CANADIAN COURIER





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ADVERTISING MANAGER CANADIAN COURIER.

THE WINDS of the WORLD

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bullet-head away from her shoulder, letting him fall like a log among the cushions. The stout second man looked frightened and sat nursing helpless hands. But the third man sat forward, and tense silence fell on the assembly as the eyes of every man sought his.

Only Yasmini, hovering in the background, had time to watch anything other than those gray European eyes; she saw that they were interested most in Ranjoor Singh, and the maids who noticed her expression of sweet innocence knew that she was thinking fast.

"You are a Sikh?" said the grayeyed man; and the crowd drew in its breath, for he spoke Hindustani with an accent that very few achieve, even with long practise.

"Then you are of a brave nation you will understand me. The Sikhs are a martial race. Their theory of politics is based on the military spirit—is it not so?"

R ANJOOR SINGH, who understood and tried to live the Sikh religion with all his gentlemanly might, was there to acquire information, not to impart it. He grunted gravely.

"All martial nations expand eventually. They tell me—I have heard some of you Sikhs have tried Canada?"

Ranjoor Singh did not wince, though his back stiffened when the men around him grinned; it is a sore point with the Sikhs that Canada does not accept their emigrants.

"Sikhs are admitted into all the German colonies," said the man with the gray eyes. "They are welcome." "Do many go?" asked Ranjoor Singh.

"That is the point. The Sikhs want a place in the sun from which they are barred at present—eh? Now, Germany——"

"Germany? Where is Germany?" asked Yasmini. She understands the last trick in the art of getting a story on its way. "To the west is England. Farther west, Ameliki. To the north lies Russia. To the south the kali pani—ocean. Where is Germany?"

The man with the gray eyes took her literally, since his nation are not slow at seizing opportunity. He launched without a word more of preliminary into a lecture on Germany that lasted hours and held his audience spellbound. It was colorful, complete, and it did not seem to have been memorized. But that was art.

He had no word of blame for England. He even had praise, when praise made German virtue seem by that much greater; and the inference from first to last was of German super-virtue.

Some one in the crowd—who bore a bullet-mark in proof he did not jest suggested to him that the British army was the biggest and fiercest in the world. So he told them of a German army, millions strong, that marched in league-long columns—an army that guarded by the prosperous hundred thousand factory chimneys that smoked until the central European sky was black.

Long, long after midnight, in a final burst of imagination, he likened Germany to a bee-hive from which a swarm must soon emerge for lack of room inside. And he proved, then, that he knew he had made an impression on them, for he dismissed them with an impudence that would have set them laughing at him when he first began to speak.

"Ye have my leave to go!" he said, as if he owned the place; and they all went except one.

"That is a lot of talk," said Ranjoor Singh, when the last man had started for the stairs. "What does it amount to? When will the bees swarm?"

The German eyed him keenly, but the Sikh's eyes did not flinch.

"What is your rank?" the German asked.

"Squadron leader!"

"Oh!"

The two stood up, and now there was no mistake about the German's heels; they clicked. The two were almost of a height, although the Sikh's head-dress made him seem the taller. They were both unusually fine-looking men, and limb for limb they matched.

"If war were in Europe you would be taken there to fight," said the German.

Ranjoor Singh showed no surprise. "Whether you wanted to fight or not."

There was no hint of laughter in the Sikh's brown eves.

"Germany has no quarrel with the Sikhs."

"I have heard of none," said Ranjoor Singh.

"Wherever the German flag should fly, after a war, the Sikhs would have free footing."

Ranjoor Singh looked interested, even pleased.

"Who is not against Germany is for her."

"Let us have plain words," said Ranjoor Singh, leading the way to a corner in which he judged they could not be overheard; there he turned suddenly, borrowing a trick from Yasmini

"I am a Sikh—a patriot. What are you offering?"

"The freedom of the earth!" the German answered. "Self-government! The right to emigrate. Liberty!"

"On what condition? For a bargain has two sides."

"That the Sikhs fail England!"

"When?" "When the time comes! What is the answer?"

"I will answer when the time comes," answered Ranjoor Singh, saluting stiffly before turning on his heel.

THEN he stalked out of the room, with a slight bow to Yasmini as he passed.

"Buffalo!" she murmured after him. "Jat buffalo!"

Then the Germans went away, after some heavy compliments that seemed to amuse Yasmini prodigiously, helping along the man who had drunk sherbet and who now seemed inclined to weep. They dragged him down the stairs between them, backward. Yasmini waited at the stair-head until she heard them pull him into a gharri and drive away. Then she