

# RED HAIR AND BLUE SEA



by **STANLEY R. OSBORN**

ILLUSTRATIONS BY HENRY JAY LEE

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He divined her meaning, grimaced back reassuringly. A moment later he was once more crouched, holding to the lava floor.

For an interval the bubbles came flying up. Then the man followed. He placed the shell in the canoe, lifted himself aboard, scarcely listed the frail craft from an even keel.

The girl, still dizzy with shock, sat and stared at the coconuts that had brought tragedy so near. Olive, amused, presently picked it up and offered it. When she did not respond, he raised the shell above his mouth, tilted it until the contents spurted out—and drank.

Palmyra laughed hysterically. He had filled the thing at the bottom of the ocean a hundred feet from land. Yet now he drank.

She took the sphere when he offered it again and tasted experimentally: sweet, fresh water; clear, cold as from a spring.

The girl drank deeply. Then, holding the shell upon her knees, she sat for a long time, looking covertly at this brown being.

He had all but given life itself that she might have the water she craved. And he WOULD have given life itself had she taken his knife and not granted her own.

He would be—DEAD!

The brown man pointed to the sand in the canoe—an island. Then he extended his arm; the island was unseen, to starboard. Then he flattened out his palm horizontally, laid his cheek upon it, closed his eyes and began to snore.

Soon would this nightmare of wind and sea be ended. Soon would she be liberated from this rack of torture. She could throw herself down in never-waking slumber.

Her hand stole toward the opening of her dress and her fingers closed, caressingly, over the handle of the knife hidden there. For Olive had given it back.

The topmasts of the Pigeon of Noah appeared. Olive snatched down sail and mast. He lashed them flat. With a glance he assured himself that everything aboard was secure. Then, paddle in hand, he kept their craft in the hollow of the seas.

But on, on came the topmasts, the topsails, rising against the sky. The girl gasped in terror. On came the sails, on and on, nearer and nearer, taller and more definite—more greatly to be dreaded.

And then, in this awful moment, without word of warning, Olive sprang overboard. Palmyra uttered a wail. After all he had braved, to forsake her now? To seek his own safety in flight? It was unthinkable!

And scarcely the unworthy thought, than the brown man's hand shot up, seized the outrigger, gave one twist. The next second Palmyra was floundering in the water, the canoe capsized.

With a stroke the savage reached out and caught her by the hair. As a kitten held in its mother's teeth, she ceased to struggle. With another stroke he recaptured the canoe, bottom up. He put his foot on the outrigger, tilted the hull so the imprisoned air escaped. With one arm he bore down upon the canoe, their combined weight, to sink it and control its motion. The other arm held the girl, submerged, so that she choked and fought for breath.

On, on the Lupe-a-Noa indeed had come, nearer and nearer—but not too near. Careening under its spread of sail, it had been unbelievably close and then, all unknowing, had flown away. Ponape Burke, with his binoculars, had glared straight over them in his scrutiny of the more distant sea.

He placed the girl's hands on the now buoyant canoe, returned its gear, lifted himself up and in. He had stooped for the more difficult feat of hauling Palmyra aboard when, startlingly, he let go his hold with a guttural cry.

She turned frightened eyes over her shoulder, then screamed. For there, cutting the surface, a little jet of spray rising from its edge, was another sail—the dreadful lateen of a shark!

The man-eater was almost upon her. Frantic, she turned her eyes to Olive. There he stood, for the first time at fault. His hand, with lightning instinct, had flown to the sheath of his belt, found it empty. The girl saw that, in throwing his knife away, she had made her own death certain.

But, instantly now, the savage rallied. Only for a second did paralyzing discovery unnerve him. The shark had all but seized its victim. A moment and action would be too late. But in that flash of time the man leaped, landed with his feet upon the shark's back. The impact threw the monster into brief panic.

She tore at her dress; thrust out the knife. He snatched it; dived.

Just as the man-eater made to seize its prey, Olive dropped below the surface. The heavy fish had no chance to stop. As it swept over his head the savage thrust upward with the knife in a lunge that reached the heart.

Olive did not waste time over the adventure of the shark. He had killed sharks before.

Throwing the canoe into its course, he sailed on for the island.

For an interval they went on, before it became evident that Ponape Burke had made them out.

Presently the schooner was so close Palmyra could make out Ponape Burke on its deck, covering them with his glasses.

The reef wall was now so immediately at hand she could see that this rim, by reason of the coral broken off and packed down by the trample of the surf, was higher than the rest of the reef behind, the surface or reef-table which outstretched inland to the beach. The barrier was armored in brown knobs of living coral, with their toothed faces like a giant nutmeg grater against which the sea could grind the canoe into splinters.

And now, as the girl looked, Olive dug his paddle in, put all his weight upon it. The craft veered and took a new course—straight for the reef. Palmyra sat stunned. She had hoped against hope that she was wrong, that he still saw a way. But here was surrender. Even for such a one there could be no further shift.

Scarcely had the canoe changed course than the Pigeon of Noah also swung in toward the reef. Palmyra could see Ponape Burke waving his arms, shouting orders. She gave one shuddering glance at the cauldron ahead, then back to the white man. The race was run.

And even now, in confirmation, Olive sprang up, let go the sheet, slashed the cords that held the mast; whipped the whole gear overboard.

But immediately, to her bewilderment, he seized the paddle again, plunged it into the water, began to speed toward the barrier.

The roar of the surf—most frightful of sounds—deafened her. But as she clung desperately to her place, staring ahead into the tumult of waters—she could smile. If Olive chose death to defeat, so could she. But, such her faith, she felt that, impossible as it seemed, he must still think to escape.

Now, as her navigator began to calculate the seas, to hold the canoe back at times, Palmyra saw there was a slight recession shoreward in the line of the reef. It swung in at this point just sufficiently to create a lee. The surf did not burst upon it with the direct drive of the wind and, protected through most of the year from the sweep of the trades, not so much broken coral had been packed down here and the rim was lower. In a flash she perceived that he must have had this place in mind from the first; that, the tide in their favor, it might be possible, in sufficiently skilled hands, to hurdle the reef.

There was just one phase in the rhythm of the surf when he could succeed. He must catch the moment when the wave had crashed down upon the coral teeth; when the violence of the impact had abated, but not one second of the precious after inrush had been lost. For, if that had not carried him far enough, he would be caught by the recoil to follow, when the water flung upon the reef poured back into the ocean.

Olive paddled furiously to get far enough in so that the back-sweep could not grip them, drag them down to destruction. Nearly he had succeeded. But, the recoil having rained the coral almost bare, the outrigger struck a knob of the limestone, broke from the canoe.

Instantly, the man leaped out, caught the girl up in his arms. He sprang upon a coral boulder that raised them above the sliding water. The canoe sucked back over the brink, but Olive held.

The moment the downrush ended, he raced with his burden, bounding over the rough coral, until he had reached another knob rising above the level, perhaps fifty feet in from the edge. Here they weathered the next sea and its subsequent retreat.

Another dash across the shallows and they were safe from the ocean. But not as yet from Ponape Burke.

As the brown man carried Palmyra, her face, over his shoulder, was turned toward the Lupe-a-Noa. The girl saw that the schooner, beaten at last, had gone about and was working back out of danger. She saw that the white man had clambered part way up the rigging. And then she gave a warning cry as, from the shrouds, there flashed out a spurt of flame.

Instantly, Olive, understanding, threw himself flat into the three-foot water. A bullet came cutting along

the surface almost where they had stood.

Olive leaping up, sprang with the girl behind another boulder in time to escape a second bullet.

Several shots Ponape Burke fired in his jealous rage, though now he had no target. Then, the Pigeon of Noah gaining way, drew off, and the pursuit in this phase at any rate, was ended.

(Continued next week)

We do not print this for its wit Nor its poetic grace. We don't care what it says a bit It's just to fill the space.

"Say, Mike, I just got an invitation to Patty Murphy's wake and on the end of it is written R.S.V.P. Sure now, and what does that mean?" "It means, 'Rush in, shake hands, vittell up and pass out.'"

The Hibernian laborer paused in front of the book store and a sign in the window caught his eye: Dickens' Works All this week for

only \$4.00 "The devil he does!" he exclaimed, "the dirty scab."

## APPLY TRUST METHODS TO FARMING IS HINT

### Article in Magazine Discusses Running of Farms on Big Business Basis

Applications of "trust" methods to agriculture to bring it abreast of other business and industry in America may be the solution to the national farm problem, according to a leading article in Farm and Fireside, which is expected to result in the widest discussion of the revolutionary project.

In its first article, Farm and Fireside presents arguments in favor of running farms on a big business basis. It contemplates the capitalization of blocks of farm lands containing ten or twenty thousand acres and their operation by experts and departments just as a large industry is operated. By this method it is believed that investments in farm machinery would result in greater returns in that they would be working the greatest possible number of days during the year instead of standing idle as does the machinery on a small farm. All products would be handled through a general sales manager and in many cases factories would be created to work up raw materials before leaving the farm.

The writer of the article believes that if most of the land in the United States were so organized farming would take equal rank with the most profitable industries.

Answering the argument that the small farmer would lose his independence by the process, the article declares he would lose it only "insofar as that independence permits him to work without ample capital, without competent direction and without suitable equipment." This change, the article continues, has happened in every other industry with vast benefit to all concerned. The small farmer, it is added, would be the workman on the consolidated farms according to his ability, and his wages would be equal to those of the city dweller.

## SOMETHING ABOUT HATS; DERBY REVIVED

The derby hat has reappeared upon the dome of man; and it is such a warlike creation that it has already gained the popular cognomen of "the iron hat." Women always do fresh stunts in hats—that is one of their pastimes and responsibilities.

An interesting and novel note at the spring fashion centers is shown in new trimmings for felt hats by the use of the ever-increasing popular cellophane, which is gradually breaking

into every branch of industry. This new glistening material gives a beautiful contrast to dull finished felt and other basis for hats. In the smart shops it is being regarded as the "quintessence of class."

There was an old woman in Spain Who was so exceedingly vain That she'd look in the glass While the hours would pass Till the overworked glass got a pain.

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