

King listened in silence, and his prisoners, watching him through the barred compartment windows, formed new and golden opinions of him, for it is common knowledge in the "Hills" that when a burra sahib speaks to a chota sahib, the chota sahib ought to say, "Yes, sir, oh, yes!" at very short intervals. Therefore King could not be a chota sahib after all. So much the better. The "Hills" ever loved to deal with men in authority, just as they ever despised underlings.

"What made you go back for the prisoners?" the general asked. "Who gave you that cue?"

"It's a safe rule never to do what the other man expects, sir, and Rewa Gunga expected me to travel by his train."

"Was that your only reason?"

"No, sir. I had general reasons. None of 'em specific. Where natives have a finger in the pie there's always something left undone at the last minute."

"But what made you investigate those prisoners?"

"Couldn't imagine why thirty men should be singled out for special treatment. Rewa Gunga told me they were still at large in Delhi. Couldn't guess why. Had 'em arrested so's to be able to question 'em. That's all, sir."

"Not nearly all!" said the general. "You realize by now, I suppose, that they're her special men—special personal following?"

"Guessed something of that sort."

"Well—she's clever. It occurred to her that the safest way to get 'em up North was to have 'em arrested and deported. That would avoid interference and delay and would give her a chance to act deliverer at this end, and so make 'em grateful to her—you see? Rewa Gunga told me all this, you understand. He seems to think she's semi-divine. He was full of her cleverness in having thought of letting 'em all get into debt at a house of ill repute, so as to have 'em at hand when she wanted 'em."

"She must have learned that trick from our merchant marine," said King.

"Maybe. She's clever. She asked me over the phone whether her thirty men had started North. I sent a telegram in cypher to find out. The answer was that you had found 'em and rounded 'em up and were bringing 'em with you. When she called me up on the phone the second time I told her so, and I heard her chuckle with delight. So I emphasized the point of your having discovered 'em and saved 'em every whit whole and all that kind of thing. I asked her to come and see me, but she wouldn't;—said she was disguised and particularly did not want to be recognized, which was reasonable enough. She sent Rewa Gunga instead. Now, this seems important."

"Before I sent you down to Delhi—before I sent you at all—I told her what I meant to do, and I never in my life knew a woman raise such terrific objections to working with a man. As it happened her objections only confirmed my determination to send for you, and before she went down to Delhi to clean up I told her flatly she would either have to work with you or else stay in India for the duration of the war."

THE general did not notice that King was licking his lips. Nor, if he had noticed King's hand that now was in front of him pressing on something under his shirt, could he have guessed that the something was a gold-hilted knife with a bronze blade. King grunted in token of attention, and the general continued.

"She gave in finally, but I felt nervous about it. Now, without your getting sight of her—you say you haven't seen her?—her whole attitude has changed! What have you done? Bringing up her thirty men seems a little enough thing. Yet, she swears by you! Used to swear at you, and now says you're the only officer in the British army with enough brains to fill a helmet! Says she wouldn't go up the Khyber without you! Says you're indispensable! Sent Rewa Gunga round to me with orders to make sure I don't change my mind about you! What have you done to her—bewitched her?"

"Done nothing," said King.

"Well, keep on doing nothing in the same style and the world shall render you its best jobs, one after the other, in sequence! You've made a good beginning!"

"Know anything of Rewa Gunga, sir?"

"Nothing, except that he's her man. She trusts him, so we've got to, and you've got to take him up the Khyber with you. What she orders, he'll do, or you may take it from me she would never have left him behind. As long as she is on our side you will be pretty safe in trusting Rewa Gunga. And she has got to be on our side. Got to be! She's the only key we've got to Khinjan, and hell is brewing there this minute! She dare unlock the gates and ride the devil down the Khyber if she thought it worth her while! You're to go up to Khyber after her to convince her that there are better mounts than the devil and better fun than playing with hell-fire! The Rangar told me he had given you her passport—that right?"

As they turned at the end of the platform King bared his wrist and showed the gold bracelet.

"Good!" said the general, but King thought his face clouded. "That thing is worth more than a hundred men. Jack Allison wore that same bracelet, unless I'm much mistaken, on his way down in disguise from Bukhara. So did another man we both knew; but he died. Be sure not to forget to give it back to her when the show's over, King."

King nodded and grunted. "What's the news from Khinjan, sir?"

"Nothing specific, except that the place is filling up. You remember what I told you about the 'Heart of the Hills' being in Khinjan? Well, they say now that the 'Heart of the Hills' has been awake for a long time, and that when the heart stirs the body does not lie quiet long. No use trying to guess what they mean; go and find out. And remember—the whole armed force at my disposal in this Province isn't more than enough to tempt the tribes to conclusions! It's a case for diplomacy. It's a case where diplomacy must not fail."

KING said nothing, but the chin-strap mark on his cheek and chin grew slightly whiter, as it always does under the stress of emotion. He can not control it, and he has dyed it more than once on the eve of happenings, there being no more wisdom in wearing feelings on one's face than on a sleeve.

"Here comes your engine," said the general. "Well—there are two battalions of Khyber Rifles up the Pass and they're about at full strength. They've got word already that you are gazetted to them. They'll expect you. By the way, you've a brother in the K. R., haven't you?"

"At Ali Masjid, sir."

"Give him my regards when you see him, will you?"

"Thank you, sir."

"There's your engine whistling. You'd better hurry. Good-by, my boy. Get word to me whenever possible. Good luck to you! Regards to your brother! Good-by!"

King saluted and stood watching while the general hurried to the waiting motor-car. When the car whirled away in a din of dust he returned leisurely to the train that had been shortened to three coaches. Then he gave the signal to start up the spur-track, that leads to Jamrud, where a fort covers in the very throat of the dreadfulest gorge in Asia—the Khyber Pass.

It was not a long journey, nor a very slow one, for there was nothing to block the way except occasional men with flags, who guarded culverts and little bridges. The Germans would know better than to waste time or effort on blowing up that track, but there might be Northern gentlemen at large, out to do damage for the sport of it, and the sepoys all along the line were posted in twos, and awake.

It was low-tide under the Himalayas. The flood that was draining India of her armed men had left Jamrud high and dry with a little nondescript force stranded there, as it were, under a British major and some native officers.

There were no more pomp and circumstance; no more of the reassuring thunder of gathering regiments, nor for that matter any more of that unarmed native helplessness that so stiffens the backs of the official English.

Frowning over Jamrud were the lean "Hills," peopled by the fiercest fighting men on earth, and the clouds that hung over the Khyber's course were an accent to the savagery.

But King smiled merrily as he jumped out of the train, and Rewa Gunga, who was there to meet him, here advanced with outstretched hand and a smile that would have melted snow on the distant peaks if he had only looked the other way.

"Welcome, King sahib!" he laughed, with the air of a skilled fencer who admires another, better one. "I shall know better another time and let you keep in front of me! No more getting first into a train and settling down for the night! It may not be easy to follow you, and I suspect it isn't, but at least it jolly well can't be such a job as leading you! I trust you had a comfortable journey?"

"Thanks," said King, shaking hands with him, and then turning away to unlock the carriage doors that held his prisoners in. They were baying now like wolves to be free, and they surged out, like wolves from a cage, to clamour round the Rangar, pawing him and struggling to be first to ask him questions.

"Nay, ye mountain people; nay!" he laughed. "I, too, am from the plains! What do I know of your families or of your friends? Am I to be torn to pieces to make a meal?"

AT that Ismail interfered, with the aid of an ash pick-handle, chance-found beside the track.

"Hill-bastards!" he howled at them, beating at them as if they were sheaves and his cudgel were a flail. "Sons of nameless mothers! Forgotten of God! Shameless! Brood of the evil one! Hands off!"

King had to stop him, not that he feared trouble, for they did not seem to resent either abuse or cudgeling in the least—and that in itself was food for thought; but broken shoulders are no use for carrying loads.

Laughing as if the whole thing was the greatest joke imaginable, Rewa Gunga fell into stride beside King and led him away in the direction of some tents.

"She is up the Pas ahead of us," he announced. "She was in the deuce of a hurry, I can assure you. She wanted to wait and meet you, but matters were too jolly well urgent, and we shall have our bally work cut out to catch her, you can bet! But I have everything ready—tents and beds and stores—everything!"

King looked over his shoulder to make sure that Ismail was bringing the little leather bag along.

"So have I," he said quietly.

"I have horses," said Rewa Gunga, "and mules and—"

"How did she travel up the Khyber?" King asked him, and the Rangar spared him a curious sideways glance.

"On a horse. You should have seen the horse!"

"What escort had she?"

"She?"

Rewa Gunga chuckled and then suddenly grew serious.

"The 'Hills' are her escort, King sahib. She is mistress in the 'Hills.' There isn't a murdering ruffian who would not lie down and let her walk on him! She rode away alone on a thoroughbred mare and she jolly well left me the mare's double on which to follow her. Come and look."

Not far from where the tents had been pitched in a cluster a string of horses whinnied at a picket rope. King saw the two good horses ready for himself, and ten mules beside them that would have done credit to any outfit. But at the end of the line, pawing at the trampled grass, was a black mare that made his eyes open wide. Once in a hundred years or so a viceroy's cup, or a Derby is won by an animal that can stand and look and move as that mare did.

"Just watch!" the Rangar boasted,

"I earn \$2 a day at home"

You may say that, too—if you want more income. Easy to learn. Steady work at home the year round. Write Auto-Knitter Hosiery (Canada) Co., Ltd. Dept. 327F, 257 College St., Toronto.

PATENTS IN ALL COUNTRIES

Book "Patent Protection" Free
BABCOCK & SONS
Formerly Patent Office Examiner. Estab. 1877
99 ST. JAMES ST., MONTREAL
Branches: Ottawa and Washington

1916 New, Revised and Enlarged Edition, Showing all Recent Improvements

THE Modern Gasoline Automobile

Its Construction, Operation, Maintenance and Repair.

By VICTOR W. PAGE, M.E.
600 Illustrations—Over 850 (5½ x 8) Pages—Twelve Folding Plates.

Price \$2.50 net

A COMPLETE AUTOMOBILE BOOK, SHOWING EVERY RECENT IMPROVEMENT.

Motorists, students, salesmen, demonstrators, repairmen, chauffeurs, garage owners, and even designers or engineers need this work because it is complete, authoritative and thoroughly up-to-date. Other works dealing with automobile construction published in the past, make no reference to modern improvements because of their recent development. All are fully discussed and illustrated.

THE most complete treatise on the Gasoline Automobile ever issued. Written in simple language by a recognized authority, familiar with every branch of the automobile industry. Free from technical terms. Everything is explained so simply that anyone of ordinary intelligence may gain a comprehensive knowledge of the gasoline automobile. The information is up-to-date and includes, in addition to an exposition of principles of construction and description of all types of automobiles and their components, valuable money-saving hints on the care and operation of motor cars propelled by internal combustion engines.

TO THE 1916 REVISED EDITION

The subject of electrical motor starting systems has been considered at length and all leading systems and their components described. A discussion on ball and roller bearing, their maintenance and installation, has also been included, and a number of other features of timely interest such as latest types of gasoline and kerosene carburetors, cyclecar power plants, the Fischer slide valve motor, detachable wire wheels, cantilever springs, eight and twelve cylinder motors, new valve operating systems, Stewart-Warner vacuum fuel feed, Boat type body design, leather universal joints, Entz electric transmission, positive differentials, armored automobile, hydraulic brakes, etc., etc.

Entirely new material has been added on tractors in three and four wheel forms, cyclecars and agricultural tractors or automobile plows; combination gasoline-electric drive, front-wheel and four-wheel drive and steer systems and other important developments in power propelled vehicles. The discussion of power transmission methods has been augmented by consideration of the skew bevel gear and two-speed direct drive rear axle, as well as several new forms of worm gear drive, etc., etc., have been added to bring the work thoroughly up-to-date.

Copies of this book sent prepaid to any address on receipt of price.

FARM PRESS

181 SIMCOE ST., - TORONTO

Many people are sending their Couriers to the boys at the front. The Courier is a good "letter from home." Send more Couriers and still more.