

The MODERN BOY

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FLYING FASTER THAN SOUND TRAVELS, this huge Seaplane will take part in Saturday's amazing contest—the greatest and most thrilling International Air Race in the World!—See *Inside*.

BO'SUN of the DAWN

By

CHARLES
HAMILTON

*King of the Islands
to the fore again in
a gripping, ripping
yarn of South Seas
adventure!*

COMPLETE

Through the Bush!

"ME hear feller sing out, ear belong me, sar!" said Kaio - lalulalonga, the gigantic Kanaka bo'sun of Ken King's ketch, the Dawn, halting in the runway and listening.

Ken King, the boy trader of the Pacific known as King of the Islands, halted, too.

Bright tropical sunshine blazed over the island of Tova, but over the narrow runway branches and creepers interlaced, forming a roof that shut off the light. On either side the thorny bush rose up like a wall.

Faintly, from the depths of the bush, came the sound of a calling voice. It was faint and afar, barely heard above the buzz of swarming insects. But Koko's ears were keen, and he had heard the cry before his white master. Now that Ken listened intently, he heard it, too.

"What name you tinkee that feller he sing out, Koko?" he asked.

"Tinkee he sing out along he lost along bush, sar," answered the boatswain. "White feller no findee way along bush samec black feller, sar."

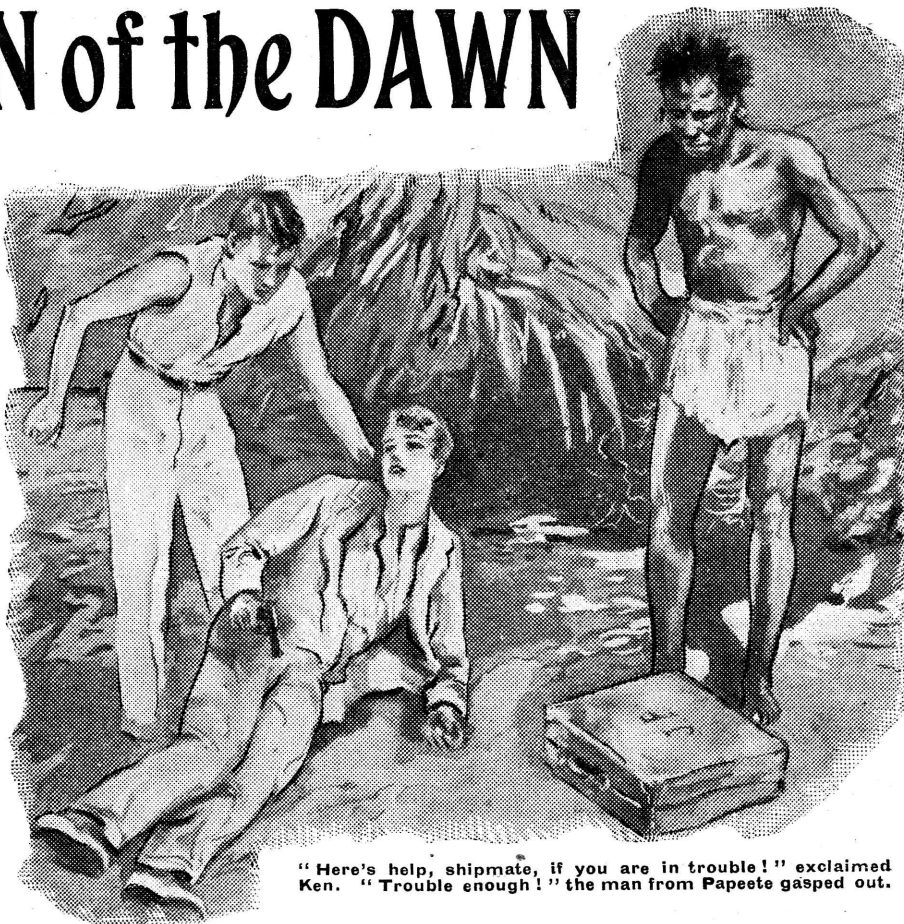
"You tinkee that feller he white feller?" asked Ken.

"Yessar, along he sing out word belong Papalagi, sar."

Ken listened again, with bent head. He had heard the cry faintly, but that was all. The keener ear of the Kanaka had distinguished a white man's word. Ken listened for it to be repeated, with the hum of countless insects like a continuous song in his ears.

"Help!" He made out the word now. At some distance a white man was calling for help in the dim intricacies of the bush of Tova.

Kaio-lalulalonga looked at the boy



"Here's help, shipmate, if you are in trouble!" exclaimed Ken. "Trouble enough!" the man from Papeete gasped out.

trader inquiringly. The young skipper of the Dawn and his Kanaka companion had emerged into the runway from another path in the bush.

The Dawn was anchored in the lagoon, and Ken had gone inland to visit a Tova chief at a native village back of the bush in the way of trade, leaving Kit Hudson, his young Australian mate, in charge of the ketch and the remainder of the native crew—Lufu, Lompo, Kolulu, Tomoo, and Danny the cooky-boy. He was on his return now, but still a mile from the beach.

Travelling on foot in the baking bush was tiring work, and Ken was anxious to get back to the ketch—to a bathe in the lagoon, and a rest.

But he could not pass that cry unheeded. Kaio-lalulalonga, in the unthinking way of a Kanaka, would have tramped on, forgetting the cry as soon as it ceased to reach his ears. It was only a matter of passing idle interest to him. It had a different effect on his white master.

Ken stared up the runway. He knew where it led—to a coconut plantation in the interior of Tova. Some white man on his way to or from the plantation had landed in trouble, apparently. Ken dismissed from his mind that cool plunge in the lagoon and the easy-chair on the deck of the Dawn and started up the runway.

"Follow me, Koko." The brown boatswain of the Dawn obediently tramped after his white master.

The runway curved through the intricate bush, dusky and hot and stuffy, plagued with innumerable insects. Ken strode on rapidly, the cry growing louder and clearer as he drew nearer to the spot whence it came.

It was quite plain now. Evidently it was a white man who called, and Ken wondered who he might be. He remembered that the steamer from Papeete had entered the lagoon that day and landed a white passenger. He had seen the man leaving the quay, with a black boy carrying a suitcase. Possibly it was this stranger from Tahiti who had found trouble in the bush. It was easy enough for a stranger on Tova to lose his way once out of sight of the beach.

As the cry came nearer and clearer, he recognised a note of pain in the voice that called. The man was probably hurt as well as lost. Ken hastened his steps, breaking into a run. Behind him the bare feet of Kaio-lalulalonga padded softly and swiftly.

At a turn in the bush path he came suddenly on the man who called. He lay in the runway, and Ken recognised him at once as the man who had landed from the Papeete steamer. Beside him in the path lay a suitcase, marked with the initials "J. P." But there was no sign of the Tova boy who had carried it when Ken had seen the stranger earlier in the day.

Bo'sun of the Dawn

The young man—he did not look more than twenty-three—was about to call again when the sight of the boy trader checked the cry on his lips. He half-raised his right hand, which held a revolver, but lowered it immediately.

"Thank my lucky stars—a white man!" he exclaimed.

"Ay, ay!" answered the boy skipper of the Dawn. "Here's help, shipmate, if you're in trouble!"

"Trouble enough!" gasped the man from Papeete. "I can't move! My leg's hurt! That nigger got me on the knee with his club. I reckon he would have brained me next whack if I hadn't got my gun out and he bolted. I've been lying here for hours—it seems like centuries!"

"A nigger?" repeated Ken.

"I hired a Tova boy to carry my suitcase and guide me to the Patterson plantation. He took a fancy to the suitcase!" groaned the man from Papeete. "He guided me as far as this, and then—I reckon I should have finished here if you hadn't blown along!"

King of the Islands had little doubt of that. In the solitary bush of Tova it was not likely that other ears would have heard the calling voice.

"Well, let's see the damage!" said Ken cheerily. "If you can't walk, my boatswain will be able to give you a lift on his back to the beach, though it's a mile from here."

"Is it far to the plantation? There's only one in this direction, so they told me on the beach."

"That's so," assented Ken. "It's run for a man in Papeete by a Portuguese named Da Silva. I've never seen it, or Da Silva, but I believe it's over two miles inland from here. If you can't walk, you'll have to give it a miss for to-day. You've got business with Da Silva?"

"Well, yes." The young man grinned faintly. "I'm Jim Patterson, nephew of the owner, and I've come out to Tova to supersede the Portuguese as manager."

"Oh!" said Ken. He had slit the duck trouser-leg while he was speaking. The man from Papeete suppressed a groan as the boy trader's fingers ran lightly over the injured knee.

"No fracture," said Ken. "But you've had a hard knock, and you've got a bruise like a young coconut! You've been lucky—the blow must have glanced!"

"It was meant for my head, but I dodged it: I want to see that Tova boy again when I get back to the beach!" groaned Patterson. "I'll break the thickest lawyer-cane they grow on Tova on his black hide!"

"You can't walk," said Ken. He frowned thoughtfully. "Look here, Mr. Patterson! If you're anxious to get to the plantation to-day, I'll leave my boatswain here with you and get on and see Da Silva. He can send some of his boys with a litter to carry you in."

"If you'd do that—"

"Ay, ay!" said Ken, rising to his

feet. "A walk in the bush won't hurt me. You feller Koko, you stop along this feller white master, along I come back along this place!"

Patterson's eyes dwelt curiously on the handsome, sunburnt face of the boy trader.

"Haven't I seen you before?" he asked. "Ever been to Papeete?"

"I've touched there a dozen times in my ketch," said Ken. "I dare say you've seen me on the beach at Papeete. My name's King—Ken King."

"Not King of the Islands?" exclaimed Patterson.

"Ay, ay! You've heard of me?" asked Ken, with a smile.

"Like everyone else on the Pacific beaches. It was a lucky day for me that you put in at Tova, Captain King!"

There was more truth in the words than the speaker knew, or than Ken dreamed at the moment.

Ken glanced round at the thick, tangled bush that shut in the runway, extending for impenetrable miles. It was silent, save for the hum of insects. But King of the Islands well knew that danger might lurk, unseen, unheard, in the high bush.

"Your Tova boy seems to have cleared off for good," he said. "But there are wild blacks on Tova. Look here, I'll carry your suitcase on to the plantation with me, if you like—it would be a temptation to any native that spotted it, and you're in no condition for scrapping."

"Da Silva's boys ought to be here with a litter under three hours," added Ken. "You'll get in before dark, I hope. I'll lose no time."

And King of the Islands picked up the suitcase and strode away up the runway. In a few minutes he disappeared from sight.

The Black Pit.

KING OF THE ISLANDS spotted a staring black face looking out from among red blossoms of hibiscus, and called:

"You feller boy!"

He was in sight of the plantation now. It had been a long, hot tramp. Sturdy as he was, the boy trader was feeling fatigued. The Papeete man's suitcase, hardly noticed when he started, had seemed to grow heavier and heavier. Ken was glad to get out of the bush and into the wide clearing that surrounded the plantation, looking forward to a rest and a long, cool drink in the shade of the veranda.

From the end of the runway in the bush a path ran across fields of yams and taro towards the low, verandaed building in the distance among the palms.

Ken had touched at Tova in his ketch several times, but he had never been so far inland on the island before. He had no doubt that this was the plantation that belonged to Old Man Patterson at far-off Papeete, and was managed by the Portuguese, Da Silva.

He was glad to see the black face

of the plantation boy peering at him from the hibiscus. He called and beckoned, and the boy—who was about forty, but all natives are "boys" in the Pacific Islands—came towards him, eyeing him curiously.

"You feller boy, you belong white master Da Silva?" asked Ken.

"Yes, sar, me belong this place!" answered the boy. "Name belong me Soloo, sar. Me house-boy along white master Da Silva."

Ken scanned him. There are many races in the Pacific, and the boy trader knew most of them. He saw at a glance that Soloo was not a native of Tova. His face was blacker and heavier in feature than a Tova boy's, and his tattoo-marks were quite different.

"You no belong Tova?" asked Ken. "No, sar, me belong Santa Cruz," said Soloo.

King of the Islands gave the Santa Cruz boy a keen look. There was a lurking glimmer in the boy's dark eyes that he did not quite understand. Soloo's manner was respectful, as became a native house-boy speaking to a white master. But there was a watchful alertness in his eyes that belied the wooden indifference of his black face.

"This feller carry baggage, belong you, sar," said Soloo. "Me takee you along house belong white master Da Silva, sar. Him sende me look see you, sar, eye belong me. Me wait plenty long time, sar."

Ken handed over the suitcase. He was not sorry to get rid of it, after carrying it more than two miles through the bush. With the case on a bare black shoulder, Soloo turned and trotted off towards the distant bungalow.

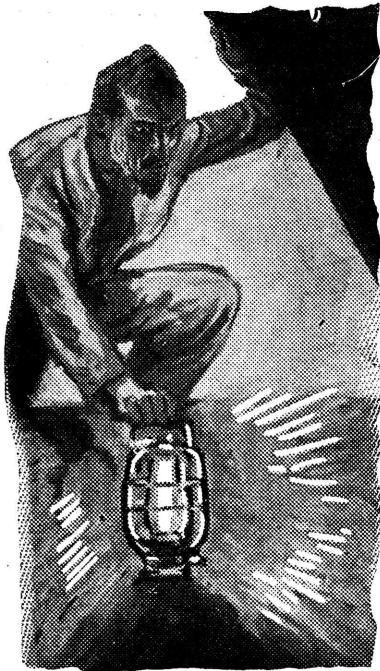
Ken strode after him. He understood from Soloo's words that Da Silva had sent his house-boy to wait at the end of the bush path for the arrival of the man from Papeete. Owing to the Tova boy's treacherous attack on the man he had been guiding through the bush, and Patterson's failure to arrive, Soloo must have waited "plenty long time," as he had said.

Seeing a white man arrive from the bush-path with a suitcase, Soloo had evidently taken him for the man he had been sent to meet. The house-boy's mistake did not matter. It was to the Portuguese manager that Ken had to explain what had happened in the bush, and to arrange for a litter to be sent to carry in the disabled man.

Soloo proceeded at a rapid trot towards the bungalow, and King of the Islands soon dropped behind. Apparently the house-boy was in haste to announce the arrival to the manager of the plantation.

Ken glanced round him as he followed the house-boy along the path winding through the taro-fields. The plantation seemed an extensive property, well planted, and watered by a stream that cascaded down a hill at a little distance, and which was doubtless the reason why that solitary spot, at a distance from the beach settlement, had been selected for the site of the plantation.

The place looked prosperous enough,



"You live!" ejaculated Da Silva, peering down into the pit in astonishment. "You are one good swimmer!"

and there was obviously work for many hands there. But, oddly, not a single native was to be seen, either in the taro-fields or among the palms. On a plantation that could not have employed fewer than a score of native boys, that was surprising. It looked as if the manager had given all hands a holiday that day, with the single exception of the Santa Cruz house-boy.

Ken could see the row of native grass huts, the dwellings of the field hands, but there was no sign of life about them. Not a single figure appeared among the huts.

Soloo increased his speed as he drew nearer the bungalow. Ken, tired from the long tramp, was now a considerable distance behind. He saw Soloo mount the palmwood steps of the veranda, dump down the suitcase on the planks, then cross to a door that was covered by a pandanus screen.

Evidently he was going to announce the arrival of the feller white master, and no doubt he was going to announce him as the man from Papeete. That error would be set right, however, as soon as Ken arrived at the house.

The boy trader had never met Pasco da Silva, but he had heard the man talked of on the beach of Tova. Da Silva had managed the Patterson plantation for many years, and managed it well. It was one of the best plantations on the island, but, according to the gossip of the beach, the handsome profits of that plantation did not all reach the owner at Papeete.

Da Silva was reported to make an excellent thing for himself out of it, and, if the beach gossip was to be believed, his private profits exceeded those of Old Man Patterson.

Possibly some echo of that gossip had reached as far as Papeete, and caused Old Man Patterson to send out his nephew to supersede the Portuguese manager. In the circumstances, Da Silva was hardly likely to give his employer's nephew a hearty welcome! If he was indeed swindling his employer, and had been doing so for years, the new manager's arrival was a crushing blow to him.

Ken rather wondered what sort of a greeting he would get from Pasco da Silva. Still at a distance, he saw the pandanus screen drawn aside from the doorway at the back of the veranda. A little, wiry, olive-skinned man in dingy white drill came out. Undoubtedly it was Da Silva.

Soloo, a grin on his black face, made a gesture towards the white man coming up the path towards the house. Da Silva came across to the front rail of the veranda and stared straight at King of the Islands for a long minute, his black eyes like jetty pin-points in his brown leathery face.

Then he raised his hat politely, and Ken returned the salute with equal politeness. To Ken's surprise, the manager then turned and went back into the house, the pandanus screen at the door falling into place behind him.

Five minutes later Ken reached the house, and mounted the steps, glad to get into the shade of the veranda, out of the glare of the tropical sun. The suitcase still lay where Soloo had dropped it, and the house-boy turned a grinning face on him.

"White master Da Silva he say you come along house, sar!" he said.

Ken nodded. Why the plantation manager chose to receive him in the stuffy house instead of on the cool veranda he did not know, and cared little. He followed the house-boy, who stopped and held aside the pandanus screen at the doorway for him to enter.

Ken stepped into the dusky room beyond. To his surprise it was empty. But on the farther side a door was open, and in the doorway stood the little wizened figure of the Portuguese. Ken glanced across at him as he advanced into the room, and the planter, still in the doorway, made a deep bow.

"You are verree welcome, Senhor Patterson!" he said. "Come zis way, if you please!"

Ken's lips opened to reply. But that reply was never uttered. As he

stepped across the room towards the Portuguese the floor suddenly gave way under his feet.

Taken utterly by surprise, King of the Islands shot downwards into the black pit that opened under him. As he fell there sounded in his dizzy ears a low chuckle from the Portuguese, and shrill falsetto laughter from the Santa Cruz house-boy.

"Adieu, Senhor!"

BLACK water closed over the head of King of the Islands as he plunged deep. He fell helplessly, dazed by the suddenness and unexpectedness of the happening. But as the water closed over him, he instinctively struck out. His feet touched the bottom, and next second he shot up to the surface.

His head came clear, and he swam, gasping, and spluttering out muddy water. He could see nothing. Blackness as of midnight surrounded him, and covered him like a cloak.

Already the trapdoor through which he had fallen had closed again, pulled shut from above. It cut off the dusky light of the room in the bungalow. The swimmer in the black pool could not see an inch, catching only faintly a pale gleam of the water that washed and splashed against the walls of the pit.

Ken's brain was in a whirl. But he quickly pulled himself together. His first dizzy thought was that it was an accident—that the plank floor had collapsed beneath him. But that was only for a moment. He knew that it was not that.

The floor above him was intact, shutting off light. It was a cunningly prepared trapdoor through which he had fallen, and it had closed immediately he had fallen through. It was a trap—a death-trap—intended for another.

He understood now the lurking grin on the face of Soloo when the house-boy had met him at the end of the bush-path, why all the natives had been sent away from the plantation, and why Da Silva had watched him from the veranda and retreated into the house before he arrived.

Unsuspecting, King of the Islands had walked into the trap prepared for Jim Patterson!

The rage that boiled up in Ken's breast at the thought was intense. Had Da Silva been within reach, he would have twisted the rascal's



"You villain!" breathed Ken, realising that he was to be left to drown in the darkness—like a rat in a trap!

Bo'sun of the Dawn

coppery neck without compunction. Treading water, he shouted:

"Ahoy! You cowardly swab, ahoy! Aloft there!" But save for the echoes, there was no answer.

Ken's eyes gleamed with rage in the darkness. But he realised that he had to keep cool. Many times he had looked death in the face and had never quailed. He knew now that he was in the tightest corner of his life.

The gossip of Tova beach was evidently well founded. The swindling manager feared the arrival of the man who had come out from Papeete to supersede him. This was the greeting he had planned for Patterson. Only the mishap in the bush had saved the man from Papeete from walking straight to his death. In the belief that Ken was the man from Papeete, Da Silva had hurled him into the sunken pit—to die!

The scoundrel's mistake had been natural. He did not know either Ken or Patterson by sight. A white man had arrived by the bush-path, as he had expected, and the suitcase carried in by the house-boy bore Patterson's initials.

Da Silva could hardly have guessed that the man who had arrived was not Patterson.

"The swab!" muttered King of the Islands, through his teeth. "The murderous, swindling scum! If I get my hands on his neck—"

He swam to the side of the pit and groped over it with his hands. It was of hard earth, and perfectly perpendicular. There was no chance of climbing. He reached as high as he could, but the floor above was far out of his reach.

He swam round the pool, feeling the sides, never missing an inch. It was roughly circular in shape, and not of large extent. When he swam across it, a few strokes carried him from side to side.

Ken ceased to swim at last and trod water, panting. There was no escape from the pit. He had learned that much. Not that he had expected to find a way of escape—it was certain that the man who had prepared this cunning trap had taken care of that!

Ken shouted, and shouted again. But only the echoing of his voice boomed back in the hollow pit. He fell silent again, busy with his thoughts. He was as fine a swimmer as any man in the Islands, and could keep afloat for a very long time. There was a chance for him yet, though the plotting Portuguese was not aware of it.

Patterson, a stranger on Tova, would have been hopelessly doomed had he fallen into the trap. The steamer came to Tova only once a month, and it would be a long time before Patterson's relations at Papeete even knew that he was missing.

Da Silva could deny that he had ever reached the plantation. There were no witnesses, and accidents had happened in the bush to white men

before this. The scheme had been cunningly laid, and nothing could have saved Patterson. The Portuguese would have been safe.

But it was King of the Islands who had fallen into the trap in the stead of the man from Papeete, and that made all the difference. Quite unknown to the rascally Portuguese, Koko was waiting for Ken on the bush path, and Kit Hudson, the mate of the Dawn, was waiting for him on the ketch in the lagoon.

If he did not reappear after coming to Da Silva's bungalow, his Australian mate and the faithful Kaio-lalulalonga would search for him. They would comb Tova till they found him, or at least learned his fate.

There was just a gleam of hope for the trapped boy trader—if he lived till his friends could seek him and find him!

A sound above caught Ken's ear, and there was a glimmer of light. He stared up. The trapdoor had moved, opening a foot or so. The light came from a lantern, held into the aperture by a wizened, olive-skinned hand; for darkness had fallen on Tova by this time.

"That white feller master he plenty dead feller, sar!" Ken heard the cackling voice of the Santa Cruz house-boy.

"Yes, yes!" came the voice of the Portuguese. In the lantern-light, the head and shoulders of Da Silva came into Ken's view, leaning over the edge of the pit. The man started as he caught the glimmer of the white face, deep below, staring up at him from the murky water.

"You live!" he ejaculated. "Senior Patterson, you are one good swimmer! No matter! You may take your time, senior!" He grinned, and the cackling laugh of the house-boy came from above.

It was in Ken's mind to tell the dusky villain of his mistake, but he checked the words. Da Silva was not likely to spare a man who had found out his secret of crime and treachery! So long as he remained in ignorance of Ken's identity, he would remain in ignorance of the fact that a keen search would soon be on foot.

He would take no measures to guard against a search which he did not dream of expecting.

"You mean to leave me here?" asked Ken.

"Yes, senior!" said the Portuguese. "Do you think I take all this trouble for nothing? Senior Patterson send you to take my place. After all zese years, he suspect something—he think I feather my nest, isn't it? It is true—I make a leetle fortune for myself; and I do not desire to hand over this plantation to the good Patterson's nephew—no, senior!" He chuckled.

"When I hear that you are coming, senior, I make ready this trap—with my good house-boy, Soloo. Steamer day you come. There is no one to see—all my boys are given holiday! It is verree clever, do you not think? If they ask questions on Tova, are you the first white man to fall to the savages in the bush?"

"I say I have never seen you! It is not for many months that my good master at Papeete know that something has happen to his good nephew. What do you think?"

Ken made no answer. The more certain the rascal was that he had caught Patterson in the death-trap, the more chance there was for King of the Islands to emerge from it alive.

"Perhaps he send another manager to replace me," the Portuguese went on. "Perhaps he also disappear in the bush of Tova! Who knows? Not for months am I troubled again—and then we shall see!"

"You villain!" breathed Ken.

"I sorry for you, senior!" grinned the Portuguese. "I have one kind heart. I advise you to resign yourself and cease to swim—it is the sooner over! I leave you now. At dawn, Soloo will fish you out, senior, and place you where you will never be found again. Adieu, senior!"

The trapdoor closed again, and Ken was left in darkness. Left to drown like a rat in a trap!

Eyes in the Gloom.

KAIO-LALULALONGA stared along the dark runway, puzzled and perturbed. Hours had passed since King of the Islands had left him in the bush with the disabled man from Papeete, bidding him wait his return. Darkness had fallen, and not a glimmer of a single star penetrated through the masses of the bush.

The long hours had been weary and painful enough to Patterson, lying in the path, groaning with the twinges of his injured leg. What had delayed the boy trader was a mystery. Long since he had had ample time to reach the plantation and return with Da Silva's boys—he had had time to make the trip twice over, yet he did not come.

"Me no savvy this thing!" Koko muttered for the twentieth time. "Me no savvy along white master he no comey. Me tinkee trouble come along white master along bush."

During the long hours of waiting, no one had trodden the path; no step had been heard. Utter silence and solitude lay on the high bush of Tova. Kaio-lalulalonga's brown face was dark with anxiety, and his heart was heavy. Something had happened to prevent the return of his white master, and it could only be some mischance.

But for Ken's order to him to remain with the disabled white man, Koko would long ago have started in search of the boy trader. But Ken's orders were law to the Kanaka boatswain of the Dawn, and he remained, with growing anxiety and uneasiness.

Koko knew that there were wild blacks on Tova, and he feared that some arrow or whizzing spear had struck down his white master.

The Kanaka scowled at Patterson in the gloom. It was the disabled man from Papeete that kept him from seeking his master. As the night grew older, the thought of disregarding his master's order grew in Koko's

mind. The man from Papeete did not weigh a mosquito's weight in the scale against the safety of his master. But Ken's order chained him to the spot.

"You feller boy," said Patterson, at last, "you go look along master belong you."

"Feller white master he say stop along this place along he comey back," muttered Koko.

"Something must have happened to him," said Patterson. "He meant to be back before dark. Leave me here—I've got my gun and can take care of myself."

"Me no tinkee along you, sar," said Koko. "Me tinkee along white master, along feller order he give."

"Well, go and look for him," urged Patterson. "It's no good waiting here. You go along plantation; tell feller Da Silva sendee boy along me."

Koko hesitated. Thinking was not much in his line, but he came slowly to the conclusion that if some mischance had happened to his master it would wash out the order to remain on the spot. He made up his mind at last.

"Me go lookee along white master eye belong me," he said.

Patterson, lying in the path, heard the softly padding steps of the Kanaka dying away up the runway. Silence, and the terrible solitude of the bush, fell upon him.

Kaio-lalulalonga gave no thought to the disabled man he had left behind. All his thoughts were concentrated on King of the Islands. In the blackness of the bush no white man could have found his way along the tangled runways, but Koko proceeded at a trot, without a stop. He could see nothing. If King of the Islands had fallen foul of black men in the bush, he had no chance of finding him before dawn of day.

He headed direct for Da Silva's plantation. There he hoped to find his white master, unaccountable as it was that Ken had not returned or sent help for the man from Papeete. At least the white man on the plantation would aid in the search, and would order out the plantation boys to help.

The Kanaka emerged from the bush at last, into the cultivated fields that surrounded the bungalow. The blackness of the bush was left behind him, and he stood in the brilliant starlight of the south. Far in the distance he could see the planter's bungalow, backed by nodding palms.

Still at a trot, Kaio-lalulalonga followed the path that King of the Islands had followed hours before.

Far and wide round him the yam-fields glimmered in bright starshine. The row of native grass huts was silent and dark, and Koko did not know that they were unoccupied. At that late hour all on the plantation would be sleeping. The bungalow was as dark and silent as the native huts. It was past midnight now.

Kaio-lalulalonga padded softly up to the palmwood steps of the veranda. There was no light in the house; no sound save the soft rustle of palm-branches in a light wind. Koko's heart was heavy with fear for his master.

He trod up the steps, and reached



As the Portuguese came on, lantern in one hand, revolver in the other, Koko leaped at him like a tiger-shark rushing on its prey.

the dusky veranda. A dim figure stirred on a sleeping-mat, and a pair of startled black eyes peered at him in the gloom. He had almost trodden on the house-boy, sleeping on the veranda. Soloo's voice came in startled tones.

"What name you feller comey along this place?"

"Me feller Kaio-lalulalonga, me comey along this place along find feller King of the Islands. White master belong me, he comey along this place. Me wantee speak along white man belong this place, along findee white master belong me."

"White master belong you no comey along this feller house," said Soloo. "Me no savvy feller King of the Islands."

Koko was about to speak again, when from the silence of the house there came a cry:

"Aho! Aho! Help!"

Koko knew that voice. He made a bound towards the doorway at the back of the veranda. With the spring of a tiger, the Santa Cruz boy leaped in his way and exclaimed:

"You no go along this place, you feller nigger! You—"

His panting voice died in his throat as the powerful grasp of the Kanaka boatswain closed on him. Next moment they were rolling on the planks of the veranda, fighting like tigers.

"Good Old Koko!"

KEN KING'S head dipped below the murky water. He spluttered, and rose again, panting for breath. Many hours had passed since he had fallen into the death-trap intended for another man. He was chilled by the water, aching with fatigue. But still he was keeping afloat. There were great powers of endurance in the sinewy frame of the boy trader, and they were called on now to their utmost.

Hope was not dead in his breast. Sooner or later he would be searched for. Koko, or perhaps Kit Hudson, would come to the bungalow to learn what had happened to him. They could have no suspicion of what had happened, but at least they would come. And now, at intervals of a few minutes, Ken sent a shout ringing through the building above him:

"Aho! Help!" If his friends came—if any man came—that shout would be heard. It rang and echoed in the sunken pit, and through the flimsy building above.

The trapdoor moved at last. The lantern swung over the opening, and the wizened, dusky face of the Portuguese grinned down.

"Senhor, it is true that you are one good swimmer," he said. "You still live! You amuse yourself with calling out, sgnhor!"

"You scoundrel!" breathed Ken. "If I could reach you—"

"You will never reach me, senhor," laughed Da Silva. "You will not leave this pit till my house-boy fish you out at dawn, and carry you to a secret place before my plantation boys come back. Why waste your breath, senhor? You disturb me, who would sleep."

"There is none to hear, senhor! All but Soloo have been sent away, and will not return till a new day. I recommend you to resign yourself to your fate, senhor."

"Aho! Help!" was Ken's shouted answer. Even at that moment his friends might be coming, little as the rascally plotter dreamed of it.

"If it amuse you, senhor, you may shout," said Da Silva. "I have tell you there is none to hear! Only myself and Soloo, senhor! Cry out if you will—I shall sleep none the less sound." The trapdoor closed, and Ken heard a fastening click.

Again he shouted, but the trap remained closed. The Portuguese had gone to his bunk, indifferent to

Bo'sun of the Dawn

the cries of the trapped trader. As he had said, there was none to hear. He was the only white man on the plantation, and all the natives except Soloo had been sent away to their village in the interior, to remain away till all was over.

The long, long minutes passed. Whether it was still night, or whether a new day had come, Ken could not tell. In the blackness of the pit he would have been almost glad to see even the villainous face of the Portuguese peering down at him. But he had no doubt that the man was sleeping now—while slow death crept on his victim.

The boy trader felt that his strength was ebbing. More than once his head ducked under the surface. But with indomitable courage and determination he fought for his life. At longer intervals now came the shout that he sent ringing through the bungalow above.

"Ahoy! Ahoy! Help!" And then the dead silence that had followed his repeated calling was broken at last!

Sounds came to his ears—vague sounds of movement above him. Ken gathered all his strength, and sent a shout for help pealing through the bungalow, a shout that echoed far beyond the building.

"Ahoy! Koko! Kit! Help! Ahoy, shipmate!" New life seemed to flow in his veins as an answering voice shouted:

"Me comey, sar! This feller Koko comey, sar! This feller comey along white master!"

"Good old Koko!" gasped Ken.

There was the sound of a struggle above. From the veranda, Koko and Soloo, locked in a furious grapple, had rolled into the doorway, tearing down the pandanus screen. The Santa Cruz boy was sinewy, but he crumpled in the grasp of the giant boatswain of the Dawn.

He rolled undermost—Koko's grip on his throat, and his fierce eyes blazing down at him. Grasping the house-boy by the throat with both hands, Kaio-lalulalonga lifted his head, and dashed it with terrific force against the floor. One groan escaped the Santa Cruz boy, and he lay senseless.

Kaio-lalulalonga leaped to his feet. The struggle with the Santa Cruz boy had lasted less than a minute.

Through the doorway, now that the pandanus screen was torn away, starlight streamed into the room. Koko stared round him. He had heard the voice of his white master close at hand, and had shouted back as he struggled with the Santa Cruz boy. But he could see nothing of King of the Islands.

"Where you stop, sar?" he shouted. "You sing out along this boy where you stop, sar?"

"Here!" shouted Ken. "Under the floor! Look out, Koko; there's

a trapdoor—feller door he stop along floor. Look out for the Portuguese—Da Silva—look out for feller white master!"

A lantern gleamed in the inner doorway. The startled face of the Portuguese glared over it. There was a revolver in the hand of the plantation manager. The uproar of Koko's struggle with Soloo had roused him from his bunk. Ken's warning, shouted from below, came just in time for the Kanaka.

Koko knew what had happened now—that his master had been trapped in the bungalow by the white planter. And as the Portuguese glared into the room, the lantern in one hand, the revolver in the other, Kaio-lalulalonga leaped at him like a tiger-shark rushing on its prey.

Who the brown man was, how and why he had come, Da Silva did not know. He threw up the revolver, but Koko struck him at the same moment. The bullet crashed into the roof

and the Kanaka boatswain dragged him up.

Dripping, spent, King of the Islands sank down on the floor, Koko's strong arms supporting him. He glanced dizzily around. Soloo lay senseless, but the Portuguese was coming to—his jetty eyes opened, staring at King of the Islands and the Kanaka.

"Get him, Koko—secure him!" exclaimed Ken, sinking back on the floor half conscious. The grasp of the Kanaka closed on Da Silva as he struggled to his feet and reached for the fallen revolver.

"Me get this feller plenty safe, sar!" said Kaio-lalulalonga grimly.

King of the Islands heard the yell of terror from the Portuguese, but, sinking into unconsciousness, he did not hear the splash that followed.

"JUSTICE!" exclaimed Jim Patterson. "Poetical justice!"

It was golden afternoon on Tova. Three white men sat in chairs on the shady veranda of the plantation bungalow—Jim Patterson, a bandaged leg stretched across another chair; King of the Islands, looking little the worse now for his fearful ordeal; and Kit Hudson, who was unusually grave.

Natives were at work in the taro-fields and among the cocoa palms, and on the steps of the veranda sat Kaio-lalulalonga, twanging a ukulele and humming a song in the Hawaiian dialect—a song he improvised as he sang after the manner of the Kanakas.

The man from Papeete was in a cheery humour.

"That Tova boy trying to bag my suitcase and knocking me out in the bush saved my life," he went on. "If I'd walked into that trap, Captain King, I shouldn't have got out of it as you did—there would have been no jolly old Koko to hunt for me! If I see that Tova boy on the beach, I'll tip him a silver dollar instead of breaking a

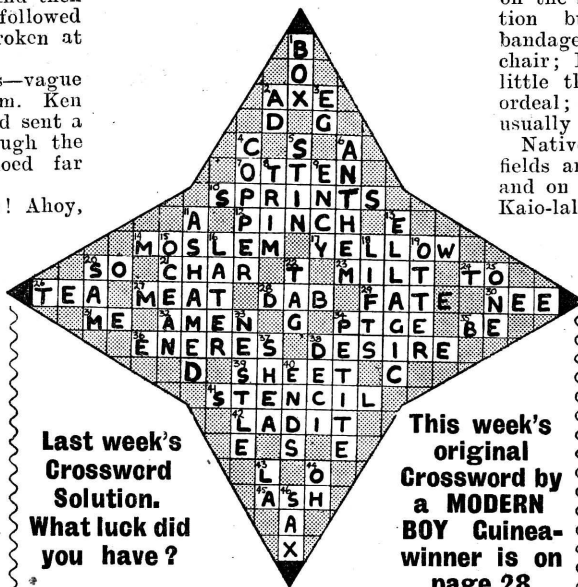
lawyer-cane on his back.

"That scum Da Silva had that death-trap fixed up for me, and he tumbled into it himself. He must have tumbled in after your Kanaka fished you out, Captain King—and I suppose Koko hadn't much attention to waste on him. The villain never dreamed what rat would be drowned in that pit when he had it dug for me. Poetical justice, what?"

"Absolutely!" agreed Hudson.

King of the Islands did not speak. He was listening to the improvised song of the bo'sun, which only he understood. And he was glad that only he understood, as Kaio-lalulalonga sang softly to the ukulele of the feller white master who had dug a death pit and had been hurled to death in it by brown hands that now twanged the ukulele!

(Another of Charles Hamilton's grippingly told tales of Ken King's South Seas adventures in next week's MODERN BOY!)



Last week's
Crossword
Solution.
What luck did
you have?

This week's
original
Crossword by
a MODERN
BOY Guinea-
winner is on
page 28

above as the Portuguese went down under that mighty blow. He rolled on the floor, as senseless as Soloo.

"Koko!" panted Ken. The crack of the revolver, ringing out above, filled him with terror for the Kanaka.

"Me comey, sar!"

Crashing blows rang above King of the Islands. The fastening of the trap was concealed, but a heavy teak stool in Koko's powerful grasp smashed it through. The trapdoor dropped on its hinges, and the lantern swung in Koko's hand over the opening. He stared down at the death-like face of the boy trader, looking up from the murky water.

"Well done, Koko!" said King of the Islands. "Get a rope—feller rope along this place—"

"Yes, sar!" panted Kaio-lalulalonga. Quickly the Kanaka searched and found a rope, and dropped a looped end down to the boy trader. Ken slipped it round his shoulders,