

MORE FREE GIFTS FOR READERS THIS WEEK!

The **POPULAR**

2¢

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(New Series).
EVERY TUESDAY.



ANOTHER ALL-LAUGHS STORY OF THE CALCROFT CHUMS!

THE LOST HUNTERS!

By CHARLES HAMILTON.



But he was anxious now. He had come back from the hunting of the man-eater in the Mhiri Forest, expecting to find his father at home. But Grant Strong had not come, and there was no news of him. The fear had been growing in his mind for a long time that some

Lyn smiled faintly. Every day the gun-bearer gave him the same advice.

Bobolobo was faithfully attached to the Bwana M'Kubwa, but Lyn could not help suspecting that the Kikuyu was anxious to exchange the kanzu for the warrior's dress of monkey-skins, the hoe for the fighting spear.

"O Bobo!" answered Lyn. "We cannot go to seek the Bwana M'Kubwa, for it is the order of my father that I await his return."

Grant Strong had gone as guide to a party of big-game shooters, and if the party had disappeared for ever in the dark depths of Africa, it would not be the first time, by many a one, that such a disaster had happened.

That was Grant Strong's dangerous trade, and he took the risks as a matter of course. But it was always on the cards that he might take the risks once too often.

Glady enough Lyn would have trekked into the west in search of his father's safari.



The Sole Survivor!

LYN STRONG climbed to the roof of the banda, and shaded his eyes with his hand as he looked away to the west.

Every day, sometimes twice or thrice in the day, Lyn clambered on that corrugated iron roof to stare away through the brilliant sunshine of Uganda, towards the mysterious heart of Africa.

Beyond the crowded wattle huts of the native town of Masumpwe lay a lava-strewn plain; beyond that, the dark shades of the vast Mhiri Forest.

And beyond the forest, unknown Africa stretching away into the vast unexplored regions of the Congo.

Lyn's boyish face was clouded, as he stood peered rather precariously on the slanting roof. Only the familiar scene that met his eyes every day met them now.

Not a sign of a dusty safari coming up the long white road that ran by the Popolaki River.

Weeks—many weeks—had passed by since Grant Strong, hunter and guide, had gone on safari in the Congo country.

In a month he should have returned home, but twice that period had passed and Lyn's father had not come back, not even a stray porter from the safari had reappeared in the streets of Masumpwe.

Lyn was accustomed to his father's long absences. He had a boy's life of his own at the bungalow by the Popolaki River.

There was the shamba to be cultivated and kept in order, there were fruits and vegetables to be taken to the market at Masumpwe for sale, and there were his duties as patrol-leader of the Popolaki Patrol.

disaster had happened to the safari, and that his father had vanished for ever in the unknown parts of the Congo country. "Bwana!"

Lyn looked down. Bobolobo, the Kikuyu, was weeding in the shamba.

Bobo had discarded the gorgous dress of monkey-skins that he wore on safari; his shield and his fighting-spears were stacked in the banda. He wore the cotton kanzu of the civilised native when he was at home, and his reluctant brown hands wielded the hoe instead of the spear.

"Lord, your eyes do not see the Bwana M'Kubwa!" asked Bobo, looking up at the boy on the roof.

Lyn shook his head. In the language of the Kikuyu, Lyn was the Bwana, the Lord, and his father was the Bwana M'Kubwa, the elder Lord.

"Lord," said Bobo persuasively, "the Bwana M'Kubwa is lost in the forests of the Great River, and it is fitting that the Bwana and Bobolobo should seek him.



But it was against his father's orders, and he could not go; not, at all events, unless he received some news of disaster.

He shook his head again. Bobolobo returned to his hoeing. From the bungalow came a little figure, Mpoko, the bushman. He came across towards the banda.

Mpoko had come to Masumpwe with Lyn, and he had been a fixture at the bungalow by the river, since Lyn had saved him from the Arab slave-traders.

"O Bwana!" said Mpoko. Lyn Strong glanced down again, and smiled. The little bushman, hardly over

Three Boys Brave the Terrible Congo Jungle!

four feet high though a full-grown man, wore a white cotton kanzu like Bobo, and a scarlet fez that he had bought in the Indian bazaar at Masumpwa.

"What is it, Mpoko?" asked Lyn.
"Plenty dirty splendid! filthy chop, Bwana!" said Mpoko.

In his own Wambuti language, or in Swahili, Mpoko was quite eloquent. But his English was strange and exotic.

"Palms! chop, Bwana!" said Mpoko.
"Fine dirty filthy chop, all ready for Bwana."

Lyn laughed.
"Right-ho," he answered.

He was about to descend from the roof of the banda, but he gave one more glance along the white road that uncurled like a ribbon before his eyes.

"My hat!" he exclaimed suddenly.
A new figure appeared on the road, that of a tired and dusty native who plodded on towards the bungalow, drooping with fatigue.

Far off as the man was, Lyn recognized him.

"Jumba!" he exclaimed.
It was one of the porters that had gone with Grant Strong's safari.

Lyn felt a contraction at his heart.
The porter was alone; there was no sign of his companions, no sign of his master.

Lyn made a flying leap from the roof of the banda, and landed in the chamba. He crossed the chamba to the gate at a rapid run, heedless of flower-beds and vegetable-beds.

He tore out into the road towards the slow figure of the porter.

He reached him, panting for breath, and Jumba came to a halt. He stood unsteadily, evidently worn out with fatigue.

Lyn caught his shoulder in his anxiety and excitement.

"Where is your master, Jumba?" he asked, speaking in Swahili, a language that came as easily to his lips as his own.

"O Bwana," said the porter fatherly. "The safari is lost, and I Jumba alone have returned to tell."

Lyn almost staggered.

The sight of Jumba, crawling wearily and alone up the long white road, had crystallized the fear that had long been in his heart.

"My father!" he panted. "Tell me!"
"The safari is lost!" repeated Jumba.

"The porters are slain by the Black Ones of the Great River; and the Mrungu also are slain. The Bwana M'Kubwa is a prisoner of the Black Ones; and I, Jumba, alone have escaped."

"My father—a prisoner?"
Lyn felt his heart beat again.

"Where did this happen, Jumba?"
"In the country of the Great River, many days journey!" said the porter.

"In the country of the Chief Mofolongo. All are slain excepting the Bwana M'Kubwa; and the Chief Mofolongo has spared his life because of the great magic; but he is a captive in the house of the Black Ones, and on the day of sacrifice he will die like the other Mrungu."

Lyn stood still and quiet for a moment.

The safari was lost; the game-hunters and the black porters were slain. But his father lived—a prisoner in the hands of the black cannibals of the Congo.

"Oh Jumba!" said Lyn at last. "Go you to the house; and you shall have food and drink and rest, and many

rupees for bringing me this news of the Bwana M'Kubwa."

He turned, and ran back to the bungalow, followed more slowly by the limping native.

Lyn burst like a tornado into the shamba.

"Bobo!" he shouted.
"Na'am, Bwana!" said the Kikuyu.

"Yes, lord!"
"Get ready for the trail! We start in an hour—to seek my father! We trek to the Congo!"

The Kikuyu's eyes danced.
"O Bwana, my ears hear you!" he said.

Mpoko gave an anxious squeak.
"Me too!" he exclaimed. "Me Mpoko with Bwana! Me carry filthy cooking-pots—we make dirty chop for Bwana."

"You too, Mpoko!" said Lyn.
And he ran into the house, to make his preparations for the safari.

Loyal Comrades!

"WHAT the thump—" exclaimed Pip Parker.

Pip jumped off his pony at the garden gate, and came into the chamba, and stared at Bobo.

Bobo was a changed Bobo. No longer were his brawny limbs encased in the cotton kanzu. Bobo was clad in the black-and-white monkey-skin, the dress that was the pride of his heart. On his left arm was the shield of rhinoceros hide; in his right hand two throwing-spears; in his right his long spear, and Bobo was brandishing the spear, the steel tip flashing in the sunlight. The brows face of the Kikuyu was alight with excitement.

"What's this game, Bobo?" demanded Pip.

The Kikuyu ceased to brandish the spear, and turned round, and gave Dr. Parker's son a rather sheepish look.

"Lord, I follow the Bwana to the Congo!" he said.

"Oh, my hat! Where's the Bwana?"
"The Bwana prepares for the safari," Bobo pointed to the bungalow.

Pip went up the path to the house, between the rows of eucalyptus trees.

"Lyn, old bean!" he shouted.
"Trot in, Pip!" called back Lyn.

Lyn Strong was busy. He was packing for the safari; and as Pip came in, his hands were full of cartridges. He gave Pip a nod.

"I looked in," said Pip. "They're saying in Masumpwa that a Baganda porter has got back from your father's safari."

"I've seen him," answered Lyn. "It was Jumba. The safari has been cut up on the Congo, and my father is a prisoner among the Lukuli."

"And you're going—"
"At once!"
Pip whistled.

"This is a job for the Scouts," he said. "You're going to call up the patrol, Lyn."

Lyn shook his head.
"No; the Popolaki Patrol can't go far afield, Pip; and—"

"And they wouldn't be likely to come back if they did!"

"That's it! I'm bound to go—but I couldn't take the fellows into the Lukuli country. I fancy their people would have something to say about it, too!" said Lyn, with a faint smile.

"Look here, Lyn, you're not going on your own. Ham and Fatty and Steepools would all be glad to join up."

"I'm not going to ask them. It wouldn't be cricket."

"Look here, at least—"
"Nothing doing, Pip! I'm going on this safari with Bobo and Mpoko. We've got three hundred miles to trek; and we shall be away for weeks, even if we have luck and don't leave our bones in Mofolongo's town. This isn't a job for the Scouts."

"Well! jolly well see about that," said Pip. "When are you starting?"

"Half an hour! Bobo's got into his war-paint, and Mpoko is packing food. I've got these things to put together."

Pip Parker did not stop to answer. He hurried out of the house, ran through the shamba to the gate, and threw himself on his pony.

The clatter of boots rang back from the road.

Lyn smiled; and went on with his packing.

The patrol-leader of the Popolaki Patrol would have been glad enough to take his comrades along with him, on that perilous expedition into the heart of unknown Africa; more than glad. But though he did not hesitate a moment on his own account, he knew that all the chances were that he would never return from the country of the cannibal Lukuli of the Congo; and he had no right to drag his comrades into such fearful peril.

He had no doubt that Pip had gone to ask his father for leave to join the safari; but he had no expectation that Dr. Parker would grant permission.

He was not losing a moment. Mpoko was soon ready with his pack of stores and his copper cooking-pot; Bobo was ready; and the bungalow was locked up.

Lyn was glad to get started.

He avoided the road through Masumpwa, and followed a path that led direct to the Mhiri Forest.

Lyn swung steadily, almost cheerily, on his way.

Grant Strong was still living, a prisoner in the hands of a cannibal chief; and Lyn was determined either to save him, or to perish under the spears of the Lukuli.

The sun was dipping towards the hills when Lyn entered the dusky shades of the Mhiri Forest.

By a narrow path, the safari tramped on, deeper and deeper into the forest.

Masumpwa, and the plantations and shambas on the Popolaki river, were far behind now.

As the shadows of falling night came more thickly, the howl of wild beasts came from the jungle on either side of the track, unheeded by Lyn and his two followers.

A hyena crossed their path, glared at them for a moment with bright, greenish eyes, and plunged into the thickets again as Bobo made a thrust with his spear.

Not till long after darkness had fallen did Lyn give the word to stop.

In a little clearing in the dense forest the safari camped; and Mpoko lighted the camp-fire, to cook the supper, and to scare away prowling beasts with the flames.

The little bushman grinned over the cooking-pot. Mpoko was as proud of his cooking as Bobo of his monkey-skin and his fighting-spears.

"Plenty good filthy chop, Bwana," said Mpoko.

Lyn smiled.

"Plenty good!" repeated Mpoko.
"Long time before, this Mpoko cook for Mrungu, and Mrungu he say, this Mpoko splendid dirty old cook."

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From the silence of the forest came a dull, echoing sound.

Lyn bent his head to listen.

"That, that, thud!"

"What is that, Bobo?" asked Lyn.

"O Bwana, it is the footstep of a swift horse!" said the Kikuyu. "It is the tread of a horse that follows from Masumpwe."

Lyn stepped away from the fire, and stood looking back along the dark jungle path.

The sound of the horse's hoofs grew clearer and clearer, echoing in the deep silence of the forest. He could hear the jangle of harness now.

Clatter, clatter, clatter!

From the darkness of the narrow path a horseman dashed up into the circle of light from the fire, and drew rein.

"Pip!" exclaimed Lyn, as the doctor's son dismounted.

Another horseman came thudding up from the darkness. Fatty Page jumped off his horse.

"Here we are again!" he grinned.

"You silly ass, Lyn!" exclaimed Pip. "We'd never have found you but for the light of the fire."

"But what—"

"We're coming," explained Pip. "I've asked my governor, and Fatty's asked his, and they think it's up to us. I galloped round to tell the fellows; but Saccopole's away, and Scout's wanted on the coffee plantation, and can't come. But we're coming—ain't we, Fatty!"

"You bet!" said Fatty.

"But—" said Lyn dubiously.

"Oh, out it out!" said Pip. "Think we're going to let you fool around the cannibals on your own? Not likely!"

Fatty Page gave an appreciative sniff, his eyes on the cooking-pot.

"That smells good," he said. "Mpoko's some cook, Lyn. It was a lucky day when you picked up Little Tich."

"Look here, you fellows—" said Lyn gravely.

"The horses will find their way home," said Pip. "We had to ride to catch you up, you fathead."

He took his peck from his pony, turned him round, and, with a smart smack, sent him galloping off back along the jungle path. Fatty Page followed his example.

"That settles it," said Pip cheerfully. "What?"

"We're going into fearful danger," said Lyn. "I don't feel that I ought to let you come."

"How are you going to stop us?" grinned Pip. "I'll jolly well punch your nose if you try. I know that."

Lyn laughed.

"Well, a wildfowl man must have his way, I suppose," he said. "I'm jolly glad to have you, of course."

"That's better."

"How long is that grub going to be, Mpoko?" asked Fatty Page.

"Plenty shty chop all ready, sar," answered the bushman.

And the Popolaki Scouts sat down round the camp-fire to supper.

Many days and nights had passed since the Scouts had left Masumpwe behind.

The Scouts were far from the country they knew. Once the Uganda border was left behind they had plunged into the unknown. The Lukull country was not even marked on a map, though it was an extensive territory. The lands of many tribes had to be crossed before the country of the Chief Mofolongo was reached. Generally the Scouts found the natives friendly or indifferent, though on two or three occasions they had needed their rifles to ensure a safe passage.

Mpoko was the guide now. Mpoko was a native of the Congo country, and he knew where the chief town of Mofolongo lay on a branch of the Great River.

Day by day the little safari marched on, by shadowy forest or sickly jungle, wading shallow streams, swimming deep rivers, clambering over lava-strewn hills.

Now the safari was following a narrow path, shut in on either side by rank walls of elephant grass, so narrow that the grass on either side brushed them as they passed.

The grass, ten or twelve feet high, almost met over their heads, leaving only a strip of burning, blue sky.

Mvrids of insects buzzed and hummed in the heat. But the Popolaki Scouts were hardened to mosquitoes.

Lyn had gone ahead to pick out a camp for noonday. More slowly the safari tramped on behind.

"Hot," repeated Fatty.

"You'll lose some of your weight at this rate, old man," said Pip.

"Think so?" asked Fatty.

"Ret on it! You're lost nearly a ton already."

"Fathead!"

Pip chuckled. Pip was small and thin, which was rather a sore point with him; but it made marching easier. Fatty was the best customer at his father's store in Masumpwe, and he had more weight to carry than was comfortable on safari.

"Like me to roll you stone, old bean?" asked Pip.

Smack!

Pip jumped.

"You chump! What are you up to?" he yelled.

"Sorry!" said Fatty affably. "I took you for a mosquito."

Pip Parker came to a halt, and laid down his rifle. He gave his plump comrade a glare of wrath.

"Where will you have it?" he demanded.

"My dear old chap, mustn't hit below the belt!" said Fatty.

"Who's going to hit below the belt, sar?"

"Well you can't reach over it, you know."

That was too much for Pip. He demonstrated at once that he could hit above the belt by landing a small but extremely hard fist on Fatty Page's plump chin.

"Ow!" gasped Fatty.

The next moment Fatty made a rush at him. He grasped the diminutive Pip, and they crashed into the elephant grass. The tall stalks swayed and parted under their weight, and they rolled in the jungle beside the path.

At that moment there was a shrill, startled yell. The two Scouts, rolling into the grass, had crashed on a figure that was crouching there—the figure of a native in a grass loincloth, with a spear clutched in his black hand.

"Great Scott!" panted

"Look out!" gasped Pip.

The Scouts released one another, the dispute instantly forgotten. They leaped up, starting with startled eyes at the man they had inadvertently knocked over, and who lay sprawling and gasping.

They had left their rifles in the bush-path. But Pip was swift to act; he sprang on the sprawling native, tore the spear from his hand, and presented the point to the bare black chest.

The native, about to spring up, sank back again as the sharp point of the spear cut his black skin; and he lay on his elbow, his dark, rolling eyes gazing up at the Boy Scout.

"Keep there, you blighter!" panted Pip. "Fatty, the rifles—quick; the jungle may be full of them!"

Fatty leaped for the rifles. Bobolobo reached the spot with a spring, and his spear flashed over the fallen man.

"Hold on, Bobo!" exclaimed Pip. "Don't kill him! Hold on, I tell you!"

Bobolobo reluctantly stayed the thrust.

"Is he a Lukull, Bobo?" asked Pip.

Bobolobo shook his head.

"We are yet far from the Lukull country, master. This is a man from the north country—from the land of the Nile. He is Dinka."

Pip whistled.

"What is he doing here, then? He seems to be alone! He was spying on us. Ask him what he does here, Bobo."

"I will speak to the son of a jackal," said Bobo, and he addressed the crouching native in Swahili, receiving only a sullen stare in reply.

"Mpoko, try him in your lingo," said Pip.

The little bushman came forward. He spoke to the native in Wambuli; but received only the same sullen stare. "He knows not the tongue, lord," said Bobo.

Mpoko grinned, and took the long bush-knife from his girdle. He knelt beside the native, and placed the razor-like edge to the black throat. His eyes glistened fiercely down at the Dinka.

"Mo makum speak," said Mpoko. And, with a steady hand, he pressed the sharp blade into the black skin.

The Dinka began to speak volubly.

Fatty and Pip, rifle in hand, were keeping a keen look-out. But there was no sign of other enemies at hand.

A change came over the black face of Mpoko. His eyes rolled and glistened. What the Dinka was saying in a strange tongue seemed to affront the bushman strangely.

"What does he say Mpoko?" exclaimed Pip impatiently.

Mpoko showed his flashing white teeth.

"He say he belong to Ziraf ben Said, the slave-trader! Ziraf is here with many men."

"Oh, crumbs!" muttered Pip.

"What rotten luck to run into that gang! Ziraf hasn't forgotten how we thrashed him that day in the Mbiti forest."

"He say Ziraf know we come, and sent out to watch!" said Mpoko. "He sent out many men, and give order to kill!"

"Lord," said Bobo. "It is fitting that this man should die."

Pip shook his head.

"Bind his hands, Bobo, and let's get on and rejoin Lyn. If Lyn falls into the hands of Ziraf—" Pip turned pale at the thought.

"Look out!" gasped Fatty. The Dinka had been watching for a

In the Jungle!

"HOT!" said Fatty Page, mopping his perspiring brow.

The heat was intense in the

tropical jungle.

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chance. With a sudden spring, with the swiftness of lightning, he leaped to his feet and sprang away into the jungle.

Swift as he was, Bobo was as swift. Like a flash of light his spear flew through the air. There was a choking cry, and the Dinka fell forward on his face.

He did not stir again. Pip shuddered. "Come!" he said.

Pip and Fatty hurried up the bush-path with Mpoko. The Kikuyu wiped his spear on the grass and followed. From the distance, far ahead in the jungle, came the sudden crack of a rifle.

"Lyn!" breathed Pip. Bobo shot ahead, running like a deer.

in Arabic, and they made a move towards Lyn.

The rifle leaped to Lyn's shoulder. The boy pulled trigger insistently, and the nearest ruffian rolled over at his feet.

The next instant he was in the grasp of the rest, and borne to the ground. He struggled fiercely.

But his struggles were hopeless. The three brawny ruffians pinned him to the

himself, a long cry of pain broke from Lyn.

And as it sounded, like music in the savage ears of Zirañ, a figure in black-and-white monkey-skins appeared at the opening of the jungle path.

Bobolobo gave one look, and leaped on the scene.

His spear flashed in the sunlight, and was driven deep into the neck of the ruffian who held the cane.



The slave-dealer made a sign and the flogging started. Lash, lash, lash! The cane rose and fell on Lyn Strong's bare back.

With wet faces and beating hearts the others tore after him.

Zirañ's Vengeance!

"BISMILLAH! We meet again, Feringhoo!"

Zirañ ben Said, the Arab slave-trader, grinned as he spoke. Lyn Strong gripped his rifle.

Lyn had pitched on a spot for camping on the edge of the jungle, where a great muhugu-tree grew by the margin of a shallow creek. He had thrown himself down to rest for a few minutes in the shade of the tree, when the Arab stepped from behind a mass of thorny bushes.

Zirañ was not alone; there were four of his men with him—savage, brown-faced ruffians, half Arab and half negro.

Lyn was on his feet in a twinkling, rifle in hand. He stared blankly at the slave-trader. Of all the enemies he looked for in the heart of Africa, Zirañ was the least expected. He had supposed that the slave-trader was far away in the Behr-el-Gazelle by that time. It was weeks since they had met in the Mbiri Forest, when the Popolaki Patrol had released the string of slaves and given Zirañ twenty blows of the kourbakh.

Zirañ rapped out an order to his men

ground; his arms were dragged behind him, and his wrists bound together with a strip of linen.

Then he was dragged to his feet.

"Dog of a kafir!" said Zirañ, between his teeth. "Unhollower, and the son of unbelievers! For days I have known that you were in this country—my spies have watched you. Dog! From yonder bush I watched you come, and had I intended that you should die quickly, you would have fallen to my pistol! But you have beaten me like a dog, and for that you shall die slowly. You shall die like a slave under the bastinado!"

Lyn set his teeth hard.

Zirañ spoke to his men in Arabic, and the boy was stretched on the ground on his face. A foot planted on his back pinned him there; and one of the ruffians drew off his boots. Another was cutting a flexible cane in the thicket. His feet were drawn up on either side of a stick planted in the ground, and tied, so that the bare soles were turned upward. For the torture of the bastinado is beating on the soles of the feet—one of the most savage forms of punishment known to the cruel East.

Zirañ watched, with the eyes of an exulting demon

He made a sign to the man with the cane, and the blows began to fall.

Lash, lash, lash!

The Arab made a furious gesture, and the blows fell faster. In spite of

With a gasping cry the man reeled and fell beside Lyn, drenching the grass with his blood.

"Bismillah!" gasped Zirañ.

Like a tiger, Bobolobo swung round at the others. His spear, dripping red, was driven into the throat of the nearest ruffian; and the third man leaped back, panting with fear, and striving to parry the spear with the barrel of a rifle.

Zirañ grasped a long-barrelled pistol from his girdle, his savage face working with fury. But from the jungle path, into the clearing round the muhugu-tree, came Fatty Page and Pip, and close behind them Mooko. Zirañ gave them one wild glance, turned, and fled into the bush.

Fatty Page and Pip fired after him together; but the slave-trader was already in cover, and running for his life. A yell of rage answered the shots, and Zirañ ben Said was gone.

Fatty and Pip ran to Lyn. Bobolobo had already accounted for his enemy; the slaver dropped on the earth, under the Kikuyu's spear, and twice again Bobolobo drove the broad blade home. Mooko, passing him, vanished into the bush in pursuit of Zirañ.

"Lyn, old man!" panted Fatty.

"Oh, Lyn, old man!" said Pip, with a break in his voice.

In a few seconds Lyn was released from his bonds. He sat up, his back

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THE DEATH THORNS!

(Continued from page 22.)

expect. I merely lifted the thing up and glanced into it, but I remembered afterwards that it was unusually heavy. If you look in there somewhere at the bottom I fancy you'll find that idol."

Drake plunged his hand in and rummaged round.

"Got it!" he said ironically, and dragged into light a particularly hideous idol, apparently made of dirty brass, but really of solid gold, beautifully modelled, even to the snakes twining round the base—and the base had a false covering.

Drake pulled it off with some difficulty, and poured out pretty well a big cupful of large, dull-looking, soapy-feeling stones.

"Diamonds!" said Ferrers Locke, glancing at them. "And beauties at that. Put 'em back and slip the thing into your coat pocket. They're Mrs. Gilbert's property, and, incidentally, they're what Granger is going to hang for."

A heavy step was heard on the stairs, and a policeman, in a heavy dripping cape, came in, bullseye in hand.

"What's all this?" he said. "Taxi waiting outside unattended and lights going here. Hello! And a man stretched out and roped."

He took a step back and drew his truncheon as he caught sight of the revolver on the floor.

"Don't be a fool!" snapped Ferrers Locke angrily. "Man, if you want promotion and all the rest of it—it's lying there. That man is Granger, who, with his confederate, who is now dead, murdered Mr. Gilbert and his brother. We've just trawled him down here."

"If you don't believe me—my name is Locke, Ferrers Locke—ring up the Yard and they'll soon tell you. Mean while, you'd better send for assistance, and get this man away and safely locked up!"

"I'm sorry, sir, but—"

"Cut it out!" said Locke. "I'm dog tired and want to go home. There's my address. See me in the morning. Come on, Baxter, drive us home, and we'll dig you out a bit of amber and something to smoke and drink."

Larkin came up next morning, and after having had breakfast was sent off to the authorities to give his evidence, the richer by a five-pound note.

A day or two later Locke called on Mrs. Charles Gilbert at Hampstead and offered her the idol and its contents, but she absolutely refused to touch either.

"They would simply haunt me," she said pathetically. "I am well off as it is, and I couldn't bear them near me. Please take them from me as a debt of gratitude."

"You risked your life and those of your friends. You found my husband's murderers. I am sure he didn't know the value of the thing, and was merely taking it home as a curio to show some of his friends."

"So keep it, please, keep it—and those stretched diamonds, too! I feel personally that I am still in your debt."

Ferrers Locke, being something of a philosopher, kept it—at least, he kept the idol and turned the diamonds into cash.

THE END.

(Another rattling Tee-Thriller in next week's issue. Don't miss "THE WHITE SNAKE," a story of detective adventure in India.)

THE LOST HUNTERS!

(Continued from page 11.)

to the mulgum, his face white and drawn. But he contrived to smile at his anxious comrades.

"All serene!" he gasped. "You fellows came in time! They were giving me the bastinado—my hat! It hurts!" He shivered with pain. A dozen blows had fallen on the soles of his feet, and already they were swelling. "By gum! If I meet that scoundrel Zirafi again—"

Mpoko came back from the bush, with savage disappointment in his face; Zirafi had escaped.

"We've got to get on," said Lym. "Zirafi may have a crowd with him. He would not be slave-raiding in this country without a strong force. We've got to beat it." He made an effort to rise, but sank back again with a gasp of pain. He could not stand on his swollen feet.

"O Bwan!" said Bobolobo. "I will carry my lord on my back, as I carried him when he was a m'toto m'changa."

Lym grunted.

"Go it, then, Bobo!" he said.

The young Kikuyu lifted Lym to his back, as if the sturdy Scout had still been a m'toto m'changa—a little child. The safari plunged across the shallow creek, and into the dark shades of the forest beyond; and, as they went, they listened for the sounds of pursuit, which they knew could not be long in coming.

THE END.

What happens to the Poplar Patrol next week? See "THE SLAVE HUNTERS OF THE CONGO!" next week!

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