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the triumph in his eyes offend her. Yet if any one had asked him how he knew that he had won, he never could have told.

"If you were to go back to India except as its conqueror, they would strip the buttons from your uniform and tear your medals off and shoot you in the back against a wall! My signature is known in India and I am known. What I write will be believed. Rewa Gunga shall take a letter. He shall take two—four—witnesses. He shall see them on their way and shall give them the letter when they reach the Khyber and shall send them into India with it. Have no fear. Bull-with-a-beard shall not intercept them, as I have intercepted his men. When Rewa Gunga shall return and tell me he saw my letter on its way down the Khyber, then we shall talk again about pity—you and I! Come!"

She took his arm, as if her threats had been caresses. Triumph shone from her eyes. She tossed her brave chin and laughed at him, only encouraged to greater daring by his attitude.

"Why don't you kill me?" she asked, and though his answer surprised her, it did not make her angry.

"It would do no good," he said simply.

"Would you kill me if you thought it would do good?"

"Certainly!" he said.

She laughed at that as if it were the greatest joke she had ever heard. It set her in the best humour possible, and by the time they reached the ebony table and she had taken the pen and dipped it in the ink, she was chuckling to herself as if the one good joke had grown into a hundred.

She wrote in Urdu. It is likely that for all her knowledge of the spoken English tongue she was not so swift or ready with the trick of writing it. She had said herself that a babu read English books to her aloud. But she wrote in Urdu with an easy flowing hand, and in two minutes she had thrown sand on the letter and had given it to King to read. It was not like a woman's letter. It did not waste a word.

"Your Captain King has been too much trouble. He has taken money from the Germans. He adopted native dress. He called himself Kurram Khan. He slew his own brother at night in the Khyber Pass. These men will say that he carried the head to Khinjan, and their word is true, for I, Yasmini, saw. He used the head for a passport, to obtain admittance. He proclaims a jihad! He urges invasion of India! He held up his brother's head before five thousand men and boasted of the murder. The next you shall hear of your Captain King of the Khyber Rifles, he will be leading a jihad into India. You would have better trusted me. Yasmini."

He read it and passed it back to her.

"They will not disbelieve me," she said, triumphant as the very devil over a branded soul all hot. "They will be sure you are mad, and they will believe the witnesses!"

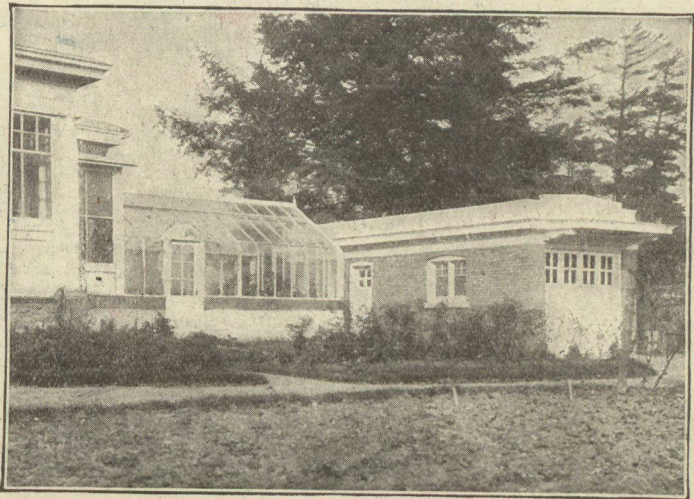
He bowed. She sealed the letter and addressed it with only a scrawled mark on its outer cover. That, by the way, was utter insolence, for the mark would be understood at any frontier post by the officer commanding.

"Rewa Gunga shall start with this to-day!" she said, with more amusement than malice. After that she was still for a moment, watching his eyes, at a loss to understand his carelessness. He seemed strangely unabashed. His folded arms were not defiant, but neither were they yielding.

"I love you, Athelstan!" she said. "Do you love me?"

(To be continued.)

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