

# *The* **MODERN BOY** 2<sup>D</sup>

EVERY SATURDAY  
Week Ending Oct. 13<sup>th</sup> 1934  
Nº 349 VOL 14

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**NEXT WEEK**  
The Crack of the Southern Railway  
"LORD NELSON"  
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"Drop that spanner, Hudson!" snapped Peter Parsons. "If you lift a finger you're a dead man!"

## The CRACKERJACK'S TREASURE!

Surf-pounded and deserted on a deadly South Seas reef, a battered ship has set **KIT HUDSON'S** blood afire! . . . . By **CHARLES HAMILTON**

### Piracy on the High Seas!

**D**ANDY PETER of Lukwe stood up in the stern of the canoe, shading his eyes and staring across the Pacific rollers. Six brawny Ysabel boys kneeling to the paddles made the long, low craft fairly fly, but the sea-lawyer of Lukwe stood like a rock watching the motor-boat ahead of him. Tropical noon blazed down on a sea of indigo.

Brawny as they were, the black boys in the canoe sweated and panted, almost groaning with fatigue, but not daring to slack down under the eyes of Peter Parsons. Slight as he was—a neat, dapper figure as he stood there in the sun-blaze, Dandy Peter had put deadly fear into the hearts of the black crew, any one of whom could have crumpled him like a palm-leaf in his grasp.

Through the starry night—through the blaze of morning—he had driven them like dogs, and he was driving them still. It was a long run down from Lalinge to Lascelles Island, the wind dead against the trip, and with all his desperate haste Peter Parsons knew that it was even chances whether he reached Lascelles in time for the auction of the wrecked

Crackerjack, aboard which was seven thousand pounds waiting to be salvaged.

His eyes were fixed on the motor-boat in wonder. He knew that dingy, dirty craft—the property of Ezra Hunk, the storekeeper on Lalinge. He had been too late to secure it for his trip. Kit Hudson, the mate of the Dawn, had got in first. He had never dreamed of sighting it again before he arrived at Lascelles. But there it was, looking as helpless as a drifting log on the sea.

As the canoe ran closer, he made out Kit Hudson and Kiwe, the black boy—the former almost as black as the latter, after his struggles with the old tin can that Ezra Hunk called an engine. And Dandy Peter grinned.

"Engine trouble!" he said to himself.

Engine trouble on Mr. Hunk's craft was not surprising. It would have been surprising had there been none. A bold man was needed to take that wretched craft out of the safety of the lagoon at Lalinge, and Hudson had taken it out for a long run across the Pacific.

Far away to the south the moun-

tain-top of Lascelles Island was in sight, and Hudson in the motor-boat had less chance of reaching the island than Dandy Peter in the canoe. Unless that miserable apology for a petrol engine got into action again, in which case Hudson would skim away and leave the canoe standing!

For several minutes Dandy Peter watched his rival, and then he glanced down at the kneeling, panting black boys.

"You feller boy, you make this feller canoe stop along feller tick-tock boat!" he snapped.

"Yes, sar!" panted the Ysabel boys. They were glad of a chance of stopping anywhere, if only for a few minutes. Long since they had repented that they had hired themselves and their canoe to Peter Parsons for that trip.

The canoe slid on over the glistening sea. Peter Parsons slid his hand under his duck jacket, as if to make sure that something was there—and ready for use. Hudson had beaten him in getting hold of the motor-boat at Lalinge. Here, on the open sea, out of the sight of land, except for that far-off glimpse of a mountain-top, it was in Dandy Peter's



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mind that he could beat Hudson for the possession of that craft.

Even on land the law had little restraint for Peter Parsons of Lukwe, and on the deep water it had none at all. But if he was going to seize the motor-boat, and make sure of getting down to Lascelles in time for the auction, he had to do it before the engine started again. And with snarled threats the sea-lawyer of Lukwe drove his fatigued crew to even greater efforts. The canoe shot on like an arrow.

Kit Hudson, standing in the motor-boat, watched it coming. But he turned away and bent over the engine again. The brute had conked out—not for the first time during that hurried run. But this time it seemed to have conked for keeps.

He had wrestled with it in vain before he scanned the sea in the hope of spotting a craft that might give him a lift to his destination.

No craft was in sight except Dandy Peter's canoe. Peter Parsons was not likely to lend a helping hand to a rival; and that rival the shipmate of King of the Islands, the boy trader he hated with a deadly hatred. Hudson's brief hope was gone, and he struggled again with that maddening engine—long since only fit for the scrap-heap.

Now that he had seen Dandy Peter in the canoe, he wasted no more time. There was a chance yet. Somehow—anyhow—he was going to make the engine go again. He had no eyes for the canoe as it ran alongside and the Ysabel boys drew in their paddles and held on—panting with relief at the rest—mopping streams of sweat from their black, glistening faces.

Kiwe stared stolidly at the sea-lawyer. Hudson did not turn his head. He was not even aware that the canoe had stopped till the voice of the sea-lawyer hailed him.

"Ahoy, Hudson! Blind and deaf?"

**T**HE Australian mate of the Dawn, who had disagreed with his old shipmate, Ken King, boy skipper of the trading ketch, over the possibility of getting the salvage off the Crackerjack, and so had set out alone to the auction of the wreck, rose to his feet and looked at Dandy Peter. The neat, clean, dapper sea-lawyer grinned at his grimy looks; Hudson gave him a scowl in return.

"Engine on strike?" grinned Dandy Peter.

"Ay, ay!" growled Hudson. "What do you want, Parsons? You've not stopped to lend me a hand, I reckon?"

He knitted his brows grimly. The motor-boat had failed him. He had no chance of bidding at the auction of the Crackerjack. There was a chance yet in the canoe. Peter Parsons was his enemy—the enemy of his shipmate! It was in Hudson's thoughts to seize Dandy Peter's canoe by main force—to force the sea-lawyer to give him a passage!

That was what Parsons would have done in his place, as he well knew!

But he shook his head. What was good enough for the sea-lawyer of Lukwe was not good enough for the shipmate of King of the Islands. He dismissed the tempting thought from his mind, and turned back wearily to the engine for another struggle.

Dandy Peter watched him curiously. He knew that Hudson was an engineer, though he sailed in a wind-jammer with Ken King. He had little doubt that the mate of the Dawn would get the motor going again. He waited, and watched. If the engine was gone for good, Dandy Peter did not want the boat. But if the engine began again—He waited.

"Your shipmate's not with you this trip," he said.

"No!" grunted Hudson, without turning his head.

"I saw the Dawn pulling out of Lalinge when I left. You've parted?"

Hudson did not answer. His dispute with his shipmate, and their parting, was not a matter he was likely to discuss with Dandy Peter. The sea-lawyer laughed.

"You were keen on the Crackerjack auction, and Ken King refused to stand for it—what?" he asked.

"Well, he's the fool of the two! There's seven thousand pounds in gold in that hulk on the Suna-Suna reef, Hudson, and the man who buys that wreck will make a small fortune—if the Solomon Island boys don't get the head off his shoulders. And the wreck will go for a few hundreds. The insurance people will take what they can get, and be glad! And if—"

"Belay your jawing tackle!" snapped Hudson. "I'm at work, and I've got no use for cackle!"

Dandy Peter laughed, and stood silent. If he had to go on in the canoe, his crew were getting a rest which they badly needed; it was not time lost. But if the motor began again—

Chug, chug, chug! Once more the engine started. Hudson, oily and grimy, dizzy with the heat, grinned through the smudges on his face. The boat moved, dragging the canoe as the Ysabel boys still held on. Hudson stared round, and waved them off.

"Cast off, Parsons, you fool!" he hooted.

With a light spring, Peter Parsons landed from the canoe into the boat. His hand whipped out from under his duck jacket, and there was the gleam of a steel barrel in the sun. Over the revolver his eyes were cold and hard and ruthless.

"Drop that spanner! If you lift a finger you're a dead man!" said Peter Parsons, in a voice of ice. "Jump into that canoe, Kit Hudson, and jump quick!"

### Whistling Bullets!

**K**IT HUDSON did not drop the spanner. His oily fingers closed on it convulsively, and his eyes blazed at the sea-lawyer of Lukwe. Hardly six feet from him, the levelled

revolver pointed in his face, with Dandy Peter's eyes gleaming over it.

There was sudden death in that levelled barrel, death in the eyes behind it, and the mate of the Dawn, standing at bay, panted with rage.

"You pirate! You thief!" he choked.

"Cut it out!" interrupted Peter Parsons. "I want this boat! I'm having it! Jump!" He gave a snarl at the staring Ysabel boys. "Cast loose hand belong you, you feller boy! Jump's the word, Hudson, and sharp!"

For a second the mate of the Dawn did not stir. His revolver was in a locker, out of reach—the spanner in his hand was a futile weapon—and as the black boys cast loose, the canoe floated clear. He had to jump into the canoe while it was yet within reach, or into the sea when it was out of reach. Dandy Peter's trigger was already moving.

Kit Hudson jumped.

Headlong, he crashed among the black boys in the canoe, and the long craft rocked and rolled under the heavy impact. Hudson sprawled among brawny bare black legs.

There was a gabble of excitement round him. The mate of the Dawn scrambled breathlessly to his feet.

Ezra Hunk's motor-boat was already shooting away. Like a streak on the sea it sped off to the south.

"If I'd a gun—" panted Hudson.

But it was already too late, even if his gun had not been left on the motor-boat. Chug, chug, chug floated back over the Pacific. For the moment, at least, the engine was singing sweetly. Peter Parsons was already getting out of effective range. If the engine stood him in good stead, he would raise Lascelles in easy time.

Slowly, the rage died out of Hudson's grimy face, and a grin replaced it. He knew that engine better than Peter Parsons did. He had wrestled with its vagaries for a night and half a day. He did not believe that it would last out. He would have wagered a ton of copra to a fathom of shell-money that it would not last.

He had been tempted to demand a passage on the canoe at the pistol's point, rather than trust to Ezra Hunk's old tin can. At the pistol's point Parsons had compelled him to change crafts. Kit Hudson grinned as it came into his mind that, ere long, the sea-lawyer of Lukwe would repent it.

He stared hard after the vanishing motor-boat, and then turned to the black crew.

"You feller boys, you washy-washy along Lascelles!" he said. He waved a hand at the distant mountain-top across the sea. "This white master pay you plenty too much, along you make Lascelles altogether too quick!"

"Yes, sar!" answered the Ysabel boys, and they kneeled to the paddles again, and the canoe glided on.

Hudson, standing in the stern, watched the motor-boat. It was hardly more than a speck now, between him and the island he was making for. The sound of the motor died away on the sea.



But the keen eyes of the mate of the Dawn noted that the speck did not diminish further. It remained in sight instead of vanishing. And then slowly it increased in size.

The canoe was overhauling it. Hudson's grin broadened. There was no sound from the engine on the wind; the engine was as dead as cold pork. Hudson chuckled. Already, he reckoned, Peter Parsons had repented of the bargain.

"Feller tick-tock no stop, sar!" said one of the Ysabel boys.

"He no stop any more altogether!" grinned Hudson. "You feller boy, you steer plenty clear along that feller tick-tock boat, along that feller no shoot along us feller, gun belong him."

"Yes, sar!"

Closer the Lalinge canoe drew to the "tick-tock" boat, now lying once more like a log on the sea, as when Dandy Peter had first sighted it. Kit Hudson grinned at Dandy Peter, standing up, with a good many oily smudges on his white ducks. He, like the craft's former owner, had been wrestling with the petrol engine, but not so successfully.

In the bright sunlight, his dark, wicked face could be seen, working with fury, and his revolver was in his hand. What was the matter with Ezra Hunk's craft was not, as Dandy Peter had supposed, a temporary engine trouble. The wretched thing had conked out for good, and the sea-lawyer of Lukwe was stranded.

Kit Hudson laughed aloud.

**D**ANDY PETER was watching for the canoe to overhaul him—to change back! The mate of the Dawn was not likely to give him a chance of changing back! He waved a hand at the distant figure of the Lukwe lawyer, and rapped an order to the Ysabel boys to steer clear. The canoe made a wide slant to the west, to pass the motor-boat, out of pistol shot.

The Ysabel boys were grinning, with a flash of white teeth from their black faces. They were glad enough to be rid of Dandy Peter, and his present predicament amused them.

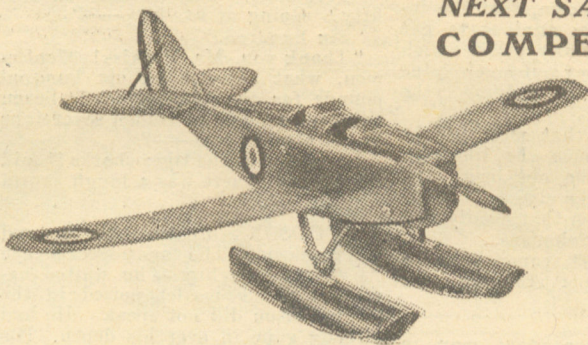
Crack, crack! came down the wind, faint and far. The sea-lawyer of Lukwe was firing. Bullet after bullet spat from his revolver. The mate of the Dawn, laughing, waved his hat in return. The canoe rushed on, driven by swiftly flashing paddles.

Once more the motor-boat diminished to a speck—this time astern of the canoe. Hudson, looking back, had a last glimpse of Dandy Peter brandishing his fists, almost dancing with rage. The dapper figure in white ducks vanished from sight, and Hudson, grinning, set his face towards Lascelles.

Swiftly the paddles flashed. Darker against the blue sky grew the verdant hill; below it the palm-trees nodded, and the white beach gleamed. The motor-boat was far out of sight under the sea line astern when the canoe ran the reef passage and paddled into the lagoon.

Whether the mate of the Dawn was in time or not, Dandy Peter Parsons

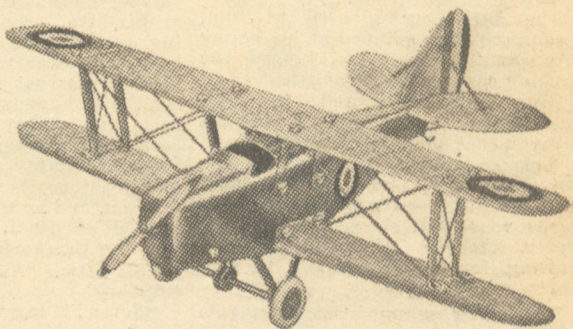
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MODEL  
RAILWAY  
—IS SHOWN  
on PAGE 2



was hopelessly out of the race, thanks to his own rascality.

The fierce heat of the tropical day was over. There was a crowd up the beach—traders, planters, natives. A dozen vessels were at anchor in the lagoon; four or five motor-boats moored along the coral quay. Lascelles was a large island, a centre of trade, and well populated; and there were always schooners or luggers in the lagoon.

But there was seldom such a bunch of shipping as Hudson saw now. The Crackerjack auction had brought skippers and traders from far and near. From some of the schooners, boats were pulling beachward, from which Hudson reckoned that the auction at Macfadyen's warehouse was not yet on, or at all events, not yet over.

He was in time; and he grinned cheerfully at the thought that he owed it to Dandy Peter!

With a last effort, the sweating black boys drove the canoe across the lagoon, and it thudded on the sand. Hudson leaped ashore. He threw a handful of silver among the canoe's crew, drawing a cackle of delight from the Ysabel boys, for it was more than twice what Peter Parsons had engaged to pay them for the trip.

Then he ran up the beach, and joined the crowd that was streaming towards a large warehouse behind the row of bungalows. White men and natives stared at the grimy figure of the usually neat and natty mate of the Dawn. Hudson would have given

anything—except his chance of getting possession of the Crackerjack—for a bathe and a change.

But there was no time—he was among the late-comers, and he heard the voice of the auctioneer as he reached the warehouse. Just as he was, oily, grimy, sunbaked, drenched with spray and perspiration, the mate of the Dawn went in, and the voice of Macfadyen, the auctioneer, fell on his ears as he entered:

"Three hundred and seventy-five! Three-seventy-five I'm bid! Who goes better than three-seventy-five?"

### Going—Going—Gone!

**T**HE warehouse was crowded. Macfadyen, a red-faced man, in cotton shirt, with a big grass hat on the back of his head, stood at an upturned packing-case, which served him as a table, a mallet in his hand.

Skippers, traders, beachcombers, flotsam and jetsam of the beaches, crowded round, and Hudson recognised many acquaintances in the throng, and nodded to them. But it was evidently curiosity that had drawn most of them there, for the bidding was not brisk. Even the fact that seven thousand pounds in golden sovereigns had gone down in the brig on the Suna-Suna reef did not seem to tempt out the bids.

For that deadly reef was well known, as also were the head-hunting cannibals who swarmed in the bushy isles round about it. And it was



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rumoured, if not known, that the insurance people were anxious to get shut of the hulk at any price, which did not look as if they put much value on the chance of salving the sovereigns.

Hudson guessed that most of the bidding came from men who, like himself; had known the old brig, and fancied that she had a chance of sticking together, even on that deadly reef in the surf-beaten Solomons.

"Four hundred!" came from a black-bearded skipper standing near Hudson.

"Four-twenty!"

This came from a stout man in white drill, the island agent of the Pacific Company.

"Four-fifty!" said Kit Hudson quietly.

The auctioneer glanced at him, recognised him, grinned at his grimy face, and nodded. He tapped the packing-case with the mallet.

"Four-fifty I'm offered!" he said. "Gentlemen, gentlemen, I needn't tell you that there are seven thousand pounds in golden sovereigns in the strong-room of the Crackerjack. And the last news was that her top-masts were still showing above the water. Seven thousand pounds waiting for a bold skipper to pick up."

"And how many black cannibals waiting for him to come and pick it up?" asked one of the traders, and there was a laugh.

"Four-seventy-five!" said the agent of the Pacific Company.

Hudson felt a sinking at the heart. According to report, bidding for the wreck had not been expected to run into hundreds. His own resources were limited to five hundred pounds. King of the Islands could have put up as much, had he stood in with his comrade. But Ken King was not there—for once he was not by his comrade's side when he needed him.

King of the Islands had sailed north, while Hudson was driving south. He was in this venture alone. He set his teeth. He felt, he knew, that the old brig was holding together on Suna-Suna; that a bold man who did not fear to take his life in his hands had a handsome chance of handling a fortune. He was not going to be beaten.

"Five hundred!" rapped the mate of the Dawn.

The black-bearded skipper gave a surly grunt. Evidently his limit had been reached and passed. But the man in white drill, after a keen look at Hudson, drawled carelessly:

"Five-twenty-five!"

Hudson's eyes gleamed. He had not expected to find himself against the Pacific Company. If they wanted the wreck, their resources were unlimited, and he was a beaten man. But he had little doubt that they had given their agent a limit. Almost without thinking, he barked:

"Five-fifty!"

There was a stir of renewed interest in the crowd. Nobody had imagined that the bidding would reach five

hundred—least of all, perhaps, the auctioneer. He grinned a cheerful grin.

"Five-fifty! Any advance on five-fifty? Going at five-fifty—"

"Six hundred!"

"Thank you, Mr. Purkiss! Gentlemen, what advance on six hundred pounds for the Crackerjack? Seven thousand pounds in golden sovereigns in her strong-room—"

"Along with the tiger-sharks!" said a voice, and there was a laugh again.

**H**UDSON breathed hard and deep. The auctioneer's eye was on him—he waited expectantly, his mallet poised in the air. Hudson did not speak. He had already gone in over his depth. His face set hard and grim.

"Going for six hundred!" said Macfadyen. "There's still time to speak, Mr. Hudson! Don't let your skipper down. Going, going—"

"Six-fifty!" rapped Hudson, throwing prudence to the winds. That long and weary drive down from Lalinge was not going for nothing—somehow, anyhow, he was going to raise the money—he was going to raise the Crackerjack!

The combined effect of weariness and excitement was strong on Kit Hudson, and he was not quite so cool-headed as usual. He was going to buy the Crackerjack!

"Six-fifty! Any advance on six-fifty—"

"Seven!" came quietly from the agent of the Pacific Company.

"Seven-fifty!" from Kit Hudson. He was utterly reckless now.

"Eight hundred!"

There was a buzz in Macfadyen's warehouse. The bidding was now between the two of them—the mate of the Dawn and the agent of the Pacific Company. It was taken for granted by the men who knew Hudson that he was bidding for his skipper as well as for himself; they were well known to be partners and comrades who shared alike in all their enterprises.

Macfadyen might have doubted whether Hudson alone could have stood by the reckless bidding he was putting up. As it was, he never thought of doubting, for King of the Islands was good for the sum twice told. All eyes were fixed on the mate of the Dawn now—keenest of all Mr. Purkiss', for the Pacific Company's agent had reached his limit now, and could not bid more without further instructions.

For a second Kit Hudson paused, but that mood of reckless resolve was strong on him, and his pause was only for a second.

"Eight-fifty!" he said.

"Eight-fifty I am offered! Going at eight-fifty—"

All glances swept round at the agent of the Pacific Company. Mr. Purkiss shrugged his shoulders.

"Going, going at eight-fifty—the hulk of the Crackerjack, with seven thousand golden sovereigns in her strong-room, and her top-masts still showing over the water, going, going—"

The auctioneer paused and stared hard at Mr. Purkiss. But the agent

of the Pacific Company only shrugged his shoulders again. He had bid to the limit prescribed by his employers, and he was done.

"Going, going—" Once more the auctioneer paused, and then the mallet came down with a bang on the packing-case. "Gone! Mr. Hudson, the hulk of the Crackerjack is yours, for eight hundred and fifty pounds."

"Mine!" breathed Kit Hudson. He passed his hand over his grimy, perspiring brow.

He had bought the Crackerjack! He was almost dizzy. He knew that the tough old brig was holding together, that the salvage of seven thousand pounds waited on the Suna-Suna reef for a bold man to pick it up—at least he was sure of it. And it was his!

He had beaten Dandy Peter in the race, he had beaten the Pacific Company and all rivals in the auction—and he had bought the brig on the reef for eight hundred and fifty pounds! And he had barely five hundred pounds in the wide world! What had he done?

He stood leaning against a stack of copra sacks, staring almost dazedly at the good-humoured, grinning face of Mr. Macfadyen. The auction was over, the crowd breaking up. The stream of humanity that had poured into the warehouse was now pouring out under the sunset, excitedly discussing the sale and the unexpected high price that had been reached.

Nine in ten were of opinion that King of the Islands and his mate would be sorry for a bad bargain. Only Hudson knew that it was his own bargain, and that King of the Islands had no hand in it, or knowledge of it, and was hundreds of miles away! What had he done?

The smiling auctioneer came over to him. Mr. Macfadyen, at all events, was pleased and satisfied with that successful sale. His tap on Hudson's arm awoke him from a deep reverie, and brought him back to his surroundings. The mate of the Dawn stared at him almost stupidly.

"You win, Mr. Hudson," said Macfadyen genially, "and if you'll step along with me to my office—"

"Oh!" stammered Hudson. "Ay, ay! I'm coming."

The warehouse was deserted now. Hudson went out with Macfadyen like a man in a dream. What had he done? He had bought the Crackerjack, as he had been determined to do, but he could not pay for it! He had only to pay, at the moment, ten per cent of the purchase price, with ample time to get the balance along—if there was anywhere for it to come from! Was there?

Mr. Macfadyen chatted cheerily as they walked along the beach to his bungalow. Hudson did not hear a word. He was wondering dizzily how he had landed in this scrape, and how he was going to get out of it. In the auctioneer's office he duly paid over the deposit and received his receipt. Then he went along to the bungalow of a trader he knew to get a bath and a change still like a man in a dream.

Afterwards he walked on the beach, trying to think it out. He had

(Continued on page 18)



