

# THE WINDS of the WORLD

CHAPTER XIII.—Continued.

By TALBOT MUNDY

"LOOK!" said the German. "I thought that officer—the adjutant, isn't he—recognized you. Now he is pointing you out to the colonel. Look!"

Ranjoor Singh did look, and he saw that Colonel Kirby was waiting to let the regiment go by. He knew what was passing through Kirby's mind, since it is given to some men, native and English, to have faith in each other. And he knew that there was danger ahead of him through which he might not come with his life, perhaps even with his honor. He would have given, like Kirby, a full year's pay for a hand-shake then, and have thought the pay well spent.

Kirby began to canter back. "He has recognized you!" said the German.

"And he is coming to cut me down!" swore Ranjoor Singh.

He dragged the German back behind the nearest cart, and together they ran for the gloom of the big gate, leaving the driver of the bullock-cart standing at gaze where Ranjoor Singh had stood. The door of the shuttered carriage flew open as they reached it, and Ranjoor Singh pushed the German in. He stood a moment longer, with his foot on the carriage step, watching Colonel Kirby; he watched him question the bullock-cart driver.

Then a voice that he recognized said, "Buffalo!" and he followed into the carriage, shutting the door behind him.

The carriage was off almost before the door slammed.

"Am I to be kept waiting for a week, while a Jat farmer gazes at cattle on the road?" demanded Yasmini, sitting forward out of the darkest corner of the carriage and throwing aside a veil. "He cares nothing for thee!" she whispered. "Didst thou see the jasmine drop into his lap from the gate? That was mine! Didst thou see him button it into his tunic? So, Ranjoor Singh! That for thy colonel sahib! And his head will smell of my musk for a week to come! What—what fools men are! Jaldee, jaldee!" she called to the driver through the shutters, and the man whipped up his pair.

It was more than scandalous to be driven through Delhi streets in a shuttered carriage with a native lady, and even the German's presence scarcely modified the sensation; the German did not appreciate the rarity of his privilege, for he was too busy staring through the shutters at a world which tried its best to hide excitement; but Ranjoor Singh was aware all the time of Yasmini's mischievous eyes and of mirth that held her all but speechless.

"Are you satisfied?" she asked the German, after a long silence.

"Of what?" asked the German.

"That Ranjoor Singh sahib can do what he has promised."

The German laughed.

"I have an excuse for doing what I promised," he said, "if that is what you mean."

"That regiment," said Ranjoor Singh, since he had made up his mind to lie thoroughly, "will camp a day's march out of Delhi. The men

will wait to hear from me for a day or two, but after that they will mutiny and be done with it; the men are almost out of hand with excitement."

"You mean—"

The German's eyebrows rose, and his light-blue eyes sought Ranjoor Singh's.

"I mean that now is the time to do your part, that I may continue doing mine!" he answered.

"What I have to offer would be of no use without the regiment to use it," said the German. "Let the regiment mutiny, and I will lead you and it at once to what I spoke of."

"No," said Ranjoor Singh.

"What then?"

"It does not suit my plan, or my convenience, that there should be any outbreak until I myself have knowledge of all my resources. When everything is in my hand, I will strike hard and fast in my own good time."

"You seem to forget," said the German, "that the material aid I offer is from Germany, and that therefore Germany has a right to state the terms. Of course, I know there are the cobras, but I am not afraid of them. Our stipulation is that there shall be at least a show of fight before aid is given. If the cobras deal with me, and my secret dies with me, there will be one German less and that is all. That regiment I have seen looks ripe for mutiny."

Ranjoor Singh drew breath slowly through set teeth.

"Let it mutiny," said the German, "and I am ready with such material assistance as will place Delhi at its mercy. Delhi is the key to India!"

"It shall mutiny to-night!" said Ranjoor Singh abruptly.

THE German stared hard at him, though not so hard as Yasmini; the chief difference was that nobody could have told she was staring, whereas the German gaped.

"It shall mutiny to-night, and you shall be there! You shall lead us then to this material aid you promise, and after that, if it all turns out to be a lie, as I suspect, we will talk about cobras."

For a minute, two minutes, three minutes, while the rubber tires bumped along the road toward Yasmini's, the German sat in silence, looking straight in front of him.

"Order horses for him and me!" commanded Ranjoor Singh; and Yasmini bowed obedience.

"When will you start?" the German asked.

"Now! In twenty minutes! We will follow the regiment and reach camp soon after it."

"I must speak first with my colleagues," said the German.

"No!" growled the Sikh.

"My secret information is that several regiments are ordered oversea. Some of them will consent to go, my friend. We will do well to wait until as many regiments as possible are on the water, and then strike hard with the aid of such as have refused to go."

The carriage drew up at Yasmini's front door, and a man jumped off the box seat to open the carriage.

"Say the rest inside!" she ordered.

"Go into the house! Quickly!"

So the German stepped out first,

moving toward the door much too spryly for the type of street merchant he was supposed to be.

"Do you mean that?" whispered Yasmini, as she pushed past Ranjoor Singh. "Do you mean to ride away with him and stage a mutiny? How can you?"

"She-buffalo!" he answered, with the first low laugh she had heard from him since the game began.

She ran into the house and all the way up the two steep flights of stairs, laughing like a dozen peals of fairy bells.

At the head of the stairs she began to sing, for she looked back and saw babu Sita Ram waddling wheezily upstairs after Ranjoor Singh and the German.

"The gods surely love Yasmini!" she told her maids. "Catch me that babu and bottle him! Drive him into a room where I can speak with him alone!"

"Oh, my God, my God!" wailed the babu at the stair-head from amid a maze of women who hustled and shoved him all one way, and that the way he did not want to go. "I must speak with that German gentleman who was giving lecture here—must positivelee give him warning, or all his hopes will be blasted everlastinglee! No—that is room where are cobras—I will not go there!"

In three native languages one after the other, he pleaded and wailed to no good end; the women were too many for him. He was shoved into a small room as a fat beast is driven into a slaughter-stall, and a door was slammed shut on him. He screamed at an unexpected voice from behind a curtain, and a moment later burst into a sweat from reaction at the sight of Yasmini.

"Listen, babuji," she purred to him. "Who was that man asking for me?" demanded the German.

"How should I know?" snorted Ranjoor Singh. "Are we to turn aside for every fat babu that asks to speak to us? I have sent for horses."

"I will speak with that man!" said the German.

HE began to walk up and down the length of the long room, pushing aside the cushions irritably, and at one end knocking over a great bowl of flowers. Ranjoor Singh stood watching him, stroking a black beard reflectively; he was perfectly sure that Yasmini would make the next move, and was willing to wait for it.

"The horses should be here in a few minutes," he said hopefully, after a while, for he heard a door open.

Then babu Sita Ram burst in, half running, and holding his great stomach as he always did when in a hurry.

"Oh, my God!" he wailed. "Quick! Where is German gentleman? And not knowing German, how shall I make meaning clear? German should be reckoned among dead languages and—Ah! My God, sir, you astonish me! Resemblance to Mohammedan of no particular standing in community is first class! How shall I—"

"Say it in English!" said the German, blocking his way.

"My God, sahib, it is bad news! How shall I avoid customaree stigma attaching to bearer of ill tidings?"

"Speak!" said the German. "I won't hurt you!"

(Continued on page 24.)

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