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## THE RED YEAR

Continued from page 6

Then she remembered that Mr. Mayne had taken her to one of the cellars of the Residency in which the women and children were secure from the leaden hail that was beating on the walls. She had a vague notion that he carried a gun and a cartridge belt, and a new panic seized her lest the Moloch of war had devoured her only relative, for her father had been killed at the battle of Alma, and her mother's death, three years later, had led to her sailing for India to take charge of her uncle's household.

The women near at hand were too sorrow-laden to give any real information. They only knew that every man within the Residency walls, even the one-armed, one-legged, decrepit pensioners who had lost limbs or health in the service of the Company, were mustered behind the front defenses.

To a girl of her temperament inaction was the least endurable of evils. Now that the shock of Malcolm's departure had passed she longed to seek oblivion in work, while existence in that stifling underground atmosphere, with its dense crowd of heartbroken women and complaining children, was almost intolerable.

In defiance of orders—of which, however, she was then ignorant—she went to the ground floor. Passing out into the darkness she crossed an open space to the hospital, and it chanced that the first person she encountered was Chumru, Malcolm's bearer.

The man's grim features changed their habitual scowl to a demoniac grin when he saw her.

"Oh, miss-sahib," he cried, "this meeting is my good fortune, for surely you can tell me where my sahib is?"

Winifred was not well versed in Hindustani, but she caught some of the words, and the contortions of Chumru's expressive countenance were familiar to her, as she had laughed many a time at Malcolm's recitals of his ill-favored servant's undeserved repute as a villain of parts.

"Your sahib is gone to Allahabad," she managed to say before the thought came tardily that perhaps it was not wise to make known the Chief Commissioner's behests in this manner.

"To Allahabad! Shade of Mahomet, how can he go that far without me?" exclaimed Chumru. "Who will cook his food and brush his clothes? Who will see to it that he is not robbed on the road by every thief that ever reared a chicken or milked a cow? I feared that some evil thing had befallen him, but this is worse than aught that entered my head."

All this was lost on Winifred. She imagined that the native was bewailing his master's certain death in striving to carry out a desperate mission, whereas he was really thinking that the most disturbing element about the sahib's journey was his own absence. Seeing the distress in her face, Chumru was sure that she sympathized with his views.

"Never mind, miss-sahib," said he confidentially, "I will slip away now, steal a horse and follow him."

Without another word he hastened out of the building and left her wondering what he meant. She repeated the brief phrases, as well as she could recall them, to a Eurasian whom she found acting as a water-carrier.

This man translated Chumru's parting statement quite accurately, and when Mr. Mayne came at last from the Bailey Guard where he had been stationed until relieved after nightfall, he horrified her by telling her the truth—that it was a hundred chances to one against the unfortunate bearer's escape if he did really endeavor to break through the investing lines.

And indeed few men could have escaped from the entrenchment that night. Any one who climbed to the third story of the Residency—its highest building within the walls and standing on the most elevated site—would soon be dispossessed of the fantastic notion that any corner was left unguarded by the rebels. A few houses had been demolished by Lawrence's orders, it is true, but his deep respect for native ideas had left untouched the swarm of mosques and temples that stood between the Residency and the river.

"Spare their holy places!" he said, yet Mohammedan and Hindu did not scruple now to mask guns in the sacred enclosures and loop-hole the hallowed walls for musketry. On the city side, narrow lanes, lofty houses and strongly-built palaces offered secure protection to the besiegers. The British position was girt with the thousand gleams of a lightning more harmful than that devised by nature, for each spurt of flame meant that field-piece or rifle was sending some messenger of death into the tiny area over which floated the flag of England. Within this outer circle of fire was a lesser one; the garrison resolved up for lack of numbers by a fixed resolve to hold each post until every man fell. To modern ideas, the distance between these opposing rings was absurdly small. As the siege progressed besiegers and besieged actually came to know each other by sight. Even from the first they were seldom separated by more than the width of an ordinary street, and conversation was always maintained, the threats of the mutineers being countered by the scornful defiance of the defenders.

Nevertheless Chumru prevailed on Captain Weston to allow him to drop to the ground outside the Bailey Guard. The Police Superintendent, a commander who was now fighting his own corps, accepted the bearer's promise that if he were not killed or captured he would make the best of his way to Allahabad, and even if he did not find his master, tell the British officer in charge there of the plight of Lucknow.

Chumru, who had no knowledge of warfare beyond his recent experiences, was acquainted with the golden rule that the shorter the time spent as an involuntary target the less chance is there of being hit. As soon as he reached the earth from the top of the wall he took to his heels and ran like a hare in the direction of some houses that stood near the Clock Tower.

He was fired at, of course, but missed, and the sepoy soon ceased their efforts to put a bullet through him because they fancied he was a deserter. As soon as they saw his face they

had no doubts whatever on that score. Indeed, were it his unhappy lot to fall in with the British patrols already beginning to feel their way north from Bengal along the Grand Trunk Road he would assuredly have been hanged at sight on his mere appearance.

Chumru's answers to the questions showered on him were magnificently untrue. According to him the Residency was already a ruin and its precincts a shambles. The accused Feringhis might hold out till the morning, but he doubted it. Allah smite them!—that was why he chanced being shot by his brethren rather than be slain by mistake next day when the men of Oudh took vengeance on their oppressors. He could not get away earlier because he was a prisoner, locked up by the huzoors, forsooth, for a trifling matter of a few rupees left behind by one of the white dogs who fell that day at Chhinut.

In brief, Chumru abused the English with such an air that he was regarded by the rebels as quite an acquisition. They had not learned, as yet, that it was better to shoot a dozen belated friends than permit one spy to win his way through their lines.

Watching his opportunity, he slipped off into the bazaar. Now he was quite safe, being one among two hundred thousand. But time was passing; he wanted a horse, and might expect to find the canal bridge closely guarded.

Having a true Eastern sense of humor behind that saturnine visage of his, he hit on a plan of surmounting both difficulties with ease.

Singling out the first well-mounted and half-intoxicated native officer he met—though, to his credit be it said, he chose a Brahmin subadar of cavalry—he hailed him boldly.

"Brother," said he, "I would have speech with thee."

Now, Chumru took his life in his hands in this matter. For one wearing the livery of servitude to address a high-caste Brahmin thus was incurring the risk of being sabered then and there. In fact the subadar was so amazed that he glared stupidly at the Mohammedan who greeted him as "brother," and it may be that those fierce eyes looking at him from different angles had a mesmeric effect.

"Thou?" he spluttered, reining in his horse, a hardy country-bred, good for fifty miles without bait.

"Even I," said Chumru. "I have occupation, but I want help. One will suffice, though there is gold enough for many."

"Gold, sayest thou?"

"Ay, gold in plenty. The dog of a Feringhi whom I served has had it hidden these two months in the thatch of his house near the Alumbagh. To-day he is safely bottled up there—he jerked a thumb towards the sullen thunder of the bombardment. "I am a poor man, and I may be stopped if I try to leave the city. Take me up behind thee, brother, and give me safe passage to the bungalow, and behold, we will share treasure of a lakh or more!"

The Brahmin's brain was bemused with drink, but it took in two obvious elements of the tale at once. Here was a fortune to be gained by merely cutting a throat at the right moment.

"That is good talking," said he. "Mount, friend, and leave me to answer questions."

Chumru saw that he had gaged his man rightly, and the evil glint in the subadar's eyes told him the unspoken thought. He climbed up behind the high-peaked saddle and, after the horse had showed his resentment of a double burthen, was taken through the bazaar as rapidly as its thronged streets permitted. Sure enough, the canal bridge was watched.

"Whither go ye?" demanded the officer in charge.

"To bring in a Feringhi who is in hiding," said the Brahmin.

"Shall I send a few men with you?"

"Nay, we two are plenty—this with a laugh.

"Quite plenty," put in Chumru. The officer glanced at him and was convinced. Being a Mohammedan, he took Chumru's word without question, which showed the exceeding wisdom of Chumru in selecting a Brahmin for the sacrifice; thus was he prepared to deal with either party in an unholy alliance.

They jogged in silence past the Alumbagh. The Brahmin, on reflection, decided that he would stab Chumru before the hoard was disturbed and he could then devise another hiding-place at his leisure. Chumru had long ago decided to send the Brahmin to the place where all unbelievers go, at the first suitable opportunity. Hence the advantage lay with him, because he held a strategic position and could choose his own time.

Beyond the Alumbagh there were few houses, and these of mean description, and each moment the subadar's mind was growing clearer under the prospect of great wealth to be won so easily.

"Where is this bungalow, friend?" said he at last, seeing nothing but a straight road a front.

"Patience, brother. 'Tis now quite near. It lies behind that tope of trees yonder."

The other half turned to ascertain in which direction his guide was pointing.

"It is not on the main road, then?"

"No. A man who has gold worth the keeping loves not to dwell where all men pass."

A little farther, and Chumru announced:

"We turn off here."

It was dark. He thought he had hit upon a by-way, but no sooner did the horse quit the shadow of the trees by the roadside than he saw that he had been misled by the wheel-tracks of a ruyot's cart. The Brahmin sniffed suspiciously.

"Is there no better way than this?" he cried, when his charger nearly stumbled into a deep ditch.

"One only, but you may deem it too far," was the quiet answer, and Chumru, placing his left hand on the Brahmin's mouth, plucked a long thin knife up to the hilt between his ribs.

To be continued

## SATURDAY NIGHT SERMONS BY REV. SAMUEL W. PURVIS, D.D.

### THE BUSH AFLAME WITH GOD.

Text. "The angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of a bush."—Ex. iii, 2.

God's schools are queer. Not many would choose them for under or post-graduate work. Luther is first a back-woodsman monk. Columbus weaves rugs. First India missionary is Carey, the cobbler. God takes a negro boy and puts him at Tuskegee. An unsuccessful tanner becomes a great general. He takes a boy born in poverty, raised in obscurity, uncouth, ungoverned, and makes a Lincoln of him. He picks Moses, a slave child out of the Nile, puts him in a king's palace to learn statecraft, then sends him back of the desert to learn worldcraft. There he cares for cattle, shears sheep, weaves wool, learns the stars, beasts, birds, trees and bushes in the great university of outdoors. He sweats at common toil. How the Bible glorifies labor! Amos, the farmer; David, the shepherd; Elisha, the plowman; Gideon, the thrasher; Saul, the drover; Peter, the fisherman; Paul, the tent-maker; Christ, the carpenter. The kingdom of heaven is easier to a busy man than to an idle one.

The Burning Bush.

One evening Moses is coming home along the edge of the desert with his sheep. He's a man now, matured by sad experience. Eyes full of mighty, deep, heart hunger. Forehead lined with questions yet unanswered. The yearnings of forty years pent up in his soul. No vision yet of God. No light along his sky line. A third of life gone, old age creeping on apace. He has staked his all on Jehovah's being, God, and there's been no answer. Tonight he's coming along the side of Mount Horeb. He's trodden it for years. It's toward evening. The sun's going down rapidly in the west. Shadows are lengthening. Dusk and gloom of evening on forest and mountain, and in the fields of Jethro, way off yonder in the valley, the sheep are bleating. The smell of the flock is heavy in the damp evening air. The cry of a jackal is heard way up on the hill. An owl hoots mournfully in the tall cedars near the summit. Suddenly in the quiet of this familiar trail he stops. Look at that acacia bush up there! Is it the glint of the evening sun? He's seen that very bush scores of times, but never like that. Why, it's on fire! Yes, it burns. But look! Faith of the fathers, it is not consumed! It is a critical moment for the lonely shepherd. Moses turns aside to look. And as he turns the world turns with him!

The Voice.

Then the Voice speaks to him. "Put off thy shoes." Reverence, to start with—a lost art today. People don't even bow their heads in God's house. Of course God doesn't speak to them, and they see no flame. The mountain might blaze like Vesuvius, but they wouldn't be impressed. They might look, but they wouldn't see. There's a difference between looking and seeing. Some people look at the sun set, others see the sunset.

Earth's crammed with heaven. And every bush aflame with God. But only those who see take off their shoes.

Moses saw the bush, and it burned in his brain from that day till the one "by Nebo's lonely mountain," when he heard the same voice calling, "Moses, Moses!" Has God sent you back of Horeb, brother? Kept you there without a vision of better things? Same old task, same old path, lots of thorn bushes, but none what you are going to say, but I've missed it. I've been to the church. I've gone through the Bible even. But I've gone by the place. It's too late in the day for me. I guess that's what Moses thought. Many a long day and year he had trudged along this very road. When suddenly one year, one day, one hour, one particular moment, he lifted up his eyes, and lo, there was God!

Today's Call.

Has the flame died out and the voice ceased? Or is God still near? Possibly the vision is daily, commonplace. Maybe we are up looking at the bush. Kicking at its roots with our heavy heels, measuring at its height, pinching the berries, nipping off a leaf, feeling the point of a thorn with our thumb. Yes, we know this bush—it's an acacia, sure; botanically, it's a "leguminosa." Meanwhile the ether is a-quiver and the atmosphere is vibrant with the unconsumed power. Yes, the church is built of wood and stone. The Bible is the same binding and print as any other book. And Christ came a baby, like your own, my good mother. Is that our view of the bush? God be patient! There's a trick of the eye in looking, men. That's an abomination to the Lord. Has your vision failed? Is the God of the bush no more? No! As Jehovah-Jireh liveth, no! He's not the God of the dead only, though their name be Abram, Isaac, Jacob and Moses. Is he the God of the fathers? Then by the living bush he is the God of the sons! Now are ye the sons of God? Be not disheartened, brother; soon you may see the bush aflame with God, and a voice calling for you as the voice called Abraham! Moses! Samuel! David! Saul!

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