'pose you tinkee that pearl stop along you feller, me knock seven bells outer you, you savvy?"

"You feller boy look along findum that big feller pearl!" broke in Dandy Peter. "You findum that feller pearl, me givum five-five feller piecee gold. You no findum, me plenty kill back belong you, along feller rope."

The Kanakas went down into the hold, and the Lukwe crew came up, sweating from their labours. Black Furley remained at the open hatch, with an eye on the searching Kanakas. If one of them found the pearl, he was quite certain to attempt to conceal it if he had a chance, or half a chance. Furley was taking no chances.

Dandy Peter went on deck. He called the Raiatean boat-steerer out of the fore-castle, and sent him below to help in the hunt. Then the cooky-boy was called from the galley.

Danny came out in fear and trembling. The knowledge that the great pearl was hidden in the pipe stuck in his ear filled Danny with dread. The cooky-boy's terror was shown in every look and movement. But Dandy Peter was far from attributing it to its real cause. He was accustomed to seeing native boys tremble under his ruthless eye.

"You go below, help feller boy findum big feller pearl along hold!" he snapped.

"Yes, sar!" mumbled Danny.

The wretched cooky-boy trembled. It was certain that the Kanakas would be searched when they came up after hunting for the pearl, in case one of them had found it and concealed it. If Danny took his prize below with him, it was certain to be found on him later.

"You hear me, ear belong you?" snarled Dandy Peter, as the cooky-boy stood hesitating. He clenched his fist for a blow.

"Yes, sar!" gasped Danny. "Me go plenty quick, sar! Me good feller boy, sar, me plenty good feller boy along you, sar. This boy he takee away pot along stove, sar, along he no burn, sar."

## STAMPS from a PIRATES' LAIR

By DOUGLAS ARMSTRONG

WHEN bold, bad buccaners roved the Spanish Main, the island of New Providence, in the Bahamas group, was a nest of pirates. So much so that in September of the year 1777 it was announced in the "London Gazette" that "His Majesty has been graciously pleased to give directions for dislodging those pirates who have taken shelter in the said islands, as well as for securing those islands and making settlements and a fortification there for the safety and benefit of trade and navigation in those seas for the future."

On the principle, apparently, of setting a thief to catch a thief, the task of driving out the sea rovers was entrusted to one Captain Woodes Rogers, himself a famous filibuster and well accustomed to handling lawless men. Like his fellow privateer, Morgan of Jamaica, he was actually appointed to a commission in the Royal Navy and made Governor of the Bahamas in the King's name.

One of the first victims of his ruthless campaign for the suppression of piracy was the infamous pirate Blackbeard, a Bristol man whose real name was Edward Teach. He was hanged, together with a number of his company, whilst more than a thousand of the buccaners surrendered to the royal pardon. The event is commemorated in the motto of the colony: "Expulsis Piratis—Restituta Commercium."



In the centre of this stamp is the long flight of steps hewn out of the solid rock to enable troops to pass secretly from the fort—erected as a defence against piratical raids—and the harbour of Nassau.  
(Both stamps enlarged.)

Uncle Sam's prohibition laws at defiance.

From this former pirates' lair has just come a particular set of stamps in celebration of the three hundredth anniversary of the first British settlement. The design incorporates an impression of the seal of the colony, showing a group of sixteenth century sailing ships with the motto already referred to and the dates "1629" (first colonisation), 1729 (ceding to Great Britain by France and Spain), and "1929" (tercentenary of British occupation). It is shared by each of the five values comprising the series, viz. 1d., 3d., 5d., 2s., and 3s., which are in concurrent use with the regular King's head issue.

"Look alive, then!" growled Dandy Peter.

Danny stepped back into the galley to remove a pot from the stove. At the same time, he slipped the pipe from the lobe of his ear and thrust it out of sight among a heap of banana peelings.

Then he hurried below to help in the search, still trembling, but with a lurking grin on his face in spite of his fear.

While the hot afternoon wore away, the five natives laboured and sweated in the quest. Black Furley watched them from above, and spurred them on with threats.

Ashore, King of the Islands and his men remained in the pearl's hut, watched by the ruffian Finn. The natives of Ia' were keeping their distance. Once Tao'oa came towards the hut. Finn, with a savage scowl, drew the revolver from his belt, and Tao'oa retreated at once to the native grass houses.

If King of the Islands had had any faint hope of help from the Ia'o natives, it faded away, as the long, hot hours passed, and night descended on the ocean and the atoll. Meanwhile, the search for the lost pearl went on relentlessly on board the Dawn.



The hanging of the infamous pirate, Blackbeard, is commemorated in the motto on this stamp.

## Troublesome Treasure!

Dandy Peter had ordered the water-casks to be swung up into the lazaretto. And in the cleared space the Kanakas hunted and rooted, streaming with perspiration, and aching with heat and fatigue.

The cooky-boy was called up at last to prepare food for the Lukwe crew. As he stepped out into the lazaretto he was seized and searched lest the pearl should be hidden about him. But nothing was found on Danny, and he went to the galley to cook.

The pipe was still where he had left it under the banana peelings. Danny sorted it out as soon as he was unobserved, and concealed it in a safer place at the bottom of a case of canned meat.

### A Dash for Safety.

THE pearlers gathered on deck for their meal, leaving the weary Kanakas still grubbing about below. Danny waited on the rough galley, providing for their wants, and jumping to orders, receiving in return blows and kicks.

"I reckon I'm beginning to think that Jim Egan was pulling your leg, Peter Parsons," growled Black Furley. "He never pitched the pearl into the hold at all."

"Stow it!" snarled Dandy Peter. "I tell you there's no doubt about it. Egan tried to grab the ketch single-handed, and went over the side for his pains. Do you think he'd have taken a chance like that for anything but the big pearl?"

"Well, they ain't found it!" snarled Furley. "An' they've rooted over every inch."

"They'll find it yet, or we'll cut the skin from their backs!" said Dandy Peter.

"Mebbe it's been found already!" growled one of the pearlers. "King of the Islands—"

"He never found it!" snapped Dandy Peter. "It's there, and it's only a question of time before we get our hands on it."

"King of the Islands never found it, nor his mate, nor old Prado," said Furley. "But it looks to me as if it ain't there. One of the Kanakas might have found it and stolen it."

"You clumsy swab!" roared Peter Parsons, as Danny gave a sudden start and upset a lime-squash over his legs.

"Oh, sar, me plenty solly, sar!" gasped Danny. "Foot belong me he slip, sar. Me plenty solly!"

The dandy of Lukwe leaped up, face convulsed with rage. His fist crashed into Danny's face, sending him flying, to hit the deck with a terrible thud.

Dandy Peter mopped his wet trousers and sat down again. Tempers were growing savage among the Lukwe crew.

Danny lay where he had rolled, half-stunned by the blow. But whether he was stunned or not mattered little to Peter Parsons.

The hour was late when the pearlers finished their meal and went below again. The Kanakas had not dared leave the hold. But they were resting till Black Furley's savage face

glaring down at them, and his fierce voice, drove them to their task again.

By the light of the glimmering lanterns, the weary search went on. It was not till midnight that the Kanakas, sinking with fatigue, were allowed to come up, and further search postponed till the morrow. Black Furley searched them, one by one, as they came into the lazaretto, well knowing that if they had found the pearl they were more likely to conceal it than to hand it over. But the pearl had not been found, and the weary natives were allowed to rest.

Furley and his two mates went to the cabin to rest, but Dandy Peter stayed on deck.

He paced the deck for a time, glancing once or twice at the beach that shimmered like silver in the moonlight. The native village was dark and quiet, and the pearlers' hut, where the prisoners lay, was dark and silent, too. The Lukwe sea-lawyer threw himself at last on a tapa mat on the after-deck, to sleep.

From the galley, two glimmering eyes were watching him. There was one on board the Dawn who was not sleeping—Danny, the cooky-boy. And Danny was not likely to sleep. Black Furley's suggestion that the pearl might have been found and stolen by one of the Kanakas had given the finishing touch to the cooky-boy's terror.

The search would go on, the next day, and the next. But at last the Lukwe crew must be driven to the conclusion that it was not there. And then—

Danny shuddered at that thought. He could foresee the measures they would take to track down the missing pearl. There was no torture known in the South Seas at which the Lukwe gang would hesitate to force the truth from the Kanakas.

In his terror the cooky-boy even thought of handing over the pearl to the Lukwe gang and claiming the "five-five piece gold" Dandy Peter had promised for its finding. But he shook his fuzzy head. The great pearl spelled unlimited wealth to him if he could get away with it. It would make Danny the richest native in his own island of Hiva-Oa!

Danny did not think of sleep. From the galley he watched till Peter Parsons laid down on the tapa mat aft and slumbered. Then, in the darkness, he got busy.

He sorted out the pipe, with the precious pearl hidden in its bowl, from the canned meat case, where he had concealed it. Carefully he rolled it up in his loincloth, and tied it securely there. Then, like a dusky ghost in the glimmering moonlight, Danny fitted from the galley.

His bare feet made no sound on the deck. Dandy Peter was sleeping aft. Pedro Prado, propped against the taffrail, raised his head for a moment and glanced at the fitting figure of the cooky-boy. But from the pearl-buyer Danny had nothing to fear.

Softly and silently, Danny slid over the rail, with a tapa rope to help him. He slid down the rope to the water, and entered it without a sound.

The ripples flashed like silver in the moonlight, as the Kanaka struck out for the distant beach.

There were sharks in the lagoon of Ia'o, as Danny well knew. But he was taking the risk of the sharks, to save the great pearl and his dream of riches at home at Hiva-Oa.

Slight were the sounds that Danny made as he swam for the beach. Like all the islanders, he was at home in the water, and swam like a fish. But they were sufficient to arouse the lightly-sleeping Dandy Peter. The sea-lawyer lifted his head, listened, and rose to his feet.

He glanced up and down the deck of the ketch, and then over the silvery waters of the lagoon. As he discerned the dark head of the cooky-boy, already at a distance, Peter Parsons ran to the rail, drawing the revolver from his belt as he did so.

"You feller boy!" he shouted, sighting the revolver. "You feller boy, you come back along this feller ketch, plenty quick! You hear me, ear belong you."

Danny heard him, and spurted desperately for the shore.

"You hear me?" roared Dandy Peter. "You come back along ketch, or me shootee along gun, you feller boy, you dead nigger!"

Danny swept on shoreward.

Bang! The roar of the revolver awoke a thousand echoes across the lagoon, and rolled back like thunder from the silent shore. The dark head on the moonlit water disappeared.

There was a trampling of heavy feet in the companion, and Black Furley put his head on deck.

"What's the trouble?" he growled. "The Kanakas—" He glared round, a revolver in his hand. The Hiva-Oa seamen were sitting up on their sleeping-mats, staring drowsily.

"One of the niggers deserting," growled Dandy Peter. "The cooky-boy, I reckon!"

Furley stared at the lagoon. There was no sign of a swimmer there.

"You got him?"

"I don't often miss," said Parsons, with a shrug of the shoulders. "It will be a warning to the others." He returned the revolver to his belt, and lounged back to his sleeping-mat. Furley, after another long look at the shining lagoon, nodded, and went down to his berth on the cabin lockers.

Far away from the anchored ketch, a dripping figure crawled out of the water, and lay panting on the sands in the shadow of a coral rock.

There was a streak of crimson on the dark cheek. Dandy Peter's bullet had gone close. But Danny had dived as the bullet grazed him, and swum under water for a distance possible only to a South Sea islander. The cooky-boy lay dripping and panting on the sands, in the shadow of the coral rock—his hand on the knot in his loincloth that hid the great pearl—the pearl for which the search was to recommence with the new day, and which was no longer on board the Dawn!

"Ken King Hits Back!" is the title of next week's complete yarn by Charles Hamilton. The last of the present series, it shows life in the South Seas as only Mr. Hamilton can describe it, life lived to the full, glamorous and packed with all the adventure one naturally associates with Tropic seas.)