

The MODERN BOY

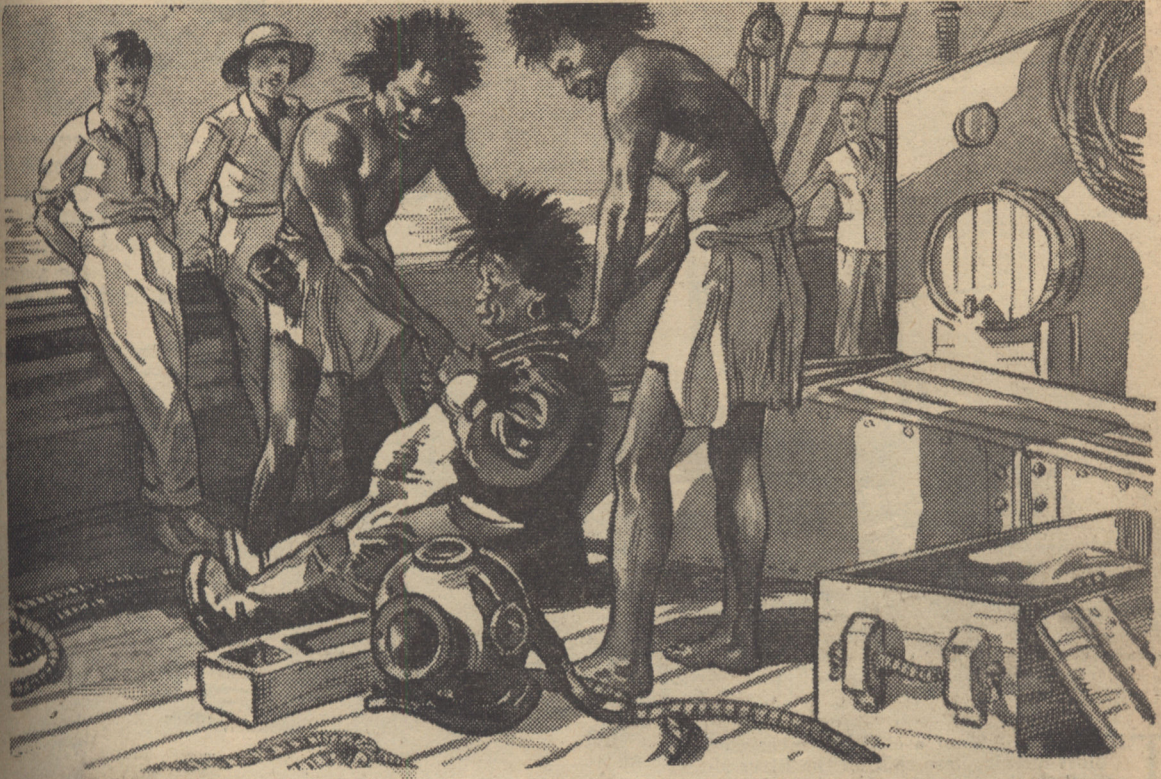
EVERY SATURDAY
WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 8TH 1934
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2^D

*Boys of the
"Conway"
School!*



SEVEN THOUSAND SOVEREIGNS AT KING OF THE ISLANDS' FEET!



As they squeezed him into the diving dress, Danny the cooky-boy already pictured himself as the richest Kanaka in all the South Seas.

DANNY THE DIVER

Cannibals—sharks—and trickery lie between Ken King and the salvage of the South Seas wreck, and only the fat cooky-boy can solve the mystery of the Treasure! . . . By CHARLES HAMILTON

Koko's Brain-wave!

"YOU making sail, Ken King?" asked Dandy Peter Parsons, the sea-lawyer of Lukwe.

"No!" snapped King of the Islands, the boy skipper of the ketch Dawn.

"Why not?" demanded Dandy Peter.

Ken did not answer that question. Indeed, he hardly knew why he was still standing off Suna-Suna, between the bushy island and the reef, now that the attempt to raise the sunken gold of the wrecked Crackerjack had failed. Yet he was loth to go.

He turned impatiently away from Peter Parsons, his eyes on his shipmate, Kit Hudson. Hudson was seated on the taffrail, his hands deep in his pockets, his face clouded with gloom. It was seldom that the sturdy Australian mate of the Dawn was knocked over like this. But the bitter disappointment seemed to have taken all the heart out of him.

He had risked his all in this salvage venture with Parsons; had

banked on the old brig holding together on the reef—and he had been right. The Crackerjack was there, where she had sunk, with seven thousand sovereigns on board.

But Dandy Peter reported that the gold was no longer in the wreck!

On the deck lay the diving-suit in which the sea-lawyer of Lukwe had been down to the wreck. It lay there neglected—it was useless now. The sun was setting over Suna-Suna; the shadows of the mangroves lengthening on the water. In the black bush on the island the cannibal chief, Komo-omo, and his savages lay hidden. It was no place for white men to linger. Dandy Peter, at least, was anxious to be gone. But King of the Islands had not made up his mind to sail.

"Look here." Peter Parsons approached him again. "What's the good of hanging on? Do you want to wait till Komo-omo gets his courage up for more trouble?"

"If you're afraid of the blacks you

shouldn't have come on this trip!" snapped the boy trader.

Dandy Peter's eyes glittered.

"I've been too near their cooking-ovens to want to go near them again!" he snarled. "I fancy Hudson feels the same! What's the good of hanging on, now that we know there's nothing doing?"

Ken turned on him and looked him straight in the eyes.

"I believe you've double-crossed my shipmate!" he said bluntly. He pointed to the diving-suit. "You got that outfit—too small for any man but a shrimp like you to get into. Hudson can't go down. I can't go down. Naked diving's impossible. And I don't trust your word that you found nothing but silt in the wreck!"

"I had to take what I could get—we were short of money on this trip!" said the Lukwe sea-lawyer sullenly. "That outfit was on sale cheap, and I was lucky to get it. I've been

(Continued on page 18)

Danny the Diver!

(Continued from page 15)

through the wreck of the Crackerjack in it, and there's nothing there but sand and seaweed.

"I tell you there's a hole a fathom wide in the old hulk, and the gold's gone—sunk fathoms deep in the sea-sand. It's as hard on me as on Hudson—I've lost as much as he has! But there's no sense in hanging on here till the niggers get after us again!"

"I don't take your word!" said Ken icily.

"Then what are you going to do?" demanded Dandy Peter savagely. "Wait here till the cannibals get us?"

"That's for me to decide! You can belay your jawing tackle till I do."

DANDY PETER gritted his teeth savagely as he lounged away.

He was at Ken's mercy, for he had no means of leaving Suna-Suna. His own cutter, the Sea-Cat, in which he and Hudson had come on the salvage venture, had fled because its native crew were afraid of the cannibals, leaving Kit and himself stranded on the reef. They had been prisoners of Komo-omo until Ken had turned up and rescued them.

Ken's glance followed him with deep distrust. What was the sea-lawyer's hurry to make sail? He was not afraid of the cannibals of Suna-Suna. Rascal as he was, he was incapable of fear. Was it an accident that he had brought a diving outfit too small for any man but himself to get into? King of the Islands did not believe so.

Ken's eyes lingered for a moment or two on Koko, the brown-skinned boatswain of the Dawn. The brawny Koko was a wonderful diver. If there was a chance of naked diving succeeding, Koko was the man to try it on. But the boy trader shook his head. Even Koko could not remain below water long enough to search in the recesses of the sunken Crackerjack. And then—there were the sharks!

There was a clatter forward as Danny the cooky-boy came out of his galley with a bucket of garbage to slip over the side. Black fins and snouts glimmered in the sea as the garbage shot into the water. The fat cooky-boy, with a grin on his brown face, pelted the sharks with fragments from the bucket. The Hiva-Oa crew, chuckling, joined in the game. There was a cheery cackle of merriment from Lompo and Lufu, Tomoo and Kolulo, as they pelted the savage monsters of the deep.

Ken, at any other time, would have smiled at the scene. Now he shook his head. The swarm of sharks that had risen was a reminder of the deadly peril of naked diving off Suna-Suna.

He crossed to where Kit Hudson sat on the taffrail. The mate of the Dawn glanced up at him gloomily.

"May as well make sail, Ken," he said. "There's nothing doing here.

I've played the goat—as you warned me at Lalinge. The game's up."

"Is it?" asked Ken slowly.

Hudson made a weary gesture.

"Parsons has been down. He's found nothing. I might have foreseen it—the hulk's there, but the gold's gone!"

"Are you sure of that?" asked King of the Islands quietly.

"Parsons has rooted through the old hulk for it—he knows."

"Ay, ay—he knows!" said Ken. "But has he told what he knows? Look here, Kit. You came out here with Parsons in his cutter to save the gold of the Crackerjack. He brought a diving outfit too small for you to get into. It was no accident! He could have got a full-sized suit more easily. Kit, he never meant you to go down to the wreck."

"But——" said Hudson.

"You'd have been on his cutter with him and his Lukwe boys. He planned to be the only man able to go down. If he located the gold, he never meant to tell you. He would have raised it, with you off the scene—perhaps at night when you were in your bunk. I don't know what trickery he had in mind, but he's as full of tricks as an Island monkey. As soon as I saw that small outfit, Kit, I was sure it meant trickery!"

"And he would have sailed with the gold on board the Sea-Cat—and you'd never have known it had been raised at all. I'm sure of it, Kit—and but for the chance that his boys were scared by the cannibals and ran in the cutter and left you both on the reef, he would have got away with it."

"Then you think that the gold is there—and that he came up with a lie on his lips?" muttered Hudson.

"I think it's more likely than not. He's in a hurry to get away from here—and I can't help suspecting that he hopes to pick up his cutter at Santa Cruz, and come back on his own. I don't take his word—and I don't trust him an inch."

Hudson clenched his hands.

"But what can we do, Ken? Neither you nor I can cram into that outfit. If it's trickery, he's done me!"

A SUDDEN howl rang along the deck of the Dawn. Danny the cooky-boy, whizzing a mouldy yam through the air to land at a shark in the water just under the rail, missed his aim and landed it on the duck jacket of Peter Parsons.

Dandy Peter spun round with an angry snarl, ran at the cooky-boy, and smacked his fuzzy head with a smack that rang like a pistol-shot. Danny rolled over with a loud howl, and the sea-lawyer began to kick him along the deck.

Ken's eyes blazed. That was the way Dandy Peter was accustomed to handling his own crew on his cutter. But it was not good enough for King of the Islands.

"Belay that, Parsons!" he shouted. The sea-lawyer did not heed. He continued to kick the yelling cooky-

boy. Probably he would have hesitated to deal in the same way with Tomoo or Kolulo, Lompo or Lufu, who were big and brawny men, like most of the natives of the Marquesas. But Danny, though fat, was no taller than the dapper sea-lawyer himself. Any of the other Hiva-Oa boys could have picked up Peter Parsons in one hand; and would probably have done so. The hapless Danny only rolled and yelled.

King of the Islands made a rapid stride along the deck. He grasped Dandy Peter by the shoulder and swung him away from the cooky-boy with so powerful a swing that he went reeling and staggering across the deck, to collapse in a huddle in the scuppers.

Danny, still yelling, dived into his galley and vanished.

Peter Parsons scrambled to his feet, his face red with rage. His hand flew to the back of his belt, where he was used to packing a revolver. But there was no "gun" there now.

"You swab!" he roared. "By James, I——"

"You won't handle my crew, you Lukwe blackguard!" snapped Ken, his eyes flashing at the sea-lawyer. "Lay a finger on a man here again, and I'll knock seven bells out of you!"

For a moment it seemed that the dapper dandy of Lukwe would spring at him like a tiger. It was well for him that he did not; for Ken, convinced of his treachery towards the mate of the Dawn, was in a mood to give him the thrashing of his life. But Dandy Peter controlled his rage and fury and went stamping below.

Koko, the brown boatswain, glanced after him, and then glanced forward at the scared face of Danny, peering out of the galley. The sight of the two of them together had put a new thought into Koko's mind. He tapped his white master on the elbow.

"Koko savvy, sar," he murmured.

Ken glanced at him.

"This feller Koko, sar, tinkee plenty too much, head belong him," said the boatswain. "This feller Koko no common Kanaka, sar. Tinkee all samee white feller, sar, head belong him!"

The boy trader smiled.

"What thing you tinkee, Koko, head belong you?" he asked.

"All white feller along this hooker, sar, big feller, all Kanaka feller big feller, only cooky-boy little feller," said Koko. He made a gesture towards the diving outfit on the deck. "What name Danny no go down along Crackerjack, sar, along that little feller suit, sar?"

"My sainted Sam!" Ken ejaculated. He gave the brown boatswain a smack on his brawny shoulder, and Koko grinned. The boy trader ran back to Hudson. "Kit, old man—Kit! I was a lubber not to think of it myself—we can cram Danny into the diving-suit——"

"Danny!" repeated Hudson blankly. "Why not?" said Ken, his eyes dancing. "He's no taller than Parsons, though he's twice as wide.

He can cram in—and shall! Kit, we're going to know at sunrise tomorrow whether the gold is still in the old hulk on the reef!"

Dandy Peter's Pocket-knife!

DANDY PETER PARSONS caught his breath. The blaze that shot into his eyes was so fierce and savage that for a moment his face was that of a demon. He was coming up the companion to go on deck, when he stopped at the sound of voices above. Keeping back out of sight, the sea-lawyer listened, gritting his teeth with rage. King of the Islands was speaking, hardly ten feet from where he stood out of sight.

The last glimmer of the sunset was red on the sea. The island of Suna-Suna was a black mass to the west; eastward, the eternal surf creamed and gleamed over the long reef. Danny had come aft, and was standing before the skipper and mate of the Dawn, an uneasy expression on his fat, sly face.

Danny, whose faults were numberless, supposed that he had been called before the white masters on account of some delinquency, and wondered whether it meant merely a reprimand or a dose of the lawyer-cane. But he was relieved as he heard what Ken had to say.

The furtive look left his plump face, and he assumed an air of importance as he realised that he was wanted for a service that neither Kit nor Ken could possibly have performed.

"You're short enough to get into that diving-suit, Danny," said the boy trader. "You're fat, but you can squeeze in. I want you to go down to the wreck in the morning."
"Yes, sar," said Danny cheerfully. "You no 'fraid along feller shark?" asked Hudson.

Danny grinned. He was very far from being a hero, but he was not afraid of sharks.

"No, sar," he answered. "This feller Danny plenty too much brave feller, sar—no 'fraid along feller shark! This feller Danny likee plenty too much go along wreck, sar, s'pose white master sing out. What white master give this feller Danny?"

The shipmates grinned.
"White master give Danny big feller tick-tock, big feller knife," said Ken. "S'pose findee feller gold along wreck give Danny five-five piecee gold."

The cooky-boy gave a chirrup of delight. A clock and a knife for going down was a rich reward. But twenty-five pieces of gold, if he found the treasure, was a reward beyond the dreams of a Kanaka cooky-boy.

Danny pictured himself when the ketch made Lalinge again going ashore the richest cooky-boy in the South Seas; buying strings of cartridge-clips for his fat ears, a gold ring for his pudgy nose, and a big silver watch to hang round his neck—not for the purpose of telling the time, but for the delight of listening to the ticking!

Boys of the 'Conway' School!

(Continued from page 17)

for the cleanliness of certain parts of the ship.

THE port and starboard foretops, for example, are responsible for the port and starboard sides respectively of the upper deck. The mizentopmen, who, being small of stature, are invariably known as "Squawkers" or "Mizensquealers," have the lower deck, and so on, while the motor-boats and the bath-room are in the charge of supernumerary cadet-captains.

At 8.15 there is P.T. (physical training) on the upper deck, and at 8.30 "Hands to dress!" is sounded, and a quarter of an hour later, morning divisions—the two divisions falling in on their respective port and starboard sides of the main deck.

As each is marched off after divisions, the fore and main tops remain on deck to rig school. Desks, hitherto neatly stowed at the ship's sides, are swung out, and the hinged flaps fixed into position.

The benches used at breakfast have now fresh duties to perform. Blackboards and folding easels are unhooked from the beams, canvas screens are hung across the deck, dividing it into classrooms, where navigation, nautical astronomy, and all the usual painful subjects of school are taught.

The conference on the after-deck of the Dawn was interrupted by Danny doing a double-shuffle of sheer exuberance.

"That's that, then," Ken laughed. "If Danny can't cram in, we'll take in a reef of his fat somehow!"

And Hudson chuckled. He was in a bright and hopeful mood now. Parsons' report, when he came up from the hulk, that the gold was gone had dashed all his hopes. But, on reflection, he had no doubt that Ken was right. Whether the gold was there or not, Dandy Peter's word was worth nothing. On the morrow they would know.

"Bring that diving-suit here, Koko!" called out Ken. "We'll see how Danny can handle it!"

Koko and Lompo brought the heavy outfit. The Hiva-Oa crew gathered round, looking on with grinning faces, as the cooky-boy was fitted into it. There was a cackle as Danny disappeared inside the suit. It was very roomy for the slim, dapper sea-lawyer of Lukwe, but a close fit for Danny. He filled the suit, and filled it well; but he got into it, and his dusky face grinned, and his white teeth flashed from the interior of the huge helmet.

"Good egg!" said Hudson. "It will work, Ken! That fat little rascal is worth his weight in shell-money!"

King of the Islands nodded in great satisfaction. The demonstration having been a success, the outfit was peeled off Danny, and the happy cooky-boy went singing back to his galley. He sang in his own dialect of Hiva-Oa, improvising his song as he went along in the manner

School ends for the morning at 12.30 and desks, benches, blackboards, and all the paraphernalia of school vanish from the deck in the same mysterious manner as they appeared. Sweepers clear up the paper (some of it covered with the mystic symbols of navigation, others, I fear, with the not-so-mystic symbols of noughts and crosses! The main deck, a few minutes ago the scene of so much learnedness, is now clear for dinner.

That is the way of the Conway—every deck serves a multitude of purposes, and is left clear of obstruction for that reason. Besides being the "dining-hall" and "school-room," it can be transformed at a moment's notice into a church or dance-hall. While at night the lower or orlop decks are the scenes of peaceful, slumbering humanity, sleeping the deep sleep that only a sailor knows.

GAMES? There's going ashore every Saturday and Wednesday afternoon, and almost every evening in the summer term. Tennis, cricket, swimming, and boat-sailing in the summer, and Rugger in the winter and spring, on the best playing-fields within fifty miles of Liverpool.

Although there is much time provided for exercise, athletics and sport, spare time hardly seems to exist; but fun does—one hundred per cent of it! And where there are cheery, laughing faces, there you will also find healthy, virile bodies and happy hearts.

Happy ship! Chummy ship! She's a grand ship—the Conway!

of the Kanakas; and the burden of it was that Danny was going to be rich like a white feller master with five-five piecee gold!

PETER PARSONS descended the companion steps again. In the cabin of the Dawn, where he had a berth on the lockers, he sat down to think it out. Luckily, it was too late for the essay to be made that day; he had the night to work in. On his own cutter, the Sea-Cat, he would have been master of the situation, but it was useless to think of that now.

He was on board Ken King's ketch, and by sheer ill-luck, as he regarded it, on that ketch one of the native crew was small enough to use the diving-suit. From the beginning, the unscrupulous sea-lawyer had planned to rob Hudson of his share in the salvage, and now it looked as if his cunning scheming was knocked to pieces. But Dandy Peter was not beaten yet. He put in some hard thinking, then went on deck.

When he came up, King of the Islands told him what had been decided—not guessing that the sea-lawyer knew it already. Dandy Peter had himself in control now. To make any opposition was futile. And he gave a careless assent.

"Hang on here another day, and try it on," he said. "If you think there's a doubt in the matter, I'll be as glad as anybody to make sure. But, by James, I reckon I'll be ready to eat any of the sovereigns that your cooky-boy roots out of that old hulk!"

Ken looked at him doubtfully. So

Danny the Diver!

well did the sea-lawyer play his part that he wondered whether, after all, he had been mistaken. Certainly Dandy Peter did not seem in the least uneasy at the prospect of the sunken wreck being searched on the morrow.

"You don't trust me," Dandy Peter said. "Leave it at that. The niggers on Suna-Suna have had a lesson, and we're safe here for another day." And he lounged away, whistling.

At eight bells, midnight, King of the Islands went to his bunk in the state-room, leaving Kit Hudson in charge of the deck. Peter Parsons had already turned in in his berth on the cabin lockers, and seemed to be fast asleep as the boy trader passed him on his way to the state-room. On the lockers on the other side was stretched the mighty form of Koko, who also berthed in the cabin. Ken gave him a good-night in passing; but the boatswain did not reply, and seemed to be as fast asleep as Dandy Peter.

It was an hour later, and Ken was fast asleep in the state-room, when there was a faint movement in the cabin.

Dandy Peter slipped from the lockers, almost without a sound. In the deep gloom his eyes turned towards the boatswain sleeping on the other side and he listened intently. But only steady and regular breathing came from Koko. For a minute the sea-lawyer stood listening, then he trod away in his socks to the companion, and crept silently and stealthily up.

And then—if he had known it—the giant figure of the boatswain rose without a sound. Koko's eyes gleamed in the dusk as he stole noiselessly after the sea-lawyer. Koko had been as fast asleep as the rascal of Lukwe—exactly as much and no more!

Dandy Peter, little dreaming of the silent, shadowy figure flitting behind him, reached the deck and looked out of the companion. There was a dim starlight on the sea. The ketch burned no lights, which might have been a guide to the savages of Suna-Suna. In the dimness of the deck, Parsons made out the figure of Kit Hudson standing by the rail, looking away across the water towards the island. Of the crew he could see nothing, but he had no doubt that they were on their sleeping-mats in the fore-castle or on the forward deck.

For another minute he stood silent, listening, watching. Hudson, leaning on the rail and watching shoreward, did not turn his head. He was thinking of a possible visit from Komo-omo and his savage men, and was on the watch for it. Dandy Peter stepped out silently.

Across the deck, where it had been left lying ready for use on the morrow, was the diving-suit. Dandy Peter took a pocket-knife from his pocket and opened the largest blade with his teeth. Silent as a snake he crept across the shadowy deck and stopped where the outfit lay.

Silently he groped for the air-tube. On the tube all depended when the diver went down, without that descent

to the sunken Crackerjack was impossible. Once it had been ripped into sections by a keen blade no repair was possible till the ketch made a port.

A malicious grin spread over the sea-lawyer's handsome, wicked face as he grasped the tube in his left hand and the knife in his right. They were going to send Danny down in the diving-outfit, were they, to prove that he had lied when he reported that the gold was gone? Neither Danny nor any other living man could descend to the wreck when that blade had severed the air-tube!

Suddenly a hand of iron grasped the sea-lawyer by the back of the neck, and he was dragged over backwards with a crash. The knife flew from his hand, a startled gasp came from his lips, and he struggled wildly in the grasp of that unexpected assailant. And through the stillness of the night came the angry roar of Koko.

"You altogether too much bad feller Parsons!"

"Fling Him to the Sharks!"

KING OF THE ISLANDS started out of slumber. There was a scuffling and trampling on the deck, a panting and shouting. The boy trader leaped from his bunk, grasped a revolver, and dashed across the cabin to the companion. His first idea was that the cannibals of Suna-Suna were attacking. Almost in a twinkling he was leaping out of the companion, revolver in hand.

But it was no attack from the cannibals. On the deck, Dandy Peter, screaming with rage and fright, was swinging in the mighty arms of Koko. Kit Hudson was grasping the angry boatswain by the arm. The Hiva-Oa crew, startled out of slumber, had gathered round with excited faces and wildly gleaming eyes in the dusk.

"What on earth—" panted King of the Islands.

"Order your nigger to let me go!" shrieked Parsons. "The black swab's mad—make him let me go, confound you."

"Koko—what—"

"Me cathee this plenty bad feller Parsons, sar!" roared Koko. "Tinkee plenty good this feller go finish along sharks, along sea, sar."

"Hold on!" shouted King of the Islands, and he caught at the boatswain's arm. "What the thump's happened, Hudson?"

"I've a mind to let Koko throw him into the sea," panted Hudson, his face white with rage. "If the Kanaka hadn't been watching him we should have been done! The dirty hound crept on deck with a knife to cut the air-tube of the diving-suit, and Koko caught him at it."

"It's a lie!" yelled Dandy Peter.

"What's your knife doing here open?" snarled Hudson savagely. Lompo held up the knife Dandy Peter had dropped. "What are you doing on deck at all—creeping up so softly that I never heard you, ten feet away? You lying, double-crossing scum, you found the gold on the hulk and told us lies, and you would have prevented us

from finding out the truth! Ken, let the bo'sun chuck him into the sea!"

"Plenty good that bad feller go along shark, sar!" said Koko.

King of the Islands grasped the sea-lawyer and wrenched him away from the boatswain. Parsons stood unsteadily on his feet, gasping for breath, his face distorted with rage. He had expected to be suspected at least, when the air-tube was found cut in the morning. But the damage would have been done then! Now it was not done—and he was not merely suspected, but his treachery was known and proved!

Koko's eyes glittered at him; it was only his white master's authority that prevented the Kanaka from flinging him headlong over the side. And Hudson was almost in a mood to let him deal as he would with the traitor.

Ken glanced at the open knife in Lompo's hand, and then fixed his eyes on the panting sea-lawyer.

"So that was your game, Peter Parsons!" he said, in a low, cutting voice of contempt. "You may as well own up now that you found the gold on the Crackerjack when you went down, and lied to us when you came up."

"It's a lie!" muttered Parsons huskily. "I—"

"Belay it! You'd have wrecked the diving-outfit; and but for my Kanaka watching you you'd have got away with it. You won't have another chance!"

"Are you going to let your niggers fling a white man to the sharks?" sneered Dandy Peter.

"No! I'm going to clap you in irons!" answered Ken grimly. "You won't have another chance of mischief on board this craft till we've finished with salving the Crackerjack!"

Ken rapped out an order, and Tomoo went for the irons—seldom used on board the Dawn. They clinked as the Kanaka came back. Dandy Peter panted with fury.

"You swab!" he yelled. "You won't iron me! By James, you'll never—"

"Seize him!" said Ken quietly.

The Kanakas closed in on Dandy Peter. Spitting with rage the sea-lawyer of Lukwe fought madly as they grasped him. Struggling fiercely he swayed and reeled along the deck till he went down with a crash and Koko's sinewy knee was planted on him, pinning him down. Then the irons were put on his wrists and locked there.

Panting with fury, Dandy Peter squatted on the deck a helpless prisoner.

And he was still a prisoner in clinking irons when the sun rose again on the Pacific and the new day dawned which was to see at long last the salving of the sunken gold of the Crackerjack!

More thrills—and a lot of joy!—for you to share in Neat Saturday's brilliant story by Charles Hamilton. One of the Top-of-the-Bill yarns in the EXTRA-SPECIAL 44-PAGE CHRISTMAS NUMBER of MODERN BOY. The FINEST ISSUE EVER PRODUCED!