

them. What a poor-spirited creature they think me to kiss the hand that robbed me, to be friends with those who have deprived me of my rights! But the day of reckoning is not far off, and then woe to them all. Have any of your messengers returned, Imambux?"

"Several have come in this evening, my lord. Would you see them now or wait till morning?"

"I will see them now; I will get the memory of these chattering men and these women with their bare shoulders out of my mind. Send the men in one by one. I have no further occasion for you to-night; two are better than three when men talk of matters upon which an empire depends."

The two officers bowed and retired. Shortly afterward the attendant drew back the curtain again, and a native, in the rags of a mendicant, entered and bowed till his forehead touched the carpet. Then he remained kneeling with his arms crossed over his chest and his head inclined in the attitude of the deepest humility.

"Where have you been?" the Rajah asked.

"My lord's slave has been for three weeks at Meerut. I have obeyed orders. I have distributed chupaties among the native regiments, with the words 'Watch, the time is coming,' and have then gone before I could be questioned. In another disguise, I have gone through the bazaar, and said in talk with many that the Sepoys were unclean and outcast, for that they had bitten cartridges anointed with pig's fat, and that the Government had purposely greased the cartridges with this fat in order that the caste of all the Sepoys should be destroyed. When I had set men talking about this I left; it will be sure to come to the Sepoys' ears."

The Rajah nodded. "Come again to-morrow at noon; you will have your reward then and further orders; but see that you keep silence. A single word, and though you hid in the farthest corner of India you would not escape my vengeance."

Man after man entered. Some of them, like the first, were in mendicant's attire; one or two were fakirs; one looked like a well-to-do merchant. With the exception of the last, all had a similar tale to tell; they