

(WRITTEN FOR THE TRUE WITNESS.)

A LOWLY MARTYR.

By Miss Emma C. Street.

Colonel Chisholm was angry. Very angry. He had just come in from parade and found that his cash box had been broken open and fifty rupees abstracted therefrom.

Like other hot-tempered, good-hearted Englishmen, the Colonel did not listen to reason when he was angry, and that is how it happened that he had at once accused his new servant of being the thief, although his friend, Major Meredith, who was present, had urged upon him the propriety of making an investigation first.

"I tell you, Meredith," he had said hotly, "there is no one to take that money but that rascally bearer. My English servant is above suspicion, and the chuprassie, Dowla has been in my service for three years, and I have never lost anything before. The other servants were all dismissed when Mrs. Chisholm went to Simla."

"Perhaps some of them who knew your habits paid a surreptitious visit here while you were out this morning," suggested the major.

"Bosh!" was the testy reply. "That fellow Laltah is the thief, and all I am sorry for is that I have no proof. I have dismissed him, and that's all I can do, unfortunately."

"And spoiled his chance of getting another situation in Panigunge," the major reminded him.

"Ah, yes! I had forgotten that. But there, the money is not worth all the fuss we've had about it. What is the latest news?"

Major Meredith's brow clouded as he answered in a troubled tone: "Not good news, Colonel, by any means. The troops in Dum-Dum have revolted. I did not like to say anything on parade lest the men should get wind of it, though we cannot keep it from them very long."

"The rascals!" ejaculated the Colonel wrathfully. "I wish I had to deal with them."

"Do you think our own men are to be trusted?"

"Eh? Why, my dear fellow, you must be dreaming to doubt the Panigunge Irregulars. I'd stake my life on my men."

"You take a more optimistic view of them than I do, then," said Major Meredith bluntly. "I would not trust a man-jack amongst them."

"Tut tut, man; what an opinion you must have of them. It's that very want of confidence that leads them into mutiny; take my word for it."

"Witness Dum-Dum," said the major quietly. "Where they shot down their officers in cold blood when they ventured amongst them."

"They didn't know how to deal with their men," was the obstinate reply. "You don't catch my men mutinying."

"Perhaps not. But I'm glad Mrs. Meredith and my wife are safe in Simla. I wish there were no European women in Panigunge just now."

"What a raven you are," cried the colonel, good humoredly. "Come over to the mess and see if there is any more news, and we might have a game of billiards at the same time."

In the meantime the native servant, who had been accused of the theft of the colonel's money, had made his way out of the bungalow and into a small hut at the back, whence he presently emerged, bearing his worldly possessions in a small bundle. He was a nice looking young fellow, rather more muscular than the general run of Hindoos, and scarcely darker in skin than many Italians are. As he passed slowly through the compound on his way to the gate, a native in livery who had been squatting in the verandah, rose to his feet and hailed him. "Are you going away, Laltah?" he asked, as though in astonishment; but there was an ill-concealed note of exultation in his voice.

Laltah approached and looked him searchingly in the face. "Yes," he said quietly. "I am leaving, and you know what for. The colonel sahib says I am a thief; but you know I am a Christian, Dowla Dass, and no thief. Some day God will judge between me and thee. I leave my cause in His hands."

So saying, he turned and walked away without once looking back; had he done so he would have seen the native in livery looking after his departing form with a grin of triumph expanding his villainous face.

A week later, Colonel Chisholm was confined to his room with a broken leg, the result of a fall from his horse; and the command of his regiment had devolved upon Major Meredith. Late one evening the major entered the invalid's room with a grave face, and signing to the native Dowla, to withdraw, took a letter from his pocket and laid it in the colonel's hand, at the same time asking, "What do you think of that?"

The colonel read the paper through once and then began to re-peruse it, his face gradually growing red with anger. The communication bore no signature, but it purported to be from a Christian Sepoy and was to the effect that a mutiny was brewing among the Panigunge Irregulars, and it ended with a warning to both the colonel and the major that their lives would be the first attempted on the outbreak. The writer further stated that fear of his comrades vengeance alone prevented his signing his name.

"That's a precious production, isn't it?" demanded the colonel, when he had finished reading, handing the letter to Major Meredith, with a contemptuous gesture.

"In my opinion it bears an air of truth," answered the other gravely.

The colonel grew still redder. "Do you mean to tell me that you place any reliance upon an anonymous letter?" he demanded hotly. "Why, man, the very fact that the writer dared not put his name to it is proof sufficient to me that his tale is false."

"But consider, colonel," urged the other earnestly. "This man, a Christian in the midst of fanatical Brahmims would naturally be an object of suspicion if a mutiny were on foot; and if it transpired that their plans were defeated through his agency, his life would not be worth a moment's purchase. I see no reason for the letter unless the information contained in it is true. And another thing—a Christian would naturally be the one who would warn us of such a design."

"Now look here Meredith," cried Colonel Chisholm, irritably, "I have no faith in those canting converts. There is Bingham, our new chaplain, and Father Ambrose of the Catholic chapel, and the pair of them are running a race to see who will make the largest number of proselytes among the niggers. The consequence is that we have a lot of canting humbugs around us who unite all the vice of civilization and paganism without any of their virtues. As a case in point, there was that fellow Laltah whom I discharged last week for theft. He came to me with a recommendation from Father Ambrose."

"You have not yet proved that he was the thief," answered the major, making his point dexterously.

"Pshaw! No criminal invites a witness to look on while he commits his crime. I think the missionaries would do better to attend to the black sheep of their own flocks and leave the niggers alone."

Major Meredith thought differently; but as that was not the question he had come to discuss he changed the subject by asking "do you intend to take any steps or authorise me to take any?"

"On account of that letter? certainly not. I have the utmost confidence in my men," and the colonel's face assumed the most obstinate expression.

Major Meredith knew his superior officer too well to attempt any further argument with him; he merely said with a sigh as he rose to go, "dissatisfaction seems to be spreading rapidly among the native soldiery all over Bengal. It is rumoured that there has been an outbreak in Herit; but I cannot vouch for the truth of the report."

"Depend upon it, half those things are fabrications and the other half exaggerations," said the colonel confidently. "the Sepoys would never dare to revolt in earnest."

"I trust not," replied the major soberly, adding under his breath, "for if they do they'll overwhelm us by sheer force of numbers."

"Not they?" asserted the other conclusively, in answer to the spoken words. "So you are going eh? Well, good night, and don't dream of mutineers. Haha," and the colonel laughed cheerfully at the idea.

Major Meredith departed with his mind filled with forebodings. He had not been blind to the fact that the men of the regiment had of late shown a sullenness and delay in obeying orders that argued ill for the spirit prevailing among them. He has drawn the attention of the colonel to it, only to be

laughed at. But for all that he did not allow himself to be cheated into a false security and his first act upon reaching his bungalow was to examine and load a pair of pistols and place his sword within reach as had been his nightly custom for some time past. His last waking thought that night was, "thank God Annie is safe in Simla if anything does happen."

Shortly after the major's departure, Colonel Chisholm's broken leg began to throb painfully and when his English servant, Roberts, came in to help him into bed he declared his intention of passing the night seated in his armchair with the injured limb resting upon a footstool. "Leave me a good lamp and a couple of books, Roberts," he ordered. "This confounded leg is not going to let me sleep I know, so there is no use in going to bed. Get me some lemonade and a cigar too, and leave the door open so that I can wake that punkah wallah if he goes to sleep; Phew! how hot it is. That is all, thanks. You may go to bed yourself now, Good night."

"Good night, sir," Roberts silently withdrew a moment later, and the colonel lit his cigar (in defiance of his physician's orders) took up a book, and began to read.

After a while the silence and the cool air produced by the waving punkah overhead had their effect. The colonel's head sank against the cushioned chair, the book slipped from his hand, and the extinguished cigar fell to the floor. The Colonel slept.

How long he did so he could never afterwards tell, but all at once he awoke and started up in his chair, every sense as keenly alive as though he had never been asleep at all. The room was as still as the grave save for the faint tick of his watch on the table beside him, and he was bathed in perspiration. Glancing up at the punkah, he saw that it had ceased to wave to and fro; and when his eyes naturally sought the cause he perceived that the punkah wallah had disappeared from the dimly lit hall outside the door.

"The rascal must have gone for a drink of water," he told himself half aloud; but there was an indefinable doubt, and a vague sense of impending evil beneath the words that he had never felt before. To be told of the possibility of danger in sunny daylight with friends all around, and to have the same danger suggested to us in the dead of night when we are alone, are two different things; and for the first time the idea of distrusting his men now began to appeal to Colonel Chisholm, though he did not encourage it.

"I must be growing feverish," he muttered irritably, annoyed at the uneasiness he could not rid himself of. "Where the deuce is that rascal of a punkah wallah! I shall be smothered if he stays away much longer."

There was a bell rope close at hand, but the Colonel, who was good hearted despite his faults, hesitated to disturb his servant in the middle of the night; so he contented himself with turning a news paper into a fan and fanning himself



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vigorously, anathematizing the delinquent punkah wallah at the same time. But in spite of those resolute proceedings, he could not banish the vague presentiment of danger that had seized upon him. Quite absurdly, as it seemed to him, the disappearance of his servant associated itself in his mind with the old adage, "Rats desert a sinking ship," and it recurred to him again and again with a persistence that was exasperating to one of his temperament. The very stillness of his surroundings seemed to isolate him from all sense of human companionship, though by stretching out his hand he could have summoned his household in a moment. But he was too obstinate to do that for what he considered a fancy, and he continued to fan himself and fume over his helplessness for some time.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

FATHER HAMON'S DRAMA.

Produced by Students in New Brunswick College.

Father Hamon, of the Society of Jesus, in this city, and who last Sunday preached a powerful sermon against theatre-going, is the author of a play entitled *Exil et Patrie*. It was produced on Thanksgiving day at Memramcook, N.B., by the students of St. Joseph College there. It is of singular interest, not only to the Acadians of the Maritime Provinces, but to their fellow-religionists, the French-Canadians of Upper Canada. The drama was written in order to put plainly before the eyes of the young French-Canadians and Acadians the evils of emigration to the United States. An Americanized Canadian comes into a prosperous French-Canadian village and persuades one of the habitants to sell his farm and cross the border. The expatriated Canadian and his family secure employment in a factory and make a few dollars in the beginning. In less than a year one of his sons turns his back on his old religion and eschews his mother tongue. The mother dies of chagrin, the eldest daughter is losing her health by overwork and the stifling air of the smoky and dusty factory; another of the sons gets shot while trying to go to work during a strike, and, finally, the father, having invested the remainder of the proceeds of the sale of his farm in stocks, loses and is left penniless, and the landlord evicts him for non-payment of rent after everything had been sold to buy bread for the starving family. The play finishes up by the return of the exiles to Canada, where they resume their peaceful farming operations, poorer but wiser Canadians.

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China has a regular army of 300,000 men, and a war footing of 1,000,000.

Turkey has a regular army of 355,000 men, a war footing of 610,200, and the annual cost of the army is \$19,642,000.

Italy has a regular army of 736,582 men, a war footing of 1,718,938, and the annual cost of the army is \$42,947,268.

Japan has a regular army of 36,777 men, a war footing of 51,721, and the annual cost of the army is \$6,151,000.

Spain has a regular army of 90,000, a war footing of 450,000, and the annual cost of the army is \$24,802,930.

Russia has a regular army of 974,771 men, a war footing of 2,738,305, and the annual cost of the army is \$131,812,502.

France has a regular army of 502,764 men, a war footing of 1,492,041, and the annual cost of the army is \$114,279,761.

Germany has a regular army of 445,402 men, a war footing of 1,492,041, and the annual cost of the army is \$98,330,429.

Great Britain has a regular army of 131,686 men, a war footing of 577,906, and the annual cost of the army is \$74,901,500.

India (British) has a regular army of 189,587 men, a war footing of 308,000, and the annual cost of the army is \$84,481,195.

Austro-Hungary has a regular army of 289,190 men, a war footing of 1,125,838, and the annual cost of the army is \$58,386,915.

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