## King of the Khyber Rifles By TALBOT MUNDY

The Most Picturesque Romance of the Decade

KIMG IS LED TO VISIT A VAST CAVE THROUGH WHICH AN UNDERGROUND RIVER FLOWS, AND IN A GREAT CAVERN MEETS THOUSANDS OF FANATICS


wrightag in the Khyber! Aye! w
$\left\lvert\, \begin{aligned} & \text { them back into their fort! Aye! we } \\ & \text { niew many I" }\end{aligned}\right.$
 "Nay, not yet. Bull-with-a-beard
holds bock yet. This was a little fight. holas back yet. This was a littie tight.
The Jihad dhalil come tater "'
"And who is 'Bull-with-a-beara' $\gamma$ " King wondered; but he did not ask
that queston because his wits were
nwake ngaln. It pays not to be in to
much of a hurry to know things in the
"HHle" much of a hurry to know things in the
"Hs.".
As happened, he asked no more
questions, for there came a shout at

A Man Whom Ho Had Never Seen Be.
fore Leaned on a Magazine Rilit and Eyed Him as a Magazine Rige
Tiger Eyos it
$\qquad$

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\begin{aligned}
& \text { morrow. There be many sick in Khin- } \\
& \text { jan. } \\
& \text { King made a uttle effort to clean the } \\
& \text { cave. but the task was hopeless. For }
\end{aligned}
$$

$$
\begin{aligned}
& \text { cave, but the task was hopeless For } \\
& \text { one thing he was so weary that hls } \\
& \text { very bones were water. He apponted } \\
& \text { two-hour watches, to relleve one an: }
\end{aligned}
$$

two-hour watches, to relieve one an-
other untl dawn and fung himself
on a clean bed. He was nasleep before
his head had met the pillow; and for
all he knew to the contrary he dreat all he knew to the contrary he dreame
of Yasminl all nlikht loag.
It seemed to him that she came Int
the enve-she, the woman of the faded
photograph the eeneral had given him
in Peahawur-and that the cavi be came filled 7 th the thenange intoxicat
 surprisingly fa
strange things.
"He sleeps 1 " sald the same volce
presently. "t is good that he sleeps !"
And in his sleep he thought that And in his sleep he thought that
shadowy Ismall grunted an answer When he awoke at last it was after
dawn, nud light shone down the pas gige into the cave.
"IImatli" he shouted, for he wa
thrsty. But there was no answer.
"Darya Khan!"
Agaln there was no answer. He
called each of the other men by nnme
oith the same result. He decided to
go to the cave mouth. summon his men,
who were no doubt sleeplng. But there
was no Ismall near the entrance-no Was no Ksman near the entrance-ne
Darya Khan-nor any of the other
men. The horse was gone. So was the
mule. So was the harness, and every
thing he had, except the drugs and tn struments and the-presents the sick
had glven him He had notced all
hiose lying about in confusion when he "Ismall", he shouted at the top of
his lungs, thinking they might all be
outside. He heard a man hawk and splt, close
o the entrance, and went out to see.
man whom he had never geen before ceaned on a magazine rife and eyed
him as a tiger eyes his prey.
"No farther " he growled, bringing "Why not? King nasked him.
"Allah! When a namel dies in the
hyber do the kites ask why? Go in ${ }^{\text {" }}$ He thought then of Yasmintr's brace-
let, that had always galned hlm
$\qquad$dog's. So King stopped at the entrance
and saw then a blood-coaked bandag on the right of his neck, not very tar
from the jugular.
"H "Hah " sald King, "Was that woun
got in the Khyber the other dayy"
"Na.
 any compunction at all, "that the figh
in the Khyber was because a jilhad is "That man Hed "" sald the guard,
shifting position uneasily, as if afral to talk too much.
"So 1 told himi" answered King.
told him there neyer told him there never will be anothe
jihhad."
"Then thou art a greater Har than
ne!" "Then thou art a greater Har than
hel" the guard answered hoty., "There
will be a thad when she is ready, such an one as never yet was! Indla shall
bleed for all the fat years she has taln
unplunderedt Not a throat of an un-
believer in the world shall be left un-
 so King retired Into the cave, with
somethlng new to think the planning the Jithat! Oor pretending
to plan one en Every once in a white
the guard lenned far into the cave mouth and hurled adjectives at hav
the mildest of whlch was a well of permation. If his temper was the tem- "HIlls," tit was easy to read
per of the
disappointment for a disappointment for a Jithad that should
have been already but had been post-
poned. King let him alone and paced the cave for hours.
He was squatting on his bed-end
in the dark, like a spectacled tmage of Sn the dark, ike a spectacied tmage or
Buddha, when the first of the three
men came on guard ngann nnd at list
Ismant came for nim holding a pltchy
stmat Ismall came for hlm holding a pltchy
torch that filled the dimu passage full
of nerla smoke and made both of them
cough. Ismail was redeeged with it
 hakim I" Then he turned on his heel
at once, as if afrald of belng twitted
with desertion. He seemed to want to
get outalde, where he could keep out of get outside, where he could keep out of
range of words,
seem unfriendily seem unfrlendily:
But King made no effort to speak to
hm, following in slience out on to the
dark ledge above the waterfall and nodark
tecegge that the guarrd with the bollis
was back agaln on duty. He grlinned
evily out of a shadow as King passed. evilly out of a shadow king passed.
"Make an end I" he advised.
"Jump, hakim, before a worse thligg happens
To illustrate the suggestion hom klcked a looge atone over the eliff, and
the movement caused hit to bend hls
neck and so inadvertently to hurt his bolls, He cursed, and there was pity
In King's volee when he spoke next.
"Do they hurt theer" "Aye, Uke the devil! Khinjan is
place of plaguea! "
"I could heal them," King sald, pa
Ing on, and the man stared hard. "I could heal them," King sald, pass
Ing on, and the man stared hard.
"Comel" boomed Ismall through the darkness, shaklng the torch to make
tt burn better and beckong tinpatent-
it it burn better and beckoning mpatient-
ly, and King hurried after him, leaving
behnd a savage at the cave mouth who
ingered his sores and wondered, mut-
on ongered his sores and wondered, mut-
tering. leaning on a rife, muttering
and muttering again as if he had seen a



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 d and Alckerlng light tholowand colora at Across the
nerns farther end for $a$ spac of two dired yards the great river rushed, rrying out of veew down another one. hungry sucking sound. There were hittle lamps everywhere, ad they suifuased the whele cavern In
olden glow. In the middst of the cary olden glow. In the midst of the cav.
rn a great arena had been left bare.
nd thousands of turbaned men squatd round it in rings. At the end
here the river formed a tangent to
nem the rings were fattened, and at em the rivgs wermed a fattenenge, and at at
hat pont they were cut into by the

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\text { to }\left.\right|_{\mathrm{s}} ^{\mathrm{g}}
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## \section*{}

"
 Ender would seurry Into bovinas amio
 Aroust ine areaty veated cerom wind
䢒 Neemed no room any meter in troot
 rhe At tue roof. The rlecchettios bibit
 srinned as
to avold it.
Instantiy a hundred men roose from
ifferent directions and raced for the arena, ench with a curved oword ti
ither hand. The yell to the The yelling changed back

It
A
t and dance, than which there of the "Hills."
Ismall seemed obsessed by the aptrit or hades let loose-drawn by lt, as by a
magnet, although subsequent eventa proved him not to have been altogether
without a plan. He got up, with hte eyes fixed on the dannec, and, with his
hirust
himself and King next to some Orakzal Pathans, elbowing savagely to right
and left to make room. And patlence
proved proved searce. The nearest man
reanched for the ever-ready Pathan
knife, but paveed knife, but paused in the Instant that
his knife licked clear. From a swift side gniance at Kilg's face he changed
to a full stare, hls scowl slowly giv: ng place to a grin as he recognised
him.
"Allah 1" "Well met, hakim! See-the wound heais ninely!
Baring his shoulder under the smelly
sheepskin coat, he ufted a bandage gingerly to show the clean opening out
of whtch Kligg had coaxed a bullet the
day before. It looked wholesome and Cendy to heal.
"Name thy reward, hakim! We
Wer (Now that boast was a true one.)
King nodded more to himself than to
the other man. He needed, for thstance, very much to know, who whas
plannlng a jlhad, nnd who "Bull-with-a-beard" might be; but tho was not safe
to confide fust yet in a chance-made ac
 with some phases of the East had
taught him that names such as Bull-
with-a-beard are otten almost graphtcally descriptive. He rose to his
feet to look. A blind man can talk, but
it takes trained eyed to The din had Increased, and it was
safe to stand up and stare, because all eyes were on the madness in the mid.
die. There were plents bestidee htm.
seif who stood to get a better verw seif who stood to get a better riew,
and he had to dodge from side to eldo "Tm not to doctor his men. There-
fore it's a falr guess that he and I are
to be kept apart. Therefore he'll be as to be kept apart. Therefore he'll be as
far away from me now as posablie, Reasoning along that line, he tried
to see the fuces on the far side, but the problem was to see over the dancers
heands. He succeeded presently, for
te 0 . Che Orakzan Pathan saw what he wanted, and in his anxiety to be agreeable,
reached forward to pull back a box
from between the ranks to front reached forward to pull back a box
from between the ranks in front. Its
owners offered Instant fight, but made oo further objection when they saw dered at their sudden change of mind.
He fornd a man soon who wan not interested in the dancing, but who had eyes and ears apparently for every-
thligg and everybody else. Ho watched
him for ten minutes until him for ten minutes, untl1 at last thetr
eyee met. Then he sat down and
licked the box back to its owners. He Kicked the box back to its owners, He
touched the Pathan's broad shoulder.
The man smiled and bent his turbaned The man smiled
head to usten.
"Opposite". sald King, "nearly ex-
netly opposite-three rows from the front, counting the front row as one-
there sits a man wrth a black beard,
whose shoulders are ulte a buils. As whose shoulders are ulke a buills, As
he sits he hangs hls hend between them. Look1 Seel
what his name is ${ }^{1 \prime}$.
The Pathan got and strode for,
ward to stand on the box, kicking aside ward to stand on the box,
the elbows that leaned on It and laughthe elbows that leaned on it and laugh-
ing $\nabla$ hen the owners cursed him. Ho
stood on it and stared for five minutes, counting delliberately three times over,
striking a fliger on the palm of his striking a finger on the
hand to check hlmself.
"Bull-with-a-beard !" "Bull-with-a-beard !" he announced
at last, dropplag back: into place beside
King. "Nuhammad Antm. The mullab
 "He says he ts an Afghan. But ub-
less he Hes he ys from Lithamboul Itching to ask more questions, King
-the halim. Kurram Khan-bilnked
miludiy behind his spectactes and looked milldy behind his spectacles and looked
uke one to whom $a$ savage might anfoease has mind.
Hee bade me go "He bade me go to sikaram whero
my village 18 and bring him a hundred
men for ht lashkar. He sady he has
her
 entily drawlug a bow at a venture for
converantion's akee. But there in an


