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## THE RED YEAR

Continued from page 6

ing judge. Could it be possible that his young friend had met the princess on other occasions than that which Malcolm laughingly described as the lunging of Nejd and the plunging of his master? It occurred to him now, with a certain chilling misgiving, that he had himself broken in with a bewildered exclamation when Frank seemed to regard the Princess's offer of employment in her service as worthy of serious thought. There were other aspects of the affair, aspects so sinister that he almost refused to harbor them. Rather to gain time than with any definite motive, he stooped over the pass again, meaning to read it word for word.

"Of course you have not forgotten, uncle, that Mr. Malcolm took us into his confidence so far as to tell us of the curious letter that reached him after the second battle outside Delhi?" said Winifred. "It saved him at Bithoor when the men from Cawnpore meant to hang him, and seeing that he had the one article in his possession, it is passing strange that he should have omitted to mention the other—to me."

Then the man knew what it all meant to the girl. He placed his arm around her neck and drew her towards him.

"My poor Winifred!" he murmured, "you might at least have been spared such a revelation at this moment."

His sympathy broke down her pride. She sobbed as though her heart would yield beneath the strain. For a little while there was no sound in the room but Winifred's plaints, while ever and anon the walls shook with the crash of the cannonade and the bursting of shells.

Ahmed Ullah, Moulvie of Fyzabad, had a quick ear for the arrival of the native officer of cavalry from Lucknow.

"Peace be with thee, brother!" said he, after a shrewd glance at the travel-worn and blood-stained man and horse. "Thou hast ridden far and fast. What news hast thou of the Jihad, and how fares it at Lucknow?"

"With thee be peace!" was the reply. "We fought the Nazarenes yesterday at a place called Chihnut, and sent hundreds of the infidel dogs to the fifth circle of Jehannum. The few who escaped our swords are penned up in the Residency, and its walls are now crumbling before our guns. By the tomb of Nizam-ud-din, the unbelievers must have fallen ere the present hour."

The moulvie's wicked eyes sparkled. "Praise be to Allah and his Prophet forever!" he cried. "How came this thing to pass?"

"My regiment took the lead," said the rissaldar, proudly. "We had long chafed under the commands of the huzoors. At last we rose and made short work of our officers. You see here—" and he touched a rent in his right side, "where one of them tried to stop the thrust that ended him. But I clave him to the chin, the swine-eater, and when Lawrence-sahib attacked us at Chihnut we chased him over the Canal and through the streets."

"Wao! wao! This is good hearing! Wast thou sent by some of the faithful to summon me, brother?"

"To summon thee and all true believers to the green standard. Yet had I one other object in riding to Rai Bareilly. A certain Nazarene, Malcolm by name, an officer of the 3rd Cavalry, was bidden by Lawrence to make for Allahabad and seek help. The story runs that the Nazarenes are mustering there for a last stand ere we drive them into the sea. This Malcolm-sahib—"

"Enough!" said the moulvie, fiercely, for his self-love was wounded at learning that the rebel messenger clasped him with the mob. "We have him here. He is in safe keeping when he is in the hands of Ahmed Ullah!"

"What!" exclaimed the newcomer with a mighty oath. "Art you the saintly Moulvie of Fyzabad?"

"Whom else, then, did you expect to find?"

"You, indeed, O revered one. But not here. My orders were, once I had secured the Nazarene, to send urgently to Fyzabad and bid you hurry to Lucknow with all speed."

"Ha! Says't thou, friend. Who gave thee this message?"

"One whom thou wilt surely listen to. Yet these things are not for every man to hear. We must speak of them apart."

The moulvie was appeased. Nay, more, his ambition was fired.

"Come with me into the house. You are in need of food and rest. Come! We can talk while you eat."

He drew nearer, but a woman's voice was raised from behind a screen in one of the rooms.

"Tarry yet a minute, friend. I would learn more of events in Lucknow. Tell us more fully what has taken place there."

"The Begum of Oudh must be obeyed," said Ahmed Ullah with a warning glance at the other. He was met with a villainous and intriguing look that would have satisfied Machiavelli, but the officer bowed low before the screen.

"I am, indeed, honored to be the bearer of good tidings to royal ears," said he. "Doubtless I should have been entrusted with letters for your highness were not the city in some confusion owing to the fighting."

"Who commands our troops?" came the sharp demand.

"At present, your highness, the Nawab of Rampur represents the King of Oudh."

"The Nawab of Rampur! That cannot be tolerated. Ahmed Ullah!"

"I am here," growled the moulvie, smiling sourly.

"We must depart within the hour. Let my litter be prepared, and send men on horseback to provide relays of carriers every ten miles. Delay not. The matter presses."

There could be no mistaking the agitation of the hidden speaker. That an admitted rival of her father's dynasty should be even the nominal leader of the revolt was not to be endured. The mere suggestion of such a thing was gall and wormwood. None realized better than this arch-priestess of cabal that a predominating in-

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