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By CHARLES
HAMILTON

The PEARLS of JAM!

To KING OF THE ISLANDS, boy trader in the Tropic Seas, come many surprises and adventures—including fat Mr. Jam and his amazing pearls—and Billy the Beachcomber, who comes out of the Sea!

Koko Goes Wild!

KIT HUDSON came up from his watch below, yawning and rubbing his eyes. Like the rest of the crew of the ketch Dawn, the Australian mate, tough as he was, had been tired out by a long night of danger and stress. King of the Islands, the boy skipper, was seated in a Madeira chair by the taffrail. Kolulo was at the wheel. Koko's giant frame was stretched out on a tapa mat, but the Kanaka boatswain was not sleeping.

As Hudson came on deck, Koko picked himself up and relieved Kolulo at the wheel, and Kolulo rolled himself on a mat and promptly snored. The Pacific, so often false to its name, was now calm and smiling. The peaks of Orohena on Tahiti, that seemed so near, were still far, but the whole island was clearly seen now in the blaze of sunshine. Buildings ashore could be picked out, and many a gliding lugger and pearling schooner and trading ketch and innumerable canoes.

Papeete, the capital of Tahiti, is a very modern and civilised town, and might indeed be a town from the French Riviera, transported by a magician's wand to the remote recesses of the Pacific.

"How's our jolly old passenger, Ken?" yawned Hudson, after a long look at the glowing island-jewel that blazed from the blue sea and sky.

"I reckon he's O.K.," said Ken, with a smile. "He's had a sleep, and Danny's fed him, and he's all right except for the lump on his figure-head. I'm sorry for that—but it couldn't be helped."

"No likee that feller," murmured Koko. "That feller no likee white master knock along head belong him. That feller tinkee plenty too much along knock along head belong him."

"Better for him than going down to Davy Jones," Ken laughed. "But he mayn't understand how necessary it was, and it was a bit of a knock,



"Get out of my sight, you rascal!" exclaimed the boy trader, and Kit Hudson swung the fat man round and planted a boot on his trousers.

too! Couldn't be helped! He had to have it, or we should both have been gone, Kit. It was a pretty close thing, as it was. But I can't say I like the man any more than Koko does. I've had a talk to him about the lugger—and he's told me that it came up from Rimitara."

"That's a long way south-west of Tahiti," said Hudson. "And it was a long way to the east we picked him up."

"Exactly. Looked to me as if it came up Nengo-nego way," said King of the Islands. "Of course, it may have been blown far out of its course in the storm last night, but—" He shook his head. "The man is lying, for some reason. He doesn't want to tell us where he came from. Why, I can't imagine."

"Perhaps he's found a pearl lagoon, and wants to keep it dark," said the mate of the Dawn, with a laugh.

"Not likely! He's no sailor, or pearler, either. He looks like what he says he is—a merchant. Well, it's no business of ours. We shall be shut of him at Papeete. If the French authorities want to know anything about him, I dare say they can find out. But he says that he's known as a pearl trader at Papeete, and he's going there to sell pearls. I fancy that much is true. Hallo, here he comes!"

The fat, olive-skinned man whom the chums had fished out of the sea emerged from the companion and appeared on deck. He looked much

better for his long sleep and a meal. His clothes were dried, and Danny had ironed them in the galley, and he looked very trim and neat, with fresh pipe-clayed shoes on his large, flat feet. Ken had provided him with a hat, his own having been lost in the sea.

He glanced round, fixed his eyes on the shipmates, and made them a polite bow, raising the hat as he did so, his fat circumference almost touching his podgy knees as he bowed.

Then he waddled towards them, showing a set of white teeth in an amiable grin. If, as Koko believed and the shipmates suspected, he retained a feeling of revenge for the blow Ken had struck him to quieten him when they were wrestling in the sea, he showed no sign of it now. Fat good temper and good humour seemed to exude all over him. Ken signed to a Kanaka to bring a Madeira chair for him, and the fat man sank into it with a weight that made it creak loudly.

"There is a large thankfulness, estimable captain," said Mr. Jam, in his extraordinary English. "Grateful appreciation of this Mr. Jam is unlimited. You, sir, go to Tahiti fer trade?"

"That's so," assented Ken. "We're taking on a cargo of trade goods at Papeete, Mr. Jam."

"All persons in extensive South Seas have heard of King of the Islands," said Mr. Jam. "It is great honour to sail with him, more

The Pearls of Jam!

especially as he save a life, which otherwise is total loss in irreparable disaster. You shall see pearls before they are seen by buyers at Papeete!"

Mr. Jam unfastened his tapa bag. Evidently it had occurred to him to do a spot of trade while he was on board the ketch.

"You buy pearls, yess?" he asked. "Well, yes," assented King of the Islands. "But—"

"I make a cheap price, sir," said Mr. Jam. "In grateful acknowledgment of services rendered, the price to you will be cheaper than I make him to buyers at Papeete. You shall see!"

HE opened the bag and shot a stream of pearls out into the palm of a fat olive hand. The shipmates started as they stared at the glistening stream shining in the sun. More than twenty pearls lay in the fat olive palm, every one of them shapely and of good size. Hudson caught his breath. It was a glistening fortune!

"Suffering cats!" ejaculated the mate of the Dawn. "You've been doing a good trade, Mr. Jam!"

"All over Pacific this Mr. Jam is known as buyer of pearls," said the fat man. "Here and there and in all places I buy them. Always I give a just price. For this reason they call me Honest Mr. Jam! If you will buy, you will say what price you will give."

Ken smiled and shook his head. Of

all the pearls that lay in the olive palm, not one looked as if it would have been priced under thirty pounds, and most of them looked more valuable than that. Hudson picked out a large, round pearl. He seemed fascinated by the rich glow of it.

"You like him?" asked Mr. Jam. "At Papeete, I sell that pearl for ten thousand francs. But to you, who save a life, I say what do you give?"

"My hat! It's a splendid specimen!" said Hudson. "You'd get a hundred pounds for that pearl anywhere!"

"You shall give me fifty!" said Mr. Jam.

"Good trade!" grinned Hudson. "I tell you I could sell this pearl, as soon as we land in Papeete, for a hundred pounds—and the johnny who bought it would sell it in Sydney for twice as much, very likely."

"It is yours, sir!" said Mr. Jam. "No fear!" Hudson laughed, and dropped the pearl back among the others. "We're out for trade, Mr. Jam, but we're not robbing you."

"But I beg you!" said the pearl-trader earnestly. "Also, on Rimitara, I give only thousand francs for that pearl, which is perhaps twelve pounds in English. The nigger know not his value. You shall buy him for fifty of your pounds, and there is for me extensive profit, and for you, also, who save a life."

Both the shipmates refused that generous offer. But Mr. Jam persisted, with almost tearful earnestness. He seemed to desire to show his gratitude by helping the boy traders to a profitable stroke of trade, and if it was true that he had paid only a thousand francs for the pearl, certainly his own profit was safe. It was probable enough, for Ken had known a pearl worth hundreds to be bought from some ignorant black man for a dozen sticks of tobacco.

Mr. Jam was so earnest that at last the shipmates consented to the trade. The fat man swept the rest of the pearls back into the bag with a careless hand, which was surprising enough considering their value. The big round pearl was placed in Ken's hand—and both the shipmates looked at it in great admiration.

They were not experts in pearls, but they had dealt in them often enough among the islanders, and neither doubted that it was worth at least a hundred pounds.

"Koko!" called out Ken. "Yes, sar!" answered Koko, who had been watching the transaction with a doubtful eye. The fat trader's generous dealing had quite banished the shipmates' doubts of him, but Koko did not easily change an opinion once formed. "No likee" still expressed his feelings towards the fat man from India's coral strand.

"Give Lompo the wheel, and go down and fetch the cash-box," said Ken. The faithful Koko was trusted with the cash-box and everything else on board the Dawn. Ken felt for his keys.

Koko gave the wheel to Lompo, who was staring at the big pearl in Ken's palm with distended eyes. But the boatswain of the Dawn did not im-

mediately go below. He approached his white master, and asked:

"White master buy feller pearl belong that feller, sar?"

"Yes, Koko—look at it." Ken, with a smile, held up the glistening object for inspection. "You tinkee plenty good feller pearl, old coffee-bean?"

"Him look plenty good feller pearl, sar," said Koko. "You givum that feller pearl along hand belong me, sar!"

Ken handed him the pearl. Koko held it between a brown finger and thumb, scanning it keenly and closely. The shipmates exchanged a grin. Evidently the suspicious Koko had an idea that the fat trader was taking some advantage of his white masters. Closely and keenly Koko scanned it, and then he lifted it to his mouth.

His lips parted, revealing the most magnificent set of gleaming white teeth in the South Sea Islands. Holding the pearl between finger and thumb, Koko rubbed it gently to and fro on his teeth.

The shipmates were watching him—but their attention was drawn to Mr. Jam. That fat and honest man was also watching Koko—and he half-rose from his chair, his black eyes scintillating, his thick lips drawn back in a snarl. Fear and rage were depicted in the olive face of the pearl-trader, momentarily off his guard.

Koko's dark eyes gleamed at him. With a careless hand, he tossed the pearl on the deck.

"You plenty bad feller!" exclaimed Koko. "You makee trade along white master belong me, along bad pearl he no good! My word! Lawyer-cane stop along back belong you, you altogether bad feller!"

Before either of the shipmates could raise a hand to stop him, Koko grasped the fat trader by the neck with one hand, and with the other grabbed up the lawyer-cane that was often used on Danny, the cooky-boy, when that unreliable native could not keep his hands from picking and stealing.

There was a terrified yell from Mr. Jam as the giant Kanaka hooked him out of the chair. The lawyer-cane flashed in the sun as Koko laid it across the fat back with fearful swipes.

"Koko!" yelled King of the Islands. "You mad swab, belay it!" roared Hudson.

There was a cackle of excitement from the Hiva-Oa crew. Koko, for once, was deaf to the commands of his white masters as he held the struggling trader in a grip of iron, and rained lashes on his back. Every lash of the stout lawyer-cane rang like a pistol-shot.

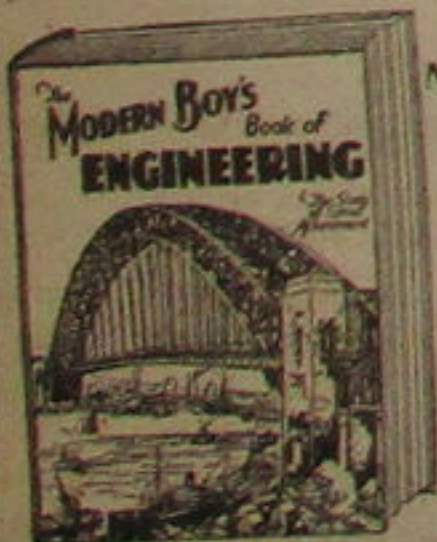
There was a sudden flash of steel in the sun as the fat man jerked a knife from the back of his trousers. But a lash of the lawyer-cane knocked it from his hand before he had a chance of using the weapon. And then the blows rained down harder and faster, the yells of the trader ringing far across the sunny sea.

King of the Islands and Kit Hudson rushed at the boatswain, grasped him, and dragged him away from Mr. Jam by main force. Even then Koko relinquished his victim reluctantly.

(Continued on page 30)

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The Pearls of Jam!

(Continued from page 28)

"That bad feller make big fool along master belong me!" gasped Koko. "Feller pearl he plenty too much bad altogether! This feller Koko beat that bad feller along lawyer-cane—"

"That's enough!" panted Ken. "Belay it, I tell you!"

And Koko unwillingly "belayed it," the shipmates intervening between him and Mr. Jam, who lay on the deck wriggling and writhing and yelling.

"Hand Over that Bag!"

KING OF THE ISLANDS picked up the pearl from the deck. For the moment he did not heed the writhing, howling trader. If the man whose life he had saved at the risk of his own was in fact trying to cheat him in a deal, the man deserved all he had received from Koko, and more. And Ken could not help feeling

that Koko was right; though a doubt still lingered.

He scanned the pearl, held up in the sunlight between finger and thumb, with keen eyes. If it was a false pearl, it was cunningly done. Ken had handled false pearls before—there were plenty of traders in "dud" pearls in the islands. More than once he had handled a pearl that at first sight looked worth fifty pounds, and on examination proved to be worth less than as many shillings.

But never had he seen a false pearl like this, if it was indeed false. Even now, after Koko had testified his opinion so emphatically, the boy trader of Lalinge could not have said that the pearl was not genuine.

"Look at it, Kit!"

"Beats me," Hudson said. "Looks all right to me! But—I'm backing the opinion of the old coffee-bean."

"Me savvy, sar!" said Koko earnestly. "This feller Koko, sar, no common Kanaka. This feller tinkee

plenty too much, head belong him. Me savvy that bad feller pearl, sar."

Mr. Jam sat up, panting.

"Statement of Kanaka is excessively distant from truth," he gasped. "This Mr. Jam is pearl-trader, known to many respected English as Honest Mr. Jam, by reason of just dealing!"

"You plenty bad feller!" roared Koko, gripping the lawyer-cane. "You makee bad trade along white master belong me. You tell big feller lie along white master, mouth belong you."

"Look here, Koko—"

"You takee feller pearl, sar," said Koko. "You lub feller pearl along tooth belong you, sar! You savvy!"

Ken remembered that trick of testing the genuineness of a pearl. He rubbed the pearl on his teeth. It rubbed smooth as glass, without the almost imperceptible "cling" of a real pearl. His brow darkened, and he threw the pearl down. There was no doubt now.

"Cultured pearls!" said Hudson, looking at him. Then the Australian fixed a grim look on Honest Mr. Jam. "You swindling swab—"

Mr. Jam staggered to his feet. He backed away, with uneasy eyes on the shipmates—a still more uneasy eye on Koko! Only the authority of King of the Islands kept the lawyer-cane from his back. And now that the shipmates knew the truth, Mr. Jam dimly anticipated a further application of the lawyer-cane.

"You rascal!" said Ken, with a look of scorn at the fat, uneasy trader. "You unscrupulous rascal!"

"Honourable mister, mistake may occur even with trader of extremely elongated experience," protested Mr. Jam. "Of cultured pearls I know nothing. Possibility exists that clever nigger pulled leg of this Mr. Jam, palming off manufactured pearl of unusual verisimilitude."

Ken's face set grimly.

"If you got this sham pearl without knowing it, Mr. Jam, the other pearls in your bag are genuine. We'll see. Hand over that bag!"

Mr. Jam backed farther away, alarm in his fat, olive face. Obviously he was unwilling for the pearls in the tapa bag to be re-examined.

But Honest Mr. Jam had no choice in the matter. Kit Hudson stepped to him, and grasped him by the back of his fat neck with a grip that drew a squeal of pain from him.

"Hand over that bag before I twist your neck!" said the mate of the Dawn, savagely. And the fat trader handed the bag to King of the Islands.

"If cultured pearls exist in bag, it is without knowledge of personal self!" he gasped.

Ken opened the bag, and shot out the pearls into the palm of his hand. The dazzling heap of glistening gems looked worth a fortune. But Ken had a fairly accurate idea of their value now. Five pounds, perhaps, was the total value—except in the hands of a swindler.

One after another, he tested them; there was not a single genuine pearl in the whole heap. Evidently Mr. Jam was a dealer in false pearls.

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Those Model Railway Extras

WHEN you come to look through a model railway catalogue—a good one—it really is astounding the number of "extras" that have been invented (or should I say modelled?) for the model railway. Some of these run into pounds, but some can be bought for pence.

I am reminding you of this because Christmas is quite close ahead, and it's not a bad plan, if you want some of these extra fittings, to leave a good model railway catalogue knocking about where the home folks can see it. If they don't take the hint, well, do as I used to do—talk about your model railway on every possible occasion.

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THIS splendid photo shows quite a number of very desirable extras, including an overhead signal gantry which no self-respecting model railway owner would ever rest content without.

Unfortunately we don't always get what we ask for, and if you are driven to making some extras for yourself, you can get the ideas for the constructional part of the job from that catalogue I have been talking about.

It isn't worth while trying to make the metal items, like that signal gantry—the job is quite beyond most of us. But what about saving up for such extras if you've already bespoken Christmas presents of another kind?

Wayside stations, foot-bridges, plate-layers' huts, signal-boxes, and such other railway indispensables can be made at home of cardboard or wood, when the manufactured article is not forthcoming. But whether you make, buy, beg, or borrow them, some extras you must have, to lift your model railway out of the ordinary and increase very many times the fun of "working" it.



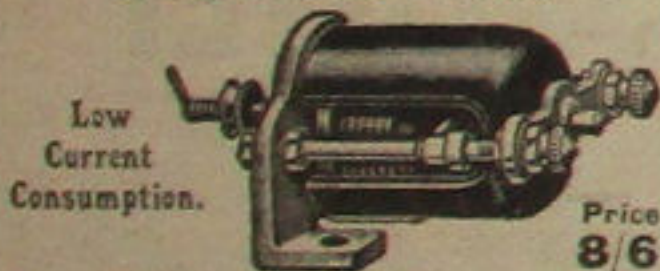
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The Modern Boy

The Pearls of Jam!

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a large scale. Darker and darker grew the brow of the boy trader.

"You rascally thief!" he said at last. "You're going to Tahiti to sell pearls—and these are the pearls! I'm not sorry that I picked you up, but no man is going to bring off a swindle with my help. You're not taking these pearls into Papeete!"

There was a yell from Mr. Jam. He made a jump towards Ken, but Hudson's iron grip on his fat neck held him back. Mr. Jam almost foamed. He wriggled like a fat worm in the Australian's grasp.

"Destruction of pearls is illegal and inadmissible!" screamed Mr. Jam, his queer English contrasting oddly with his passionate rage and excitement. "Pearls are property of this Mr. Jam personally. Throwing of pearls into sea is enormous and unjustifiable outrage!"

"Ay, ay!" King of the Islands slipped the pearls back into the bag. "They're your property, you thieving swab. Take them!"

Mr. Jam took them with a trembling, fat hand.

"Now," went on Ken quietly, "I advise you to throw that bag of rubbish into the sea, Mr. Jam. Please yourself, but otherwise I shall put you into irons and hand you over to the French authorities at Papeete as a thief and swindler. Take your choice—if you'd rather go to a French convict island."

Mr. Jam's fat jaw dropped. He gazed at the boy trader, his black eyes almost bulging from his olive face. Hudson burst into a chuckle. Even Koko's grim, brown face relaxed into a grin. Plainly the pearl merchant was desperately unwilling to part with the bag of "cultured" pearls, with which he had intended to trade at Papeete.

But he dared not have them on him when the Dawn sailed into the lagoon. Possibly he knew what life was like on a French convict island. And that was his certain fate if Ken handed him over to the law at Papeete.

For a minute he stood, trembling with rage and dismay, almost gibbering. Then slowly he lifted his arm, and the bag of manufactured pearls shot over the rail of the ketch.

There was a splash in the Pacific, and it vanished. What might have brought Mr. Jam tens of thousands of francs at Papeete—with the risk of a term of imprisonment—had gone to the bottom of the sea. The half-caste trader stared at the sea with almost haggard eyes as the Dawn glided on. Then he turned to Ken, his olive face convulsed with rage. A stream of furious words poured from his lips.

"The remember of this injuriousness will be excessively elongated!" he yelled. "In event of opportunity approximating, revenge shall be of unlimited extent!"

Ken burst into a laugh. There was no doubt of the rascal's revengeful intentions if opportunity ever came his way. His black eyes blazed with hatred and fury. But a threat of vengeance in such ludicrous language

only excited the merriment of the shipmates.

"Get out of my sight, you rascal!" said the boy trader.

Kit Hudson swung the fat man round and planted a boot on his trousers. Mr. Jam went spinning along the deck, amid a cackle of laughter from the Hiva-Oa boys, till he collapsed in the scuppers, after which he crawled below and was not seen again while the ketch made Tahiti. King of the Islands sailed in through the Matavia passage in the great barrier reef into the shining lagoon, and the ketch glided along the verdant shore to the harbour of Papeete.

Billy the Beachcomber.

"THAT feller kill along sun close up!" Koko grinned as he made the remark, and pointed with a brown finger to the beach. Between the shore and the outer reef the lagoon was as smooth as a pond. The wind had fallen to a mere breath, and the ketch crawled on towards Papeete.

Mr. Jam was still below, preferring to keep out of sight of the shipmates till he could get off the ketch. A schooner under power passed at ten knots, and Kit Hudson, with a cheery grin, reverted to his favourite topic of installing a petrol engine on the Dawn. But he broke off as Koko pointed out the man on the beach.

From Papeete, in the distance, the shore ran along the lagoon, white and glistening in the sun. Beyond it rose the verdant hills, a mass of colour. It was past noon, and the burning heat of the tropical day lay on Tahiti. In the sun-blaze, on the dazzling road, a running figure appeared. The ketch was hardly half a cable's length off shore, and the shipmates saw him clearly.

"Beachcomber!" grunted Hudson, with a sniff of contempt. A glance told that the man was a beachcomber—flotsam and jetsam of the South Seas. He was a white man, though his face was burnt coppery by the sun. He was clad in a ragged cotton shirt and a pair of duck trousers cut short at the knees. A rag of a hat was on his tousled head, and as the shipmates watched him it fell behind him in the road. He did not stop for it, but ran desperately on.

"He's asking for sunstroke," said King of the Islands, in wonder.

"He go finish along sun close up!" said Koko.

"But what the thump is he running for?" asked Hudson. "Beachcombers aren't keen on exercise as a rule, and in this sun—"

The running man looked as if he was in desperate flight from pursuit. But if there were pursuers on his track, the winding beach road hid them from sight. On a savage island he might have been supposed to be in flight from natives. But on Tahiti the natives were peaceful and well-ordered. Law and order were rigidly maintained by a French governor and his officials and any number of gendarmes. The comrades of the Dawn watched him curiously, half expecting

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to see him pitch over, struck by the sun.

He came to a sudden halt and turned round to stare back, mopping the perspiration from his face with the back of his hand. Then, leaving the road, he ran down the beach towards the lagoon. The ketch, moving slowly through the glassy water, was almost opposite him.

He tramped hurriedly down the shelving sand and powdered coral and seashells of the beach, and stood knee-deep in the water, staring with haggard eyes towards the ketch, the two white men on her deck, and the grinning Kanakas. Then he suddenly plunged into the lagoon and started to swim, heading for the Dawn.

"My word! That feller wantee comey along ship belong white master!" exclaimed Koko.

"Cheek!" grunted Hudson. The mate of the Dawn had little sympathy to waste on a drunken derelict of the beach.

"What the dickens does he want?" exclaimed King of the Islands. "Lompo, stand by throw feller line along that feller along lagoon!"

"Yes, sar!" answered Lompo. He picked up a rope and went to the rail. The man was swimming hard, and rapidly nearing the ketch.

Koko burst into a chuckle, and his brown finger pointed to the road again.

"Feller comey catchee that feller!" he said.

Another figure had appeared on the

shore road—that of a gendarme from Papeete. He came along the road at a trot, and suddenly, catching sight of the swimmer, turned staring towards the lagoon. Then he, in his turn, tramped down the beach, stopping at the water's edge and gesticulating excitedly. It was clear that he was in pursuit of the beachcomber, and the reason of the man's flight in the blazing sun was revealed now. It was trouble with the Papeete police. The gendarme, however, did not care to follow the fugitive into the water. He stood high and dry, waved his hands, and shouted.

"Cheek!" Kit Hudson repeated. "That swab's been kicking up a shindy in Papeete, and they want him. We can't help him get away."

Ken King's eyes were fixed rather anxiously on the swimmer, and he did not answer. The man had swum more than half the distance with a desperate burst of energy, but his strength was not equal to the effort. His head went below the shining surface of the lagoon. He came up again immediately and struggled on, but plainly in difficulties. Lompo stood ready with the line, but it was doubtful whether the wretched man would be able to reach it.

"That feller go walk along bottom lagoon!" remarked Koko. "He go finish, me tinkee!" And, with the cheerful indifference of the South Sea Islander, Koko watched for the swimmer's head to disappear for the last time. A hoarse cry came from the struggling man and reached the ketch.

"King of the Islands!"

Ken started. He had never, so far as he knew, seen the wretched derelict of the beach before. Only once had he called at Tahiti, and that was long ago. But the beachcomber had evidently recognised the Dawn, and he called on the boy skipper by name. As if the effort had exhausted him, he plunged under the glistening water.

The gendarme on the beach ceased to gesticulate and gave a shrug of the shoulders, evidently under the impression that he had seen the last of the beachcomber. But the tangled head emerged again on the shining water. Ken clapped a hand on Koko's brawny, brown shoulder.

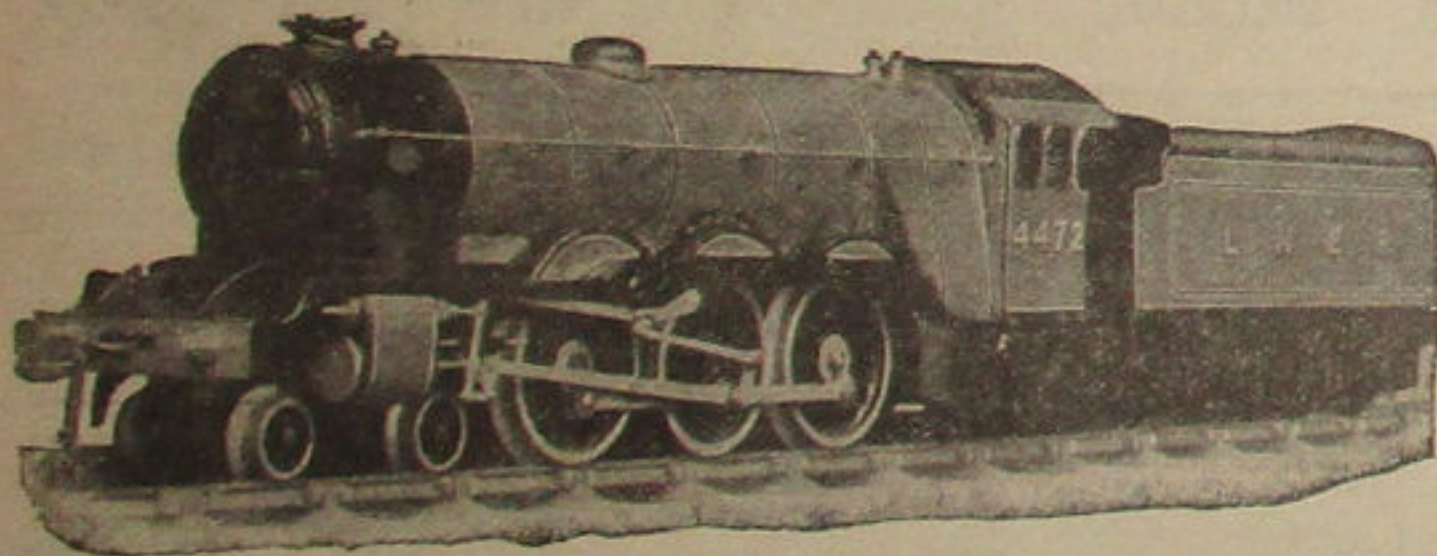
"You feller Koko, you jump along lagoon, along pick up that feller beachcomber," he said.

Koko jumped on the low teak rail of the Dawn, and plunged into the lagoon. With powerful strokes he shot towards the sinking swimmer. King of the Islands watched with keen anxiety, and Hudson's face was a little anxious now. A hand was flung up as the beachcomber sank again, then it vanished. Koko's dark head disappeared as he plunged under.

"Suffering cats!" muttered Hudson. "He's gone!"

"Koko's got him!" breathed King of the Islands, in deep relief, as the Kanaka's dark head shot into view again, and Koko came up with the beachcomber in his grasp.

(Continued on opposite page)



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A minute more, and Koko had hold of the rope held over the rail by Lompo. King of the Islands shouted, and Lufu and Kolulo jumped to the aid of the boat-swain, and he was dragged on board with his burden. Koko shook the water from his thick hair and glistening brown skin, like a dog after a swim. The man he had saved sank down on the deck, drenched and dripping.

The gendarme on the beach was waving and gesticulating again. His shrieking voice reached the ketch. "We'd better not understand French!" Kit Hudson grinned. "They can get him at Papeete, if they want him. I wonder what he's done?"

"Tomoo, Lompo, take that fellow below, along cabin!" said King of the Islands, with a pitying glance at the miserable derelict.

The Kanakas carried the man down the companion. The Dawn glided on under the dying wind. The gesticulating gendarme on the beach was left behind—still gesticulating! Papeete was in sight, with its wharves and quays, and great avenues of trees that almost hid the buildings of the town. Leaving the deck to his mate, King of the Islands went below, and found the beachcomber stretched on the cabin lockers—and Mr. Jam staring at him.

The beachcomber's haggard eyes scanned him as he came into the cabin. He took no heed of the half-caste.

"I knew your ship—I've seen the Dawn before—long ago, up Lalinge way!" muttered the beachcomber. "They say you're the whitest man in the Pacific, King of the Islands!"

"What's the trouble?" Ken smiled. "I had to pick you up, but—you know what French officials are like if you live on Fahiti. I'm not looking for trouble with them. Is it anything I can square?"

"It was a row in Yellow Charley's place!" muttered the man on the lockers. "I cracked a Chink's head. It will be a fine of a hundred francs—and I haven't a centime—so—"

"If that's all, I can see you through," said Ken, relieved. "We shall be in Papeete in half an hour, and you'll have to give yourself up—but I'll see you through it!"

"You've never heard of me—Billy the Beachcomber—but I've heard of you many a time. It wasn't only to get away from the gendarme that I swam out to you when I recognised your ship. If they'd put me in prison, I mightn't have seen you again before you sailed."

"You'd give a man a fair deal!" went on the beachcomber eagerly. "Every man in the Islands says that you're white. Have you ever heard of Tunaviva? It's a small island—an atoll—two hundred miles from Tahiti—and there's a fortune there!"

Billy the Beachcomber was suddenly interrupted. Mr. Jam had been staring at him contemptuously and indifferently, but at the mention of Tunaviva the pearl-trader gave a violent start. He came quickly across the cabin towards the man on the lockers, black eyes blazing from his olive face.

"What is the meaning of such preposterous statement?" exclaimed Mr. Jam, his voice sharp and shrill. "Estimable captain, this miserable person would deceive you with lying statement of excessive magnitude! On Tunaviva there is nothing, and of such remote spot this deplorable person is in total ignorance!"

Ken stared at him blankly. He had never heard of Tunaviva; but it seemed that Mr. Jam had.

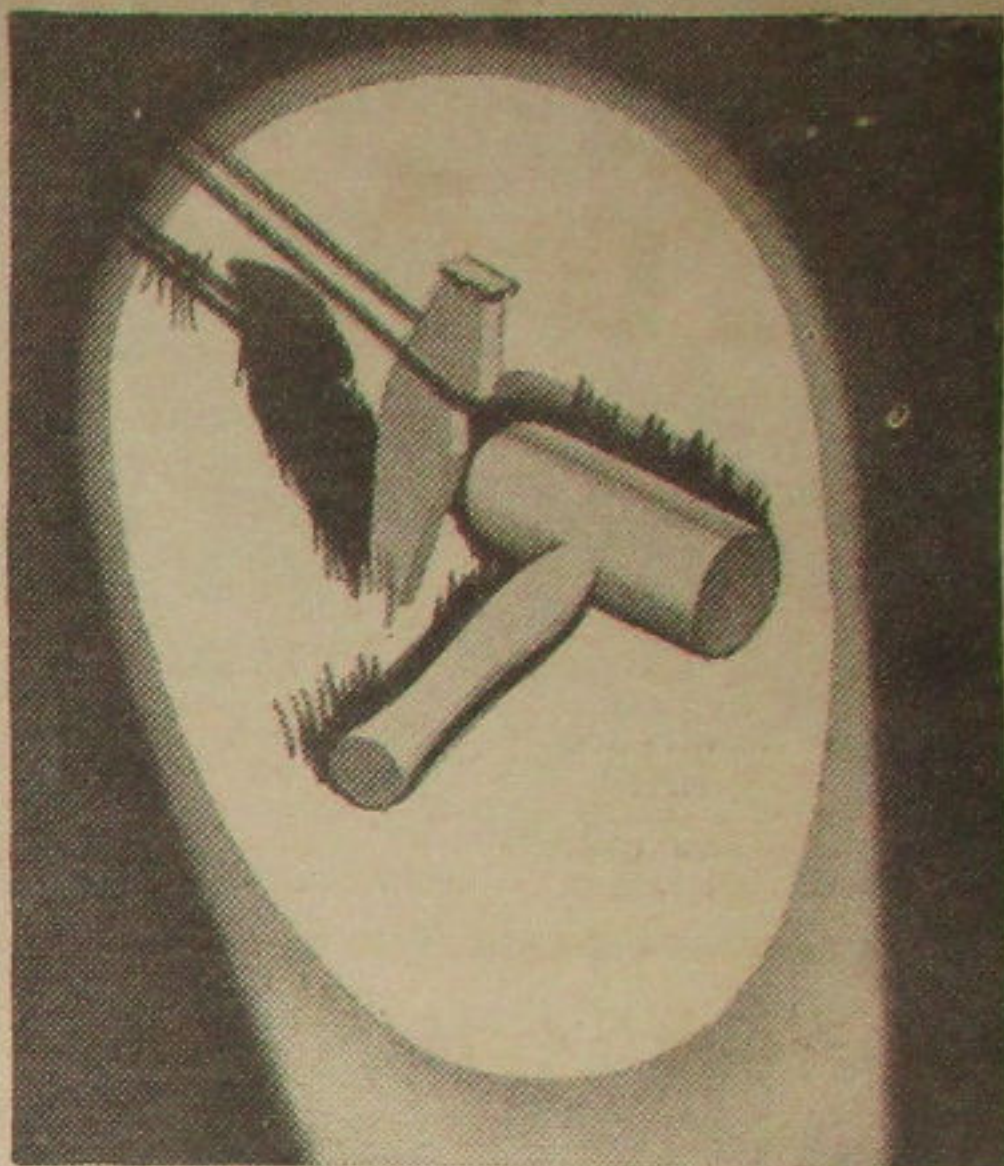
"That's enough from you, my man!" rapped King of the Islands. "Get on deck!"

"Such statement of enormous untruthfulness!" panted Mr. Jam.

"Get on deck!" And as the fat pearl-trader made no movement to obey, King of the Islands grasped him by the back of his neck and the slack of his trousers and ran him into the companion and up the ladder. Mr. Jam yelled as he went, spluttering with fury; but he went, and he emerged yelling on deck in the sinowy grasp of the boy trader.

Bump! Mr. Jam landed on the deck, where he sprawled gasping and spluttering.

But the chums haven't done with fat Mr. Jam yet—not by a long way! He's well in the limelight again in Next Saturday's South Seas Adventure yarn!



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