

afterward. He did not listen to it. And then the wisdom of the West came to him, as epitomized by Cocker along the lines laid down by Solomon. "It isn't possible to make a puzzle that has no solution to it. The fact that it's a puzzle is the proof that there's a key! Go ahead!"

It was the "Go ahead!" that Solomon omitted, and that makes Cocker such cheerful reading. King ceased conjecturing and gave full attention to his guide.

She showed him where eleven hundred Mauser rifles stood in racks in another cave, with boxes of ammunition piled beside them—each rifle and cartridge worth its weight in silver coin—a very rajah's ransom!

"The Germans are generous in some things—only in some things—very mean in others!" she told him. "They sent no medical stores, and no blankets!"

Past caves where provisions of every imaginable kind were stored, sufficient for an army, she led him to where her guards slept together with the thirty special men whom King had brought with him up the Khyber.

"I have five hundred others whom I dare trust to come in here," she said, "but they shall stay outside until I want them. A mystery is a good thing. It is good for them all to wonder what I keep in here! It is good to keep this sanctuary; it makes for power!"

Pressing very close to him, she guided him down another dark tunnel until he and she stood together in the jaws of the round hole above the river, looking down into the cavern of Earth's Drink.

Nobody looked up at them. The thousands were too busy working up a frenzy for the great jihad that was to come.

Stacks of wood had been piled up, six-man high in the middle, and then fired. The heat came upward like a furnace blast, and the smoke was a great red cloud among the stalactites. Round and round that holocaust the thousands did their sword-dance, yelling as the devils yelled at Khinjan's birth. They needed no wine to craze them. They were drunk with fanaticism, frenzy, lust!

"The women brought that wood from fifty miles away!" Yasmini shouted in his ear; for the din, mingling with the river's voice, made a volcano chord. "It is a week's supply of wood! But so they are—so they will be! They will lay waste India! They will butcher and plunder and burn! It will be what they leave of India that we shall build anew and govern, for India herself will rise to help them lay her own cities waste! It is always so! Conquests always are so! Come!"

She tugged at him and led him back along the tunnel and through other tunnels to the throne room, where she made him sit at her feet again.

The food had been cleared away in their absence. Instead, on the ebony table there were pens and ink and paper.

She leaned back on her throne, with bare feet pressed tight against the footstool, staring at the table and the pens, and then at King, as if she would compose an ultimatum to the world and send King to deliver it.

"I said I will tell you," she said slowly. "Listen!"

CHAPTER XIV.

AS Yasmini herself had admitted, she headed from point to point after a manner of her own.

"You know where is Dar es Salaam?" she asked.

"East Africa," said King.

"How far is that from here?"

"Two or three thousand miles."

"And English war-ships watch the Persian Gulf and all the seas from India to Aden?"

King nodded.

"Have the English any ships that dive under water?"

He nodded again.

"In these waters?"

"I think not. I'm not sure, but I think not."

"The grenades you have seen, and the rifles and cartridges were sent by the Germans to Dar es Salaam, to suppress a rising of African natives. Does it begin to grow clear to you, my friend?"

He smiled as well as nodded this time.

"Muhammad Anim used to wait with

a hundred women at a certain place on the seashore. What he found on the beach there he made the women carry on their heads to Khinjan. And by the time he had hidden what he found and returned from Khinjan to the beach, there were more things to find and bring. So they worked, he and the Germans, for I know not how long—with the English watching the seas as on land lean wolves comb the valleys.

"Did you ever hear of the big whale in the Gulf?"

"No," said King. That was natural. There are as a rule about as many whales as salmon in the Persian Gulf.

"A German who came to me in Delhi

—he who first showed me pictures of an underwater ship—said that at that time the officers and crew of one such ship were getting great practise. Do you suppose their practise made whales take refuge in the Gulf?"

"How should I know, Princess?"

"Because I heard a story later, of an English cruiser on its way up the Gulf, that collided with a whale. The shock of hitting it bent many steel plates, and the cruiser had to put back for repair. It must have been a very big whale, for there was much oil on the sea for a long time afterward. So I heard."

"And no more dynamite came—nor rifles—nor cartridges, although the Germans had promised more. And or-

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