

SIR MALCOLM CAMPBELL'S GREAT MOTOR-RACING
STORY AND 9 FREE-GIFT PICTURES INSIDE!

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Sir Malcolm
Campbell's
RECORD-
BREAKING
MOTOR-RACING
STORY *is Inside!*



"'Mornin', gents!" said Billy the Beachcomber, touching his rag of a hat to Ken and Kit. "You ain't thought better of it since I spun you the yarn?"

TROUBLE ON TAHITI!

Never in the sun-splashed waters of the Pacific has KING OF THE ISLANDS, the Boy Trader, seen a more beautiful island than Tahiti. But it's more full of trouble than any other isle in the tropic South Seas! . . . By CHARLES HAMILTON

Mr. Jam Asks For It!

TOP of a beautiful morning, sir!" King of the Islands, boy skipper of the South Seas trading ketch, Dawn, stared round as he received that peculiar greeting.

Kit Hudson grinned. It was morning on Tahiti—a golden, glowing morning. The little town of Papeete hummed with life. The Dawn was moored to the coral quay among the pearly schooners and luggers. There were French officials, gendarmes, sailorman, white, brown, and black, loafing coolies, and lounging Kanakas on the quay when the shipmates of the Dawn stepped off the ketch.

Among them appeared an enormously fat man with a dark olive skin, glinting black eyes almost hidden by rolls of fat, his body almost bursting through his suit of white ducks and crimson cummerbund. It was he who greeted Ken King, taking off his hat and bowing till his podgy stomach almost touched his podgy knees.

Ken's brow darkened at the sight of Mr. Jam, the dealer in false pearls. But Ken's frown and his mate's grin did not seem to disconcert Mr. Jam in the slightest. Judging by his amiable smile and polite bow, Mr. Jam had quite forgotten that he had tried to swindle the shipmates with a deal in dud pearls, and that only the day before he had rolled a boulder down the hillside almost on to the car which they were driving on the shore-road. He

bowed and smiled with a gleam of white teeth.

"What do you want, you rascal?" rapped King of the Islands.

"Such injurious expression from mouth of estimable mister is excessively painful to this Mr. Jam," said the fat man. "Once more I asseverate with solemnity that fall of rock was lamentable accident."

Over the rail of the moored ketch Koko, the Kanaka boatswain of the Dawn, glared at the fat man. He shouted to Danny, the cooky-boy:

"You feller Danny! You bring lawyer-cane along me, close-up!"

"You'd better beat it, Mr. Jam, before Koko gets busy with the lawyer-cane!" Kit Hudson chuckled.

Mr. Jam gave an uneasy glance at the Kanaka boatswain towering over the rail. But he did not "beat" it. He planted his fat person in the way of the shipmates, evidently determined to say what he had come to say at the risk of Koko and the cane.

"Estimable mister captain," he exclaimed, "few words will explain purpose of coming, if you will lend ear. It is a matter of business."

"I've no business with you!" snapped Ken.

"More pearls to sell?" asked Hudson sarcastically.

"It is matter of cargo," explained Mr. Jam. "I have cargo to dispatch to Lalinge by sure hand. Private and personal deplorable disputes should not incommode matters of business. No other estimable craft in Papeete sails for that island."

"Oh!" said Ken, rather taken by surprise. Hudson stared curiously at the fat man. There was still a mark on Mr. Jam's face where Ken's knuckles had landed the previous day. But it seemed that Mr. Jam was prepared to forget trifles like that when business called.

"You give me hearing of few minutes," said Mr. Jam. "I have cargo, which I consign to John Chin at Lalinge. You take, yess? You state terms of carrying, also date when going to sea. I agree to all reasonable terms."

Ken shook his head. It was true that he had room for more cargo on the Dawn. And a trader could not, as a rule, allow private grudges to interfere with matters of business. Mr. Jam's cargo was as good as any other merchant's cargo if it came to that. But his distrust and dislike of the fat, olive-skinned man were too deep.

"No!" he said curtly.

Koko put a sinewy brown leg over the rail. There was a thick lawyer-cane in his hand and a gleam in his eyes, for he meditated drastic treatment of the rascal who had the impudence to visit the Dawn and speak to his white masters.

"Good mister, you order disgusting Kanaka not to approximate to this Mr. Jam!" exclaimed the pearl trader, in alarm.

"Belay it, Koko!" said Ken. "Plenty good kill that bad feller, lawyer-cane belong me, sar!" said

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Trouble on Tahiti!

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Koko rebelliously. "That bad feller pitch big feller rock along kill master belong me. He shoot along gun along beachcomber, name belong him Billy. He plenty bad feller, sar!"

Ken smiled and waved him back. He did not want a scene on the crowded quay.

"Belay it," he repeated. "I won't take your cargo, my man! I'll have no truck with you. Sheer off!"

"But you sail for Lalinge?" persisted Mr. Jam, his bright black eyes sharp and keen.

"No business of yours!" snapped Ken. "Look here, Mr. Jam, I've had more than enough of you! I've told you to sheer off!"

KOKO gripped the cane, longing to lay it round Mr. Jam, and it needed only a sign from his white master. The Eurasian was running a real risk by his persistence. But—with one uneasy eye on Koko—he still persisted. No doubt Mr. Jam had his own good reasons for desiring information.

"You will not take a cargo?" he said. "I will pay good price to dispatch cargo with so estimable a captain—excessively generous price. Perhaps you do not sail for Lalinge? Possibility exists that when you take departure from Tahiti you will not be homeward bound?"

Ken made no answer; he was fed-up with the man. But Kit Hudson,

staring at the fat, sly face, burst into a chuckle.

"Suffering cats!" ejaculated the Australian. "I fancy I guess why the swab's come here to offer us cargo, Ken! He wants to find out whether we're making Lalinge when we pull out. He heard Billy the Beachcomber tell his tale of Tunaviva, and he fancies we're heading that way. And he wants to know. Is that it, Mr. Jam?"

Ken started, then laughed. Billy the Beachcomber's tale of precious pink coral on the lonely isle of Tunaviva had almost slipped from his mind. He had heard too many tales of treasure from down-and-out beachcombers to heed one more. Mr. Jam had not heard the story of the pink coral, but he had heard the name of Tunaviva on the beachcomber's lips. And the shipmates knew that it had excited and alarmed him—why, they could not guess.

Ken had no doubt that the mate of the Dawn had hit on the true reason of Mr. Jam's visit that morning. He wanted to find out whether the shipmates were sailing for Tunaviva! They had not the slightest intention of setting such a course, but it was clear that Ken's refusal to take on cargo for Lalinge had given the suspicious Eurasian quite another impression.

His sharp black eyes glittered at them as they laughed, their merriment evidently puzzling him.

"It is true, then!" he exclaimed. "You believe unfounded and ridiculous story of beachcomber of

fortune existing on Tunaviva, isle of which that disreputable person ignorance is unlimited. You sail Tunaviva when you sail, yess?"

"Nothing of the kind," said King of the Islands. "Whatever the beachcomber may have told us, it won't make us set a course for Tunaviva. False statement will not throw dust in eyes of this Mr. Jam!" said the pearl trader, his black eyes glittering.

"What?" roared King of the Islands. He made a stride toward the fat trader, then halted, and signed to Koko. That was all the brown boatswain needed. He rushed on Mr. Jam like a tiger-shark. He went the cane, and it came down with a terrific crash on the fat head of Mr. Jam. There was a yell from the olive-skinned man, who leaped clear of the coral quay as the cane landed.

"Better beat it!" grinned Hudson. This time the fat trader took his advice. Mr. Jam raced along the quay, yelling, loafers and loungers staring and grinning. Koko rushed after him, and another swipe of the cane caught Mr. Jam on his podgy trousers. He leaped into the air, fairly lifted by that terrific swipe.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Hudson. There was a cackle of laughter from the Hiva-Oa crew, staring from the Dawn. It was echoed all along the quay. Louder than the laughter rang the yells of Mr. Jam as he fled.

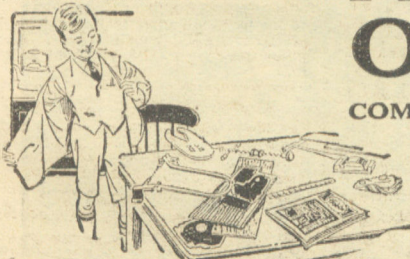
"Koko!" shouted King of the Islands. (Continued on page 30)

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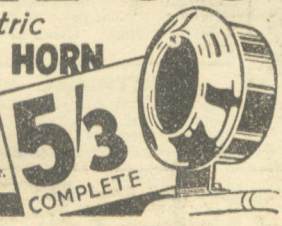
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Trouble on Tahiti!

(Continued from page 28)

Islands. Koko seemed disposed to pursue the fleeing fat man through Papeete, lashing with the cane. He came back reluctantly at his master's call. Mr. Jam, running with a wonderful speed for so fat a man, faded into the distance, and his white ducks and red cummerbund vanished into Papeete.

Shadowed!

KEN KING and his shipmate sauntered up the street. All Papeete was glowing under the sunshine. On the morrow, the Dawn was pulling out, and, business matters being concluded, the shipmates were taking a walk through the town to enjoy the sights and sounds and glowing colours. They turned into the market, crowded with all sorts and conditions of people. Natives and whites, visitors and tourists and sailormen, mingled with a babble of many tongues.

The shipmates sauntered through the busy scene. Hudson smiled and tapped his comrade's arm at the sight of a man buying fish from a brown Tahitian at a stall. It was Billy the Beachcomber, with his shaggy beard, dingy cotton shirt, and ragged old trousers cut short at the knee.

He spotted them, and touched his rag of a hat. They had last seen him at his hut by the lagoon, miles from Papeete. With a kindly impulse they stopped to speak to the dingy out-cast of the beach—who was eyed suspiciously by a French gendarme standing near at hand.

Billy was in bad odour with the French authorities in Papeete. Which was not surprising. He was not a credit to that well-ordered island. There was a faintly reproachful expression on his tanned, shaggy face as he looked at the smiling shipmates. No doubt he was thinking of his tale of treasure, which had fallen on un-heeding ears.

"'Mornin', gents!" said the beachcomber. "You ain't thought better of it, since I spun you the yarn?"

Ken smiled and shook his head.

"I reckon you've heard a good many tales of treasure, sir!" said Billy, with a sigh. "The beaches are thick with 'em. But this one happens to be true. I got it from that Kanaka at Apia—"

"We're pulling out for Lalinge tomorrow," said King of the Islands. "I'll give you a passage, if you like, to any island on my course."

"I'm sticking here, sir, till I find a square man to go with me on the Tunaviva venture," said the beachcomber. "That is, if I don't get bumped off by that Indian nigger, Jam. I came near it yesterday. He'd have shot me if you hadn't come along. Doesn't that look, sir, as if he knows what's on Tunaviva, and is scared of another man getting there?"

"He seems interested in Tunaviva, for some reason," admitted Ken. "But

I'll bet he's never heard of pink coral there."

"What's his game, then, sir?"

"I give that up!" said King of the Islands. "He's a rotten rascal, and is up to something, I suppose. Have you come away from your hut now?"

"I reckon my life wouldn't be safe there, with that swab after me. I'm at Yellow Charley's place now, in Papeete," said the beachcomber. "I can stay at Yellow Charley's as long as I can pay."

Ken smiled again, and slipped a hundred-franc note into the grubby hand. Then the shipmates walked on in rather thoughtful mood, while Billy bought his breakfast fish and wrapped it in a palm-leaf.

"It's dashed queer, Ken!" remarked Hudson. "I don't believe in precious pink coral on Tunaviva—and I'll bet Mr. Jam doesn't, or he'd have gone there long ago. That isn't why he's excited about Tunaviva. But why?"

"I can't make it out! It seems to be a small, uninhabited island, with nothing on it but gulls. But it seems pretty clear that Jam doesn't want anybody to get there."

"He's keen on that, Ken—keen enough to pull a gun on that wretched swab, because he thought Billy might induce us to set a course for the island. There's something on Tunaviva—though I reckon it's not pink coral. If we had time—" The mate of the Dawn paused and laughed.

"Time's money!" said Ken. "We can't afford a week for a wild-geese chase, Kit."

"No," agreed Hudson. "Anyhow, Jam's game at Tunaviva, whatever it is, is no business of ours. If it's fishy, it's for the French governor to look into it. No business of ours—but I feel rather curious, all the same."

The shipmates strolled through the market, and when they emerged one of the first things that caught their eyes was a crimson cummerbund. Hudson nodded towards it and chuckled.

"The fat man is haunting us, Ken!" he remarked.

Ken glanced at Mr. Jam. His podgy back was to them, and he was walking slowly, his eyes fixed on some object in advance. They saw the next moment what it was—the tattered, dingy figure of Billy the Beachcomber, with his bundle of fish under his arm.

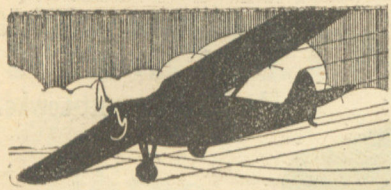
Curiously the shipmates eyed Mr. Jam. Billy stopped to speak to some dingy acquaintance, and the fat trader immediately stopped, too, and stepped out of sight behind one of the many trees. When the beachcomber resumed his way, Mr. Jam rolled on again in his wake.

"He's following him!" said Hudson.

"Looks like it!" Ken was puzzled. "He can't think of playing any game here, in Papeete, as he did yesterday at Billy's hut in the ravine. Papeete isn't a place for the rough stuff."

"We'll keep our weather-eye on him for a bit!" suggested Hudson. "The swab's as full of mischief as an egg is of meat."

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Trouble on Tahiti!

(Continued from page 30)

Ken nodded, and they strolled on at a little distance behind the fat man, whose attention was concentrated on the dingy figure lounging along before him. It seemed improbable that the rascal could intend any "rough stuff" in Papeete, but in any lonelier place it was certain that the outcast's life was not safe from him.

Keeping him under observation, the shipmates strolled on, and the way led them to a street by the docks, where "Yellow Charley's" place lay among a score of other "dives" frequented by sailmen of all nations.

As Billy passed in at a doorway, a stout Chinaman standing there glanced somewhat contemptuously at the beachcomber. If this hard-faced Chink was Yellow Charley, it was plain that he did not think much of his guest.

THERE was a big, shady tree at a little distance, and the shipmates paused under it, curious to see Mr. Jam's next proceedings, now that he had traced the outcast to his lair.

They had heard of Yellow Charley's as a place where brawls among the sailmen were frequent—it was probably the lowest and roughest haunt in Papeete; and tales were told of bodies found floating in the lagoon, of which Yellow Charley could have told the gendarmes more than he cared to tell them. It was not a place that the fat, prosperous-looking pearl trader would have been likely to enter without a very powerful reason.

Mr. Jam waddled up to the doorway and entered into conversation with the hard-faced yellow man standing there. Evidently they were acquaintances.

"Mischievous brewing, Ken, old bean!" said Hudson quietly. "No man's life is worth more than ten dollars in a place like that! I begin to think Billy would have been safer at his hut up the beach, now that fat scoundrel has found out his new quarters."

Ken was thinking the same as he stood with his eyes fixed on the two men. He saw Mr. Jam's fat hand slide under his cummerbund, and it came out with something in it that passed into the ready hand of the Chink. Swift as the movement was, the shipmates knew that money had passed.

"See that, Ken?" exclaimed Hudson. "Jam handed the Chink some money, or I'm a blind Dutchman! And you can bet that fat scoundrel's not giving money away for nothing. There's dirty work afoot!"

"Guess you're right, Kit," agreed Ken. "And it's a pretty safe bet that the dirty work's something to do with Billy the Beachcomber. I wonder what it can be? We know that Jam got fearfully excited when Billy mentioned Tunaviva to us, and that he's since tried to get Billy's

story out of him at the point of a revolver, but I'm hanged if I can see why he's so anxious to know Billy's yarn, and why he's going to so much trouble over it. After all, it would be easy enough to pay somebody else to get Billy into the right mood and get his story out of him.

"No," added the boy trader. "There's something fishy about Tunaviva—something that Jam knows all about, and he's afraid that Billy has discovered his secret."

"And you think he's bribing Yellow Charley to shanghai Billy and have him put aboard a boat bound for somewhere miles away from Tahiti and Tunaviva?" suggested Kit.

"That—or something worse!" replied King of the Islands grimly.

"Worse?" echoed Kit, looking sharply at his shipmate. "Surely you don't think Jam intends Yellow Charley to get rid of Billy for good?"

"The scoundrel's not above it," replied Ken. "Look at the pair of them over there. Did you ever see such a pair of scoundrels in all your life?"

Kit looked. The fat pearl trader and Yellow Charley were still deep in conversation, and as the shipmates watched they saw Mr. Jam pat Yellow Charley on the back and then shake him warmly by the hand, as if sealing a bargain.

Then the fat trader rolled on his way and disappeared round a corner, and Yellow Charley turned back into the building and also disappeared. Ken's and Kit's eyes met.

"I reckon," drawled Hudson, "that it's lucky for Billy we spotted Mr. Jam in his wake. There's going to be another shindy at Yellow Charley's, Ken, and somebody is going to get hurt—bad!"

Kit's prophecy is correct—there's a very Great Big Blow-Up in Next Saturday's KING OF THE ISLANDS Story in MODERN BOY!

PEN-PALS WANTED.—The following readers would like to correspond with others interested in the subjects mentioned.

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G. Townsend, Jeppe High School, Johannesburg, South Africa, interested in aeronautics and game hunting, wants pen-pals in India and Australia.

D. Clews, 24, Wycombe Road, Hall Green, Birmingham, interested in stamps, wants to correspond with South African readers.

P. F. Onyon, 4, Fynford Road, Radford, Coventry, interested in curios, would like to get in touch with readers in Egypt and South Africa.