

# The MODERN BOY

EVERY MONDAY.  
Week Ending April 9th, 1932.

No. 218.  
Vol. 9.

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BOY SCOUT FILM ACTORS!—See inside.

# South Seas Shipmates

COMPLETE



To the amazement of Ken and Kit the boat's crew proceeded to heave bags and packages aboard. Apparently the Kolo trader meant to remain aboard their ketch!

The young skipper of the trading ketch Dawn—world-famous KING OF THE ISLANDS—and his Australian shipmate embark on a great adventure in the sun-baked Tropic Seas, in this splendid story—

By

Charles Hamilton

## The Tonga Boy.

THE Tonga boy came alongside with a flash of paddles, and had jumped over the low rail of the Dawn before anyone on the ketch knew that he was coming aboard. He stood on the deck grinning and ducking his fuzzy head to King of the Islands, who stared at him in displeased surprise.

As Ken King was about to order the anchor to be swung up from the coral bottom of the lagoon at Kolo to take the ketch out to sea, he neither expected nor wanted visitors, whatever their business might happen to be.

Kaio-lalualonga—Koko for short—the brown-skinned boatswain of the Dawn, dropped a heavy hand on the Tonga boy's bare shoulder. The Tonga boy was a powerful fellow, but he twirled round like a top in the grasp of the brown boatswain.

"You feller boy, what name you come along this feller ship?" exclaimed Koko warmly. "This feller ship go along sea. You jumpee along canoe plenty too quick altogether!"

"Me come along see feller King of the Islands," answered the Tonga boy. "Master belong me sendee talk along mouth belong me."

"Message for you, Ken!" said Kit Hudson, the mate of the Dawn. "I've seen that boy before. He belongs to Holt, the trader on the other side of Kolo."

Koko looked at his master for orders. The Dawn was ready for sea. King of the Islands had finished his business at Kolo, and the wind was waiting outside the reef.

The arrival of a messenger at such a time was inopportune, and Koko was disposed to pick up the Tonga boy bodily and toss him back into his canoe, message or no message. His feeling was shared by the boy trader. Interruption at such a moment was irritating even to the placid temper of King of the Islands. But the name of Holt was a name to conjure with on Kolo. Bristowe Holt was the richest trader on the island, or for hundreds of miles round.

King of the Islands had never done any trade with him. Holt's trade was done in bigger ships than the Dawn. But if this last-moment message meant that Holt had a line of business for the boy trader, it was worth while to give it attention.

Ken signed to the boatswain to send the Tonga boy aft. Koko, with a grunt, released the bare shoulder and gave the "boy" a shove in the direction of his white master.

"You belong white master Holt?" asked Ken, as the Tonga boy came up grinning and ducking.

"Yes, sar, me belong big feller Holt, sar. Big feller Holt sendee talk along mouth belong me!"

"You speakee plenty quick, mouth belong you!" said King of the Islands.

"Big feller Holt come along this ship, sar!"

"Mr. Holt is coming here?" exclaimed Ken.

"Yes, sar! He sendee me tell white master wait along he comey," answered the Tonga boy.

King of the Islands compressed his lips. Holt was a big man on Kolo

—a big man in the Islands. He gave orders to the captains of Sydney steamers. Probably he supposed that the skipper of a trading ketch would be glad to jump to his orders.

But Ken King was not the man to jump to any man's orders. He was ready to sail, and he was going to sail. He would have been glad enough, if it came to that, to get an opening into Holt's big business. But to hang on in the lagoon at Kolo because the great man chose to come along at the last moment did not suit the boy trader at all.

Ken's business was no doubt small stuff in the estimation of a man like Bristowe Holt, but he could not afford to let it slide, and he did not mean to let it slide.

"Check!" murmured Kit Hudson.

"Just what I was thinking!" said Ken. "Holt's a big man, but he isn't Emperor of the Pacific. We're running out to sea, Holt or no Holt."

"You wait along feller white master Holt he comey," said the Tonga boy. "He comey plenty quick. Sendee this feller along say he comey."

Ken glanced towards the beach. He understood that Holt was on his way, and had dispatched the swift Kanaka ahead to warn King of the Islands to expect him. That was all very well. But there was no reason, so far as Ken could see, why Holt should not have come before, if he wanted to come at all.

The Dawn had been three days in the lagoon of Kolo, and in that time

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Holt could have called whenever he had liked. Sending a Kanaka to delay the boy trader in the very moment of sailing seemed to Ken, as to his Australian mate, cheek pure and simple.

Ken's eyes swept the beach. He was willing to give the man a chance. Partly for trade reasons, and partly from motives of courtesy, he would have delayed lifting the anchor if Holt had been in the offing. But the Kolo trader was not to be seen.

Kanakas were loafing on the beach. White men could be seen at the bungalows and warehouses, but the big, fat, prosperous trader, Bristowe Holt, was not in view. Apparently he was still on his way across the island, and his messenger was a long way ahead of him.

Ken's glance turned to the sky and the reef. The sun was sinking towards the Pacific, and with sundown the wind freshened. The skipper of a windjammer could not afford to lose the wind.

"We can't wait," said Ken. "I don't want to offend Holt. I'd be glad to get some of his trade. But we can't hang on here."

"What the dickens can he want?" asked Hudson.

"Trade, I suppose—can't want anything else with us. I've seen the man half a dozen times, and spoken to him once or twice. He may have something to ship in a hurry, and as there's no steamer here at present, he's giving us a turn. But there's nothing in that—we've got no room for his cargo this trip!" Ken turned to the Tonga boy again.

"You sing out along big feller Holt, me plenty solly no can stop," said Ken, and pointed to the canoe that floated alongside as a sign to the Tonga boy to be gone.

The Kanaka stared at him. Evidently he was astonished that a trading skipper should venture to disregard the wishes of a "big feller master" like Bristowe Holt.

"You go along canoe plenty quick!" said Ken impatiently.

"No savvy, sar!" said the astonished Tonga boy. "Big feller Holt he say you wait along he comey."

"No can wait," Ken smiled. "You go along canoe!" And he shouted to the Hiva-Oa crew to lift the anchor.

"No can, sar," answered the Kanaka. "Big feller Holt he tell this feller stop along ship, sar!"

"Get into that canoe!" Ken repeated his order.

The Tonga boy did not budge.

"Big feller Holt he say stop along this ship, sar," he grinned. "Big feller Holt he plenty big feller, sar. Feller King of the Islands he plenty little feller, sar, along big feller Holt. Me stop along this ship, sar."

"Koko!" rapped out Ken. The brawny boatswain came quickly up, a glitter in his dark eyes. He had heard the Tonga boy's talk.

"Put that feller Tonga boy along canoe, Koko!" said Ken.

"Me put that feller along canoe plenty too quick, sar!" said Koko.

The Tonga boy gave a howl as he crumpled up in the mighty grasp of the bo'sun. He resisted as he was whirled to the side.

"You no put this feller along canoe!" he yelled. "My word, big feller Holt he plenty mad along you, s'pose you put this feller along canoe!"

Crash! There was a yell as the Tonga boy sprawled in his canoe, hurled there headlong by the angry boatswain. The canoe rocked wildly, and shipped water.

The Tonga boy sat up in it, and stared amazedly at the ketch. The anchor swung up from the coral, and the Dawn glided away for the reef passage. Tao, the Tonga boy, was left squatting in his rocking canoe, still staring in amaze.

### Money Talks!

"SUFFERING cats!" ejaculated Kit Hudson. The Australian stared back over the taffrail. The Dawn was picking her way through the reef passage to the sea, under a handful of canvas. Koko was at the wheel, and King of the Islands rapped out orders to the Hiva-Oa seamen at the sheets, with no eyes for anything but the passage through the Kolo reef.

It was Hudson, looking back, who sighted the whaleboat in pursuit of the ketch.

From the lagoon the whaleboat came sweeping under the propulsion of a dozen Kanaka oarsmen. In the stern sat a fat man in white drill, an angry frown on his plump face. He was staring after the Dawn, and obviously in chase of her. The Tonga boy could be seen in the boat, and a number of bags and packages could also be discerned.

"What—" Ken gave his shipmate a quick glance.

"Mr. Holt's determined to see us before we clear," answered Hudson, pointing. "He's after us in a whaleboat."

"My sainted Sam!" King of the Islands looked back and eyed the fat trader in the whaleboat in astonishment.

Bristowe Holt half rose in his seat as he saw the boy trader's face over the taffrail of the Dawn, and waved his hand as a signal. He shouted, but though his words did not reach the distance, his meaning was clear.

"Does the swab think we can leave to in the reef?" said Ken.

"Big feller Holt can't understand a trading skipper having a will of his own," Hudson chuckled. "He must have thought we should be jolly glad to hang on for a word from his royal highness. But I say, Ken, old man, it must be something jolly important to make a man in Holt's position chase us like this."

"Blessed, if I can understand it," said King of the Islands, wrinkling his brows in perplexity. "One doesn't want to be uncivil, of course. We can't stop here, but we can wait outside the reef and let him speak, I suppose. It beats me hollow what the man can want."

The ketch glided on for the open sea.

Holt was still waving, evidently as a signal to the ketch to stop for him. Ken waved a hand back, hoping that he would understand that the ketch would wait for him outside the reef. But whether he understood or not, Ken had no further attention to bestow on him. The boy skipper was not taking the risk of piling up his ship on the teeth of the coral.

The Dawn glided on, with the whaleboat in pursuit. Holt could be seen shouting and gesticulating at his crew to pull. The Kanakas pulled their hardest, and the whaleboat shot on at a speed that was scarcely safe, even for a boat, among the reefs of Kolo.

It was a perplexing puzzle to the shipmates of the Dawn. What the Kolo trader could want with them that was so pressing and important was an utter mystery. Certainly no matter of ord nary trade would have induced the "big feller" trader of Kolo to take all this trouble.

King of the Islands was rather curious. Anyhow, as Holt was so anxious to get in touch with him, he would have waited for the boat to come up, once he was outside the reef.

The Dawn glided out into the open sea, and instead of hoisting sail to the wind, lay to, to wait for the whaleboat. The oars flashed fast, a dozen Kanakas pulling hard, and the boat came up hand over fist now that the Dawn was waiting.

The shipmates watched it come, and Koko and the Hiva-Oa seamen stared at it curiously. Even Danny, the cooky-boy, came out of his galley to stare at the boat, which came alongside at last, the Kanakas panting at the oars. The Tonga boy hooked on.

Bristowe Holt stood up in the boat, his plump face red with excitement and anger. It did not need a second glance to see that the trader of Kolo was intensely exasperated.

The Dawn had a low freeboard, and the accommodation ladder was hardly ever used. But Ken signed to Koko to put it over for the Kolo trader. Holt came gasping up to the deck. Ken saluted him civilly.

"What does this mean, Captain King?" roared Holt, glaring. "What the thunder do you mean, man?"

"I 'on't quite catch on, Mr. Holt." "I sent my boy with a message that I was coming. I told him to tell you to wait for me."

Ken smiled. Mr. Holt was a "big feller" in the estimation of all Kolo, and in his own estimation, also. He was as surprised as his Tonga boy that a mere trading skipper had not jumped to his order.

He was exasperated, too. And something more than exasperation could be read in his face. It dawned on the shipmates that it was a matter of the greatest importance that had brought him on board the ketch, though they were still mystified as to what it was.

"Well, here you are," said Ken good-humouredly. "If it's an important matter, Mr. Holt—"

"Do you think I should have followed your twopenny yawl in a whaleboat if it hadn't been important?" bawled Mr. Holt.

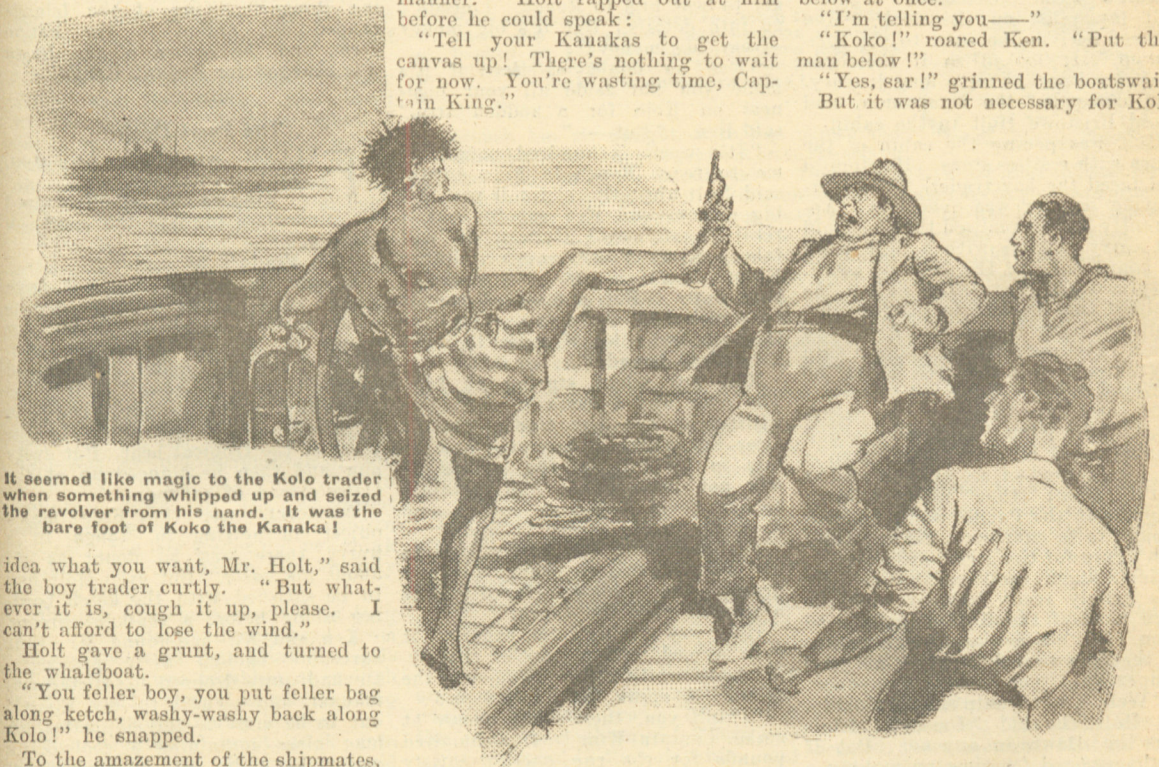
King of the Islands frowned. The Dawn was the pride of his heart, and he did not like to hear her referred to as a yawl. But he kept his temper.

"Well, if I'd known it was as important as all that, Mr. Holt, I might have stretched a point," he said. "But here we are, anyhow. What is it—cargo?"

Lompo had brought a deck-chair for the distinguished visitor. But Holt did not sit down.

"Cargo!" he snorted. "Don't be a fool! Do you think I should have chased you with a handful of cargo?"

"The fact is, I haven't the faintest



It seemed like magic to the Kolo trader when something whipped up and seized the revolver from his hand. It was the bare foot of Koko the Kanaka!

idea what you want, Mr. Holt," said the boy trader curtly. "But whatever it is, cough it up, please. I can't afford to lose the wind."

Holt gave a grunt, and turned to the whaleboat.

"You feller boy, you put feller bag along ketch, washy-washy back along Kolo!" he snapped.

To the amazement of the shipmates, the boat's crew proceeded to heave the bags and packages aboard from the boat. Tao, the Tonga boy, followed his master on board; but the Kolo boys remained in the whaleboat. Ken and Kit eyed the proceedings with astonishment.

Apparently Mr. Holt had boarded the ketch with the intention of remaining on board. Ken found his voice.

"Mr. Holt! What the dickens are you up to? What do you mean?"

"Haven't you eyes?" snapped Holt.

"You don't mean you want to sail in this ketch?" exclaimed the astounded boy trader.

"I don't mean anything else."

"But—but—" stuttered Ken. He was so astonished that he hardly knew what to say.

"Cut it short!" grunted Holt. "I'm chartering this ketch. You can name your own figure. I want the ketch, and I'm chartering it."

"Chartering my ketch!" King of the Islands repeated the words like a man in a dream. Kit Hudson stared blankly at the Kolo trader. He, too, found it difficult to believe that the man was in earnest.

"Did—did you say chartering my ketch?" gasped King of the Islands.

"Are you mad?"

"That's enough! You feller boy, you plenty quick along feller bag!" snapped Holt. "You washy-washy along Kolo."

The trader's baggage had been tossed on board. The Kanaka boat's crew pushed off from the ketch.

Ken turned to the Kolo trader, a gleam in his eyes. He was deeply angry. Bristowe Holt might be the "big noise" on Kolo, but he could not dictate to King of the Islands on his own deck in this high-handed manner. Holt rapped out at him before he could speak:

"Tell your Kanakas to get the canvas up! There's nothing to wait for now. You're wasting time, Captain King."

business on hand, and I did not expect any trouble in chartering a little trading ketch. I've never yet seen a skipper who touched at Kolo who would not have jumped at the offer."

"You've seen one now who doesn't intend to jump at it!" snapped Ken. "You've sent your boat away, and landed yourself on my ship. If I could afford to lose the wind I'd send you ashore in my own boat. I can't very well chuck you into the Pacific, so you will have to stay on board till we raise the next island. But don't give me any more insolence. You're not chartering my ship, and I want to hear nothing further from you."

"Look here—"  
 "That's enough! Get below. You're a passenger till we raise Sua," said Ken savagely. "You're not wanted, and you're in the way. Go below at once."

"I'm telling you—"  
 "Koko!" roared Ken. "Put that man below!"

"Yes, sar!" grinned the boatswain. But it was not necessary for Koko

"Do you know that you're asking me to pitch you neck and crop into the Pacific, Mr. Holt?" Ken roared.

"Don't be a fool! I'm chartering this ketch. I've told you so."

"This ketch isn't open to charter. And no man but the skipper gives orders on this deck—not even the High Commissioner at Fiji himself! You may have all Kolo feeding from your hand, Mr. Holt, but here you're nobody but a cheeky swab who's butted in where he's not wanted!"

"Just that, and nothing more!" said Hudson, with a nod. "If you're not out of your senses, Mr. Holt, explain what you're up to."

Holt glanced at the mate for a moment, then fixed his eyes on King of the Islands. His brows were knitted, and it was clear that angry words trembled on his lips. But he restrained them.

"Let's talk business, Mr. King," he said, more quietly. "I've got urgent

to help Mr. Holt below. The Kolo trader gave Ken an angry look, and went down the companion without waiting for the boatswain to reach him. The Tonga boy scuttled after him.

Ken, for the moment, dismissed Holt from his mind. He gave rapid orders, and the canvas was shaken out on the ketch. Before the wind the Dawn glided swiftly away from Kolo.

Then King of the Islands found leisure to consider the strange affair. Kit Hudson smiled as he met the boy trader's eyes. Ken was angry, but the mate of the Dawn was rather amused.

"Well, we've got a passenger as far as Sua at least, Ken," he said. "Can you make the thing out?"

"Not in the least—unless the man's mad."

"Anything but that," answered Hudson. "He's the hardest and

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coolest case in the islands—if not the most unscrupulous. He must be in a frightful hurry to leave Kolo all of a sudden. There's no other ship in the lagoon, so he's honoured us. But to think that he could charter the ketch without so much as saying 'by your leave'! The mate of the Dawn laughed.

"Well, he's a big gun on Kolo, and I suppose he fancies he can buy up any man and any ship!" growled King of the Islands. "He will find that he has made a mistake on this packet. Still, I suppose one had better be civil—he's landed on us now as far as Sua, and that's two days. I'll leave you in charge here, and go down and talk with him."

Holt's rather extensive baggage still lay piled on the deck. Ken glanced at it as he went to the companion. It looked as if the Kolo trader had packed for a long journey. Ken descended the companion, and found Bristowe Holt in the cabin.

Holt was pacing the cabin of the Dawn with restless steps. He stopped and faced the boy trader. His overbearing manner was gone now. Apparently he had realised that he could not carry matters with a high hand on board King of the Islands' ketch. Surprised and irritated as he was, he realised that he had to toe the line. Holt was a big trader, and Ken King was a little one, but on his own ship any skipper was monarch of all he surveyed.

"I shall have to ask you to excuse me, Captain King." Holt's voice and manner were civil. "I've taken a lot for granted—I see that now; but you'll admit that most trading skippers in the Pacific would be glad enough to be chartered, naming their own figure for the accommodation."

Ken's anger vanished at once. He was grimly ready to deal with the high hand if the Kolo shipper tried it on. But a conciliatory manner was all that was needed to restore his good temper.

"Well, a man's ship is a man's ship, Mr. Holt," he said. "I'm not chartering the Dawn to anyone. But if you're pressed for time on making a trip, I'm more than willing to give you a passage anywhere on my course."

"You won't charter the Dawn?"

"I will not!"

"Not at your own figure?"

"Not at any figure," said Ken decidedly. "I could hardly do it if I wanted to. I've my schedule to keep to. I've got cargo on board for a dozen islands, and dates to keep."

A hasty answer was obviously on Holt's lips. He could barely restrain his contempt for the petty trade of a ketch. But he contrived to restrain it. He had already learned that insolence would get him nowhere in dealing with King of the Islands.

He sat down, the chair creaking under his portly form. He made a sign to the Tonga boy, and Tao disappeared on deck.

"I've got to talk business with you, Captain King," said the Kolo trader. "If you won't charter your ketch, you won't, and there's an end. I'm not

undertaking to dictate terms to a skipper on his own ship."

Ken was careful not to smile. From overbearing insolence Mr. Holt had swung over to excessive civility.

"But as a skipper and a trader yourself, you'll understand that business is business," went on Holt. "I'm up against difficulties, and I want you to help me out. I want a fast run to Ronga."

"Ronga!" Ken stared. "That's a long run, Mr. Holt, and far out of my beat."

"I've reasons," said the Kolo trader. "I've no doubt that I've surprised you, Captain King. But I'm ready to explain. There's a stroke of business to be done at Ronga, and big money in it, and there's another man after it. I've got to beat him to Ronga. I needn't go into details. But it's big money—very big money!"

"I've no doubt of that, if it's made you put aside all your business on Kolo for a sudden trip," said Ken. "But—"

"It's worth a hundred pounds to me to reach Ronga in four days!" said Holt abruptly. "I tell you, it's big money, and I've got to beat a rival to it," said Holt. "It will take you out of your course, Captain King. You'll be late with some of your dates. But a hundred pounds isn't picked up every day. You have to drum for a lot of copra to make a hundred pounds!"

Ken was silent, staring at him. The offer was a tempting one. Unwilling as the boy trader was to alter his sailing programme and be late in his calls at the islands, it was not impossible. And certainly he had never picked up such a sum so easily in the course of trade.

His hesitation was chiefly due to his unwillingness to change his programme and to his reluctance to take a passenger on the Dawn.

Holt was eyeing him eagerly, it even seemed with a trace of anxiety. Without waiting for King of the Islands to speak, he hurried on:

"I tell you, there's big money at stake, Captain King! If a hundred pounds for the run doesn't satisfy you, name your own figure."

"A hundred pounds for the run more than satisfies me, Mr. Holt!" answered Ken. "But—"

"Money talks!" said Holt, and drew out a fat pocket-book. "I'm ready to pay down the money in advance."

"Never mind that!" said Ken. "The fact is, it's a good offer. But I'd rather not sail out of my course. Suppose I run you down to Sua, where I have to put in, and you pick up a schooner there?"

"Too late! Captain King, I'm appealing to you as one trader to another," said Holt. "Give me a quick run to Ronga, and name any figure within reason. It's in your hands to help me make the biggest deal of my life, or to put me to a big loss. I ask you to stand by me."

"Well, if you put it like that, Mr. Holt," said Ken slowly. "I'll speak to my mate. He's my partner in trade, and I must consult him."

Ken went back to the deck. He was puzzled, and, for some reason he could hardly have explained, not wholly easy in his mind.

"What's up?" asked Hudson curiously.

Ken told him. Somehow, he rather hoped that the mate of the Dawn would raise objections. But that was not in Hudson's thoughts. He whistled.

"We can work it, Ken," said Kit. "A hundred pounds isn't to be sneezed at! We can make Ronga under four days and speed up afterwards to get back the time lost. Jump at it, old man!" And Hudson having given the casting vote, Ken made up his mind. He walked to the companion and called down:

"It's a go, Mr. Holt! We're making Ronga!" King of the Islands rapped out orders to the native crew, and the course of the Dawn was changed for distant Ronga.

### The Pearl Dealer.

"FELLER whaleboat he stop, sar!" said Koko.

King of the Islands turned his binoculars towards the speck on the sea.

"It's Prado!" he said.

It was the second day out from Kolo. The Dawn leaned to the wind, making good speed on her course for Ronga, far to the east. In a deck-chair under the striped awning aft Bristowe Holt was sprawling, taking his ease. The Kolo merchant seemed half-asleep in the blaze of the tropical heat. But every now and then he glanced up at the Dawn's load of canvas.

Whatever was the Kolo man's object in getting to Ronga in a hurry, there was no doubt at all about his haste. But even Holt had to be satisfied with the ketch bowling along before a ten-knot breeze.

Ken and Kit had found Mr. Holt agreeable enough as a passenger. He had quite dropped his dictatorial manner and seemed to lay himself out to be civil to the shipmates. A long glass containing a cool drink was at his elbow, and he sipped from it occasionally. Tao, the Tonga boy, squatted on the deck near his master. Holt's eyes had been half-closed, but he sat up, very wide-awake, as Ken turned the glasses on the distant whaleboat.

Ahead of the ketch the whaleboat appeared on the rolling blue of the Pacific. With the naked eye only the boat could be seen, and it was little more than a speck on the blue. But the powerful glasses brought it near and clear, and King of the Islands recognised the little, wizened, dark-skinned man who sat in it under a rag of awning.

It was Pedro Prado, the Portuguese pearl-buyer, whom Ken knew well. The other occupant of the boat, a native, was his boat-steerer, a Raiatean.

"It's Prado," repeated Ken. "He's got a stiff row to hoe, if he's making Kolo with this wind!"

Hudson nodded. The wind was against the whaleboat, whose little

sail danced on the waves. Many a long and weary tack lay before Prado if he was aiming to reach Kolo.

Mr. Holt jumped out of the deck-chair quite actively for a man of his portly build. He joined the ship-mates with a quick stride.

"What's that?" he rapped.

"Pedro Prado's whaleboat," Ken said. "Prado's making one of his long trips."

"Lend me the glasses!" The trader's tone was curt. Ken handed him the binoculars without a word and Holt trained them on the distant whaleboat. After a minute he handed them back to the skipper of the Dawn.

"How do you know they're making Kolo?" he asked.

"I don't," answered Ken, with a smile. "But it looks like it! I'd like a word with Prado," he added to Hudson.

"You've no time for that, Captain King," said Holt curtly. Ken stared at the trader. "I mean what I say!" snapped Holt. "You've undertaken to run me to Ronga in the shortest possible time, and even minutes may be valuable. I'm holding you to your bargain!"

"I'm not the man to back out of a bargain!" said Ken coldly. "We're keeping on to Ronga, Mr. Holt!"

The Kolo trader nodded, turned away, and went below.

Ken and Kit exchanged a glance. King of the Islands was breathing hard. His eyes turned on the pearl-buyer's whaleboat again. Ken would have liked a few words with Prado, who was an old acquaintance, and little time would have been lost in running down to the whaleboat before the wind. After Holt's words, however, the boy trader did not think of doing so. The Dawn kept steadily on her course.

Prado's whaleboat swept on a long tack, and almost disappeared from view. The wind that filled the sails of the Dawn was troublesome enough to the pearl-buyer, if he was heading for Kolo, as apparently he was.

The whaleboat swept back into view, and the little Portuguese could now be seen standing up, waving his hands to the ketch.

"He wants to speak us!" said Ken, and frowned. "If it's only a chat, I suppose we've no right to delay Holt—a bargain's a bargain! But if Prado's in want of assistance—"

"Looks like it," said Hudson.

"If it's that, we're stopping," said Ken.

Pedro Prado could be plainly seen now. He was obviously in a state of excitement, standing up, waving both hands, gesticulating to the ketch. It was clear that he recognised the Dawn.

Ken watched him, with knitted brow. He knew that the Portuguese pearl-buyer was accustomed to making long trips, sometimes of hundreds of miles, among the islands in his whaleboat with the Raiatean boat-steerer.

Likely enough, after days of weary tacking against unfavourable winds,

# Show 'Em How to Ride!

By SID G. HEDGES, who will answer free, by Post, any cycling queries sent to the Editor, MODERN BOY

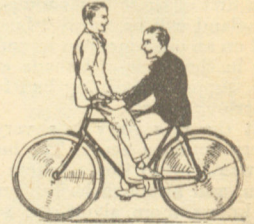
WHEN you try cycling tricks with a passenger, see that you choose the right sort of fellow—about your own size, with plenty of nerve and quickness, and with a well-developed safety-first instinct!

Go very carefully, for it's a funny business balancing a bike when someone else is balanced on it, too. First get used to taking him on your rear step. From there his first promotion should be to the carrier—if it's strong enough.

He will start off on the step. Then, when you are running smoothly, first his right, then his left foot will go up on to the carrier, until he is standing upright. His hands will stay on your shoulders, and he will look straight ahead.

Next you may let him sit on the saddle, while you stand on the pedals. He must not

Your passenger will need to clutch the handle-bars, and you should both keep as straight-backed as you can, chests forward and eyes looking straight ahead. Then this trick WILL make the onlookers stare!



crouch but sit upright, with legs spread out straight. After that you get back on to the saddle and take him on the handle-bars. There it will be a bit more difficult for him to balance, and he will need to clutch the handle-bars or your own arms.

These are all forward sitting feats, and when he has had this much practice he can turn round and face backwards from the same position.

The great thing in all passenger riding is that you should make the tricks look well. If your partner hunches up in a niggling, cramped position, the feat will be spoiled. You should both keep as upright as you can, chest forward, and eyes looking straight ahead. Don't crouch or look frightened, but be quite calm and steady, and make every move quietly. Smile as you tackle it—and the stiffest trick will seem much easier.

he might be in need of water. Few sailormen could have passed such a need unheeded, least of all King of the Islands.

The earnestness with which the pearl-buyer was signalling could not be mistaken. It was not merely a chat that he wanted.

Ken rapped out sharp orders, and the course of the ketch was changed, to run down to the dancing whaleboat.

The tramp of feet on deck, and the creak of the heavy boom as it swung, warned the Kolo trader below that the course was changed. There was a hurried tread in the companion, and the trader's fat face, red with anger, appeared on deck.

Holt stared across at the whaleboat, now quite clear to view, then turned to King of the Islands, with glittering eyes.

"What does this mean, Captain King?" he exclaimed passionately. "You're wasting time running down to that boat—"

"Prado's in need of something," explained Ken, keeping his temper, though with difficulty. "I'm bound—"

"You're bound to keep your bargain with me!" snarled Holt. "You're bound to keep on your course for Ronga. Do you think I'm paying you a hundred pounds to chat with every loafer in the Pacific?"

"Hang you and your hundred pounds!" snapped Ken. "You were never wanted on this craft, Mr. Holt, and you know it! Prado's a friend of mine. But if he were a stranger

and an enemy, I would not pass him without a word when he's in need of help."

Holt trembled with anger. But it was not only anger that could be read in his face. There was something else—uneasiness, at least, if not fear.

"Unfound you!" he broke out. "You—"

"Belay it!" said Ken. "That's enough from you, Holt."

"Will you steer for Ronga and leave that boat alone?" shouted Holt.

"No, I won't!"

Holt clenched his fat fists. It seemed, for a moment, that he would strike at the cool, handsome, contemptuous face of the boy skipper of the Dawn.

Ken eyed him grimly. The Kolo trader's angry excitement was difficult for him to understand. The few minutes that would be lost on the trip to Ronga could not possibly account for it.

But, whatever the reason was, Ken was not the man to be bullied on his own deck. Mr. Holt was very near, at that moment, to being knocked heels over head into the scuppers.

No doubt he realised it, and realised that he was helpless. He unclenched his hands, though his face was now almost pale with rage. With a great effort he controlled himself.

He stared at the whaleboat again, pulling the broad brim of his hat over his eyes. Perhaps it was to shade them from the glare of the sun. But it came into the minds of both the

(Continued on page 18.)

## South Seas Shipmates

(Continued from page 15.)

shipmates that Holt did not wish the man in the whaleboat to recognise him.

"You think that boat's bound for Kolo, Captain King?" asked Holt at last, speaking slowly.

"It looks like it," answered Ken.

"What does it matter?"

"It matters a lot."

Holt had turned now, and his back was to the whaleboat. There was no longer any doubt that he wished to avoid being seen by the Portuguese. He was silent for a full minute, evidently thinking hard. Meanwhile, the ketch was running down swiftly to Prado's boat.

What was on the trader's mind was a mystery to the shipmates. But it was clear that something was on his mind, and that it was due to the fact that Prado was, or might be, bound for Kolo, the island Holt had left.

Why, was a mystery. Twenty people at least must have seen him follow the Dawn, at Kolo, and must know that he had boarded the ketch. True, they did not know, and could not surmise, that Ken had changed his plans since putting to sea, and sailed for Ronga instead of Sua.

That, apparently, Holt wished to keep from the knowledge of his acquaintances on Kolo.

Holt licked his dry lips.

"I've got to confide in you, King!" he jerked out at last. "I've told you I'm on a big business deal—a big thing, with money in it, and—and another man after it. I don't want it known on Kolo that I'm sailing for Ronga—it's important—more important than I can tell you—for that to be kept a secret. You get me? On Kolo they know that you sailed for Sua, and at Sua there's the Sydney steamer—they may fancy I've taken it. In fact, I let my boat's crew believe I was getting a passage in your ketch to catch the Sydney steamer at Sua. If Prado sees me on board here, he will tell them at Kolo that I never landed at Sua for the Sydney steamer. You understand?"

"I understand!" said Ken, with a curl of the lip.

"It's big business—very big business," said Holt. "I get a clear course if my rivals on Kolo fancy I've hit for Sydney while I'm making for Ronga. If you're determined to run down that Portuguese—"

"That's settled."

"Not a word about my being on board, then. And not a word about your course being set for Ronga," said Holt. "That's not asking much of you, Captain King?"

Ken pointed to the companion.

"Get below, before Prado sees you," he said. "Your name will not be mentioned, and nothing will be said of Ronga. Prado's not the man to ask questions, anyhow. All he wants, most likely, is a keg of water."

Holt gave another glance at the whaleboat, eyed the shipmates un- easily for a moment or two, then hurried below. Ken and Kit looked at one another.

"Here's Prado!" said Ken.

The whaleboat ran alongside, and a rope was thrown. The little Portuguese clambered on the ketch, active as a monkey, grinning and bowing to the shipmates. And Ken and Kit, as they greeted him, dismissed from their minds the scared, anxious man skulking out of sight below.

"Good Man, Koko!"

HOLT did not return to the deck till the pearl-buyer's whaleboat was a distant speck vanishing into the glare of the sunset. King of the Islands gave the Kolo trader a grim look, but did not speak.

Holt stood staring at the sea for some minutes. The Dawn, with a fair wind filling her canvas, was speeding on towards distant Ronga.

The grim expressions on the faces of the shipmates did not escape the man from Kolo. He gnawed his lip as he watched the sea. The meeting with Prado had forced him to confide to the boy trader what he certainly had never intended to confide to him. Probably he could read distrust and suspicion in their looks.

After a long look at the sea, he eyed the skipper and mate of the Dawn with an uneasiness he could not wholly conceal.

"What did Prado want?" he asked abruptly.

"Water," answered Ken briefly.

"He was making Kolo?"

"Ay, ay!"

"You did not tell him you were making Ronga?" Holt breathed un- steadily.

"No!" Ken's answers were the briefest possible. Hudson did not speak. Holt turned away and scanned the sea again, watching the distant speck that was Prado's boat till it vanished.

Ken's brow was clouded. He had been glad to see old Pedro Prado again, and to give him the supplies he needed. As he had guessed, the pearl-buyer had run short of water on his long trip. A keg had been passed down to the whaleboat, sufficient to see Prado and his boat- steerer through till they made Kolo. The incident was a common enough one at sea. What was uncommon and disconcerting was the way Holt had taken it.

No business deal, howsoever im- portant and profitable, could account for the anger and fear the trader had displayed. Anger, impatience, irritation Ken could have understood in a man of Holt's overbearing character. But why fear?

What it meant King of the Islands could not begin to guess, but he had an uneasy feeling that there was something "fishy" at the bottom of it. He had been unwilling to take Holt as a passenger on the ketch. He was still more unwilling to keep him aboard now.

He was thinking of it, with a knitted brow, as night fell on the Pacific. Under the starry sky the Dawn glided swiftly on, her canvas bellied out before the wind.

Holt did not go below. He had

been assigned a bunk in the state room amidships, and the previous night he had turned in at an early hour. Now he did not seem to be thinking of sleep, but sat in the deck- chair, wakeful, the Tonga boy, Tao, squatting on the deck near him, dozing.

Many times Holt rose from the chair and paced the deck. But the looks of the skipper and mate did not encourage him to talk, if he desired to do so.

Ken and Kit stood near Koko at the wheel, in low-voiced converse. It was time for Hudson to take his watch below, but he had not left the deck.

Once or twice Holt had moved near the skipper and mate, as if he desired to catch their low-toned words. Now he was watching them suspiciously, his eyes glinting in the shadows. He could see that the shipmates seemed to be listening. For what they could be listening, far out on the solitary sea, was perplexing to the Kolo trader. Koko, at the wheel, was listening, too; many times Holt saw his dusky head bent.

He heard Koko's voice at last:

"Me hear, sar, ear belong me."

Holt rose to his feet again. His face was tense.

"That's it!" he heard Hudson say. The Kolo trader strained his own ears to listen, but could hear nothing save the murmur of wind in the sails and the wash of the sea. He stooped and touched the Tonga boy on the shoulder, and Tao's black eyes looked up at him inquiringly.

"You listen, ear belong you!" mut- tered Holt. "What you hear?"

"Me hear feller steamer, sar, ear belong me," the Tonga boy answered. "Feller engine belong steamer he talk along sea, sar."

"A steamer!" Holt strode across to the shipmates of the Dawn. The colour was wavering in his face, but his teeth were set and his eyes gleam- ing.

"Captain King!" His voice came tensely. "What's this? Is that a steamer?"

"You'll hear it soon," said Ken.

"Yes, it's a steamer, Mr. Holt; we're on the beat of the steamer from Late to Ronga."

"You'll give it a wide berth?"

"I've been listening to pick it up!" answered King of the Islands, with a stare. "It was a chance in a dozen that we should raise the Ronga steamer, and we've been lucky. It's a chance for you to hit Ronga a good twenty-four hours before we could land you there."

"In a quarter of an hour from now we can signal the steamer," ex- plained Ken. "They'll be glad enough to take you aboard, and you can pay your passage to Ronga for a tenth of what you've offered me."

The Kolo trader did not speak. He stared at King of the Islands, and the shipmates could see that the sweat was thick on his brow. He turned his head suddenly and stared away across the shadowed sea. Through the silence of the night the distant throbbing of the engines came to his ears.

He could see no lights. But the

throbbing, faint as it was, was louder, and he knew that the two vessels must be approaching one another from their different courses.

"I'm paying you a hundred pounds for the trip to Ronga, Captain King!" he said at last hoarsely.

"I want you to pay me nothing, Mr. Holt, and I'll be glad to see the last of you," said Ken King quietly. "You want a quick run to Ronga—well, the steamer will take you there faster than we can—by a day, at least. If you're in a hurry to hit Ronga, you're in luck."

"You've agreed—" muttered Holt.

"What's the odds?" exclaimed Hudson impatiently. "If all you want is a quick passage to Ronga, what's the matter with the steamer?"

Holt passed his hand across his wet brow.

"There's a lot of reasons." His voice came in jerks. "The Lute steamer touches at five or six places on her trip to Ronga."

"What about it?" snapped Ken. "I tell you she's scheduled to raise Ronga at least twenty-four hours before we can get there. Whether she stops at the islands or not makes no difference."

"I tell you it does!" Holt's voice rose shrilly. "Word will get back to Kolo that I'm bound for Ronga if I'm seen on the steamer."

"I suppose that's possible," Ken said slowly. "But—"

"Me see feller light, sar, eye belong me!" came from Koko at the wheel.

Holt spun round. He stared across

the shadows of the sea. Far off on the Pacific twinkled a light, and now the throbbing of the engines was nearer and clearer. He swung back towards King of the Islands. His face was white, his eyes gleaming, and his hand was thrust into the pocket at the back of his trousers.

"Keep clear of that steamer!" he snarled. "I'm paying you for a passage to Ronga—you've given your word—do you think you're going to double-cross me? Hang you! Give that steamer a wide berth, or I'll blow your brains out!"

A revolver flashed from the trader's hip-pocket. It was jammed almost in the face of King of the Islands, with Holt's podgy finger on the trigger, his eyes gleaming over the barrel.

Ken stared at him, dumbfounded.

"Why, you swab—" he gasped.

"Stand away from that steamer!" yelled Holt. "Do you hear me, you fool? Stand away from that steamer, or I'll lay you dead on your own deck!"

"Suffering cats!" gasped Hudson. Amazing as the trader's action was, it was plain that he was in savage, deadly earnest. Whatever was the mysterious cause of it, the podgy trader was a bundle of jumping nerves at that moment.

"Stand away from that steamer— Oh!" broke off the Kolo trader, with a gasp of rage.

Koko's hands were on the wheel. But a Kanaka can use his feet as handily as a white man his hands. It seemed like black magic to the Kolo trader when something whipped up

and seized the revolver in his grip. It was the bare foot of Koko the Kanaka, and his toes gripped it as easily as a white man's fingers and dragged it down. The revolver crashed on the deck.

"Good man, Koko!" gasped Hudson. The next instant Ken King's grasp was on the Kolo trader. Holt was making a desperate dive for the revolver when the boy trader grasped him.

"You swab!" Ken's voice was husky with rage. "You'd draw a gun on me, on my own deck! You lubberly swab!" The fat man swung like a sack of copra in the muscular grasp of King of the Islands. Ken whirled him to the companion.

"You swab! I'll stand clear of the steamer and keep on to Ronga because you hold me to my word!" said King of the Islands. "But, by Davy Jones, if I have any more insolence from you, I'll order a Kanaka to give you a dozen with a lawyer-cane! Now get below!"

With a swing of his arms, he threw the Kolo trader into the companion, and Holt went crashing and yelling into the cabin. From below he could be heard panting and muttering.

King of the Islands did not heed him. Koko gave him an inquiring look, and, with a frowning brow, the boy trader signed to him to keep on his course. The Dawn swept on, and the throbbing of the steamer died away into the silence of the sea.

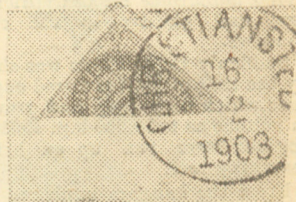
*(Follow the Dawn in next Monday's ripping story of the South Sea chums—with King of the Islands as your skipper!)*

## The New Stamp Collecting

# BITS and PIECES

By DOUGLAS ARMSTRONG

who will answer free, by Post, any stamp queries sent to the Editor, MODERN BOY



SOMETIMES half a stamp is not only "better than none," but actually worth more than a whole one. It depends on the circumstances. If you were to cut an ordinary English penny stamp in half and attempt to use it on a letter for a halfpenny the post office would refuse to pass it and the letter would be taxed double the deficiency on delivery, simply because the use of half or "bisected" stamps has never been recognised by the Postmaster-General.

IN days gone by, however, the halving or even quartering of postage stamps has been officially authorised on occasion, either to make up an odd amount or on account of a temporary shortage of a particular value. The early stamps of the British North American colonies provide many such instances. For example, the Nova Scotia stamp (on left, above) was originally a 1 cent denomination, but has been cut in half to make up 12½ cents postage, probably in conjunction with a 2 and a 10 cents stamp.

STRICTLY speaking these bisected varieties should only be collected when "tied" by the postmark to a fragment of the envelope as proof of genuineness, which is the case with the Danish West Indian "bisected" provisional, shown on the right, above.

It so happened that in February, 1903, the post office on the island of St. Croix in what was then known as the Danish West Indies (now the U.S. Virgin Islands) ran out of 2 cents postage stamps of the current issue. A notice was promptly

inserted in the local newspaper telling people that until a fresh supply could be obtained the 4 cents stamp might be divided diagonally and would be accepted in repayment of the 2 cents rate. This arrangement lasted for several weeks, so that the value of a bisected specimen is not more than double that of the normal stamp.

WHEN the Falkland Islands were first admitted to the Universal Postal Union in 1891, the charge on letters for foreign countries was immediately reduced from 4d. to 2½d. per half ounce. There being no ½d. stamp available, permission was given for the existing 1d. stamp to be cut in half to represent half its nominal value, pending preparation of a ½d. denomination in the permanent series.

SOON it was discovered that dishonest persons were passing through the post a second time the halves of penny stamps which had accidentally escaped cancellation. From that time each half had to be impressed at the post office with a bold figure "½d." before it was allowed to pay postage.

JAMAICA is another British colony where bisected stamps were once permitted to be employed, and a hunt through the catalogue will reveal many more examples. At the Pageant of Postage Stamps held in London recently a complete collection of "bits and pieces" of stamps from all parts of the world was shown by one exhibitor and attracted very great attention.