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The POPULAR

2¢



In the African Forest!

THE Popolaki Patrol of Boy Scouts were in high feather.

They sat round the camp-fire in the clearing, in the heart of the Mbiri Forest, eating a late breakfast.

Generally, when they were on safari, the Popolaki scouts broke their fast at dawn, and were on the trail before the sun was over the tree-tops. On this especial morning they had good reason for being late.

The night had been spent in trailing Zirafi ben Said, the Arab slave-trader, and the sun was high in the heavens when the scouts got back to their camp.

There had been little rest for them in the night. But they were not thinking of resting during the day—not till the heat of the tropic noon made repose imperative.

They had left Masumpwe four days ago to track down the man-eating lion that terrorised the district. They had not found "Simba" yet. And they were not going back to Masumpwe till they had put "paid" to Simba! So far, they had not been lucky.

Still, they were in high feather. If they had not found Simba, the lion, they had found Zirafi, defeated him, and released the slaves he had been marching northward to the Bahr-el-Gazelle. And that was an exploit of which Lyn Strong and his comrades might well be proud.

Lyn's tanned face was bright and cheery. He sat on a log, finishing his breakfast, with a bunch of juicy plantains. Fatty Page was still busy with the guinea-fowl stew, left over from supper. Fatty believed in putting away a solid meal before going on the march. Pip Parker and Smut, the silent Dutchman, were eating dhurra cakes and bananas. Stacpoole, the dandy of the patrol, was dealing delicately with a mango. He was a little distressed at the juice getting on his slim fingers, and he wiped them very carefully with a cambric handkerchief.

Bobolobo, the Kikuyu gun-bearer, was cleaning Lyn's rifle. On a blanket, at a little distance, lay Mpoko, the bushman, who had been saved from the vengeance of Zirafi.

Bobo glanced sometimes at the bushman, with disapproval and disfavour in his glance.

The proud Kikuyu, tall and strong, had a lofty contempt for the dwarf race of the bushmen. Mpoko was as hefty as a gorilla, but he was scarcely four feet high—smaller than the smallest of the scouts.

But Mpoko was not heeding the Kikuyu.

His eyes, as he lay, were fixed on Lyn.

Mpoko was not handsome. He was, in fact, extremely ugly. The pygmy bushmen of Central Africa are not a beautiful race. But there was a soft expression on Mpoko's face that made it almost pleasant to look upon. Fierceness or sullenness was his habitual expression. But there was no trace of either now. Mpoko's black skin showed many signs where the soldier-ants had bitten him, and the bushman, fierce and sullen as he might be, was not ungrateful. Lyn had saved him from death.

THE POPULAR—No. 589.

The SLAYING of "SIMBA!"

By Charles Hamilton.



by torture, and Mpoko was thinking of it as he lay watching the handsome, tanned face of the patrol leader.

Lyn Strong rose from the log and stretched himself.

"Time we got a move on!" he remarked.

"Give a fellow a chance," said Fatty Page, with his mouth full. "You don't

fellows begin ragging! Chuck it, Fatty! We can't roll you along when we start, you know. Ready, Bobo?"

"Na'am, Bwana!" answered Bobolobo. "Yes, lord!"

"What are you goin' to do with the jolly old bushman, Lyn?" drawled Stacpoole. "Take him home and keep him for a beauty show?"

The scouts chuckled.

"Well, I suppose he'll trek for home," said Lyn. "The rest of Zirafi's prisoners were jolly glad to show their heels. I suppose this chap belongs to

some tribe in the Upper Congo."

He crossed over to where the bushman was lying.

Mpoko rose to his feet. "We're breaking camp now, Mpoko," said Lyn.

Boy as he was, he towered over the little bushman. But, strong as he was, he would have been an infant in the bushman's muscular hands.

Mpoko's dark eyes looked up at him. "Me, Mpoko, with Bwana!" he said.

"Eh, what?" The Bwana stared at him. "Don't you want to get home?"

Mpoko shook his head.

Lyn looked perplexed. He had had little to do with bushmen, but he had heard the hunters talk of that strange race. Implacable and relentless in revenge for an injury, but with a long memory for a kind or friendly action.

"Me mtumwa—slave—with Bwana!" said Mpoko. "Me serve Mzungu—white man—long time before. Me cook!"

Man-Eating Lion Manhandled by Pigmy!

want to start on a trail hungry, old bean."

"You don't want to load more than you can carry, old scout," answered Lyn. "We're hunting Simba; but if Simba caught sight of you, Fatty, I believe he would start hunting us. You'd tempt him."

"And you'd last him about a month, Fatty, and keep him out of mischief!" chuckled Pip Parker.

Fatty grunted.

"Well, there's something of me," he remarked. "You wouldn't last a mosquito five minutes, Pip!"

Pip sniffed.

"Well, I'm not as broad as I'm long," he said.

"You wouldn't be very broad if you were!" retorted Fatty. "About a yard."

"Look here, you fat duffer—"

Pip was rather touchy about his inches.

"Order!" said Lyn. "Don't you



heat was over. For hours the scouts had been hunting for the spoor of the man-eater, but hunting in vain. And then suddenly, softly, Bobo, the gun-bearer, breathed the word. The scouts were fatigued, ready to tumble over with the heat and exertion of trailing through a jungle forest. But at that whisper from Bobo, they forgot heat and fatigue, and each man of the patrol straightened up, with glinting eyes, and grasped his rifle.

"The lion?" repeated Pip.
"Na'am! Simba!" said the Kikuyu.

In the drowsy forest there was no sound, save the

buzzing of countless insects that whirled in the filtering rays from above.

Lyn looked round him swiftly, and then doubtfully at the Kikuyu.

"You're sure, Bobo?"

"My eyes see, Bwana!" said the Kikuyu, and with his spear, he pointed to a mark in the earth.

Lyn dropped on his knees and examined it.

Keen scout as he was, he would have missed it; but Bobolobo had the eyes of an eagle for the faintest sign.

Lyn's eyes flashed.

"Look out, you fellows!" he said. "It's Simba's sign—he's trodden here, and not long ago."

"The Terrible One goes to sleep," said Bobo. "Bwana, he lies in the brush, and his eyes are closed."

The scouts drew together, their rifles ready, their eyes on the alert. It was the sign of a lion that Bobo had found, and they hoped that it was the sign of the man-eater they were hunting. But in the thick brush was not a favourable spot for finding him. The terrible beast might have been within ten paces of them, unseen and unheard. It was creepy to feel that perhaps they were within reach of his spring; and that, at any moment, a sinuous body might come hurtling through the air towards them.

"Follow the track, Bobo," said Lyn; and the Kikuyu led the way.

That the lion had passed the spot, not long since, was certain. Again and again sign of his tread was picked up. That he had lain down to sleep in some shady spot was equally certain; but he was not likely to remain asleep while enemies approached.

Bobo stopped suddenly, his sinewy arm, with his spear in his hand, stretched out before him.

Through the brush there was a glimpse of something yellowish that stirred.

"Simba!" whispered Bobo.

There came a deep, menacing growl, that thrilled the hearts of the scouts of Masumpwe.

The lion, disturbed from his midday sleep, was up and watching, within six or seven feet of the Kikuyu's spear-head.

Bang!

The sudden roar of Stacpoole's rifle

came with an effect of thunder in the stillness of the tropical forest.

A fearful roar answered it, and following the roar came the spring of the lion.

"You ass!" panted Lyn.

Stacpoole, anxious to bag the lion, had fired too soon. A volley might have stretched the great beast on the earth; but Stacpoole's bullet had grazed his huge neck, irritating without injuring him. The scouts leaped away into the brush, as the great body was launched through the air, and the lion came down on the spot where they had been gathered, roaring and tearing up the earth with his great claws.

They had a full sight of him now—a huge beast with a tawny mane, nearly ten feet long from muzzle to tail. It was the man-eater!

The scouts scrambled quickly out of reach through the tangled brush. Bobolobo, who had no time to jump clear, swung himself into a branch overhead with the activity of a monkey.

Roar after roar pealed from the lion, awakening every echo of the forest.

"Shoot!" shouted Lyn.

But at the first crack of a rifle, the lion leaped away again, and vanished into the brush.

Crashing of the brushwood was heard, as the great animal fled.

Bobolobo dropped from the trees.

"After him!" exclaimed Stacpoole. He was running forward; but Lyn caught him by the arm.

"Hold on, you duffer!"

"Do you want to let him get clear?" exclaimed Stacpoole impatiently.

"Hold on, I tell you! And hold your fire next time till I give the word," said Lyn gruffly. "We might have had him then—you spoiled it by blazing away in a hurry—"

"Oh rot!" muttered Stacpoole.

"Rot or not, keep back, and follow your leader!" snapped Lyn.

Stacpoole compressed his lips; but he obeyed. There had always been a latent hostility between Stacpoole and the patrol-leader of the Popolaki scouts. Stacpoole could never quite forget that he was the nephew of the Commissioner; and that Lyn was the son of a hunter. The Commissioner was a great gun; and Grant Strong, the hunter, a nobody. That had nothing to do with scouting; but the dandy of Popolaki never seemed quite to realise that.

"Get on, Bobo!" muttered Lyn.

The Kikuyu led the pursuit, the scouts trailing after him. Ahead of them, the crashing of the brush, as the lion leaped away in flight, reached their ears, and guided them. The heat was overpowering; the scouts streaming with perspiration, but they hardly noticed it. Now that they were at close quarters with Simba, they were not thinking of rest.

But the crashing died away in the distance.

The lion was in full flight, and he threaded his way through the jungle at amazing speed. With all their efforts, the scouts had no chance of keeping pace with him.

But they kept on doggedly.

There was silence round them now; and they slacked their pace, and proceeded with caution. For the silence might mean that the lion was far off; or it might mean that he had stopped and was crouching under some bush ready for them to come up.

Bobo stopped at last, on the high bank of a dry ravine. Here the trees fell away, and the ground was clearer,

"Cook?" repeated Lyn. "I am already served by the Kikuyu, and it is not written that I should have two servants. Let there be peace, and you shall have food and a knife and seek your home by the Congo."

Mpoko shook his fuzzy head.

He did not speak again, and the scouts prepared for the trail. A bag of food and a long Kikuyu knife were bestowed on the bushman, and he said no word. His eyes followed Lyn when the scouts took the trail and disappeared into the forest.

The leader of the Popolaki Patrol glanced back and saw the little, muscular figure still standing there, motionless, gazing.

He waved his hand; but the bushman made no sign. He stood like a statue, gazing after the scouts, and in a few moments more he was lost to sight.

The Man-eater!

SIMBA!" Bobo breathed the word. Noon had come; the fierce noon-tide of equatorial Africa, when man and beast and bird sink into rest and silence.

It was like an oven in the Mbiri forest.

Great trees, a hundred feet high, locked their branches high above. Lesser trees, growing among the giants, interlaced their foliage below the upper canopy. It was like a roof of green far above the heads of the scouts, shutting off the blaze of the vertical sun, but not its heat. Only here and there a bright ray came gleaming through some interstice in the foliage; but the heat shimmered everywhere. And with the aching heat was the dimness of a cathedral.

Lyn Strong was looking for a place for the noontide camp, where the Popolaki Patrol would rest till the fiercest

and the sun came uninterrupted from above, in a blaze of burning heat. Bobo pointed with his spear down the steep side of the ravine.

"O Bwana, Simba has leaped into the fumbi," he said, "and on the stones my eyes see nothing."

"Keep on!" said Lyn.

The scouts descended the stony slope of the watercourse. It was completely dried up; not a vestige of water remaining among the stones and dried mud. And on the stones and the baked earth, there was no sign to be picked up of Simba.

"We've lost him!" grunted Pip.

"All your fault, Stacpoole, you duffer!" said Fatty Page.

"Rot!" snapped Stacpoole.

"No good crying over spilt milk," said Lyn cheerily. "We'll camp in the fumbi for a rest; and then separate and hunt for the brute's spoor. We're bound to find him before dark."

On the shady side of the fumbi the scouts camped, glad to stretch their tired limbs on the earth. While the other fellows were resting, Fatty Page travelled slowly and methodically through a big bunch of bananas.

Bobo stood watching, his eyes fixed on the brush that clothed the upper edge of the fumbi, warily and suspiciously. Lyn called to him at last.

"What do your eyes see, O Bobo?"

"My eyes see nothing, Bwana; but my ears hear!" answered the Kikuyu. "He-that-treads-softly moves in the jungle."

Lyn jumped up.

"Not the lion?"

"Siyo, Bwana! No, lord!" said the gun-bearer. "But my ears hear."

Lyn listened intently. There was no breath of wind stirring; but from the brush on the edge of the ravine came a faint rustling.

"Lo! Kumbo!" ejaculated the Kikuyu suddenly, pointing with his spear. "Look, lord! It is the Small One!"

From the brush a little black face suddenly looked out, and two flashing, keen eyes scanned the depths of the fumbi. Lyn uttered an exclamation. It was the face of Mpoko, the bush-man.

It vanished the next moment, and the rustle was heard no more.

"My hat," exclaimed Lyn, "that giddy bushman has been following us through the forest!"

Pip Parker chuckled.

"He's taken a fancy to you, Lyn. You're not going to get shut of that beautiful one!"

"More likely lookin' for somethin' to steal," said Stacpoole. "These bushmen are bigger thieves than the Kikuyu, which is sayin' a lot."

"Oh, rubbish!" said Pip. "I believe he's quite a decent little chap."

Pip had taken rather a liking to Mpoko; for the excellent reason that the bushman was much smaller than himself. When Pip had stood beside Mpoko, he had felt quite tall, which made him feel good.

"Well, he's gone now," said Lyn.

At Close Quarters!

IT was still hot, but the blaze of noontide had passed when the patrol took up the trail again.

Pip Parker and Smut went up the ravine, and Fatty Page and Stacpoole went down. Lyn Strong and THE POPULAR.—No. 589.

Bobolobo clambered up the stony farther side, to hunt for sign farther afield.

In which direction the man-eater had gone they could not tell; but all the scouts were hoping to strike his spoor before long. And within half an hour Lyn and Bobo fell in with a forest path, where the tracks of many animals were to be seen.

Among the tracks was the spoor of a lion, though whether it was that of the man-eater of Masumpwe they had to guess. That well-trodden path evidently led to a drinking-place, and it was likely enough that the man-eater, after his noonday nap, was heading for water.

Bobo's keen eyes searched the trodden track suspiciously.

"O Bwana, black men have trodden here," he said.

"Native hunters," said Lyn.

"Na'am, Bwana. But the tracks are old, one-two-three-days," said the Kikuyu.

The scout and the gun-bearer pressed on through the forest. The track wound onward among the thick trees and brush, shut in on either side by an almost impenetrable green wall.

Lianas, thick as a man's arm, hung from the branches above, and Bobo's long Kikuyu knife slashed a way through them. The animals that used the path were accustomed to creeping under them. All kinds of tracks were to be picked up—the lion's, the hyena's, the antelope's, and others. The path was well-worn, and had probably existed for ages.

A shining gleam came through the trees ahead. It was the shining of water in the sun. They were drawing near to the drinking-place of the wild beasts that had trodden the track.

There was a sudden cry from Bobolobo.

The Kikuyu, spear in hand, was treading the track about six paces in advance of the Bwana, who followed with his rifle at the ready.

Suddenly the earth opened under the Kikuyu's feet, and Bobo vanished from Lyn's sight, in the midst of a smashing and crashing.

"Bobo!" gasped Lyn.

He started forward, and stopped on

the edge of the pit into which the Kikuyu had tumbled.

The pit was about four feet wide, and had been dug deep in the centre of the path. The opening had been cunningly covered with twigs and dead leaves—so cunningly that even the piercing eye of the Kikuyu had not detected it.

It was a game-pit of a native hunter. Lyn stared down into it, his face white.

"Bobo!" he panted.

The dusky face of the Kikuyu looked up. To Lyn's immense relief he looked unhurt.

Lyn had feared that it might be a lion-pit, in which sharp-pointed stakes would have been planted at the bottom, to pierce the lion as he fell.

If that had been the case, nothing could have saved the Kikuyu from being impaled.

But it was only a game-pit; and Lyn panted with relief as he saw that Bobo was unharmed, save for the fall.

"You're not hurt, Bobo?"

"Bwana, it is nothing!" answered Bobo, from below, but his dusky face was full of distress. "Lo, Bwana, your servant is a great fool! I, a hunter of the Kikuyu, to fall into a pit like a foolish Mzungu that knows not the forest! Bwana, it is fitting that you should leave so foolish a one to die."

"Fathead!" was Lyn's reply.

Bobo grinned. That reply showed him that his lord was not angry with him for his clumsiness.

"O Bwana, I am ashamed!" he said. "The black men would laugh if this was told at Masumpwe!"

"Never mind about that now," said Lyn. "We've got to get you out of that hole, Bobo."

He looked round him in perplexity. Bobo, as he stood in the deep pit, was far out of his reach—his head was six feet below the top. The sides were perpendicular, and offered no hold for a monkey.

"How the thump am I going to get you out, Bobo?" growled Lyn.

"If the Bwana will make a rope of lianas, and lower it to this foolish one—"

"Good!"

Lyn drew his hunting-knife, and turned away from the pit.

There were plenty of thick lianas close at hand, and Lyn slashed them down to make a rope.

He stood his rifle against a tree while he was cutting the lianas. For the moment he had forgotten Simba; and he had no expectation of falling in with the lion till he reached the drinking-place, which was still at some little distance ahead.

Lyn stuck his knife back in his belt, and plaited the thick creepers together with swift, active fingers.

The rope was soon finished, and he carried it to the edge of the game-pit.

He was about to lower it, when the faintest of faint sounds behind him made him suddenly spin round, his heart leaping.

Faint as the sound was, he knew the soft pad of a wild beast's foot.

"Oh!" gasped Lyn.

A deep, blood-curdling growl sounded horribly in his ears.

In the jungle path, within a dozen feet of him, stood the man-eater.

The huge lion, padding along to the drinking-place, had come suddenly in sight of the hunter.

He stopped, crouching, and fixed his shining yellowish eyes on the almost petrified Lyn.

"Good heavens!" breathed Lyn.

His teeth came hard together.

Picking 'em up all round the dial

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The lion, for the moment, was motionless. He lay crouched, his burning eyes fixed on the boy.

Lyn stood still, on the edge of the pit. He was unarmed; his rifle was standing where he had left it, against the trunk of a baobab, a dozen feet away. Only his knife remained to him—of little more use than a toothpick against so fearful an enemy at close quarters.

He was caught napping. The idea had been in his mind that the lion had gone on to the drinking-place. But evidently the hunters had been ahead of their quarry. Simba had been sleeping through the hot hours, in some lair in the brush, and the hunters had passed him unknowing. Now he had wakened, and was going along the path to the water. And Lyn, on the edge of the pit, stood directly in his path—unarmed.

The scout breathed hard and deep. Not for a second did he lose his head or his nerve. But in that fearful moment, he knew how unlikely it was that he would ever see Masumpwo again, or greet his father when Grant Strong returned from safari.

He stood with his eyes on the lion's, waiting for the spring. He knew that the spring would come instantly if he made a movement to reach his rifle. His hand was on his knife; all his nerves tensed and strung.

There was a groan from the Kikuyu at the bottom of the pit. He had heard the growl of the man-eater, and he knew the danger in which his lord was standing.

"O Bwana!" came the Kikuyu's voice. "O Bwana-wangu! Why do you not fire at him—who-speaks-with-the-terrible-voice?"

"My rifle's out of reach!" muttered Lyn, over his shoulder.

"Olo wangu! Olo wangu!" groaned the Kikuyu.

"Give me your spear, Bobo!" breathed Lyn, still watching the lion, his back to the pit, and not daring to turn his head. "Your spear, Bobo! Chapu! chapu! Quick!"

The Kikuyu reached up the spear; Lyn, groping behind him with one hand, grasped it.

He drew it up, grasped the shaft, the keen point towards the crouching lion. It was a better weapon than the knife; but little enough likely to stop the leap of the man-eater.

The crouching beast was lashing his sides with his tail now, his eyes burning fiercer and fiercer. A few hours since, the lion had fled from the scouts; but he showed no sign of fear now. Savage ferocity burned in his eyes, and his tail lashed and lashed.

To Lyn, watching him, the seconds seemed centuries. At any instant the spring might come; and if he stirred, he knew that it would come at once.

Grasping the Kikuyu's spear, he stood and waited, still, tense, his eyes fixed on the man-eater's.

A deeper growl; and a shiver ran through the long, cat-like body. The next moment the lion leaped.

Lyn sprang aside with the swiftness of lightning. He barely escaped the slash of the mighty paws, as the lion came down on the very verge of the pit. He turned, and thrust with the spear, and the keen blade sank deep under the lion's shoulder. With all his strength Lyn drove the broad-bladed spear; and with a terrific roar, the lion spun round on him, and the spear was wrenched from his hand. He plunged madly into the brush, with the maddened lion roaring and clawing at his very heels.



The lion was almost upon Lyn, when a small black figure dropped suddenly from a tree clean on the beast's back.



Saved from the Lion!



LYN knew that it was death! — He knew it, as he scrambled madly through the tearing brush, with the lion clawing after him. A slash of a paw barely missed him, tearing a strip from his shirt, and the blood ran down his arm. He dodged round the trunk of a baobab, and for a moment was clear. He leaped into the forest path again, and ran for his rifle. It was the only chance; but he knew that it was no chance—that he would be torn down before he could reach the rifle.

The lion, with the spear still sticking in his side, streaming with blood and maddened with pain, snapped and clawed after him. A second more—

Something leaped from the brush; Lyn had a fleeting impression of a monkey falling from a branch. But the tiny figure that leaped was not that of a monkey. A long Kikuyu knife flashed in the sun that filtered through the foliage. Lyn, untouched by the terrible claws behind, reached the rifle, grasped it, and turned.

He gave a cry. "Mpoko!"

It was Mpoko the bushman that had leaped on the lion, and driven the two-foot knife deep into the tawny throat.

The man-eater, spluttering and choking with blood, turned on this new enemy.

Bang!

The rifle was at Lyn's shoulder in a flash. The bullet crashed on the tawny body, barely in time to save the bushman.

Mpoko leaped out of reach of the lashing claws.

The lion sprang, fell short, and rolled on his side. The bullet had torn through the fierce heart.

A long and terrible shudder ran through the sinuous body, and the lion lay still. Simba was slain. The man-eater of Masumpwo was dead. Lyn shivered as he looked at the terrible beast, terrible, even in death. He could scarcely believe that the danger had passed, that the lion was dead, and that he was living.

"Mpoko!" he stammered. "Mpoko! You little trump, you've saved my life." Mpoko grinned.

"How did you come here, Mpoko?"

"Me follow Bwana!" said the bushman, with a grin that showed a large set of flashing white teeth; and then, in Swahili: "O Bwana, is it not written that Mpoko should serve you?"

"Bwana, wangu!" came the Kikuyu's voice from the pit.

"All serene now, Bobo!" called back Lyn. "Simba is dead, and Mpoko has killed him."

He picked up the rope of lianas and lowered it into the game-pit. Bobolobo came clambering out.

The Kikuyu looked at the dead lion with awe in his look. Then his eyes turned on the little bushman.

Mpoko faced him with sullen defiance in his black face. His grasp closed on the long knife, that streamed with the blood of Simba.

"Mpoko saved my life, Bobo!" said Lyn quietly. "Simba would have had me in another moment, when Mpoko jumped on him from the bush."

But there was no hostility in the Kikuyu's look now. He stepped towards Mpoko, and as he approached him he spat twice, which, among the Kikuyu tribes, is a sign of the deepest respect and esteem.

And Mpoko, understanding, dropped the knife.

"O Small One!" said Bobolobo, in a trembling voice.

"O Kikuyu!" said Mpoko.

And Bobolobo spat again, and the bushman, not to be outdone in politeness, spat also.

"O Small One, you have saved the Bwana from Simba, while this foolish one lay in the pit, like a trapped hyena!" said Bobo. "O Slayer of Simba, Bobolobo is your brother!"

"O splendid and handsome Kikuyu, your words sing like the birds of the forest in the ears of Mpoko!" said the bushman.

And they spat again and clasped hands.

Lyn chuckled.

And the Kikuyu and the bushman, on the friendliest terms now, set to work skinning the lion.

"My only hat!" drawled Stacpoole,

as Lyn came into camp in the fumbi. "You've picked up that beauty spot again."

Mpoko and Bobolobo followed Lyn into camp. Bobolobo was carrying the skin of the man-eater.

"Great pip!" yelled Fatty Page. "You've got the lion!"

"Ach! Good!" said Smut.

"We've all had rotten luck!" said Pip Parker. "And you've bagged the jolly old lion while we were rooting around, getting bitten by mosquitoes. Some fellows have all the luck."

"He jolly nearly bagged me," said Lyn, "and would have done it quite if Mpoko hadn't butted in. The bushman saved my life."

"Good old bushman!" said Pip. "He isn't lovely to look at, but from now on he's a man and a brother!"

"What are you goin' to do with him?" drawled Stacpoole. "Keepin' him for that beauty show, as I suggested?"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Lyn. "I'm not turning him down after he's saved my life. He's going back to Masumpwe with me. We'll find room for him somehow at home. I dare say he can help in the shamba; and he says he can cook."

"Me cook!" said Mpoko, grinning, with a flash of teeth. "Mo plenty filthy good cook!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My hat! I hope his cookin's better

than his English, if he's goin' to cook for this patrol!" yawned Stacpoole.

"Me cook for Mzungu, long time before," said Mpoko. "Mzungu say me splendid dirty filthy cook!"

The scouts yelled. Mpoko grinned widely, showing every tooth in his head, evidently pleased at having caused so much merriment, though he was unaware of its cause.

"Well, let's see him cook," said Fatty Page, becoming serious as he touched on a serious subject. "I've brought in plenty for supper—"

And Mpoko set to work, and the scent that rose from the cooking-pot made the scouts' mouths water. And when the supper was eaten they realised that Mpoko was a valuable addition to the patrol.

When the Popolaki Patrol trailed homeward, the following morning, carrying the man-eater's skin as evidence of their successful trek, Mpoko trailed behind with Bobolobo, and they talked to one another politely in that politest of all languages, Swahili. Lyn caught a fragment of their talk.

"O handsome and splendid Kikuyu!"

"O Small One, with the courage of many lions—"

And the Bwana chuckled.

THE END.

(Don't miss the Popolaki Patrol in the ALL-THRILLS Complete Yarn next week!)

MORE "TRIP-UPS" THIS WEEK!

MY PAGE

By WILLY WANGLE,
the Schoolboy Wizard



Young William, the Wangling Wizard, waves his wand to great effect this week.

HOME-MADE X-RAYS.—Here's a jolly good stunt in the way of optical illusions. Get two strips of card, each about two inches long by one and a half wide. Cut in the exact centre of each a circular hole rather less than a half-inch in diameter. Get a piece of chicken's feather—part of the finest part of a feather pipe-cleaner will do well—and place it between the two card strips so that the feather blocks the hole completely. Paste the two cards neatly together, trim off any bits of feather that stick out, and you can start X-raying folks like billy-ho. Look through the feather-blocked hole at your hand, with plenty of strong light on the job, and you'll see every blessed bone. You won't really, but you'll easily be able to kid other fellows, not in the know, that what they see is real bones and not an optical illusion due to the feather. I don't guarantee

this gadget to reveal any evidence of brain in the thick skull of that gnat-witted fellow who riles you so with his silly ways!

ANOTHER MATCH TRICK.

You'll have a reputation presently if you keep up with my clever match tricks! Try this one. Borrow nine matches, and ask a pal to make

TEN

Nine Matches make ten.

ten of 'em—without breaking one into two. It's ten to one he'll give it up. Then you show him.

CATCH!—I heard of a fellow the other day who was on a ship getting ready for a foreign trip. They were taking stores aboard, and the mate of the ship was fed to the teeth. A boat pulled up alongside, and the



A home-made X-ray that provides hours of fun.

fellow in it yelled to the disgruntled mate that he'd got a load of vegetables for him.

"All right!" grunted the mate. "Pitch 'em up. There ain't room for you aboard."

Without a word the bloke in the boat started on the job.

"Catch!" said he. "Here's the first!" And it caught the mate a stinger in the eye. It was a dried pea! The fellow had got a hundred-weight of 'om to pitch up—one at a time!

TRY YOUR WIT.—As I said to Bill Bloggins the other day, when he went for a bun as if he'd been living on flies' legs for the last nine years: "Oh, I see you are empty!" Now, can you write that sentence in seven single letters? Oh, well, here you are—O I C U R M T. That's another one up to yours truly!

PAT AS YOU LIKE!—This is another little story concerning fruit

that I heard about last week. A farmer caught a kid scrounging in one of his apple trees. "Hi! Wodger doin' 'u p there?" he bawled. Well, it was a fool question, anyway, and the answer came pat. "Come down," cried the farmer. "Just fell out of an aeroplane!" yelled the kid, as he slid down the tree's 'other side and nipped briskly home.

