

A GIFT FOR YOU—Inside!

The
MODERN BOY

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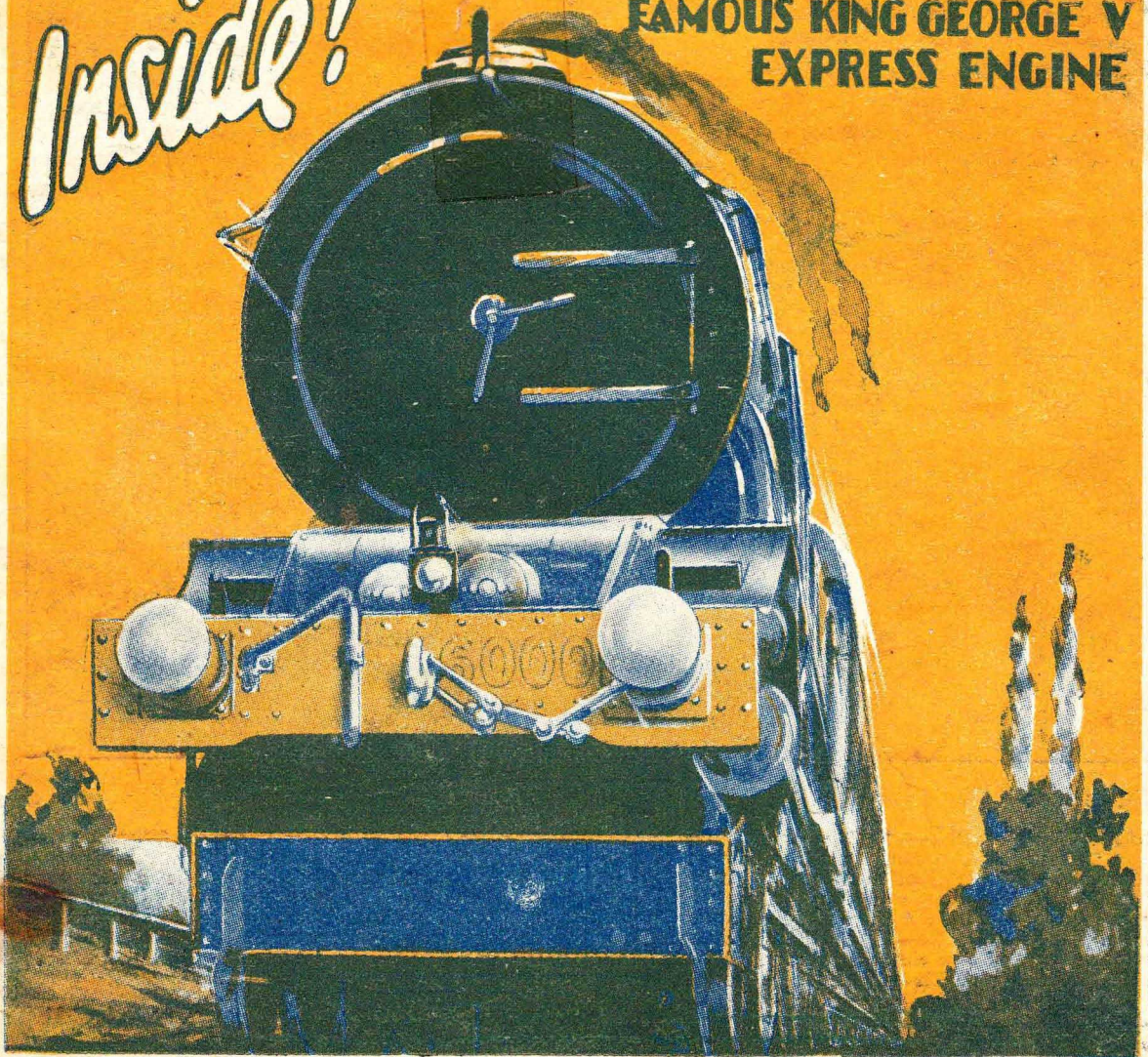
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FREE COLOURED PLATE

Inside!

**FAMOUS KING GEORGE V
EXPRESS ENGINE**



The LAGOON of LOYA



Ken pointed to the group of blacks round the canoe on the beach, and Koko stared thoughtfully.

Well might Ken King's heart thump when he hears the sudden crack of a revolver, followed by shouts and yells of the Solomon Islanders! A yarn of South Seas adventure, with the shipmates of the ketch Dawn in great peril!

COMPLETE

By **CHARLES HAMILTON**

"Night—At Last!"

THE sun was setting in a flaming ball over the South Seas island of Loya. The thick bush that covered the interior of the island was black and impenetrable.

On the lagoon, swinging idly to her anchor, rode the Dawn, the smart ketch in which her owner, Ken King, traded among the scattered coral islands dotting the Pacific Ocean.

King of the Islands, to give the handsome young boy trader the name by which he was known throughout the South Seas, stood leaning against the taffrail, looking towards a ruined bungalow ashore where once had dwelt a white planter and his wife.

Beside him stood his young Australian mate and comrade, Kit Hudson, hands plunged deep in trousers-pockets, also staring shorewards.

Forward, Kaio-lalulalonga—Koko, for short—the giant Kanaka bo'sun, and the rest of the Hiva-Oa crew—Lompo, Lufu, Kolulu, Tomoo, and Danny, the cooky-boy—stood in a group, alternately looking at their white masters and casting uneasy glances ashore.

Loya was uninhabited, and said to be haunted by the ghost of a white woman who had been killed there. In the ordinary way sailormen gave it a wide berth, but Ken had been compelled to put into the lagoon in order to refill his water-casks.

And the crew of the Dawn had

seen what they thought was the ghost—the white-clad figure of a woman flitting through the ruins of the bungalow.

But Ken and Kit had investigated, and found that a white woman was actually living on the island—a Miss Craye, who was hiding there with her brother, Montague Craye, who was said to have absconded from Apia with £10,000, and for whose capture the Pacific Company offered a reward of £500. Aileen Craye had played the ghost in order to frighten them away.

For the girl's sake, the shipmates had agreed to leave them in peace on Loya and say nothing about them to the outside world. But just as Ken had been about to give the order to "up hook," a canoe manned by Solomon Islanders, and commanded by Barney Hall, a rascally trader from Tonga, who was their bitter enemy, and whom they knew to be searching for Craye, had put into the lagoon.

The Tonga trader had gone up the beach to the old bungalow, but the black crew were loafing on the sand round the beached canoe. Sometimes they glanced towards the ketch anchored in the lagoon. But oftener their eyes turned uneasily on the black bush, growing blacker as the sun dipped to the sea. It was easy to guess that they shared the superstitious dread of the Polynesian crew of the Dawn for the so-called haunted island.

"White master, sar!" said Koko, approaching King of the Islands.

Ken glanced round, smiling faintly at the trouble in the brown face of Kaio-lalulalonga.

"White master, sar!" repeated Koko, pointing with a brown finger to the sinking sun, now touching the rim of the sapphire sea. "Feller might he comey along this island plenty too quick, sar. What name we no go along sea? What name we stop along this feller island, sar?"

"No can," replied Ken.

"Me no savvy, sar," said the boat-swain. "This feller ship comey along this island along takee water along this looker, sar. Plenty water he stop along this ship, sar. What name we no makee sail?"

"Plenty feller debble stop along bush, sar, along this feller island." Koko's brown finger swept towards the distant bush. "Every feller boy along this ship, sar, plenty flaid along that feller debble. This feller boy Kaio-lalulalonga he plenty too much fright, all same Hiva-Oa boy, sar."

There was a murmur from the brown-skinned crew forward. All the crew of the Dawn were puzzled to understand why their skipper did not sail now that the water was on board. The thought of another night in the lagoon of the haunted island filled them with dread.

"Little white master no believe along feller debble," said Koko. "Kana'ka feller savvy, feller white

The Lagoon of Loya

master no savvy!" He turned his brown finger towards the canoe of the Tonga trader.

"White master he no savvy feller aitoo, no savvy feller debble along bush. He savvy feller cannibal along Solomon Island.

"He savvy feller Barney Hall, plenty too much bad feller altogether. Along dark he comey, plenty too much trouble along Barney Hall and that feller cannibal, sar."

"Barney Hall's tried the rough stuff with us on the run to Loya. Koko, and we gave him a lesson. I reckon he'll steer clear of us now!"

"What name white master no makee sail?" persisted the Kanaka.

"Listen to me, Koko, ear belong you," said King of the Islands slowly. "You tinkee feller debble he stop along bush. No feller debble he stop. White man and white feller Mary stop along bush."

"No white man along Loya, sar," said Koko, staring incredulously. "No white Mary along Loya. Feller debble lookce all same feller white Mary, sar."

Ken made an impatient gesture. The belief was fixed in the minds of the Kanakas that the island was haunted by the ghost of the white woman of Loya—that the "feller white Mary," as they called a white woman in their queer English, was a being of another world.

Willingly Ken would have left them in that belief, but the arrival of Barney Hall had forced him to change all his plans.

"You hear me, ear belong you, Koko," he said. "You savvy feller Montague Craye, white feller that run from Apia, along he takee plenty money belong Pacific Company along Samoa. That feller Craye he stop along Loya. He hide along bush. Feller white Mary sister belong him. Now you savvy?"

Kaio-lalulalonga stared blankly at his white master. The boatswain had heard of the lost man from Apia, and knew that Barney Hall was combing every atoll in those lonely waters in search of him. Slowly, understanding dawned on him.

"That feller Craye he stop along Loya, sar?" he ejaculated. "White master see that feller, eye belong him?"

"Me see him, eye belong me."

"Me savvy, sar. Now Barney Hall comey along Loya, he finde that feller Craye plenty too quick," said Kaio-lalulalonga. "That no business along us feller, sar. S'pose Barney Hall takee that feller along canoe belong him, no business along us feller."

Ken impatiently pointed to the group of Solomon Island blacks round the canoe on the beach.

"Feller white Mary along that feller Craye," he said. "Sister belong him, like me say. S'pose black feller makee kai-kai along that feller white Mary? What you tinkee?"

Koko stared thoughtfully for some moments. Then he bowed his dusky head.

"Me savvy, sar!" he said. And the

brown boatswain of the Dawn retreated across the deck and said no more. Whatever his own views might have been, he knew that King of the Islands would never leave Loya while a white woman was in danger of falling into the hands of a mob of cannibals. He knew it was useless to say more.

The sun dipped beneath the waters. The glow of red and gold faded out of the western horizon. Darkness, like a cloak, fell on sea and land. Loya—mysterious Loya—vanished in blackness.

From the beach, where the Solomon Islanders had camped, the ruddy glare of a fire rose, wavering against the dark. All else was dark. Kit Hudson drew a deep breath.

"Night—at last!" he said. "At last!"

Kit Hudson's Venture.

IT was for darkness that the shipmates of the Dawn had been waiting. Kit Hudson examined his revolver with a careful eye. He knew he would be taking his life in his hands when he set foot on Loya, now that Barney Hall was there.

The shipmates had laid their plans. Deep in the bush of Loya, Craye, the lost man from Apia, was camped in a palm-wood hut. Little would King of the Islands have cared for his fate had he been there alone.

Barney Hall was welcome, so far as Ken was concerned, to capture the absconding manager of the Pacific Company, take him back to Samoa for trial, and pocket the reward offered by the company. But the fugitive from justice was not alone.

For both the white men to leave the ship was impossible, with the Tonga trader and his savage crew at hand. Hudson was to go—and he was keen on the job. Aileen Craye had to be warned of the danger and taken on board the ketch. If she refused to leave her brother, Craye had to be taken on board also.

To save the white girl from falling into the hands of the savage blacks, or from being left in solitude on the lonely island, Ken had to make his ship a refuge for the absconder from Apia. It was not a pleasant thought to him, but there seemed no help for it.

"You'll find the camp in the bush easily enough, Kit," said King of the Islands.

"Easily," answered Hudson. "It's only a few hours since we were there, and I'm at home in the bush."

"Take care of Craye. The man's a bundle of nerves. He may take you for an enemy, and handle his gun."

Ken's glance turned to the dancing light of the camp-fire on the beach. The figures of the blacks moved, half seen, in the red glare. A white man in dingy ducks, with a ragged beard, came down the path from the ruined bungalow, and emerged into the light of the fire.

It was Barney Hall, the trader of Tonga. For several moments he stood revealed by the firelight, then he moved again, and was swallowed up in darkness.

"Barney Hall may never find them, or suspect that they are there." Ken spoke his thoughts aloud. "He's come here for water, as we did. Likely enough he will fill his kegs at dawn and clear."

"He's been rooting about in the bungalow," said Hudson. "He must have found traces of occupation, as we did. He will guess—"

"We did not guess," said Ken. "We reckoned it was some castaway, and hunted for him. Hall would never trouble his head about a castaway."

"We weren't hunting for Craye, or thinking of him. Hall's combing these waters for the man. Craye's in his thoughts all the time. At least he will search for the man on the island, to find out whether he is Craye."

Ken nodded. It was likely enough, if not certain.

"If the swab were only alone on the island!" he muttered. "My sainted Sam! To take a hunted thief on this hooker!"

"His sister believes him innocent," said Hudson shortly.

"That's why she's sticking to him, I suppose. She's a good girl, and I reckon she would never have stood by him if she'd known his pockets were crammed with stolen money."

"I'm not so sure," said Hudson; and his voice had an unusually sharp note. "A man's innocent till he's proved guilty. Craye may be an innocent man, in spite of all they say on the beaches."

"There's a chance, I suppose," said Ken. "I hope it is so, for the poor girl's sake. But, innocent or guilty, he ought to go back to Apia and stand his trial. Somebody had the ten thousand pounds from the Pacific Company."

"That's neither here nor there." Hudson shrugged his shoulders impatiently. "We've got to save Aileen Craye, and as she won't leave her brother, we've got to save him, too."

"Look here, Kit," said Ken, "we've got to save her—and him, too—as you say. But we can't help a thief escape with his loot. If he comes on board he must hand over the banknotes, to be given back to the company."

"Think of her, Ken!" Hudson set his lips. "Will she step on board the ketch if her brother is to be treated as a thief?"

Ken peered at his shipmate in the gloom. Hudson's face was pale and set, and there was a strangely sullen expression on it that Ken had never seen before.

Never once since they had been shipmates had there been a word of dissension between the skipper and the mate of the Dawn. But King of the Islands was skipper, and Hudson was mate. The latter seemed to have forgotten it now. Ken's lips tightened a little.

"I don't quite understand you, Kit," he said quietly. "You seem to have changed, somehow, since we came on Craye and his sister in the bush. You never had a doubt before that Craye was a guilty man."

"I hadn't seen Aileen—I mean Miss Craye—then! Now I've seen her."

"What difference does it make?"

"I believe as she believes," said Hudson shortly. "The man's a weak character—a wretched coward—but he's no thief. I'm sure of that."

"The girl's prejudiced," said Ken. "She naturally has faith in her brother. But there's such a thing as common sense!"

"We're wasting time," was Hudson's impatient reply. "Now it's dark, and that gang of swabs yonder can't follow me, the sooner I go the better."

"Ay, ay!" said Ken. His momentary irritation vanished. His comrade was going into danger, and that was more than enough to banish irritation.

He gave orders to the Kanakas in a low voice. The whaleboat was silently dropped into the lagoon, and Koko and Lompo pulled it to the beach with Hudson.

Ken stared after the boat anxiously as it vanished into the darkness. In a few minutes it returned. Koko and Lompo leaped on board the ketch.

Ken, a rifle under his arm, remained watching the dark shore. His thoughts followed his comrade through the dark runways of the bush.

Almost he regretted that he had not gone with Hudson. But it was impossible for him to leave the ketch. In the hours of darkness, Barney Hall might seek to revenge his bitter grudge, and if an attack came from the Solomon Islanders, the ketch's crew would be lost without a white man on board. But it was with a heavy and anxious heart that Ken King watched the dark shore of Loya.

Crack! From the darkness of the shore came the sudden, whip-like crack of a revolver. Ken started, and his heart thumped. The shot was followed by a shout from the camp of the blacks, and dusky figures were seen moving in the firelight.

Ken bit his lip hard and stared into the darkness. What had happened in the blackness of the night on Loya? Who had fired?

He listened with throbbing ears, but there came no other shot, only a vague shouting of the blacks. What had happened to his comrade, alone on the haunted island? Had he been shot?

King of the Islands could not leave the ship. He could only wait—wait with an ach-

ing heart, striving to pierce the darkness with straining eyes.

"Keep Back!"

AFTER the whaleboat had landed him, Kit Hudson tramped up the beach. It was pitch dark on Loya. The moon had not yet risen, and a dim mist over the sky obscured the stars. But the mate of the Dawn tramped on at a good speed up the beach towards the bush.

He had landed at a distance from the camp of Barney Hall, and he was glad of the darkness that wrapped him like a garment. For if Hall discovered that a man had landed from the ketch, he knew only too well that he would have to fight his way against overwhelming odds.

The Tonga trader would not lose such a chance of avenging himself on the crew of the Dawn.

Hudson paused suddenly. He was moving swiftly, but with care to make

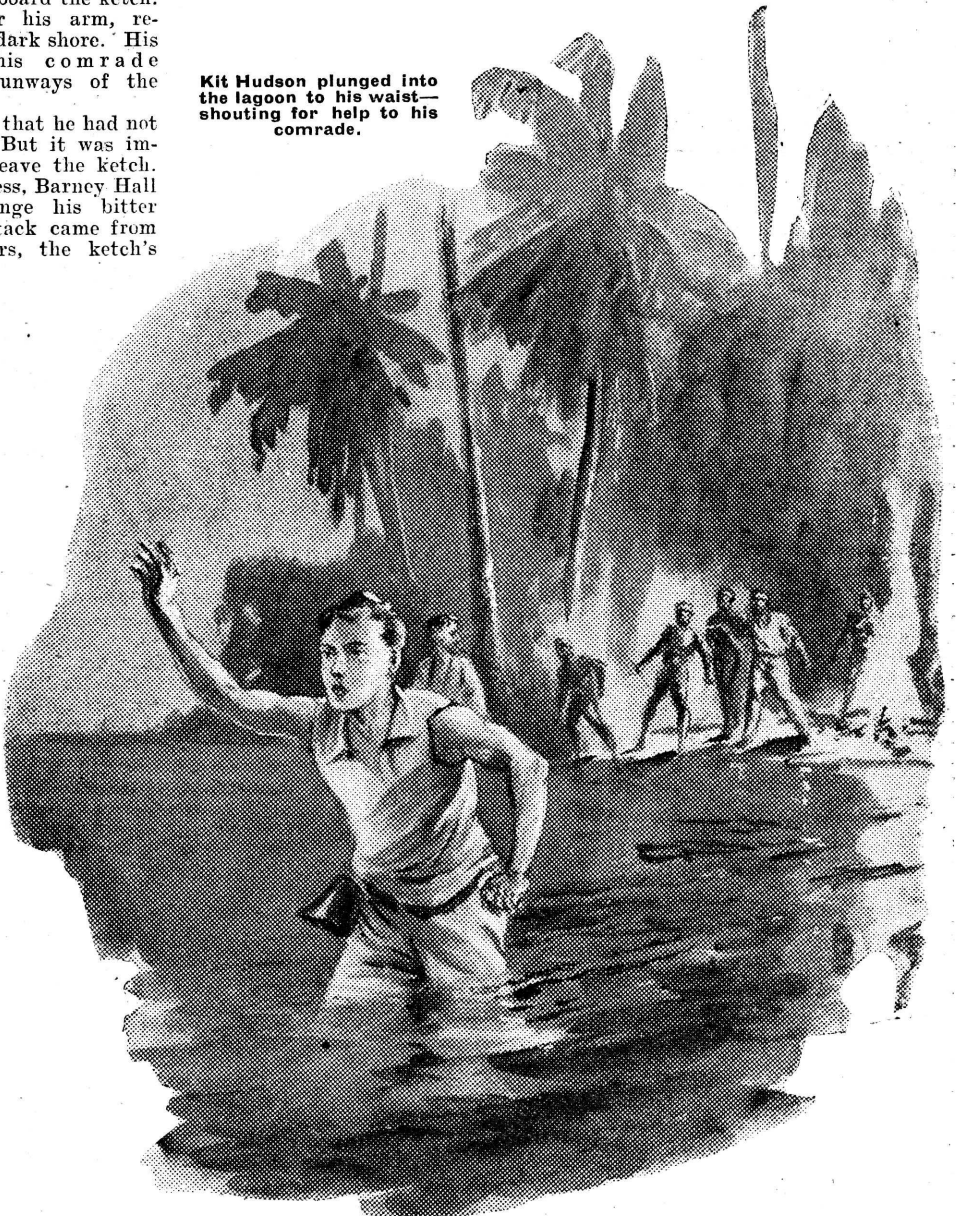
his footfalls light. From the darkness came a sound of heavier footfalls, grinding on the sand and powdered coral of the beach. Dimly in the gloom a figure loomed up before his eyes.

Hudson stood quite still. He knew that it must be Barney Hall, for it was the heavy tramp of sea-boots he had heard, and the man's black crew had naked feet. But a shout, or a shot, from the Tonga trader would bring the whole crew to the spot. Kit hoped, for a moment, that the darkness would hide him, and that Hall would pass on, unseeing.

But the hope was vain. The heavy, tramping footsteps came nearer, and he had a glimpse of a savage, bearded face under a big grass hat. He caught the fierce glare of the Tonga trader's eyes, and the next instant the shot came. The bullet whizzed by a few inches from the mate of the Dawn.

Hudson leaped forward, revolver in hand. Before the Tonga trader could

Kit Hudson plunged into the lagoon to his waist—shouting for help to his comrade.



The Lagoon of Loya

fire again, the heavy barrel of Hudson's revolver crashed on the grass hat, and Hall went to the sand with a gasping cry.

Hudson heard the shout from the blacks at the distant fire as he ran on up the beach. He did not give Hall a glance. He had put all his strength into that crashing blow, and the Tonga trader did not stir or utter a sound after he had fallen. He ran swiftly up the beach, anxious to get clear before Hall's crew reached the spot.

In a couple of minutes he was in the bush and slackened speed. In the bush he could defy any number of enemies to run him down, so long as darkness lasted.

The faint ripple of the stream guided him, and he reached the runway which, earlier in the day, he had followed to the Crayes' hiding-place.

He tramped along the tangled runway, black as midnight in the deep shadow of boughs and hanging creepers and lianas.

The young Australian was at home in the bush. Black as it was, he never hesitated for a moment. Swift and steady, he tramped on, seeking the hut where the man from Apia was camped.

Behind him, the shouting of the blacks had died away into silence. No doubt they had found Hall. But the Tonga trader could give him no trouble now.

Hudson was not thinking of him. Neither was he thinking of Montague Craye, the man he was going to save. He was thinking of a sweet, sad face—a face he had seen for the first time that day, but which had haunted his thoughts from the moment he had seen it.

Why it haunted him, why the soft, sweet voice of Aileen Craye lingered in his ears, he hardly knew. But he knew that he would have died to save her from harm.

He came into the little clearing at last, by the big bread-fruit tree where the Crayes' hut of palm-poles and pandanus-leaf stood. Here the bush was less thick, and a glimmer of faint light came from the sky.

He made out the shape of the hut. All was silent there, and Hudson's heart misgave him. He knew that the man from Apia was the prey of incessant terrors, that he trusted no man; and, though the shipmates had left him in peace, he still distrusted and feared them. Suppose he had gone to some deeper hiding-place in the trackless bush?

But a sound from the hut relieved him. It was occupied. He heard a soft, rustling sound in the gloom. The pandanus screen in the opening of the hut moved, and there was a pale gleam of metal in the darkness. It came from a revolver, held unsteadily in a shaking hand.

Hudson called out hastily, and the unseen man in the hut evidently recognised the voice of the young Australian.

"I come as a friend!" called Hudson.

He did not advance. The scared, desperate man in the palm-wood hut

might have pulled trigger at any moment.

"Liar!" came back the bitter voice. "You promised to leave us in peace, said that you were sailing before sundown. Yet you are here!"

"I come to warn you of danger."
"Liar! Keep your distance. I swear that if you come nearer I will drive a bullet through you."

Hudson gritted his teeth. In his distrust and terror, the man from Apia was wasting precious moments. But he did not advance. The revolver was bearing full on him.

"Monty!"
It was the soft voice Hudson remembered so well.

"Silence, Aileen! What did I tell you? They are not gone. They did not mean to go without me. I told you they were hunters of blood-money. Keep back!"

"Listen to me, Miss Craye!" called out Hudson. "It is I, Kit Hudson, the mate of the Dawn. I've come to save you."

He made a movement, and the voice of Montague Craye came snarling from the hut.

"Another step, and I fire!"
Hudson halted again.

"He comes as a friend, Monty," said the soft voice again. "I am sure of it. Put down the revolver. I will speak to him."

"Keep back, Aileen."

But the girl evidently did not heed. The glimmering revolver disappeared from the doorway, and Hudson guessed that she had drawn the shaking hand away. The next moment the figure of Aileen Craye emerged from the pandanus screen.

Quietly, steadily, the girl stepped towards the mate of the Dawn. Hudson heard Craye muttering, but the man did not show himself. He saluted the quiet, pale-faced girl, and stepped to meet her.

"Miss Craye, you are in danger," he said urgently. "Barney Hall, one of the biggest ruffians in the South Seas, has come to Loya. He's a trader in the ordinary way, but at present he's combing the islands in these waters in search of your brother."

"His men are camped on the beach; ten or twelve blacks from the Solomon Islands—all cannibals. He has searched the bungalow, and already he must have found out that someone is on the island. To-morrow he will be searching the island, the blacks combing the bush, and if they find you—" He broke off, appalled at the thought.

"I am here to help you," Hudson went on. "My skipper, King of the Islands, has sent me to take you to the Dawn. It is the only way to save you from Barney Hall and his crew. You must come."

"It's a lie—a lie!" came Craye's quavering voice from the hut. "A trick to get me on board the ketch! Aileen, come back!"

"Miss Craye, you believe me—you must believe me!" Hudson breathed hard. "If we meant you harm, we could seize your brother, if we chose. What is to prevent us? We could have taken him to day, had we chosen. I could take him now if I chose—his

gun would not stop me. You must believe me!"

"I believe you," said Aileen.
"There is no time to lose. Barney Hall fired on me when I landed to come here. I struck him down and left him stunned. If you are not on the ketch before dawn your lives are worth nothing!"

"It is false, and I will not go!" came the trembling voice from the hut. "It is a trick, Aileen!"

"Fool!" broke out Hudson, his anger gaining the upper hand. "Remain here if you choose. Do you think I would have come here to save you? I am here to save a woman from death! Remain, if you think you are safer here; but Miss Craye must go to the ship."

"I cannot leave my brother," said the girl quietly.

"If he will not come, you *must* leave him!" retorted Hudson. "I tell you at dawn the cannibals will be combing the bush, and they will find you. It is death to stay!"

The girl clasped her hands, her face white and tense. From the pandanus screen, at the doorway of the hut Montague Craye emerged. The revolver was in his hand, but it was not raised. His face was white as a sheet. It seemed that Hudson's earnestness had forced belief at last into the doubting mind of the fugitive from Apia.

His scared eyes wandered round at the darkness of the gloomy bush, as if he already feared to see the fierce faces and rolling eyes of the Solomon Island blacks glaring at him. The girl turned to him.

"Monty, this man is our friend, and what he says is true. If they meant you harm, you are at their mercy as much here as on board the ketch. We must trust him."

"If I come, you will not seek to make me a prisoner?" The wretched man's haggard eyes scanned Hudson's face. "You will land me in a safer place?"

"You shall land where you like. Where you go is no business of ours. You were a madman to bring a woman to this lonely island!" snapped Hudson.

"A hunted man has no choice," muttered Craye, "and my sister was the only one that had faith in me. Without her I should have gone under!"

Hudson had little doubt of that. He could only wonder that the calm, courageous girl was of the same flesh and blood as the wretched fugitive who stood trembling by her side.

"There is no time to lose," he said. "If you have anything to take with you, make haste."

"We have little here," muttered Craye. "Most of our stores are hidden in the plantation at the old bungalow over the beach."

"They must be left, then. Barney Hall's men are there. Hurry!" said the mate of the Dawn. "If we get back to the ketch without a scrap with the blacks we shall be lucky."

The man from Apia stood silent, hesitating. Aileen laid a hand on his arm.

"Come, Monty. There is no time to

lose." She moved back quickly towards the palm hut, but Craye stood hesitating. Again his haggard eyes searched the face of Hudson in the gloom.

"Pull yourself together, man!" said Hudson gruffly. "You are wasting precious time!"

Craye turned and followed his sister to the hut.

Hudson waited impatiently. Save for the indefinable murmur of the bush, there was no sound in the night. He did not suppose that he had been followed on the shadowy runways, and that foes were near at hand. Yet it was possible that the clinging gloom hid creeping, stealthy savages.

Ere long the moon would be up over Loya. When it sailed full and clear over the island the beach would be as light almost as by day. Before then the fugitives had to get clear

the mate of the Dawn led the way into the tangled run-way in the bush.

Fighting Through!

BLACKNESS surrounded them in the run-way. Not a gleam of light came through the tangled boughs and creepers that met overhead. Trailing plants and thorny bushes cumbered the path, and in the darkness Hudson heard a stumble beside him. His hand closed on Aileen's.

"Hang the darkness! Hang it!" Craye's voice was muttering behind. "If the moon would come we should get a glimmer of light!"

"We must be on the ketch before the moon rises," said Hudson. "If those demons sight us on the beach it will be touch and go!"

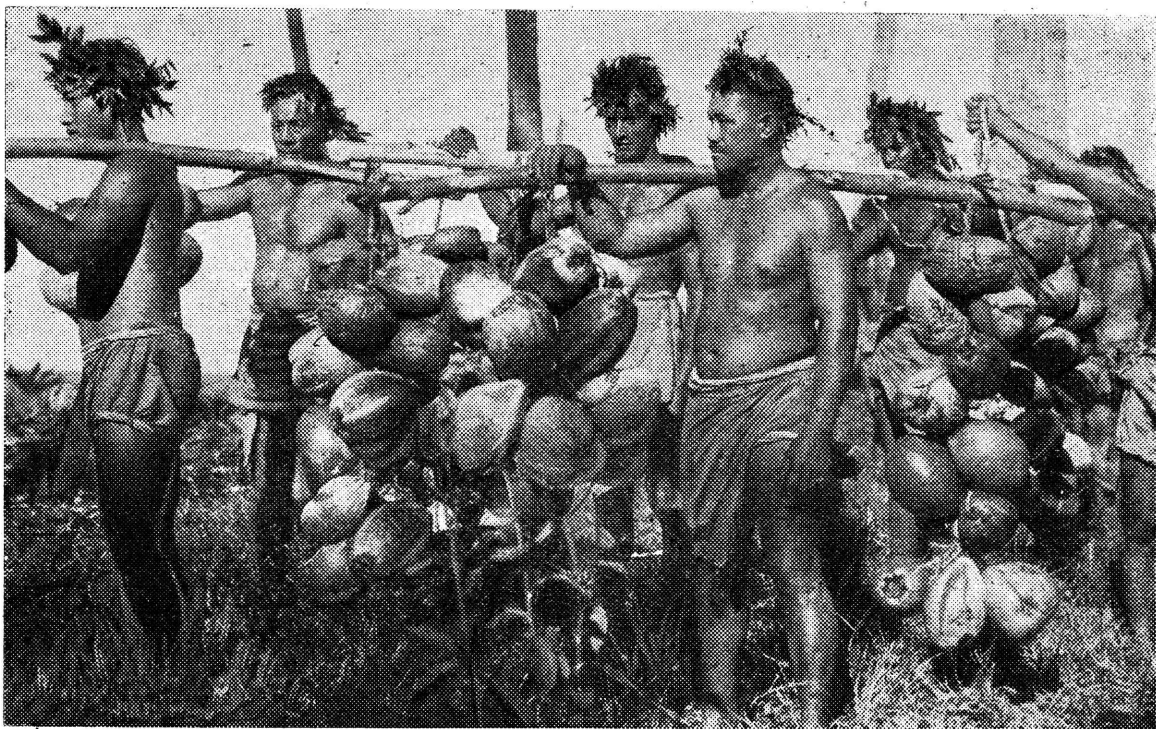
From Craye, stumbling after them, came an almost ceaseless muttering of complaint.

Faintly, in the distance ahead, the blackness was broken by darkness less opaque. They were approaching the end of the run-way, where it opened out of the bush near the bank of the little stream, where the casks of the Dawn had been filled. The ripple of water came through the silence.

"It is not far now," whispered Hudson. Beyond the bush he could see a glimpse of sky. The mist that had hidden the stars was clearing off. There was starshine on the beach and on the stream that flowed down to the lagoon.

But it was darkness he wanted—the blacker, the better. For himself he would have cared little—for Craye, less.

It was of the girl whose hand was clasped in his own that he was think



Very well known indeed to young Ken King, these fine-looking fellows. They are Polynesians, members of the race that inhabit the South Sea Islands, and they are bringing in their coconut harvest. Rather unfamiliar in appearance, those nuts, but that is because they are in their husks—they haven't yet been got ready for the shops! Coconut palms grow to more than 100 feet high, but that doesn't deter the nippy native "boys" when they feel like a drink of coconut milk, for they can swarm up the bare trunks like a fly climbing a wall!

of the bush, cross the wide, shelving beach, and get on board the Dawn. Otherwise they must fight their way through the enemy. Minutes were precious.

But the mate of the Dawn was not kept waiting long. The two dim figures emerged from the palm hut again, the girl with a rucksack on her shoulder, the man with a bundle. The girl's face was calm, expressing plainly her faith in the mate of the Dawn, Craye's white and anxious.

Obviously the man was in a blue funk, dreading the journey in front of them. His overwrought nerves peopled the dark bush with ruthless enemies waiting to pounce on him!

Hudson had little sympathy for a coward, but he felt a touch of pity at that moment for the hunted man. He took the rucksack from Aileen and slung it over his own strong shoulder. "Follow me!" he said; and the palm hut disappeared behind them as

Hudson led onward. In spite of darkness and tangled, tropical growths, he had made his way swiftly enough to the camp in the bush; but the return was not so swift. His companions were blinded in the darkness, and the wild, rough path was hard going for Aileen.

But for Hudson's guiding hand, many times the girl would have stumbled and fallen. He could hear her breathing fast by his side, but no sound of complaint passed her lips.

ing. If the blacks sighted them on the beach—

Suddenly the girl stopped. Her hand was drawn from Hudson's, and he turned towards her.

"There is someone by the stream. Is it your shipmate?"

"King of the Islands is on the ketch. He cannot leave it. Hall may attack in the night. Are you sure?"

"Look!" Hudson strained his eyes to see. They were close on the end of the run-way now. A minute more and they would emerge into the glimmer of the stars. But where they stood they were wrapped in blackness.

He could see the shimmering water. Something dark and shadowy intervened between his eyes and the glimmer. He would have taken it for a bush until he saw it move.

Dim, indistinct, it was a human

The Lagoon of Loya

form, the figure of a man who was standing there, staring into the run-way. The mate of the Dawn grasped his revolver. From the blackness came Craye's quivering voice.

"Who is it? What is it?"
"Barney Hall, or one of his men. Nobody belonging to the ketch is on shore. I left Hall stunned on the beach, but— Listen!"

Sharply from the gloom came the sound of a voice. It was a white man's voice, and could only have been Barney Hall's.

"You feller Popoo!"
"Yessar!" came the curious falsetto voice of a native.

"You feller boy, you see nothing along this bush, eye belong you?"
"Feller dark he plenty too much black altogether, sar. No see, eye belong me."

"That feller white man belong ketch, he go along bush, Popoo!" went on Hall's gruff, savage voice. "Me savvy plenty that feller go along bush. He run along bush, along he plenty too much fright along me."

Hudson's eyes glinted. Had he been alone, he would have demonstrated to Barney Hall that it was not a case of "too much fright." But he remained silent and still. The girl beside him was standing like a statue, but he could feel the trembling of Craye close at hand.

"Me savvy, sar. New day he come, we plenty find that white feller along bush, makee kai-kai along that feller, sar."

"What's he landed for? What's he gone into the bush for?" growled Hall. "There's a white man on the island. Somebody has lived in the ruined bungalow. I can't make it out!"

"Feller aitoo stop along bush, sar, along Loya."

The fugitives hidden in the blackness caught every word clearly, and they detected the quiver of uneasiness in the black man's voice.

"Us feller no likee that feller bush, sar, along night."

"You soot-faced swab, belay it!" snarled Hall. "They say this island is haunted by the ghost of a white woman. I reckon if I see a ghost, I'll try a bullet on it. I tell you, Popoo, there's a man on the island—a white man. I found plenty of proof in the bungalow that somebody had been living there. I reckon he's taken to the bush. And now one of those swabs from the ketch has gone into the bush! What you tinkee, Popoo, head belong you?"

"Me no tinkee, sar, head belong me," was the answer of the native.

"That's true enough, you black image!" snarled Hall. "But if you could think with your thick figure-head, I reckon you'd think what I'm thinking—that we've got on the track of the man from Apia! By Davy Jones, we came here for water, but I reckon we're finding Montague Craye, the man I've combed a hundred islands for!"

"And those swabs from the Dawn would double-cross me, if they could,

and get hold of him first. By Davy Jones, if that's how the matter stands, I'll sink the Dawn with every soul on board. But I'll have the man from Apia. Five hundred pounds reward for him, Popoo, if we hand him over to the Pacific Company in Samoa."

"Plenty good, sar!"
"But I reckon," growled Hall, "that there's more than that in his belt. He ran with ten thousand pounds, and I reckon the Pacific Company won't see the money again if I lay hands on Craye!"

Hall moved a little deeper into the run-way. He was eager to track the way Hudson had gone in the bush, tempted to plunge into the blackness of the tangled run-way, but the hopelessness of searching the bush at night deterred him.

Craye was trembling like a leaf. He was not a dozen yards from the man who was hunting him. Little did the Tonga trader dream how near his prey was to him.

Hudson waited. Hall moved again, and his shadow barred for a moment the glimmer of the stream. Then there was a sound of heavy tramping sea-boots on the sand.

The Tonga trader had gone back to the beach, taking his man with him. He had given up the idea of penetrating the bush in the darkness. Hudson breathed more freely.

"They are gone!" whispered Aileen, almost inaudibly.

The three moved on to the end of the run-way, where they paused again. Looking out from the black bush, they could scan the shelving beach that ran down to the lapping waters of the lagoon. In a dark sapphire sky the stars were glistening, reflected in the lagoon. A faint shape could be made out where the Dawn rode at her anchor on the still waters.

Hudson searched the beach with his eyes. He could see nothing of Barney Hall or the blacks. In the distance, near the old bungalow, the camp-fire had died down to a faint red glow.

Hudson could see nothing of the foe, but he knew that every ridge of sand might hide an enemy.

But it was impossible to wait longer. Already a silvery whitening on the lagoon showed that the moon was rising. To wait was to wait for a clear light that would inevitably betray them to their enemies.

"We've got to chance it!" whispered Hudson. "We've got to run for the lagoon. If they show up—if they stop us—keep on, and leave them to me! A call will bring the boat. King of the Islands is watching, waiting for us, and the boat will be ready. Come!"

He moved on, the girl following him. For a moment Craye hesitated, as if dreading to leave the cover of the bush. Then he hurried after them. Softly, swiftly, they trod the sand and powdered coral of the beach, hurrying down towards the water.

From somewhere in the darkness rose a cry—a native cry. It was the howl of one of the blacks giving the alarm. They had been seen.

"Run!" urged Hudson. Silence and caution could serve them no longer. Shout after shout answered from various directions. The deep voice of Barney Hall was heard, and heavy footsteps trampled the dim sands.

"Ketch ahoy!" roared Hudson. His powerful voice rang far and wide. "King of the Islands, ahoy! The boat—the boat!"

There was an answering shout from the ketch. Hudson grasped the girl's arm and ran, helping her as he ran. Behind them came Craye, running like a deer, and he passed them and led the way to the lagoon's margin. Hudson had forgotten him. He did not heed him now.

Shout on shout, and running feet in the darkness! Shadows loomed up. Rolling eyes and white teeth flashed in the dark. From somewhere in the gloom roared the savage voice of Barney Hall. A flash lit the night, and a bullet whizzed past the fugitives, followed by the crack of the Tonga trader's revolver.

A black hand grasped at Hudson; rolling eyes glared at him. He fired with his muzzle almost touching the black face, and the savage dropped at his feet with a shriek.

He stumbled over the body, recovered, and rushed on.

He was at the lagoon now, trampling in sand and water, plunging in to his waist. He was shouting—shouting for help to his comrade. From the glimmering lagoon the voice of King of the Islands shouted back amid the dash of oars and the ringing of rifle-shots.

The whaleboat was speeding towards him, the Kanakas pulling as if for their lives. King of the Islands, standing up, was pitching shot after shot from his rifle at the yelling demons on the beach.

"Here!" panted Hudson. A brown hand grasped him, and Kaiolalulalonga dragged him into the boat, still holding Aileen. The whaleboat rocked wildly. Another hand grasped the gunwale.

King of the Islands dropped his rifle and helped Craye into the boat.

"Back to the Dawn!" he panted. "You feller boy, washy washy along ketch, debblish quick!" And the sinewy arms of the Kanakas strained at the oars.

Barney Hall, livid with rage, tramped knee-deep into the water, firing furiously. Crack after crack rang out, echoing back from the bush like thunder, and bullets splashed into the water round the boat.

Like an arrow, the whaleboat shot across the lagoon, thudded on the hull of the Dawn, and Kit Hudson lifted Aileen over the low rail.

Over the black bush of Loya a silver crescent of moon showed in a sapphire sky. The light fell on the savage figure of Barney Hall, brandishing an empty revolver and yelling with rage. A shot whizzing from the ketch drove him panting to cover!

(The shipmates of the Dawn have more exciting adventures in another long and complete Charles Hamilton story, in next Monday's MODERN BOY.)