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Life's Railroad to Heaven.

Life is like a mountain railroad
With an engineer that's brave.
We must make the run successful
From the cradle to the grave.
Watch the curves, the hills, the tunnels,
Never falter, never fail.
Keep your hand upon the throttle
And your eye upon the rail.

You will roll up grades of trial;
You will cross the bridge of strife;
See that Christ is your conductor
On this lightning train of life;
Always mindful of instruction—
Do your duty, never fail;
Keep your hand upon the throttle
And your eye upon the rail.

You will often find obstructions
Look for storms of wind and rain,
On a hill or curve or trestle,
They will almost ditch your train.
Put your trust alone in Jesus
Never falter, never quail;
Keep your hand upon the throttle
And your eye upon the rail.

You roll across the trestle
Spanning Jordan's swelling tide,
Behold the Union Depot
Into which your train will glide.
Here you'll meet the Superintendent
God the Father, God the Son,
With a hearty, joyous plaudite
"Weary pilgrim, welcome home."

ZULEIKA'S WOOING.

AN ENGLISH COLONEL'S STORY.

It is a good few years ago since one April found me quartered at Peshawur, in India. Out on the frontier, as most of you know, our extreme outposts are Dichi, Abazai, and Shubkudr, three as dreary spots as a man could ever hope to see. They have not, as I dare say you know, a single redeeming feature, being solitary mud buildings which hold the police and native troops who are supposed to overawe the tribesmen, and which, except the commandant and the doctor, don't offer many attractions in the way of society. You know what frontier service in the old days was like. Forays by the tribesmen, and punitive expeditions by the Sirkar, carried to such an extent that we almost realized the idea of "Brank-some Tower," in the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," and "Thank the red wine through the helmet barred."

You know the sort of life—rows with the tribesmen eternally springing up and dying down again in individual localities, while as a matter of fact there was always trouble at one or more places along the frontier.

At the time I am speaking of, the post of commandant of the frontier forts was not in much request. I don't know that the authorities at Simla were much troubled by eager applicants; in fact, I think the general at Peshawur usually detailed some unlucky major from the Staff Corps and sent him *volens volens* to hold the fort as long as he could with decency be made to stay. There was trouble brewing that April, and in Peshawur we all knew it. How it came about we none of us cared much, but the man before the then incumbent had gone home sick, and the commandant *pro tem* was reported to be in daily fear of his life.

Well, unpleasant as it was it was scarcely a surprise when one morning the assistant adjutant general rode up to my bungalow in great excitement, and told me I was to go out at once and assume command of the forts.

"You're to lose no time," he said. "Poor So-and-so" (mentioning the late commandant) "was shot last night by some scoundrel, and the general wants you to try and find out who did it. The police are making inquiries, but you know what that means. By the way, he wants to see you before you go."

A soldier never has much time to make his arrangements, and that very evening

I rode out to the forts, having received a long lecture from the general on that confounded word "tact" which, as we find in the service, is always on everybody's lips, and not understood by one man in a hundred who uses it.

Well, I must get on with my story, or we shall be in the Thames before I come to the point of it. I never thought much about tact, but I always believed that a well-born native is as much a gentleman as an English duke, and will behave to you just as you treat him. I soon discovered my unfortunate predecessor had tried to ride rough-shod over the tribesmen, and had made his hand felt in every corner of his command. A Pathan is as vengeful as a Corsican of good family, and will carry his feuds as far as a self-respecting American desperado. They are always ready with knife or rifle to exact vengeance from any enemy, and near Peshawur will often murder the wrong man, if they can't find the right. An Englishman who is accustomed to living in a law abiding country is no match for them, and so my predecessor found to his cost. They shot him as he was smoking his pipe after dinner one night, on his own veranda in view of the guard. Of course I never found his murderer—I never expected I should—but I did find that my own system of treatment paid better than his, and before very long I had, as the politicians would have expressed it, "established excellent relations with the surrounding tribesmen."

There was a very simple way of testing this. A few hundred yards from the gate of the fort, a former commandant had made for himself a garden, sunk a well, and planted trees. Here most of the vegetables used by the garrison were grown. Just before my time nothing ever suc-

ceeded. The Pathans broke down the walls, cut the water-courses, and stole the vegetables. But I started a different system; I was civil to the neighboring Khans and sent them baskets of vegetables and before very long I found my produce grew in plenty, and more, on the fine summer evening, after the heat of the day when I went across to the garden and set under the trees and smoked my pipe, one or other of the Khans would drop in for a chat, and in a short time reckoned many friends among the supposed irreclaimable blackguards who owned the frontier villages.

Among them all there was none with whom I got on better than a grand old fellow named Mahomed Aslim Khan, chief of a village near the fort. He was a thorough gentleman, had served in his younger days under the Sikh generals, and was as proud of his home and his

scars as any honorable man need be. Many were the pleasant evenings we spent together, for, as I have said, European society was limited, and a fine old fellow like that a perfect godsend to a lonely man.

Well, for a time all went merry as a marriage bell, till one unlucky day a case arose regarding a theft of cattle from old Aslim Khan's village. The thief was caught red-handed and tried by a native magistrate, and condemned chiefly on the Khan's evidence. After the trial, I met the old gentleman casually and exchanged a few sentences with him. Not five minutes later I heard a shot. Alarmed by the cries, I ran in the direction, and to my horror found my old friend weltering in his blood. Inquiry soon showed that the assassin was the thief condemned that day. He had escaped from custody, armed himself somehow, and before finally

had tracked down the thief to a village as he fled from the vengeance which was, he knew full well, sure to follow. How he had assumed disguise and traveled hard, after hungry and thirsty, through the valleys, till at last, one evening at sunset he had overtaken his enemy. He had found him in a quiet spot, kneeling, with his face towards Mecca, beside the shrine of some forgotten saint, going punctiliously through those devotions which no pious Mussulman, however bloodstained his hands may be, ever neglects. He described how he stood watching him paying his last devotions on earth, his own finger on the trigger of his carbine, and how, as he finished his devotions, he rose and folded up the shawl he had used as a carpet. This was Aslim's opportunity. Calling upon the assassin to turn, he covered him with the carbine, and reviling him in all the expressive terms of Pathan abuse, he then and there, as the sun disappeared in the west, shot his enemy like a dog.

You know how hard it often is to fit our English notions of justice on to native customs. Personally, I should have liked to let the boy, for he was little more, go scot free. But the commandant of the frontier forts dared not do so, and to Aslim's surprise I ordered him into custody. I did so with great regret. Before he was securely locked up I sent for the Tehildar and asked if he was safe. I think the man guessed my anxiety, for he said gravely, as an Oriental will, even when he is making a joke:

"Sabib, that young man is as safe as we can make him, but our prison is a very bad one. Men escape."

"But Asful won't?" I asked, eagerly.

"These things, my lord," he answered, "are in the hands of Providence. We must wait and see."

Next morning the Tehildar was early at my house. As he spoke I could not help thinking that the suspicion of a smile was lingering round his fat face.

"My lord," he said, joining his hands and bowing to the ground, "a miracle has happened. In the night that young man broke his bonds and escaped. I fear we shall not see him again."

I need not tell you how I held an inquiry and censured all concerned. I do not think they minded much. None of them seemed to think I was in earnest. However, there was no help for it—Asful had vanished.

That night I rode away toward old Aslim Khan's village. As I approached it I heard sounds of merriment, and presently there issued from the village a gay procession. First came a group of horsemen all gayly attired, and preceded by drums and horns—among them was one I thought I knew—they followed a closed litter, and then a lot of men driving buffaloes and carrying distaffs, cooking-pots, and a large native bed, painted in gaudy colors. As they saw me the musicians beat louder than ever, and I thought the horseman waved his hand. I determined to inquire. An old gray-beard volunteered information.

"Your lordship," he said, "probably knew the late Mahomed Aslim Khan, who is now with the prophet in Paradise. He had a lovely daughter, Zuleika, who loved a young man, Afsul by name. The chief did not favor the match, for he was rich and the young man was poor. Well, the chief was slain, and Afsul undertook to avenge him. Now the beautiful Zuleika is his by conquest. Yonder Afsul rides, this is the bride, these are the marriage gifts. They are going to Afsul's home in a distant village."

I turned my horse's head home more or less contented, though I pondered, too, over the strangeness of frontier customs.

That was the only excitement while I was commandant. Well, lads, that's my yarn. Make the best of it. If we don't turn in, it will be daylight before we get to bed. Good-night.

She was a sweet, dear thing, and was trying to work out the solution for a problem in a cook book. She was in trouble, and she went to her new husband and said:

"Sweetness, help me. This book says 'Lump of butter and cup powdered sugar. Beat it until it looks like snow.' I've beat it until I'm tired and there isn't a sign of snow. The sun is as bright as can be." He fled and now threatens to do something desperate if the "boys" don't stop talking about snow.

"After listening to a parliamentary candidate's fervid appeal, a shrewd old farmer was asked what he thought of the speech. His reply was simply: 'Weel, I dinna ken, but I think six hours' rain would ha' done us a deal mair guid!'"

K D C is marked prompt and lasting in its effects.



LOVE'S MESSENGER.

taking off had shot his accuser.

We always kept a portion of the cavalry escort in readiness for emergencies, and in less time than it takes me to tell you, the assassin was being followed by a mounted party. My horse was soon saddled, and I too, tried to follow, but unsuccessfully, as they were too far ahead, and I had to sit at home and wait for news.

It was late in the afternoon when my searching-party returned, unsuccessful. They had ridden after the murderer, and, being slightly better mounted, were rapidly gaining on him, when the way was barred by a broad, broken nullah, beyond which lay a village. The assassin knew the ground, his pursuers did not. The advantage enabled him to get clean across the nullah, while the cavalry were looking for a road for their horses. He

rode boldly into the village, from which, unluckily, all the men happened to be absent, and finding an elderly woman munching a chupatti, snatched it from her hand, ate a portion, and proclaimed that he had eaten of their salt, and claimed sanctuary. You know the Pathans. By the time my party got across the nullah he was securely hidden, and while they were haggling, a second searching-party arrived from Michni under command of a European officer. Had the natives been left to themselves they would probably have secured their man, but the officer, in wholesome dread of the authorities' orders regarding frontier complications, said he must withdraw, as they were out of British territory, and sent both parties home. Personally, I think I should have risked a wiggling, as the Path-

ans were little like to object to the capture of a British subject who had murdered one of themselves. But my subaltern ruled differently.

Of course we were disappointed, but one or two Khans who were with me bade me to be of good cheer; the murderer would be caught. I said I hoped so.

Next day a fine young Pathan, who was a sowar in the cavalry detachment at the fort, came to me and asked for long leave to visit his home. I granted it without hesitation, but that night, as I rode past the spot near my garden where his relatives had buried the body of poor Mahomed Aslim Khan, I saw that a lamp was burning on the new-made grave, and flowers were strewn upon it; and happening to meet one of the Khans, I was told that where public punishment had failed,

private vengeance would step in. The young sowar, Afsul by name, had taken up the vendetta, and Aslim's murder would assuredly be avenged.

It was six weeks later when, one evening, my servant brought me news that Afsul, the sowar, would like to be admitted to my august presence. I readily granted the permission, and in he came. He was a great swell. His flowing, white garments were new and spotless, his hair carefully dressed, and his face clean shaved except his mustache. I asked him what brought him to see me, and a smile of pride lit up his face as he replied, with many curses on the dead scoundrel, that Aslim's murderer had met his deserts, and that he himself had slain him. Shocked as I was, I asked for particulars. He told me how with infinite patience he