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2^D.



THE AEROPLANE'S KICK-OFF!—See page 3

HEAD-HUNTERS' LAIR

There's a very real chance that **KING OF THE ISLANDS** himself may join his runaway deck-hand in the Cannibals' Larder!



A Cannibal Custom!

RAY PAGET, the scallywag of the South Seas, lay in a grass hut on the cannibal island of Kua and watched the light fade in the doorway. The long, hot day was drawing to an end, and with the sinking of the sun came a breath of coolness. Bound hand and foot, with tight cords that almost ate into the flesh, Paget had lain like a log since the blacks had tossed him into the hut.

His dry throat ached with thirst, his limbs were numbed by the biting cords. From a distance he heard voices, the cackle of the native village. But no one came to the hut. He was glad enough to be forgotten if that was it. He lay in bitter pain, but he shuddered as he thought of what the coming of the savages would mean.

They were cannibals on Kua—and he was a helpless prisoner in their hands! It was for this that he had exchanged the life on the ketch, Dawn, that had seemed so hard to him! For this that he had deserted from Ken King's ketch—helped by Ka'aama, the chief of Kua—never suspecting how glad the cunning black chief was to get the white man on his island. The black man had fooled him into this trap in his eager-

The whaleboat shot like an arrow across the lagoon, but the tall prow of the canoe loomed up in the dusk, twenty paddles flashing swiftly. Ka'aama was showing his gleaming teeth in a snarl of rage, and brandishing his spear.

ness to escape from the Dawn. He groaned aloud as he thought of it.

The scapegrace of Lalinge would have been glad to be back on the Dawn, to hear the mate, Kit Hudson, slanging him; to jump to the orders of King of the Islands; even to wince under the lawyer-cane in the brown hand of Koko, the boatswain. Anything but the terrible fate into which his folly had plunged him.

He had not wanted to ship aboard the Dawn. It was his uncle, Mr. Belnap, the Pacific Company's manager at Lalinge, who had

arranged for Ken King to take Ray to sea and try to make a man of him. Paget had hated the life and deserted at the first opportunity. Now he would gladly have returned.

Night was stealing over the Pacific Ocean and the lonely island of Kua. Where was the Dawn now? His last glimpse of the ketch had shown her under sail, standing out to sea—far away from the island. King of the Islands was gone, leaving him to his fate—the fate he had rushed upon! Not that it mattered, for the boy trader could not have saved him if he would. What could the handful of men on the ketch have done against a swarming tribe of blacks? The Dawn was far away, and but for his folly he might have been safe on her deck.

A shadow darkened the doorway.

Paget turned his weary head and saw Ka'aama. The chief of Kua grinned as he looked down on the white, strained face of the captive. A shudder ran through the scallywag as his eyes fixed on the brawny black man with the brass rings in his nose and ears gleaming in the sunset. He did not doubt that his last moment had come. The cooking-oven—the cannibal feast—and his head smoking in the wood-fire in the canoe-house!

Ka'aama spoke in his own

By
**CHARLES
HAMILTON**

Head-Hunters' Lair

Melanesian dialect to two burly blacks, who stepped past him into the hut. They lifted Paget from the ground by his feet and shoulders and carried him out into the red glare of the setting sun.

A swarm of grinning black faces looked at him among the grass houses of Ka'aama's village. Paget shut his teeth hard. Scallywag as he was, he had courage, and he strove to nerve himself to face his fate as a white man should.

But, to his surprise, it was out of the village that the two blacks carried him, following in the footsteps of the chief, who strode ahead.

Down the path under the palm-trees to the beach of the lagoon they went. The lagoon, red in the sunset, glared on his eyes, then he saw the reef beyond it, and the Pacific rolling to infinity. His eyes sought the open spaces of the sea with a wild hope. A sail—if there had but been a sail! But there was no sail, no smoke-blur of a steamer on the blue. Ships came seldom to the lone island of Kua. Perhaps once in six months a trading ketch came to barter for island produce. And when a trader came, he lay off at a safe distance from Kua and the blacks went out in their canoes to trade. No white man trusted himself ashore on Kua. King of the Islands had traded with the blacks hove-to-out at sea, with barbed wire around the deck and loaded firearms at hand.

Where were the blacks taking him? If it was the finish—the sacrifice, the feast of "long-pig"—it would surely take place in the village. But the straggle of grass houses had been left far behind. His bearers were tramping along the beach on the edge of the lagoon, following the tall figure of Ka'aama.

THEY stopped at last where a little purling stream ran down from the bush, emptying into the lagoon. In spite of pain and terror, Paget eyed the glistening water greedily. He was tortured with thirst.

In the running stream near where it joined the lagoon, a palm-pole was planted, firmly staked in the bed of the stream. The two blacks waded out in the shallow water and slammed Paget against the pole. His back was to the bush, his face to the lagoon, and across the lagoon he could see the reef and the Pacific.

The blacks bound him there with lengths of tapa cord, securing him to the pole with the running water lapping round his neck. By stooping his head he could drink, and he drank again and again of the cool water. It was an almost overpowering relief to quench his cruel thirst.

But what did it all mean? Was this a form of torture? He could make no resistance; the bonds remained on his limbs while the blacks bound him to the pole with fresh cords. If they intended to leave him there, there was no hope of escape.

The two savages waded ashore after

binding him, and went back grinning along the beach.

Paget's haggard eyes sought the wide spaces of the ocean again. A cackle of derision came from Ka'aama, looking down at him.

"White feller look along sea, along wantee see feller ship belong King of the Islands!" grinned the chief of Kua. "That feller ship no stop, my word. Feller King of the Islands plenty too much far away altogether." He had read Paget's thought. "That feller ship no stop! You white feller you stop along Kua, along makee kai-kai along black feller! One, two day you stop along water he run, you savvy?"

He turned and followed the blacks along the beach.

Paget screwed his head round and watched the tall figure till it disappeared among the palms.

He was left alone.

Knowing nothing of the customs of the black cannibals, he was puzzled. The cool water up to his neck was a pleasant change after the stifling heat of the hut where he had lain so long. But why had the blacks left him there?

He could guess that they had kept him safely in the village till they had watched the Dawn's tall sails sink beneath the sea-rim and knew for certain that King of the Islands was gone. But what did it mean? For two days, the chief had said, he was to remain there, sunk to his neck in running water. Already the water was chilling his limbs. And when the new day came and the sun rose over Kua, he would be exposed to its full glare. It was a strange form of torture!

Paget did not know that it was the custom of the blacks to steep their intended victim for a period in running water before killing him in the belief that it made the meat tender! It was as well for him that he did not know!

The sun dipped below the sea-rim; darkness rushed on the Pacific and the lone island. From a distance, Paget heard the sound of barbaric musical instruments. The natives were dancing on the beach. But none came near the spot where he stood bound to the pole, the water lapping by, singing in his ears.

His limbs ached with the chill. His head sank. But for the cords he would have slipped under water. The pain in his bound limbs was increasing. Every now and then sharp cries escaped his lips, though he was hardly conscious of it.

The night grew older—a night of tropical beauty. The music and dancing ceased; the savages had gone to their grass houses to sleep. From the lagoon came the occasional splash of a paddle, where canoes were out for the night-fishing.

The sky, of a deep indigo, was spangled with stars, and against the starry heavens nodded the graceful fronds of the palm-trees. High in the south hung the Southern Cross, blazing like jewels. And from the prisoner bound to the pole in the lapping stream came cry after cry—

cries of pain and misery that, if they were heard at all, fell on indifferent ears.

Alarm in the Lagoon!

KOKO, the boatswain of the Dawn, gave an angry grunt. Never had the faithful Koko disputed an order from his white master, but he came very near to it now. It was madness, in Koko's belief, and, in point of fact, King of the Islands and his mate, Kit Hudson, feared that he was right. The Hiva-Oa crew of the ketch—Tomoo and Kolulo, Lompo and Lufu, and Danny—heard the boy trader's orders with dismayed faces.

Ray Paget, an unwilling recruit to Ken King's crew, had gone ashore at Kua of his own accord. The ketch had turned her stern—the cannibal island had dropped out of sight below the horizon. Koko, and all the crew, had supposed that that was the end. And they stared in dismay when, after darkness had fallen on the sea, Ken King put the ketch about.

Under the stars, the Dawn was making Kua again. The crew simply did not understand. But Koko, keener than the other Kanakas, knew now that King of the Islands had sailed away from Kua only to give the blacks the impression that he was gone. For if Ka'aama and his bucks had known that the white man's ship was in the offing there would not have been the remotest possibility of rescuing the scallywag. Neither was there, in Koko's opinion, the remotest possibility now, even if the blacks were taken by surprise. But he knew that the attempt was in the mind of his white master.

King of the Islands glanced at his disapproving brown face with a faint smile.

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

"Tinkee brain belong white master no walk about any more altogether!" answered the boatswain bluntly.

"What do you think, Kit?" Ken asked.

The mate of the Dawn laughed. "I agree with Koko. But I'm with you all the way, old man! We'll leave our heads on Kua along with that scallywag's."

"There's a chance, Kit," said the boy trader quietly. "The blacks think we're gone for good—we've made them believe that. Most of them will be fast asleep when we make Kua again. Kit, old man, we can't leave him to it—even that reckless fool! What could I say to Mr. Belnap when we make Lalinge again—his nephew left to the cannibals?"

"You could tell him the obstinate idiot asked for it, and got it," answered Hudson coolly. "You could tell him that Paget hid himself in a native canoe and sneaked ashore, and that you weren't mad enough to throw away your life, and the lives of your crew, trying to get him out of what he got into of his own accord!"

Ken stood silent. He knew the terrible risk he was taking, not only for himself but for others—that the chance of getting the scallywag out of the hands of the cannibals was next

to none. The one chance was that the savages believed that the white man's ship was gone, and it might be possible to make a landing unseen, unsuspected, in the dark hours. But then—

To find Paget, to save him—was it possible? If the alarm was given—and it could scarcely fail to be—hundreds of armed and savage blacks would be upon the rescuers. The ketch could not enter the lagoon—the reef passage was too narrow for even a small ship. The landing would have to be made in the whaleboat, with the ketch standing far off the reef. Three or four in a boat—in the midst of cannibal swarms! It was asking for destruction. And what was the use?

Yet to leave a white man to such a fate, without making an effort to save him—Ken could not make up his mind to that. He stood in troubled thought; and Koko began to hope that he would change his mind and order the ketch to be put about once more.

Hudson touched the arm of his comrade.

"Stick to it, Ken, old man!" he said. "Never mind my talking hoss-sense—I'm as ready to make a fool of myself as you are!"

"We've got to try it on, Kit." Ken laughed. "We must! If we fail, we fail, but we've got to try it. There's a ghost of a chance, at least, of saving that idiot from the result of his own folly—"

"If he's not dead already," said Hudson, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"I think not, Kit! I watched them through the binoculars—I saw them seize him on the beach, bind him, and carry him up through the palms.

They did not kill him on the spot, at all events."

The mate of the Dawn nodded.

"Keeping him for the next cannibal feast," he said. "Well, there may be a ghost of a chance of getting him away, Ken, but—"

"But what?"

"But I don't believe in ghosts," said the mate of the Dawn, with a laugh.

"But you're with me, Kit?"

"Of course, fathead—all the way!"

Koko gave an expressive grunt. The scallywag, in his opinion, was not worth saving, even if he could be saved. And Koko did not believe that it was even remotely possible. The attempt would cost his white master his life. But the faithful Koko said no more. It was not for him to argue with his white master.

A dim blur in the starry night, Kua rose at last from the dark sea. Ken watched its dim shape with searching, anxious eyes. If the blacks were on their guard the attempt was hopeless.

As the ketch, burning no lights, drew nearer to the island, Ken could catch the distant sound of native instruments, borne on the wind. The blacks were dancing on the beach, under the stars. But the sound died away, and all was silent when the Dawn hove-to at a distance from the reef.

The night was calm, the Pacific almost like a pond. The light wind hardly ruffled the surface of the sea.

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The war-canoe was slipping into the water and the blacks were swarming into it. But Ken did not heed. His eyes were fixed on a dark object in the water—a palm pole with a figure bound to it—Paget!

The whaleboat slid into the water. Ken and Kit looked carefully to rifle and revolver. Koko slung his long Malaita bush-knife to his belt. Only two men were left on board the ketch—Lufu and Danny, the cooky-boy.

Koko and Lompo, Kolufo and Tomoo took the oars, and Hudson steered as the whaleboat pulled away. Ken, his rifle across his knees, watched the reef.

Steadily the Kanakas pulled, and the whaleboat glided into the narrow channel in the coral. The Dawn, hove-to behind them, was swallowed up in the gloom.

ALMOST in silence the whaleboat glided through the narrow reef channel and into the glimmering lagoon. Overhead, the sky glittered with stars, but visibility was dim on the water. It was difficult to see a few yards from the boat—impossible to see with any certainty more than a few yards. But Ken knew that the native village was on the opposite side of the lagoon, hidden among the palms. With beating hearts the boat's crew pulled across the lagoon, on which a white man's boat had seldom or never pulled before.

"Hark!" breathed Kit suddenly.

Ken felt a contraction at his heart as a cry pealed thrillingly through the silence of the night. Exactly whence it came he could not tell, except that it was from the farther beach. It was a prolonged cry that told of pain and suffering. The Kanakas, for a moment, rested on their oars, even their unimaginative minds struck by that sound of anguish from the night.

"My word! That feller kill plenty too much!" whispered Koko.

"Paget?" muttered Ken.





## Head-Hunters' Lair

"Ay, ay!" breathed Hudson. "Torture, perhaps! Those black demons do not kill their prisoners quickly! Pull on!"

The shipmates listened as the boat glided on. The cry came again—painful, thrilling. Then there was silence. King of the Islands set his teeth. He could not doubt that it was Paget's cry that had rung out in the night.

"Look out!" rapped Hudson suddenly.

It was too late! There was a crash as the bows of the whaleboat smashed into a canoe, night-fishing on the lagoon.

Startled cries rang from six or seven blacks as their light craft, stove-in by the crash, rolled over on the lagoon and filled.

Black, startled faces glimmered from the water, rolling, flashing eyes gleamed in the dusk. Loud through the night sounded the yells of the canoe's crew, flung into the lagoon.

From the beach, echoing, came answering shouts.

The alarm was given—all Kua knew that a white man's boat was in the lagoon. A black hand grasped at the gunwale. Koko's bush knife flashed like a streak of light. There was a yell, and a dead man slid away into the water.

"That black feller go finish!" muttered Koko, with a grin.

"Pull on!" rapped King of the Islands.

The whaleboat shot on to the beach and bumped on the shelving sand.

### The Swarming Beach!

**K**ING OF THE ISLANDS sprang ashore, Hudson at his heels, rifle in hand. The boy trader's face was white and set. The yells of the blacks in the wrecked canoe had alarmed the island. From the village beyond the palms came answering yells and the loud beating of a drum. Ka'aama and his bucks were already swarming out of the grass houses, spear and axe in hand. The palm-trees at the back of the

beach were alive with them, like swarming ants.

Whizzing spears and arrows, from the palms, were already falling on the sand. Yells as of pandemonium broken loose, awoke all the echoes of Kua. The brass rings in the ears and nose of Ka'aama gleamed in the starlight, in the midst of the yelling mob.

Hudson caught the boy trader by the arm as he was tramping up the beach.

"Ken! Stop! It's hopeless!"

Koko leaped from the boat, the long bush-knife gleaming in his brown hand. Ken stopped, panting.

His rifle leaped to his shoulder, and he fired into the thick of the savages swarming from the palms. It was hopeless, and he knew it, now that the alarm was given. If the scallywag of Lalinge was, as he supposed, a prisoner in the native village, it was impossible to reach him. Scores of blacks were in the way, soon to be increased to hundreds. An arrow whizzed by his cheek; a spear dropped in the sand at his feet.

His rifle blazed, and Hudson's was blazing the next moment. The Winchesters pumped bullets into the yelling mob. Howling blacks reeled right and left under the fire.

But the fire did not stop them. Out from the palms, with yells and brandished spears, they came swarming down to the beach.

Lompo and Kolulo and Tomoo, in the boat, watched with terrified eyes. King of the Islands emptied his rifle, but the rush of the savages did not pause.

"Back to the boat!" breathed Hudson.

There was nothing else to be done. The scallywag of Lalinge, as they supposed, was in the native village; but so far from its being possible to reach the grass houses, it was doubtful whether the shipmates had time to get back to the whaleboat.

Ken still hesitated, unwilling to retreat, but his comrade grasped his arm and dragged him back down the beach. A brawny savage, ahead of the swarm, leaped on with thrusting spear.

A bush-knife crashed on the spear, knocking it aside; and Koko, meeting the charging savage chest to chest, grappled with him and rolled on the sand.

Ken and Kit were splashing in the water, making for the boat. But they turned back as Koko rolled over, struggling with the black man. The struggle was only for a moment. Koko leaped clear, the bush-knife gleaming red, and leaped into the lagoon, hardly escaping a dozen thrusting spears behind him.

Kolulo and Lompo and Tomoo were already pushing off with the oars. Drenched and dripping, Ken and Kit and Koko clambered into the boat.

It rocked away on the lagoon, followed by whizzing arrows and spears that splashed on all sides in the glimmering water.

"Pull!" panted Hudson. "Washy-washy, you feller boy!"

The Kanakas tugged at the oars, and the boat shot away from the

# PUZZLE CORNER

Solutions on page 30

### The Answer's a —?

**C**AN you think of any question to which the only answer is a lemon?

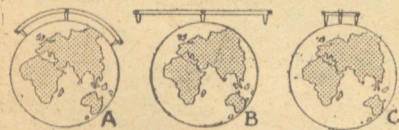
### The Missing Links

**A** MAN broke his watch-chain into five pieces, each piece consisting of three links. He took them to a jeweller, who said he would charge sixpence per link for joining the chain again. What was the lowest amount for the job?

### The Billiards Ball

**I**F you place a billiards ball upon an absolutely level billiards table, to which part of the table would it roll? Here's the answer—try it on your pals!

The ball would roll to the middle of the table. A glance at these diagrams will show why. It must be remembered that a billiards table is not absolutely flat. It has a quite microscopic curve



which is the same as the curve of the earth's surface. This can be proved by imagining a billiards table 10,000 miles long.

An ordinary table of this length would be as in diagram A. A perfectly flat table would stretch up into the sky, as in diagram B. In diagram C we have a flat table, greatly magnified, to show that it is nearer to the earth in the middle than at the ends. Every flat table is consequently nearest to the

earth in the middle. The law of gravitation would thus draw the ball to the centre of the table.

### Word Making

**S**TARTING with one letter, can you add one letter at a time to make the words suggested by the following clues?

1. Exclamation (One letter).
2. Alternative.
3. Preposition.
4. The front part.
5. A plate of type.
6. Fashioned or moulded.
7. (Two words.) A seat. Finish.
8. Not fashioned or moulded.
9. Wearing livery.
10. Without knowledge.

You will thus finish up with a word of ten letters. The letters can be added one by one to any part of the final word.

### No Change

**A** MAN once had in his pocket silver and copper coins to the value of £1 5s. 11d., and yet he couldn't give a friend change for a pound note. How was this?

### Can You Alpha-Better?

**M**OST of you know the old sentence, "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog." The idea is to make a sentence using all the letters of the alphabet, and as few extra as possible. In the sentence quoted there are nine extra letters. Can you make one with fewer? Of course, they must all be dictionary words.



beach, a swarm of the savages following, up to their necks in the water, some of them swimming.

The deep voice of Ka'aama reached the ears of the boat's crew. They could not understand his words, but they could guess what he meant. A crowd of the blacks rushed for the canoe-house, to drag down canoes to the lagoon.

"Suffering cats!" breathed Hudson. "We've woke up a hornets'-nest, Ken!"

Ken did not answer. He stared back at the beach, swarming with howling cannibals.

"The game's up, Ken!" said the mate of the Dawn quietly. "If there was a ghost of a chance before there's

none now. If we wait till they get the canoes down to the water—"

"We go finish altogether, sar!" muttered Koko.

"The mad idiot!" groaned King of the Islands. "We've got to leave him—to that!"

"We've done all we could, old chap!"

"I know! I know! But—"

Ken broke off and signed to the Kanakas to cease pulling. Unwillingly, the brown men rested on their oars. King of the Islands stood up, staring back at the landing-place on the beach. The boat was out of range of arrows now. Dim in the star-gleam on the beach, black figures could be seen moving—a swarm of

them gathered round a tall-prowed canoe, dragging it down to the water.

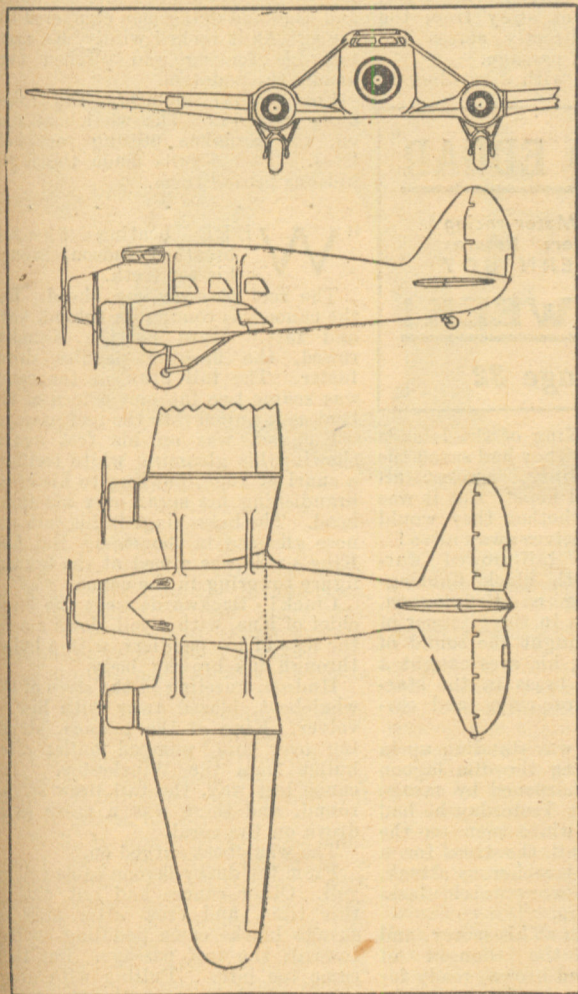
Hudson shrugged his shoulders.

There was nothing to be done, and to wait for the canoe, with its swarm of black fighting-men aboard, was to wait for a desperate hand-to-hand struggle against overwhelming odds and—death! But he understood his comrade's feeling—he shared it. To pull back to the Dawn, abandoning the reckless scallywag to his fate—it was hard and bitter!

It seemed as if King of the Islands could not make up his mind to it. He stood staring back at the landing-place, his brows knitted, as if

(Continued on next page)

Easy-to-Make Scale Models of Famous Planes—No. 9 - By HOWARD LEIGH



## THE STINSON "MODEL A" TRANSPORT

THE Stinson Aircraft Corporation of America produced the tri-motored "Model A," a low-winged cabin monoplane with retractable undercarriage, in 1934. With accommodation for eight passengers, this machine acts as a fast ferry-plane between the big towns and cities of America.

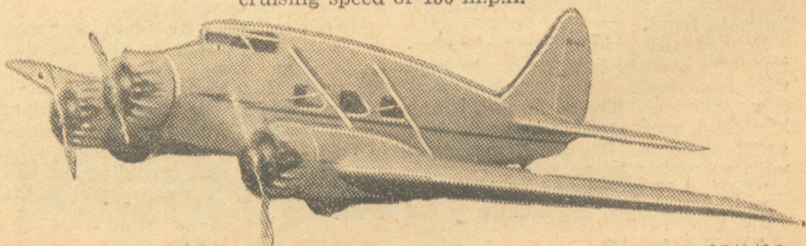
The wings, seen in plan form, remind one of the English "Monospar," narrowing in thickness and chord from the engines to the fuselage. The main outer portions of the wings also taper in thickness and chord. Landing lights are in the leading edges. At the rear, split trailing-edge flaps are fitted and extend the whole length between the two engine nacelles.

The two centre sections are braced to the fuselage by two streamlined steel struts either side. The pilots' cockpit is well up in the nose of the plane, and allows an excellent all-round view for both pilots. A large mirror is mounted over their heads, to give them a clear view behind when taxi-ing out to take off.

THE main cabin is to the rear, with ample accommodation for eight passengers; hammock-type seats are fitted; four of the seats are adjustable so that they may be turned inwards and passengers who wish to play cards may do so. The cabin is fully equipped with all the latest gadgets for heating, ventilation, and lighting, and considering that there are three high-powered engines the cabin is wonderfully free from noise and vibration.

The tail unit has balanced rudder and elevators with no external bracing. A small tail wheel is used instead of a skid. The undercarriage is of the retractable variety; each unit is retracted upwards into the engine nacelles. The wheels are carried between metal forks, with two further outward and backward sloping legs, which run from the ends of the forks to the rear of the nacelles.

Three Lycoming R 680 B.A. engines of 240 h.p. each are mounted in the front; two in the wings and the other on to the nose. All are cowled over by circular metal cowlings and are fitted with Smith controllable-pitch airscrews. At 5,000 feet the machine has a cruising speed of 150 m.p.h.



### DIMENSIONS

- Span ..... 60 ft.
- Height ..... 12 ft.
- Length ..... 36 ft. 10 ins.
- Wheel track ..... 17 ft. 6 ins.



## Head-Hunters' Lair

calculating what chance there might yet be.

There came a cry from the beach, and Ken gave a start.

"Kit—hark!"

It was a repetition of the strange, agonised cry they had heard when the boat entered the lagoon. But now, closer to the beach, they could judge the direction better.

It did not come from the native village, or from the landing-place where the blacks were dragging down the war-canoe. It came from farther along the circling beach—from a considerable distance along the shore of the lagoon.

"Listen!" breathed Ken.

It came again—a cry, or rather a wail of anguish. Whoever was shrieking in the night was nowhere near the native village—nowhere near the savages swarming at the landing-place on the beach.

"Koko! You listen ear belong you!" breathed King of the Islands. "You tinkee white feller sing out along beach?"

"Tinkee white feller, sar!" answered Koko, at once.

"It's Paget! Washy-washy along beach, you feller boy! Plenty too quick you washy-washy!" rapped Ken; and as the Kanakas bent to the oars he steered for the dark beach, in the direction of that echoing cry.

It died down, and there was silence. But Ken had the direction, and he steered on. Staring through the gloom, he made out a stream that glimmered down from the bush, pouring into the lagoon.

A sudden outburst of yells came from the landing-place, at a distance round the circling beach. The war-canoe was slipping into the water, and the black fighting-men swarming into it.

But Ken did not heed. His eyes were fixed on a dark object in the stream—a palm-pole with a figure bound to it. And as he sighted it the sunken head was lifted, a colourless face glimmered in the stars, and a cry of pain and misery came throbbing, wailing.

"Paget!" exclaimed Ken.

He grasped Koko's bush-knife, and leaped, waist-deep, into the water, plunging headlong towards the figure bound to the palm-pole.

### Fight on the Water!

"KILL me!" muttered Paget.

"You fiends, kill me!"

His haggard eyes, half-blind with pain, stared stupidly at the plunging figure in the water, and caught the gleam of the knife. He could not see clearly, and he did not know that it was King of the Islands; he fancied that it was one of the blacks from the native village, knife in hand.

Racked with pain, a lump of suffering from head to foot, he would have welcomed death—he only hoped that it was the end. The cords that bound him had sunk into the flesh, and every nerve of his body was alive with searching pain.

"Kill me!" he moaned. "Kill me!"

The razor-edged bush-knife glided

over him, snapping the cords swiftly. He lurched away from the pole, and would have collapsed helplessly into the water had not King of the Islands grasped him.

"Courage!" breathed Ken. "You're saved, Paget—you're saved! Don't you know me?"

But the dazed, half-unconscious scallywag of Lalinge only stared at him stupidly. Ken half dragged him, half carried him, to the boat. Hudson grasped him and pulled him in.

"It's Paget—" breathed the mate of the Dawn.

"Ay, bound to the pole in the water!" Ken gritted his teeth. "You can guess why!"

"Makee him meat plenty soft, along makee kai-kai along black feller!" murmured Koko.

Paget lay in the bottom of the boat. He did not seem to realise that he was saved.

Koko and Lompo, Kolulo and Tomoo sat to the oars, rowing hard. The whaleboat shot away from the beach, heading directly across the lagoon for the reef passage.

Hudson steered, with a revolver in

"They've spotted us," muttered Hudson.

"Washy-washy, you feller boy!" rapped King of the Islands. "You washy-washy quick!"

The Kanakas slaved at the oars. The whaleboat shot almost like an arrow across the dark lagoon. But the tall prow of the canoe loomed up in the dusk, twenty paddles flashing swiftly. A yell broke from the blacks as they sighted their prey and they rushed down on it.

King of the Islands stood up, his rifle to his shoulder. Steady as a rock, with the boat rushing under him, his eyes gleamed along the barrel and he pumped bullets into the crowded canoe.

It was scarcely possible to miss, in the thick of the crowded blacks—and King of the Islands did not miss a single shot.

Ka'aama's voice rang in a fierce yell, urging his crew on. But five or six paddles had slipped into the water, and dead and dying men cumbered the canoe. As it rocked wildly, Ka'aama lost his footing and pitched over among the paddlers.

For several moments the canoe hung helpless. The whaleboat shot on, the Kanakas pulling for their lives. Fierce yells made the night hideous behind them.

"W"ERE beating them!" breathed Hudson, through his set teeth.

The reef passage was ahead. But the canoe was coming on behind, hard and fast. Hard as the Kanakas rowed, the flashing paddles drove faster. The tall prow of the canoe was scarce two fathoms astern of the boat as it pulled into the reef passage.

Ka'aama was on his feet again, showing his gleaming white teeth in a snarl of rage, howling to his crew, brandishing his spear over his fuzzy head. The brass rings in his ears and nose gleamed in the stars. But Ken King's rifle was aimed at the brawny figure towering in the canoe.

Crack! Backwards went the black chief of Kua, with a yell, down among the legs of his paddlers, with a bullet through his brawny body.

Hudson, kneeling in the stern of the whaleboat, blazed away with his revolver. King of the Islands, standing over him, pumped bullet after bullet from the Winchester. The canoe lost way, the tall prow swung round, and there was a crash as it drove on the coral.

The whaleboat surged on.

From the dusky lagoon came yell on yell. Other canoes had put out by this time, and crew after crew of savage blacks came paddling swiftly towards the reef passage. But they came too late. Pulling with every ounce of their strength, the boat's crew pulled clear of the reef, and the whaleboat shot out into the open waters of the Pacific.

Not for a moment did they slacken. Sweating at the oars the Hiva-Oa boys pulled on for the ketch. Canoe after canoe glided from the reef in pursuit, packed with paddling blacks, but too late to have a chance of overtaking the fleeing boat. A long,

(Continued on page 31)

## ALFRED EDGAR

Prince of Motor-racing  
Story Writers Returns  
to MODERN BOY

## NEXT WEEK!

See Page 32

his right hand. King of the Islands grasped his rifle. They had saved the scallywag of Lalinge, against all chance, against all hope. But it was still a question whether they would get him and themselves away alive!

For the long, tall-prowed war-canoe, packed with black fighting-men, was gliding on the lagoon, searching for them in the glimmer of the stars. Ken caught the sound of splashing paddles; his eyes caught a gleam of shining brass in the starlight from the nose-rings and earrings of Ka'aama.

The black chief was standing up in the canoe, searching the dim lagoon with keen eyes, sharpened by savage hate and ferocity. Yesterday he had traded with the white men on the Dawn, watching all the time for a chance to make a treacherous attack, but baffled by the wary watchfulness of the white traders.

Now he had them at his mercy, and he rejoiced in the thought of prisoners, white and brown, ready for the cooking-ovens—of heads to be smoked in his canoe-house.

He did not know what had happened in the darkness—that his prisoner was gone from the palm-pole in the stream. His savage thoughts were concentrated on the white man's boat, and his search for it in the dimness of the stars. As his keen ears caught the sound of oars grinding in the rowlocks, he gave a sharp yell to his crew.



## Head-Hunters' Lair

(Continued from page 24)

strong pull, and the whaleboat bumped on the side of the Dawn.

Danny and Lufu stared down over the rail. King of the Islands grasped Paget, and swung him up from the bottom of the boat. Brown hands above received him, and lifted him to the deck.

Swiftly the boat's crew scrambled on board, and the whaleboat swung up to the davits. Ken's voice rang over the ketch, sail was swiftly shaken out, and the Dawn put before the wind.

Kit Hudson stared back at canoes, packed with black fighting men, dotting the sea in the dusky glimmer of

the stars, and muttered: "We're well out of that, Ken!"

"Ay!" Ken looked back. The Kua canoes dropped from sight as the Dawn rushed before the wind. Kua itself was only a blur against the stars.

"My word!" Koko chuckled. "Me tinkee leavee head belong me, all samee head belong white master, smooke along canoe-house belong Ka'aama. Head belong me stop along shoulder belong me, my word!"

RAY PAGET limped on deck. The sunset was red on the sea. Koko had rubbed his swollen limbs with a native ointment, relieving the pain; but the scallywag of Lalinge was still aching.

King of the Islands, standing at the binnacle, glanced round and gave the scallywag a nod and a smile.

"Feeling better?" he asked.

"More or less!" grunted Paget. He looked rather uncertainly at the boy trader. "You got me away from those brutes last night?"

"Ay, ay!"

"I think I was a bit off my head!" muttered Paget.

"You were," Ken agreed. "And no wonder. It was touch and go!"

"I suppose it was. I shouldn't have expected you to take the trouble!"

"You weren't worth it!" remarked Hudson.

Paget gave the mate of the Dawn a black look. The shipmates had wondered whether what Paget had been through would make any difference in him. Apparently it had made none. From the shadow of death, from the horror of the cooking-ovens of the cannibals, he had come back the same sullen, discontented scallywag.

"You'll stick to the Dawn after this, at any rate!" said King of the Islands.

"Do you think so?" Paget sneered. "I shall do nothing of the kind! I'm on this ship against my will, and I shall get away at the first chance—the first island you touch!"

"Even a cannibal island?" grinned Hudson.

"Better that than this rotten packet! Put me ashore, you rotters, and let me see the last of you! If you don't, I warn you, Ken King—"

"That's enough!" said King of the Islands curtly. "Last night we saved your life, Paget."

"You put it in danger to begin with!" sneered the scallywag. "If you fancy I'm going on the gratitude tack, you're mistaken! And I tell you—"

"You've said enough!" rapped Ken. "Get forrard."

"I tell you—" shouted Paget.

"Kick that man forrard, Koko!"

And the scallywag's speech came to a sudden end as a big bare brown foot drove him along the deck!

*Paget's up to his tricks again next Saturday. Full of his determination to get away from the Dawn at all costs, he again gives Ken the slip—and finds himself in the hands of a Rogue of the South Seas!*



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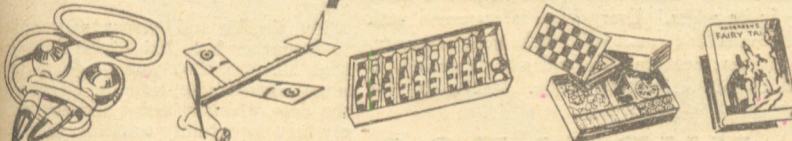
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