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He rises to his feet and bursts into a wild, high-pitched chant. The drums soon pick up his rhythm, and Margo begins a Nautch-like dance. Perhaps it is as well for our morals that we do not understand his words. Anyhow, Margo's turn goes with a swing, and he grows hot with the vigour of his effort. The Indians score over us Westerners. There is nothing of stage fright or reticence about them in playing their parts, good or bad, in a fraternal evening of this kind. Here is Margo, a jungli wallah, if ever there was one, from a primitive, remote village, and as near to the soil as well could be.

"The next turn brings the house down. Our cheerful Ghurka, Tulea Tharpa, has been in a military band, and now despises both Nepali and Hindustani music.

"Then Tulea gives us his masterpiece. It is a song 'I Want to be Single.' Masterji is not very successful in providing an accompaniment, as waltz-time



SIR CLUTHA MCKENZIE

is an unfamiliar metre in India. However, though Tulea's effort may lack perfection, it goes down with a bang.

Self-Appause

"Everyone is jolly and happy. Each performer signals the end of his piece by heartily applauding himself, and we all join in. Who hasn't contributed? Only Jaggar Singh, a bearded Sikh, who has only been with us a week, having been blinded in the Sicilian campaign. He was miserable and depressed for the first two or three days, but has perked up a bit. 'Give us a song,' Unhesitatingly he begins. It is a Sikh invocation, a kind of psalm, as it were, to one of his gods. Fascinated, we listen. His voice is amazingly true, full of fervour, and of good tone. We knew nothing of the words, but there was no mistaking the changing motifs of prayer, humility, obeisance, praise, submission, and triumph. . . . Sweet tea is served with sugary Indian cakes. We smoke our cigarettes, and so come to the end of a friendly hour. 'Salaam, Sahib! Salaam Huzoor!' 'Salaam, salaam, salaam!'

"We walk across to our bungalow. The snow-covered mountain-crests hang a startling white in the peaceful moonlight. Sharp shadows are made by the palms and mango trees, so still in the silvered air. . . . Another day has passed."



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