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## LONE MAN STARTS ON HUNT FOR HUNDRED CANNIBAL MUTINEERS

Malden Man, Alone on Lonely Pacific Island, After Waiting For Second Attack From Murderous Natives, Resolves to Hunt Them Down Single-Handed



**By JAMES H. POWERS**

The Sunday Globe has told in previous instalments how Joseph English of Malden was left as manager of Christmas Island, that lowly bit of land in the Pacific, how the native workmen mutinied and how after a narrow escape from a squad of them he waited, the only white man on the island, for a second concerted attack which could have but one end. Unable to stand the suspense longer, he resolved on a desperate plan.

### **THE STORY OF JOSEPH ENGLISH**

The plan which I hit upon, as I sat on the shore below London House, and the details of which I began to work out at that moment, seemed to present the only solution to the problem of escaping alive from my predicament, or, what would be worse than failure, losing my mind.

#### **I resolved to turn hunter instead of hunted.**

Where the mutineers might be I did not know. Where I might be they could not help but guess with fair accuracy. So long as I remained on the defensive, I saw clearly that I should be at a decided disadvantage in the game of hide and seek which had now developed.

I had my gun and revolver, and a few rounds of good ammunition left from the stores. If I began stalking the natives I might catch them, a l'improviste as old "Santa Claus" Rougier would put it.

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#### **Alone on Island 60 Miles Long**

The scheme presented vast difficulties and no little danger. The official Navigators' Book of the South Pacific, on the shelf, had informed me that Christmas Island was 46 miles on the north coast and 45 miles on the south coast, with an average width of 35 miles.

My operations about the island, the trips in the automobile which the mutineers had now stolen, had, however, caused me to doubt the accuracy of the book and I had made measurements of my own, with the result that I convinced myself the south coast was between 55 and 60 miles from point to point, southwest and southeast.

**Now, for myself alone, a solitary white man out there on an island of such proportions, close to 3000 miles from 'Friso, to begin an armed search for a crowd of murderous mutineers whom I had not laid eyes on since the night of the attack, appealed to my imagination and my desire for solution.**

But for all that, I had no desire to run my head into a noose and then hand over the rope's end to my foes. So I plotted and planned for the next few days, testing out possibilities.

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## Preparing for a Campaign

I would approach them from the rear. I went to the storehouse and dragged out the canoe from its shelter to the edge of the lagoon, thinking to cross during the night to the Paris side. The boat leaked like a sieve and sank in the shallow water off shore. I took it out again put it in to soak over night.

**The next afternoon, at dusk, I prepared for my expedition. Locks were out on the doors of the house and the shed and the flour tank. I filled my water bottle with the drinking water from the brackish well outside the house, packed my pockets with biscuits and cartridges, took my two weapons and paddle and shoved off.**

It was now dark. The reading of the barometer as I left London Station was not reassuring, the mercury having dropped to 39.2, but I was determined to cross that lagoon.

Directly across the straits past Cookes Island to Paris Point it was about seven miles. During these Winter months, however, to cross directly was almost impossible, owing to the tides and the tremendous surf. It was safer to paddle back six or eight miles into the lagoon and then turn and effect a landing well inside of the south arm.

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## Driven Back by the Storm

My troubles began before I had gone three miles. With a whoop and a shriek the wind came up out of the southeast, directly in my teeth. It lashed the waters of the lagoon into a fury.

The whole thing occurred within five minutes and, at the end of that time I was battling with all my strength to keep the canoe from capsizing in the shark-infested waters.

The windstorm increased. It was almost pitch dark. Now I was literally at a standstill, for all my effort, the canoe plunging and whirling crazily from side to side, as the wind buffeted the bows and the waves crashed upon us.

I began to take in water. My bare feet were splashing about in the bottom of the canoe. Then, slowly but relentlessly, the raging winds swept us abck into the north, and, after nearly an hour's desperate struggle, I was spilled out on the sands between Motu Manu Peninsula and London House.

I crawled from the water, dragging the half-filled canoe after me up the shore, clear of the lagoon. This done, I started for home, wet, chilled to the bone and well-nigh discouraged.

Once there, with a fire and some dry clothing, I recovered my spirits and my determination. I **would** cross. I resolved to tra again the next night.

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## To Walk Around the Island

But it was no use. The winds again drove me back almost to the start.

Again the following night I attempted the crossing, only to be very nearly drowned this time. And, thoroughly frightened at the narrowness of my escape, I was thankful to set foot on shore.

**As I stood on the sands, in the sunlight of the 26th day of January, through my glasses over the reefs by Paris House, I saw one of the natives fishing.**

My heart leaped. They were there, then. He was the first human being that I had laid eyes on nearly a month, but, if my weapons had had the range, I would have drilled him clean.

The knowledge that the mutineers were at Paris House lent strength to my determination, and though I was suffering from exhaustion and a deadly headache, I tried again that night to make the crossing. I failed.

**I determined to walk around the road.**

The distance from where I was to Paris, by the lagoon road was 72 kilometers, or about 45 miles, but this did not deter me. The exhilaration of the hunt was upon me. I was resolved either to crush out the mutiny or be killed and get over with it.

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### **A Dim Shadow in the Dark**

Once more I stocked up with ammunition and food and water. There were good wells along the road, but I took no chances. And at 8:30 on Sunday morning I set out, my shotgun loaded and slung over my shoulder and my revolver under my hand in my belt, where a dozen handcuffs dangled.

I was barefoot and the shells and coral cut sharply, but I marched on, keeping a wary eye ahead, skirting the trees beside the roadbed and watching for the natives. I saw no one.

All day long I walked, stopping for a rest finally, late at night, in an old tumble-down shack on the shores of the lagoon, where I smoked my cigarette and worked out the details of the surprise for the mutineers.

It was yet half-way round the lagoon to my destination and my feet had begun to swell from the cuts. But the sound of a crunched footfall on the road outside brought me to my feet of an instant, alert, and I seized my shotgun.

**A dim shadow passed swiftly down the shore, toward Erie Basin. This would not do. I must get on and not let them filter past and get behind me.**

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### **Saw Them First**

I started again. This time I was limping badly, but I felt refreshed after the rest and pressed ahead.

So I went 27 kilometers more, and then, in the gray light of the morning, I nearly ran into two of the natives on the road. Luckily I saw them first.

**I ducked into the bushes and watched them. I saw Tama, whom I had left lying senseless, and another of the blacks in earnest conversation, approaching my lair.**

I let them get within a few feet of me when I stepped out into the road and thrust the gun to my shoulder. Tama immediately threw up his hands and began bowing deeply, protesting all the while

that he was innocent. The other savage dropped to his knees and shrieked prayers for me to spare his life.

I told them to stand up and shut up. I asked them where the auto was. Tama said that they had taken it to Paris House and had taken it down again.

Why had he deserted me? Why had he gone to the mutineers when I had risked my life to help him? He protested that he had feared for his safety if he did otherwise. I told him that I was disgusted with his cowardice and ordered both of them to come nearer.

Where were the men? They were at Paris House. I snapped a pair of handcuffs over the wrists of the pair.

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### **Handcuffing the Ringleaders**

“Very well,” I said. “My feet are swollen, I can walk no further. You shall carry me in.”

And with that I slung my gun, took out the revolver and ordered them to pick me up, which they did, making a chair of the two hands that were manacled together.

Thus we passed along the road in silence. As we came to the edge of the plantation, I saw that Tama was in a really repentant mood, and the other man frightened nearly to death, so I resolved to try leniency – **I could not arrest the whole lot of them, the ringleaders were enough.**

And, ordering them to halt behind some bushes that screened us from the buildings, I got down, unlocking the handcuffs and told them I would let them off if they gave me the names of the leaders of the mutiny; which they did, only too eagerly.

There was a sound of hammering in the storehouse, and I went up to it, gun in hand, and shouted for the men to come out. A huge brute appeared in the doorway, and when he saw me the hammer dropped from his hand with a clatter on the threshold and his face went grayish-green.

“Joe is a good manager, Joe is a good manager,” he shrieked, holding his hands high over his head.

“Come down here and hold out your hands, then,” I ordered. He advanced, his knees trembling. I think he fully expected to be shot on the instant. I handcuffed him.

The others began to appear, and I covered them with my gun. Then I picked out the leaders by name and told them to come forward in a line, and I handcuffed them also.

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### **Eager to Work**

When this was done I huddled the prisoners into a group and turned to the rest of the crew, who were all of them looking scared and silent.

“You will all start to work today, at once, or else you will get off the plantations into the jungle.” I shouted.

They did not move. They continued to eye me with apprehension and I waved the gun. "Do you all hear? Or must I help you to make up your minds?" I repeated savagely.

They clamored Yes, yes, yes They would work. They wanted to work. They were sorry they had . . . . But I cut them short.

"You can begin right away then," says I. And they scampered like children in fear of a whipping. I marched the prisoners up to the owner's house at Paris Station, determined to lock them into one of the large rooms, which should serve as a jail till I could devise their future punishment or make up my mind to hold them pending the arrival of the schooner.

As we came into the yard I saw one of the men, unconscious of what had taken place, out on the reefs spearing fish and I immediately decided to give the prisoners and the rest of the repentant rebels an object lesson so as to remove any doubts they might have concerning my determination. A few bird shot would turn the trick, so I threw up my shotgun and fired.

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### **Ending the Mutiny**

That man must have leaped 10 feet into the air, with surprise and terror at the sting of the shot. He dropped back into the water and floundered up to the reef and lay there, undecided whether he was dead or alive, or what turn events had taken.

I shouted to him to come in. He did not answer. I raised the gun once more, and he came in with a rush, and fell on his knees and implored me to spare him.

I told him in loud tones that whether he was spared or not depended upon himself, and the disposition he showed to work and obey orders.

When the prisoners were locked up I went over to the seaward side of the point, and there I saw five more of the mutineers cooking fish on a fire. The noise of the surf had drowned the report of the gun and they did not suspect anything. I was fair upon them when one turned.

He uttered a single exclamation and they all sat as if frozen stiff. I stalked boldly over the fire and, seizing their pan of fish, I hurled its contents into the sea.

"You will not eat fish on this plantation unless you work," I declared, coldly incisive. They said that they would work.

**And that was the end of the mutiny, which had lasted just one month, and which had nearly brought me into my grave,**

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### **All Hands at Work**

February came, and we were back laboring with a vengeance. The natives, with the fear of punishment for the mutiny and the knowledge that several of their fellows were still in jail, worked with more zeal than they had ever displayed before.

We began to set out seed by the thousands, and, between improvising rope tires for my auto – makeshifts which lasted only two days – and inspecting, and spearing sharks, and painting the houses and the boats, we had plenty to keep us from any further missteps.

With the arrival of March the gang went to “protecting” the plantlings set out in new groves. This consisted of laying covers to shut off the direct rays of the sun and fighting the pests and sea crabs.

All through these months I fought against almost continual headaches, caused probably by the heat and the diet. The illness did not keep me from work, however, save on one day, and that came early in May, when of a sudden my hands and face and neck and body went blue. I became deadly sick, and my fingernails turned a blackish purple. I took violent exercises for an hour or two and this seemed to restore circulation.

We cleaned trees and began to look for the arrival of the schooner which was due in June.

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### **Waiting for the Schooner**

Once, about the 4th of the month, a strange schooner appeared in the offing and there was general rejoicing in the belief that this was the “Ysabel May,” but the joy turned into grief and discouragement when she veered away and disappeared.

Now the men began to grumble. Their contract had expired on the last day of May and I had hard work persuading them to keep busy till the ship should come.

They went to their tasks with a growing indifference and dislike, and finally stopped work altogether and I had to assemble them at London House Station where I could keep my eye upon them, for they were mischievous and might become dangerous.

On the 16th day of June I lost a pair of trousers and 100 francs to Tama, who had wagered that the ship would not be in by that time. We began to assume all the appearance in the world of a colony of avoided loafers, for none would help or turn a hand to anything.

The grumbling rose louder and louder, and so June went by, and July came..

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### **The Coming of a Stranger**

Finally, on zhe night of July 28, shortly before midnight, there befell something that gave an entirely new complexion to affairs at Christmas Island, and was to prove one of the turning points towards even worse disasters than had already befallen me.

I lay on my cot reading, inside the doorway at London House. It was almost quiet. The noise of the surf had died away into a vague rumble on the reefs. I was trying to get interested in a much reread tale when I heard a shouting down toward the point.

**I looked out, thinking that it was one of my own men. Staggering up the shore in the moonlight, I saw coming toward the house, and calling loudly, a strange man.**

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**This thrilling story, told by a Malden boy of his adventures in the South Seas, will be continued in next Sunday's Globe.**