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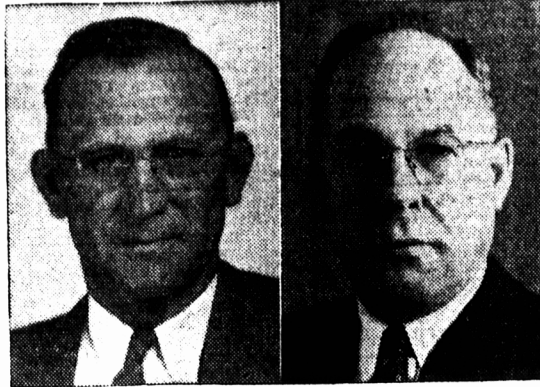
Exit Tony Blount

by Sydney Parkman
CHAPTER VIII
Continued

The man looked at him with a curious blank expression on his

face, but made no comment. "Well, the New Zealand Gov'tment's goin' to be pleased to know that you ain't gone under," the captain continued. "But I'm just wonderin' if there wasn't others that got away. Y'see, nobody knows what happened to the Mau-wai, so if you can give me a few ideas — she hit something, I s'pose — a reef or something?" The other raised his hand and shaded his eyes with the palm, as though he found the light too strong for him. "I — suppose so," he agreed, after a pause of a few seconds. The captain stared at him in some surprise. "Well, maybe you wouldn't know what it was," he conceded. "I dessey it happened all of a rush — an' maybe at night? But you'd know if any of the other boats got away, wouldn't you?" There was another short pause, and then the man shook his head slightly, still keeping his eyes shaded with his hand. "I don't know," he muttered at last. The captain eyed him with a puzzled frown. It seemed to him that the other was being far from helpful. "But you must know something about it," he insisted. "If one boat got away, there's a good chance that some of the others did, too. But anyway, how did it happen that you was alone in the boat? Or was there others when you started out?" Again there was a pause, and then the man dropped his hand wearily and looked at him with haggard eyes. "I don't know," he repeated. "I can't remember." The captain stared at him blankly. "Can't remember?" he repeated. "But it ain't all that long ago! D'ye mean to say —" He broke off, remembering the doctor's warning. "Well, if you can't — you can't," he resumed after a moment, striving to conceal his disappointment. "It ain't to be wondered at, I s'pose, seein' what you've been through. Three weeks in an open boat ain't no joke — specially when the water runs out. How you made it last that long I dunno, for you couldn't ha' been without it for more'n a day or two when we picked you up. I reckon two days would be the limit for anyone to go thir-ty in these latitudes." He paused, and as the man made no response, he slowly straightened himself up. "Well, I'll be beatin' it up on deck

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again. The doc only gave me ten minutes down here — an' I guess that's enough, seein' the shape you're in. But I'll be lookin' you up again before long." He nodded reassuringly and turned away towards the door. As he reached the threshold, however, he turned again to deliver a final encouraging word. "I guess the doc's told you we're aimin' to land you at Arafu," he said. "It'll be another four or five days before we make it though, so all you've got to do is to take things easy an' get your strength back. You ought to be around here by then, an' fit to take the job on." The man was staring at him with a queer, half-dazed look in his eyes, as though he found some difficulty in understanding what he meant. He said nothing, however, and after a moment the captain nodded again, and backing out of the cabin, made his way up on deck. The doctor was seated aft with a book, but he looked up at his approach. "Well? What do you think of our patient now?" he asked. The captain shook his head dubiously. "I dunno," he said slowly. "He don't look so good to me. O' course he's still a mighty sick man, but if you was to ask me I'd say he's gone a bit queer up here. And he tapped his forehead significantly. His passenger surveyed him with a slight smile. "What makes you think that?" he asked indulgently. "Well, for one thing he don't remember nothin' about what happened to the Mau-wai," the captain told him. "He don't know what they hit or when they hit it, or — or anything. An' he don't know how he come to be adrift in that boat by himself. That ain't natural, is it?" The doctor shrugged. "It is only what one might have expected," he said placidly. "It is probably a direct result of that injury to the head. I imagine he sustained it in making his escape from the ship, and it caused confusion of the brain — which it probably did — that would easily account for the fact that he has no recollection of the circumstances. You will remember that I warned you not to expect too much." The captain still looked unconvinced. "Yes, I know you did," he admitted. "But that ain't all. It's the way he looks at you — as though he only savvies about half you're sayin'! Even when I mentioned that we was on our way to Arafu, he didn't seem to know what I meant. An' you told him that already, hadn't you?" The doctor shook his head. "To be continued"

BURGESS BEDTIME
(Continued from Page 7)

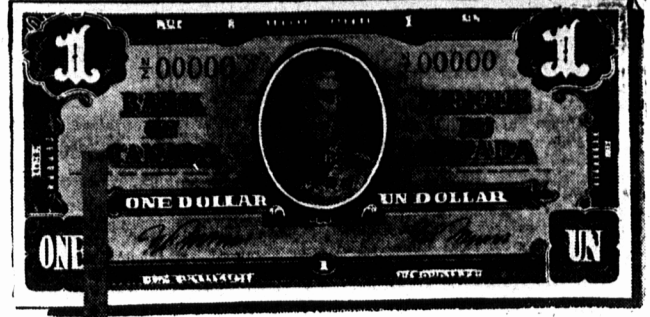
and when Mother Bear scolds the sound isn't at all a pleasant one. Sometimes she boxed their ears. They would squeal, and be sorry, and for a little while tag along at her heels as they should. Then curiosity would lead them right into the same kind of trouble again.

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