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# The POPULAR

2¢



Simba!

# In The Land of the Cannibals!

"HAYA!" snapped Bobo. Bobo. Crack! The bamboo came down across the broad shoulders of Zirafi ben Said. "Haya!" repeated Bobo, which, being translated, means, "Got a move on."

Zirafi scowling like a demon, got a move on. Lyn Strong, marching ahead of the safari, as it tottered across the burning, rock-strewn plain, looked back. He grinned, and his grin was reflected on the faces of Fatty Page and Pip Parker.

The Scouts had left behind, several days ago, the forest where they had encountered Zirafi and his troop of Arab slave-hunters.

The way lay now by a lava-strewn plain, unsheltered from the burning rays of the sun of Central Africa.

Ahead lay a range of hills, barring the horizon, split by a narrow opening, for which the safari was heading.

Beyond the hills lay the Lukuli country, where Lyn's father was a prisoner in the hands of Mofolongo, the chief.

The Scouts were drawing near to their destination at last. They were weary a long day's march from their home in Uganda.

Zirafi, the slave-trader, marched with the safari, held as a hostage by the Scouts.

His men were far behind. But sometimes, glancing back, the Scouts had a glimpse of a glittering spear-point, or a glimmering white turban, among the masses of lava that strewed the burning plain.

They were well aware that the slave-hunters were following the track of the safari at a safe distance.

That distant pursuit, however, mattered little to them, so long as the sheikh was in their hands.

Zirafi knew, and his men knew, that if they approached within shot the sheikh's life would pass for forfeit. And Zirafi was even more anxious than the Scouts that his men should not come to close quarters.

Since dawn on this blazing day the Scouts had marched across the lava-strewn plain, scorching under the rays of the African sun. The shelter of the hills was still far off, and they did not make the usual halt for noon.

And Mpoke, the cook, tired of carrying his cooking-pots, had slung them on the Arab sheikh, which was not only a burden for Zirafi, but an insult to his pride and dignity. Zirafi had hated, pouring out a stream of curses in eloquent Arabic. But the stream was interrupted by Bobo's bamboo, which crashed like a piano-drum across the shoulders of the sheikh.

Zirafi stamped on, with cooking-pots clattering.

The Arab's black eyes turned on Lyn's grinning face, with a glare of hatred and malvolence.

"O dog of a hair!" said Zirafi, between his yellow teeth, "as I a slave The Poorman.—No. 585.



to carry the cooking-pots of a bush-man!"

Lyn laughed. "Get on!" he said. "You've got yourself to thank for this, Zirafi. We should have turned you loose long ago, if your men hadn't been following us. So long as they follow, you must grin and bear it. Mpoke was your slave once, now you are Mpoke's slave, and you can carry his cooking-pots. Shut up and march!"

The safari swung on towards the hills, winding among the great masses of rock that strewed the plain. Fatty Page mopped his streaming brow with a drenched handkerchief.

"It's hot!" he murmured. "What do you expect on the jolly old Equator?" yawned Pip. "But, by gum, I shall be glad to get into the shade! What price sitting under a palm-tree and sipping lemon-squash, Fatty?"

"You silly son!" gasped Fatty, and he missed a kick at Pip, which the smallest of the Popolani Scouts easily dodged.

"Kumbi!" ejaculated Bobo suddenly. "Behold!"

His eyes were on Lyn.

Lyn, marching ahead of the safari, had come to a sudden stop. He was about to turn the base of a great mass of ragged lava when he stopped and leaped back towards his comrades.

"What—" began Pip. He did not need to finish the question.

From beyond the ragged edge of the lava mass came a deep, echoing roar.

"Simba!" shouted Bobo.

"Oh, my hat! A lion!"

"Look out!" shouted Lyn.

The Scouts grasped their rifles.

At the same moment the lion leaped into view. The great brute had been lying in the shade of the lava, in the heat of the day, half-asleep and silent, and Lyn had almost stumbled on him. With flaming eyes and hissing mane the lion glared at the safari—a huge brute, gaunt and hungry.

## Cannibals to the Right of Them,

Cannibals to the Left of Them,  
CANNIBALS ALL ROUND THEM!

"Oh, don't!" growled Fatty. That delightful vision was positively painful in the arid plain burning with heat and thirst.

"Blow the sun!" said Fatty. "Blow the dust! Blow all Africa!"

"Blow the whole jolly old universe, if you like," said Pip generously. "I told you you shouldn't have come on this safari, Fatty. You've got too much weight to carry."

"Fatted!" "You're melting away under our eyes, old fat head," said Pip. "But you two to one that when you take your boots off to-night you'll find them full of tallow."

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"Scatter!" yelled Lyn.

The lion had dropped not a dozen feet away, and was springing again, straight at the group of startled Scouts. Had the brute been fed, he would probably have slunk away among the rocks. But he was hungry, and to the hungry lion the safari meant food.

The Scouts leaped away in different directions. In an instant the safari was scattered.

The leaping brute came thudding down, but the Scouts had dodged the leap in time. Lyn and Pip and Fatty, Bobo and Mpoko and Zirafi, had leaped in various directions. On the ground lay the cooking-pots that Zirafi had hung down in his haste.

A deep-throated roar pealed from the disappointed brute.

He crouched on the earth, glaring round with burning eyes at the scattered figures among the rocks, evidently in doubt upon which to turn his special attention.

Lyn, at a grove of yards distance, clamped his rifle to his shoulder, and took aim.

The crack of the rifle was followed by a fearful roar from Simba. There was a spurt of blood from the gaunt ribs.

The lion turned on Lyn.

Crack, crack, came from Pip and Fatty, and both bullets struck the lion as he leaped.

He shuddered down about in his leap, growling horribly. Crouching on his stomach, his tail lashing his gaunt ribs, he glared round with eyes of fire at his enemies.

Crack-ack-ack came from the three rifles, and the lion's roar pealed far and wide. He made a wild rush towards Fatty, and the fat Scout scrambled over a ridge of lava to get out of his way—his foot slipped, and he rolled on his side, panting.

A moment more and the lion would have leon upon him. But Bobolobo was leaping forward with thrusting spear; and the broad blade drove deep into Simba's throat.

The roar was changed to a choking

gurgie; and the great brute fell upon his side. Mpoko leaped in and drove his long Kikuyu knife into the heaving flank.

Fatty Page scrambled up, gasping. "Oh, crikey!" he spluttered. "I—I thought I was a goner! Oh, scissors!"

"The Terrible One of the desert is slain!" said Bobolobo.

Fatty shivered as he looked at the great carcass, stretched out now with scarce a quiver in the huge muscles. Mpoko drew out his knife, and wiped the long blade on the lion's hide. Then he stared round anxiously among the rocks. The little bushman was the first to think of Zirafi.

"Bwana!" he ejaculated. "That dirty Arab he lib for roa."

"Zirafi!" exclaimed Lyn.

"Bolted!" said Pip.

Lyn scrambled to the summit of a high rock, and stared round him, his rifle ready.

But Zirafi was gone.

The sheikh had taken advantage of the struggle with the lion to make his escape.

In which direction he had gone Lyn could easily guess—back to join his men, who were tracking the safari. But the scattered rocks and lava ridges gave him ample cover, and he was lost to sight.

Lyn set his teeth.

Had the Goring sheikh been in view he would have fired on him without hesitation. But Zirafi was only too well aware of that; and he was crouching among the rocks as he sed to rejoin his men.

Lyn descended from the rock. His brow was black.

"Ho's got clear?" asked Pip.

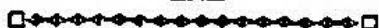
"Yes. It's nobody's fault—we couldn't watch him while we were handling Simba. But now—"

"This dirty bushman he go after!" said Mpoko.—"He go killum dirty Arab, Bwana."

Lyn shook his head.

"His men are behind us—we've got to get on! It's quick march now, you fellows: if they come on us in this open plain, we're done for. Beat it!"

And the safari hurried on, under the broiling sun, towards the distant line of hills, leaving Simba where he had fallen; and as they marched they heard the howls and yelps of the hyenas that crept out of the rocks and disputed and snarled over their prey.



The Fight in the Pass!



**L**YN STRONG halted on a rocky ridge, and looked back. The hills were closer now; but the gap for which the safari was heading was still three or four miles distant over rising, rugged ground. In the long line of steep, stony hills only that one gap was visible, a narrow fissure left by some ancient convulsion of Nature. It was all new country to the Uganda Scouts; but Mpoko, a



native of the Congo country, was the guide now; and according to the bushman, the narrow hill-gap lead into the land of the Chief Mofolongo. But Lyn Strong was not thinking now of the land beyond the dark hills, but of the enemy behind. Zirafi had escaped; and before this he had rejoined his men, who had hung for days on the track of the safari. Now the slave-hunters would be no longer hanging on the trail, far in the rear, but pressing on as fast as they could cover the ground, led by the sheikh, aghast for vengeance. Standing on the ridge, Lyn surveyed the lava-strown plain behind.

Here and there, among the scattered rocks, glittered a spear, and white turban and burnous glistened in the sun.

The slave-hunters were in easy view now, and pressing on fast. Lyn watched the dim figures in the dusty distance; there were no fewer than fifteen or twenty of them in all. Something whizzed by him as he stood, and pinged on a rock near at hand. The report followed more slowly from the distance. The Arabs were getting within rifle range.

"Forward!" said Lyn.

The pursuers were gaining ground. Lyn's face was set as he pushed on with the safari. He was limping, for his foot had not yet wholly recovered from the bastinado of a few days before. He was able to march with his comrades; but they were going at a trot now, and it told severely on the patrol-leader of the Popolaki Scouts.

"They're gaining!" said Pip quietly.

Lyn nodded. "We shall beat them to the hills," he said. "and then, I fancy, we'll teach Zirafi a lesson he won't forget in a hurry. It was rotten luck his getting away from us, but—"

"He's saved us, so far," said Pip. "Those rotters could have caught up with us any time the last three days. They kept off because Zirafi's life was in our hands. But we'll beat them yet."

Lyn limped on. There was no doubt that the Arabs, led by Zirafi, were gaining fast. **THE POPOLAKI.—No. 503.**



of the savage crew who could not keep the pace in the hot sunshine fell behind, that was all. But the safari had to accommodate its pace to the slowest of the party; and that was Lyn, limping on his aching feet.

But the hill-gap was drawing nearer and nearer now.

Whiz! Ping! Ping!

Lead splattered on the rocks round the safari.

The shooting was wild; the bullets did not pass within yards of the Scouts. The distance was as yet too great. But the slave-hunters were fast drawing nearer.

The trot of the safari had slackened to a walk again. Lyn stumbled on resolutely, his teeth set; but he could not cover the ground quickly.

"O Bwana!" said Bobolobo, at last. "It is fitting that I should carry my lord, whose feet are sore."

Lyn heitated.

"Better, old man!" said Pip. "We shall get along faster! Phew, that went close!" he added, as a bullet grazed the brim of his hat.

Lyn stopped.

"Be it as you say, O Bobo!" he said.

In a moment the Kikuyu swung the Roy Scout up to his brawny shoulders, and swung onward with his burden.

The pace quickened now.

Bobo strode on, as if Lyn had been an infant on his shoulders; Pip and Fatty had to break into a trot at intervals to keep pace with the long strides of the Kikuyu. Behind came the dwarf bushman, running, with clattering pots and calabashes.

The steep hills were towering before them now. Bare savage slopes of sun-baked rock led up to the hills, impassable save in the only place where the narrow gap opened.

From the distance the gap looked like a mere slit; but it widened as the labouring safari approached it. But even in the widest place it was not more than a dozen feet. On either side the walls of rock were almost perpendicular, and great boulders and heaps of stones strewed the way. The Scouts panted into the shade of the gap at last, panting with relief to be out of the glare of the sun. The heat in the narrow pass was like that of an oven; but they were sheltered now from the sun glare. The way was still ascending steeply.

"Here we are, at last!" gasped Fatty Page.

The narrow pass wound before them, giving the range of stony hills. Here and there the rocky walls approached one another, leaving a four-foot gap.

Lyn's eyes were keenly about him. From the plain behind came the sound of a shout. The Arabs were near enough now for the safari to hear their voices. They had seen the safari disappear into the gap, and were pressing on fast to corner them there.

"Halt!" said Lyn.

He slipped from the shoulders of the Kikuyu.

There was a glitter in the eyes of the patrol-leader of Popolaki that boded ill to the savage crew that were following on his track.

The Scouts had passed through a narrow neck, not three feet wide, shut in by high perpendicular rocks. Beyond the pass opened out wider.

"We stop here," said Lyn grimly. "We've got a quarter of an hour at least before they get this far. We shall be ready for them."

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"What ho!" grinned Pip.

Fatty Page fanned himself with his hat.

"Good egg!" he gasped. "I think I'd rather escap with all the Arabs in Africa, than take another stop."

It did not take Lyn long to make his dispositions. His keen eye had picked out the strength of the position at a glance.

Pip was posted on a high ledge up the rocky side of the pass, overlooking the narrow bottleneck by which the pursuers had to come. There was room on the ledge for Pip to lie down, with his magazine-rifle before him, well covered from fire from the pass twenty feet below him. Pip grinned over his rifle as he waited. Pip was a good shot, and he did not think that many of the slave-hunters would get past him.

Fatty Page climbed to a jutting rock on the other side of the pass, where a bunch of thorn-bushes growing in a crevice gave him cover.

Meanwhile, Bobolobo and Mpoke rolled heavy boulders into the narrow way, forming a breastwork high enough to stop a rush of the Arabs. The rugged boulders were piled from one side to the other to a height of six feet. Openings were left in the breastwork for rifles, and behind the screen of rocks Lyn waited with the two natives.

By that time the footsteps and voices of the slave-hunters could be clearly heard, close at hand, in the winding defile.

A swarthy ruffian in dusty turban and soiled bournous, appeared in sight, cussing up the narrow pass at a run.

Not a sound greeted him. Pip and Fatty held their fire, though the Arab's life was theirs for the taking till Lyn should give the word. And Lyn made no sign yet.

After the leading Arab more and more of the dusty figures appeared in the narrow way.

A dozen men were in the defile, and the foremost of them had reached the barrier of rocks, and evidently taking it for a natural obstacle, was about to clamber over it when Lyn shouted: "Fire!"

He pulled trigger as he spoke, and the Arab in the lead tumbled back from the breastwork with a bullet through his heart.

The next second Pip and Fatty were shooting from above.

Bullets rained on the slave-hunters blocked in the narrow pass. Wild yells and shrieks rose from them in a deafening and hideous din.

Evidently the crew of slave-hunters had not dreamed that the safari would stop. Their only fear had been that the Scouts might elude them in the recesses of the hills, and they had pushed on breathlessly, hard and fast, urged on by the savage voice of Zirafi ben Said, thirsting for vengeance. The sudden blaze of rifle-fire took the slave-hunters utterly by surprise. Well-aimed bullets tore through turban and bournous, and dusky, yelling desperados reeled right and left.

Some of them rushed on with fierce yells, to clamber over the breastwork of rocks, and Pip and Fatty from above picked them off like partridges. Lyn fired steadily through the loopholes in the rocky screen before him, his fire sweeping the narrow pass.

Bobo and Mpoke crouched by his side, with spear and knife ready if a slave-hunter succeeded in clambering over. Only one desperate ruffian, escaping the raining bullets by a miracle, flung himself across the barrier, and Bobolobo

met him with thrusting spear, and buried him back a dead man.

The voice of Zirafi ben Said was heard, screaming with rage, yelling to his men to press on. But the enraged voice ceased suddenly as Pip's rifle cracked from the ledge, and Zirafi spun over and fell.

For several minutes it was as if pandemonium had been let loose in that narrow pass in the hills. Then one or two of the Arabs vanished, running for their lives, back the way they had come; a couple of wounded men, one of them Zirafi, crawled away. The fight was over.

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### The Land of the Cannibals!

□—————□

"OUR win!" chuckled Pip. He came clambering down from the ledge, perspiring and gasping.

Lyn looked over the rock barrier. His face was grim. It was not a pleasant sight that met his gaze. But he had no pity to waste on the savage ruffians who had fallen. There was many a black village in the Congo country where the natives would sleep in peace because Zirafi ben Said's slave-hunting crew had been wiped out.

"I fancy we're done with Zirafi now," said Lyn grimly.

"I fancy so," chuckled Pip. "I know I got him; he crawled away, but he was hard hit. He's got something to remind him of the Popolaki Scouts, if he pulls through."

"We're done with them," said Fatty. "Not more than two got away without being hit—and I fancy they won't stop running for some time. We're done with the jolly old Arabs."

"Get on!" said Lyn.

The safari resumed its march. All hearts were lighter now. Before them lay the peaks of the Lukuli country, peopled by an untamed, almost unknown, tribe of cannibals, in the heart of the Belgian Congo. But the peril behind them was at an end. Of all Zirafi's numerous troop, probably only six or seven stragglers remained, and the abbe himself was sorely wounded. The Scouts were finished with the slave-hunters.

They marched on slowly, but steadily, through the narrow pass as the sun sank before them towards the distant Atlantic. In the sunset the summit of the pass was traversed, and the way sloped before them down to the Lukuli country.

The pass gradually widened into a valley, the slopes clothed with tropical vegetation. A tiny rivulet, leaping from the hills ran at their feet now, broadening into a stream in the valley below. It was sheer joy to the safari to plunge their burning faces into the water, and drink deep of it.

As the valley widened, the hills falling away on either side, the Scouts had a view of the lower country before them. Red in the sunset Lukuli lay stretched before their eyes.

Beyond the hills was forest and jungle, the river gleaming here and there from the thick green. From where they stood the Scouts could see across the forests, and, far in the distance, in a loop of the river, was a dark mass, on which Lyn fixed his eyes.

"Mpoke!"

The bushman came up to him, and pointed with a black finger to the distant loop of the Lukuli river, far away across the belt of forest and jungle.

"Lukuli, Bwana!" he said.

"That is the town of Mofolongo?" asked Lyn.

"Big town of chief Mofolongo," said Mpoko. "Big, filthy town, sir."

Lyn gazed steadily at the distant spot. The town of Mofolongo was too far off for even the shapes of the houses and streets to be made out. But, allowing for the distance, it was a large town. It was likely that the inhabitants were numbered by hundreds—perhaps by thousands. There, in the chief's hut, his father was a prisoner—awaiting the day of sacrifice.

Lyn's heart beat faster at the thought. At the same time something of the hopelessness of his enterprise came heavily upon his mind. Grant Strong was there a prisoner, and his son had come from far Uganda to save him—

Lyn lowered his glasses, his face sombre.

"Let's have a peep, old bean," said Pip Parker.

Lyn handed the glasses to Pip, who surveyed the Lukuli town curiously, and passed the glasses on to Fatty. Fatty stared at the distant town and shook his head.

"Looks a big proposition, old man," he remarked.

Lyn smiled faintly.

It was madness; he knew that it was madness to dream of rescuing his father from the midst of countless swarms of savages. He did not think of faltering. He did not dream of turning back. But he knew that, unless a miracle helped him, it was only death that he could find in the town of Mofolongo.

The sun dipped behind the forests;

and it was not to be thought of. The Scouts wrapped themselves as warmly as they could in their blankets and slept, taking watch by turns.

But there was no alarm in the night. Zirañ and his crew evidently were done with, and they had no further pursuit to fear from the slave-hunters. And at Lukuli their coming was unknown.

It was not easy for Lyn to sleep. He was thinking of the mission, and the impossible task before him. But he slept at last.



Tall and brown, clad in the tatters of a khaki shirt and shorts, Grant Strong walked in the midst of the guard towards the cannibal king!

to save him from the black chief at whose order thousands of black warriors would grasp their spears. By what miracle could he hope to succeed in that terrible task?

He unslung his field-glasses, and fixed them on the distant town of Mofolongo.

The place rushed into clearness, though still tiny, toy-like, in the distance. The town was laid out in regular streets of huts, all radiating from a common centre, like the spokes of a wheel. In the centre was a larger hut—or rather, a collection of huts joined together. That was evidently the house of the chief Mofolongo, occupying the centre of the central square. And in one of the huts of the chief's wattle palace Grant Strong was a prisoner.

Tiny, midge-like in the distance, Lyn made out moving forms in the street—tiny figures in the main fields that surrounded the town. The latter were women, working in the fields; for the Central African native, like the savage all the world over, disdains labour, and leaves such servile things to his women-folk.

Here and there, among the fields of Indian corn, were large patches of un-cleared jungle.

the brief tropical twilight wrapped the wild land of Lukuli in shadow.

"We camp here," said Lyn.

His face was dark and thoughtful. He had left his home in Uganda to find his father, to save him or to die with him. It was heavy on his mind that he had allowed two members of the Popolaki Patrol to come with him to certain death. True, Pip and Fatty had refused to take "No" for an answer. But now that they were in sight of Lukuli—in sight of death—Lyn was determined that his comrades should go no farther.

The Scouts camped by the stream in the valley. There was no sign of inhabitants anywhere at hand—a wide, uninhabited tract had to be crossed to reach the first villages of the Lukuli. But the Scouts did not venture to light a fire so near to the enemy's country. Mpoko was unable to set up his cooking-pots. There were bananas and plantains and mangoes in the valley to be had for the gathering, and Fobo brought armfuls of fruit into the camp.

Not only for cooking, but for warmth the Scouts missed their camp-fire, for the burning heat of day was followed by the cold of night. But a fire on the hillside might have been seen from

With dawn the Scouts were active again. Fatty Page's face was sombre and serious over breakfast. He was not thinking, like Lyn, of the perils before the safari. A vegetarian diet made Fatty sad and serious, and he was thinking of the feshpots of Egypt.

"Now, you fellows," said Lyn, when breakfast was over, "we part here!"

Pip grinned.

"Think again, old bean," he suggested.

Fatty forgot the feshpots of Egypt for a moment.

"Fathead!" he said, "I jolly well know what you had in your mind. Cut it out."

"My dear chap," said Lyn quietly, "I'm going on—it's my duty to go on; but it isn't yours. You've seen for yourself what we've got to face—it's a bigger proposition even than I thought when I first heard the news that my father's safari had been cut up by the cannibals. I'm going on; but I know, and you know, that there isn't a dog's chance. You've got to turn back here."

"Bats!" said Pip.

"And many of them!" said Fatty.

"Well, look here. I'm your patrol."

leader, and I order you back!" said Lyn.

"I'm deaf on that side of my head," explained Pip cheerfully. "I can only hear orders to go ahead."

"Look here, you are—"

"The Popolaki Patrol never backs out!" said Fatty reproachfully. "You know that's our jolly old motto, Lyn."

"Yes; but—"

"Chuck it!" said Pip decisively.

"But—" persisted Lyn.

"You butt like a billy-goat, old bean! Chuck it! Bobolobo, are you going to leave the Bwana?" asked Pip.

"It is fitting that Bobo should die with his lord," answered the Kikuyu calmly.

"What about you, Mpoko?"

Mpoko grinned with a flash of white teeth.

"This filthy bushman he stick along Bwana!" he said. "This dirty Mpoko lib for die all same Kikuyu."

Pip rose and stretched himself.

"Me for Enkull!" he said.

And he started. Fatty Page grinned and followed. Lyn stood with a troubled and perplexed face.

"O Bwana!" said the Kikuyu. "It is written that we go to death in the town of Mofolongo, where the Bwana M'Kubwa lies in the hands of the black ones. It is fitting that we should die with the Bwana and Bwana M'Kubwa."

And Bobo picked up his shield and his fighting-spears. Lyn glanced after Pip and Fatty, and gave the order to march. And the safari wound on down the hill side into the forests of Lukuli.

### The Mark of Death!

"BRING forth the Mzungu!" said Mofolongo the chief, speaking in the Lukuli language, which is first cousin to the Swahili and other Bantu tongues. "Bring the White One before my eyes!"

Mofolongo the chief sat in the carved ebony chair, in the great square of the town, before his hut—the chair in which generations of the chiefs of Lukuli had sat, to administer justice, to condemn prisoners to death or the torture, or to hold council with lesser chiefs.

A fine figure of a man was Mofolongo, the son of Kimboobwo; six feet high, broad and strong and sinewy, his massive form clothed in spotted leopard-skins. Black as the ace of spades was the face of Mofolongo, and his beard perhaps blacker.

For many days' march along the banks of the Lukuli river to the mighty Congo Mofolongo's rule extended, and all men feared him.

But Mofolongo feared no man—neither the surrounding tribes nor the white Belgians in their forts far away.

Doubtful if he even knew that his realm was included in the vast region which is called the Belgian Congo. And though he had heard of the English, he did not fear them, for their territories lay far from Lukuli.

If there was one man for whom Mofolongo felt a tincture of something like fear, it was M'uki-M'uki, the witch-doctor, and chief of the witch-doctors—for M'uki-M'uki knew the ways of devils and ghosts, and commanded them to obey his will—at least, so the Lukuli believed.

As Mofolongo's command a number of the spearmen who encircled his chair

of state moved off to one of the huts of the palace, and entered it.

Mofolongo, sitting massive and mighty in his drapery of leopard-skins, waited.

Before the chief stood M'uki-M'uki, and he waited, too, with a cruel grin on his wizened face that showed his toothless gums.

Old and shrivelled and wizened and small was the devil-doctor, shrunken in his grass kilt, with his necklaces and armlets and anklets of human bones.

From the hut that the guards had entered, they emerged, bringing with them the Mzungu—the white man.

Tall and brown and lean, clad in the tatters of a khaki shirt and shorts, Grant Strong walked in the midst of the guards—his head erect, his eyes calm and clear.

They brought him before the chair of state, and the eyes of Mofolongo fixed on him.

The hunter of Uganda returned his gaze with unflinching eyes.

"O Mzungu, slayer of many of my people, you who came unbidden into the land of Lukuli," he said, "the day of sacrifices draws near."

"I slew not your people until they attacked me, O Mofolongo!" answered Strong. "I came in peace with my safari to shoot lions, who prey on the little black ones of your village. In your wisdom you should greet me as a friend, O Mofolongo."

The chief's black face twistedardonically.

"It is not good for the Mzungu to come," he said "for where one white man treads, others will follow, till they are as many as the reeds in the waters of the Great River. It is written that the white man who treads the paths of the Lukuli country shall die, and not live!"

"All things are in the hands of God!" said the white man. "Have I asked you for mercy, O Mofolongo?"

"The Mzungu has a great heart," said the chief. "He has the courage of many lions. By his powerful magic he slew many of my soldiers; and it is because of that that his life has been spared, when the other Mzungu were slain. He is spared for the day of the great sacrifice, and his courage will pass into the hearts of my soldiers when they eat him."

Grant Strong did not flinch.

Day by day, night by night, a prisoner among the cannibals, he had waited for his doom; and he did not fear it now that it was at hand.

"Did you need for me to tell me this, O Mofolongo?" he asked, in a tone of indifference.

"I sent for you that M'uki-M'uki may place the mark of sacrifice on your breast, as is the custom," answered the chief. "On the third day after the mark is made you will be with the ghosts, O Mzungu."

Grinning like some evil ape, his necklaces of bones clattering and jingling as he moved, the devil-doctor approached the tall white man.

On either side brawny black hands grasped Grant Strong; and it was well for M'uki-M'uki that they did so, for it was in the mind of the hunter to dash the shrivelled skeleton of a man to death with one blow of his heavy fist.

In the witch-doctor's claw-like hand was a stick of charcoal. With the charcoal he drew the sign of death on the chest of the white man, where the torn khaki shirt left it bare.

"For three days, O Mzungu, you live in the house of the chief," he croaked. "On the third day you are delivered to me M'uki-M'uki, to die in my house in the jungle!"

"On the third day, M'uki-M'uki will come, and you shall follow him to his house in the jungle, where you shall die, O Mzungu!" said Mofolongo. "And there shall be a feast when you are slain. Take him away!"

Grant Strong drew a deep breath. In the hands of the black soldiers Grant Strong was led back to the prison hut. From the door of the guarded hut he looked out at the bright African sunlight—the sunlight that streamed down, though he knew it not, upon Lyn Strong and the Popolaki Scouts, trudging down the jungly hillside into the land of the Lukuli.

THE END.

(Don't miss next week's fine story in this novel series, boys; it's great!)

## 2 CRICKET BATS

AUTOGRAPHED

BY THE  
AUSTRALIAN  
TEST TEAM

offered in  
a simple  
contest.

ALSO

## 6 BATS

SIGNED BY  
W. HAMMOND

TO BE WON!

See next  
week's  
issue!

