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# The MODERN BOY

EVERY MONDAY.  
Week Ending September 19th, 1931.

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2<sup>D.</sup>



The RAILWAY FIRE PATROL!—See page 3.

Business  
owners  
profession  
seem to

A spanking South Seas Island adventure yarn of Ken King, the Boy Trader!

Danny's heart thumped fast as his keen knife ripped the packing-canvas of the mysterious case.



**Fat Man of Tova.**

"No likee that feller Dussman!" Kaio-lalulalonga, the brown bo'sun of Ken King's trading ketch, the Dawn, made that remark for the third time.

Koko, as the bo'sun was called, was not alone in his dislike. Few South Seas natives like Dutchmen, and with regard to the particular Dutchman who was waddling across the coral quay of Tova, Ken fully shared the feeling of his Kanaka boatswain.

King of the Islands, the famous boy trader of the South Seas, particularly disliked Van Pomm, the Dutch trader of Tova. He had had trouble with the man in the past, and blows had been struck. But that was a long time since, and Ken was not the man to remember offences or nourish grudges.

Besides, business was business where Ken was concerned. He was drumming around the islands in search of cargo with which to fill the Dawn, and if the Dutch trader had a load for him, and there was room for it aboard, that was all that concerned the handsome young skipper.

The Dawn, with Ken, Kit Hudson (his young Australian mate), Koko, and five Hiva-Oa boys—Lompo, Lufu, Tomoo, Kolulu, and Danny, the cooky-boy—aboard, had put in at Tova to land cargo. That had left a space to be filled in the hold, and Ken had been pleased to hear that Van Pomm had a packing-case to send on to Luta, an island which lay in his course when he sailed.

If the Dutchman forgot that old trouble, Ken had no desire to revive it. Indeed, he was glad that the Dutch trader had buried the hatchet, for Van Pomm had a reputation for vindictiveness all through the islands.

But as he stood on the Dawn, moored to the coral quay, and watched the podgy trader waddling into view, Ken's instinctive dislike of the man rose within him.

It was more than a year since Ken had seen Van Pomm, but the man had not changed. He was a mountain of flabby flesh, almost bursting through his dingy white drill, with little cunning, cruel eyes peering from a podgy face.

"Is that Van Pomm?" asked Kit, who had not been at Tova before.

"That's the man," said Ken. "Enough of him, isn't there?"

Hudson grinned. There was not only enough of him—there was considerably too much.

"No likee feller Dussman!" repeated Koko for the fourth time. The Kanaka's dark eyes dwelt distrustfully on the trader of Tova. "Feller Dussman no good along white master."

"Feller Dussman no good—feller cargo plenty good!" replied King of the Islands, with a laugh.

Danny, the cooky-boy, came to the side with an armful of banana-peelings to throw into the lagoon. At the sight of the fat Dutchman on the quay, he gave a squeal of alarm, dropped the banana-peelings on the

what had happened when King of the Islands called to see Van Pomm on such a matter!

Ken's face set grimly for a moment. The recollection of that scene in the Dutch trader's office gave him a reminiscent twinge in his knuckles.

"Me see, eyes belong me," grinned Koko. "White master plenty kill that feller Dussman, along fist belong him."

"I left him on his back in his office, spitting like a cat," said Ken. "I never thought he would get over it—he's got a reputation for nursing grudges. But he seems to have forgotten it, so the least said soonest mended. No reason why we shouldn't carry his packing-case of clocks on to Luta."

"None at all," agreed Hudson, as the fat trader arrived and stepped on the Dawn's deck from the quay.

Van Pomm puffed and blew as he halted. Perspiration ran in streams down his fat face. It was hot on Tova, and the fat Dutchman was thoroughly out of condition.

Ken signed to a Hiva-Oa boy to place a chair for the trader, and the strong Madeira chair creaked and groaned as Van Pomm's weight sank heavily into it.

Koko had picked up a capstan bar and slipped it under his arm, his dark eyes on the "feller Dussman." Ken, greeting the Dutchman civilly, did not observe the boatswain's action. But Hudson saw it, and grinned.

Kaio-lalulalonga seemed to suspect that the Dutch trader had come on board to kidnap men under the eyes of the boy skipper, and he watched him like a cat. He would not have been sorry for an excuse to establish contact between the capstan bar and the Dutchman's glistening bald head!

Van Pomm sat and fanned himself with his hat, and grunted. The Hiva-Oa crew, muttering at a distance, told one another that the feller Dussman grunted "all same pig along bush."

He shook his head at the offer of lime-squash, his fat lips curving in a sneer. He was accustomed to stronger medicine than lime-squash. But there was nothing stronger to be had on board the Dawn.

"Ach! It is hot!" said Van Pomm

Complete  
**The TICK  
of DOOM**  
By Charles Hamilton

deck, and bolted back into his little galley. The mate of the Dawn stared after him.

"What's got Danny?" he asked. "That feller Danny plenty flaid along feller Dussman!" chuckled Kaio-lalulalonga.

"Danny was the cause of my little trouble with Van Pomm," Ken explained. "Van Pomm deals in copra, trade goods—and niggers. He's the worst kidnapper in the Islands. He's even said to have shanghai'd men off Government gunboats. I don't know about that, but I do know that no man's niggers are safe within a hundred miles of Van Pomm. A Dutch skipper was short of a cook, and Van Pomm shanghai'd Danny for him."

"His Tova boys had got Danny trussed up like a chicken in his warehouse, all ready to send on board the Dutch brig after dark, when I got wind of it, and called to see Van Pomm."

Hudson chuckled. He could guess

# The Tick of Doom

fanning his streaming face. "Wait! I get my breff!"

Ken waited politely till the fat man got his breath. Then there was ten minutes of chaffering. The trader had a consignment of clocks for a native chief on the island of Luta.

He impressed on Ken that the greatest care must be taken of the packing-case. The clocks had been specially sent out from Holland, for a good price, and were eagerly expected by Soko, the native chief.

Insurance did not cover the consignment after it reached Tova, and for that reason, according to Van Pomm, he had picked out King of the Islands to carry them to their destination—on his reputation as a skilful and careful skipper.

This was rather flattering from a man whose fat features had been seriously damaged by the boy trader's knuckles in the past. It helped Ken to repress his instinctive dislike of the man.

Van Pomm was assured that the case of clocks would be packed with every care in the Dawn's trade-room, and that the skipper would keep a personal eye upon it till it was handed over to the consignee at Luta. With this assurance Van Pomm seemed satisfied, but the question of freight was not so easily settled.

Van Pomm exemplified the old truth that "the fault of the Dutch is giving too little and asking too much." But even that delicate question was settled at last, and Van Pomm rose from the creaking chair to take his leave.

During the talk a couple of Tova coolies had brought the packing-case along the quay from the Dutchman's warehouse. Ken signed to them to bring it on board, and it was taken below and stacked in the trade-room. Van Pomm gave a grunt expressive of satisfaction as it disappeared.

He rolled to the Dawn's side and stepped on to the quay. There he raised his big grass hat, looking back at King of the Islands with a glimmering twinkle in narrow eyes that peered from folds of flesh.

"Vaarwel!" he grunted. "A good voyage to you, mynheer! Vaarwel!" And he rolled up the quay to his warehouse, puffing and grunting.

"That's that!" said Ken, with a smile.

In the purple sunset the Dawn spread her white wings and sailed out of the lagoon of Tova. Ken, glancing back, saw a fat figure standing on the quay, watching the ketch as she flew.

It seemed to him that a mocking grin twisted the podgy features of the Dutch trader. But all the boy skipper's attention was needed for the reef passage, and he speedily dismissed Van Pomm from his mind.

## A Sharp Knife.

OUTSIDE the reef, the ketch ran northward for Luta. The wind was not favourable, so the Dawn had to tack wide and long, with a constant cackle from the Kanaka crew as the boom swung and

roared. But King of the Islands' ketch could sail as near to the wind as any craft in the Pacific, and the Dawn was making good way as the sun sank deeper in the glowing west.

Leaving Kit Hudson in charge of the deck, and Lompo at the wheel, Ken went down to the cabin, followed by Koko and Danny, to give his attention to the last packing-cases that had been brought aboard, and especially the case of clocks for Luta.

The case lay on the planks where the coolies had landed it. From it came a sound of ceaseless ticking. The clocks had apparently been wound when the Dutchman packed them in the case.

How many clocks it contained was unknown, but as it was five feet long, a foot or more wide, and a couple of feet deep, there was room in it for a good number.

The ticking came dully through the thick canvas that was packed carefully round the contents of the case.

The packing-case itself was of unusually strong construction, and round it strong cords had been knotted. The Dutch trader had evidently taken the greatest care with his consignment.

"My word, plenty talk along that box!" said Danny.

Ken picked out a secure spot for the packing-case, and saw it stowed with a number of bags of copra stacked round it, to save it from shock in case of rolling and pitching. When he returned to the deck he gave it no further thought.

The crew of the Dawn, however, were more interested than the skipper. To the infantile mind of a Kanaka there was something keenly entertaining in the ticking of a clock.

Any one of the Hiva-Oa boys would have been proud to possess a clock, which he would probably have worn strung around his neck by way of ornament.

One after another the native boys, when they thought the white masters' eyes were not upon them, crept along to the companion, or to the cabin skylight, to bend a listening ear to the muffled ticking in the trade-room below.



E	A	S	I	E	R	C	H	E	E	R	Y
A	E	R	E	T	M	O	L	E	E		
S	L	A	T	I	R	E	D	O	P	A	
Y	A	M	I	R	S	C	O	M	E	R	
O	N	B	E	S	O	V	C	A			
R	I	E	L	S	E	O	L	E	R	O	D
A	N	E	L	O	P	E	M	O	N	K	S
T	T	S	O	B	I	T	E	N	I	D	H
E	O	N	E	T	E	D	S	I	N	S	
O	R	B	E	X	C	E	L	L	B	I	T
B	E	L	L						H	I	S
C									T		
T	E								E	E	
S	O								E	A	R
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Y	E								C	E	

Did you Hit the Bullseye last week? Here is the Solution to the reader's original Crossword Puzzle in our last issue. This week's puzzle is on page 23.

"Feller box belong Dussman he plenty talk!" said the Hiva-Oa boys to one another. "Feller clock stop along that feller box, he talk plenty too much altogether."

Only Kaio-lalulalonga, the boat-swain, maintained a lofty indifference. Koko knew all about clocks. He knew that a feller white master could tell the time by looking at a clock, just as a Kanaka could by looking at the sky.

He affected to understand how they did it, though as a matter of fact the mystery was beyond him. He knew that if a clock ceased to talk, a feller white master would poke a little feller key into it and turn it round and round, and then the clock would begin to talk again.

White men had their own peculiar ways, and Koko knew that they liked to keep their clocks talking all day and night, instead of, as seemed more reasonable to Koko, setting them talking only when they wanted the clock to tell them the time! Personally, he preferred a musical-box.

Lompo and Lufu, Kolulu and Tomoo listened again and again to the muffled ticking from below, till they tired of the entertainment. Then they lost interest in the Dutchman's packing-case.

But there was one member of the crew who did not lose his interest in it. That one was Danny, the cooky-boy.

Danny's duties took him frequently into the cabin, for the cooky-boy was also cabin-boy and steward and several other things. He had to clean and sweep, polish the brasses, tidy the state-room where Ken and Kit had their bunks, and look after the stores in the lazarette.

Danny performed his many duties in a more or less perfunctory manner, an occasional touch of the lawyer-cane giving him new vigour when he grew too perfunctory.

Danny was on his best behaviour now. Lately he had "sacked" himself, and having changed his mind had been taken on again by the boy skipper of the Dawn. His object now was to prove to his feller white master how very valuable a "boy" he was. There was not much brass-work about the Dawn, but what there was shone like gold.

The beds in the state-room were made with meticulous care. The cooking was perfect. The early morning coffee was always hot, the cooling lime-squash in the heat of the day always delightfully cool.

And for days and days Danny had not stolen so much as a banana-skin.

Stealing came as naturally to Danny as breathing. Only the lawyer-cane kept him in the straight and narrow path. And even the lawyer-cane could not always keep him there.

He could resist, though with difficulty, the temptation of coloured glass beads, bright pocket-knives, and calico of many hues in the trade-room. But there were some temptations too strong for Danny to resist.

Like the other Hiva-Oa boys, Danny would have dearly loved to

possess a clock. He did not want it for time-keeping. Telling the time by a clock was one of those mysterious things that white masters could do, but which a Kanaka could not expect to do.

He wanted a clock because it had a bright metal case, a gleaming glass front, a face with mysterious symbols marked on it, and because it would go tick-tock, tick-tock as long as you liked.

So Van Pomm's packing-case had an irresistible attraction for the cooky-boy. When he was alone in the cabin, Danny sought out the corner where the case had been stacked, and bent his dusky head to listen to the muffled ticking.

His dusky fingers glided over the thick canvas that bulged through the slats, and over the cords that were wound and knotted round the case. Had the case been carelessly packed, and could Danny have found a slit for thievish fingers, undoubtedly he would have abstracted one of the clocks that it contained. But the most careful examination failed to reveal any opening for an enterprising pilferer.

Danny sighed and gave it up. But his thoughts ran on the case when he was cooking, or washing dishes in his little galley.

There were, he was assured, a number of clocks in the case—very likely five-five, or even five-ten. Soko, the native chief on Luta, would surely not miss one from so many, if it fell into the hands of a cooky-boy on its way to Luta. After all, how was Soko to know?

White men could tell the number of articles in a case by looking at marks made on a paper. But Soko was a native and, of course, unacquainted with white man's magic.

With a favourable wind, it was two days' sail to Luta. With an unfavourable wind it might be three or four; and the wind was not in favour of the ketch. In that time Danny felt that opportunity to acquire a clock ought to come his way.

The thought of the lawyer-cane troubled him a little. King of the Islands was rather severe if his own property was touched. Danny knew that he would be terribly stern if cargo entrusted to his care was touched.

For some white man's reason, which Danny did not understand, the boy trader was more particular about goods entrusted to his keeping than about his own belongings.

So Danny's mind dallied with temptation, without coming to a fixed resolve.

The morality of the matter did not bother Danny. The thing was simple to his untutored mind: on the one hand, the possession of the yearned-for feller clock, on the other hand, the dread of the feller lawyer-cane!

When Danny served supper to the two white masters in the cabin, Koko



The fat Dutchman, powerful as he was, crumpled in the grasp of King of the Islands. Hudson looked on grimly.

being in charge of the deck, his eyes turned frequently in the direction of the Dutchman's packing-case. Ken noticed it, and smiled. "You likee hear feller clock talk along box belong Dussman, Danny?" he remarked, when the cooky-boy had looked round for about the tenth time.

Danny started guiltily. White masters had a way, sometimes, of guessing the thoughts of a feller Kanaka boy, and Danny was smitten with dread that King of the Islands had divined his felonious intentions towards Van Pomm's packing-case.

But he was relieved to see only good-natured amusement in the face of the boy trader.

"Yes, sar!" stammered Danny, starting guiltily. "Me likee plenty hear feller clock talk along box. S'pose this feller rich feller, he buy feller clock, stop along galley belong him."

"You likee this feller supper, sar?" asked Danny, eager to change the subject.

"Me likee plenty too much, Danny," said Ken. "Me tinkee you best feller cook along Islands."

"Hear, hear!" grinned Hudson.

And Danny grinned. There was no doubt that it was a good supper—an uncommonly good supper. Danny was an astute boy. Good food and good cooking kept white masters in a good temper along a Kanaka cooky-boy, and might help to make them forbearing if they caught the cooky-boy pilfering cargo.

While Ken was taking his watch on deck that night, and Hudson sleeping in the state-room, Kaio-lalualonga came down to his berth on the cabin lockers. Danny at that hour should have been sleeping in his galley.

But as Koko came down, his bare feet making no sound, he was surprised to see the cooky-boy, by the shaded light of the swinging lamp, bending over the packing-case stacked



among the bags of copra in the corner.

Danny had his back to the boatswain. In his hand was a sharp knife he used in the galley.

"You feller Danny!" Kaio-lalualonga rapped out. The cooky-boy gave a convulsive jump clear of the cabin floor, and spun round at the boatswain in dismay.

"What name you come along this place, feller knife along hand belong you?" demanded Kaio-lalualonga.

"Me comey hear feller clock talk, ear belong me," gasped Danny. "Me no savvy what name this feller knife stop along hand belong me."

"You go along place belong you," grunted Koko, giving him a very suspicious look. And Danny went, with some assistance from the boatswain of the Dawn. Koko's foot was bare, but it was hard and heavy, and Danny yelled as he went.

And Koko laid himself down to sleep on the lockers, lulled by the muffled ticking of the clocks.

#### Needle and Thread.

**K**ING OF THE ISLANDS came down the companion, yawning. It was eight bells—four in the morning—and Hudson was now on deck, and Kaio-lalualonga taking his trick at the wheel.

(Continued on page 16.)

## The Tick of Doom

(Continued from page 13.)

The boy trader gave a grunt as he came down into the dark cabin. The swinging lamp should have been burning, but it was out, which looked as if Danny had forgotten to renew the supply of oil. Which in its turn looked as if Danny was slipping into lazy ways, requiring a touch of the lawyer-cane!

However, the boy trader did not trouble about a light. He crossed the cabin to the little state-room, passed through the sliding-door, and turned to his bunk.

He was not aware that a figure crouching in the darkness of the cabin had stilled its breath as he passed, or that two startled eyes had watched him fearfully from the shadows.

If he had given a thought to Danny, it was only on account of the lamp being neglected, and he certainly did not suspect that it had been turned out intentionally. Still less was he likely to suspect that the cooky-boy, instead of being asleep in his galley, was crouching by the Dutchman's packing-case in the corner of the cabin!

Danny remained without motion in the dark till he had heard the boy trader settle down in the bunk in the state-room. He listened intently. The state-room door was open, and he could hear the regular breathing of King of the Islands. Ken was asleep a minute after his head had touched the pillow.

Danny grinned. He was safe now. The skipper asleep in his bunk, the mate on duty on deck, and Koko at the wheel, left the coast clear for him. But the cooky-boy's heart thumped fast as he turned to the Dutchman's packing-case.

Danny had made up his fuzzy mind—he was going to abstract one of the clocks consigned to the native chief on Luta. The temptation of such a treasure was not to be resisted.

Of course, he would have to keep his new possession a dead secret and hide it in the galley. But after Luta was left behind he would be able to reveal it, and pretend that he had bought it from a trader at Luta.

He would be the envy of the whole crew. He would let them, as a great favour, sit round the galley and listen to the tick-tock. When he went ashore, he would wear the clock hanging from a necklace round his brown neck, the admiration of all the natives.

Lompo, when he wanted to dress to kill, had a big dinner-plate which he suspended over his brawny chest on a string of cartridge-clips. Lompo's dinner-plate, splendid as it was, would be put in the shade by Danny's clock, as soon as he could venture to sport it in public. In the meantime, he had to keep it very, very dark. Pilfering cargo was an offence to earn plenty too much lawyer-cane!

Danny's fingers felt over the packing-case. He had come to the cabin fully prepared. The keen edge of his cook's knife ripped the packing-canvas between the thick slats and

his wimble brown fingers felt in at the gash, groping through thick straw packed round the precious clocks.

The whole length of his sinuous brown arm was thrust into the interior. Nestling in the straw were a number of small packages, and one of considerable size.

The large one, no doubt, contained a "feller clock" of great splendour. But Danny realised regretfully that he could not venture to steal the "big feller clock." There was only one large package, so it was certain to be missed if it was taken. And it was obviously impossible to pull it through the slats of the packing-case. It was too large.

Danny could not venture to break open the wooden slats. He dared make no noise, and dared leave no outward sign of his pilfering. Regretfully, he made up his mind to content himself with one of the little ones.

His fingers closed on one of the smaller packages and drew it cautiously through the thick straw. It was wrapped in thick packing-paper, and was too large to pass between the slats. His keen cook's knife quickly ripped the paper.

Without that, Danny hoped that it would come through. To his amazement, his groping fingers then came in contact not with a clock but with several oblong objects.

Danny had taken it for granted that all the packages in a packing-case of clocks would contain clocks. Now he found that that was a mistake. He knew what those oblong objects were—he had handled sticks of dynamite plenty of times!

He gave a grunt of dissatisfaction. A white man making such a discovery would assuredly have been alarmed, but not the cooky-boy. He concluded, without taking the unnecessary trouble to think, that Van Pomm was sending sticks of dynamite to Soko at Luta as well as clocks. Dynamite, used for fishing, is a common article of commerce in the Islands, and Government regulations on the subject do not extend to outlying islets and atolls.

The carelessness with which natives will handle the deadly explosive is shown by the number of legless or armless Kanakas in all the Islands.

Still, Danny was aware that dynamite was a dangerous article to handle, and he rather carefully thrust back the deadly sticks into the straw. Then he groped for another package, which, when ripped open, proved to contain a clock.

The tick was music to Danny's ears. But it alarmed him a little. He feared that it might reach other ears.

The treasured article was one of those round metal alarm-clocks, with little projecting handles at the back, one of which wound up the clock, the other the alarm.

Evidently it had been fully wound before being packed, for although it had been on board the ketch for more than twelve hours, it was still going strong, like a number of others in the case.

Why the Dutch trader of Tova had taken the trouble to wind the clocks

before packing them had rather puzzled King of the Islands. They could hardly keep going till the ketch raised Luta and so could not be handed over to Soko as going concerns.

Possibly Van Pomm had wound them up to make sure that they were in going order when they were packed. King of the Islands supposed that that was the case, though he had not given the matter more than a passing thought. It did not matter to him whether Van Pomm dispatched his clocks wound or unwound.

Danny rather wished now that the Tova trader had not wound the clocks, delightful as the tick-tock was. He listened intently. King of the Islands was sleeping soundly in his bunk.

On deck there was a creaking of cordage, a booming of canvas, that made all safe in that quarter.

Danny proceeded to extricate the clock, which fortunately, from his point of view, was narrow enough to squeeze through the slats now that its wrappings were off.

Having secured his prize, the cooky-boy carefully closed the slit he had cut in the outside canvas, and sewed it together. He had a needle and thread with him for that purpose, and the sewing did not take him long.

Only a careful examination now was likely to reveal that the packing-case had been tampered with at all.

He crept into his galley and shut himself in. And there, in the dark, he listened with delight to the ticking of his clock. It was his own now—his very own! He could have listened to it for hours!

But the necessity of keeping it dark recurred to his fuzzy brain. It was delightful to hear his clock talking, but if it was still talking in the morning, near at hand now, it might betray him. How to stop a clock was a mystery beyond his intellectual powers, but he did not doubt that there must be some way of doing it.

He turned one of the little projecting handles at the back. It turned easily for some time, then refused to turn farther. Danny gave it up, blissfully unconscious of the fact that he had now wound up the clock, and that it would "talk" for twenty-four hours from that moment.

He tried the other little projecting handle. That also wound up quite easily for a time, and then refused to wind further. Again Danny had to give it up, in happy ignorance of the fact that he had wound the alarm!

There seemed nothing else that Danny could experiment with. So he placed the clock on the floor and put a sack over it. That muffled the ticking very considerably. Another sack quite drowned it.

Danny grinned contentedly. Whenever he liked, he could lift a corner of the sacks and listen. His prize was safe.

The cooky-boy laid himself down at last and slept peacefully and contentedly. He would not have slept so contentedly had he been aware that his prize was an alarm-clock, that he had wound up the alarm to its fullest extent, and that, as the alarm happened to be set for eight o'clock, a

terrific outburst of sound was due at that hour!

### Into the Lagoon!

THE Pacific glimmered far and wide under bright sunshine. It was not yet hot, though the heat was growing as the golden sun climbed higher in a sky of azure. The Dawn was sweeping on a long tack, making distant Luta by an indirect route.

On the after-deck the table was set for breakfast, and King of the Islands and his Australian mate sat there, bright and cheery in the sunny morning.

Danny was waiting on them, and Danny was bright and cheery, too—until a sudden, unexpected, and alarming sound rang through the quiet air. Bzzzzzzzz!

Ken had his coffee-cup half-way to his mouth. At that sudden outburst of raucous sound it stopped, and some of its contents swamped over. As for Danny, he jumped almost clear of the deck in his surprise and dismay.

Bzzzzzzzz! The Dawn was not a large vessel, and that intensely penetrating, whirring buzz would probably have been heard the length of a vessel twice the size of the Dawn. It buzzed and whirred and it almost howled.

Cheap alarm-clocks do not, as a rule, keep good time. But they have at least one recommendation—the alarm will make enough noise to rouse the soundest sleepers.

Had any man been asleep on board the Dawn, certainly he would have been awakened when Danny's clock went off. But nobody was asleep at eight o'clock—eight bells in the morning watch—and all the ship's company jumped at the buzzing roar that came from the galley.

"What the thump—" ejaculated Hudson.

"What the dickens—" exclaimed King of the Islands.

"Feller clock he talk too plenty much altogether!" gasped Kaio-lalulalonga.

Danny, after one jump, stood rooted to the deck in dismay. His eyes rolled and his jaw dropped. No cooky-boy could have foreseen this!

Two sacks drowned the "talking" of the clock hidden in the galley. How could any cooky-boy in the Islands tell that the hidden clock would suddenly begin to talk in a new and louder voice—a voice that could not have been drowned by a dozen sacks?

Danny's dusky knees knocked together. Discovery was inevitable now! That feller clock, beginning suddenly to talk in a big feller voice, had given him away!

King of the Islands rose to his feet and set down his coffee-cup. His face was grim. He knew that there was no alarm-clock on board the Dawn unless there had been some packed in Van Pomm's packing-case. That case was below in the trade-room, and it was not from that direction that the roar proceeded.

The alarm-clock was buzzing and snarling in the cook's galley; from

# The North Pole Post

By DOUGLAS ARMSTRONG

WHENEVER the giant airship Graf Zeppelin sets out on one of her spectacular flights she carries thousands of letters that have been sent by souvenir hunters all over the world in order to obtain the special stamps or postmarks which are provided for the occasion.

In connection with the recent air trip to the Arctic regions special postage stamps were issued by both the German and Russian post offices for use upon the mail which was successfully transferred from the dirigible to the Soviet ice-breaker Malygin in the Polar seas, off Hoche Island.

Approximately two shillings was charged for each letter, and one shilling for a postcard, forwarded to its destination via the North Pole. Originally it was intended that the Zeppelin post should be taken aboard the super-submarine Nautilus, in charge of Sir Hubert Wilkins, who is attempting to reach the Pole by this means, but owing to a breakdown of the machinery after crossing the Atlantic the under-sea boat was unable to keep the rendezvous.

The German issue consisted of three stamps in the design of those first introduced for the Europe-America flight of 1928, showing the Zeppelin flying over the world, distinguished by the overprinted inscription "Polar Fahrt 1931" (Polar Flight 1931), in the denominations 1 mark carmine, 2 marks sepia, and 4 marks blue.

A striking picture of a polar bear disturbed at the invasion of his solitude by the arrival of the Graf Zeppelin and its escorting steamer makes a most effective design for four stamps prepared by the Soviet Government for the express purpose of franking letters and cards picked up by the airship when she touched at Leningrad en route for the Arctic. The face values of these stamps are 30 and 35 copecks, 1 and 2 roubles respectively.

Quite an interesting and potentially valuable collection might be made of the special stamps already issued for Zeppelin mails in different parts of the world, embracing the United States, Argentine, Bolivia, Brazil, Hungary, Iceland, Russia, Finland, Egypt, and even the tiny European principality of Liechtenstein.



Polar flight stamp from Russia, showing the Graf Zeppelin, its escorting steamer, and a disturbed Polar bear.



Another Zepp stamp, with the giant airship flying over the world.

which it followed that Danny had been pilfering cargo.

The boy trader gave Danny one look, which caused his brown face to turn almost green, and then strode to the galley. From under the sacks which had drowned the ticking, but could not drown the hoot of the alarm, the hideous buzzing proceeded merrily.

Ken tossed the sacks aside, and the alarm-clock was revealed. He picked it up, and returned to the deck, the alarm still buzzing.

"My word!" murmured Kaio-lalulalonga. "Big feller voice belong that little feller clock, sar!"

"For goodness' sake shut it off, old man!" gasped Kit Hudson, stopping his ears. "Have mercy on a ship-mate's ear-drums!"

Ken switched the catch and shut off the alarm. Blessed silence fell once more. The Hiva-Oa crew gazed at their skipper in great admiration.

The skipper of the Dawn, who could do so many things that they could

not understand, had made the clock stop talking with its second powerful voice, though its first softer voice was still going on—tick-tock, tick-tock!

"You plenty bad rascal cooky-boy!" said Ken sternly. "You've been breaking cargo—you steal this feller clock along packing-case belong Dussman."

Danny groaned. The game was up! He would never possess that clock—never be able to sport it on the beach, strung round his neck and ticking away merrily, the glass face reflecting the rays of the sun. And the lawyer-cane was in the offing!

"What place you get this feller clock, you bad cooky-boy?" demanded Ken sternly.

"Oh, sar, me plenty solly!" groaned Danny. "Me savvy me bad feller along you, sar. Me get that feller clock along packing-case belong Dussman, sar, along night he stop."

Kit Hudson suppressed a grin with difficulty. In such a case as pilfering cargo it was necessary to keep grave

## The Tick of Doom

in order to impress the seriousness of the affair on the minds of the Kanakas.

But it was hard not to smile at the simplicity of the hapless cooky-boy in hiding away an alarm-clock with the alarm wound and set!

Ken laid the clock down, and sat down to finish his breakfast. The affair had its comic side, but he was deeply irritated and perturbed. A packing-case entrusted to his care had been tampered with, and an article abstracted from it. To a skipper who had his reputation as a trader and a carrier of cargo to consider, that was extremely serious.

It would have been still more serious had not the stolen article been recovered, and had it been missing when the packing-case reached the consignee.

Fortunately it had been recovered, and could be returned to its place. But sharp eyes might discern the signs of tampering, and awkward questions be asked.

The matter might reach the ears of Van Pomm. And all the more because he disliked the Dutch trader, Ken hated the idea of sneering questions and humiliating suspicions from Van Pomm.

His brow was dark, so dark that Danny trembled as he watched the face of his white master. He could read there that there was going to be "plenty too much" lawyer-cane!

Ken finished his breakfast speedily. Hudson, who understood his feelings, gave him an inquiring look.

"We must get that clock back into the packing-case, Kit," said the boy trader. "But the man it's consigned to will see that the case has been meddled with. I shall hear of this from Van Pomm. That Dutch swab will be glad to make out that cargo isn't safe from pilfering on the Dawn."

"It's rotten," said Hudson. "But it's lucky the alarm went off and gave that black thief away. I can't imagine why Danny wound it, but it's lucky he did."

"You feller Danny!" snapped King of the Islands, turning to the cooky-boy. "You takee other feller thing belong that feller packing-case, all same this feller clock?"

"No, sar!" gasped Danny. "Me takee feller clock, sar, me no takee other feller thing, sar!"

Ken stared at him dubiously. The wretched cooky-boy was as ready to lie as to steal, and it was impossible to know whether he had purloined other articles without unpacking the case and enumerating the contents.

Danny might have taken only the one clock, or he might have abstracted three or four that were small enough to pass through the slats. Ken was extremely unwilling to break open the case, but he could not be sure that he had recovered all the stolen goods without doing so.

"Oh, sar, me tellee plenty truth!" gasped Danny. "Me speakee plenty truth along you, sar, mouth belong

me. Me wantee feller clock, sar—me no wantee feller dynamite, sar."

"Feller dynamite!" repeated Ken blankly.

"Yes, sar! Me no wantee!" declared Danny. "Me takee one feller clock, sar, along me wantee clock, sar. Me likee tick-tock along clock, sar. No tick-tock stop along feller dynamite, sar."

"Is the boy mad?" asked Hudson, in wonder. "Van Pomm couldn't have been idiot enough to pack dynamite in a case of clocks."

Ken's face changed strangely. Danny, not understanding, but reading black wrath there, gave a howl of terror.

"Oh, sar, me plenty solly!" he wailed. "Me no touch feller dynamite, finger belong me sar! Feller dynamite he stop along packing-case, sar!"

"That Dutch swab!" Ken said. "I wondered that he had got over that old grudge. Is it possible—"

"Ken!" stuttered Hudson.

His sunburnt face went white at the thought he read in his shipmate's face.

"You feller Danny, you plenty sure dynamite he stop along packing-case belong Dussman?" Ken demanded.

"Me plenty sure, sar."

"We've got to look into this, Kit!" said King of the Islands abruptly, and went below, followed by his shipmate.

Danny stared after them. Blacker wrath than he had ever seen there before had gathered on the brow of King of the Islands. But Danny understood that, for some reason, that wrath was no longer directed against him.

For a reason unknown to Danny, the discovery that there was dynamite in the Dutchman's packing-case had wrought this change.

There was a sound below of a packing-case being opened with care. The crew listened and wondered. Then King of the Islands came springing back to the deck, with a white face and blazing eyes, shouting orders to the crew. And never had the Hiva-Oa boys jumped more promptly to orders from the skipper of the Dawn!

The wind, which had been adverse while the ketch was tacking for Luta, swept the Dawn swiftly along on an altered course. The ketch came about and headed direct for the island she had left at sunset the previous day.

Carrying every inch of sail that King of the Islands could cram on his sticks, the Dawn rushed back for Tova with the speed of a swooping seagull!

### The Dutchman's Revenge.

"THE swab! The murderous swab!" King of the Islands muttered the words through clenched teeth.

The Dawn swept swiftly through the sunny blue waters, but she was slow to the impatience of the boy trader. Far in the distance the palm tops of Tova rose over the sea. But it seemed to Ken that he was long in reaching the island he had sailed from the day before.

The crew wondered. Lucy had never known King of the Islands to turn back on his course like this. His impatience to get back to Tova was a mystery to them.

Danny wondered most of all. His white master had plainly forgotten his serious offence of pilfering cargo. From his muttered words, it could be gathered that his wrath was now directed against Van Pomm, the Dutch trader of Tova.

In the trade-room below, the packing-case lay open. The largest package it contained—that Danny had supposed to be a "big feller clock"—had been opened with extreme care.

A dozen clocks lay about the floor still ticking, but the clock in the big package was no longer ticking? Or if it was, it ticked unheard, for Ken had dropped it through a porthole, and it had disappeared into the depths of the Pacific far behind the Dawn.

Of all the natives on board, only Kaio-lalulalonga understood, and his face was grim and savage. Koko had been right in his distrust of the "feller Dussman."

"He'll be surprised to see us back at Tova!" said Hudson grimly. "If that fool Danny had not meddled with the case, Kit, we should never have known the infernal machine was timed to act at noon. Van Pomm reckoned that we should be far enough out of sight of Tova by that time, good wind or bad wind."

"Our lives have been saved by a margin of four hours—our lives and our ship!"

Danny, the cooky-boy, had given no thought whatever to the discovery of dynamite in the packing-case. That discovery had naturally had a different effect on the white masters, however. Dynamite packed in a case supposed to contain only clocks, and by a man who had been his bitter enemy, told King of the Islands all that he needed to know.

But he had made sure. Very carefully that packing-case had been unpacked, and the clockwork machine revealed—timed to explode a cap and ignite a fuse at noon.

Around the clockwork machine were packed bundles of dynamite sticks, connected with the fuse, and a dozen other bundles were among the clocks.

The revengeful trader of Tova had done his work thoroughly. Once the explosion had started, there was sufficient explosive in the packing-case to have blown the side out of the ketch!

Sudden destruction of the Dawn and all on board had been the Dutchman's intention. That was his revenge on King of the Islands. To the native crew, who had given him no offence, he had evidently not given a thought. Niggers counted for nothing in the Dutchman's estimation.

Neither had he wasted a thought on the mate of the Dawn. In his savage scheme of vengeance on the man who had thrashed him, the trader of Tova had thought of nothing, cared for nothing, but the success of his revenge.

But for the cooky-boy, the scheme would have been a success—the Dawn would have disappeared at sea with all hands! The Dutchman would have been safe from punishment and suspicion. He would have grinned and rubbed his podgy hands when it was said on the beaches that King of the Islands had vanished at sea and was no more to be heard of.

No wonder the boy trader had forgotten the offence of the cooky-boy! "The hound!" said Hudson, his eyes gleaming at the rising palms of Tova. "That's why he selected a consignment of clocks—why the clocks were wound and ticking! I rather wondered why, but I reckon I'd never have guessed that one of the clocks that ticked was going to blow the ship into smithereens at noon!

"If we'd heard his infernal machine ticking from a packing-case of trade goods, it would have given us the tip. But from a packing-case of clocks—"

"The villain was cunning enough!" said Ken. "But after the lesson he's going to get, I fancy he won't play any more tricks on cargo." He stared impatiently across the sea. "Shall we never get into Tova?"

The ketch swept swiftly on, and at last she ran into the lagoon at Tova. The whaleboat carried King of the Islands and his mate to the beach, and under Ken's arm was a thick lawyer-cane.

In the shade of his veranda, Van Pomm lay stretched in a chair that creaked under his weight. It was noon on Tova, and in the heat of the tropic day the fat Dutchman lolled lazily, hardly troubling to draw at the black cigar stuck in his flabby mouth.

A grin dawned on his podgy face as he thought of what had happened on the Dawn; of the fate that had overtaken the young trader who had dared to thrash him in his own office for shanghaiing the cook of the Dawn.

Van Pomm's fat nose had never felt the same since the day King of the Islands had crashed a clenched fist upon it. Well, the British trader had paid for the blows now—paid for them with his life and his ship! Scattered fragments of the Dawn floated on the Pacific, and captain and crew had gone down the greedy gullets of the sharks! So ran the Dutchman's thoughts.

He gave a throaty chuckle of satisfaction, and heard, without heeding, a footstep on the wooden steps of the veranda.

"You dog!" The words came in a voice husky with rage.

Like a man in a dream, Van Pomm stared at the figure that suddenly appeared before him—stared wildly at the face of the man whom he had believed to be already the prey of the sharks!

"You!" he gurgled. "You!"

"Yes, you dog! Get out of that chair!"

Slowly the Dutchman dragged his heavy bulk upright. His eyes turned for a moment to the lagoon, and he saw the Dawn riding at anchor. Then he looked at King of the Islands again, and at Kit Hudson.

Fear and rage struggled in his podgy face. So the Dawn had not been blown to fragments, and King of the Islands had not gone to the sharks!

In sheer terror, the Dutchman clutched at the revolver in his hip-pocket. It was knocked spinning from

his hand. Then the boy trader grasped him.

Fat as he was, the Dutchman was powerful. But he crumpled in the grasp of King of the Islands. Hudson looked on grimly. With Ken's left hand grasping the back of his collar, the Dutchman squirmed.

The lawyer-cane in Ken's right hand rose and fell, and rang like a succession of pistol-shots on the Dutchman's fat carcass.

Under the stinging blows of the lawyer-cane Van Pomm struggled wildly, striving to break away from that iron grip on his collar. But he struggled in vain. Anger had lent Ken additional strength.

Wild yells for mercy from the Dutchman rang shrilly out. Still the thick lawyer-cane rose and fell. Round the veranda gathered a crowd of startled, staring natives, white traders and beachcombers.

Ken did not heed—did not even see the staring faces, or hear the voices. Blow after blow rained from his sinewy arm, till that arm ached with fatigue.

He ceased at last. The Dutch trader of Tova lay at his feet, a flabby, gasping mound of humanity.

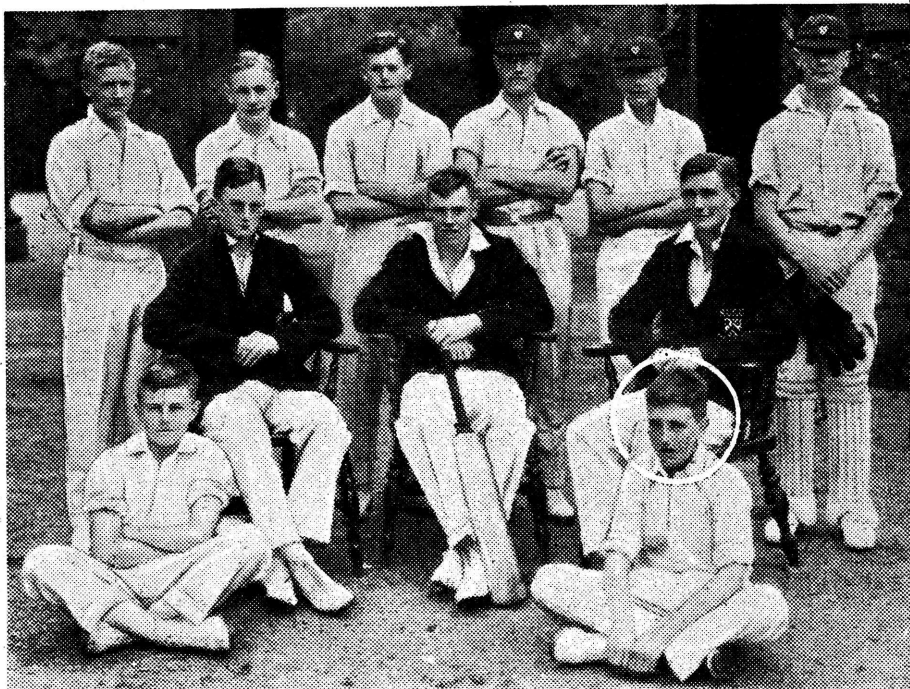
Danny, the cooky-boy, never quite knew how and why he had escaped the lawyer-cane. But he knew that he had escaped it, and it was a bright and cheerful cooky-boy who sang among his pots and pans as the Dawn sailed once more from Tova!

*(The sky is clear and the wind set for a good run—the Dawn is heading for new Adventures! Come with Ken King for another round of excitement in the South Seas, in next Monday's MODERN BOY.)*

This week's  
AWARD of

## ONE GUINEA

for a school group photograph goes to A. P. HAMILTON, School House, Kelly College, Tavistock, for this snap of the Kelly College Cricket Eleven ('30). A. P. Hamilton is the skipper—in centre, with the bat.



**FIVE SHILLINGS** for the owner of the RINGED HEAD! Will he please send his full name and address—vouched for by A. P. Hamilton—in an envelope marked "Claim," to the Editor, MODERN BOY? The gift is waiting to be posted off to him.