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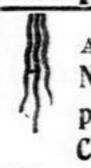
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THE

A Story of the Indian Mutiny

— By — LOUIS TRACY

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CHAPTER XV. At the King's Court

Without guns to breach the walls. even the heroic Nicholson was poweress against a strongly fortified city. The siege train was toiling slowly across the Punjab, but the setting in of the monsoon rendered the transit

On the 24th of August an officer rode in from the town of Baghput, twentyfive miles to the north, to report that the train was parked there for the

of heavy cannon a laborious task.

"What sort of escort accompanies it?" asked Nicholson, when the news reached him.

"Almost exclusively natives and few in number at that," he was told. An hour later a native spy from Del-

hi came to the camp. "The mutineers are mustering for a big march," he said. "They are provid-

camels, and the story goes that they WITH MINIMUM CHARGE OF 25c) mean to fight the Feringhis at Baha-The place named was a large village, ten miles northwest of the ridge,

and Nicholson guessed instantly that the sepoys had planned the daring coup of cutting off the siege train. With him, to hear was to act. He formed a column of two thousand men and a battery of field artillery and Round Trip Homeseekers' left the camp at dawn on the 25th. If a forced march could accomplish it, he meant not only to frustrate the at Low Rates, via Sarnia or Chicago enemy's design but to inflict a serious

Malcolm went with him and never A. E. Duff, District Passenger Agent, had he taken part in a harder day's work. The road was a bullock track, JAMES R. GUN, Town Agent; J. a swamp of mud amid the larger swamp of the ploughed land and jungle. Horses and men floundered through it as best they might. The guns often sank almost to the trunnions; many a time the infantry had to help elephants and bullocks to haul

ANYONE ONE NEEDING In seven hours the column only New Pumps, Pump Re- disheartening news that the spy's inmarched nine miles, and then came the pairs, Cement Curbing or formation was wrong. The rebels had, indeed, sent out a strong force, but they were at Nujufgarh, miles away to

> Officers and men ate a slight meal growled a bit, and swung off in the new direction. At four o'clock in the afternoon they found the sepoy army drawn up behind a canal, with its right protected by another canal, and the centre and left posted in fortified villages. Evidently, too, a stout serai, or inn, a square building surrounding a quadrangle set apart for the lodgment of camels and merchandise was regarded as a stronghold. Here were placed six guns and the walls were loopholed for musketry.

> In a word, had the mutineers been equal in courage and morale to the British troops, the resultant attack must have ended in disastrous failure. But Nicholson was a leader who took the measure of his adversaries. Above

were ordered to lie down. Nicholson lurid language, they counted on keeprode up to them, a commanding figure ing their new-found comrades in tow gunners from Bareilly?" said one. on a seventeen-hands English hunter. while they made the tour of the city. you at Chillianwallah, and you have some expedition planned for the night in another. heard that he said the same thing at or the next morning. the battle of the Alma. 'Hold your Of course, having undertaken an I want my pay." fire until you see the whites of their unpleasant duty he intended to carry eyes, he said, and then, my boys, we it through. If he did not learn the rise yesterday." Let us follow his advice here!"

and did not fire a shot until they were ability. within twenty yards of the enemy. A

a subadar of the 8th Irregular Cavalry, encounter. named Akhab Khan," he said.

spared at Cawnpore when Winifred Gate and admitted to the fortress. It troopers clattered in on horseback, and

"I knew him well, sir," he could not it was to question new arrivals, was He began by explaining timorously help saying. "He was not a subadar, taking part in it. but a lance-corporal. He was one of a small escort that accompanied me

Nicholson looked at him fixedly. He

"If men like him are obtaining com- solence and lust of the swaggering their houses and debauch their wives mands in Delhi they will prove awk- soldiers. ward," was his brief comment, and That very day matters had reached peated injunctions prohibiting robbery Frank did not realize what his chief a climax. Malcolm found a brawling and oppression in the city, but to no was revolving in his mind until, three mob in front of the Lahore gate of the avail." days later, the Brigadier asked him to palace. He caught Chumru's eye and He was interrupted with loud murdon his disguise again, ride to the the latter appealed to a sepoy for in- murs. southward, and endeavor to fall in with a batch of mutineers on the way

"The King of Kings hath a quarrel folk, O King," yelled a sepoy. "We

"You will be rendering a national to his will. "I know it is a distasteful thou been, brother, that these things

ousiness, but you are able to carry it through, and five hours of your observation will be worth five weeks of friend. I and twenty more, whom thou native reports. Will you do it?"

fused even to allow his thoughts to against the infidels." dwell on such a repellant subject. A spy! What soldier likes the office? the utmost bravery-that calm courage | guard their tongues in Imperial Delhi. of facing an ignoble death alone, unheeded, forgotten, which is the finest test of chivalry, but it can never commend itself to a high-spirited youth.

in the field; it was hard to be chosen low for such a doubtful enterprise.

absent. You will remain here in charge of my baggage and of certaain | mangoes amongst them. letters which I shall give you." "Why am I cast aside, sahib?"

that I must deal with myself, and not of my own wish, Chumru. I obey the general-sahib's order." "Jan Nikkelsen-sahib Bahadur?"

"Yes. I would refuse any other. But haste thee, for time presses." Chumru went off. He returned in half an hour, to find his master sealing a letter addressed to "Miss Winifred Mayne, to be forwarded, if possible, with the Lucknow Relief Force."

There were others to relatives in England, and Frank tied them in a "If I do not come back within a

me in the matter. I go with you." "It is impossible. kelsen-sahib Bahadur. He says I will

true enough. He had waylaid Nicholson and obtained permission to accom-

pany his master. Like a faithful dog

he was not to be shaken off, and, in his heart of hearts, Malcolm was glad Their preparations were made with the utmost secrecy. The same men who sold Bahadur Shah's cause to the British were also the professed spies of the rebels. They were utterly unreliable, yet their tale-bearing in Delhi

might bring instant disaster to Mal-

colm and his native comrade. Nejdi was in good condition again after the tremendous exertions undergone since he carried his master from Lucknow. Malcolm was in two minds whether to take him or not, but the chance that his life might depend on a reliable horse, and, perhaps, a touch of the gambler's belief in luck, swayed his judgment, and Nejdi was saddled Chumru rode a spare charger which Malcolm had purchased at the sale o a dead officer's effects. Fully equip ped in their character as rebel non commissioned officers, the two rode forth, crossed the Jumna, reached the Meerut road unchallenged and turned their horses' heads toward the bridge of boats that debouched beneath the

walls of the King's palace. ed the branch canal under fire and ventiveness in maintaining a flow of tunes of Delhi.

will make short work of it.' Come on! nature and extent of the enemy's batteries, the general dispositions of the money till some one clears those acstraight at serai and battery. Grape- the different sections that composed a deep voice close behind Malcolm.

Fortune favored the adventurers at But now a craning of necks and a smoking a cigar with his staff, Nichol- was excellent fooling to hear Chumru sparkled an immense emerald. son commented on the skill shown in detailing the wholesale slaughter of Malcolm had seen Bahadur Shah the Nazarenes, while the victors, alonly once before. He remembered how "I asked a wounded havildar who it ways the sepoys, found it advisable to decorous and dignified was the Mogul

Malcolm started. Akhab Khan was the party crossed the bridge, were in- while, ever and anon, even during his the young sowar whose life he had terrogated by a guard at the Water short address, belated officers and and her uncle and himself were es- chanced that a first-rate feud was in did not dismount within the precincts progress, and the officer, whose duty of the sacred Hall of Audience itself.

sury. Many thousands of sepoys had not arrange matters as he would have from Agra to the south, but he is a neither been paid nor fed; there was wished. He knew that there were smart soldier, and not at all of the a quarrel between Mohammedans and arrears of pay and that the food supply Hindoos, because the former insisted was irregular. on slaughtering cattle; and the more "But you do not help me," he said. seemed to be considering some point respectable citizens were clamoring with some display of spirit. "Respecfor protection from the rapacity, in- table citizens tell me that you plunder

to Delhi. Then he could enter the city, note the dispositions for the defense, and escape by joining an attacking party during one of the many tacking party during the many tacking p

To be sure. Is there not tha Counservice by your deed," said Nicholson, cil of the Barah Topi? (Twelve Hats.) gazing into Frank's troubled eyes with Are not Bakht Khan and Akhab Khan that magnetic power that bent all men in charge of brigades? Where hast

are not known to thee?" "Be patient with me, I pray thee, seest here, have ridden in within the "Yes, sir," said Malcolm, choking hour. We come to join the Jehad, and back the protest on his lips. He could we are grieved to find a dispute tonot trust himself to say more. He re- ward when we expected to be led

The sepoy laughed scornfully. "You will see as many fights here as It stifles ambition. It robs war of its outside the walls," he muttered, and glamour. It may call for a display of moved off, for men were beginning to

A rowdy gang of full five hundred armed mutineers marched up and hustled the mob right and left as they forced a way to the gate. Their words Frank had already won distinction and attitude betokened trouble. The opportunity was too good to be lost. Malcolm dismounted, gave the reins to His worst hour came when he Chumru, and told him to wait his resought Chumru's aid in the matter of turn under some trees somewhat removed from the road, for Akhab Khan "What is toward, sahib?" asked the had sharp eyes, and the Mohamme-Mohammedan. "Have we not seen dan's grotesque face was well known enough of India that we must set forth to him. Chumru made a fearsome grimace, but Malcolm's order was per-"This time I go alone," said Frank, emptory. Summoning a fruit-seller, sadly. "Perchance I shall not be long the bearer led the Gwalior men to the rendezvous named and distributed

Frank joined the ruck of the demonstrators and passed through the "Nay. Say not so. 'Tis a matter portals of the magnificent gate. A long, high-roofed arcade, spacious as the nave of a cathedral, with raised marble platforms for merchants on each side, gave access to a quadrangle. In the centre stood a fountain, and round about were grassy lawns and

The sepoys tramped on, heedless of the destruction they caused in the garden. They passed through the noble Nakar Khana, or music-room, and entered another and larger square, at the further end of which stood the Diwan-i-Am, or Hall of Public Audience.

Not even in Agra, and certainly not in gaudy Lucknow, had Malcolm seen "Nay, sahib, give not instructions to any structure of such striking architectural effect. The elegant roof was supported on three rows of red sand-"Huzoor, it is the order of Jan Nik- stone pillars, adorped with chaste gilding and stucco-work. Open on three be useful, and he hath promised me sides, the audience chamber was backed by a wall of white marble, from The Mohammedan's statement was which a staircase led to a throne raised about ten feet from the ground and covered with a rarely beautiful marble canopy borne on four small pillars.

The throne was empty, but an attendant appeared through the door at the foot of the stairs, and announced that the Light of the World would receive his faithful soldiers in a few minutes

The impatient warriors snorted their disapproval. They did not like to be kept waiting, but carried their resent ment no further, and Malcolm, with alert eyes and ears, moved about among them, as by that means he hoped to avoid attracting attention.

Even in that moment of deadly peril he could not help admiring the exquisite skill with which the great marble wall was decorated with mosaics and paintings of the fauna and flora of India. The mosaics were wholly composed of precious stones, and the paintings were executed in rich tints that told of a master hand There was nothing bizarre or crude in their conception. They might have adorned some Athenian temple in the heyday of Greece, and were wholly free from the stiff drawing and Ilamboyant coloring usually seen in the East. He did not then know that a renegade Venetian artist, Austin de Bordeaux, had carried out this work Provided they met some stragglers the arts, and in any event, his appreon the road they meant to enter the ciation of their excellence was spasmoall, he did not shirk a battle because city with the dawn. By skilful expendic, for the broken words he heard diture of money on Malcolm's part and from the excited soldiery warned him The 61st made a flank march, ford- the exercise of Chumru's peculiar in- that a crisis was imminent in the for-

"Who is he, then, this havildar ca "Now, 61st," he said, "I want you to The curiosity of strangers would be say he fought for the Nazarenes at "And the other, Akhab Khan. They take that serai and the guns. You all quite natural, and Malcolm hoped they Meerut. Mohammed Latif swears he know what Sir Colin Campbell told might be able to slip out again with deefnded the treasury there," chimed

"As for me, I care not who leads. "I, too. I have not eaten since sun

"We shall get neither food nor Swinging his horse around, he rode defense and the state of feeling among cursed Feringhis off the hill," growled shot and bullets sang the death-song the rebel garrison, he must perforce There was something familiar in the of many a brave fellow, but Nicholson remain longer. But that was in the tone. Frank edged away and glanced was untouched. The 61st leaped to lap of fate. At present he could only at the speaker, whom he recognized their feet with a yell, rushed after him, plan and contrive to the best of his instantly as a subadar in his old regi-

volley and the bayonet did the rest. first. They encountered a score of sudden hush of the animated talk They captured the guns, carried the ruffians who had cut themselves showed that some development was serai, and pelted the flying rebels adrift from the Gwalior contingent. toward. Servants entered with cushwith their own artillery. The 1st Pun- Among these strangers Chumru was ions, which they disposed around the jabis had a stiff fight before they quickly a hero. He beguiled the way foot of the throne and at the base of killed every man in the village of with tales of derring-do in Oudh and its canopy. A few nobles and court Nujufgarh on the left, but the battle the Doab, and discussed the future of functionsaries lounged in, two gorwas won, practically in defiance of all unbelievers with an amazing gusto. geously appareled guards came every tenet of military tactics, when Malcolm, whose head was shrouded in through the doorway, and behind them the 61st forced their way into the a gigantic and blood-stained turban, tottered a feeble old man, robed in listened with interest to his servant's white, and wearing on his head an Utterly exhausted, the soldiers slept account of the actions outside Cawn- aigrette of Bird of Paradise plumes, on the soddened ground. That night, pore and on the road to Lucknow. It fastened with a gold clasp in which

was that led the column, and he told fall back on a strategic position many court when Britain paid honor to an me the commander was a new arrival, miles in the rear after each desperate ancient dynasty. And now, what a change! The aged emperor had to lift In this hail-fellow-well-met manner a trembling hand to obtain a hearing,

that while affairs remained in their Money was short in the royal trea- present unsettled condition he could

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