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The
MODERN BOY

EVERY SATURDAY No 358 VOL 14
WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 15TH 1934

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*The
Christmas Mail!*

KEN KING and SOLOMON ISLANDS GOLD!



Excitement mounted to fever pitch as Danny dropped handfuls of golden coins from his sack into the whaleboat.

The COOKY-BOYS HAUL!

Promoted from the pots and pans of the galley to deep-sea diver, Danny the Kanaka rifles Davy Jones' Treasury! By CHARLES HAMILTON

Sunk in the Crackerjack!

LOWER the whaleboat!" Ken King's voice rang cheerily across the deck of the Dawn. The morning sunshine streamed down on the Pacific, and all was activity on King of the Islands' ketch, hove-to between the reef and the cannibal island of Suna-Suna.

Only one face was dark and gloomy. It was that of Dandy Peter Parsons, the sea-lawyer of Lukwe. Scowling like a demon, he watched the lowering of the boat and the Kanaka seamen slinging the diving suit into it.

Danny the cooky-boy came along from his galley, a huge grin on his fat, dusky face. Danny was an important person that morning. He was the only one of the Dawn's crew small enough to cram into the diving outfit, and on him depended whether the gold of the wrecked Crackerjack, sunk on the reef, would be found. And Danny strutted with his importance.

Dandy Peter scowled at him blackly. The fact that the fat little cooky-boy could cram into the outfit

spelt disaster to the plans he had so cunningly laid to cheat Kit Hudson, the mate of the Dawn, who was his partner in the venture to raise the Crackerjack's gold, out of his share of the seven thousand golden sovereigns. As a last resource, he had attempted to destroy the diving suit, and had been clapped in irons by Ken King, the boy skipper and owner of the Dawn.

As the cooky-boy went strutting and grinning past him, the sea-lawyer's savage temper broke out. He could not use his manacled hands, but he could use his feet. He stepped away from the mizzen and shot out a foot. The grin vanished from Danny's fat face, and he uttered a fearful yell as Parsons' foot crashed on his loin-cloth, sending him sprawling along the deck.

"My sainted Sam!" ejaculated King of the Islands, as the spinning cooky-boy crashed into him and nearly knocked him backwards.

"Me solly, sar!" yelled Danny. "No can help, sar! Feller Parsons

kick this feller Danny, sar, foot belong him, altogether too much, sar!"

Not satisfied with one kick, Peter Parsons was about to follow it up with another, when Kit Hudson grasped him by the collar and swung him back. With a swing of his sinewy arm the mate of the Dawn sent Dandy Peter crashing back against the mizzen, and he collapsed at the foot of the mast. Hudson glared down at him with glinting eyes.

"You scum!" he roared. "You thieving sea-lawyer! Koko!"

"Yes, sar!" The brown boatswain came across the deck.

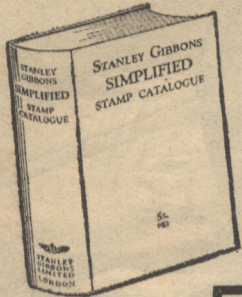
"You give this feller Parsons seven bells along lawyer-cane!"

"Yes, sar!" grinned Koko, and strode away for the lawyer-cane. Dandy Peter struggled to his feet, his eyes burning.

"If you dare—" he panted.

"You swab!" said Hudson savagely. "You're not on your cutter, the Sea-Cat, now; you're on the Dawn, and you'll toe the line on this packet!"

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The Cooky-Boy's Haul!

Koko came back with the lawyer-cane in his brown hand. Dandy Peter, his face pale with rage, yelled to Ken:

"King of the Islands! Keep your nigger off!"

Ken looked at him across the deck. Danny was wriggling and squirming from the savage kick, his fat importance for the moment quite dashed.

"You Lukwe blackguard!" said Ken. "You're getting what you've asked for. You've been warned not to handle my crew as you do your Lukwe boys on the Sea-Cat. Give him a dozen, Koko!"

There was a cackle of laughter from the Hiva-Oa boys as the brawny boatswain grasped Dandy Peter and pitched him face down on the deck. The lawyer-cane rose and fell in Koko's mighty hand.

Twelve times it lashed across the back of Peter Parsons, and his yelling rang across the blue waters, waking echoes in the bush of Suna-Suna, where lurked Chief Komo-omo and his cannibals. Parsons lay squirming when Koko had finished with him, and the shipmates of the Dawn gave him no further heed.

The diving outfit was packed in the whaleboat, and Danny dropped in, Lompo and Lufu taking the oars. The skipper and mate of the Dawn followed the Kanakas over the side, and the boat pushed off.

Koko was left in charge of the ketch, with Tomoo and Kolulo, and the three Kanakas watched as the boat's crew pulled towards the reef.

Dandy Peter dragged himself to his feet, his face white, his eyes burning, and lurched across to the rail, leaning his manacled hands on it, to watch.

It was a calm day; the sky cloudless, the sea almost as smooth as a pond away from the reef. But on the rocks of the long Suna-Suna reef there was an incessant creaming and foaming of surf. Jutting teeth of coral, swirling bursts of foam, were round the whaleboat as it pulled for a rocky islet in the midst of the half-sunken rocks.

Dandy Peter watched it with bitter eyes. All his scheming had come to naught now. Cunningly he had contrived that the diving suit should be too small for any man but himself on board the Sea-Cat, in which he and Hudson had come to Suna-Suna, to cram into. Only he could have gone down in it to seek for the gold of the wrecked brig, and Kit Hudson would have seen little of the seven thousand golden sovereigns sunk in the Crackerjack had matters gone according to plan.

But his crew had fled in the cutter from the cannibals of Suna-Suna, and only the arrival of King of the Islands in the ketch had saved him and Hudson from the cooking-ovens.

Little gratitude was there in the sea-lawyer's heart for that! On the Sea-Cat he would have "got away" with his cunning scheme; on the Dawn there happened to be one of the native crew small enough to get into the diving outfit, and that was the end of Dandy Peter's scheming!

For he knew—what the shipmates

suspected—that the gold still lay where it had sunk in the wreck. He had seen it and handled it when he went down, and came up again with a lie on his lips, declaring the gold was no longer there. And what he—Parsons—had found, Danny was going to find!

He gritted his teeth with helpless rage as he watched the boat pulling through the surf-ridden coral, and coming to a stop in calm water off the little rocky island over the spot where the old Crackerjack lay fifty feet below.

According to his compact with Hudson, they were to share and share alike in the salvage if they found it. He had planned to cheat Hudson of his share; and now, after his black treachery, he did not expect the mate of the Dawn to stand by the compact. He himself had never intended to stand by it, though Hudson had given him good faith; why should Hudson, after his treachery? He raised his manacled hands and shook his clenched fists at the distant salvage-seekers.

"Golden Quids!"

KING OF THE ISLANDS stood in the whaleboat, helping Danny on with the diving suit. It fitted him almost like a glove, and his dusky face grinned, with a gleam of white teeth, from the interior of the helmet. Lompo and Lufu kept the boat steady.

The sea was calm, a fortunate circumstance for the salvage-seekers, for in anything like a blow no craft could have lived near the Suna-Suna reef. Several times Ken's eyes had turned anxiously on the sky. But there was hardly a cloud to be seen, and only a light wind ruffled the surface of the Pacific.

Ken fastened the glass in front of the helmet, and the shipmates helped Danny over the gunwale, the Kanakas throwing their weight on the other side to keep the whaleboat on an even keel.

The rope was paid out, and the diver sank like a stone in the calm, clear water, dragged down by the heavily leaded boots. Kit Hudson leaned over the gunwale, watching him with eager eyes. Gladly the mate of the Dawn would have made the perilous descent himself to the wreck of the old brig; gladly Ken would have made it; but Dandy Peter's treachery made that impossible. They could only hope that the cooky-boy's nerve would be equal to the strain.

And Danny, though not of the stuff of which heroes are made, went about his task coolly enough. Deep waters and gliding sharks had few terrors for a Kanaka. A white man could not help thinking what might happen if there was a twist in the diving suit's air-tube. But the fuzzy head of a Kanaka was not much given to thinking. If Danny was thinking at all, it was chiefly of the gold he was to receive if he discovered the treasure of the sunken brig!

Deeper and deeper the strange-looking figure sank, till the leaded feet rested on the deck of the sunken brig, fifty feet under the boat, and gliding fishes sped away from his heavy tread.

So clear was the water that Ken and Kit could follow every movement of the diver, though it clouded a little as Danny's tread stirred up silted sand.

Slowly, lumbering along the wreck, Danny moved aft, where the after-deck and companion-hatch had been broken away and it was possible to sink into the interior of the old Crackerjack. And keen, anxious eyes watched him from above as he sank lower and disappeared into clouded water.

The shipmates waited, their hearts beating. Hudson breathed quickly, his cheeks flushed. Almost every shilling he had had gone in fitting out Dandy Peter's cutter for the salvage trip. Was it failure—or had Dandy Peter lied when he came up from the wreck and reported that the gold was gone?

Hudson was certain that he had lied—that he had found the treasure, and kept it a secret, safe in the knowledge that neither of the shipmates could get into the diving suit and that naked diving was impossible. But there was a doubt—a doubt that was to be resolved by the cooky-boy's exploration of the hulk. The seconds seemed long to the mate of the Dawn—the minutes endless.

Ken stood to gain nothing from the venture, but he was keen to see his mate succeed.

Ken touched Hudson's arm and pointed to the ketch, hove-to a cable's length off the reef.

"Look!" he said.

Hudson glanced round at the Dawn. Three brown faces looked over the teak rail—Koko's, Kolulo's, Tomoo's. And a white face—white as chalk with angry passion—watched with them: Even at the distance the hate and rage in Dandy Peter's face could be read. The shipmates saw him shake his clenched fists, and Ken smiled.

"Looks as if Dandy Peter thinks we shall have luck!" he remarked.

Hudson laughed. The sea-lawyer's expression was not to be mistaken. He knew that the salvage-seekers were going to have luck! And Hudson, laughing, waved his hand to Dandy Peter. He could imagine the feelings with which the sea-lawyer of Lukwe watched the defeat of all his schemes!

It seemed an endless time to the shipmates before the signal came from below to haul up. But it came at last, and they dragged on the rope.

From the black recesses of the wrecked brig, from the water clouded with stirred sand, festooned with clinging seaweed, the figure of the diver came into view again. Up and up it came, till the gloved hands caught the gunwale of the boat and the glass-fronted helmet looked out of the water.

The shipmates hauled, and Danny put one heavy leg over the side. Hurriedly Ken unscrewed the glass, and the grinning, dusky face of the cooky-boy glimmered at him. Hudson's voice was sharp and tense:

"You feller Danny, you see piecee gold along wreck, eye belong you?"

Danny chuckled.

"Yes, sar! This feller Danny see plenty piecee gold, eye belong him, sar! You look, sar, eye belong you!"

HE groped in the bag slung to his side. His hand came out with something in it that gleamed and glittered in the sunshine. There was a musical clinking as the cooky-boy dropped a handful of gold coins into the whaleboat. Lompo and Lufu gave a cackle of excitement, and Danny grinned from ear to ear with triumph.

"Golden quids!" roared Hudson. He caught up the coins—more than twenty of them—and ran them through his fingers, the bright gold catching the rays of the tropical sun. "Ken! Look—look! The gold of the Crackerjack! Hurrah!"

"Good luck!" said King of the Islands. "Oh, good luck!"

"I knew it!" panted Hudson. "Didn't I tell you at Lalinge, Ken, that the old brig was sticking together on Suna-Suna, with the gold in her as safe as in the Bank of Sydney? Didn't I?"

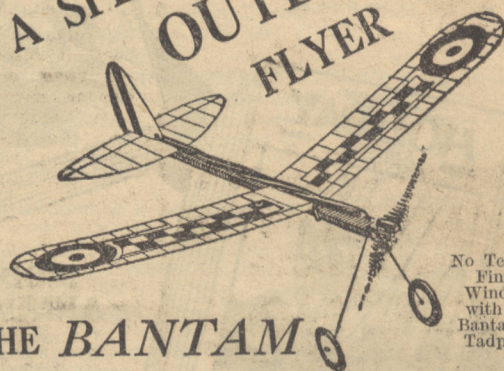
"You did, old chap!" said Ken, with a smile.

"You told me it was a mad venture, and you were right, too!" said Hudson. "If you hadn't come after me, and if I hadn't had big luck, I should have finished

(Continued on next page)

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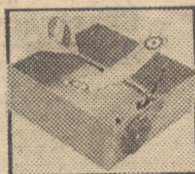
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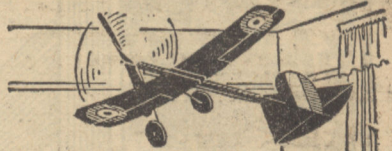
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The Cooky-Boy's Haul!

in the cooking-ovens on Suna-Suna, and the gold would have stayed there till the next hurricane broke up the Crackerjack!

"But it's worked out all right—it's plane sailing now, Ken! The chance in a thousand has come off!"

"My word, too much plenty gold!" gasped Lompo, as Danny produced handful after handful from his bag. Evidently the diver, carefully following Hudson's instructions, had found the strong-box in the captain's cabin in the sunken brig.

At the auction at Lascelles Island, when the wreck had been sold, eight hundred and fifty pounds had seemed a large sum to pay for such a slim chance of fortune. But it seemed a small enough sum now, with seven thousand sovereigns to show for it!

Danny's axe had broken open the treasure-box in deep water, and the bag was full of golden coins. Hudson counted them gleefully. Three hundred sovereigns was the result of the first trip.

"And that scoundrel Peter Parsons came up and told us that the gold was no longer there!" breathed Hudson. "The swab! The scum! The rascally lubber! No wonder he was keen to get away—and to come back later, on his own, and raise the gold, the thieving pirate!"

"Plenty more gold stop, sar!" said Danny, grinning. "Too much feller gold altogether, sar, stop along that brig!"

The glass was screwed on again, and the diver sank once more in the deep waters. This time a sack was lowered on a rope beside him, for the diver to fill. Over the gunwale of the whaleboat the shipmates watched him at work, lumbering about the sunken wreck in the heavy diving suit like some strange creature of the sea amid the seaweed. The signal to haul was again given, and the boat's crew dragged up the sack, heavy with gold.

Their eyes danced as they dragged it in, tilted it open, and a cascade of sovereigns shot out in a stream into the boat. Half a hundredweight of the precious metal, all in bright yellow Australian sovereigns, had come up in the sack.

Lompo and Lufu gazed at it in wonder. Never had their eyes beheld such treasure; indeed, they would hardly have believed that there was so much gold in the wide world. From the distant ketch came a shout from Koko and Tomoo and Kolulo; they had caught the gleam of the gold in the sunshine, and knew that the diving was a success. Dandy Peter knew it, too, and he gritted his teeth in helpless rage.

Down went another sack, loaded with ballast of coral—for Danny to tip out the ballast and replace it with golden coins. Again the shipmates hauled in, and the heavy sack came over the side. And then came Danny's signal to haul him up, and he was drawn up to the boat. Ken and Kit helped him in, and the glass was unscrewed. Danny gasped for breath and grinned at them gleefully.

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The Cooky-Boy's Haul!

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"Feller gold go finish!" he announced. "All piccee gold stop along this feller boat, sar!"

Ken helped the cooky-boy off with the diving dress, while Hudson, with dancing eyes, counted the sovereigns, arranging them in little piles of twenty. Pile after pile glimmered in the sunshine. Danny sat down, breathing hard after his long imprisonment in the diving dress, and chuckling with glee at his success. Ken watched his shipmate's occupation with a smiling face. When the piles were completed, Hudson counted them, and they came to three hundred and fifty.

"How's the tally, old man?" asked King of the Islands.

"Right as rain—seven thousand to the last quid!" said Hudson. He swept the piles of sovereigns into the sacks. "Suffering cats! We've picked up more gold than a man could comfortably carry on his back, old bean! Now for the Dawn. The sooner we get away from the Solomon Islands the better I shall be pleased!"

"Washy-washy along ketch, you feller boy!" said King of the Islands. And the whaleboat pulled back to the Dawn.

Fleeing from the Cannibals!

KOMO-OMO, chief of the cannibal blacks of Suna-Suna, stood up, staring across the tall prow of a Solomon Island war-canoe as it slid out of the channels of the mangroves into the sea. Thirty savages were crowded in the chief's canoe; and after it came canoe after canoe, with equal numbers in them, and innumerable paddles flashing.

Komo-omo's eyes were fixed on the ketch, hove-to on the shining waters between the island and the reef, where the whaleboat was swinging up to the davits. And his black eyes gleamed and flashed like the polished coffee-can that hung on his brawny black chest. The white men were still lingering in those dangerous waters!

Komo-omo had had time to gather forces from far and near to avenge his previous defeat by them, and now he was coming to the attack with all the canoes of his tribe and an overwhelming swarm of fighting-men. Countless paddles flashed swiftly as the bunch of war-canoes swept across the half-mile of glistening water that separated them from the white men's ship.

"Plenty feller canoe comey, sar!" said Koko. "Too much feller cannibal stop along that feller canoe, sar!"

King of the Islands glanced at the savage array and smiled. On the deck of the Dawn lay the sacks of gold raised from the wreck of the Crackerjack. Dandy Peter—released from his irons now—was standing by them, regarding them with bitter eyes, and he did not even glance towards the array of the blacks of Suna-Suna. He was thinking of what he had lost by his treachery; and thinking, perhaps, that honesty, after all, might have been the best policy.

"Komo-omo seems to have gathered

all his jolly old family!" remarked Hudson, with a chuckle. "But we've got the wind, and we're finished here. It's good-bye to the Solomon Islands."

"Ay, ay!" answered Ken. "They've lost no time—but they're too late! Up mainsail!"

Spread out in a half-circle, paddling swiftly, the mass of war-canoes shot across the water. Yells from the Solomon Island savages reached the crew of the Dawn as they shook out sail. The ketch began to move before the wind that came out of the south-west. The shipmates looked back at the savages, with smiles on their faces.

Fast as the blacks paddled, they had no chance of running down the ketch under sail. The Dawn stood to the north, between the island and the long reef, and from some of the canoes arrows whizzed after her. But they fell short, dropping in the sea, and the Hiva-Oa boys waved their dusky hands and made defiant gestures at the blacks toiling in pursuit.

"Solomon Island boy plenty big fool along he tinkee catchee us!" chuckled Lompo.

"Altogether too much plenty fool!" laughed Tomoo. "He no—" Suddenly he broke off with a cackle of alarm as the wind died away, spilling out of the Dawn's sails and leaving them flapping idly.

Howling ferociously, the cannibals came on with a rush, their canoes rapidly overhauling the ketch as the Dawn lost way.

"My sainted Sam!" exclaimed Kit. "That's torn it!" And, grabbing up his rifle, he jumped to the stern and commenced to pump bullets at the leading canoe.

Yelling orders to Koko to stand fast at the wheel and the crew to get rifles from the rack at the base of the mast, Ken joined Kit and opened fire.

Kit was making good shooting, but his bullets failed to stop the savages.

Ken knew that it was up to him and Kit to stop the blacks. It was no use depending on the Kanakas. Their shooting was hopeless. They simply pulled trigger and trusted to luck where their bullets went, never stopping to take aim. But the boy trader ordered them to open fire, hoping that their bullets would go near enough to the paddlers to intimidate them.

By some strange fluke, each of the five Hiva-Oa boys' bullets found a mark in the leading canoes. Paddlers went tumbling backwards, and for a moment the canoes faltered. Then they came on again, Ken and Kit pumping bullets into them, and the crew firing wildly in their excitement.

Dandy Peter had taken no part in the affair. It seemed as if he did not care if Ken King's ship was captured. Then he recalled his awful experiences in the canoe-house on Suna-Suna when he had been Komo-omo's prisoner, and, shuddering at the recollection, he got a rifle and joined in the defence. He was a crack shot, and his well-aimed bullets, added to Ken's and Kit's, caused the blacks to spread out and try to circle the ketch.

As they did so the wind came again, and the ketch began to move, gradually gaining speed and leaving the

cannibals behind. With howls of rage, the blacks made a last attempt to overhaul her. But it failed, and the Dawn sped on at ever-increasing speed.

Running before the wind, the ketch sped out into the open Pacific, north of Suna-Suna, with the canoes still in pursuit, the paddles flashing in the sun. Komo-omo brandished a spear in his rage at seeing his enemies escape. North of the reef, the ketch tacked to the east and swept away towards the main group of the Solomons.

And still the obstinate savages, hoping against hope, carried on in chase. It was not till the sun was dipping down to Suna-Suna that they gave it up in despair, and the prows of the war-canoes were turned back towards the cannibal island.

"They'll be watching for us again!" grinned Hudson. "They don't know yet that we've finished with Suna-Suna! By gum, I'm glad to see the last of it! I don't like thinking of the night I spent in Komo-omo's canoe-house, with the cooking-ovens ready in the morning!" He shivered. "It was a mad venture, Ken, as you told me at the start, but it's turned out a winner!"

He glanced at the two sacks of gold which still lay on the deck. From one of them he drew twenty-five sovereigns, and called to Danny. The fat cooky-boy came up grinning to receive the reward for his services in the diving dress. He grinned from ear to ear as he ran the sovereigns through his brown fingers.

"My word, this feller Danny plenty too much rich feller!" chuckled the cooky-boy. "Along we stop along Lalinge, all feller say that feller Danny plenty too much rich, all samec white feller master!" And Danny went singing back to his galley.

THEN the sacks were tied up and carried below to the stateroom. Dandy Peter watched the Kanakas carrying them down, a bitter look on his face. He came across the deck to the shipmates, his hands clenched, his eyes glinting.

"Where do I come in on this deal?" he asked, in a voice thick with rage.

King of the Islands shrugged his shoulders and turned his back on him. Hudson regarded him with cool contempt.

"Where do you expect to come in, after the game you played?" he asked. "You thieving scum, you went down first and found the gold, and then reported that it was lost. But for the cooky-boy, you might have got away with it. You're in luck not to be kicked over the side!"

"If you're going to rob me—" hissed Peter Parsons.

"Why not?" smiled the mate of the Dawn. "You fixed it all up from the beginning to rob me—and they say that one good turn deserves another."

"King of the Islands—" began Parsons.

"Leave me out of it," said Ken curtly. "You've told me yourself

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The Cooky-Boy's Haul!

(Continued from page 40)

that I don't come in on this deal! You're dealing with my mate."

Parsons clenched his hands convulsively.

"So that's your game, Kit Hudson!" he said, in a choking voice.

"Why not?" smiled Hudson. "What game would you be playing in my place, Peter Parsons?"

The sea-lawyer made no reply. He turned away, almost sick with rage. Hudson laughed.

"The way of the jolly old transgressor is hard!" he remarked. "Parsons can chew on that till we raise Santa Cruz. We can kick him off the ketch when we get there."

The thoughts in the sea-lawyer's mind were easy enough to read in his dark and savage face as the ketch made the run eastward. A favourable wind carried her through the Malaita Strait, and she ran down to Santa Cruz.

In the harbour of Santa Cruz the disappointed and enraged sea-lawyer had a gleam of comfort: his cutter, the Sea-Cat, was waiting for him there, with his two Lukwe boys on board. It was only to get rid of him that the Dawn had put in at Santa Cruz before stretching her sails for Lalinge, her home port.

As the ketch came to anchor, Dandy Peter waved his hand to Koo and Toto, staring from his cutter, and they came across for him in a native canoe.

Parsons stood watching them as they came. He had his cutter back—and that, with what he stood up in, was all he had after that wild and perilous venture in the Solomon Islands. He gripped the teak rail so hard that his knuckles showed white.

King of the Islands glanced at his mate. Hudson laughed and spoke a word to Koko, who went down the companion. He returned in a few minutes with a heavy sack on his brawny shoulders.

The canoe slid under the rail of the Dawn, and Toto and Koo stood up and held on for their master to step down. Peter Parsons turned a last, bitter look on the smiling shipmates. His rage was almost too deep for words, and his voice came huskily as he spoke.

"You've done me!" he muttered thickly. "You've done me—"

"You fool and rascal!" interrupted Kit Hudson contemptuously. "I've let you think that your own rotten game was going to be played on you—but you're dealing with a white man, not with a scoundrel like yourself. You scum, your half of the gold is in that sack—every sovereign of it!"

The sea-lawyer started and caught his breath.

"You mean——" he panted. "Pitch it into the canoe, Koko!"

The boatswain dropped the sack containing three thousand five hundred sovereigns over the rail into the canoe.

Dandy Peter stared after it with

unbelieving eyes. Then he looked blankly at Hudson.

King of the Islands burst into a laugh.

"There's your share, you scum!" said Hudson. He made a stride at the sea-lawyer and grasped him in his sinewy hands. "You double-dealing, treacherous swab, there's your whack—every sovereign of it! And now you're going after it!"

He swung the sea-lawyer of Lukwe clear of the deck, and Dandy Peter yelled as he spun in the air.

The next moment he was pitched bodily over the rail, landing with a crash on the sack of gold in the canoe.

The canoe rocked wildly and shipped water. Peter Parsons sat up dizzily, drenched to the skin. Toto and Koo, grinning, pushed off and paddled for the Sea-Cat.

And as the Dawn pulled out to sea again the last the shipmates saw of Dandy Peter he was standing on the deck of his cutter, shaking a clenched and furious fist after them!

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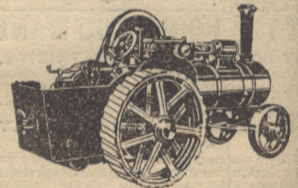
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