



the captain sahib call me a scoundrel—or some worse name if he loves me very much, for the English are a strange race—

"Thou art a dreamer!" said King. "Untie my hands; the thong cuts me." The Pathan obeyed.

"Dreamer, am I? It is good to dream such dreams. By Allah, I've a mind to see that dream come true! I never slew a man on Indian soil, only in these 'Hills.' I will go to them and say 'Here I am! I am a deserter. I seek that pardon!' Truly I will go! Come thou with me, little hakim!"

"Nay," said King, "I have another thought."

"What then?"

"You, who were seen to slay a man a yard this side of the border—"

"Nay! half a mile this side!"

"Half a mile, then. You who were seen to slay a fellow soldier of your regiment, and I who am a political offender, do not win pardons so easily as that."

"Would they hang us?"

That was the first squeamishness the Pathan had shown of any kind, but men of his race would rather be tortured to death than hanged in a merciful hempen noose.

"They would hang us," said King, "unless we came bearing gifts."

"Gifts? Has Allah touched thee? What gifts should we bring? A dozen stolen rifles? A bag of silver? And I am the dreamer, am I?"

"Nay," said King. "I am the dreamer. I have seen a good vision."

"Well?"

"There are others in these 'Hills'—others in Khinjan who wear British medals?"

The Pathan nodded.

"How many?" asked King.

"Hundreds. Men fight first on one side, then on the other, being true to either side while the contract lasts. In all there must be the makings of

many regiments among the 'Hills.'"

King nodded. He himself had seen the chieftains come to parley after the Tirah war. Most of them had worn British medals and had worn them proudly.

"If we two," he said, speaking slowly, "could speak with some of those men and stir the spirit in them and persuade them to feel as thou dost, mentioning the pardon for deserters and the probability of bonuses to the time-expired for reenlistment; if we could march down the Khyber with a hundred such, or even with fifty or with twenty-five or with a dozen men—we would receive our pardon for the sake of service rendered."

"Good!"

THE Pathan thumped him on the back so hard that his eyes watered.

"We would have to use much caution," King advised him, when he was able to speak again.

"Aye! If Bull-with-a-beard got wind of it he would have us crucified. And if she heard of it—"

He was silent. Apparently there were no words in his tongue that could compass his dread of her revenge. He was silent for ten minutes, and King sat still beside him, letting memory of other days do its work—memory of the long, clean regimental lines, and of order and decency and of justice handed out to all and sundry by gentlemen who did not think themselves too good to wear a native regiment's uniform.

"In two days I could do the drill again as well as ever," he said at last. Then there was silence again for fifteen minutes more. "I could always shoot," he murmured; "I could always shoot."

When Muhammad Anim came back they had both forgotten to replace the lashing on King's wrists, but the mul-

lah seemed not to notice it.

"Come!" he ordered, with a side-wise jerk of his great ugly head, and then stood muttering impatiently while they obeyed.

He had twice the number of women with him, but none of them the same; and he had brought five ruffians to guard them, who pounced on the captured rifles and claimed one apiece, to the Pathan's loud-growled disgust. Then the women were made to gather up King's belongings, and at a word from the mullah they started in single file—the mullah leading, then two men, then King, then the Orakzai Pathan, and then the other three. The Pathan began to whisper busily to the man next behind and noticing that King looked straight forward and contented himself; his heart was singing within him unexplainedly; he wanted to sing and dance, as once David did before the ark. He did not feel in the least like a prisoner.

They marched downward through interminable tunnels and along ledges poised between earth and heaven, until they came at last to the tunnel leading to the one entrance into Khinjan Caves. Just before they entered it two more of the mullah's men came up with them, leading horses. One horse was for the mullah, and they helped King mount the other, showing him more respect than is usually shown a prisoner in the "Hills."

THEN the mullah led the way into the tunnel, and he seemed in deadly fear. The echo of the hoof-beats irritated him. He eyed each hole in the roof as if Yasmini might be expected to shoot down at him or drench him with boiling oil and hurried past each of them at a trot, only to draw rein immediately afterward because the noise was too great.

It became evident that his men had been at work here too, for at intervals along the passage lay dead bodies. Yasmini must have posted the men there, but where was she? Each of them lay dead with a knife wound in his back, and the mullah's men possessed themselves of rifles and knives and cartridges, wiping off blood that had scarcely cooled yet.

When they came to the end of the tunnel it was to find the door into the mosque open in front of them, and twenty more of Muhammad Anim's men standing guard over the eyelashless mullah. They had bound and gagged him. At a word from Muhammad Anim they loosed him; and at a threat the hairless one gave a signal that brought the great stone door sliding forward on its oiled bronze grooves.

Then, with a dozen jests thrown to the hairless one for consolation, and an utter indifference to the sacredness of the mosque floor, they sought outer air, and Muhammad Anim led them up the Street of the Dwellings toward Khinjan's outer ramparts. They reached the outer gate without incident and hurried into the great dry valley beyond it. As they rode across the valley the mullah thumbed a long string of beads. Unlike Yasmini, he was praying to one god; but he seemed to have many prayers. His back was a picture of determined treachery—the backs of his men were expressions of the creed that "He shall keep who can!" King rode all but last now and had a good view of their unconsciously vaunted black-guardism. There was not a hint of honour or tenderness among the lot, man, woman or mullah. Yet his heart sang within him as if he were riding to his own marriage feast!

Last of all, close behind him, marched his friend, the Orakzai Pathan, and as they picked their way among the boulders across the mile-wide moat the two contrived to fall a little to the

rear. The Pathan began speaking in a whisper and King, riding with lowered head as if he were studying the dangerous track, listened with both ears.

"She sent her man Rewa Gunga toward the Khyber with a message," he whispered. "He took a few men with him, and he is to send them with the message when they reach the Khyber, but he is to come back. All he went for is to make sure the message is not intercepted, for Bull-with-a-beard is growing reckless these days. He knew what was doing and said at once that she is treating with the British, but there were few who believed that. There are more who wonder where she hides while the message is on its way. None has seen her. Men have swarmed into the Cavern of Earth's Drink and howled for her, but she did not come. Then the mullah went to look for his ammunition that he stored and sealed in a cave. And it was gone. It was all gone. And there was no proof of who had taken it!"

"Hakim, there be some who say—and Bull-with-a-beard is one of them—that she is afraid and hides. Men say she fears vengeance for the stolen ammunition, because it was plenty for a conquest of India. So men say. So say these here, for I have asked them."

"And thou?" asked King, struggling to keep the note of exultation from his voice. He did not believe she was hiding. She might be staring into a crystal in some secret cave—she might be planning new mischief of any kind. But afraid she was surely not. And just as surely he could vow she was working out her own undoing.

"I?" said the Pathan. "I swear she is afraid of nothing. If she has taken all the ammunition, then we shall hear from it again and from her too!"

"And what of me?" asked King. "What will the mullah do with me?"

"His men say he is desperate. His own are losing faith in him. He snatched thee to be a bait for her, having it in mind that a man whom she hides in her private part of Khinjan must be of great value to her. He has sworn to have thee skinned alive on a hot rock should she fail to come to terms!"

THAT being not such a comforting reflection, King rode in silence for a while, with the Pathan trudging solemnly beside his stirrup keeping semblance of guard over him. When they reached the steep escarpment he had to dismount, although the mullah in the lead tried to make his own beast carry him up the lower spur and was mad-angry with his men for laughing when the horse fell back with him.

Far in the rear King and the Pathan shoved and hauled and nearly lost their horse a dozen times at that. But once at the top the mullah set a furious pace and the laden women panted in their efforts to keep up, the men taking less notice of them than if they had been animals.

The march went on in single file until the sun died down in splendid fury. Then there began to be a wind that they had to lean against, but the women were allowed no rest.

At last at a place where the trail began to widen, the mullah beckoned King to ride beside him. It was not that he wished to be communicative, but there were things King knew that he did not know, and he had his own way of asking questions.

"Damned hakim!" he growled. "Pill-man! Poulticer! That is a sweeper's trade of thine! Thou shalt apply it at my camp! I have some wounded and some sick."

King did not answer, but buttoned

## Any Spare Time?

While the work-a-day hours of the week may be devoted to productive toil it is not always the case that the week-end sees accumulated profit. Therefore the handicaps of average ability, of a poor job, or of lack of opportunity to progress, must be made up—if made up at all—in other directions.

The spare time, the leisure time, the loafing time, the undevoted to anything time, holds the secret of financial advancement. It holds it for YOU.

## Why Not Earn?

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