

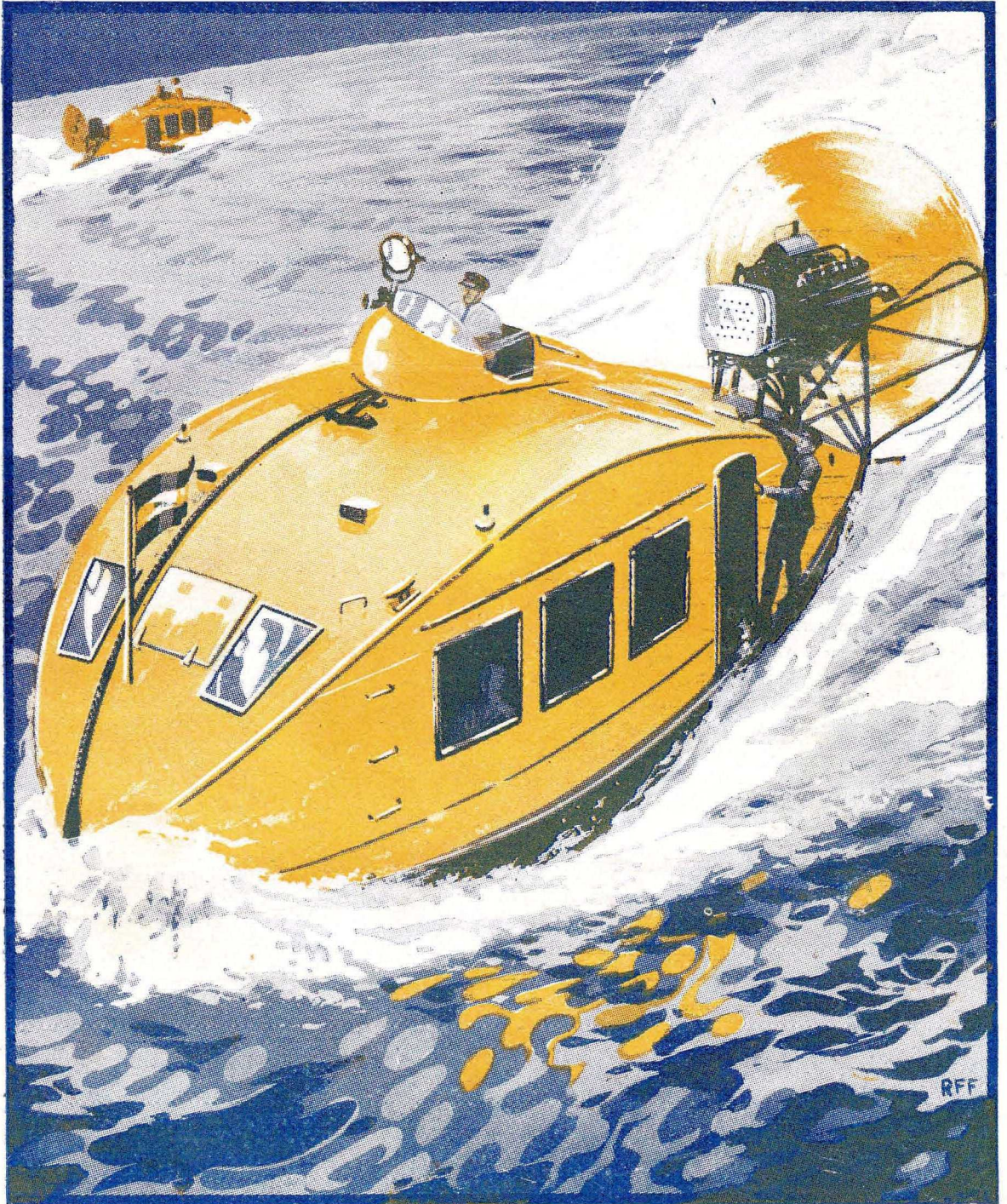
*B. C. Mondrian*

# The MODERN BOY

EVERY MONDAY.  
Week Ending October 10th, 1931.

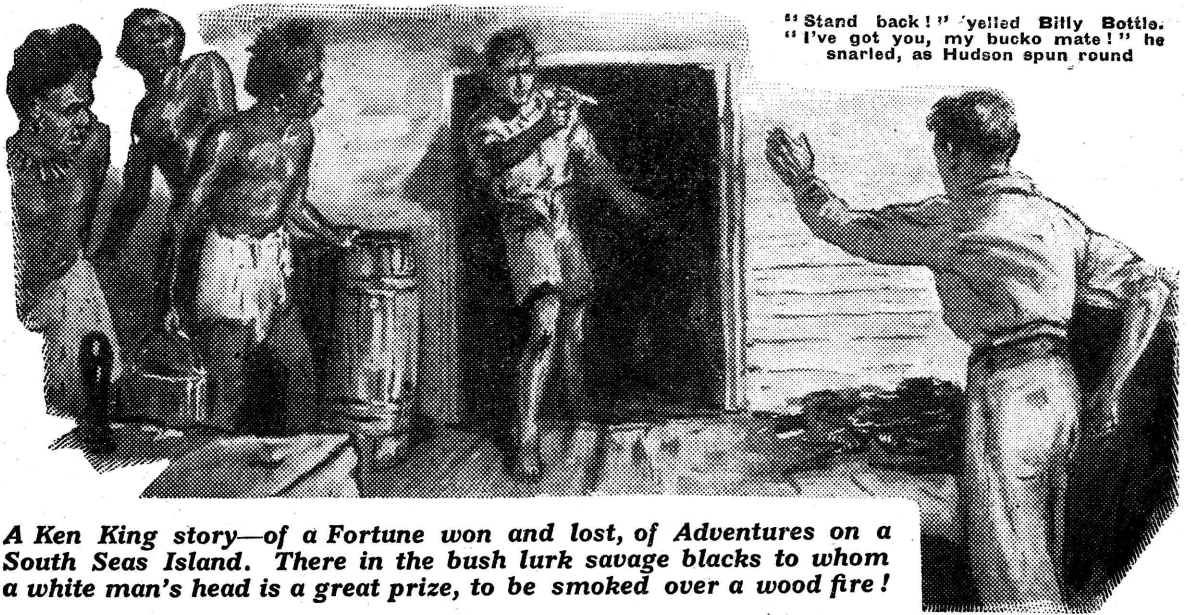
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**WEIRD and WONDERFUL WATER-CRAFT!**—See page 3.

"Stand back!" yelled Billy Bottle. "I've got you, my bucko mate!" he snarled, as Hudson spun round



**A Ken King story—of a Fortune won and lost, of Adventures on a South Seas Island. There in the bush lurk savage blacks to whom a white man's head is a great prize, to be smoked over a wood fire!**

**The Outcast.**

THE sails dropped, the cable ran out, and the ketch Dawn rode at anchor in the lagoon of Oloo, in the South Seas. Ken King, the boy owner and skipper, turned to his mate with a smile on his sunburnt face.

"Only a few hours here, Kit! We shall get the hook up again before sundown. We've only a dozen bags of copra to pick up. I could have cut out this call, really, but—"

"No need," replied Kit Hudson laconically.

"I should have thought you'd be in a hurry to hit Fushima to catch the steamer, with a fortune waiting for you at Sydney!" said King of the Islands—as Ken was known throughout the South Seas.

"Never mind that!" Hudson frowned. "The fortune at Sydney can wait—and be hanged to it! I don't care when we raise Fushima—or whether we ever raise it at all."

"I own that I don't catch on!" said Ken. "But have it your own way, old chap. I shall be sorry to lose my mate, when the time comes, and the longer you stick to the Dawn the better I shall like it."

"I almost wish that your uncle hadn't left you that fortune, Kit—that Billy Bottle, the Luta beachcomber, had never brought those old papers on board and put you wise to it. But for Billy Bottle, you might never have known the legal swabs were advertising for the nephew of William Charters, the shipper of Sydney. I shouldn't be losing my mate!"

Turning to the native crew—Kaio-lalulalonga, otherwise Koko, the Lo'sun, Tomoo, Lufu, Lompo, Kolulu, and Danny the cooky-boy—Ken ordered them to lower the whaleboat.

"Coming ashore with me, Kit?" he asked.

"I've got to keep an eye on Billy Bottle!" replied Hudson. "He isn't

exactly pleased to be sailing on the Dawn, and he'll cut loose here if he gets a chance. I'm going to see that he doesn't!"

The smile faded from Ken's face as his eyes turned on a man who was standing by the rail, staring towards the dazzling white beach of Oloo.

Billy Bottle looked a changed man since he had been forcibly compelled to sail on the Dawn.

The wretched white outcast who had gone native and "combed" the beach of Luta had come on board dirty, unshaven, with matted hair, clad in a loin-cloth like a native. Now he was clean, shaven, his hair

frowning face. He hesitated before he spoke.

"Kit, old man——" he began.

"Cut it out, Ken!" the mate of the Dawn interrupted him. "You gave me leave to bring that swab on the Dawn, and I'm holding you to your word."

"I never knew you meant to shanghai him, old fellow."

"He wouldn't have come willingly, so I had to kidnap him. Look at him!" said Hudson, with a glance at the beachcomber. "He looks better for it already! I'm making a white man of him again."

"He doesn't like the process!" Hudson shrugged his shoulders.

"I know your reason, old fellow!" said Ken slowly.

"Do you?" Hudson laughed. "I doubt it!"

"Well, the man brought you good luck, though he didn't know it, and you want to save him from the beach and make a man of him. But it's high-handed, Kit! You've shanghai-him. If you'd like to let him run, I'll take him ashore in the boat."

"I'm sticking to him."

"Well, it's for you to say. But it isn't like you, old chap."

Kit Hudson made no reply, and King of the Islands stepped into the whaleboat. Lompo and Kaio-lalulalonga pulled him to the beach.

There was a frown on the brow of the boy trader. He was letting the mate of the Dawn have his way with the beachcomber, but he did not understand why Hudson had adopted such drastic measures, and he did not like them.

Hudson watched the whaleboat till it grounded on the beach of Oloo and King of the Islands stepped ashore. Then he looked at the beachcomber again, a hard expression on his face.

Billy Bottle was looking around furtively. Obviously, he was thinking of plunging into the lagoon and attempting to swim to the beach. He

Complete

# Cannibal Island!

By Charles Hamilton

cut, and dressed in clean calico shirt and shorts. Few on Luta would have recognised him if they had seen him now.

But Billy Bottle had not taken kindly to the change. Work and discipline did not agree with the man who had loafed and lounged for idle years, and his miserable soul yearned for the drink that had become almost a necessity to him.

It was easy to read his thoughts as he stared longingly at the beach. He intended, if he could, to get away from the ketch while the hook was down at Oloo!

Ken looked at him, then his glance returned to Kit Hudson's moody,

## Cannibal Island!

had tried it on when the ketch left Luta, and had narrowly escaped drowning, Hudson fishing him out of the sea and saving his life. But it was a short and easy swim to Oloo—if he was not stopped!

Close by the beachcomber was Tomoo, who had been specially warned to keep an eye on him. Tomoo was ready to grasp the shanghai-ed man at the first attempt to jump over the rail.

"You stop along ketch, you white feller!" said Tomoo, grinning as the beachcomber looked furtively around.

Billy Bottle growled and slouched away. He met Kit Hudson's scornful eyes, and gritted his teeth.

"You swab!" he muttered. "You're keeping me on this hooker against my will! You've shanghai-ed me like a nigger—"

"That's enough from you!" said the mate of the Dawn curtly.

Billy Bottle gave him a bitter look. "Let me get a chance—" he began.

"You're asking for the lawyer-cane," said Hudson. "It's ready if you want it, you scum." And he turned his back on the beachcomber.

The outcast of Luta looked at him, bitter hate in his sunken eyes. Then he moved to the side. Tomoo, grinning, moved after him, ready to seize him in a sinewy hand. Billy Bottle slouched away to the hatchway and sat on the coamings. A few minutes later he slipped below.

Hudson was not heeding, and Tomoo took no notice. He was ready to act if the beachcomber attempted to leave the ketch, but it was impossible for him to get away from below.

Hudson was thinking of the strange trick fortune had played him. For a few hours, at Luta, he had believed himself the heir of the Sydney shipper. It was only his desire to do something for the man who had unknowingly given him the good news that had brought him into contact with Billy Bottle at all.

And then had followed the discovery that Billy Bottle, the outcast of Luta, was William Charters, son of old William Charters, and rightful heir to the fortune that Hudson had believed to be his own!

The temptation to keep his own counsel, to leave the wretch to his fate, had been strong. But Hudson had cast it aside. He could not touch a fortune that was not his own.

But neither should Billy Bottle touch it so long as he was a drunken waster, a dingy comber of Pacific beaches. Hudson was resolved on that, and he was giving the man a chance to recover his lost manhood, while the ketch made the run to Fushima.

The outcast had never looked at the Sydney papers, and he did not know that his father had died without making a will. He had disgraced his name, and expected nothing from the father who had cut him off. He had been glad to let it be believed that he had been lost at sea, for when he had fled from Sydney long ago, the

arm of the law had been stretched out for him.

It rested with Kit Hudson whether he ever knew—and, so far, Kit had said no word. He was giving the beachcomber a chance to make good. The rest was up to Billy Bottle—Hudson's cousin, if the wretch had known it!

Hudson could not claim a fortune that was not his own. That was impossible. If Billy Bottle made good—if he became a white man again—he would be told. If not, he would take his chance of ever knowing, for Kit would tell him nothing.

Little did the outcast of Luta dream why he had been shanghai-ed on board the Dawn, any more than did King of the Islands.

The wretch was longing to get back to the beach to loaf and lounge and cadge drinks where he could. Little did he dream how much it was to Kit Hudson's interest to let him have his way, and how Hudson had had to fight against the temptation to let him go his own miserable way to destruction.

A sudden yell from Kolulu interrupted Hudson's moody reflections.

"You look out, sar! Feller gun along that white feller, sar!"

Hudson spun round. Billy Bottle had emerged from the companion. In his right hand was a revolver. As Hudson spun round towards him, the revolver was lifted, and the savage eyes of the outcast glared over the levelled barrel at the mate of the Dawn.

### "I'm Going Ashore!"

"STAND back!" yelled Billy Bottle, his eyes blazing over the revolver. There was a cackle of alarm from the Kanakas on deck. Tomoo, Lufu, and Kolulu stared with starting eyes. Danny the cooky-boy, half-way from his galley to the rail with a bucket of garbage to empty into the lagoon, stopped dead and turned bulging eyes on the beachcomber.

Hudson clenched his hands, his eyes gleaming. But he halted. Billy Bottle's hand was shaking, and the revolver was shaking in it, but at such close range he could not have missed. And there was murder in the glaring eyes of the beachcomber.

"Stand back, you hound! Lift a hand, and you go down!" snarled Billy Bottle. "Back, you scum! Back!"

To advance on the beachcomber was sudden death, and Hudson was not tired of life. His eyes blazed at the outcast, and his hands clenched till his nails dug in the palms, but he stood still.

"I've got you where I want you, you swab!" snarled the other. "You'd shanghai me, would you? You'd haze me on this hooker—set me scraping boats and cleaning paint? By hokey! You'd handle a white man as if he was a nigger! Lift a finger, and you go down, you hound!"

The beachcomber was master of the situation now! Hudson had not even noticed that the man had crept below. But he knew now that Bottle must

have rooted in the state-room and found the revolver there. He had not looked for such desperate measures on the part of the slinking outcast. There was a spark, at least, of a man's spirit still in the rum-soaked beachcomber.

"I've got you!" said Billy Bottle, through his teeth. "Got you, my bucko mate! I'll shoot you dead as soon as look at you if you lift a finger!"

"And I'll let you have it, if you try to stop me! Chew on that! I'm going ashore! Try to stop me if you dare! You're a dead man if you do!"

Still keeping the revolver aimed at the mate of the Dawn, Billy Bottle backed to the rail. He waved his left hand to one of the native canoes on the lagoon, and without taking his eyes off Hudson, he shouted to the Oloo natives in the canoe.

"You feller boy along canoe! You come along this ship plenty quick! Me wantee canoe along beach!"

The canoe glided towards the ketch, with a dash of paddles.

Hudson watched the beachcomber with glittering eyes. The revolver shook in the unsteady hand, but he knew that Billy Bottle would pull the trigger, and that he would not miss. Nevertheless, Kit Hudson was calculating chances of a sudden spring.

Billy Bottle read his intention in his eyes.

"Keep back!" he said. "You're a dead man if you try to stop me! I mean it!"

Crash! The beachcomber, his eyes glued on Hudson, watching him like a cat, had given no heed to the Kanakas—least of all to Danny the cooky-boy. But it was the astute cooky-boy who intervened.

The bucket of garbage left Danny's hands, came flying through the air, and crashed on the side of his head. The beachcomber spun sideways and fell on his knees, the bucket clattering down on the teak planks, the garbage splashing over him. The revolver was still in his hand, but it sagged down.

In another moment it would have been raised again. But that moment was not granted to the outcast. Hudson leaped forward with the swiftness of lightning and kicked the weapon from his hand, sending it spinning across the deck to the scuppers.

The beachcomber sprawled frantically after the revolver, but before he could reach it Kit Hudson's grasp was on him, and he was swung to his feet.

"Now, you scum!" said Hudson grimly.

With a snarl, the beachcomber closed with him and struggled. But the waster was no match for the sturdy mate of the Dawn. For a minute he struggled, then he was flung over the coamings of the hatchway, and held there, squirming in a powerful grip.

"You feller Kolulu!" shouted Hudson. "You bring me feller lawyer-cane!"

Kolulu brought the lawyer-cane. Hudson gripped it, and brought it

hissing down across Billy Bottle's back. Again and again it came down, hard and fast, and the beachcomber squirmed and yelled under the lashes. The Kanakas grinned at the scene.

"My word!" murmured Danny. "That feller Hudson plenty kill feller beachcomber along lawyer-cane!"

Hudson flung aside the cane at last, and tossed the howling waster sprawling on the deck. Picking up the revolver, Hudson slipped it into his pocket. Billy Bottle, sprawling and gasping, eyed him with the eyes of a demon.

"I'll get you yet!" he hissed. "I'll get you, Kit Hudson! I was a fool not to drop you when I had the chance! Next time—"

"That's enough!" said Hudson curtly. "Another word from you, Billy Bottle, and I'll order the Kanakas to trice you up!"

The beachcomber was silent, but his sunken eyes glared defiance and hatred. He was still on board the ketch, and had not sought to make another attempt at escape, when King of the Islands came back in the whaleboat, and the copra was hoisted on the Dawn.

When the ketch sailed out of the lagoon, the beachcomber stared back at the atoll as it sank from sight.

Oloo dropped below the sea-line, and the boundless ocean rolled round the ketch once more. Then the voice of Koko shouted to the shanghaied outcast:

"You feller Bottle, you plenty lazy feller! You takee feller mop along deck, or me knock seven bells outer you, my word!"

Billy Bottle gave the Kanaka boatswain a glare. But he had felt the heavy hand of Koko, and he did not want to feel its weight again.

There was no room for a loafer on board the Dawn, and under the eye of the boatswain the beachcomber swabbed the deck, muttering as he swabbed. If hard work and stern discipline could make a white man of Billy Bottle, he was on his way to becoming a white man again.

### Too Late!

It was a fortnight since the Dawn had dropped Oloo astern, and more than two weeks had passed since Billy Bottle had come unwillingly on board the Dawn.

Standing by Kit Hudson's side at the binnacle, Ken was looking at the beachcomber, marvelling at the change in the man. In clean calico, he looked a decent white sailorman. But the change was greatest in his face. The hangdog sullenness was gone, his eyes were brighter, his mouth had grown firm, and there was healthy colour in his cheeks.

Hard work had done him good, and the clean breezes of the open sea

seemed to have blown the dingy rottenness out of the man who had been an eyesore on the beach of Luta.

For the first time for many a long year Billy Bottle knew what it was to wake in the morning with clear head and steady nerve, to eat his food with healthy relish, to feel a springiness in his step, strength in his limbs, and courage in his heart.

Ken smiled. He had disapproved of the drastic measures taken by his mate, not knowing the reason Hudson had. Now he wondered whether after all, those measures were justified. Looking at the man, it was hard to doubt it.

"I reckon he's improved, Kit!" said the boy trader. "It's a big chance for him to get back. He will be a fool if he goes back on the beach again when you let him run."

Kit Hudson nodded, his eyes on Billy Bottle. Sitting on the little forecandle of the ketch, the beachcomber was carefully mending a rent in a cotton shirt. He seemed intent on his task—a strange change for the man who had been content to loaf on

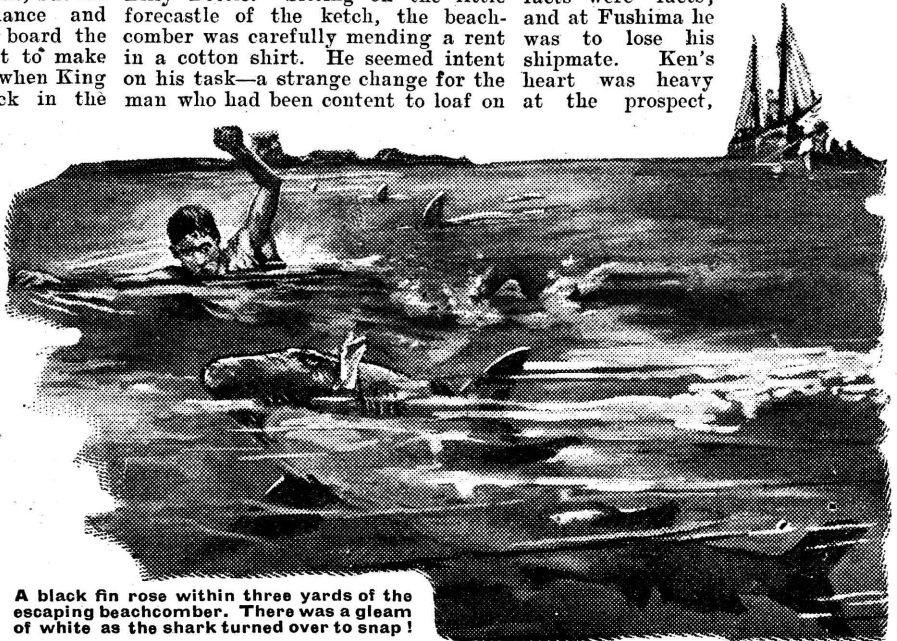
"Pita'ao," said Ken, with a gesture towards a purple blur on the vast ocean ahead of the ketch. "Our last call before Fushima, Kit!"

He suppressed a sigh. Of the fortune at Sydney, which Ken still believed was Hudson's, the mate of the Dawn said never a word. At times Ken could have fancied Hudson had forgotten it, and that he had settled down as mate of the ketch, as of old.

He never talked of the future. If he mentioned it at all, he spoke as if it was bound up with the Dawn, as if he had no intention whatever of leaving his ship or his shipmate.

It was a puzzle to King of the Islands. But he realised that Hudson did not wish to talk of his inheritance, and he left that subject severely alone.

Whatever was said or left unsaid, facts were facts; and at Fushima he was to lose his shipmate. Ken's heart was heavy at the prospect,



A black fin rose within three yards of the escaping beachcomber. There was a gleam of white as the shark turned over to snap!

the beach of Luta in a dingy loin-cloth!

Self-respect was coming back to Billy Bottle. He was a white man among Kanakas, and for the first time for long degraded years the pride of a white man was alive within him. During the last few days he had shown more and more care of his appearance, and now he was as trim and neat as even Kit Hudson could have desired.

Sullenness had left him with returning health and vigour. Work that a fortnight ago had left him a perspiring lump of aching fatigue now came easily to him. If the beachcomber still longed for the drink that had been his bane, at least he knew how much he owed to its enforced absence.

The lawyer-cane was a thing of the past—Billy Bottle had learned to jump to orders. Towards Ken his manner was always respectful. Indeed, he seemed to have something of a liking for the boy trader. Only when he looked at Hudson was there a subdued fierceness in his eyes.

though he was generously glad of Kit's good fortune.

"Our last call!" repeated Hudson thoughtfully.

"You've missed the steamer, Kit!" said the boy trader. "Missed it by weeks through sticking to the Dawn instead of taking the motor-launch from Luta. You'll have to wait for the next."

"Lots of time for the steamer!" Hudson smiled. "We shall be at Fushima in a week, Ken. A week more for Billy Bottle to make good."

"If he doesn't give us the slip at Pita'ao," said King of the Islands, with a smile.

"The lagoon at Pita'ao is alive with sharks," replied Hudson. "And the bush is alive with cannibals. If Billy Bottle gives us the slip there, he'll be sorry for himself!"

"The fact is, old man," said Ken thoughtfully, "the more you turn him into a white man, the more he'll kick at being shanghaied. If he's got a man's grit in him, he'll try to get away, sharks and cannibals and all."

## Cannibal Island!

"But has he?" grunted Hudson.

The Dawn ran on swiftly before the trade wind. Pita'ao rose higher over the sunny Pacific. As the ketch ran down to the island, Koko brought up the white masters' revolvers. Pita'ao was one of the cannibal isles of the Pacific.

A single white trader dwelt there, who bought safety from the natives with a tribute of coloured beads and cloth. But any other white man who landed on the beach of Pita'ao took his life in his hands!

The ketch ran into the lagoon and dropped her anchor. Back of the beach stood the white trader's bungalow and warehouse, with a group of native grass-huts near it. Goldberg, the trader, could be seen in his veranda, picking up the ketch through a pair of binoculars.

Ken's eyes strayed from the bungalow to the high bush beyond. From the dark bush he had no doubt that the eyes of savage natives were watching the ketch. He had visited Pita'ao before, and knew what the Pita'ao bush was like. Suddenly he called to Billy Bottle, who was standing by the rail staring towards the island.

"Give it a miss, Billy!" advised the boy trader good-naturedly. "There are sharks in the lagoon and cannibals in the bush. Stick it out till Fushima!"

"Send me ashore, sir, and I'll chance the cannibals," pleaded the beachcomber.

Ken shook his head, and the beachcomber's eyes turned to the shining lagoon as Danny emptied a pail of garbage over the rail, with a grinning glance at the shanghaied man. Immediately three or four black fins glided over the surface.

"Plenty feller shark along this lagoon!" grinned Danny.

The beachcomber drew a deep breath. Ken and Kit gave him no further attention. The sight of those black fins in the lagoon was warning enough for the most desperate man!

Suddenly there was an ear-splitting yell from Koko, and the sound of a heavy splash in the lagoon.

"My word, that feller go along lagoon, along feller shark!"

The shining surface of the lagoon rippled under the strokes of the desperate swimmer. Billy Bottle was in the water, swimming desperately for the beach.

"The madman!" panted King of the Islands. "Lower the boat! You feller boy, you lower whaleboat plenty too quick!"

The Kanakas rushed to obey.

Hudson stood with his gaze fixed on the swimmer. He had caught up a rifle, and he clamped it to his shoulder as a black fin rose into view within three yards of the escaping beachcomber. There was a gleam of white as the shark turned over to snap.

Crack! Hudson's face was white, but the rifle at his shoulder was as steady as a rock as his finger pressed the trigger.

A splash of red showed on the white

throat of the shark. The hideous snout with the gleaming jaws disappeared under water. A great tail rose in the air and thrashed the lagoon into spray and foam.

There was a cry from the swimmer. That swift, sure shot had saved him from the jaws of the shark, but the furring brute had brushed against him. The touch of the sandpaper-like skin gashed the beachcomber's leg, sending a thrill of horror through him.

For a moment a face white as death looked from the splashing water, and the beachcomber's eyes were glazed with terror. Then, setting his teeth, the desperate man swam on.

"Fool!" roared Hudson. "Swim for the boat!"

The whaleboat had splashed down into the lagoon. King of the Islands was in it, and four brawny Kanakas were pulling at the oars.

The beachcomber heard Hudson's shout, but he did not heed. Desperately he swam on, away from the ketch, heading for the beach. The furring shark, thrashing the water, headed him no more. But from Billy's leg, where the shark's rough skin had scraped, blood was flowing, attracting other sharks. Black fin after fin rose from the lagoon.

Twice again Hudson fired, bullets crashing among the sharks, whilst the whaleboat rushed down on the swimmer. There was a heavy bump as it crashed into a shark rising to the surface, and lost way. The Kanakas, with yells of excitement, beat off the shark with their oars.

The swimmer increased his distance. Sand was under his feet now, and, with a last desperate effort, he dragged himself up the beach. Dripping with water, the beachcomber stood panting, staring back at the boat and the ketch. He shook a clenched fist at the Dawn, then turned and raced up the beach!

Billy Bottle did not take the direction of the trader's bungalow, from which the Pita'ao trader was staring at him blankly. There was no safety for the shanghaied man there! He cut off towards the bush.

"You feller boy washy-washy along beach!" shouted King of the Islands. Then the whaleboat grounded on sand and powdered coral, and Ken leaped ashore.

Billy Bottle, already at a good distance, had almost reached the bush. The boy trader darted in pursuit.

Hudson, from the ketch, watched the chase. The beachcomber ran on. At the edge of the bush he stopped and turned, looking back.

King of the Islands was still twenty yards away. The beachcomber grinned at him savagely.

"Too late, King of the Islands!" he shouted hoarsely. "Too late!"

"Stop!" shouted Ken. "You madman, the bush is thick with cannibals! Come back, for your life!"

Unheeding, the beachcomber turned and plunged into the bush. Ken halted. Pursuit in the trackless mazes of the high bush was impossible. The shanghaied beachcomber had escaped!

Ken walked back to the whaleboat and pulled to the Dawn. He gave Kit Hudson a rather grim look as he stepped on deck and said:

"That's that!"

Kit Hudson did not reply. His eyes were fixed on the spot where the beachcomber had disappeared. Like a black veil the bush had closed on the escaping man, shutting him off from all eyes!

### Trapped in the Bush.

**K**IT HUDSON stood on the beach, his rifle under his arm, watching the trader's house-boys load copra into the boat. King of the Islands was in the trader's veranda, talking with Goldberg.

There was only one boat-load of cargo to be taken aboard, and it was Ken's intention to get the hook up and get out of the lagoon before sundown. The cannibal island of Pita'ao was not a spot where the boy trader desired to linger.

Hunting for Billy Bottle in the bush was hopeless. No doubt he intended to turn up at the trader's bungalow after the ketch had put to sea. There his life would be safe, and he could wait in hope for a vessel to take him off.

He could not "comb the beach" on Pita'ao, as he had done on Luta, and might have done on Oloo. There was only one white man on Pita'ao, a surly German trader, and there was no rum or "square-face" for the beachcomber. He had risked sharks and cannibals to escape from the ketch, but his life on Pita'ao was likely to be harder than on the Dawn.

Hudson's thoughts were strangely mingled as he stood staring away towards the bush that hid the fugitive. He had said that he would make a white man of the drunken waster of Luta. It seemed that he had succeeded. There was surely reviving manhood in the man who was taking such desperate risks!

The house-boys had finished loading the boat, and Kit strode away along the beach. He reached the spot where the beachcomber had vanished into the bush an hour ago, and paused, watching and listening.

The bush, shadowy even in the brilliant sunshine of a tropic afternoon, was silent save for the buzz of myriads of insects; savage blacks lurked in the bush, cannibals to whom a white man's head, to be smoked over a wood fire, was a great prize.

Hudson wondered whether Billy Bottle's head was still on his shoulders. Surely the man had not gone deep into the bush, but was lingering close at hand, watching for the Dawn to set sail.

He knew the dangers of the bush on Pita'ao as well as Hudson knew them, and he was unarmed. It seemed certain to the mate of the Dawn that the beachcomber was not far away—perhaps within sound of a hail.

With his rifle ready, and eyes keenly alert, Hudson entered the bush at last. He would not leave the beachcomber on Pita'ao if he could help it.

He would have shouted to the man, but he knew that a shout was likely to reach other ears. He found himself in a tangled run-way. On either side the bush was thick, thorny, almost impenetrable. Keeping his eyes well about him, Hudson trod along. Alert as he was, he did not see a crouching figure in the tangled bush, did not know that two fierce eyes gleamed at him as he passed.

Billy Bottle, crouching in cover, eyed him with eyes of hate, but he made no sound, no motion, as the mate of the Dawn passed him by. Two or three weeks on the ketch had made a great difference to the waster: braced his flabby muscles and given him strength. But he was no match for the sturdy mate of the Dawn, and he knew it. And he had no weapon.

With burning eyes, silent and crouching like a hunted beast, Billy Bottle watched Hudson disappear up the run-way.

Safe from the mate of the Dawn and recapture so long as he kept in hiding, he grinned sardonically as Hudson disappeared from his sight.

As Hudson tramped on, a rustle in the bush close at hand caught his ears. He spun round quickly. From the bush a black face and two rolling eyes glared at him.

Hudson's heart beat faster. There were black men in the bush. Likely as not they had seen the flight of the beachcomber, and were seeking him. Hudson halted and lifted his rifle as he faced the black visage glaring from the tangled thicket.

As he did so, a grasp was laid on him from behind. Before he could pull the trigger, the rifle was wrenched from his grasp and dropped to the ground.

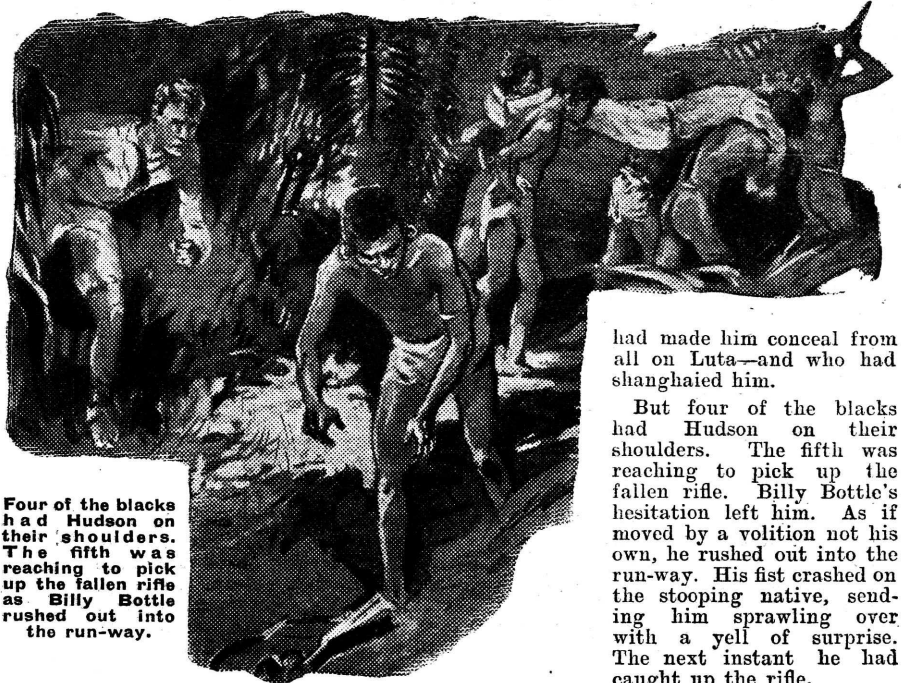
One shout left Hudson's lips as he struggled in the grasp of black, savage hands, though he knew, even as he shouted, that he was too far away for King of the Islands to hear him at the trader's bungalow. Then he was borne to the earth.

Black faces grinned round him, and there was a jabber of savage, triumphant voices, a gleam of rolling eyes on all sides.

Kit Hudson fought desperately. The silence of the bush had deceived him, and he had simply walked into the hands of the savages. There were five of the wretches, and he struggled in vain in their grasp. Too late, he saw his folly in venturing into the treacherous bush.

Fiercely he fought in the grip of the cannibals. Jabbering voices, rolling eyes, foul breath, gleaming teeth, grasping hands, in the deep shadow of the bush—it was like a scene from the Inferno!

Twice he made desperate efforts to



Four of the blacks had Hudson on their shoulders. The fifth was reaching to pick up the fallen rifle as Billy Bottle rushed out into the run-way.

grasp the rifle that lay in the run-way, but he was dragged back from its reach. The revolver had already been torn from his belt and thrown aside. And now he sprawled on the ground, his strength ebbing.

He was swung up on brawny black shoulders. Every limb was grasped, and he was helpless. They were going to carry him away to their den deep in the heart of the bush of Pita'ao.

And he knew the rest—the cooking oven, the smouldering wood fire over which his head would smoke, swinging from a branch; and there was black despair in the heart of the mate of the Dawn.

#### "I've Done It!"

UNSEEN by Hudson, unseen by the cannibals who had seized him, Billy Bottle watched the scene. His first feeling had been one of complete satisfaction. The man who struggled in the grasp of the blacks was the man who had shanghaied him, thrashed him with a lawyer-cane, driven him to work, and who had entered the bush to hunt him down and drag him back to the ketch!

With glittering eyes he watched while Hudson fought, succumbing at last to the heavy odds against him. But the beachcomber's face changed, the satisfaction died out of it as the savages swung Hudson up to their shoulders, to bear him away into the depths of the bush.

Something stirred within Billy Bottle—something that was strange and new to him. He was a white man—though till late days he had almost forgotten it—looking on at a white man being carried away to death in a cannibal orgy! He hated the man—the man who had learned his name, that a last rag of shame

had made him conceal from all on Luta—and who had shanghaied him.

But four of the blacks had Hudson on their shoulders. The fifth was reaching to pick up the fallen rifle. Billy Bottle's hesitation left him. As if moved by a volition not his own, he rushed out into the run-way. His fist crashed on the stooping native, sending him sprawling over with a yell of surprise. The next instant he had caught up the rifle.

Crack, crack! The Winchester was at his shoulder, his finger on the trigger. The range was point-blank, and even had his hand shaken, as it had shaken on Luta, he could scarcely have missed. But the beachcomber's hand was steady now.

Two of the blacks bearing Hudson reeled and fell, screaming, into the run-way. Hudson went with a crash to the earth as, with wild howls, the other two bearers turned on their unexpected foe.

The sprawling native leaped up, spear in hand. Crack! He fell, shot through the head before he had gained his feet. But the other two were springing at Billy Bottle like tigers, and he had no time to fire again. They were too close on him. He swung the rifle round, and the barrel crashed on a woolly head, sending one of his assailants stunned to the ground. A second later the other was upon him, bearing him backwards with his weight.

Kit Hudson staggered to his feet. His brain was in a whirl. For a moment he fancied that it must be King of the Islands who had come to his rescue. Then he knew, and he leaped to the aid of the beachcomber!

A crashing blow from his clenched fist struck Billy Bottle's enemy down. From the depths of the bush sounded a shrill yell. There were other foes at hand. The shots and the yelling of the savages had reached many ears!

Hudson grasped the rifle. Billy Bottle, freed of his assailant, lay panting.

"Quick!" shouted Hudson. "Back to the beach!" And he dragged Billy to his feet.

He forgot, even as Billy Bottle forgot, everything then save that they were white men, comrades in deadly peril, and that a horde of savages were swarming to their prey.

## Cannibal Island!

Side by side they raced along the run-way towards the beach.

A whizzing spear missed Hudson by an inch. Yells rang and echoed in the bush. The opening of the run-way was near. Beyond lay the open beach, the burning sunlight—and safety. Hudson halted.

"Keep on!" he panted, as he swung round and clamped the rifle to his shoulder. Behind the fugitives the run-way was thick with blacks, a score or more jabbering fiends racing in pursuit.

Crack, crack, crack! Hudson emptied the repeating-rifle into them. The rush stopped, in a pandemonium of shrieks and yells.

He turned and raced after the beachcomber, and side by side they emerged from the deadly bush. They were on the beach now, racing for the lagoon.

From the Kanakas in the boat came a shout. From the direction of the trader's bungalow came another. King of the Islands, rifle in hand, was running from the bungalow!

The beachcomber staggered over a coral rock, and fell. Hudson dragged him to his feet. From the bush behind burst a mob of yelling blacks.

Crack, crack, crack! King of the Islands was firing now, pitching his bullets into the thick of the yelling mob. Screaming like savage animals, the cannibals of Pita'ao broke under the fire of the boy trader and scurried back into the bush. Three prone figures remained in the glare of the sunlight.

"Kit!" yelled King of the Islands, as he came panting up.

"Bear a hand!" gasped Hudson.

King of the Islands grasped the arm of the beachcomber and helped him on. Whizzing spears flew from the cover of the bush, but they fell short. The skipper and mate of the Dawn, with the beachcomber staggering between them, reached the boat. Billy Bottle sank across the gunwale, exhausted, and the sinewy hand of Koko dragged him in.

"Plenty much better you stop along us feller!" grinned Koko. "Black feller make kai-kai along you, along Pita'ao!"

Billy Bottle collapsed in the bottom of the boat. King of the Islands looked over his rifle towards the bush. But there was no pursuit across the beach—the blacks kept to the bush.

"Kit!" panted the boy trader. "You were mad to go into the bush—mad as a hatter! But you've got your man!"

"I've got him!" said Hudson. There was a strange look on his face. "Or, rather, he's got me, Ken."

"What—"

"The blacks got me in the bush. Billy Bottle got hold of my rifle and saved my life," said Hudson simply.

King of the Islands stared at the sprawling man in the boat. The beachcomber, utterly spent, lay still. Ken whistled softly.

"He saved you! Kit, old man, you said you'd make a white man of him, and you've jolly well done it!"

"Yes," agreed Hudson, "I've done it!"

The whaleboat pulled for the Dawn.

### Shipmates Still.

PITA'AO sank into the Pacific astern of the Dawn. The prow of the ketch was turned for Fushima, swiftly cleaving the blue waters. It was a long run, with no sight of land till the port of call for the Sydney steamer was reached. And Billy Bottle was still on board the ketch.

During the days that followed, while the Dawn ran before the trade wind, King of the Islands glanced at the beachcomber many times with curious eyes. It was a completely changed Billy Bottle. The change in him since he had been taken away from Luta had gone deeper than he had dreamed, and it had culminated on Pita'ao.

Ken wondered sometimes what the white men on Luta would have thought could they have seen the beachcomber now—clean, orderly, alert, fit, a self-respecting white man. His bitterness towards Hudson had vanished since those wild moments in the bush. He was friends with Hudson now, and he berthed aft with the white men, was treated as a white man, and felt himself one!

When at last Fushima was raised on the horizon, the beachcomber stared with fixed eyes towards the palm-trees rising from the sea, a shadow of deep thought on his brow. He turned to King of the Islands, and grinned as he met the smiling eyes of the boy trader.

"You're putting me ashore at Fushima, Captain King?"

"Ay, ay! You're free to go your own way!" said Ken.

"I reckon my way won't be the way I went on Luta." Billy Bottle flushed. "I don't know why your mate shangaied me, but I reckon he did me a good turn. If they'll give me a chance, I'm going to work my passage on the steamer back to Sydney, and try again."

"Hudson's for Sydney, and he will see you through," said Ken.

"I'm not beginning that again, Captain King!" replied Bottle. "I'm touching no man's money! I reckon I've earned my keep on this packet, and I'm going to earn my keep to Sydney. What they had against me there will be forgotten by this time, and I've got a chance to make good. But I'm touching nothing that my hands don't earn."

"Good man!" said King of the Islands heartily. "But you've got a claim on Hudson. He might never have got on to his good luck but for you. Only that advertisement in the old papers you brought on board at Luta—"

"I know! But I'm making no claim. I'm standing on my own feet, sir. I've settled that."

Kit Hudson came on deck, and smiled as he heard the words of the beachcomber.

"You've friends in Sydney?" asked Ken.

"I reckon my old father's dead long

ago, and there's nobody else," answered the beachcomber. "But a man can make good if he puts his back into it. I'm trying, anyhow!"

The Dawn ran into the lagoon of Fushima. A dozen other craft were anchored there; but the Sydney steamer was not yet in. A few days later the steamer came in, and Kit Hudson went ashore with Billy Bottle.

King of the Islands watched them go, with a thoughtful brow. He was ready for sea again—and this time he was to sail without his mate!

It was an hour later that Hudson came back to the ketch alone. There was a smile on his face as he stepped on deck.

"Ready for sea, skipper?" he asked.

"Ay, ay!" said King of the Islands.

"It's good-bye now!"

"Not unless you want to lose your mate!" laughed Hudson. "I've left Billy Bottle on the Sydney steamer, Ken."

"They're letting him work his passage?"

"They are not!"

"Then what is he doing on the steamer?"

"Berthing as a first-class passenger."

"You've paid his passage?" asked Ken, surprised.

"No. It was easily arranged as soon as the steamer people knew who he was."

"Who he was!" repeated Ken.

"Billy Bottle, the beachcomber of Luta—"

"William Charters, son and heir of old William Charters, the shipper of Sydney!" said Hudson. "I found it out on Luta."

"I thought the fortune was mine for a few hours, Ken. Then I found out. I couldn't have touched the money, but if Billy Bottle had remained Billy Bottle, he would have had no help from me to touch it. I gave him his chance—and you know what he's made of it!"

"I've told him everything, and he's going back to Sydney to be a rich man." Hudson smiled whimsically.

"If you still want me as mate on this packet, Captain King—"

King of the Islands, his heart too full for words, grasped the hand of his old shipmate.

Later, when the Dawn sailed from Fushima, she passed within a cable's length of the Sydney steamer. Ken and Kit waved to a man who waved from the steamer—once the beachcomber of Luta, now once more a White Man!

Dinner that night aboard the Dawn was a happy meal. Danny had prepared an extra special spread in Kit Hudson's honour, and the comrades did full justice to it.

Raising his glass of lime-squash, and looking over it with sparkling eyes at Hudson, Ken toasted his shipmate:

"To the whitest man in the Pacific! The staunchest shipmate a fellow ever had!"

*(The Dawn is speeding to another adventure. Take part in it, with the South Seas chums, in a positively ripping Charles Hamilton story next week!)*