

DON'T MISS THIS FREE GIFT!

The MODERN BOY

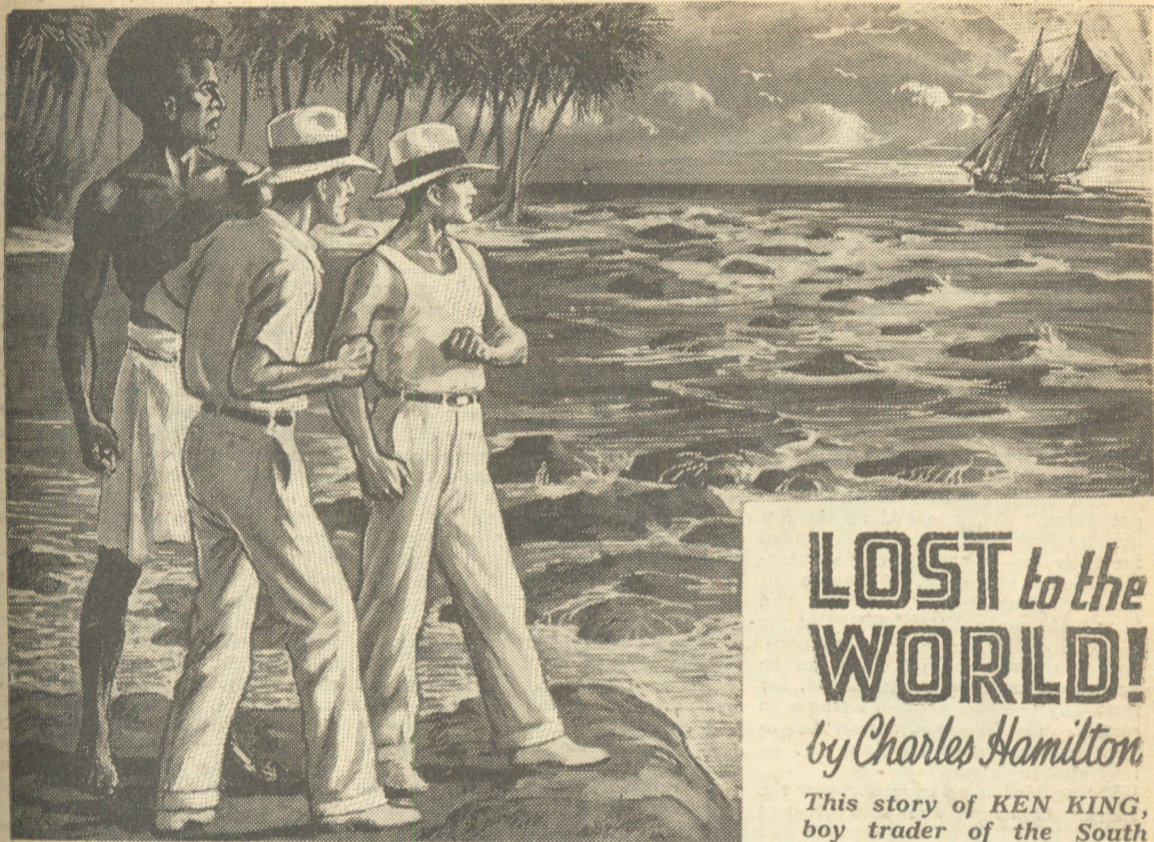
EVERY SATURDAY.
Week Ending June 24th, 1933.

No. 281.
Vol. 11.

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THE ALL-CRAZY FLYERS!—See centre pages



Jagged Reefs!

"MAROONED!" King of the Islands muttered the words between his teeth. What had happened seemed almost like an evil dream to the boy trader of the South Seas. But it was only too terribly real. He stood on the coral reef, the surf breaking at his feet, and stared across the lengthening space of water that divided him from his ship.

Behind him lay the lagoon and the palm-trees, the thick black bush that rose almost to the summit of the volcanic hill, the high lava spire of the hill-top. Before him was creaming surf and jagged coral rocks, and the open sea—and on the blue waters his ketch, the Dawn, her sails filling, standing away from the lonely island! Against the red of the sinking sun, the ketch stood out clear.

He could see Lompo at the wheel, Kolulo and Lufu and Tomoo at sheet and halyard, the fat face of Danny, the cooky-boy, staring back over the rail. He could see Dandy Peter, the sea-lawyer of Lukwe, standing by the binnacle, dapper and spotless in white ducks, a mocking grin on his handsome wicked face, a cigarette in his mouth, waving a hand in ironic salute to the boy skipper whose ship he had stolen. The figures disappeared—but still the Dawn could be seen, leaning to the wind that bore her away from Maroon Island.

Ken King seemed unable to take his eyes from the ship he had lost—his home, almost his all. Many times the boy trader had come into conflict with Peter Parsons of Lukwe—and

this time the desperate sea-lawyer had defeated him, stolen his ship and his crew, and left him marooned on as lonely a speck of land as any in the wide Pacific.

A long sigh escaped Ken. His ship was gone. It was only too likely that he would never see her again—or any white man's ship. Only by the remotest chance could any vessel touch at the island, many days' sail out of the nearest track of trade. Marooned—and lost to the world—but Ken was thinking less of his own situation than of the graceful ketch that had sailed away into the boundless blue!

He turned, at last, to his companions. Kit Hudson, the mate of the Dawn, stood silent, grim, savage. Koko, the Kanaka boatswain, had his dark eyes on his master. While King of the Islands was thinking of his ship, the faithful Koko was thinking of his white master. The deck of the Dawn or the beach of the desolate island were the same to Koko, so long as his white master was there.

"He's gone!" Hudson spoke at last. "Gone—to make a fortune—leaving us to rot here!" The Australian shook a clenched fist after the vanished ketch. "How long do you reckon, Ken, before we see a sail in the offing?"

"Weeks—months—years!" answered King of the Islands quietly. "We've got to bide on it, Kit. Dandy Peter's picked out a good spot for marooning a man whose ship he has stolen. We've no chance of being picked off—not an earthly. No ship ever touches here."

LOST to the WORLD!

by Charles Hamilton

This story of **KEN KING**, boy trader of the South Seas, marooned on the lonely island in the Pacific, knocks poor old Robinson Crusoe's experiences all sideways!

Complete

"You've seen the island before?" asked Kit.

"Once, driven a hundred miles out of my course in a typhoon. That doesn't happen often."

"Did you land?"

"No fear!" Ken smiled faintly, and waved his hand towards the lines on lines of jagged reefs that stretched out into the Pacific. "I was only too glad to be able to beat to windward of a deathtrap like this. I know no more of the island than you do. I don't suppose a foot has trodden here for twenty years—perhaps for fifty! It's called Maroon Island. It's said that pirates marooned prisoners here in the old days. Otherwise, it's never been inhabited. We've got our little world to ourselves, Kit!"

The Kanaka boatswain suddenly pointed across the reef to the lagoon. In one spot there was a sparkling and flashing of water, where a torrent leaped down the steep hill and flowed through a channel it had cut in the sandy beach into the lagoon. "Plenty good fresh water stop along this island, sar!" he said.

"Ay, ay, we shan't want for fresh water," said Ken. "I remember seeing that torrent from the sea, when I passed the island long ago."

Lost to the World!

"P'laps feller skipper come along this island, wantee water, sar!" said the Kanaka. "Me tinkee, sar, head belong me."

Ken nodded slowly. There was a remote chance that some skipper, short of water in those solitary seas, might run down to Maroon Island to fill his casks.

"Good old coffee-bean!" said Hudson. "A chance in a hundred is better than nothing, Ken. By gum! I'd be glad to see any craft raise the island—the roughest pearling crew in the Pacific, or a whaler out of Frisco. Anyhow, here we are, and here we've got to stop—and I reckon we'd better see about fixing up something for the night. We don't want to be standing on this reef when the tide turns."

"It's turning," said Ken. "Let's get going." They picked up the few articles that Dandy Peter had landed for their use—a bag of cooking utensils, some sail-cloth, a bundle of clothes, some tools, blankets and tapa mats, and a little food. But for a sheath-knife they had no weapons. But weapons were not likely to be needed on an uninhabited island, far from any possible visit of savages in canoes. The tide was already beginning to wash over the low reef as they started inland.

It was hard work tramping over the rugged coral, broken into strange shapes, with hollows and crevices and gullies, by the action of the sea. Carrying their burdens, they tramped on, with the surf booming behind them, and reached the beach of the little lagoon. Here and there the thick bush that clothed the island grew almost down to the lagoon. There was a rustle in a tangled thicket, and a pair of sharp, twinkling eyes stared out for a second; then a wild pig went racing away in the bush. Startled for the moment, they stopped and stared after it.

"Only a wild pig!" Ken exclaimed. "Bacon to-morrow!" said Hudson, who was already recovering his spirits. Even the disaster that had overtaken the boy traders could not cast a gloom over the cheery Australian for long.

"My word!" said Koko, standing still and staring in the direction the fleeing wild pig had taken. "This feller no savvy."

"What thing you no savvy, Koko?" asked King of the Islands. "You see plenty feller wild pig, plenty time, eye belong you."

"Yes, sar! Wild pig he run along bush!" said Koko. "That thing me no savvy, sar." The shipmates stared at him. The most natural proceeding for a wild pig, at the sight of humans, was to "run along bush." Yet that natural proceeding seemed to surprise Koko. Slowly Koko turned his keen glance along the beach, over the lagoon, over the bank of high bush that clothed the rising ground.

"Me no savvy!" he repeated. "You plenty sure no feller stop along this island, sar?"

"Plenty too much sure," answered Ken.

"What name feller pig he run, sar?" asked Koko.

"He run along he plenty fright," answered Ken. "What on earth have you got in your old brown noddle now, Koko? I've never seen a wild pig in the islands that did not run if anyone came near it."

"Me no savvy what name feller pig he run, sar, s'pose no feller stop along this island. What name he fright, s'pose no feller stop?"

THE shipmates stared at one another blankly. If the island was uninhabited, as utterly deserted as it looked, the wild pig could never have seen a human being. Many tales had the shipmates heard on the beaches of men who, landing for the first time on an uninhabited island, had found the animals tame, approaching them without fear. That was what the castaways might have expected on Maroon Island, if theirs were the only feet that had trodden that lonely beach. Yet the pig, at the sight or scent of them, had scuttled away in fear into the depths of the bush.

"Me no savvy!" repeated Koko.

"I'm dashed if I savvy, either, Ken!" said Hudson. "If that porker had never seen a man before—Ken, is it possible that there is someone on the island—some other maroon or castaway?"

He broke off, staring round at the silent lagoon, red in the setting sun, at the silent stretches of dark bush. Save for the eternal boom of the surf, and the crying of gulls hunting fish in the hollows of the reef, there was no sound. Silence lay heavy on the lonely island.

"Goodness knows!" said Ken, at last.

And the maroons tramped on, puzzled. Dandy Peter had picked out Maroon Island to land them, as the loneliest and least likely to be visited of all the lonely specks of land in the vast Pacific. Yet was it possible, after all, that the solitary island was inhabited—that other feet had lately trodden where now they trod?

"We're Not Alone!"

NIGHT had fallen on the tropical isle.

The dark blue dome of the sky was spangled with glittering stars. Far away to the south, the Southern Cross hung like a flaming jewel. The shipmates had lost no time before the sun dipped. They had camped where the stream from the torrent flowed into the lagoon, to have the supply of fresh water close at hand. The day had been hot, but the night, as was common in the tropics, was cold, and they were glad of the blankets they had brought ashore.

Koko had cut poles in the bush, the shipmates had gathered broad leaves of pandanus, and a flimsy shelter had been run up for the night. Within the palm-leaf hut they bedded in the soft sand, wrapped in blankets, on tapa mats. Ken and Kit were weary, and ready to stretch themselves in slumber. But Koko sat on his mat at the doorway of the hut, evidently not

intending to close his eyes. Hudson was already fast asleep. But twice Ken raised his head and looked at the boatswain in the gloom.

The boom of the surf on the coral rocks was incessant, but their ears were so accustomed to it now that it did not seem to break the silence. And all other sounds were still, save for the occasional splash of some fish in the lagoon close at hand, and every now and then a faint rustle of foliage as the wind stirred in the bush.

Koko was listening. Ken smiled faintly. The incident of the wild pig was puzzling, but it seemed to linger more in the mind of the Kanaka than in the minds of the white men. Per that there could already be anyone on the lonely island seemed, when the shipmates pondered over it, a sheer impossibility. For an hour, at least, the Dawn had been in full sight of the island that day, and a castaway, if one had been there, would surely have come running down to the reef in the hope of being taken off. As for savages, it was known that the island was not inhabited by natives—and natives, too, had they been there, would assuredly have shown up at the sight of a ship. But it was clear that Koko was not easy in his mind.

"Plenty better you sleep, Koko," said Ken.

"No wantee sleep, sar!" answered the Kanaka. "This feller tinkee plenty too much, head belong him."

"You tinkee feller stop along this island? Then what name that feller no come, along he see us feller?" asked Ken.

"Me no savvy, sar! P'laps black feller, sar?"

"No black feller stop along this island," answered Ken, shaking his head. "But keep watch if you like, old coffee-bean."

And Ken drew his blanket over him again, closed his eyes, and dropped at once into slumber.

Koko sat leaning back against a palm-pole, his eyes wide open, watching the beach that glistened in the starshine. The shipmates slept soundly, but the eyes of the Kanaka did not close. The night grew older, and still the sleepless Kanaka watched the beach. Where it was open, the starlight lay like dusky silver. But here and there coral rocks jutted up, casting black shadows. All was still and silent as the grave. But suddenly he stirred, and a quiver ran through his sinewy brown limbs. His eyes were fixed on a black shadow of a rock, at a distance of three or four fathoms—and unless his eyes had deceived him that shadow had stirred.

Koko drew a long, deep breath. The shadow of the rock could not stir—but a creeping enemy skulking in the cover of it could. With his heart beating faster, the Kanaka watched intently. The long, black shadow cast by the rock was extending—something that moved there was adding its shadow to the shadow of the rock. Something that crept and crawled without a sound—for not the slightest sound reached the straining ears of the Kanaka.

"ALL CLEAR" FOR THE FLYING SCOTSMAN!

He knew that it was a human foe—it could only be a foe, coming silently and stealthily in the night. The shadow lengthened—a creeping form was moving round the rock. Koko groped for his axe, and gripped it hard. He leaped to his feet, and at the movement the shipmates awakened.

They started up together, to see the giant figure of the Kanaka leaping out into the starlight, axe in hand. They were both on their feet in a twinkling. Ken grasped his knife—Hudson caught up a cudgel. They leaped to the doorway, staring after the Kanaka.

"Koko!" shouted Ken.

The giant boatswain stood there in the starlight, his arm uplifted, the axe glistening. But no one else was to be seen. From the bush close at hand came a faint rustle, and that was all.

"My word!" gasped Koko.

"What name?" exclaimed Ken impatiently.

Without answering, Koko stared round the rugged rock where he had seen the shadow move, and stared towards the bush. Then, slowly, he came back to the palm-leaf hut, the axe tightly gripped in his hand, his dark eyes shining with excitement.

"What you see, eye belong you, Koko?" asked the mate of the Dawn.

"Me see black feller he stop, sar!" answered Koko.

"Black feller?" exclaimed Ken.

"Me tinkee black feller, sar! He run along bush plenty too quick, no see plenty too much along that feller."

THAT there was a "black feller" on Maroon Island the shipmates did not believe for a moment. Savages on the island would have known of their presence at once, and would certainly have shown up long since. And a single black feller, alone on the island, was hardly imaginable.

"You've been dreaming, Koko," said Ken, at last.

"No dream, sar! How can, along me no sleep?" said the boatswain.

"A shadow, I suppose," said Hudson, with a yawn. "Or perhaps our friend the wild pig, looking for grub, what?"

"Me see that feller, sar, eye belong me," said Koko obstinately. "Me no see that feller plenty too much, along he run along bush too much quick, but me see that feller, sar."

"There's nobody on the island, old coffee-bean," said Hudson. "Nobody but us and the wild pigs."

"No tinkee, sar!"

"Well, I'm going back to my blankets!" Hudson laughed. "Give me a hail if he lays us aboard again."

"Me no tinkee feller stop along this island, Koko," said Ken, shaking his head. "Plenty better you sleep, along night he stop."

"This feller Koko no sleep, sar!"

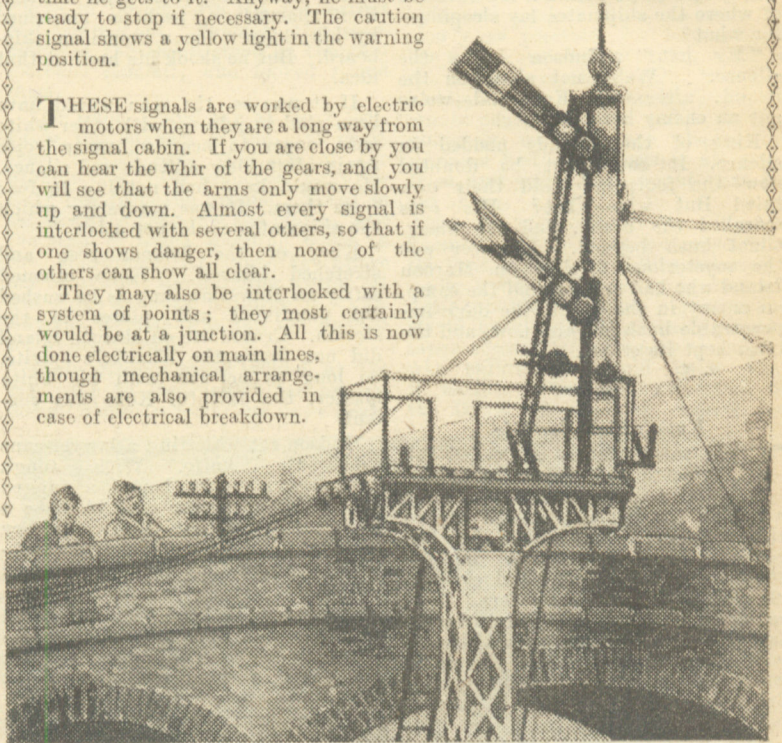
Ken laughed, and followed Hudson's example and went back to his blankets. Neither of them doubted that the uneasy Kanaka had been startled by some stirring shadow, or the rustle of a wild pig rooting in the

FELLOWS who have travelled on the London Underground railways know these new signals well. But it is only recently that they have come into use on our main trunk lines. Here you see them on the L.N.E.R., handing the "all clear" to the Flying Scotsman. Unlike the Underground signals, though, these are "two-position" only, showing "clear" in the off-position, as in the sketch, and "danger," or "stop," in the on-position.

The top arm is the home signal, painted red with white stripe; if that is on—or in the horizontal position—showing a red light, it must on no account be passed. It shows a green light in the off-position, as all signals do. The fishtailed arm is the caution signal, painted yellow with a black stripe. It is a warning only, and may be passed if it is on, as it tells the driver that the next home signal is not off yet, though it may be by the time he gets to it. Anyway, he must be ready to stop if necessary. The caution signal shows a yellow light in the warning position.

THESE signals are worked by electric motors when they are a long way from the signal cabin. If you are close by you can hear the whir of the gears, and you will see that the arms only move slowly up and down. Almost every signal is interlocked with several others, so that if one shows danger, then none of the others can show all clear.

They may also be interlocked with a system of points; they most certainly would be at a junction. All this is now done electrically on main lines, though mechanical arrangements are also provided in case of electrical breakdown.



bush. They were fast asleep again in a couple of minutes.

But there was no sleep for Koko. Axe in hand, with unwinking eyes, the Kanaka watched, till the stars paled in the dawn and the rising sun glimmered over the bush and was reflected back from the surface of the lagoon.

But if an enemy had approached in the night, he had gone, and he did not return. When the rising sunlight streamed down on the beach, the shipmates awoke, and turned out. They smiled at the sight of the watchful Koko.

"No see that feller any more, eye belong you, old coffee-bean?" asked Hudson, with a chuckle.

"No, sar!"

"That feller walk about head belong you, along you sleep," chuckled Hudson.

"Me no shut eye belong me, sar!"

Koko stepped out of the hut now that his white masters were up.

They followed him out. They were turning towards the lagoon, to begin with a dip in the shining waters. But Koko moved towards the high coral rock, in the shadow of which he believed he had seen the "black feller" in the night.

"That feller he no stop, along day he come, Koko!" said King of the Islands, with a laugh. He did not believe that there had been a "feller" at all.

"Me savvy, sar! Me tinkee findee mark belong foot, belong that feller, sar!" explained Koko. "Tinkee findee now day he come."

"Looking for the trail?" grinned Hudson. "Well, if any black feller came along in the night, he must have left traces. This soft sand would keep his tracks. Let's look, Ken!"

Ken nodded and smiled, and they followed the Kanaka past the coral rock. Beyond it, the soft sand lay glistening in the rising sun. Koko,

Lost to the World!

with a gleam of triumph in his eyes, pointed to the sand.

The shipmates stared blankly. Deeply marked in the soft sand was the trail of bare feet. Human feet had trod there, and the tracks led away up the beach, to the nearest point of the bush. Ken and Kit gazed at the footprints almost in stupefaction. The trail was unmistakable, both coming and going. Someone had crept down from the bush in the night, and lurked in the shadow of the rock, spying on the camp. The maroons were not alone on the island! And if Koko had not been on the watch, what might have happened? The unseen, unknown enemy had crept within a few fathoms of where the shipmates lay sleeping—for what?

"My hat!" Hudson broke the silence. "We're not alone on the island, after all, Ken—and—we've got an enemy here."

King of the Islands nodded in silence. It could not be doubted now—the footprints told their own tale! But who—what? His eyes searched the beach, and the black, silent bush beyond. Whoever was the mysterious dweller on Maroon Island who had crept round the camp, an enemy in the night, the dark impenetrable bush hid him now, and the bush kept its secret.

Koko's Fight for Life.

THE savoury scent of broiled fish greeted the shipmates of the Dawn as they came back from a dip in the lagoon. Koko opened the earth-oven in which he had cooked the fish, caught in the shallows of the lagoon, and grinned cheerily at his white masters. They sat down on lumps of coral to breakfast of broiled fish and ship's biscuit, with fresh water from the stream to wash it down, and the milk of young drinking-nuts gathered close at hand.

The maroons were not likely to want for food on the lonely island. The lagoon swarmed with fish, coconuts and bananas grew in wild luxuriance, and there were wild pigs in the bush. From where they sat at their meal, they could see across the lagoon and the outer reef, far across the rolling Pacific beyond. Far to the horizon stretched the limitless expanse of blue, unbroken by a sail. Gulls innumerable called and cried over the wide stretches of the reefs, and unceasingly came the boom of the surf on the hard coral.

Every now and then the eyes of the shipmates turned on the black wall of bush, and they wondered whether eyes were watching them from the dusky shades. Nothing had been seen or heard of the strange denizen of the island since day had dawned. But here and there, in the sand of the beach, traces had been picked up of old footprints—the prints of naked feet, showing that the Man of the Island had been used to coming down to the lagoon.

Who and what he could be was a

mystery. The naked footprints seemed to indicate that he was a native, and it seemed certain that a white man, a castaway, would have shown up at once as a friend and not as a foe, overjoyed to see other white men again. That, indeed, could hardly be doubted, and it drove the shipmates to the conclusion that the man was a native, black or brown. Yet it was strange that a savage should be there alone, and it seemed clear that he was alone.

A native canoe might have been driven on the lonely island in a hurricane, yet if one man had escaped alive from the wreck, why not others? As they ate, the shipmates were thinking over the curious problem, and it occurred to Ken that the Man of the Island might be some maroon, like themselves, perhaps marooned by his skipper for a crime on shipboard. But he shook his head at that idea.

If it was so, the man would have been glad to join up with other white men, eager to hear a human voice again after long solitude and silence. He would have had nothing to fear from them. It was a mystery which the shipmates could not solve.

King of the Islands rose and stretched himself. Koko crooned softly an Hawaiian song as he washed tin pannikins and plates in the stream. Crusoe life on Maroon Island did not damp the Kanaka's spirits. So long as he was with his white master, the faithful Koko was content.

Hudson sat whittling a lawyer-cane with the knife. With tough pandanus fibre he bound a jagged lump of coral to the end, to make a war-club. Now that they knew they were not alone on the island, the shipmates realised that they might need weapons.

Ken threw his head back and gazed up at the high volcanic peak that rose above the bush. That spire-like peak was visible from a vast distance at sea, from all sides of the island. Over the bush-clad hill the peak rose in a hundred feet of glistening lava. Kit Hudson glanced at him inquiringly.

"No ship ever comes near this island, except by chance, Kit," said the boy trader. "But that peak can be seen against the sky from sixty miles out, I should say."

"Likely enough," assented Hudson. "All the worse for us, Ken! It's a warning to skippers to steer clear."

"But a signal-fire on the summit!" said Ken.

"Some climb!" said the mate of the Dawn.

"We've got time on our hands here," said Ken, with a smile. "I'm reckoning on going aloft this morning, Kit, to see what can be seen from the top. And there's more than enough fuel for a fire."

"You're not going alone," Hudson said. "Our unknown friend may be hanging about in the bush, watching for a chance at one of us."

"We'll make it together, then," said Ken. "Koko's our builder, and he can get on with the hut while we're going aloft."

"This feller make plenty good hut, sar," said Koko. "Make strong feller hut, along night he come."

Ken nodded. The flimsy shelter that had been put up was useless for defence if the shipmates had to meet an attack in the dark hours, which seemed not unlikely after the strange happenings of the night. A "strong feller hut" was a necessity if they were to sleep in safety when night came again.

"Go' it, old coffee-bean," said Hudson, "and keep one eye open for squalls."

Koko swung his axe, and grinned. "S'pose that feller he come along this place, along day, me see um, eye belong me," he said. "Me cut off head belong that feller, along axe belong me, all samee Solomon Island feller."

Koko was already at work when the shipmates started from the beach. His devotion to his master overcame the laziness that was natural to a Kanaka. Any other of the crew of the Dawn would have laid down idly in the sand, once the white men were out of sight. Not so Koko, who prided himself on being no common Kanaka. His axe was swinging actively, cutting palm poles to build the walls of a hut, as the shipmates tramped away towards the bush, and the ringing of the axe followed them long after they were out of sight.

To reach the lava peak was, as Hudson had said, "some" climb. On an inhabited island there would have been runways in the bush; but on Maroon Island the bush grew thick and close and tangled, sharp with thorns, sickening with the smell of rotting vegetation. It was yet early, but the sun was high, and already the heat was intense. Here and there were open spaces, where old ridges of lava lay, but for the most part the shipmates had to push aside bush and bramble to advance.

Once in the bush they lost sight of beach and lagoon and ocean and sky. A dusky twilight reigned, though the sun was burning with a fierce glare. Few white men could have kept a sense of direction in the tangled wilderness. But Hudson was used to the bush in his native Australia, and Ken had a sailor's sixth sense in such matters. And the upward slope of the ground was some guide.

Hudson fanned himself with his hat. They had been struggling for more than an hour in the bush, and a rest was welcome. Faintly from the distance came the hollow boom of the surf. There was no other sound save the buzzing of innumerable insects, and every now and then the scream of a cockatoo. But as the shipmates stood at rest, a sudden rustling came to their ears from the jungle. There was a crackling and brushing that told of hurried flight, and it was approaching them.

Instinctively they gripped the loaded lawyer-canes, and stared round, the thought of the mysterious denizen of the island in their minds. But it was a wild pig that suddenly burst into view, appearing from the bush and vanishing into it again.

The animal was plainly in flight, and it could have only one pursuer—the mysterious Man of the Island. King of the Islands and his mate stood with tense nerves, watching for him to appear on the track of the fleeing animal. The continued rustling told that he was not far away, and they had no doubt that in a few moments more their eyes would fall on him.

But the rustling suddenly ceased. Ken's eyes met Hudson's. "He's spotted us!" muttered the mate of the Dawn. Ken nodded.

They watched the bush in the direction where the rustling had ceased. But all was still and silent. Wary as the wild animal he had been hunting the Man of the Island had discovered their presence, and was keeping in cover. It gave them an eerie feeling to know that his eyes were watching them from the tangled bush. But there was no sound.

"Give him a hail!" said Hudson at last. "White man or black, we're not his enemies, if he could understand it."

"Aho!" King of the Islands shouted. "Aho! You feller stop along bush, you hear me sing out, ear belong you? You show a leg, you feller! This feller plenty good feller along you." The echoing of his shout died away, and dead silence followed. They waited, but the stillness was unbroken.

"Let's get on," said Hudson at last. "But keep your weather-eye open. If it's some black cannibal, a knife in the back would be no joke."

THE shipmates tramped on again, their eyes keenly on the alert. If the unseen man was some savage, who did not understand even the *beche-de-mer*, the common language of the South Seas, it was likely enough that a whizzing knife or stone might fly from the thickets. And surely the Man of the Island must be a black savage, for there was no imaginable reason why a white man should keep out of sight so warily.

But there was no attack, though every now and then a faint rustle in the bush behind them told that the unseen man was following. From moment to moment they stopped and faced round, but immediately the pursuing rustle ceased. It was heard again when they resumed their way. Hudson gritted his teeth. "This is getting on my nerves, Ken! What about hunting him in the bush and making the swab show up?"

"No chance," answered Ken. "Might as well hunt a needle in a haystack." Hudson grunted, but he knew that his shipmate was right. Tracking the unseen man in the tangled bush was a hopeless task. He had only to stand still, and they might have passed within a yard of him, unseeing.

But they were getting on the higher ground now, where the old streams of lava from the volcano lay thicker and wider, and the bush consequently thinned. And as the cover thinned, the pursuing rustle was heard no more. Evidently the Man of the

Island did not intend to emerge into the open. The pursuit had ceased, and the shipmates breathed more freely as they pursued their way.

They emerged from the bush at last into the open, a blaze of brilliant sunshine after the dusk of close vegetation. Before them lay the steep ascent to the lava peak, the ancient crater of the volcano. But for a few shrubs, and a straggle of low bushes, it was clear of vegetation. The lava was dazzling to the eye, and hot to the touch.

Aching with heat, streaming with perspiration, they clambered doggedly on, till they stood on the summit, lava crunching under their feet. The old crater was blocked with solid lava, and here and there shrubs grew, where in far-off days the fire-torrent had poured out. Panting, the shipmates of the Dawn stood on the sun-scorched summit, and looked round them.

The whole island lay at their feet. From the summit of the lava peak, they looked over the top of the highest bush, over branches that grew sixty feet from the ground. Small in the distance they saw the lagoon, and the strip of beach, dazzling white in the sunshine. An ant-like figure moved against the dazzling white. It was Koko at work building the hut. But the Kanaka was far too distant for recognition.

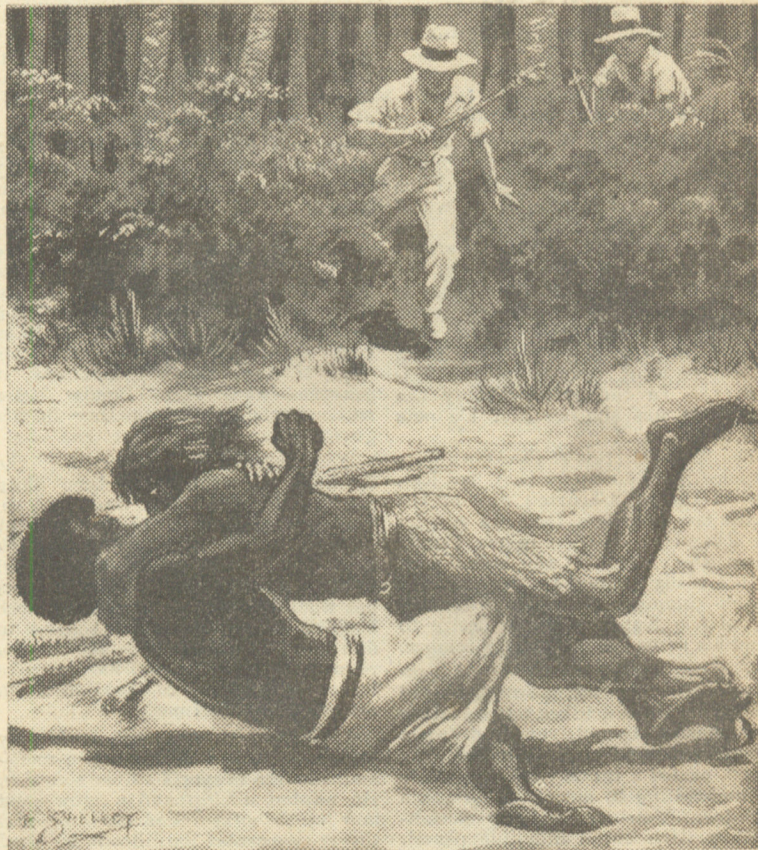
Their glances swept round at the sea, open to their sight for an immense distance from the lava peak.

But only the rolling blue met their gaze—no sign of a sail, no trace of a steamer's smoke. They might have fancied that the island was the only land in the globe, and all the rest unending water.

IT was close on noon now—the climb had taken hours. The blaze of the sun on the hot lava was almost unendurable. But the shipmates had a task to perform, and after that long scanning of the encircling waters they set about it. Wood, dry as tinder in the hot sun, was gathered from the sparse growths in the crannies and gullies of the lava, and piled on the highest point. In spite of heat and fatigue, they laboured hard and steadily, and the pile grew.

It was packed close, to burn as slowly as possible, for to replenish the fire meant another weary climb to the summit of the peak. But Ken had made up his mind to make the climb once a day to keep the fire going—it was the one chance the maroons had of attracting attention from any vessel that might pass far out at sea.

Ken set a match to the pile, the flames licked up, they retreated from the heat, and a long rolling column of smoke went floating away against the brilliant blue. That signal-smoke would be visible at an immense distance across the sea, and any skipper who sighted it would know what it meant. Then the shipmates of the Dawn left the lava summit and



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plunged once more into the dimness of the bush.

The downward way was easier and swifter. Through the dim heat of the bush they tramped, with wary eyes and ears for the Man of the Island. But they saw and heard nothing of him. At last their ears were gladdened by a sound from far ahead—the ringing of Koko's axe. The Kanaka was still at work cutting poles, regardless of the heat of the tropic day.

For several minutes as they threaded their way onward and downward they heard the strokes of the axe. Then the sound ceased. No doubt Koko was carrying the poles he had cut down to the site of the building. They tramped on, listening for another sound from the Kanaka. When it came, suddenly, it was startling. From the direction of the beach, now close at hand, came a sudden startled yell in the voice of Koko. It was followed by a fierce howl as of some savage man or beast.

"My sainted Sam!" panted King of the Islands. "Koko—look alive, Kit!" He raced on through the bush, reckless of tangled branches and piercing thorns. Hudson raced at his heels. Both knew what it meant—the Man of the Island! Again that fierce howl, which seemed as if it could come from no human throat, rang from the beach, and as they tore desperately on they heard fierce panting and struggling, and they knew that Koko, in the grasp of the wild denizen of Maroon Island, was fighting for his life.

The Message in the Bottle.

"HONOLULU to Sydney—plenty of room to look!" Dandy Peter of Lukwe snarled the words aloud, and Kolulo, at the wheel of the stolen ketch Dawn, started and eyed him uneasily. Peter Parsons did not glance at the steersman, but sat in Ken's Madeira chair aft, his brows knitted over glinting eyes, scowling. Tomoo and Lufu and Lompo, on deck, stood ready to jump to orders at a word from the sea-lawyer. In the galley Danny the cooky-boy was singing over his pots and pans.

The Hiva-Oa crew of the Dawn were attached to the skipper they had lost, but in the light-hearted way of the South Sea Islanders they did not let the loss weigh on their minds. Dandy Peter was captain of the Dawn now, with a ready fist and revolver to back up his command, and the chief feeling of the Kanakas was a desire to avoid his fierce eye and savage temper.

Why the Dandy of Lukwe was looking morose now the brown boys did not know. He had taken out a leather case, opened it, and from it drawn a sheet of paper, which he unfolded. On it was pasted a thinner sheet, to keep it from falling to pieces. This was a leaf torn from an ordinary pocket-book, written on in indelible pencil, but partly illegible from the action of the sea. Evidently it had been in the

That scrap of paper was worth a fortune to Dandy Peter. Two words on it, though smudged by water that had long since dried, stood out plain and clear: a signature—and the signature was "Grant Blake." It was a name that was good for tens of thousands of pounds in the city of Sydney—the name of a millionaire, whose trading business had extended over the wide Pacific, from Honolulu to the Solomons and the Fijies.

His ships sailed every sea, his traders were posted on a hundred islands, wealth poured into his coffers from a hundred sources. And a year ago he had vanished from all knowledge, when the steamer Mindanao went down in a typhoon on a voyage from Honolulu to Sydney.

Dandy Peter had laughed when he heard of the reward of £5,000 offered by the firm at Sydney for news of the lost millionaire. No more than any other South Sea skipper did he believe that there had been any survivor from the Mindanao. But now he believed it—for he knew!

He knew—under the hand of Grant Blake himself—the hand that had traced those half-obliterated words on a sheet torn from a pocket-book and consigned it in a bottle to the sea! Dandy Peter had been at the lowest turn of Fortune's wheel when that strange stroke of luck came his way. His native boys had run away with his cutter and piled it on a reef. He was at Lukwe almost in tatters, cadging drinks from the rough traders there, ready for any desperate deed to retrieve his fortunes. And the lapping tide in the lagoon had cast that floating bottle almost at his feet!

He had cracked the bottle on a chunk of coral, and a damp paper lay in his hand—and the name that was signed to it had electrified him. Grant Blake! But he shrugged his shoulders the next moment—ten to one it was a hoax. With little belief in its genuineness, he showed the signature to two or three men on Lukwe who had had dealings with Grant Blake and knew his "fist." And they pronounced it genuine—and then Dandy Peter realised what a fortune lay in his grasp.

Had he still had his cutter, the Sea-Cat, all would have been plain sailing. But his cutter was piled up, his crew gone—and he was almost without a bean. Plenty of the rough crew on Lukwe would have joined in such an adventure—but that was not what he wanted. Already at the back of his mind was the scheme to find the lost millionaire—not for the reward, large as it was, but to make terms with him—to hold him to ransom for a fortune!

A man worth millions would pay high to be taken off a desolate reef—and the sea-lawyer had no scruples. He wanted a ship and a crew—and now by a mixture of cunning and sheer desperate hardihood he had them. And had at the same time paid off his old bitter grudge against King of the Islands. Now to find

the reef where the millionaire watched for a sail—not an easy task, for many of the words in the message from the sea were obliterated by the water that had soaked into the bottle, and the thing was by no means clear.

THE men on Lukwe had talked—he had left the beach buzzing with rumours of what he knew. There were plenty of men on Lukwe who would have stopped at little to get a sight of that paper—among them Barney Hall, the trader of Tonga, whose lugger had been in the lagoon at the time. Barney Hall, he knew, was aware that he was on the Dawn, and was hunting him—it was only a couple of days since he had dropped the Tonga lugger astern. Likely enough, he might fall in with the lugger again on his course back from Maroon Island. He cared little—there was no man in the Pacific whom the iron-nerved sea-lawyer feared.

With knitted brows, Peter Parsons scanned the half-illegible scrawl on the paper as he had scanned it a hundred times already. There were many blanks that he had to fill in by guesswork. But sooner or later he would get it clear. He scowled savagely as he scanned it, and the Kanakas eyed him with uneasy glances.

"Feller sail he stop!" came from Kolulo.

Dandy Peter muttered an imprecation. Sailing a stolen ship, driving a stolen crew, any sail on the sea spelled danger to the reckless adventurer who was risking the fate of a pirate. He thrust the paper back into the case, the case into his pocket, and leaped to his feet.

Kolulo pointed. A lug-sail glanced on the sea, almost directly in the course of the ketch. Dandy Peter stared at it long and hard, and recognition came into his eyes.

"Barney Hall, by thunder!"

It was Barney Hall's lugger, beating to the north-east. The sea-lawyer watched it. The Tonga trader was still hunting the ketch. He knew that Dandy Peter was on board, but he did not know what had happened to King of the Islands and his mate. And it did not suit Dandy Peter to let him know. He did not want the news to spread on all the beaches in the Pacific that he was sailing a stolen ship.

He snarled an order to the crew, and the ketch was put before the wind. He gritted his teeth as he saw the lugger come about in pursuit. But he laughed the next moment—the Dawn could sail two fathoms to the lugger's one. Standing at the taffrail, he waved a mocking hand at the lugger.

From under the brown, patched lug-sail a stream of white smoke spurted. The bullet came before the report, faint in the distance, rolled on the sea. By good marksmanship or luck it came close, and Dandy Peter felt the wind of the bullet before he knew that Barney Hall had fired. It hummed by, grazing his

check, and he started back, stumbled, and fell on the deck.

There was a sudden cackle from the Kanaka crew. Tomoo and Lufu and Lompo made a forward movement—Kolulo left the wheel—Danny slid out of his galley. Had that bullet struck the sea-lawyer, as the Kanakas for the moment believed, Dandy Peter would have had short shrift!

But in a moment he was leaping up—and the Kanakas stopped dead in almost ludicrous surprise and terror as he gained his feet and grasped the revolver from his belt. Kolulo jumped back to the wheel—Danny vanished into his galley—Lompo and Lufu and Tomoo backed away in fear. The sea-lawyer's eyes blazed at them.

"You scum!" he snarled. "You tinkee this feller plenty kill along gun—you tinkee throw this feller white master along shark, along sea! You wantee this feller knock seven bells outer you, my word!"

With his clubbed revolver he rushed at the Kanakas. There were wild howls of terror as they dodged the savage blows. When Dandy Peter went back to the taffrail there was a rifle in his hands and a murderous light in his eyes as he glared back at the lugger. But already the Dawn was walking away from her pursuer and the lug-sail sinking into the Pacific.

The Smoke Signal.

"KOKO!" panted King of the Islands. Breathless, panting, scratched by unheeded thorns, the boy trader burst from the bush, with Hudson at his heels.

Blinded for a moment by the sudden change from the dusk of the bush to the brilliant sunlight on the beach, King of the Islands stared round him. Only that one cry had come from Koko—one yell of mingled rage and terror. He was fighting for his life, and he needed all his breath for the desperate fight.

A startling scene burst on the eyes of the boy trader. Two figures, locked in a death-grapple, rolled on the beach, kicking up clouds of sand and powdered coral as they struggled. In that fight it was not easy to distinguish one from the other—but Ken glimpsed a strange wild figure grappling with the Kanaka—a figure of terrible aspect. So wild and shaggy was it that he might almost have supposed that it was a gorilla, had it been possible to imagine a gorilla on the island.

But it was a man—though whether white or brown or black could hardly be said. It was a man of herculean strength, that was clear, for although of lesser stature than the giant Kanaka, he was getting the upper hand in the struggle. Koko, a giant of strength, was fighting his hardest, eyes gleaming and teeth shut hard, but he was barely holding his own.

Near by lay scattered palm poles, which the Kanaka had dropped when he was attacked. With watchful cunning, the wild man of the island had waited till the Kanaka laid down his axe, and started carrying the cut

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poles down to the site of the hut. Then he made the attack with tiger-like suddenness when Koko had no weapon in his hand, and was cumbered with his burden.

But for the fact that the skipper and mate of the Dawn were returning from the hill, and were close at hand, it might have gone hard with Koko, powerful as he was. It was amazing to see the gigantic Kanaka, whose strength was enormous, struggling in vain in the grasp of any man. There was something terrifying in the strength of the wild man of Maroon Island.

Ken raced to the spot, his loaded stick uplifted. But he did not strike. The two desperate combatants, laced together, rolled over and over, and it was impossible to strike without as much risk to Koko as to his assailant. King of the Islands dropped the lawyer-cane and flung himself on the Man of the Island, grasping at him fiercely.

His arms locked round a muscular bull-neck, and he dragged with all his force. But he could not drag the wild man loose from Koko, and the three rolled over together in the spurting sand.

"Kit!" panted the boy trader.

But Hudson did not need the call. He was only a moment or two behind his shipmate. He hurled himself into the fray, grasping the enemy and dragging at him. A yell burst from the Man of the Island—a yell as fierce and savage as the war-yell of any savage in the Solomons. Terrible

as his strength was, he had no chance against the three, and Ken and Kit together dragged him headlong off the almost exhausted boatswain.

"My word!" gasped Koko, as he sprawled in the sand, panting for breath. "My word! That feller plenty strong feller too much!"

There was another fierce yell from the wild man as he struggled furiously in the grasp of the shipmates. Strong and sturdy as they were, he dragged them to and fro as they clung to him, like a powerful stag with the hounds hanging to him. Koko staggered to his feet to go to their aid. The wild man was seeking to escape now, struggling fiercely to get away to the bush.

"Hold him!" panted Ken.

But it was not easy to hold the wild man. With herculean strength he tore himself loose, and leaped away from the panting shipmates. They reeled breathless, and the wild man sprang, with the activity of a wild animal, to a distance of a dozen feet, and stood glaring back at them.

For the first time they had a clear view of him, and his aspect might have struck a chill to the stoutest heart. He was six feet in height, but the wild, tangled shock of hair on his head made him look taller. His face, as brown as a native's—if it was a white man's—was half covered with a rough and shaggy beard, which grew down to his bare, brown chest. His only clothing was a kilt of plaited pandanus fibre, belted round his waist. If he was a white man, he

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was burned so brown by the sun that he was as dark as any native of the Islands.

His eyes rolled and glittered with the savage fierceness of a wild beast's. For a moment he stood there, a hideous and terrifying figure in the brilliance of the tropical sun. Then, as the shipmates made a movement towards him again, he turned and ran for the bush.

King of the Islands dashed in pursuit.

"After him, Kit!"

Who the man was, what he was, the shipmates could not begin to guess. But, for their safety's sake, they had to secure him if they could. They rushed up the beach after the fleeing islander, and Koko, gurgling for breath, rushed after them.

The wild man ran with almost incredible speed. Fast as they were, they dropped behind by yards as he fled like a hunted deer. He was far ahead of them when he reached the bush and plunged into its dusky shades. The crashing and rustling in the bush told that he was still fleeing at frantic speed after he had vanished.

They halted on the edge of the bush, panting, listening to the crashing and rustling that died away in the distance.

"My word!" breathed Koko, rubbing his aching arms. "That feller plenty strong feller too much! S'pose white master no comey along this place, me tinkee that feller plenty kill this Kanaka, my word."

"If that swab Parsons had left us a gun—" muttered Hudson.

"We've got to stick together after this!" said King of the Islands, with a deep breath. "Some savage wrecked from a canoe. Savage as a wild beast; crazed by solitude, perhaps—goodness knows! We've got to keep our weather-eye open after this, Kit!"

"You bet!" said Hudson.

The bush was silent now. The wild man was gone. In the long, hot hours that followed the shipmates worked hard, helping Koko build the hut for defence when the night came. Nothing more was seen of the wild man of the island; but they had an uneasy feeling that fierce eyes might be watching them from the shadows of the bush.

WHILE they laboured through the hot hours, planting strong palm poles and binding them together with fibre, the smoke from the fire on the summit of the peak rolled thick and black against the sky over the hill. It could be seen for many miles across the ocean, and from the bottom of their hearts the maroons hoped that there might be eyes to see it. It was late in the afternoon when Koko, glancing up at the summit over the high bush, ejaculated suddenly:

"Feller smoke no stop!"

Ken and Kit stared up at the peak. When they had last glanced up a black volume of smoke had been rolling against the sky. Now only a few light wisps floated away on the blue. The fire had been banked up with ample fuel to last a long day, but it was burning no longer. The

signal-smoke, on which the only hope of rescue from the lone isle depended, was blotted out.

"That swab of a nigger has put out the fire!" muttered Hudson, between his teeth.

It was clear that the wild man of the island had extinguished the signal-fire—whether with a purpose, or in mere senseless fury, could not be told. King of the Islands drew a deep breath.

"We've got to get him, Kit," he said. "We've got to get him—or he will get us!"

The sun was sinking to the Pacific. The hut was finished before the light was gone—strong walls of poles firmly planted, with a roof of poles strongly bound in place with wiry fibre, and a door of palmwood, with stout bars to secure it. And when the brief, tropical twilight was over, and darkness descended, the maroons were glad to camp inside that safe defence. In the hours of darkness, more than once they awoke to hear a brushing sound outside, and they knew that the wild man of the island was prowling round them in the night. But the walls were strong, and the wild man prowled in vain!

It's a real tip-top thriller, next week's story of the adventures of Ken and his comrades on this exciting island! Avid DONT FORGET to order next Saturday's MODERN BOY—to-day—because another magnificent series of CAPTAIN JUSTICE starts in that issue!!!

How to Sort Out Your Penny Reds

By DOUGLAS ARMSTRONG

who will answer, free, any Stamp Queries sent to the Editor. A stamped, addressed envelope should be enclosed for reply by Post

THE early British stamps were christened "Queen's Head" when they first made their appearance about ninety-three years ago, and so they continued to be known so long as they bore the likeness of Queen Victoria. The original penny stamp was printed in black, but as this prevented the postmark, also in black, from showing up distinctly, the colour was changed to red. During the forty years or so that the Penny Red was in circulation, it passed through many stages, so that when you are confronted with a mixed lot of Red Pennies, you may be at a loss to sort them into their several varieties.

AT first the red stamp was printed from the same plates that had served for its black forerunner, and like it had what are known as "check letters" in the bottom corners only, with Maltese crosses in the top ones. Commencing with the combination A—A, these check letters ran in sequence across and down a sheet, which consisted of 240 stamps in all, the last stamp in the twentieth row being lettered T—L.

By means of this alphabet the exact position occupied by each stamp on the post office sheet can be determined. Up

to 1854 all British stamps had to be cut apart with scissors, but in that year a perforating machine, invented by an Irishman named Henry Archer, was brought into use, punching first of all 16 and afterwards 14 holes to the inch. The original Penny Reds can therefore be collected both with and without perforation. Two types of watermark are also to be found in the later perforated stamps, distinguished by a small and a large crown. Again, these stamps exist on bluish-tinted as well as pure white paper.

From 1858 onwards a double set of check letters was employed, occupying the top as well as the bottom corners, the object being to prevent the joining together of two uncancelled halves with intent to cheat the Post Office. At the same time, the number of the actual plate from which the stamps were printed was added in the fancy border that runs down either side of the Queen's head. These numbers run from 71 to 225 (with certain exceptions), and a complete set of them is worth several pounds. Stamps from plate 77 are very rare, only six or seven being known, whilst the next best is Plate 225, valued at about a pound. There are many other varieties of Penny Reds, but these are only of importance to more advanced collectors.



Left.—The original 1d. red stamp of 1841 with Maltese crosses in the upper corners, no plate numbers or perforations. From 1854 onwards this type is also found perforated.

Right.—Second type of the 1d. red stamp introduced in 1858. Check letters now appear in all four corners and plate number at sides. These lasted until 1879 and are always perforated.

