

and handed him an "urgent" envelope. Montagu-Murray took the envelope, flicked the messenger off the bottom left-hand corner, and cut it open with official neatness. The wire read :

You are called to the Viceroy's Council.

—ROBERTS.

Many things which, as a human being, Montagu-Murray might have questioned, simply didn't strike him. As a matter of fact he did not even decide that it was not correct for the Commander-in-Chief to meddle with calls to the Council.

The messenger hung about his spurs in wistful unmeaningness waiting for the favour of a reply. Montagu-Murray merely administered a superior jostle to remove the small vestment of officialdom out of the road, puffed out his chest, and turned towards the barracks.

It was an afterthought that induced him to hastily recover his horse from the care of the *sais*, and ride at a furious pace up the hill to the telegraph station to wire his reply to Calcutta as follows :

Appointment accepted. In Calcutta to-morrow.
MONTAGU-MURRAY.

But there was no excitement, nothing out of the regulation pace, as he trotted back to barracks to prepare.

The station was all agog with excitement at the approaching departure of the regiments. Men bustled about in and out of the barracks; officers' wives appeared on the scene with melancholy countenances; native knansamahs and kitmatgars made their license and authority felt among the promiscuous bhistis and followers who had rolled up from strange corners for the march; loud-mouthed dealers paraded horses which certainly never were equalled for frontier service; and every little social function was swept away into oblivion.

The officers of the squadron were merry at the prospect, and more. Montagu-Murray was one of many, and seemed for once to be imbued with the common instinct. It was not surprising, therefore, that nobody noticed that his traps were labelled "Calcutta" instead of anything else.

"Hullo, Monty, old fellow!" yelled Savile in the exuberance of his preparations, "what's this? Dak bungalow, shikar kit, chain mail, 'pon my word!"

At that moment the major appeared on the scene, cynically prepared to sneer at anything and everything emanating from young minds.

"Humph!" he snorted, with the air of one who has found the kitmatgar's chicken perched on his table-cloth. "Who the devil expects the Field Force tongas to carry all this?" (kicks Montagu-Murray's pile). "It's as plain as plain can be you fellows missed the Colonel's lecture on transport the other day. The first lesson of wild warfare, perhaps you'll remember, is to find material for your defences on the spot, and so adapt materials at hand to your purpose. Now, hang it all, Murray, we're not going to carry trenches and breastworks with us, that's dead certain!"

"You don't understand, Major," explained Montagu-Murray; "my traps are going to Calcutta."

The major burst into a derisive laugh.

"Well, well, in all my life I never saw such a set of fellows as you! Here's a fresh sub. never been under fire yet making over his effects to his friends to escape the Court of Adjustment! You're altogether too deuced morbid, Murray! You won't believe that I've known an officer—yes, and a man who was worth something, too—come out of a campaign alive, and he didn't even have the honour of having scared the whole mess into funk of death. Perhaps you'll have a few healthier ideas when you've been shot at for a week or two. You'll place a smaller price on effects then."

"I'm afraid it will be a few weeks yet before I'm under fire," meekly suggested Montagu-Murray, with admirably assumed disappointment.

"Don't be too sure! I'll lay you a wager you'll have a hundredweight of lead seething within a yard of you, and a few score of tulwars hacking at your head before you're a week older; and if you don't make an effort to get into something like form before then, well, I don't know what! Now the