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AEROPLANE PICTURE IN COLOURS INSIDE!

The MODERN BOY

EVERY MONDAY.
Week Ending March 1st, 1930.

No. 108.
Vol. 5.

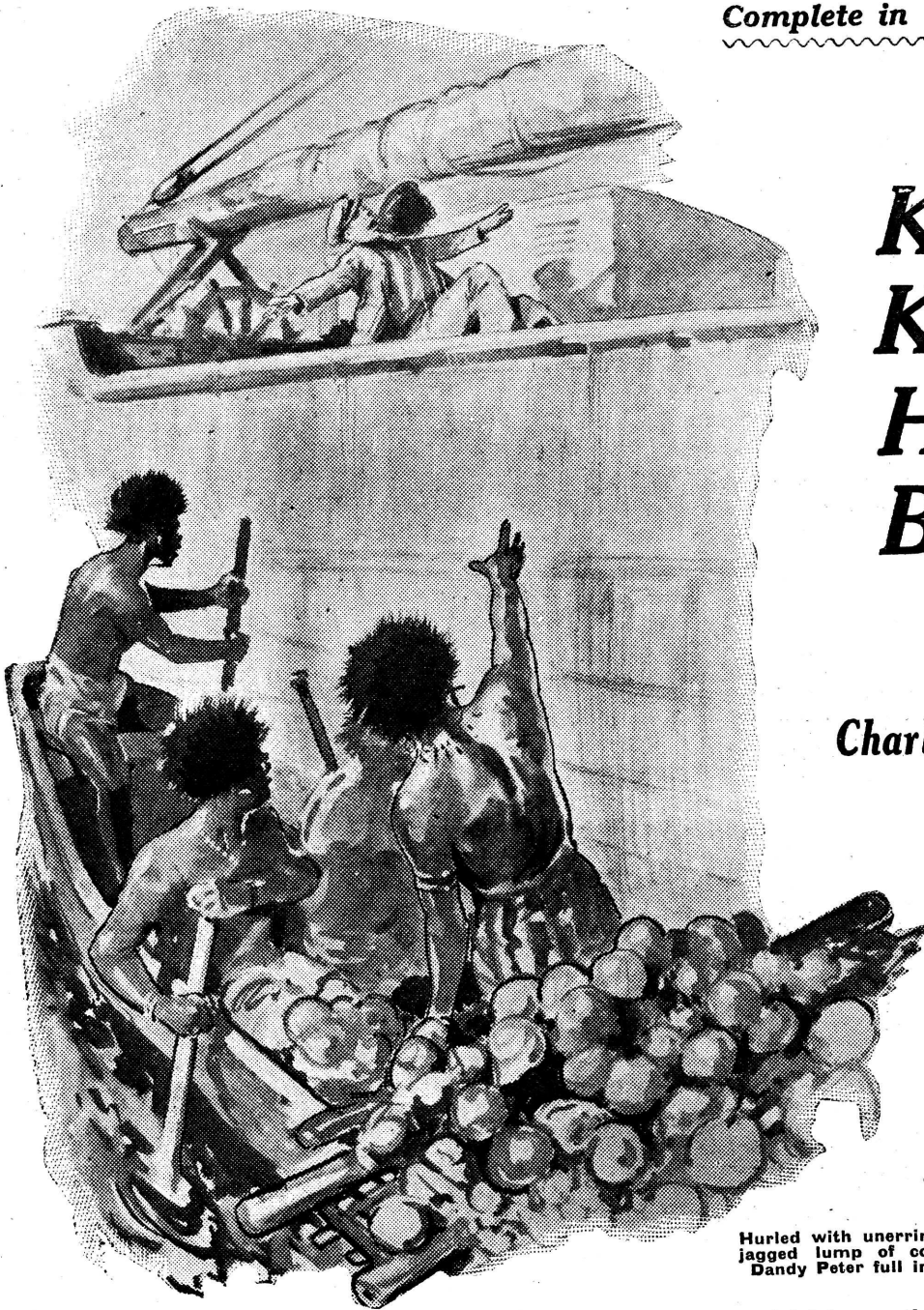
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THE SEA-BED BUS!—See page 11.

Ken King Hits Back!

BY
Charles Hamilton



A SOUTH SEAS
ADVENTURE
STORY THAT
WILL LIVE IN
YOUR MEMORY!

Hurled with unerring aim, the jagged lump of coral struck Dandy Peter full in the face.

Rescue!

A CRESCENT moon sailed over the island and the lagoon of Ia'o, turning the white sands and the shining waters to dusky silver.

It was long past midnight, but Ken King, the boy skipper of the ketch Dawn, had not closed his eyes.

Leaning against one of the palm-wood poles in the pearl-ers' hut in which he was being held prisoner, King of the Islands, as Ken was known, looked out through the doorless opening in the front of the hut. Far out in the lagoon he could see his ketch, lying at anchor, scarce moving on the placid waters.

A light burned on the Dawn, and the glimmering moonlight showed the

graceful outlines of the vessel. But there was no sound, no movement, on the ketch. Dandy Peter Parsons, Black Furley, and the other three Lukwe ruffians who had seized the ketch for the purpose of finding a stolen pearl—the Moon Pearl—which had been thrown into the Dawn's hold unknown to Ken King, were sleeping.

Ken was a helpless prisoner, and his arms ached in the tapa cords that bound them behind his back. He could not sleep. And, weary as he was, he had no desire for sleep. He longed with a passionate longing to turn the tables on the ruffians who had seized his ship.

He glanced round the dim interior of the grass hut. Kit Hudson, his mate, was sleeping fitfully. Kaio-

lalulalonga, otherwise Koko, the giant Kanaka bo'sun, and Lompo, one of the five Hiva-Oa seamen who manned the ketch, were fast asleep, in spite of the bonds on their limbs.

In the doorway, leaning against a palm-pole post, sat Dick Finn, the pearler who had been left to guard the prisoners. He was sleeping, with his chin sunk on his breast. But there was a revolver in his hand as he slept.

Black Furley had ordered him to shoot if the prisoners attempted to escape, and there was no doubt that he would carry out the order. But escape was impossible, with the tapa cords knotted fast and cutting into their limbs.

Ken had had a faint hope that the natives of Ia'o might intervene—that

Ken King Hits Back!

he might be helped by Tao'oa, the chief, and his tribesmen. But the natives had kept their distance. If they had thought of helping the boy trader, they would have been daunted by the Lukwe crew, desperate men armed to the teeth.

From the men he had left on the Dawn could come no help. The Hiva-Oa boys and Pedro Prado, the half-caste pearl-buyer, were in terror of their lives at the hands of the ruffians in command.

It was bitter to King of the Islands to admit it, but he had to admit that this time Dandy Peter had beaten him—that his ketch, and the great pearl hidden aboard her, and his own life, were at the mercy of the Lukwe sea-lawyer. That knowledge added to the passionate anger that was burning in his heart as he sat wearily watching the lagoon and the anchored ketch in the dusky moonlight.

Suddenly the boy trader started. On the glistening beach, a short distance in front of the hut, a dark figure had appeared. It moved slowly, making no sound, and creeping towards the hut with the stealthy silence of a snake.

The moonlight shone on a dark head and a dark face, and caught the glimmer of a white loincloth.

For a moment or two King of the Islands fancied that it was one of the Ia'o natives.

Then, as the gleam of the moon fell more clearly on the dark, tattooed face, he recognised it. It was the face of Danny, the Hiva-Oa cooky-boy of the Dawn.

Danny had been left on the ketch and had been there when the vessel was taken by the Lukwe crew. Evidently the cooky-boy had dropped over the side in the night and swum ashore. It was an hour since Ken had heard a pistol-shot ring out from the ketch, and he had wondered what it portended. Now he guessed that it had been fired by one of the Lukwe gang at Danny as he escaped to the beach.

Ken made no move, uttered no sound. Only his eyes were fixed intently on the cooky-boy as he crept nearer and nearer.

Within a dozen paces Danny came to a stop. Looking direct at King of the Islands, whose pale, tense face he could discern in the shadows within the doorway, he put his finger to his lips in sign of silence.

But Ken did not need the warning. He sat motionless, soundless—though, in the intensity of the excitement he was feeling, it seemed to him that the throbbing of his heart must awaken the ruffian who sat sleeping in the doorway.

Danny's intention was plain. In his right hand he grasped a lump of jagged coral. Closer and closer he

drew to the ruffian in the doorway of the hut.

Not for a moment had Ken dreamed of receiving help from the Kanakas he had left on the Dawn. His native crew were brave and loyal enough, but without a white man to lead them they were powerless. Least of all would he have dreamed of help from Danny. The cooky-boy was the least brave and the least devoted of his crew, and there was a good deal of the shifty rogue in Danny's disposition.

That the cooky-boy had a secret motive, Ken could not guess. That Danny had found the lost pearl on the ketch, that it was now hidden in a knot of his dingy white loincloth, and that its possession filled him with terror so long as the Lukwe crew were masters of the situation, Ken could not know. Only if King of the Islands gained the upper hand of the pearling gang could Danny hope to keep his prize and live. It was that knowledge that spurred the Hiva-Oa boy on to his attempt to save his white master.

Closer and closer he drew, and Ken had to clench his teeth to control his excitement. If the sleeping ruffian awakened, even if he discharged the revolver when Danny struck, all was lost. The shot would bring the pearling crew ashore in the whaleboat!

But Finn was sleeping soundly. His steady breathing did not slacken as the danger drew nearer and nearer. And Danny at last was near enough to strike. He rose silently to his feet, the heavy, jagged lump of coral grasped in both hands, and swung it over the unconscious, bending head of the sleeping pearler.

The rock came thudding down on the ruffian's head. Finn did not utter even a moan. He lurched over and fell on his side, dashed into instant insensibility by the blow.

The cooky-boy's face had been drawn with anxious fear till the blow was struck. Now it relaxed into a grin.

"My word, me plenty killy that Lukwe feller, sar!" he chuckled, and swung up the rock for another blow.

"Stop! No kill-dead that Lukwe feller, Danny!" exclaimed King of the Islands hastily. "You takee knife belong him, cut feller rope along me, plenty too quick altogether."

"Yes, sar!" grinned Danny. He laid down the lump of coral, and took the sheath-knife from the insensible pearler and opened it. The keen blade sawed across the tapa cords that bound Ken's arms.

"What the thunder—" ejaculated Kit Hudson. The other prisoners in the hut were awake now. Hudson sat up, staring at Danny. Kaio-lalulalonga and Lompo stirred, their startled eyes glistening in the gloom.

"Feller Danny!" muttered Lompo.

in wonder. "Feller cooky-boy he comey along this place."

"Ken—what—" Hudson was staring blankly at the grinning cooky-boy as he sawed the boy trader's bonds asunder.

"We're saved, Kit!" King of the Islands spoke in a low, tense voice. "We're free, and those scoundrels on the Dawn shall know it soon. Before we're an hour older, we'll deal with Dandy Peter and Black Furley. My sainted Sam, I'll make that crew sorry that they've meddled with my ship."

There was a glimmer of pale rose in the eastern sky. The moonlight was fading into dawn. Danny, knife in hand, moved from one prisoner to another, sawing through the tapa cords. King of the Islands and his comrades were free. The struggle for the ketch, which Dandy Peter believed to be over, was about to commence.

Praying Tempers.

BLACK FURLEY tramped heavily up the companion steps, and came out on the deck of the Dawn, in the first rosy glimmer of day. Dandy Peter, stretched on a tapa mat at the foot of the mizzen, yawned and rose to his feet. From below the other two pearlers came tramping up. The native crew were still sleeping on their mats forward; but the harsh voice and heavy sea-boots of Black Furley awakened them, and they jumped to attention.

Dandy Peter rubbed his eyes, and stood at the teak rail looking towards the beach. The native village on the edge of the palm grove was still silent—the islanders were not yet astir. Dandy Peter's glance turned to the hut where the prisoners had been left under guard of Dick Finn. Nothing seemed to be stirring there. The Lukwe crew were still—so far as they knew—masters of the situation.

There were scowling brows and black tempers among the gang on board the Dawn. Black Furley and his followers were beginning to doubt whether the stolen pearl was, after all, on board the ketch; though Peter Parsons did not doubt.

Furley drove the Kanakas below, to resume the search in the hold under the lazaretto. Lufu, Kolulo, and Tomoo, the three Hiva-Oa seamen, and Prado's Raiatean boat-steerer scuttled below. The water-casks had been swung out, and the space below the lazaretto floor was vacant. And in the gloomy recesses the four natives flashed lantern-light to and fro, as they resumed the weary search. Dandy Peter had promised "five-five piecee gold" to the native boy who should find the lost pearl; but Furley's threats and blows spurred them on more than the hope of reward.

There was no cooky-boy on board the

ANOTHER COLOURED PICTURE FREE NEXT WEEK!

Dawn now, to prepare breakfast for the ruffians. Danny was gone, and it was the belief of Dandy Peter that he had gone to the bottom of the lagoon, or into the jaws of the sharks. He had fired on the cooky-boy as he swam ashore in the night, and had seen him disappear. He was not aware that Danny had dived and swum under water to the distant beach.

"Here, you Prado!" roared Black Furley.

Pedro Prado, the little half-caste pearl dealer, was propped against the taffrail, half-asleep. He opened his eyes and blinked at the Lukwe ruffian.

"Yes, senhor?" he queried.

Furley strode towards him.

"Show a leg, you darned half-caste!" he snarled. "The cooky-boy's gone to the sharks, and you're going to make yourself useful. Show a leg."

"At your service, senhor," stammered Prado, scrambling to his feet, just in time to elude a savage kick from a heavy sea-boot. "I do as you wish. Bom!"

"You'd better!" snarled Furley. "Get into the galley and turn out breakfast."

The little pearl-buyer ran to the galley. He was the best judge of pearls in the South Seas; but as a cook he did not shine. He hurriedly turned out breakfast for the Lukwe crew, and was rewarded with a blow from Furley that sent him sprawling. He crept away trembling to the galley, in terror of his life.

Black Furley finished his breakfast and lighted his pipe. He gave Dandy Peter an evil look.

"If we don't find the pearl today—" he commenced.

"What then?" asked Dandy Peter, his cold, hard eyes fixed on the ruffian's threatening face with a look that daunted Furley.

"You've brought us here for the pearl—and where's the pearl?" growled Furley. "According to your yarn, Jim Egan" hucked it into the hold to get rid of it. We know that King of the Islands never found it, or his mate, or that half-caste, Prado. The Kanakas have rooted over the place from end to end. Looks to me as if you've fooled us, Peter Parsons, or else Jim Egan fooled you."

"Stow it!" said Dandy Peter. "The pearl's there, in some crack or crevice. It's never been found and it's still where it fell when Egan pitched it into the hold. We've got plenty of time before us, and the niggers to do

the work. Stow the gab, Furley. You make me tired."

After further bickering Furley tramped down below. Standing by the hatch in the lazaretto floor, he glared down at the Kanakas who were seeking the lost pearl. His savage voice urged them on to their task.

Kolulo looked up at him, his brown face streaming with perspiration. Early as the hour was, it was already hot. And in the narrow space under the lazaretto the air was close and the heat intense.

"Me no tinkce feller pearl he stop along this place, sar!" gasped Kolulo. "Eye belong me look along every place, sar. Feller pearl he no stop."

"You listen along me speak, ear belong you!" roared Furley in reply. "S'pose you no findum that feller pearl this feller day, you black scum, me knock seven bells outer you, along rope, along lawyer-cane. By hokey, I'll cut the skin from your backs, s'pose you no findum that feller big pearl. Get to it, you black scum!"

And the Kanakas, sullen but submissive, went on with the weary work. Furley sat with his legs hanging over the edge of the trapdoor, watching them while he smoked his pipe, and shouting threats at a sign of slacking.



Kit Hudson struck with the thick cane, and Black Furley went crumpling down the companion.

Eager as the Lukwe crew were to discover the lost pearl, they shrank from the work in the hot and stuffy hold. If it was there, the Kanakas could find it—and there was no doubt that they were doing their best in their fear of what would follow failure.

Had the pearl been still where it had been flung, that minute search must have revealed it. And neither the Kanakas nor their savage masters guessed that it had already been found and hidden by the cooky-boy, before the Dawn dropped anchor at La'o. But Black Furley and his followers were doubting, by this time, whether the pearl was there, and the prospect of disappointment roused all the evil in their natures. If the pearl was not found, it was more than likely that there would be deadly trouble between the pearling gang and Dandy Peter, who had led them on this wild-goose chase.

On deck, two of the pearlers were sprawling in the shade of an awning, smoking and muttering together, and casting evil looks at the sea-lawyer. Dandy Peter did not heed them. That disappointment would lead to trouble with his associates, he knew well enough. But there was no fear in the composition of the dandy of Lukwe. Trouble with the pearling crew he was prepared for. It was of

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his own doubt and disappointment that he was thinking as he restlessly paced the deck under the rising sun.

On the distant beach, the natives of Ia'o were stirring. A number of them were dragging a large canoe piled high with tropical produce—yams, bananas, coconuts, and other fruits—down to the water. It slid into the lagoon, and half a dozen paddlers brought it out towards the anchored ketch.

Dandy Peter gave it a careless glance. But that laden canoe from the beach of Ia'o was deserving of a more careful inspection, had the ruffian only known it.

Ken's Ruse.

KING of the Islands stood in the shadow of the palms, looking out at the anchored ketch.

Before the sun rose over Ia'o, Ken and his comrades had crept away into the palm grove, leaving Finn bound and gagged in the hut. In

chief, he was greeted with surprise and cordiality. The Ia'o chief had not ventured to intervene in the white men's quarrels, but he had no liking for the Lukwe ruffians who had invaded the peaceful atoll, and with King of the Islands he was on the best of terms.

"Me tinkee you go finish altogether, sar, along that feller belong Lukwe," said the chief.

"This feller he no go finish—Lukwe feller he go finish plenty quick," smiled Ken. "You listen, Tao'oa, ear belong you. That Lukwe feller he takum ship belong me. Me go takum ship along Lukwe feller. Me wantee big canoe, plenty feller paddler."

Tao'oa looked dubious. He was evidently unwilling to be drawn into the fight with the Lukwe crew, friendly as he was to the boy trader.

"You listen what me say, ear belong you," urged Ken. "Plenty yam, plenty banana, plenty coconut, along that big feller canoe. White man along ship tinkee island feller

"That's the game," nodded Ken. "It's our only chance. If we get within range of their guns, the game's up if they spot us. We're taking a big chance, but it's the only way."

"Let's get going!" said Hudson.

Keeping in the cover of the palms, for now that the sun was up the beach was full in view from the ketch, the shipmates reached the rear of the native village, and came among the grass houses. There Tao'oa met them, a wide grin on his dusky face.

"Plenty feller boy stop along canoe," he said. "Eye belong Lukwe feller no see you feller."

A crowd of grinning natives were round the canoe that was being loaded. In the midst of the crowd, screening them from the sea, Ken and his comrades crept to the big canoe and tumbled into it. Lying in the bottom of the canoe, they were covered from sight with the piles of fruits.

Then the big canoe was run into the water, and half a dozen Ia'o boys took the paddles. The rest stood on the beach, watching it paddle out to the Dawn.

Swiftly the canoe paddled out to the anchored ketch. Tao'oa sat on a pile of coconuts, his head-dress of brilliant parrot feathers and his necklaces of brass cartridge-clips, shining in the sun. The canoe ran alongside the ketch, and Tao'oa stood up and smiled at Dandy Peter with the childlike duplicity natural to the South Sea savage. He waved a brown hand to the stacks of fruit in the canoe.

"Comey trade along white master," said Tao'oa. "Plenty feller fruit he stop along this canoe. Feller white master he likee?"

"You black feller stop along canoe," growled Dandy Peter. The sea-lawyer did not intend to trust natives on board.

"Yes, sar, this feller he stop along canoe," answered Tao'oa amiably. "Feller fruit he plenty good, sar—feller banana—feller yam—feller coconut, sar—"

While the Ia'o chief was speaking, a heap of yams in the canoe suddenly heaved, and the brawny figure of Kaio-lalulalonga leaped into view. A jagged lump of coral was in the bo'sun's hand, and he hurled it with unerring aim. With a startled yell, Dandy Peter dragged at the revolver in his belt. But before he could draw it, the jagged coral crashed in his face, and hurled him half-stunned to the deck.

The next instant King of the Islands had thrown the bunches of bananas aside and was on his feet, revolver in hand. One fierce leap carried him to the low rail of the Dawn.

With a leg over the rail, the boy trader raised the revolver. Dandy Peter lay sprawling, half senseless, but the two pearl-layers had leaped up and were rushing to the side, drawing their revolvers as they came.

Crack, crack! rang the revolver in the hand of the boy trader. It was no time to hesitate. A few moments more and two revolvers would have been spitting death at him. With

THIS WEEK'S

FREE COLOURED PICTURE

Pithy facts about the splendid Coloured Picture given free with this issue of MODERN BOY.

THE HAWKER HORSLEY DAY BOMBER is one of the biggest single-engined fighting aeroplanes in the world. But so beautifully is she designed that when in the air you would not think she was any bigger than ordinary aircraft of similar shape and smaller engine power.

You would know, however, when the Horsley dropped her load of bombs. For there are few aircraft in the world which can carry so much high explosive as the Horsley. For all her size the Horsley can be handled easily in the air. Roll her and bank her, and she answers the controls almost as quickly as a fighting scout!

She has been used as a torpedo-carrier, too. With a large torpedo slung between the undercarriage, she becomes a nasty proposition for any battleship to meet. But if the Horsley could speak she would complain bitterly of her bad luck. For three times in succession she has been within sight of winning the world's long-distance record.

Each time she left Cranwell for Karachi, with a full load of petrol. The first time not a word was heard of the two pilots for two days, and then it was found that they had been forced down in the Persian Gulf by engine trouble, and had been picked up just in time by a lighthouse keeper.

The second time, a few minutes after she had got up, the pilot felt the engine start to slow down and was faced with the awful problem of landing an aircraft which was so heavily overloaded that only with difficulty had he got her into the air. But he did it, and that alone showed what a fine aircraft the Horsley is.

The last time she got a little farther—Australia—and then she gave it up!

NEXT WEEK.—The Free Coloured Picture to be given away with next Monday's MODERN BOY—the Eleventh of the Full Set of Fourteen—will represent the Fairey Fox Two-Seat Day Bomber.

the cover of the palms, screened from the view of the Lukwe crew on the ketch, Ken and Kit had discussed ways and means of getting back the Dawn. Ken had taken a revolver from Finn, but it was the only weapon in the party. And on board the Dawn were four ruffians armed to the teeth. The shipmates were free on Ia'o; but the recapture of the ketch was another matter.

Hudson, Koko, and Lompo had cut lawyer-canes from the thicket, but they were futile weapons against the firearms of the Lukwe crew. To take one of the native canoes and paddle out to the ketch was easy; but they would only be greeted by a volley from the revolvers of the ruffians on board.

"Wait here!" said Ken at last. And leaving his comrades under the palms, the boy trader threaded his way through the grove, and arrived at the native village from the rear.

In the grass house of Tao'oa, the

come along trade. Us feller stop along that feller canoe, along feller cargo, you savvy."

"Me savvy plenty!" grinned Tao'oa.

"Me give five piecee gold, plenty shell-money, big feller knife, feller box along bell he ring, along that feller canoe."

Tao'oa nodded, and it was settled.

From the canoes drawn up on the beach, one was selected; and at Tao'oa's order the natives proceeded to stack it with tropical fruits. King of the Islands returned to the spot where he had left his comrades, and explained his scheme.

"We're going out to the Dawn in a native canoe," said Ken, "hidden under a cargo of island produce."

"My hat!" ejaculated Hudson, his eyes dancing. "That trick's been worked before. I've heard of a schooner at Su'u that was cut out by a crew of Solomon Island boys hidden under a cargo of yams in a canoe."

lightning speed King of the Islands fired twice, and the two ruffians lurched to right and left, crashing on the deck.

King of the Islands jumped aboard. Fast after him came Kit Hudson, lawyer-cane in hand, followed by Kaio-lalulalonga. More slowly came Lompo. More slowly still came Danny the cooky-boy.

There was a trampling of heavy sea-boots below, and the hoarse voice of Black Furley, shouting. His heavy footsteps crashed on the steps of the companion. As his shaggy head and black-bearded face emerged on deck, Kit Hudson struck with the thick lawyer-cane, and Black Furley went crumpling down the companion to roll senseless into the cabin.

"Bom, bom!" yelled Pedro Prado, running out excitedly from the galley. "Capitao! I am save! I am save! Bom, bom, bom!"

The ketch was retaken, and King of the Islands was master of his own ship again.

Turned Adrift.

KING OF THE ISLANDS seemed to be walking on air as he trod the teak planks of his deck again, master once more of his ship.

From below the sweating Kanakas came up, grinning with glee at the change that had taken place on board. But the most joyful of all was Danny the cooky-boy.

To Danny the recapture of the ketch meant the safety of his prize—the great pearl that was to make him the richest native in Hiva-Oa. Danny, back in his galley, restored to the slit in his ear-lobe the old pipe, in the bowl of which, pressed down under trade tobacco, was the hidden pearl.

Dandy Peter came to his senses at last, to find himself disarmed and a prisoner. His handsome face was cut and gashed, his head ached horribly, and he was sick and sore. But worst of all to the sea-lawyer was his defeat and the knowledge that, whether the great pearl was ever found or not, he would never lay his hands on it.

He dragged himself to his feet, leaning weakly on the mizzen, and looked round him with dizzy eyes. Black Furley lay on the deck, bound hand and foot. Dick Finn, brought from the island in a native canoe, lay beside him, also bound.

The other two pearlmen were sorely wounded. Their hurts had been bandaged, but they were hard hit, and they lay on tapa mats and groaned.

"You've beaten me, King of the Islands," muttered Parsons, as his dizzy eyes took in the scene. "You've beaten me. Have you—have you found the pearl?"

"No; but if it's on board it will be found," said King of the Islands, "and your thievish fingers will never touch it, Peter Parsons."

"Nor yours, King of the Islands," snarled Black Furley. "I reckon that pearl ain't on board, or it would have been found by now. You'll never handle the pearl, I reckon, and that's one comfort."

"If the pearl's found, it belongs to Prado," answered Ken. "I shall not touch it, Furley, nor will any man on board but the owner. And if it's on board my ketch it shall be found."

"I'm going to put you in your boat and get shut of you," went on the boy trader. "I've sent some of the natives to look for it and bring it here. You'll be given food and water enough to last you to Lukwe, and you can take your chance."

The pearlmen's whaleboat was brought alongside by the Ia'o natives, and food and water sufficient for the voyage back to Lukwe placed in it. No weapon, not even a sheath-knife, was left to the ruffianly crew. Black Furley and Dick Finn were unceremoniously dropped into the boat and released from their bonds there. Then the two wounded men were lowered carefully enough and given tapa mats to lie on.

Dandy Peter stood by the rail, unheeding Ken's stern sign to follow his comrades into the boat, as if unable to tear himself away from the ship that held the great pearl. But his hesitation was brought to a sudden end by Kaio-lalulalonga.

"You Lukwe feller, you go along boat plenty quick!" said the boatswain of the Dawn. And he grasped Dandy Peter in his powerful arms and dropped him over the side into the whaleboat.

(Continued on the next page.)

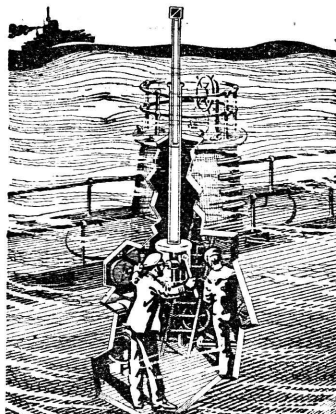
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Ken King Hits Back!

With a yell, Dandy Peter bumped into the boat. He sprang up again, his eyes blazing with rage. Koko grinned down at him from the rail.

Ken looked down into the boat over the barrel of a revolver. Black Furley had grasped a tholepin, and Dandy Peter an oar, as if some desperate intention of resistance was yet in their minds.

"Get going!" said King of the Islands quietly. "You're getting off cheap, you swabs, and you know it. Give way before I change my mind and riddle you with lead, as you deserve!"

Finn pushed off from the ketch. The sail was lifted, and the Lukwe whaleboat glided out of the lagoon on the reef passage to the open sea, carrying a savage, desperate, and defeated crew.

King of the Islands was glad enough to see the last of them. The Lukwe boat, running before the wind, was soon a speck on the blue Pacific.

Pedro Prado touched the boy trader on the arm. Ken looked at him with a smile. He thought he could understand the shade of anxiety on the wizened face of the half-caste pearl-buyer.

"Senhor capitao, the great pearl, he is lose on this ship," said Prado. "Those Lukwe thieves, they seek but they do not find. The pearl—my pearl, senhor—he stop on this ship."

"So they said, Prado," answered Ken. "But the Kanakas have been searching for it and they have not found it."

"If he is found, senhor, he belong to me?" asked Prado anxiously.

"You swab!" replied Ken, laughing. "Do you think any white man on this hooker would take your pearl from you?"

"No, senhor, no. But—but he is a wonderful pearl. He is like the moon. He is ten thousand pounds of your money!" said Prado. "Those Lukwe feller go mad when they see him. He is one wonderful pearl!"

"Well, if my mate and I see it we shan't go mad," said Ken. "The pearl is yours, Prado, if it can be found, and you can hunt for it as long as you like."

King of the Islands turned his attention to other matters. Now that he was clear of the Lukwe crew, he had business to do at Ia'o. Copra and canoe-loads of tropical produce were brought on board the Dawn, and Ken and his mate were busy in dealing with Tao'oa.

The boy trader's business was finished by sundown, and under the evening breeze that blew off the island the Dawn spread her white wings and put to sea. When the moon climbed the cloudless heavens, the ketch was far from the atoll.

Meanwhile, Pedro Prado and his boat-steerer were searching, wearily but obstinately, in the hold under the lazaretto. Unless Dandy Peter and the Lukwe crew had been on a false scent, the pearl was there, and though the Kanakas had failed to find it, Prado hoped for better luck. Once or twice Danny the cooky-boy looked down on them from the lazaretto and grinned. Danny knew

exactly how much luck Prado was likely to have in his search for the lost pearl.

It was not till midnight that Prado gave it up, aching with fatigue and dolefully disappointed, and allowed the tired-out Raiatean to rest. Early the next day, while the Dawn was gliding over sunny waters before a favourable breeze, Prado and his man were at the search again. But nothing rewarded them, and it could scarcely be doubted that the pearl was not there. The pearl-buyer, whose hopes had been high, gave up the search in despair. Both King of the Islands and his mate, when their duties permitted, gave help in the search. The only result was to convince them that the great pearl was not on board.

What had become of it was impossible to surmise, if indeed it had ever been there, which now seemed doubtful. Prado gave up the search. And in the following days he haunted the deck of the Dawn like an unquiet ghost, despairing of ever seeing his precious pearl again and muttering incessantly to himself. And Ken and Kit, though they often discussed the great pearl and its mysterious fate, did not surmise that it was still on board the Dawn—and never dreamed of the true reason of the happy grins that wreathed the face of Danny the cooky-boy.

Found!

IT was on the fourth day out from Ia'o that the island of Orua rose on the sapphire sea ahead of the Dawn.

At Orua, Prado and his boat-steerer were to go ashore. By this time the little Portuguese had given up all hope of ever seeing the pearl again. Deeply as they sympathised with the pearl-buyer, the shipmates were not sorry that he was leaving the ketch at Orua. His doleful, dismal face was like a cloud on the ship. But as the ketch glided towards Orua under the blue sky, King of the Islands learned with

surprise that there was another on board who desired to go ashore at that port. Danny came aft, with the embarrassed grin on his face which characterised a Kanaka who had something unpleasant to say to a white master.

"S'pose you please, sar," said Danny, "this feller-boy he likee go ashore along Orua."

"No shore leave at Orua, Danny," answered Ken. "We're only putting in to send Mr. Prado ashore in the boat."

"That feller boat he takee this feller, too, sar!"

"Do you mean you want to leave the Dawn?" ejaculated Ken.

"Yes, sar."

"What name you wantee leave this feller ship, along Orua?" demanded Ken.

Danny wriggled uncomfortably. He fully intended to leave the ketch at the first port where he could get into touch with a vessel for the Marquesas. But his reason was one that he could not explain to his white master. His grubby hand went for a moment to the old clay pipe stuck in the slit lobe of his ear.

"This feller wantee go back along Hiva-Oa, sar," he said. "This feller he plenty sick along no see Hiva-Oa plenty long time."

Ken frowned. He knew that the Kanaka was lying, and he could not imagine for what reason Danny desired to leave his service. King of the Islands was not a hard master, and a Kanaka on his ship was as free as a white sailorman. But he had no intention of being left without a cook on board in the middle of a voyage. If Danny had changed his mind about his berth, he could make the best of it till the Dawn returned to Lalinge.

"No can, Danny," answered the boy trader. "You comey along this ship, cook along galley. You stop along this ship, along we raise Lalinge."

"Me plenty likee go along Orua, sar!" pleaded Danny.

"No can!" answered Ken, and closed the matter by turning his back.

But Danny did not go back to his galley. He hung about the rail as the ketch glided down to Orua, and Ken kept an eye on him. The ketch was to stop outside the reef while the whaleboat landed Prado and his Raiatean. He did not think that the cooky-boy, however much he desired to quit his berth, would attempt the swim to get away. But he was taking no chances.

"You watch that feller, eye belong you, Koko," ordered Ken. "S'pose he makee go along sea, you knock seven bells outer that feller."

Danny was glancing round him with stealthy caution. The Dawn was gliding by a little islet that lay off Orua—an islet covered with thick bush, scarce a hundred yards from the ketch. Once ashore in the bush, it would be easy enough for Danny to hide until the ketch was gone and then reach Orua at his leisure.

(Continued on page 26.)

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The Modern Boy

Ken King Hits Back!

(Continued from page 24.)

Of a sudden the cooky-boy whipped over the rail of the Dawn. In another second he would have been plunging into the sea, left behind by the ketch as she glided swiftly on. But that necessary second was not granted Danny. Even as he tumbled over the rail, the long and sinewy arm of Kaiolalulalonga shot out and a powerful hand grasped him and wrenched him back.

Danny landed on the teak deck with a heavy concussion. There was a roar from the cooky-boy as his hard head struck the harder planks and a crack as the pipe in his ear was smashed by the impact.

"That feller cooky-boy he stop!" chuckled Kaiolalulalonga.

Danny scrambled up. His hand went wildly to his ear from the slit in which the old pipe was gone. The pipe lay smashed into fragments on the hard teak. From the broken bowl a shining object rolled that gleamed and glowed in the burning rays of the sun—and there was a shout from three or four throats at the same moment. For the round object that rolled on the deck of the Dawn, blazing in the sunlight, was a pearl—the largest pearl that any eye on the ketch had ever seen.

Danny made a desperate scramble after it. Kit Hudson's boot met him and hurled him back. The mate picked up the pearl. Ken's eyes were on it in amazement.

"My hat!" Hudson caught his breath. "Ken, look—look! Who ever saw the like of this?"

King of the Islands turned on the cowering Danny, eyes blazing with wrath. He knew now what had happened to the pearl that had been lost in the hold of the ketch.

"You plenty big feller rascal!" roared the boy trader. "You findum this feller pearl, you keepum this feller pearl, you tinkee go ashore along Orua, takee this feller pearl belong Prado."

Danny backed away, stammering with terror. King of the Islands turned from him and shouted to Prado. The Portuguese was standing forward, looking towards Orua with a dismal face and a lack-lustre eye, and had noticed nothing of the scene on deck.

The pearl-buyer looked round.

"Look!"

Ken held up the great pearl, glowing with light in the sunshine. Pedro Prado stared at it with unbelieving eyes for a moment or two. Then he gave a husky cry and leaped towards the boy trader, clutching at the pearl.

"Is that the pearl?" asked Ken.

"Yes, senhor!" panted the Portuguese. "It is the pearl—the great pearl—the wonderful pearl! Oh, senhor! He is found—he is mine—the great pearl!"

"It is yours," said King of the Islands; and he handed the pearl to Prado, whose dusky fingers closed on it tenaciously.

Pedro Prado burst into incoherent thanks and blessings in mingled

Portuguese and English, carressing the wonderful pearl as if it were a thing of life. Gone now was the dismal cloud from the dusky face; gone was the black care that had sat so long on the pearl-buyer. The great pearl had been found! It was a happy Prado that the Dawn's whaleboat landed at Orua, with the great pearl sewn up in the sleeve of his shirt.

ORUA dropped astern in the crimson sunset. A happy Portuguese was left there, gloating over the wonderful pearl, but a doleful cooky-boy clattered pots and pans in the Dawn's galley. Danny's dreams of being the richest native in Hiva-Oa were gone for ever. But the services he had rendered at Ia'o saved him from a thrashing, and in a few days, with a Kanaka's inconsequence he forgot his disappointment and was once more the grinning, contented cooky-boy of the Dawn.

King of the Islands, drumming for copra among the coral atolls of the Pacific, was reminded a few weeks later of the wonderful pearl that had once been in his hands. A ship out of Sydney spoke the ketch, and a bundle of Australian papers was tossed aboard. And in a Sydney paper Ken read the account of a wonderful pearl that had been sold at Sydney by a Portuguese trader for an enormous sum—a pearl of amazing beauty and lustre that was named the "Moon."

It was shortly afterwards that the ketch, running down to Lalinge, sighted Peter Parsons' cutter, the Sea-Cat. The skipper and mate of the Dawn smiled at the sight of the Lukwe cutter. They could guess that Dandy Peter was looking for the ketch, anxious to learn whether the pearl had been found, perhaps entertaining some desperate scheme of getting his hands on it. Ken sent Lompo down to the cabin for the Sydney paper, and marked the paragraph describing the great pearl that had been sold by the Portuguese. The ketch ran close to the cutter, and King of the Islands tossed the newspaper on to the Sea-Cat.

As the ketch ran on, he looked back, and saw Dandy Peter pick up the newspaper in surprise. Then, as he looked at the marked paragraph, the sea-lawyer's face blackened with rage. He hurled the paper into the sea, and shook a clenched fist after the ketch.

King of the Islands chuckled and waved his hand. Then he set the course for Lalinge again, and the Dawn went bowling along to her home port, all on board ready for a spell ashore and a welcome rest from the excitements of the great South Seas!

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