

# The Red Hawk

By  
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## CHAPTER I

### THE DESERT CLANS

THE January sun beat hotly down upon me as I reined Red Lightning in upon the summit of a barren hill and looked down upon the rich land of plenty that stretched away below me as far as the eye could see toward the mighty sea that lay a day's ride, perhaps, to the westward—the sea that none of us had ever looked upon—the sea that had become as fabulous as a legend of the ancients during the almost four hundred years since the Moon Men had swept down upon us and overwhelmed the Earth in their mad and bloody carnival of revolution.

In the near distance the green of the orange groves mocked us from below, and great patches that were groves of leafless nut trees, and there were sandy patches toward the south that were vineyards waiting for the hot suns of April and May before they, too, broke into riotous, tantalizing green. And from this garden spot of plenty a curling trail wound up the mountainside to the very level where we sat gazing fiercely down upon this last stronghold of our foes. When the ancients built that trail it must have been wide and beautiful indeed, but in the centuries that have elapsed man and the elements have sadly defaced it. The rains have washed it away in places and the Kalkars have made great gashes in it to deter us, their enemies, from invading their sole remaining lands and driving them into the sea; and upon their side of the gashes they have built forts where they keep warriors always. And well for them that they do. It is so upon every pass that leads down into their country.

Since fell my great ancestor, Julian 9th, in the year 2122, at the end of the first uprising against the Kalkars, we have been driving them slowly back across the world. That was over three hundred years ago. For a hundred years they have held us here, a day's ride from the ocean. Just how far it is we do not know; but in 2408 my grandfather, Julian 18th, rode alone almost to the sea. He had won back almost to safety when he was discovered and pursued almost to the tents of his people. There was a battle, and the Kalkars who had dared invade our country were destroyed, but Julian 18th died of his wounds without being able to tell more than that a wondrous rich country lay between us and the sea, which was not more than a day's ride distant. A day's ride, for us, might be anything under a hundred miles.

We are desert people. Our herds range a vast territory where feed is scarce that we may be always near the goal that our ancestors set for us three centuries ago—the shore of the western sea into which it is our destiny to drive the remnants of our former oppressors. In the forests and mountains of Arizona there is rich pasture, but it is far from the land of the Kalkars where the last of the tribe of Or-tis make their last stand, and so we prefer to live in the desert near our foes, driving our herds great distances to pasture when the need arises, rather than to settle down in a comparative land of plenty, resigning the age-old struggle, the ancient feud between the house of Julian and the house of Or-tis.

A light breeze moves the black mane of the bright bay stallion beneath me. It moves my own black mane where it falls loose below the buckskin thong that encircles my head and keeps it from my eyes. It moves the dangling ends of the Great Chiefs blanket where it is strapped behind my saddle. On the twelfth day of the eighth month of the year just gone this Great Chief's blanket covered the shoulders of my father, Julian 19th, from the burning rays of the summer's desert sun. I was twenty on that day and on that day my father fell before the lance of an Or-tis in the Great Feud and I became The Chief of Chiefs.

Surrounding me today, as I sit looking down upon the land of my enemies, are fifty of the fierce chieftains of the hundred clans that swear allegiance to the house of Julian. They are bronzed and, for the most part, beardless men. The insignias of their clans are painted in various colors upon their foreheads, their cheeks, their breasts. Ochre, they use and blue and white and scarlet. Feathers rise from the head bands that confine their hair—the feathers of the vulture, the hawk and the eagle. I, Julian 20th, wear a single feather. It is from a red-tailed hawk—the clan-sign of my family.

We are all garbed similarly. Let me describe The Wolf, and in his portrait you will see a composite of us all. He is a sinewy, well built man of fifty, with piercing, gray-blue eyes beneath straight brows. His head is well shaped, denoting great intelligence. His features are strong and powerful and of a certain fierce cast that might well strike terror to a foeman's heart—and does, if the Kalkar scalps that fringe his ceremonial blanket stand for aught. His breeches, wide below the hips and skin tight from above the knees down are of the skin of the buck deer. His soft boots, tied tight about the calf of each leg, are also of buck. Above the waist he wears a sleeveless vest of calfskin tanned with the hair on. The Wolfs is of fawn and white. Sometimes these vests are ornamented with bits of colored stone or metal sewn to the hide in various manners of design. From The Wolfs headband, just above the right ear, depends the tail of a timber wolf—the clan-sign of his family.

An oval shield, upon which is painted the head of a wolf, hangs about this chiefs neck, covering his back from nape to kidneys. It is a stout, light shield—a hard wood frame covered with bull hide. Around its periphery have been fastened the tails of wolves. In such matters each man, with the assistance of his women folk, gives rein to his fancy in the matter of ornamentation. Clan-signs and chief-signs, however, are sacred. The use of one to which he is not entitled might spell death for any man. I say might, because we have no inflexible laws. We have few laws. The Kalkars

were forever making laws, so we hate them. We judge each case upon its own merits, and we pay more attention to what a man intended doing than what he did.

The Wolf is armed, as are the rest of us, with a light lance about eight feet in length, a knife and a straight, two-edged sword. A short, stout bow is slung beneath his right stirrup leather and a quiver of arrows is at his saddle bow.

The blades of his sword and his knife and the metal of his lance tip come from a far place called Kolrado and are made by a tribe that is famous because of the hardness and the temper of the metal of its blades. The Utaws bring us metal, also, but theirs is inferior and we use it only for the shoes that protect our horses\* feet from the cutting sands and the rocks of our hard and barren country.

The Kolrados travel many days to reach us, coming once in two years. They pass, unmolested, through the lands of many tribes because they bring what none might otherwise have and what we need in our never ending crusade against the Kalkars. That is the only thread that holds together the scattered clans and tribes that spread east and north and south beyond the ken of man. All are animated by the same purpose—to drive the last of the Kalkars into the sea.

From the Kolrados we get meager news of clans beyond them toward the rising sun. Far, far to the east, they say, so far that in a lifetime no man might reach it, lies another great sea, and that there, as here upon the world's western edge, a few Kalkars are making their last stand. All the rest of the world has been won back by the people of our own blood—by Americans.

We are always glad to see the Kolrados come, for they bring us news of other peoples, and we welcome the Utaws, too, though we are not a friendly people, killing all others who come among us, for fear, chiefly, that they may be spies sent by the Kalkars. It is handed down from father to son

that this was not always so, and that once the people of the world went to and fro safely from place to place and that then all spoke the same language; but now it is different. The Kalkars brought hatred and suspicion among us, until now we trust only the members of our own clans and tribes.

The Kolrados, from coming often among us, we can understand, and they can understand us, by means of a few words and many signs, though when they speak their own language among themselves we cannot understand them, except for an occasional word that is like one of ours. They say that when the last of the Kalkars is driven from the world we must live at peace with one another, but I am afraid that that will never come to pass, for who would go through life without breaking a lance or dipping his sword point now and again into the blood of a stranger? Not The Wolf, I swear, nor no more The Red Hawk. By The Flag I take more pleasure in meeting a stranger upon a lonely trail than in meeting a friend, for I cannot set my lance against a friend and feel the swish of the wind as Red Lightning bears me swiftly down upon the prey as I crouch in the saddle, nor thrill to the shock as we strike.

I am The Red Hawk. I am but twenty, yet the fierce chiefs of a hundred fierce clans bow to my will. I am a Julian—the twentieth Julian—and from this year, 2434, I can trace my line back five hundred and thirty-four years to Julian 1st, who was born in 1896. From father to son, by word of mouth, has been handed down to me the story of every Julian,—and there is no blot upon the shield of one in all that long line, nor shall there be any blot upon the shield of Julian 20th. From my fifth year to my tenth I learned, word for word, as had my father before me, the deeds of my forebears, and to hate the Kalkars and the tribe of Or-tis. This, with riding, was my schooling. From ten to fifteen I learned to use lance and sword and knife, and on my sixteenth birthday I rode forth with the other men—a warrior.

As I sat there this day, looking down upon the

land of the accursed Kalkars, my mind went back to the deeds of the 15th Julian, who had driven the Kalkars across the desert and over the edge of these mountains into the valley below just one hundred years before I was born, and I turned to The Wolf and pointed down toward the green groves and the distant hills and off beyond to where the mysterious ocean lay.

"For a hundred years they have held us here," I said. "It is too long."

"It is too long," replied The Wolf.

"When the rains are over The Red Hawk leads his people into the land of plenty."

The Rock raised his spear and shook it savagely toward the valley far below. The scalp-lock fastened just below its metal-shod tip trembled in the wind. "When the rains are over!" cried The Rock. His fierce eyes glowed with the fire of fanaticism.

"The green of the groves we will dye red with their blood," cried The Rattlesnake.

"With our swords, not our mouths," I said, and wheeled Red Lightning toward the east. The Coyote laughed and the others joined with him as we wound downward out of the hills toward the desert.

On the afternoon of the following day we came within sight of our tents where they were pitched beside the yellow flood of The River. Five miles before that we had seen a few puffs of smoke rise from the summit of a hill to the north of us. It told the camp that a body of horsemen was approaching from the west. It told us that our sentry was on duty and that doubtless all was well. At a signal my warriors formed themselves in two straight lines, crossing one another at their centers. A moment later another smoke signal arose informing the camp that we were friends and us that our signal had been rightly read.

Presently, in a wild charge, whooping and brandishing our spears, we charged down among the tents. Dogs, children and slaves scampered for safety, the dogs barking, the children and the slaves yelling and laughing. As we swung

ourselves from our mounts before our tents, slaves rushed out to seize our bridle reins, the dogs leaped, growling, upon us in exuberant welcome, while the children fell upon their sires, their uncles or their brothers, demanding the news of the ride or a share in the spoils of conflict or chase. Then we went in to our women.

I had no wife, but there were my mother and my two sisters, and I found them awaiting me in the inner tent, seated upon a low couch that was covered, as was the floor, with the bright blankets that our slaves weave from the wool of sheep. I knelt and took my mother's hand and kissed it and then I kissed her upon the lips and in the same fashion I saluted my sisters, the elder first. It is custom among us; but it is also our pleasure, for we both respect and love our women. Even if we did not, we should appear to, if only for the reason that the Kalkars do otherwise. They are brutes and swine. We do not permit our women a voice in the councils of the men, but none the less do they influence our councils from the seclusion of their inner tents. It is indeed an unusual mother among us who does not make her voice heard in the council ring, through her husband or her sons, and she does it through the love and respect in which they hold her and not by scolding and nagging. They are wonderful, our women. It is for them and The Flag that we have fought the foe across a world for three hundred years. It is for them that we shall go forth and drive him into the sea.

As the slaves prepared the evening meal I chatted with my mother and my sisters. My two brothers, The Vulture and Rain Cloud, lay also at my mother's feet. The Vulture was eighteen, a splendid warrior, a true Julian. Rain Cloud was sixteen then, and I think the most beautiful creature I had ever seen. He had just become a warrior, but so sweet and lovable was his disposition that the taking of human life seemed a most incongruous calling for him, yet he was a Julian and there was no alternative. Everyone loved him and respected him too, even though he had never excelled in feats of arms for which he seemed to have no relish; but they respected him because

they knew that he was brave and that he would fight as courageously as any of them, even though he might have no stomach for it. Personally, I considered Rain Cloud braver than I, for I knew that he would do well the thing he hated while I would be only doing well the thing I loved.

The Vulture resembled me in looks and the love of blood, so we left Rain Cloud at home to help guard the women and the children, which was no disgrace since it is a most honorable and sacred trust, and we went forth to the fighting when there was likely to be any, and when there wasn't we went forth and searched for it. How often have I ridden the trails leading in across our vast frontiers longing for sight of a strange horseman against whom I might bend my lance! We asked no questions then when we had come close enough to see the clan-sign of the stranger and to know that he was of another tribe and likely he was as keen for the fray as we, otherwise he would have tried to avoid us. We each drew rein at a little distance and set his lance, and each called aloud his name, and then with a mighty oath each bore down upon the other, and then one rode away with a fresh scalp-lock, and a new horse to add to his herd, while the other remained to sustain the vulture and the coyote.

Two or three of our great, shaggy hounds came in and sprawled among us as we lay talking with mother and the two girls, Nallah and Neeta. Behind my mother and sisters squatted three slave girls, ready to do their bidding, for our women do no labor. They ride and walk and swim and keep their bodies strong and fit that they may bear mighty warriors, but labor is beneath them as it is beneath us. We hunt and fight and tend our own herds, for that is not menial, but all other labor the slaves perform. We found them here when we came. They have been here always—a stolid, dark skinned people, weavers of blankets and baskets, makers of pottery, tillers of the soil. We are kind to them and they are happy. The Kalkars, who preceded us, were not kind to them—it has been handed down to them from father to son for over a hundred years that the Kalkars were cruel to them and they hate their memory, yet, were we to be



driven away by the Kalkars, these simple people would remain and serve anew their cruel masters, for they will never leave their soil. They have strange legends of a far time when great horses of iron raced across the desert dragging iron tents filled with people behind them, and they point to holes in the mountain sides through which these iron monsters made their way to the green valleys by the sea, and they tell of men who flew like birds and as swiftly, but of course we know that such things were never true and are but the stories that the old men and the women among them told to the children for their amusement. However, we like to listen to them.

I told my mother of my plans to move down into the valley of the Kalkars after the rains. She was silent some time before replying.

"Yes, of course," she said; "you would be no Julian were you not to attempt it. At least twenty times before in a hundred years have our warriors gone down in force into the valley of the Kalkars and been driven back. I wish that you might have taken a wife and left a son to be Julian 21st before you set out upon this expedition from which you may not return. Think well of it, my son, before you set forth. A year or two will make no great difference. But you are The Great Chief and if you decide to go we can but wait here for your return and pray that all is well with you."

"But you do not understand. Mother," I replied. "I said that we are going to move down into the valley of the Kalkars after the rains. I did not say that we are coming back again. I did not say that you would remain here and wait for our return. You will accompany us. The tribe of Julian moves down into the valley of the Kalkars when the rains are over, and they take with them their women and their children and their tents and all their flocks and herds and every other possession that is movable, and—they do not return to live in the desert ever more."

She did not reply, but only sat in thought. Presently a man-slave came to bid us warriors to the evening meal. The women and the children eat this meal within their tents, but the warriors gather around a great, circular table, called The Council

Ring.

There were a hundred of us there that night. Flares in the hands of slaves gave us light and there was light from the cooking fire that burned within the circle formed by the table. The others remained standing until I had taken my seat which was the signal that the eating might begin. Before each warrior was an earthenware vessel containing beer and another filled with wine, and there were slaves whose duty it was to keep these filled, which was no small task, for we are hearty men and great drinkers, though there is no drunkenness among us as there is among the Kalkars. Other slaves brought meat and vegetables-beef and mutton, both boiled and broiled, potatoes, beans and corn, and there were bowls of figs and dried grapes and dried plums. There were also venison and bear meat and fish. There was a great deal of talk and a great deal of laughter, loud and boisterous, for the evening meal in the home camp is always a gala event. We ride hard and we ride often and we ride long. Often we are fighting and much of the time away from home. Then we have little to eat and nothing to drink but water, which is often warm and unclean and always scarce in our country.

We sit upon a long bench that encircles the outer periphery of the table and as I took my seat, the slaves, bearing platters of meat, passed along the inner rim of the table, and as they came opposite each warrior he rose, and leaning far across the board, seized a portion of meat with a thumb and finger and cut it deftly away with his sharp knife. The slaves moved in slow procession without pause and there was a constant gleam and flash of blades and movement and change of color as the painted warriors rose and leaned across the table, the firelight playing upon their beads and metal ornaments and the gay feathers of their headdresses. And the noise!

Pacing to and fro behind the warriors were two or three score shaggy hounds waiting for the scraps that would presently be tossed them'-large, savage beasts bred to protect our flocks from coyote and wolf, hellhound and lion, and capable

of doing it, too.

As the warriors fell to eating the din subsided, and at a word from me a youth at my elbow struck a deep note from a drum. Instantly there was silence.

"For a hundred years we have dwelt beneath the heat of this barren waste land while our foes occupied a flowering garden, their cheeks fanned by the cooling breezes of the sea. They live in plenty; their women eat of luscious fruits, fresh from the trees, while ours must be satisfied with the dried and wrinkled semblance of the real; ten slaves they have to do their labor for every one that we possess; their flocks and herds find lush pasture and sparkling water beside their masters' tents, while ours pick a scant existence across forty thousand square miles of sandy, rock-bound desert; but these things gall the soul of The Red Hawk least of all. The wine turns bitter in my mouth when in my mind's eye I look out across the rich valleys of the Kalkars and I recall that here alone in all the world that we know there flies not The Flag."

A great growl rose from the fierce throats. "Since my youth I have held one thought sacred in my breast against the day that the blanket of The Great Chief should fall upon my shoulders. That day has come and I but await the time that the rains shall be safely over before making of that thought a deed. Twenty times in a hundred years have the Julian warriors ridden down into the Kalkar country in force, but their women and their children and their flocks remained behind in the desert—an unescapable argument for their return.

"It shall not be so again. In April the tribe of Julian leaves the desert forever. With our tents and our women and all our flocks and herds we shall descend and live among the orange groves. This time there shall be no turning back. I, The Red Hawk, have spoken."

## CHAPTER II

### EXODUS

APRIL arrived and with it the clans, coming at my bidding. Soon there would be little danger of heavy rains in the coast valleys. To have been caught there in a week of rain with an army would have been fatal, for the mud is deep and sticky and our horses would have mired and the Kalkars fallen upon us and destroyed us. They greatly outnumber us, and so our only hope must lie in our mobility. We realize that we are reducing this by taking along our women and our flocks, but we believe that so desperate will be our straits that we must conquer, since the only alternative to victory must be death—death for us and worse for our women and children.

The clans have been gathering for two days and all are here—some fifty thousand souls, and of horses, cattle and sheep there must be a thousand thousand, for we are rich in live stock. In the past two months, at my orders, all our swine have been slaughtered and smoked, for we could not be hampered by them on the long desert march, even if they could have survived it.

There is water in the desert this time of year and some feed, but it will be a hard, a terrible march. We shall lose a great deal of our stock, one in ten, perhaps; The Wolf thinks it may be as high as five in ten. We shall start tomorrow an hour before sunset, making a short march of about ten miles to a place where there is a spring along the trail the ancients used. It is strange to see all across the desert evidence of the great work they accomplished. After five hundred years the location of their well graded trail, with its wide, sweeping curves, is plainly discernible. It is a narrow trail, but there are signs of another, much wider, that we discover occasionally. It follows the general line of the other, crossing it and recrossing it, without any apparent reason, time and time again. It is almost obliterated by drifting sand, or washed away by the rains of ages. Only where it is of a material like stone has it endured. The pains those ancients took with things! The time and men and effort they expended! And for what? They have disappeared and their works with them.

As we rode that first night Rain Cloud rode often at my side and, as usual, he was gazing at the stars.

"There is so much that we do not know," sighed Rain Cloud; "yet all that we can spare the time for is thoughts of fighting. I shall be glad when we have chased the last of the Kalkars into the sea, so that some of us may sit down in peace and think."

"It is handed down to us that the ancients prided themselves upon their knowledge, but what did it profit them? I think we are happier. They must have had to work all their lives to do the things they did and to know all the things they knew, yet they could eat no more, or sleep no more, or drink no more in a lifetime than can we. And now they are gone forever from the Earth and all their works with them and all their knowledge is lost."

"And presently we will be gone," said Rain Cloud.

"And we will have left as much as they to benefit those who follow," I replied.

"Perhaps you are right. Red Hawk," said Rain Cloud; "yet I cannot help wanting to know more than I do know."

The second march was also made at night and was a little longer than the first. We had a good moon and the desert night was bright. The third march was about twenty-five miles and the fourth a short one, only ten miles; and there we left the trail of the ancients and continued in a southwesterly direction to a trail that followed a series of springs that gave us short marches the balance of the way to a lake called Bear by our slaves. The way, of course, was all well known to us, and so we knew just what was ahead and dreaded the fifth march, which was a terrible one, by far the worst of them all. It lay across a rough and broken area of desert and crossed a range of barren mountains—for forty-five miles it wound its parched way from water hole to water hole. For horsemen alone it would have been but a hard march, but with cattle and sheep to herd across that waterless waste, it became a terrific undertaking. Every beast that was strong enough carried hay, oats or barley in sacks, for we could not depend entirely upon the sparse feed of the desert for so huge a caravan; but water we could not carry in sufficient

quantities for the stock, transporting enough, however, on the longer marches to insure a supply for the women and all children under sixteen, and on the short marches enough for nursing mothers and children under ten.

We rested all day before the fifth march began, setting forth about three hours before sundown. From fifty camps in fifty parallel lines we started. Every man, woman and child was mounted. The women carried all children under five, usually seated astride a blanket on the horse's rump behind the mother. The rest rode alone. The bulk of the warriors and all the women and children set out ahead of the herds, which followed slowly behind, each bunch securely hemmed in by outriders and followed by a rear guard of warriors.

A hundred men on swift horses rode at the head of the column, and as the night wore on, gradually increased their lead until they were out of sight of the remainder of the caravan. Their duty was to reach the camp site ahead of the others and fill the water tanks that slaves had been preparing for the past two months. We took but few slaves with us, only a few personal attendants for the women and such others as did not wish to be separated from their masters and had chosen to accompany us. For the most part the slaves preferred to remain in their own country and we were willing to let them, since it made fewer mouths to feed upon the long journey and we knew that in the Kalkar country we should find plenty to take their places, as we would take those from the Kalkars we defeated.

The long, tiresome march was over at last. The years of thought that I had given it, the two months of preparation that had immediately preceded it, the splendid condition of all our stock, the training and the temper of my people bore profitable fruit and we came through without the loss of a man, woman or child, and with the loss of less than two in a hundred of our herds and flocks. The mountain crossing on that memorable fifth march took the heaviest toll, fully ten thousand head, mostly lambs and calves, falling by the trail side.

With two days out for rest, we came, at the end of the tenth march and the twelfth day, to the lake called Bear and into a rich mountain country, lush

with feed and game. Here deer and wild goats and wild sheep abounded, with rabbit and quail and wild chicken and the beautiful wild cattle that the legends of our slaves say are descended from the domestic stock of the ancients.

It was not my plan to rest here longer than was necessary to fully restore the strength and spirits of the stock. **Our** horses were not jaded as we had had sufficient to change often. In fact we warriors had not ridden our warhorses once upon the journey. Red Lightning had trotted into the last camp fat and sleek.

To have remained here long would have been to have apprised the enemy of our plans, for the Kalkars and their slaves hunt in these mountains which adjoin their land, and should a single hunter see this vast concourse of Julians, our coming would have been known throughout the valleys in a single day and our purpose guessed by all.

So, after a day of rest, I sent The Wolf and a thousand warriors westward to the main pass of the ancients with orders to make it appear that we were attempting to enter the valley there in force. For three days he would persist in this false advance and in that time I felt that I should have drawn all the Kalkar fighting men from the valley lying southwest of the lake of the Bear. My lookouts were posted upon every eminence that gave view of the valleys and the trails between the main pass of the ancients and that through which we should pour down from the Bear out into the fields and groves of the Kalkars.

The third day was spent in preparation. The last of the arrows were finished and distributed. We looked to our saddle leathers and our bridles. We sharpened our swords and knives once more and put keener points upon our lances. Our women mixed the war paint and packed our belongings again for another march. The herds were gathered in and held in close, compact bunches. Riders reported to me at intervals from the various lookouts and from down the trail to the edge of the Kalkar farms. No enemy had seen us, but that they had seen The Wolf and his warriors we had the most reassuring evidence in the reports from our

outposts that every trail from south and west was streaming with Kalkar warriors converging upon the pass of the ancients.\*

During the third day we moved leisurely down the mountain trails and as night fell our vanguard of a thousand warriors debouched into the groves of the Kalkars. Leaving four thousand warriors, mostly youths, to guard the women, the children, the flocks and the herds, I set out rapidly in a northwesterly direction toward the pass of the ancients at the head of full twenty thousand warriors.

Our war horses we had led all day as we came slowly out of the mountains riding other animals, and not until we were ready to start upon the twenty-five mile march to the pass of the ancients did we saddle and mount the fleet beasts upon which the fate of the Julians might rest this night. In consequence our horses were fresh from a two weeks' rest. Three hours of comparatively easy riding should see us upon the flanks of the enemy.

The Rock, a brave and seasoned warrior, I had left behind to guard the women, the children and the stock. The Rattlesnake, with five thousand warriors, bore along a more westerly trail, after fifteen miles had been covered, that he might fall upon the rear of the enemy from one point while I fell upon them from another, and at the same time place himself between their main body, lying at the foot of the pass, and the source of their supplies and reinforcements.

With The Wolf, the mountains and the desert upon one side and The Rattlesnake and I blocking them upon the south and the southeast, the position of the Kalkars appeared to me to be hopeless.

Toward midnight I called a halt to await the report of scouts who had preceded us and it was not long before they commenced to come in. From them I learned that the camp fires of the Kalkars were visible from an eminence less than a mile ahead. I gave the signal to advance. Slowly the great mass of warriors moved forward. The trail dipped down into a little valley and then wound upward to the crest of a low ridge, where a few minutes later I brought Red Lightning to a halt.



Before me spread a broad valley bathed in the soft light of moon and stars. Dark masses in the nearer foreground I recognized as orange groves even without the added evidence of the sweet aroma of their blossoms that was heavy on the still night air. Beyond, to the northwest, a great area was dotted with the glowing embers of a thousand dying camp fires. I filled my lungs with the cool, sweet air; I felt my nerves tingle; a wave of exaltation surged through me; Red Lightning trembled beneath me. After nearly four hundred years a Julian stood at last upon the threshold of complete revenge!

\*Probably Cajon Pass.

### CHAPTER III

#### ARMAGEDDON

VERY quietly we crept down among the orange groves, nearer, ever nearer to the sleeping foe. Somewhere to the west of us, beneath the silvery moon. The Rattlesnake was creeping stealthily forward to strike. Presently the stillness of the night would be broken by the booming of his war drums and the hoarse war-cries of his savage horde. It would be the signal that would send The Wolf down from the mountain heights above them and The Red Hawk from the orange groves below them to sink fang and talon into the flesh of the hated Kalkars, and ever The Rattlesnake would be striking at their heels.

Silently we awaited the signal from The Rattlesnake. A thousand bowmen unslung their bows and loosened arrows in their quivers; swords were readjusted, their hilts ready to the hand; men spat upon their right palms that their lance grip might be the surer. The night dragged on toward dawn. The success of my plan depended upon a surprise attack while the foe slept. I knew that The Rattlesnake would not fail me, but something must have delayed him. I gave the signal to advance silently. Like shadows we

moved through the orange groves and deployed along a front two miles in length, a thousand bowmen in the lead and behind these, line after line of lancers and swordsmen. Slowly we moved forward toward the sleeping camp. How like the lazy, stupid Kalkars that no sentries were posted at their rear. Doubtless there were plenty of them on the front exposed to The Wolf. Where they could see an enemy they could prepare for him, but they have not imagination enough to foresee aught. Only the desert and their great numbers have saved them from extermination during the past hundred years.

Scarce a mile away now we could catch occasional glimpses of the dying embers of the nearest fires, and then from the east there rolled across the valley the muffled booming of distant war drums. A momentary silence followed and then faintly, there broke upon our ears the warcries of our people. At my signal our own drums shattered the silence that had surrounded us. It was the signal for the charge. From twenty thousand savage throats rose the awful cries of battle, twenty thousand pairs of reins were loosed and eighty thousand iron shod hoofs set the earth atremble as they thundered down upon the startled enemy, and from the heights above came the growl of the drums of The Wolf and the eerie howls of his painted horde.

It was dawn as we smote the camp. Our bowmen, guiding their mounts with their knees and the swing of their bodies, raced among the bewildered Kalkars, loosing their barbed shafts into the cursing, shrieking mob that fled before them only to be ridden down and trampled by their horses' feet.

Behind the bowmen came the lancers and the swordsmen thrusting and cutting at those who survived. From our left came the tumult of The Rattlesnake's assault and from far ahead and above us the sounds of battle proclaimed that The Wolf had fallen on the foe.

Ahead I could see the tents of the Kalkar leaders and toward these I spurred Red Lightning. Here would be the representatives of the house of Or-tis and here would the battle center. Ahead the

Kalkars were forming in some semblance of order to check and repel us. They are huge men and ferocious fighters, but I could see that our surprise attack had unnerved them. They gave before us, before their chiefs could organize them for resistance, yet again and again they reformed and faced us. We were going more slowly now, the battle had become largely a matter of hand-to-hand combats; they were checking us, but they were not stopping us. So great were their numbers that even had they been unarmed it would have been difficult to force our horses through their massed ranks. Back of their front line they were saddling and mounting their horses, which those who had borne the brunt of our first onslaught had been unable to do. We had cut the lines to which their animals had been tethered and driven them, terrified, ahead of us to add to the confusion of the enemy. Riderless horses were everywhere, those of the Kalkars and many of our own, whose riders had fallen in battle. The tumult was appalling, for to the shrieks of the wounded and the groans of the dying were added the screams of stricken horses and the wild, hoarse war-cries of battle-maddened men, and underlying all, the dull booming of the war drums. Above us waved The Flag, and here were the drums and a massed guard of picked men. The Flag and the drums moved forward as we moved. And near me was the clan flag of my family with the red hawk upon it and with it were its drums. In all there were a hundred clan flags upon that field this day, and the drums of each rolled out, incessantly, defiance of the enemy.

Their horsemen now were rallied, and the dismounted men were falling back behind them and presently a Kalkar chief upon a large horse confronted me. Already was my blade red with their blood. I had thrown away my lance long since, for we were fighting in too close quarters for its effective use, but the Kalkar had his spear, and there was a little open space between us. In the instant he crouched and put spurs to his horse and bore down upon me.

He was a large man as most Kalkars are, for they have bred with that alone in mind for five hundred years, so that many of them are seven feet in

height and over. He looked very fierce, did this fellow, with his great bulk and his little, blood-shot eyes. He wore a war bonnet of iron to protect his head from sword cuts and a vest of iron covered his chest against the thrusts of sword or lance, or the barbed tips of arrows. We Julians, or Americans, disdain such protection, choosing to depend upon our skill and agility, not hampering ourselves and our horses with the weight of all this metal.

My light shield was on my left forearm and in my right hand I grasped my two-edged sword. A pressure of my knees, an inclination of my body, a word in his pointed ear were all that was needed to make Red Lightning respond to my every wish, even though the reins hung loose upon his withers.

The fellow bore down upon me with a loud yell and Red Lightning leaped to meet him. The Kalkar's point was set straight at my chest and I had only a sword on that side to deflect it, and at that I think I might have done so had I cared to try, even though the Kalkar carries a heavy lance and this one was backed by a heavy man and a heavy horse. With my left hand I grasped Red Lightning's mane and at the instant that the Kalkar thought to see his point tear through my chest I swung from my saddle and lay flat against Red Lightning's near side, while the Kalkar and his spear brushed harmlessly past an empty saddle. Empty for but an instant though. Swinging back to my seat in the instant that I wheeled Red Lightning I was upon the Kalkar from the rear even as the fighting mass before him brought him to a halt. He was swinging to have at me again, but even as he faced me my sword swung down upon his iron bonnet, driving pieces of it through his skull and into his brain. A fellow on foot cut viciously at me at the instant I was recovering from the blow I had dealt the mounted Kalkar, so that I was able only to partially parry with my shield, with the result that his point opened up my right arm at the shoulder—a flesh wound, but one that bled profusely, though it did not stay the force of my return, which drove through his collarbone and opened up his chest to his heart.

Once again I spurred in the direction of the tents

of the Or-tis, above which floated the red banners of the Kalkars, around which were massed the flower of the Kalkar forces; too thickly massed, perhaps, for most effective defense, since we were driving them in from three sides and packing them there as tightly as eggs in the belly of a she-salmon. But now they surged forward and drove us back by weight of numbers, and now we threw ourselves upon them again until they, in their turn, were forced to give the ground that they had won. Sometimes the force of our attack drove them to one side while at another point their warriors were pushing out into the very body of the massed clans, so that here and there our turning movements would cut off a detachment of the enemy, or again a score or more of our own men would be swallowed by the milling Kalkar horde, until as the day wore on, the great field became a jumbled mass of broken detachments of Julian and Kalkar warriors surging back and forth over a bloody shambles, the iron shoes of their reeking mounts trampling the corpse of friend and foe alike into the gory mire.

Once, late in the afternoon, during a lull in the battle, I sat looking about the chaos of the field. Red with our own blood from a score of wounds and with the blood of friend and foe, Red Lightning and I stood panting in the midst of the welter. The tents of the Or-tis lay south of us—we had fought half way around them—but they were scarce a hundred yards nearer for all those bitter hours of battle. Some of the warriors of The Wolf were near me, showing how far that old, grey chief had fought his way since dawn, and presently behind a mask of blood I saw the flashing eyes of The Wolf himself, scarce twenty feet away.

"The Wolf!" I cried and he looked up and smiled in recognition.

"The Red Hawk is red indeed," he bantered; "but his pinions are yet undipped."

"And the fangs of The Wolf are yet undrawn," I replied. A great Kalkar, blowing like a spent hound, was sitting his tired horse between us. At our words he raised his head. "You are The Red Hawk?" he asked. "I am The Red Hawk," I replied. "I have been searching for you these two hours,"

he said. "I have not been far, Kalkar," I told him; "what would you of The Red Hawk?"

"I bear word from Or-tis the Jemadar." "What word has an Or-tis for a Julian?" I demanded. "The Jemadar would grant you peace," he explained. I laughed. "There is only one peace which we may share together," I said, "and that is the peace of death—that peace I will grant him, and he will come hither and meet me. There is nothing that an Or-tis has the power to *grant* a Julian."

"He would stop the fighting while you and he discuss the terms of peace," insisted the Kalkar. "He would stop this bloody strife that must eventually annihilate both Kalkar and Yank." He used an ancient term which the Kalkars have applied to us for ages in a manner of contempt, but which we have been taught to consider as an appellation of honor, though its very meaning is unknown to us and its derivation lost in antiquity.

"Go back to your Jemadar," I said, "and tell him that the world is not wide enough to support both Kalkar and Yank, Or-tis and Julian; that the Kalkars must slay us to the last man or be slain."

He wheeled his horse toward the tent of the Or-tis and The Wolf bade his warriors let him pass. Soon he was swallowed by the close-packed ranks of his own people, and then a Kalkar struck at one of us from behind and the battle raged again.

How many men had fallen one might not even guess, but the corpses of warriors and horses lay so thick that the living mounts could but climb and stumble over them and sometimes barriers of them nearly man-high lay between me and the nearest foeman so that I was forced to jump Red Lightning over the gory obstacle to find new flesh for my blade. And then, slowly, night descended until man could not tell foe from friend, but I called to my tribesmen about me to pass along the word that we would not move from our ground that night, staying on for the first streak of dawn that would permit us to tell a Kalkar from a Yank.

All through the night we heard a considerable movement of men and horses among the Kalkars, and we judged that they were reforming for the dawn's attack, and then quite suddenly and without warning of any sort, we saw a black mass moving

down upon us. It was the Kalkars—the entire body of them—and they rode straight for us, not swiftly, for the corpse-strewn, slippery ground prevented that, but steadily, overwhelmingly, like a great, slow-moving river of men and horses. They swept into us and over us, or they carried us along with them. Their first line broke upon us in a bloody wave and went down and those behind passed over the corpses of those that had fallen. We hacked until our tired arms could scarce raise a blade shoulder high. Kalkars went down screaming in agony, but they could not halt, they could not retreat, for the great, ever-moving mass behind them pushed them onward, nor could they turn to right or left because we hemmed them in on both flanks, nor could they flee ahead, for there, too, were we.

Borne on by this resistless tide I was carried with it. It surrounded me. It pinioned my arms at my sides. It crushed my legs. It even tore my sword from my hand. At times, when the force ahead stemmed it for a moment, and the force behind continued to push on, it rose in the center until horses were lifted from the ground, and then those behind sought to climb over the backs of those in front, until the latter were borne to earth and the others passed over their struggling forms, or the obstacle before gave way and the flood smoothed out and passed along again between the flashing banks of Julian blades, hewing, ever hewing, at the Kalkar stream. Never have I looked upon such a sight as the moon revealed that night—never in the memory or the tradition of man has there been such a holocaust. Thousands upon thousands of Kalkars must have fallen upon the edge of that torrent as it swept its slow way between the blades of my painted warriors, who hacked at the living mass until their arms fell numb at their sides, and then gave way to the eager thousands pressing from behind.

And ever onward I was borne, helpless to extricate myself from the sullen, irresistible flood that carried me southward down the broadening valley. The Kalkars about me did not seem to realize that I was an enemy, or notice me in any way, so intent were they upon escape. Presently

we had passed the field of yesterday's thickest fighting, the ground was no longer strewn with corpses and the speed of the rout increased, and as it did so the massed warriors spread to right and left sufficiently to permit more freedom of individual action, still not enough to permit me to worm my way from the current.

That I was attempting to do so, however, was what attracted attention to me at first and then the single red hawk feather and my other trappings, so different from those of the Kalkars.

"A Yanki" cried one near me and another drew his sword and struck at me, but I warded the blow with my shield as I drew my knife, a pitiful weapon wherewith to face a swordsman.

"Hold!" cried a voice of authority near by. "It is he whom they call The Red Hawk, their chief. Take him alive to the Jemadar."

I tried to break through their lines, but they closed in upon me, and though I used my knife to good effect upon several of them they overbore me with their numbers, and then one of them must have struck me upon the head with the flat of his sword, for of a sudden everything went black, and of that moment I remember only reeling in my saddle.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CAPITAL

WHEN I regained consciousness it was night again. I was lying upon the ground, out beneath the stars. For a moment I experienced a sense of utter comfort, but as my tired nerves awoke they spoke to me of pain and stiffness from many wounds, and my head throbbed with pain. I tried to raise a hand to it, and it was then that I discovered that my wrists were bound. I could feel the matted stiffness of my scalp, and I knew that it was caked with dried blood, doubtless from the blow that had stunned me.

In attempting to move, that I might ease my cramped muscles, I found that my ankles were



fastened together as well as my wrists, but I managed to roll over, and raising my head a little from the ground I looked about and saw that I was surrounded by sleeping Kalkars and that we lay in a barren hollow ringed by hills. There were no fires, and from this fact and the barrenness and seclusion of the camp I guessed that we were snatching a brief rest in hiding from a pursuing foe.

I tried to sleep, but could do so only fitfully, and presently I heard men moving about and soon they approached and awakened the warriors sleeping near me. The thongs were removed from my ankles shortly thereafter, and Red Lightning was brought and I was helped into the saddle. Immediately after, we resumed the march. A glance at the stars showed me that we were moving west. Our way led through hills and was often rough, evidencing that we were following no beaten trail, but rather that the Kalkars were attempting to escape by a devious route.

I could only guess at the numbers of them, but it was evident that there was not the great horde that had set forth from the battlefield below the pass of the ancients. Whether they had separated into smaller bands, or the balance had been slain I could not even conjecture; but that their losses must have been tremendous I was sure. We traveled all that day, stopping only occasionally when there was water for the horses and the men. I was given neither food nor water, nor did I ask for either. I would die rather than ask a favor of an Or-tis. In fact, I did not speak all that day, nor did any of the Kalkars address me.

I had seen more Kalkars in the past two days than in all my life before and was now pretty familiar with the appearance of them. They range in height from six to eight feet, the majority of them being midway between these extremes. There is a great variety of physiognomy among them, for they are a half-caste race, being the result of hundreds of years of interbreeding between the original Moon Men and the women of the Earth whom they seized for slaves when they overran and conquered the world. Among them there is occasionally an individual who might pass

anywhere for a Yank, in so far as external appearances are concerned; but the low, coarse, brutal features of the Kalkar preponderate.

They wear a white blouse and breeches of cotton woven by their slaves and long, woolen cloaks fabricated by the same busy hands. Their women help in this work as well as in the work of the fields, for the Kalkar women are no better than slaves, with the possible exception of those who belong to the families of the Jemadar and his nobles. Their cloaks are of red, with collars of various colors, or with borders or other designs to denote rank. Their weapons are similar to ours, but heavier. They are but indifferent horsemen. That, I think, is because they ride only from necessity and not, as we, from love of it.

That night, after dark, we came to a big Kalkar camp. It was one of the camps of the ancients, the first that I ever had seen. It must have covered a great area, and some of the huge stone tents were still standing. It was in these that the Kalkars lived or in dirt huts leaning against them. In some places I saw where the Kalkars had built smaller tents from the building materials salvaged from the ruins of the ancient camp, but as a rule they were satisfied with hovels of dirt, or the half-fallen and never-repaired structures of the ancients.

This camp lies about forty-five or fifty miles west of the battlefield, among beautiful hills and rich groves, upon the banks of what must once have been a mighty river, so deeply has it scoured its pathway into the earth in ages gone.\*

I was hustled into a hut where a slave woman gave me food and water. There was a great deal of noise and excitement outside, and through the open doorway I could hear snatches of conversation as Kalkars passed to and fro. From what I heard, I gathered that the defeat of the Kalkars had been complete and that they were flying toward the coast and their principal camp, called The Capital, which the slave woman told me lay a few miles southwest. This, she said, was a wonderful camp, with tents reaching so high into the heavens that often the Moon brushed against their tops as she made her way through the sky.

They had released my hands, but my feet were

still bound and two Kalkars squatted just outside the door of the hut to see that I did not escape. I asked the slave woman for some warm water to wash my wounds and she prepared it for me. Not only that, the kindly soul saw to my wounds herself, and after they had been cleansed she applied a healing lotion which greatly soothed them, and then she bound them as best she could. I felt much refreshed by this, and with the food and drink in me was quite happy, for had I not accomplished what my people had been striving after for a hundred years—a foothold on the western coast? This first victory had been greater than I had dared to hope, and if I could but escape and rejoin my people I felt that I could lead them to the waters of the ocean with scarce a halt while the Kalkars still were suffering the demoralization of defeat.

It was while I was thinking these thoughts that a Kalkar chief entered the hut. Beyond the doorway the score of warriors that had accompanied him, waited.

"Cornel" commanded the Kalkar, motioning me to arise.

I pointed to my tethered ankles.

"Cut his bonds," he directed the slave woman.

When I was free, I arose and followed the Kalkar without. Here the guard surrounded me and we marched away between avenues of splendid trees such as I never had seen before, to a tent of the ancients, a partially ruined structure of imposing height that spread over a great area of ground. It was lighted upon the inside by many flares and there were guards at the entrance and slaves holding other flares.

They led me into a great chamber that must be much as the ancients left it, though I had seen from the outside that in other places the roof of the tent had fallen in and its walls were crumbling. There were many Kalkars in this place, and at the far end of the room, upon a platform, one sat alone on a huge, carved bench—a bench with a high back and arms.

I was led before this man. He had a thin face and a long, thin nose, and cruel lips and crafty eyes. His features, however, were good. He might have

passed in any company as a full-blood Yank. My guard halted me in front of him.

"This is he. Jemadar," said the chief who had fetched me.

"Who are you?" demanded the Jemadar, addressing me.

His tone did not please me. It was unpleasant and dictatorial. I am not accustomed to that, even from equals, and a Julian has no superiors. I looked upon him as scum. Therefore I did not reply.

He repeated his question angrily. I turned to the Kalkar chief who stood at my elbow. "Tell this man that he is addressing a Julian," I said, "and that I do not like his manner. Let him ask for it in a more civil tone if he wishes information."

The eyes of the Jemadar narrowed angrily. He half rose from his bench. "A Juliani" he exclaimed. "You are all Julians—but you are *the* Julian. You are the Great Chief of the Julians. Tell me," his tone became suddenly civil, almost ingratiating, "is it not true that you are *the* Julian, The Red Hawk who led the desert hordes upon us?"

"I am Julian 20th, The Red Hawk," I replied; "and you?"

"I am Or-tis, the Jemadar," he replied.

"It has been long since an Or-tis and a Julian met," I said.

"Heretofore they always have met as enemies," he replied. "I have sent for you to offer peace and friendship. For five hundred years we have fought uselessly and senselessly because two of our forebears hated one another. You are the 20th Julian, I am the 16th Or-tis. Never before have we seen one another; yet we must be enemies. How silly I"

"There can be no friendship between a Julian and an Or-tis," I replied, coldly.

"There can be peace," he said, "and friendship will come later, maybe long after you and I are dead. There is room in this great, rich country for us all. **Go** back to your people. I will send an escort with you and rich presents. Tell them that the Kalkars would share their country with the Yanks. You will rule half of it and I will rule the other half. If the power of either is threatened, the other

will come to his aid with men and horses. We can live in peace and our people will prosper. What say you?"

"I sent you my answer yesterday," I told him. "It is the same today—the only peace that you and I can share is the peace of death. There can be but one ruler for this whole country and he will be a Julian—if not I, the next in line. There is not room in all the world for both Kalkar and Yank. For three hundred years we have been driving you toward the sea. Yesterday we started upon the final drive that will not stop until the last of you has been driven from the world you ruined. That is my answer, Kalkar."

"Take him away," cried the Jemadar. "Send this message to his people: I offer them peace on these terms—they may have all the country east and southeast of a straight line drawn from the pass of the ancients south to the sea; we will occupy the country to the west and northwest of that line. If they accept I will send back their Great Chief. If they refuse, he will go to The Butcher, and remind them that he will not be the first Julian that an Ortis has sent to The Butcher. If they accept, there are to be no more wars between our people."

They took me back then to the hut of the old slave woman and there I slept until early morning, when I was awakened by a great commotion without. Men were shouting orders and cursing as they ran hurriedly to and fro. There was the trampling of horses' feet, the clank and clatter of trappings of war. Faintly, as from a great distance, I heard presently a familiar sound and my blood leaped in answer. It was the war-cry of my people, and beneath it ran the dull booming of their drums.

"They cornel" I must have spoken aloud, for the old slave woman turned toward me.

"Let them come," she said. "They cannot be worse than these others, and it is time that we changed masters. It has been long now since the rule of the ancients, who, it is said, were not unkind to us. Before them were other ancients, and before those still others. Always they came from far places, ruled us and went their way, displaced

by others. Only we remain, never changing. Like the coyote, the deer and the mountains we have been here always. We belong to the land, we are the land—when the last of our rulers has passed away we shall still be here, as we were in the beginning—unchanged. They come and mix their blood with ours, but in a few generations the last traces of it have disappeared, swallowed up by the slow, unchanging flood of ours. You will come and go, leaving no trace; but after you are forgotten we shall still be here."

Now Kalkars entered the hovel. They came hurriedly and as hurriedly departed, taking me with them. My wrists were tied again and I was almost thrown upon Red Lightning's back. A moment later we were swallowed up by the torrent of horsemen surging toward the southwest.

Less than two hours later we were entering the greatest camp that man has ever looked upon. For miles we rode through it, our party now reduced to the score of warriors who guarded me. The others had halted at the outskirts of the camp to make a stand against my people and as we rode through the strange trails of the camp we passed thousands upon thousands of Kalkars rushing past us to defend The Capital.

We passed vast areas laid out in squares, as was the custom of the ancients, a trail upon each side of the square, and within, the grass-grown mounds that covered the fallen ruins of their tents. Now and again a crumbling wall raised its ruin above the desolation, or some more sturdily constructed structure remained almost intact except for fallen roof and floors. As we advanced, we encountered more and more of the latter, built of that strange, rock-like substance, the secret of which has vanished with the ancients.

My guard turned in beneath the high arched entrance of a mighty structure. From the filth of its spacious floor rose mighty columns of polished stone, richly variegated. The tops of the columns were carved and decorated in colors and in gold. The place was filled with horses, tied to long lines that stretched almost the length of the room, from

column to column. At one end a broad flight of stone steps led upward to the second floor. After we had dismounted I was led up these steps. There were many Kalkars coming and going. We passed them as I was conducted along a narrow avenue of polished white stone upon either side of which were openings in the walls leading to other chambers.

Through one of these openings we turned into a large chamber, and there I saw again the Or-tis whom I had seen the night before. He was standing before one of the openings overlooking the trail below, talking with several of his nobles. One of the latter glanced up and saw me as I entered, calling the Jemadar's attention to me. Or-tis faced me. He spoke to one near him who stepped to another opening in the chamber and motioned to someone without. Immediately a Kalkar guard entered bringing a youth of one of my desert clans. At sight of me the young warrior raised his hand to his forehead in salute.

"I give you another opportunity to consider my offer of last night," said the Or-tis, addressing me. "Here is one of your own men who can bear your message to your people if you still choose to condemn them to a futile and bloody struggle and with it he will bear a message from me—that you go to The Butcher in the morning if your warriors do not retire and your chiefs engage to maintain peace hereafter. In that event you will be restored to your people. If you give me this promise yourself, you may carry your own message to the tribes of Julian."

"My answer," I replied, "is the same as it was last night, as it will be tomorrow." Then I turned to the Yank warrior. "If you are permitted to depart, go at once to The Vulture and tell him that my last command is that he carry The Flag onward to the sea. That is all."

The Or-tis was trembling with disappointment and rage. He laid a hand upon the hilt of his sword and took a step toward me; but whatever he intended, he thought better of it and stopped. "Take him above," he snapped to my guard; "and to The Butcher in the morning. I will be present,"

he said to me, "to see your head roll into the dust and your carcass fed to the pigs."

They took me from the chamber then and led me up and up along an endless stairway, or at least it seemed endless before we finally reached the highest floor of the great tent. There they pushed me into a chamber the doorway to which was guarded by two giant warriors.

Squatted upon the floor of the chamber, his back leaning against the wall, was a Kalkar. He glanced up at me as I entered, but said nothing. I looked about the bare chamber, its floor littered with the dust and debris of ages, its walls stained by the dirt and grease from the bodies that had leaned against it, to the height of a man. I approached one of the apertures in the front wall. Far below me, like a narrow buckskin thong, lay the trail filled with tiny people and horses no bigger than rabbits. I could see the pigs rooting in the filth—they and the dogs are the scavengers of the camp.

For a long time I stood looking out over what was to me a strange landscape. The tent in which I was confined was among the highest of the nearer structures of the ancients, and from its upper floor I could see a vast expanse of tent roofs, some of the structures apparently in an excellent state of preservation, while here and there a grass grown mound marked the site of others that had fallen. Evidences of fire and smoke were numerous and it was apparent that whatever the ancients had built of other materials than their enduring stone had long since disappeared, while many of the remaining buildings had been gutted by flame and left mere shells, as was attested by hundreds of smoke-blackened apertures within the range of my vision.

As I stood gazing out over distant hills beyond the limits of the camp I became aware of a presence at my elbow. Turning I saw that it was the Kalkar whom I had seen sitting against the wall as I entered the chamber.

"Look well. Yank," he said, in a not unpleasant voice, "for you have not long to look." He was smiling grimly. "We have a wonderful view from here," he continued; "on a dear day you can see the



ocean and the island."

"I should like to see the ocean," I said.

He shook his head. "You are very near," he said, "but you will never see it. I should like to see it again, myself; but I shall not."

"Why?" I asked.

"I go with you to The Butcher in the morning," he replied, simply.

"You?"

"Yes, I."

"And why?"

"Because I am a true Or-tis," he replied.

"Why should they send an Or-tis to The Butcher?" I demanded. "It is not strange that an Or-tis should send me, *the* Julian; but why should an Or-tis send an Or-tis?"

"He is not a true Or-tis who sends me," replied the man, and then he laughed.

"Why do you laugh?"

"Is it not a strange joke of Fate," he cried, "that sees *the* Julian and *the* Or-tis going to The Butcher together? By the blood of my sires I think our feud be over, Julian, at least so far as you and I are concerned."

"It can never be over, Kalkar," I replied.

He shook his head. "Had my father lived and carried out his plans, I think it might have ended," he insisted.

"While an Or-tis and a Julian lived? Never!"

"You are young, and the hate that has been suckled into you and yours from your mothers' breasts for ages runs hot in your veins; but my father was old and he saw things as few of my kind, I imagine, ever have seen them. He was a kindly man and very learned, and he came to hate the Kalkars and the horrid wrong the first Or-tis did the world and our people when he brought them hither from the Moon, even as you and yours have hated them always. He knew the wrong and he wished to right it. Already he had planned means whereby he might get into communication with the Julians and join with them in undoing the crime that our ancestor committed upon the world.

He was Jemadar, but he would have renounced his throne to be with his own kind again. Our blood strain is as clear as yours—we are Americans. There is no Kalkar or half-breed blood in our veins. There are perhaps a thousand others among us who have brought down their birthright unsullied. These he would have brought with him, for they all were tired of the Kalkar beasts.

"But some of the Kalkar nobles learned of the plan, and among them was he who calls himself Or-tis and Jemadar. He is the son of a Kalkar woman by a renegade uncle of mine. There is Or-tis blood in his veins, but a drop of Kalkar makes one all Kalkar, therefore he is no Or-tis.

"He assassinated my father, and then set out to exterminate every pure-blood Or-tis and all those other uncontaminated Americans who would not swear fealty to him. Some have done so to save their hides, but many have gone to The Butcher. In so far as I know, I am the last of the Or-tis line. There were two brothers and a sister, all younger than I. We scattered and I have not heard of them since, but I am sure that they are all dead.

"Yes, if my father had lived the feud might have been ended; but tomorrow The Butcher will end it. However, the other way would have been better. What think you, Julian?"

I stood meditating in silence for a long time. I wondered if, after all, the dead Jemadar's way would not have been better.

\*The camp described probably occupies the site of present-day Pasadena.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SEA

IT SEEMED strange indeed to me that I stood conversing thus amicably with an Or-tis. I should have been at his throat, but there was something about him that disarmed me, and after his speech I

felt, I am almost ashamed to say, something of friendliness for him. He was an American after all, and he hated the common enemy. Was he responsible for the mad act of an ancestor dead now almost four hundred years? But the hate that was almost a part of my being would not down entirely—he was still an Or-tis. I told him as much. He shrugged his shoulders.

"I do not know that I can blame you," he said; "but what matters it? Tomorrow we shall both be dead. Let us at least call a truce until then."

He was a pleasant-faced young fellow, two or three years my senior, perhaps, with a winning way that disarmed malice. It would have been very hard to have hated this Or-tis.

"Agreed!" I said, and held out my hand. He took it and then he laughed.

"Thirty-four ancestors would turn over in their graves if they could see this," he cried.

We talked there by the opening for a long time, while in the trail below us constant streams of Kalkars moved steadily to the battle front. Faintly, from a great distance, came the booming of the drums.

"You beat them badly yesterday," he said. "They are filled with terror."

"We will beat them again today and tomorrow and the next day until we have driven them into the sea," I said.

"How many warriors have you?" he asked.

"There were full twenty-five thousand when we rode out of the desert," I replied proudly.

He shook his head dubiously. "They must have ten, twenty times twenty-five thousand," he told me.

"Even though they have forty times twenty-five thousand we shall prevail," I insisted.

"Perhaps you will, for you are better fighters; but they have so many youths growing into the warrior class every day. It will take years to wear them down. They breed like rabbits. Their women are married before they are fifteen, as a rule. If they have no child at twenty they are held up to scorn, and if they are still childless at thirty they

are killed, and unless they are mighty good workers they are killed at fifty anyhow—their usefulness to the State is over."

Night came on. The Kalkars brought us no food or water. It became very dark. In the trail below and in some of the surrounding tents flares gave a weird, flickering light. The sky was overcast with light clouds. The Kalkars in the avenue beyond our doorway dozed. I touched the Or-tis upon the shoulder where he lay stretched beside me on the hard floor.

"What is it?" he whispered.

"I am going," I said. "Do you wish to come?"

He sat up. "How are you going?" he demanded, still in a low whisper.

"I do not know, nor how far I shall go; but I am going, if only far enough to cheat The Butcher."

He laughed. "Good! I will go with you."

It had taken me a long time to overcome the prejudices of heredity, and I had thought long before I could bring myself to ask an Or-tis to share with me this attempt to escape; but now it was done. I hoped I would not regret it.

I arose and moved cautiously toward the doorway. A wick, burning from the nozzle of a clay vessel filled with oil, gave forth a sickly light. It shone upon two hulking Kalkars nodding against the wall as they sat upon the stone floor of the avenue. My knife, of course, had been taken from me and I was unarmed; but here was a sword within my reach and another for the Or-tis. The hilt of one protruded from beneath the cloak of the nearer Kalkar. My hand, reaching forth, was almost upon it when he moved. I could not wait to learn if he was awaking or but moving in his sleep. I lunged for the hilt, grasped it and the fellow was awake. At the same instant the Or-tis sprang upon the other.

He whom I had attacked lumbered to his feet, clawing at the hand that had already half drawn his sword from its scabbard, and at the same time he set up a terrific yelling. I struck him on the jaw with my clenched fist. I struck him as hard as I could strike, as he loomed above me his full eight

feet. The Or-tis was having a bad time with his man, who had seized him by the throat and was trying to draw a knife to finish him. The knife must have become stuck in its scabbard for a moment, or his long, red cloak was in the way. I do not know. I saw only a flash of it from the corner of my eye as my man stiffened and then sank to the floor. Then I wheeled upon the other, a naked blade in my hand. He threw the Or-tis aside when he saw me and whipped out his own sword, but he was too slow. As I ran my point into his heart I heard the sound of running footsteps ascending the stairway and the shouts of men. I handed the sword I carried to the Or-tis and snatched the other from the fellow I had just finished. Then I kicked the puny flare as far as I could kick it and called to the Or-tis to follow me. The light went out and together we ran along the dark avenue toward the stairway, up which we could hear the warriors coming in response to the cries of our late antagonists.

We reached the head of the stairs but a moment before the Kalkars appeared. There were three of them, and one carried a weak, smoking flare that did little but cast large, grotesque, dancing shadows upon wall and stair and reveal our targets to us without revealing us to them.

"Take the last one," I whispered to the **Or-tis**.

We leaned over the railing and as he smote the head of the last of the three I finished the second. The first, carrying the flare, turned to find himself facing two swords. He gave a shriek and started down the avenue. That would not do. If he had kept still we might have let him live, for we were in a hurry; but he did not keep still and so we pursued him. He reminded me of a comet as he fled through the dark with his tail of light, only it was such a little tail. However, he was a little comet. He was a fast comet, though, and we could not catch him until the end of the avenue brought him to bay, then, in turning, he slipped and fell. I was upon him in the same instant, but some fancy stayed my blade when I might have run it through him. Instead I seized him, before he could recover himself, and lifting him from the floor I hurled him through the aperture at the end of the avenue. He

still clung to his lamp and as I leaned out above him he appeared a comet indeed, though he was quickly extinguished in the courtyard far below.

The Or-tis chuckled at my elbow. "The stupid clodi" he ejaculated. "He clung to that flare even to death, when, had he thrown it away and dodged into one of these many chambers he could have eluded us and still lived."

"Perhaps he needed it to light his way to Hell," I suggested.

"They need no help in that direction," the Or-tis assured me, "for they will all get there, if there be such a place."

We retraced our steps to the stairway again, but once more we heard men ascending. The **Or-tis** plucked me by the sleeve. "Come," he whispered; "it is futile to attempt escape in this direction now that the guard is aroused. I am familiar with this place. I have been here many times. If we have the nerve we may yet escape. Will you follow me?"

"Certainly," I replied.

The corpses of two of our recent antagonists lay at our feet at the head of the stairs, where we stood. Or-tis stooped and snatched their cloaks and bonnets from them. "We shall need these if we reach the ground—alive," he said. "Follow me closely."

He turned and continued along the corridor, presently entering a chamber at the left. Behind us we heard the Kalkars ascending the stairs. They were calling to their fellows above, from whom they would never receive a reply; but they were evidently coming slowly, for which we were both thankful.

Or-tis crossed the chamber to an aperture in the wall. "Below is the courtyard," he said. "It is a long way down. These walls are laid in uneven courses. An agile man might make his way to the bottom without falling. Shall we try it? We can go down close to these apertures and thus rest often, if we wish."

"You go on one side and I will go on the other," I told him.

He rolled the two cloaks and the bonnets into a bundle and dropped them into the dark void

beneath, then we slid over the edge of the aperture. Clinging with my hands I found a foot-hold and then another below the first. The ledges were about half the width of my hand. Some of them were rounded by time and the weather. These did not afford a very good hold. However, I reached the aperture below without mishap and there, I am free to confess, I was glad to pause for a moment, as I was panting as though I had run a mile.

Or-tis came down in safety, too. "The Butcher appears less terrible," he said.

I laughed. "He would have it over quicker," I replied.

The next stage we descended two floors before we halted. I like to have slipped and fallen twice in that distance. I was wet with sweat as I took a seat beside my companion. I do not like to recall that adventure. It sends the shivers through me always, even now; but at last it was over—we reached the bottom together and donned the cloaks and the bonnets of the Kalkars. The swords, for which we had no scabbards, we slipped through our own belts, the cloaks hiding the fact that they were scab-bardless.

The smell of horses was strong in our nostrils as we crept forward toward a doorway. All was darkness within as we groped forward to find that we were in a small chamber with a door at the opposite side. Nearly all the doors of the ancients have been destroyed, either by the fires that have gutted most of the buildings, by decay, or by the Kalkars that have used them for fuel; but there are some left—they are the metal doors, and this was one. I pushed it open enough to see if there was a light beyond. There was. It was in the great chamber on the first floor where the horses were tethered. It was not a brilliant light, but a sad, flickering light. Even the lights of the Kalkars are grimy and unclean. It cast a pallid luminance beneath it; elsewhere were heavy shadows. The horses, when they moved, cast giant shadows upon the walls and floor and upon the great, polished stone columns.

A guard loafed before the door that led to the trail in front of the tent. It was composed of five or

six men. I suppose there were others in some nearby chamber. The doorway through which we peered was in shadow. I pushed it open far enough to admit our bodies and we slipped through. In an instant we were hidden from the sight of the guard, among the horses. Some of them moved restlessly as we approached them. If I could but find Red Lightning! I had searched along one line almost the full length of the chamber and had started along a second when I heard a low nicker close by. It was hel Love of The Flagi It was like finding my own brother.

In the slovenly manner of the Kalkars, the saddles and bridles lay in the dirt in the aisle behind the horses. Fortunately I found my own, more easily, of course, because it is unike those of the Kalkars, and while I slipped them quietly upon Red Lightning, the Or-tis, selecting a mount haphazard, was saddling and bridling it.

After a whispered consultation, we led our horses to the rear of the room and mounted among the shadows, unobserved by the guard. Then we rode out from behind the picket lines and moved slowly toward the entrance, talking and laughing in what we hoped might appear an unconcerned manner, the Or-tis, riding on the side nearer the guard and a little in advance, that Red Lightning might be hidden from them, for we thought that they might recognize him more quickly than they would us.

As they saw us coming they ceased their chatter and looked up, but we paid no attention to them, riding straight on for the aperture that led into the trail outside the structure. I think we might have passed them without question had there not suddenly burst from the doorway of what was, I judge, the guard-room, an excited figure who shouted lustily to all within hearing of his voice.

"Let no one leavel The Julian and the Or-tis have escaped!" he screamed.

The guard threw themselves across the entrance and at the same instant I put spurs to Red Lightning, whipped out my sword, and bore down upon them, the Or-tis following my example. I cut at one upon my left front and Red Lightning bore down another beneath his iron hoofs. We were out upon the trail and the Or-tis was beside us. Reining



to the left we bore south a few yards and then turned west upon another trail, the shouts and curses of the Kalkars ringing in our ears.

With free rein we let our mounts out to far greater speed than the darkness and the littered trail gave warrant, and it was not until we had put a mile behind us that we drew in to a slower gait. The Or-tis spurred to my side.

"I had not thought it could be done, Julian," he said; "yet here we ride, as free as any men in all the country wide."

"But still within the shadow of The Butcher," I replied.

"Listen! They are following hot-foot." The pounding of the hoofs of our pursuers' horses rose louder and louder behind us as we listened. Again we spurred on, but presently we came to a place where a ruined wall had fallen across the trail.

"May The Butcher get me!" cried the Or-tis, "that I should have forgotten that this trail is blocked. We should have turned north or south at the last crossing. Come, we must ride back quickly, if we are to reach it before they."

Wheeling, we put our mounts to the run back along the trail over which we had but just come. It was but a short distance to the cross trail, yet our case looked bad, for even in the darkness the pursuing Kalkars could now be seen, so close were they. It was a question as to which would reach the crossing first.

"You turn to the south," I cried to Or-tis, "and I will turn to the north. In that way one of us may escape."

"Goodi" he agreed; "there are too many of them for us to stand and fight."

He was right—the trail was packed with them, and we could hear others coming far behind the van. It was like a young army. I hugged the left hand side of the trail and Or-tis the right. We reached the crossing not a second in advance of the leaders of the pursuit and Or-tis turned to the south and I to the north. Into the blackness of the new trail I plunged and behind me came the Kalkars. I urged Red Lightning on and he responded as I knew he would. It was madness to

ride through the black night along a strange trail at such speed, yet it was my only hope. Quickly my fleet stallion drew away from the clumsy, ill-bred mounts of my pursuers. At the first crossing I turned again to the west and though here I encountered a steep and winding hill it was fortunately but a short ride to the top and after that the way was along a rolling trail, but mostly down hill.

The structures of the ancients that remained standing became fewer and fewer as we proceeded and in an hour they had entirely disappeared. The trail, however, was fairly well marked and after a single, short turn to the south it continued westward over rolling country in almost a straight line.

I had reduced my speed to conserve Red Lightning's strength, and as no sign of pursuit developed, I jogged along at a running walk, a gait which Red Lightning could keep up for hours without fatigue. I had no idea where the trail was leading me, and at the time I did not even know that it was bearing west (for the heavens were still overcast), though I judged that this must be the fact. My first thought was to put as much distance as possible between me and the Kalkar camp and at the first streak of dawn take to the hills and then work my way north and east in an attempt to rejoin my people.

And so I moved on, through country that was now level and now rolling, for the better part of three hours. A cool breeze sprang up and blew in my face. It had a damp freshness and a strange odor with which I was entirely unfamiliar. I was tired from my long exertions, from loss of sleep and from lack of food and water, yet this strange breeze revived me and filled me with new strength and life.

It had become very dark, although I knew that dawn must be near. I wondered how Red Lightning could pick his way through the utter blackness. This very thought was in my mind when he came to a sudden halt. I could see nothing, yet I could tell that Red Lightning had some good reason for his action. I listened and there came to my ears a strange, sullen roar— a

deep pounding, such as I never had heard before. What could it be?

I dismounted to rest my beloved friend while I listened and sought for an explanation of this monotonously reiterated sound. At length I determined to await dawn before continuing. With the bridle reins about my wrist I lay down, knowing that if danger threatened. Red Lightning would warn me. In an instant I was asleep.

How long I slept I do not know—an hour, perhaps—but when I awoke it was daylight and the first thing that broke upon my sensibilities was the dull, monotonous booming, the pounding, pounding, pounding that had lulled me to sleep so quickly.

Never shall I forget the scene that burst upon my astonished eyes as I rose to my feet. Before me was a sheer cliff dropping straight away at my feet, upon the very verge of which Red Lightning had halted the previous night; and beyond, as far as the eye could reach, water—a vast expanse of water, stretching on and on and on—the sea. At last a Julian had looked upon it! It rolled up upon the sands below me, pounding, surging, booming. It rolled back again, resistless, restless, and, at once, terrifying and soothing. Terrifying in its immensity and mystery, soothing in the majestic rhythm of its restlessness.

## CHAPTER VI

### SAKU THE NIPON

HUNGRY and thirsty. Red Lightning and I set off up the canyon away from the sea, presently entering the first side-canyon\* bearing in a northerly direction, for it was my desire to pass through these mountains in the hope of finding a valley running east and west, which I could follow back in the direction of my people.

We had proceeded only a short distance up the side-canyon when I discovered a spring of pure water and around it an abundance of fine pasture, and a moment later Red Lightning and I were

drinking avidly from the same pool. Then I removed his saddle and bridle and turned him loose to browse upon the lush grasses, while I removed my clothing and bathed my body, which was, by now, sorely in need of it. I felt much refreshed and could I have found food should soon have been myself again; but without bow and arrows my chances seemed slight unless I were to take the time to construct a snare and wait for prey. This, however, I had no mind to do, since I argued that sooner or later I must run across human habitation, where, unless greatly outnumbered by armed men, I would obtain food.

For an hour I permitted Red Lightning to line his belly with nutritious grasses and then I called him to me, resaddled, and was on my way again up the wooded, winding canyon, following a well-marked trail in which constantly appeared the spoor of coyote, wolf, hellhound, deer and lion, as well as the tracks of domestic animals and the sandaled feet of slaves; but I saw no signs of shod horses to indicate the presence of Kalkars. The imprints of sandals might mark only the passage of native hunters, or they might lead to a hidden camp. It was this that I hoped.

I had wound upward for perhaps two or three miles when I came suddenly upon a little open meadow and the realization of my wish, for there stood three of the pointed tents of slaves consisting of a number of poles leaning inward and lashed together at the top, the whole covered by a crazy patchwork consisting of the skins of animals sewn together. These tents, however, were peculiar, in that they were very small.

As I came in sight of the camp I was discovered by a horde of scrawny curs that came bristling and yapping toward me, apprising their masters of the presence of a stranger. A head appeared in the opening of one of the tents and was as quickly withdrawn. I called aloud that I would speak with their chief and then I waited through a full minute of silence. Receiving no reply I called again, more peremptorily, for I am not accustomed to waiting long for obedience.

This time I received a reply. "Go away, Kalkar/" cried a man's voice. "This is our country. **Go** away

or we will kill you."

"But I am not a Kalkar. I have but just escaped them and I have been long without food. I wish food and then I will go on, for I am in search of my own people who are fighting the Kalkars at the edge of their great camp to the east."

He stuck his head through the flap then and eyed me closely. His face was small and much wrinkled, and he had a great shock of stiff, black hair that stuck out in all directions and was not confined by any band. I thought that he must still be sitting or squatting upon the ground, so low was his head, but a moment later, when, evidently having decided to investigate my claims more closely, he parted the flap and stepped out of the tent, I was startled to see a man little more than three feet tall standing before me. He was stark naked and carried a bow in one hand and several arrows in the other. At first I thought he might be a child, but his old and wrinkled face, as well as the well-developed muscles moving beneath his brown skin, belied that.

Behind him came two other men of about the same height and simultaneously from the other two tents appeared six or eight more of these diminutive warriors. They formed a semicircle about me, their weapons in readiness.

"From what country do you come?" demanded the little chief.

I pointed toward the east. "From the desert beyond your farthest mountains," I replied.

He shook his head. "We have never been beyond our own hills," he said.

It was most difficult to understand him, though I am familiar with the dialects of a score of tribes and the mongrel tongue that is employed by both the Kalkars and ourselves to communicate with the natives, yet we managed to make ourselves understood to one another.

I dismounted and approached them, my hand held out toward them as is the custom of my people in greeting friends, with whom we always clasp hands after an absence, or when meeting friendly strangers for the first time. They did not seem to understand my intentions and drew back,

fitting arrows to their bows.

I dropped my hand and smiled, at a loss as how best to reassure them. The smile must have done it, for immediately the old man's face broke into a smile.

"You are not a Kalkar," he said; "they never smile at us." He lowered his weapon, his example being followed by the others. "Tie your horse to a tree. We will give you food." He turned toward the tents and called to the women to come out and prepare food.

I dropped my reins to the ground, which is all the tying that Red Lightning requires, and advanced toward the little men, and when I had thrown aside my Kalkar coat and bonnet they crowded around me with question and comment.

"No, he is not a Kalkar," said one. "His cloak and bonnet are Kalkar, but not his other garments."

"I was captured by the Kalkars," I explained, "and to escape I covered myself with this cloak which I had taken from a Kalkar that I killed."

A stream of women and children were now issuing from the tents, whose capacity must have been taxed beyond their limit. The children were like tiny toys, so diminutive were they, and, like their fathers and mothers, quite naked, nor was there among them all the sign of an ornament or decoration of any nature. They crowded around me, filled with good-natured curiosity, and I could see that they were a joyous, kindly little people; but even as I stood there encircled by them I could scarce bring myself to believe in their existence, rather thinking that I was the victim of a capricious dream, for never had I seen or heard of such a race of tiny humans. As I had this closer and better opportunity to study them, I saw that they were not of the same race as the slaves, or In-juns, but were of a lighter shade of brown, with differently shaped heads and slanting eyes. They were a handsome little people and there was about the children that which was at once laughable and appealing, so that one could not help but love them.

The women busied themselves making fire and bringing meat—a leg of venison, and flour for bread, with fresh fruits, such as apricots,

strawberries and oranges. They chattered and laughed all the time, casting quick glances at me and then giggling behind their hands. The children and the dogs were always under foot, but no one seemed to mind them and no one spoke a cross word, and often I saw the men snatch up a child and caress it. They seemed a very happy people—quite unlike any other peoples who have lived long in a Kalkar country. I mentioned this fact to the chief and asked him how they could be so happy under the cruel domination of the Kalkars.

"We do not live under their rule," he replied. "We are a free people. When they attempted to harass us, we made war upon them."

"You made war upon the Kalkars?" I demanded, incredulously.

"Upon those who came into our hills," he replied. "We never leave the hills. We know every rock and tree and trail and cave, and being a very little people and accustomed to living always in the hills we can move rapidly from place to place. Long ago the Kalkars used to send warriors to kill us, but they could never find us, though first from one side and then from another our arrows fell among them, killing many. We were all about them but they could not see us. Now they leave us alone. The hills are ours from the great Kalkar camp to the sea and up the sea for many marches. The hills furnish us with all that we require and we are happy."

"What do you call yourselves?" I asked. "From where do you come?"

"We are Nipons," he replied. "I am Saku, chief of this district. We have always been here in these hills. The first Nipon, our ancestor, was a most honorable giant who lived upon an island far, far out in the middle of the sea. His name was Mik-do. He lives there now. When we die we go there to live with him. That is all."

"The Kalkars no longer bother you?" I asked.

"Since the time of my father's father they have not come to fight with us," replied Saku. "We have no enemies other than Raban, the giant, who lives on the other side of the hills. He comes sometimes to hunt us with his dogs and his slaves. Those

whom he kills or captures, he eats. He is a very terrible creature, is Raban. He rides a great horse and covers himself with iron so that our arrows and our spears do not harm him. He is three times as tall as we."

I assumed that, after the manner of the ignorant, he was referring to an imaginary personification of some greatly feared manifestation of natural forces—storm, fire or earthquake, perhaps—probably fire, though, since his reference to the devouring of his people by this giant suggested fire, and so dismissed the subject from my mind.

As I ate, I questioned Saku concerning the trails leading back in the direction of my people. He told me that the trail upon which he was camped led to the summit of the hills, joining with another that led straight down into a great valley which he thought would lead me to my destination, but of that he was not sure, having only such knowledge of the extent of the valley as one might glean from viewing it from the summit of his loftiest hills. Against this trail, however, he warned me explicitly, saying that I might use it in comparative safety only to the summit, for upon the other side it led straight down past the great stone tent of Raban the giant.

"The safer way," he said, "is to follow the trail that winds along the summit of the hills, back toward the camp of the Kalkars—a great trail that was built in the time of Mik-do, and from which you can ride down into the valley along any one of many trails. Always you will be in danger of Raban until you have gone a day's march beyond his tent, for he rides far in search of prey; but at least you will be in less danger than were you to ride down the canyon in which he lives."

But Raban, the imaginary giant, did not worry me much, and though I thanked Saku for his warnings, and let him believe that I would follow his advice, I was secretly determined to take the shortest route to the valley beyond the hills.

Having finished my meal I thanked my hosts and was preparing to depart when I saw the women and children pulling down the tents to an accompaniment of much laughter and squealing



while several of the men started up the canyon, voicing strange cries. I looked at Saku questioningly.

"We are moving up the canyon for deer," he explained, "and will go with you part of the way to the summit. There are many trees across the trail that would hinder you, and these we will move or show you a way around."

"Must you carry all this camp equipment?" I asked him, seeing the women struggling "with the comparatively heavy hide tents, which they were rolling and tying into bundles, while others gathered the tent poles and bound them together.

"We will put them on our horses," he explained, pointing up the canyon.

I looked in the direction he indicated, to see the strangest creatures I had ever looked upon—a string of tiny, woolly horses that were being driven toward camp by the men who had recently gone up the canyon after them. The little animals were scarce half the height of Red Lightning and they moved at so slow a pace that they seemed scarce to move at all. They had huge bellies and most enormous ears set upon great, uncouth heads. In appearance they seemed part sheep, part horse and a great deal of the long-eared rabbit of the desert.

They were most docile creatures, and during the business of strapping the loads to them the children played about between their feet or were tossed to their backs, where they frolicked, while the sad-eyed, dejected creatures stood with drooping heads and waving ears. When we started upon the march, the children were all mounted upon these little horses, sometimes perched upon the top of a load, or again there would be three or four of them upon the back of a single beast.

It did not take me long to discover that Red Lightning and I had no place in this cavalcade, for if we went behind we were constantly trampling upon the heels of the slow-moving little horses, and if we went ahead we lost them in a few yards, and so I explained to Saku that my haste made it necessary for me to go on, but that if I came to any obstacle I could not surmount alone I would wait there for them to overtake me. I thanked him again

for his kindness to me, and we exchanged vows of friendship which I believe were as sincere upon his part as they were upon mine. They were a happy, lovable little people and I was sorry to leave them.

Pushing rapidly ahead I encountered no insuperable obstacles and after a couple of hours I came out upon a wide trail at the summit of the hills and saw spread before me a beautiful valley extending far to the east and to the west. At my feet was the trail leading down past the imaginary tent of the imaginary Raban and toward this I reined Red Lightning.

I had not yet crossed the old trail of the ancients when I heard the sound of the flying feet of horses approaching from the west. Here the trail winds upwards and passes around the shoulder of a hill, and as I looked I saw a running horse come into view and at its heels another in hot pursuit. The rider of the second horse was evidently a Kalkar warrior, as a red robe whipped in the wind behind him, but the figure upon the leading animal I could not identify at first; but as they drew rapidly nearer, the streaming hair of its head suggested that it must be a woman.

A Kalkar up to his old tricks, I thought, as I sat watching them. So intent was the man upon his prey that he did not notice me until after he had seized the bridle rein of his quarry and brought both animals to a halt not a score of feet from me, then he looked up in surprise. His captive was looking at me, too. She was a girl with wide, frightened eyes—appealing eyes that even while they appealed were dulled by hopelessness, for what aid might she expect from one Kalkar against another, and, of course, she must have believed me a Kalkar.

She was a Kalkar woman, but still she was a woman, and so I was bound to aid her. Even had I not felt thus obligated by her sex I should have killed her companion in any event, for was he not a stranger in addition to being a Kalkar?

I let my Kalkar cloak slip to the ground and I tossed my Kalkar bonnet after it. "I am The Red Hawk" I cried, as I drew the sword from my belt and touched Red Lightning with my spurs. "Fight, Kalkar 1"

The Kalkar tried to bring his spear into play, but it was slung across his back and he couldn't unslung it in time, so he, too, drew a sword, and to gain time he reined his horse behind that of the girl; but she was master of her own mount now, and with a shake of her reins she had urged her horse forward, uncovering the Kalkar, and now he and I were face to face. He towered above me and he had the protection of his iron vest and iron bonnet, while I was without even the protection of a shield; but whatever advantage these things might have seemed to give him they were outweighed by the lightness and agility of Red Lightning and the freedom of my own muscles, unencumbered by heavy metal protections. His big, clumsy horse was ill-mannered, and on top of all else, the Kalkar's swordsmanship was so poor that it seemed ill befitting a brave warrior to take his almost defenseless life; but he was a Kalkar and there was no alternative. Had I found him naked and unarmed in bed and unconscious with fever, it would still have been my duty to dispatch him, though there had been no glory in it.

I could not, however, bring myself to the point of butchering him without appearing, at least, to give him a chance, and so I played with him, parrying his cuts and thrusts and tapping him now and then upon his iron bonnet and vest. This must have given him hope, for suddenly he drew off and then rushed me, his sword swinging high above his head. The Flag! What a chance he offered, blundering down upon me with chest and belly and groin exposed, for his iron shirt could never stop a Julian's point.

So wondrous awkward was his method of attack that I waited to see the nature of his weird technique before dispatching him. I was upon his left front and when he was almost upon me he struck downward at me and to his left, but he could not think of two things at once—me and his horse—and as he did not strike quite far enough to the left his blade clove his mount's skull between the ears, and the poor brute, which was rushing forward at the time, fell squarely upon its face, and turning completely over, pinioned its rider beneath its corpse. I dismounted to put the man

out of his misery, for I was sure he must be badly injured, but I found that he was stone dead. His knife and spear I appropriated as well as his heavy bow and arrows, though I was fearful as to my skill with the last weapons, so much lighter and shorter are the bows to which I am accustomed.

I had not concerned myself with the girl, thinking, of course, that during the duel she would take advantage of the opportunity to escape; but when I looked up from the corpse of the Kalkar she was still there, sitting her horse a few yards away, and eyeing me intently.

\*Probably Rustic Canyon, which enters Santa Monica Canyon a short distance above the sea.

## CHAPTER VII

### BETHELDA

"WELLI" I exclaimed; "why have you not flown?"

"And where?" she demanded.

"Back to your Kalkar friends," I replied.

"It is because you are not a Kalkar that I did not fly," she said.

"How do you know that I am no Kalkar," I demanded, "and why, if I am not, should you not fly from me, who must be an enemy of your people?"

"You called him 'Kalkar' as you charged him," she explained, "and one Kalkar does not call another Kalkar that. Neither am I a Kalkar."

I thought then of what the Or-tis had told me of the thousand Americans who had wished to desert the Kalkars and join themselves with us. This girl must be of them, then.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"My name is Bethelda," she replied; "and who are you?"

She looked me squarely in the eyes with a fearless frankness that was anything but Kalkarian. It was the first time that I had had a good look at her. By The Flag! She was not difficult to look at. She had large, gray-green eyes and heavy lashes

and a cheerful countenance that seemed even now to be upon the verge of laughter. There was something almost boyish about her and yet she was all girl. I stood looking at her for so long a time without speaking that a frown of impatience clouded her brow.

"I asked you who you are," she reminded me.

"I am Julian 20th, The Red Hawk," I replied, and I thought for an instant that her eyes went a little wider and that she looked frightened; but I must have been mistaken, for I was to learn later that it took more than a name to frighten Bethelda. "Tell me where you are going," I said, "and I will ride with you, lest you be again attacked."

"I do not know where to go," she replied, "for wherever I go I meet enemies."

"Where are your people?" I demanded.

"I fear that they are all slain," she told me, a quiver in her voice.

"But where were you going? You must have been going somewhere."

"I was looking for a place to hide," she said.

"The Nipons would let me stay with them if I could find them. My people were always kind to them. They would be kind to me."

"Your people were of the Kalkars, even though you say you are no Kalkar, and the Nipons hate them. They would not take you in."

"My people were Americans. They lived among the Kalkars, but they were not Kalkars. We lived at the foot of these hills for almost a hundred years and we often met the Nipons. They did not hate us, though they hated the Kalkars about us."

"Do you know Saku?" I asked.

"Since I was a little child I have known Saku, the Chief," she replied.

"Come, then," I said, "I will take you to Saku."

"You know him? He is near?"

"Yes, cornel"

She followed me down the trail up which I had so recently come and though I begrudged the time that it delayed me, I was glad that I might have her off my hands so easily and so quickly, for, of a certainty, I could not leave her alone and unprotected, nor could I take her upon my long

journey with me, even could I have prevailed upon my people to accept her.

In less than an hour we came upon Saku's new camp, and the little people were surprised indeed to see me, and overjoyed when they discovered Bethelda, more than assuring me by their actions that the girl had been far from stating the real measure of the esteem in which the Nipons held her. When I would have turned to ride away they insisted that I remain until morning, pointing out to me that the day was already far gone and that being unfamiliar with the trails I might easily become lost and thus lose more time than I would gain. The girl stood listening to our conversation, and when I at last insisted that I must go because, having no knowledge of the trails anyway, I would be as well off by night as by day, she offered to guide me.

"I know the valley from end to end," she said. "Tell me where you would go and I will lead you there as well by night as by day."

"But how would you return?" I asked.

"If you are going to your people perhaps they would let me remain, for am I not an American, too?"

I shook my head. "I am afraid that they would not," I told her. "We feel very bitterly toward all Americans that cast their lot with the Kalkars—even more bitterly than we feel toward the Kalkars themselves."

"I did not cast my lot with the Kalkars," she said, proudly. "I have hated them always—since I was old enough to hate. If four hundred years ago my people chose to do a wicked thing is it any fault of mine? I am as much an American as you, and I hate the Kalkars more because I know them better."

"My people would not reason that way," I said. "The women would set the hounds on you and you would be torn to pieces." She shivered.

"You are as terrible as the Kalkars," she said, bitterly.

"You forget the generations of humiliation and suffering that we have endured because of the

renegade Americans who brought the Kalkar curse upon us," I reminded her.

"We have suffered, too," she said, "and we are as innocent as you," and then, suddenly, she looked me squarely in the eyes. "How do you feel about it? Do you, too, hate me worse than as though I were a Kalkar? You saved my life, perhaps. You could do that for one you hate?"

"You are a girl," I reminded her, "and I am an American—a Julian," I added, proudly.

"You saved me only because I am a girl?" she insisted.

I nodded.

"You are a strange people," she said, "that you could be so brave and generous to one you hate and yet refuse the simpler kindness of forgiveness—forgiveness of a sin that we did not commit."

I recalled the Or-tis, who spoken similarly, and I wondered if, perhaps, they might not be right, but we are a proud people and for generations before my day our pride had been ground beneath the heel of the victorious Kalkar. Even yet the wound was still raw. And we are a stubborn people—stubborn in our loves and our hatreds. Already had I regretted my friendliness with the Or-tis, and now I was having amicable dealings with another Kalkar—it was difficult for me to think of them as other than Kal-kars. I should be hating this one—I should have hated the Or-tis—but for some reason I found it not so easy to hate them.

Saku had been listening to our conversation, a portion of which at least he must have understood. "Wait until morning," he said, "and then she can at least go with you as far as the top of the hills and point out the way for you; but you will be wise to take her with you. She knows every trail, and it will be better for her to go with you to your own people. She is not Kalkar, and if they catch her they will kill her. Were she Kalkar we would hate her and chase her away; but though she is welcome among us it would be hard for her to remain. We move camp often, and often our trails lead where one so large as she might have difficulty in following, nor would she have a man

to hunt for her, and there are times when we have to go without food because we cannot find enough even for our own little people."

"I will wait until morning," I said, "but I cannot take-her with me—my people would kill her."

I had two motives in remaining over night. One was to go forth early in the morning and kill game for the little Nipons in payment for their hospitality and the other was to avail myself of the girl's knowledge of the trails, which she could point out from some lofty hill top. I had only a general idea of the direction in which to search for my people and as I had seen from the summit that the valley beyond was entirely surrounded by hills, I realized that I might gain time by waiting until morning, when the girl should be able to point out the route to the proper pass to my destination.

After the evening meal that night I kept up a fire for the girl, as the air was chill and she was not warmly clad. The little people had only their tents and a few skins for their own protection, nor was there room in the former for the girl, so already overcrowded were they. The Nipons retired to their rude shelters almost immediately after eating, leaving the girl and me alone. She huddled close to the fire and she looked very forlorn and alone. I could not help but feel sorry for her.

"Your people are all gone?" I asked.

"My own people—my father, my mother, my three brothers—all are dead, I think," she replied. "My mother and father I know are dead. She died when I was a little girl. Six months ago my father was killed by the Kalkars. My three brothers and I scattered, for we heard that they were coming to kill us, also. I have heard that they captured my brothers; but I am not sure. They have been killing many in the valley lately, for here dwell nearly all the pure descendants of Americans, and those of us who were thought to favor the true Or-tis were marked for slaughter by the false Or-tis.

"I had been hiding in the home of a friend of my father, but I knew that if I were found there, it would bring death to him and his family, and so I came away, hoping to find a place where I might be safe from them; but I guess there is no place for



me— even my friends, the Nipons, though they would let me stay with them, admit that it would be a hardship to provide for me."

"What will you do?" I asked. Somehow I felt very sorry for her.

"I shall find some nearly inaccessible place in the hills and build myself a shelter," she replied.

"But you cannot live here in the hills alone," I remonstrated.

She shrugged her shoulders. "Where may I live, then?"

"For a little while, perhaps," I suggested, "until the Kalkars are driven into the sea."

"Who will drive them into the sea?" she asked.

"We," I replied, proudly.

"And if you do, how much better off shall I be? Your people will set their hounds upon me—you have said so yourself. But you will not drive the Kalkars into the sea. You have no conception of their numbers. All up and down the coast, days' journeys north and south, wherever there is a fertile valley, they have bred like flies. For days they have been coming from all directions, marching toward The Capital. I do not know why they congregate now, nor why only the warriors come. Are they threatened, do you think?" A sudden thought seemed to burst upon her. "It cannot be," she exclaimed, "that the Yanks have attacked them! Have your people come out of the desert again?"

"Yes," I replied. "Yesterday we attacked their great camp—today my warriors must have eaten their evening meal in the stone tents of the Kalkars."

"You mean The Capital?"

"Yes."

"Your forces have reached The Capital? It seems incredible. Never before have you come so far. You have a great army?"

"Twenty-five thousand warriors marched down out of the desert beneath The Flag," I told her, "and we drove the Kalkars from the pass of the ancients back to The Capital, as you call their great camp."

"You lost many warriors? You must have."

"Many fell," I replied; "thousands."

"Then you are not twenty-five thousand now, and the Kalkars are like ants. Kill them and more will come. They will wear you down until your few survivors will be lucky if they can escape back to their desert."

"You do not know us," I told her. "We have brought our women, our children, our flocks and herds down into the orange groves of the Kalkars and there we shall remain. If we cannot drive the Kalkars into the sea today we shall have to wait until tomorrow. It has taken us three hundred years to drive them this far, but in all that time we have never given back a step that we have once gained—we have never retreated from any position to which we have brought our families and our stock."

"You have a large family?" she asked.

"I have no wife," I replied as I rose to add fuel to the fire. As I returned with a handful of sticks I saw that she hugged closer to the blaze and that she shivered with the cold. I removed my Kalkar robe and threw it across her shoulders.

"Nol" she cried, rising; "I cannot take it. You will be cold." She held it out toward me.

"Keep it," I said. "The night will be cold, and you cannot go until morning without covering."

She shook her head. "Nol" she repeated. "I cannot accept favors from an enemy who hates me." She stood there, holding the red robe out toward me. Her chin was high and her expression haughty.

I stepped forward and took the robe, and as her hand dropped to her side I threw the woolen garment about her once more and held it there upon her slim figure. She tried to pull away from it, but my arm was about her, holding the robe in place, and as I guessed her intention, I pressed the garment more closely around her, which drew her to me until we stood face to face, her body pressed against mine. As I looked down into her upturned face our eyes met and for a moment we stood there as though turned to stone. I do not know what happened. Her eyes, wide and half frightened, looked up into mine, her lips were parted and she

caught her breath once in what was almost a sob. Just for an instant we stood thus and then her eyes dropped and she bent her head and turned it half away and at the same time her muscles relaxed and she went almost limp in my arms. Very gently I lowered her to her seat beside the fire and adjusted the robe about her. Something had happened to me. I did not know what it was, but of a sudden nothing seemed to matter so much in all the world as the comfort and safety of Bethelda.

In silence I sat down opposite her and looked at her as though I never before had laid eyes upon her, and well might it have been that I never had, for, by The Flagi I had not seen her before, or else, like some of the tiny lizards of the desert, she had the power to change her appearance as they change their colors, for this was not the same girl to whom I had been talking a moment since—this was a new and wonderful creature of a loveliness beyond all compare. No, I did not know what had happened, nor did I care—I just sat there and devoured her with my eyes. And then she looked up and spoke four words that froze my heart in my bosom.

She looked up and her eyes were dull and filled with pain. Something had happened to her, too—I could see it. She was changed.

"I am an Or-tis," she said and dropped her head again.

I could not speak. I just sat there staring at the slender little figure of my blood enemy sitting, dejected, in the firelight. After a long time she lay down beside the fire and slept, and I suppose that I must have slept, too, for once, when I opened my eyes, the fire was out, I was almost frozen, and the light of a new day was breaking over rugged hill tops to the east.

I arose and rekindled the fire. After that I would get Red Lightning and ride away before she awakened; but when I had found him, feeding a short distance from the camp, I did not mount and ride away, but came back to the camp again—why, I do not know. I did not want to see her again ever, yet something drew me to her. She was awake and standing looking all about, up and down the

canyon, when I first saw her and I was sure that there was an expression of relief in her eyes when she discovered me. She smiled wistfully, and I could not be hard, as I should have been to a blood enemy.

I was friendly with her brother, I thought—why should I not be friendly with her? Of course, I shall go away and not see her again, but at least I may be pleasant to her while I remain. Thus I argued and thus I acted.

"Good morning," I said, as I approached; "how are you?"

"Splendid!" she replied. "And how are you?" Her tones were rich and mellow and her eyes intoxicated me like old wine. Oh, why was she an enemy?

The Nipons came from their little tents. The naked children scampered around, playing with the dogs, in an attempt to get warm. The women built the fires around which the men huddled while their mates prepared the morning meal.

After we had eaten, I took Red Lightning and started off down the canyon to hunt and although I was dubious as to what results I should achieve with the heavy Kalkar bow, I did better than I had expected, for I got two bucks, although the chase carried me much farther from camp than I had intended going.

The morning must have been half spent as Red Lightning toiled up the canyon trail beneath the weight of the two carcasses and myself to the camp. I noticed that he seemed nervous as we approached, keeping his ears pricked forward and occasionally snorting, but I had no idea of the cause of his perturbation and was only the more on the alert myself, as I always am when warned by Red Lightning's actions that something may be amiss.

And when I came to the camp site I did not wonder that he had been aroused, for his keen nostrils had scented tragedy long before my dull senses could become aware of it. The happy, peaceful camp was no more. The little tents lay flat upon the ground and near them the corpses of two of my tiny friends—two little, naked warriors. That was all. Silence and desolation broded where

there had been life and happiness a few short hours before. Only the dead remained.

Betheldal What had become of her? What had happened? Who had done this cruel thing? There was but a single answer—the Kalkars must have discovered this little camp and rushed it. The Nipons that had not been killed doubtless escaped, and the Kalkars had carried Bethelda away, a captive.

Suddenly I saw red. Casting the carcasses of the bucks to the ground I put spurs to Red Lightning and set out up the trail where the fresh imprint of horses' hoofs pointed the direction in which the murderers had gone. There were the tracks of several horses in the trail and among them one huge imprint fully twice the size of the dainty imprint of Red Lightning's shoe. While the feet of all the Kalkar horses are large this was by far the largest I had ever seen. From the signs of the trail I judged that not less than twenty horses were in the party and while at first I had ridden impetuously in pursuit, presently my better judgment warned me that I could best serve Bethelda through strategy, since it was obvious that one man could not, singlehanded, overthrow a score of warriors by force alone.

And now, therefore, I went more warily, though had I been of a mind to do so, I doubt that I could have much abated my speed, for there was a force that drove me on and if I let my mind dwell long on the possibility of the dangers confronting Bethelda I forgot strategy and cunning and all else save brute force and blood. Vengeance! It is of my very marrow, bred into me through generations that have followed its emblem. The Flag, westward along its bloody trail toward the sea. Vengeance and The Flag and The Julian—they are one. And here was I, Lord of Vengeance, Great Chief of the Julians, Protector of The Flag, riding hot-foot to save or avenge a daughter of the Or-tis! I should have flushed for shame, but I did not. Never had my blood surged so hot even to the call of The Flag. Could it be, then, that there was something greater than The Flag? No, that I could

not admit; but possibly I had found something that imparted to The Flag a greater meaning for me.

## CHAPTER VIII

### RABAN

I CAME to the summit without overtaking them, but I could tell from the trail that they were not far ahead of me. The canyon trail is very winding and there is a great deal of brush, so that oftentimes a horseman a score of yards ahead of you is out of sight and the noise of your own mount's passage drowns that of the others. For this reason I did not know, as long as I was in the canyon, how close I might be to them; but when I reached the summit it was different. Then I could see farther in all directions. The murderers were not in sight upon the great highway of the ancients, and I rode swiftly to where the trail drops down upon the north side of the mountains to the great valley that I had seen the day before. There are fewer trees and lower brush upon this side, and below me I could see the trail at intervals as it wound downward and as I looked, I saw the first of a party of horsemen come into sight around the shoulder of a hill as they made their way down into the canyon.

To my right, a short distance, was a ridge leading from the summit downward and along the flank of the canyon into which the riders were descending. A single glance assured me that a few minutes of hard and rather rough riding would permit me to gain the canyon ahead of the riders and unseen by them, unless the brush proved heavier than it appeared or some impassable ravine intervened. At least the venture was worth essaying and so, not waiting for a longer inspection of the enemy, I wheeled and rode along the summit and out on the ridge which I hoped would prove an avenue to such a position as I wished to attain, where I might carry out a species of warfare for which we are justly famous, in that we are adepts at it.

I found along the ridge a faint game trail and this I followed at reckless speed, putting Red Lightning

down steep declivities in a manner that must have caused him to think me mad, so careful am I ordinarily of his legs; but today I was as inconsiderate of them as I was of my own life.

At one place the thing I most feared occurred—a deep ravine cut directly through the ridge, the side nearer me dropping almost sheer to the bottom. There was some slight footing, however, part way down and Red Lightning never hesitated as I put him over the brink. Squatting on his haunches, his front legs stiff before him, he slid and stumbled downward, gaining momentum as he went, until, about twenty feet from the bottom, we went over a perpendicular dirt cliff together, landing in the soft sand at the foot of it a bit shaken, but unhurt.

There was no time even for an instant's breathing spell. Before us was the steep acclivity of the opposite side and like a cat Red Lightning pawed and scrambled his way up, clinging motionless at times for an instant, his toes dug deep into the yielding earth, while I held my breath as Fate decided whether he should hold his own or slip back into the ravine; but at last we made it and once more were upon the summit of the ridge.

Now I had to go more carefully, for my trail and the trail of the enemy were converging and constantly the danger of apprehension increased. I rode now slightly below the brow of the ridge, hidden from whomever might be riding the trail along the opposite side, and presently I saw the mouth of the canyon to my right and below me and across it the trail along which the Kalkars must pass. That they had not already done so I was confident, for I had ridden hard and almost in a straight line, while they had been riding slowly when I saw them and the trail they were following wound back and forth at an easy grade.

Where the ridge ended in a steep declivity at the bottom of the canyon I drew rein and dismounted, and leaving Red Lightning hidden in the brush, made my way to the summit where, below me, the trail lay in full view for a distance of a hundred yards up the canyon and for half a mile below. In my left hand I carried the heavy Kalkar bow and in my right a bundle of arrows, while a score or more

others protruded from my right boot. Fitting an arrow to my bow I waited.

Nor did I have long to wait. I heard the clank of accouterments, the thud of horses' feet, the voices of men, and a moment later the head of the little column appeared about the shoulder of a hill.

I had tried my Kalkar bow this morning upon the bucks and I was surer of it now. It is a good bow, the principal objection to it being that it is too cumbersome for a mounted warrior. It is very powerful, though, and carries its heavy arrows accurately to a great distance. I knew now what I could do with it. I waited until half a dozen riders had come into view, covering the spot at which they appeared, and as the next one presented himself I loosed my shaft. It caught the fellow in the groin, and coming from above, as it did, passed through and into his horse. The stricken animal reared and threw itself backward upon its rider; but that I only caught with the tail of my eye, for I was loosing another shaft at the man in front of him. He dropped with an arrow through his neck.

By now all was pandemonium. Yelling and cursing, the balance of the troop galloped into sight and with them I saw such a man as mortal eye may never have rested upon before this time and, let us pray, never may again. He sat a huge horse, which I instantly recognized as the fellow who had made the great imprints in the trail I had been following to the summit, and was himself a creature of such mighty size that he dwarfed the big Kalkars about him.

Instantly I saw in him the giant, Raban, whom I had thought but the figment of Saku's imagination or superstition. On a horse at Raban's side rode Bethelda. For an instant I was so astonished by the size of Raban that I forgot my business upon the ridge, but only for an instant. I could not let drive at the giant for fear of hitting Bethelda, but I brought down in quick succession the man directly in front of him and one behind.

By now the Kalkars were riding around in circles looking for the foe, and they presented admirable targets, as I had known they would. By the blood of my fathers! But there is no greater sport than



this form of warfare. Always outnumbered by the Kalkars we have been forced to adopt tactics aimed to harass the enemy and wear him down a little at a time. By clinging constantly to his flanks, by giving him no rest, by cutting off detachments from his main body and annihilating them, by swooping down unexpectedly upon his isolated settlements, by roving the country about him and giving battle to every individual we met upon the trails, we have driven him two thousand miles across the world to his last stand beside the sea.

As the Kalkars milled about in the canyon bottom I drove shaft after shaft among them, but never could I get a fair shot at Raban the giant, for always he kept Bethelda between us after he had located me, guessing, evidently, that it was because of her that I had attacked his party. He roared like a bull as he sought to urge his men up the ridge to attack me, and some did make the attempt, half-heartedly, prompted, no doubt, by fear of their master—a fear that must have been a little greater than fear of the unknown enemy above them; but those who started up after me never came far, for they and I soon discovered that with their heavy bow I could drive their heavy arrows through their iron vests as if they had been wool.

Raban, seeing that the battle was going against him, suddenly put spurs to his great mount and went lumbering off down the canyon, dragging Bethelda's horse after him, while those of his men who remained covered his retreat.

This did not suit me at all. I was not particularly interested in the Kalkars he was leaving behind, but in him and his captive, and so I ran to Red Lightning and mounted. As I reined down the flank of the ridge toward the canyon bottom I saw the Kalkars drawing off after Raban. There were but six of them left and they were strung out along the trail. As they rode they cast backward glances in my direction as though they were expecting to see a great force of warriors appear in pursuit. When they saw me they did not return to engage me, but continued after Raban.

I had reslung my bow beneath my right stirrup leather and replaced the few arrows in my quiver

as Red Lightning descended the side of the ridge, and now I prepared my lance. Once upon the level trail of the canyon bottom I whispered a word into the pointed ear before me, couched my lance, and crouched in the saddle as the thirtieth descendant of the first Red Lightning flattened in swift charge.

The last Kalkar in the retreating column, rather than receive my spear through the small of his unprotected back, wheeled his horse, unslung his spear and awaited me in the middle of the trail. It was his undoing. No man can meet the subtle tricks of a charging lancer from the back of a standing horse, for he cannot swerve to one side or the other with the celerity oft necessary to elude the point of his foe's lance, or take advantage of what opening the other may inadvertently leave him, and doubly true was this of the Kalkar upon his clumsy, splay-footed mount. So awkward were the twain that they could scarcely have gotten out of their own way, much less mine, and so I took him where I would as I crashed into him, which was the chest, and my heavy lance passed through him, carrying him over his horse's rump, splintering as he fell to earth. I cast the useless stump aside as I reined Red Lightning in and wheeled him about. I saw the nearer Kalkar halted in the trail to watch the outcome of the battle, and now that he saw his companion go down to death and me without a lance he bore down upon me, and I guess he thought that he had me on the run, for Red Lightning was indeed racing away from him, back toward the fallen foe; but with a purpose in my mind that one better versed in the niceties of combat might have sensed. As I passed the dead Kalkar I swung low from my saddle and picked his lance from where it lay in the dust beside him, and then, never reducing our speed, I circled and came back to meet the rash one riding to his doom. Together we came at terrific speed, and as we approached one another I saw the tactics that this new adversary was bent upon using to my destruction and I may say that he used judgment far beyond the seeming capacity of his low forehead, for he kept his horse's head ever straight for Red Lightning's front with the intention of riding me down and overthrowing my mount,

which, considering the disparity of their weights, he would certainly have accomplished had we met full on; but we did not. My reins lay on Red Lightning's withers. With a touch of my left knee I swung the red stallion to the right and passed my spear to my left hand, all in a fraction of the time it takes to tell it, and as we met I had the Kalkar helpless, for he was not expecting me upon his left hand, his heavy horse could not swerve with the agility of Red Lightning, and so I had but to pick my target and put the fellow out of his misery—for it must be misery to be a low creature of a Kalkar. In the throat my point caught him, for I had no mind to break another lance since I saw two more of the enemy riding toward me, and being of tough wood, the weapon tore out through the flesh as the fellow tumbled backward into the dust of the trail.

There were four Kalkars remaining between me and the giant who, somewhere down the canyon and out of sight now, was bearing Bethelda off, I knew not where or to what fate. The four were strung out at intervals along the trail and seemed undecided as to whether to follow Raban or wait and argue matters out with me. Perhaps they hoped that I would realize the futility of pitting myself against their superior numbers, but when I lowered my lance and charged the nearer of them, they must have realized that I was without discretion and must be ridden down and dispatched. Fortunately for me they were separated by considerable intervals and I did not have to receive them all at once. The nearer, fortified by the sound of his companions' galloping approach, couched his lance and came halfway to meet me, but I think much of his enthusiasm must have been lost in contemplation of the fate that he had seen overtake the others that had pitted their crude skill against me, for certainly there were neither fire nor inspiration in his attack, which more closely resembled a huge, senseless boulder rolling down a mountain side than a sentient creature of nerves and brain driven by lofty purposes of patriotism and honor.

Poor clod! An instant later the world was a better place in which to live, by at least one less Kalkar; but he cost me another lance and a flesh wound in

the upper arm, and left me facing his three fellows, who were now so close upon me that there was no time in which to retrieve the lance fallen from his nerveless fingers. There was recourse only to the sword, and drawing, I met the next of them with only a blade against his long lance; but I eluded his point, closed with him and, while he sought to draw, clove him open from his shoulder to the center of his chest.

It took but an instant, yet that instant was my undoing, for the remaining two were already upon me. I turned in time to partially dodge the lance point of the foremost, but it caught me a glancing blow upon the head and that is the last that I remember of immediately ensuing events.

When next I opened my eyes I was jouncing along, lashed to a saddle, belly down across a horse. Within the circumscribed limits of my vision lay a constantly renewed circle of dusty trail and four monotonously moving, gray, shaggy legs. At least I was not on Red Lightning.

I had scarcely regained consciousness when the horse bearing me was brought to a stop, and the two accompanying Kalkars dismounted and approached me. Removing the bonds that held me to the saddle, they dragged me unceremoniously to the ground and when I stood erect they were surprised to see that I was conscious.

"Dirty Yank!" cried one and struck me in the face with his open palm.

His companion laid a hand upon his arm. "Hold, Tav," he expostulated; "he put up a good fight against great odds." The speaker was a man of about my own height and might have passed as a full blood Yank, though, as I thought at the time, doubtless he was a halt-breed.

The other gestured his disgust. "A dirty Yank," he repeated. "Keep him here, Okonnor, while I find Raban and ask what to do with him." He turned and left us.

We had halted at the foot of a low hill upon which grew tremendous old trees and of such infinite variety that I marveled at them. There were pine, cypress, hemlock, sycamore and acacia that I recognized and many others the like of which I never before had seen, and between the trees grew

flowering shrubs, and where the ground was open it was carpeted with flowers—great masses of color; and there were little pools choked with lilies, and countless birds and butterflies. Never had I looked upon a place of such wondrous beauty. Through the trees I could see the outlines of the ruins of one of the stone tents of the ancients sitting upon the summit of the low hill. It was toward this structure that he who was called Tav was departing from us.

"What place is this?" I asked the fellow guarding me, my curiosity overcoming my natural aversion to conversation with his kind.

"It is the tent of Raban," he replied. "Until recently it was the home of Or-tis the Jemadar—the true Or-tis. The false Or-tis dwells in the great tents of The Capital. He would not last long in this valley."

"What is this Raban?" I asked.

"He is a great robber. He preys upon all, and to such an extent has he struck terror to the hearts of all who have heard of him that he takes toll as he will, and easily. They say that he eats the flesh of humans, but that I do not know—I have been with him but a short time. After the assassination of the true Or-tis I joined him because he preys upon the Kalkars. He lived long in the eastern end of the valley where he could prey upon the outskirts of The Capital and then he did not rob or murder the people of the valley; but with the death of Or-tis he came and took this place and now he preys upon my people as well as upon the Kalkars, but I remain with him since I must serve either him or the Kalkars."

"You are not a Kalkar?" I asked, and I could believe it because of his good old American name, Okonnor.

"I am a Yank; and you?"

"I am Julian 20th, The Red Hawk," I replied.

He raised his brows. "I have heard of you in the past few days," he said. "Your people are fighting mightily at the edge of The Capital; but they will be driven back—the Kalkars are too many. Raban will be glad of you if the stories they tell of him are true. One is that he eats the hearts of brave warriors that fall into his hands."

I smiled. "What is the creature?" I asked again. "Where originates such a breed?"

"He is only a Kalkar," replied Okonnor; "but even a greater monstrosity than his fellows. He was born in The Capital, of ordinary Kalkar parents, they say, and early developed a lust for blood that has increased with the passing years. He boasts yet of his first murder—he killed his mother when he was ten."

I shuddered. "And it is into the hands of such that a daughter of the Or-tis has fallen," I said, "and you, an American, aided in her capture."

He looked at me in startled surprise. "The daughter of an Or-tis?" he cried.

"Of *the* Or-tis," I repeated.

"I did not know," he said. "I was not close to her at any time and thought that she was but a Kalkar woman."

"What are you going to do? Can you save her?"

He drew his knife and cut the bonds that held my arms behind me. "Hide here among the trees," he said, "and watch the Raban until I return. It will be after dark, but I will bring help. This valley is almost exclusively peopled by those who have refused to intermarry with the Kalkars and have brought down their strain unsullied from ancient times. There are almost a thousand fighting men of pure Yank blood within its confines. I should be able to gather enough to put an end to Raban for all time, and if the danger of a daughter of Or-tis cannot move them from their shame and cowardice they are hopeless indeed."

He mounted his horse. "Quick!" he cried, "get among the trees."

"Where is my horse?" I called as he was riding away. "He was not killed?"

"No," he called back; "he ran off when you fell. We did not try to catch him." A moment later he disappeared around the west end of the hill and I entered the miniature forest that clothed it. Through the gloom of my sorrow broke one ray of happiness—Red Lightning lived.

About me grew ancient trees of enormous size with boles five or six feet in diameter and their upper foliage waving a hundred and more feet above my head. Their branches excluded the sun

where they grew thickest and beneath them baby trees struggled for existence in the wan light, or hoary monsters, long fallen, lay embedded in leaf mold, marking the spot where some long dead ancient set out a tiny seedling that was to outlive all his kind.

It was a wonderful place in which to hide, though hiding is an accomplishment that we Julians have little training in and less stomach for. However, in this instance it was in a worthy cause—a Julian hiding from a Kalkar in the hope of aiding an **Or-tisi** Ghosts of nineteen Julians! To what had I brought my proud name? And yet I could not be ashamed. There was something stubbornly waging war against all my inherited scruples, and I knew that it was going to win—had already won. I would have sold my soul for this daughter of my enemy.

I made my way up the hill toward the ruined tent, but at the summit the shrubbery was so dense that I could see nothing. Rose bushes fifteen feet high and growing as thickly together as a wall hid everything from my sight. I could not even penetrate them. Near me was a mighty tree with a strange, feathery foliage. It was such a tree as I had never seen before, but that fact did not interest me so much as the discovery that it might be climbed to a point that would permit me to see above the top of the rose bushes.

What I saw included two stone tents not so badly ruined as most of those one comes across, and between them a pool of water—an artificial pool of straight lines. Some fallen columns of stone lay about it and the vines and creepers fell over its edge into the water, almost concealing the stone rim. As I watched, a group of men came from the ruin to the east through a great archway, the coping of which had fallen away. They were all Kalkars and among them was Raban. I had my first opportunity to view him closely. He was a most repulsive appearing creature. His great size might easily have struck with awe the boldest heart, for he stood a full nine feet in height and was very large in proportion about the shoulders, chest and limbs. His forehead was so retreating that one might with truth say he had none, his

thick thatch of stiffly erect hair almost meeting his shaggy eyebrows. His eyes were small and set close to a coarse nose and all his countenance was bestial. I had not dreamed that a man's face could be so repulsive.

He was speaking to that one of my captors who had left me at the foot of the hill to apprise Raban of my taking—that fellow who struck me in the face while my hands were bound and whose name was Tav. He spoke in a roaring, bull-like voice which I thought at the time was, like his swaggering walk and his braggadocio, but a pose to strike terror in those about him. I could not look at the creature and believe that real courage lay within so vile a carcass. I have known many fearless men—The Vulture, The Wolf, The Rock and hundreds like them—and in each, courageousness was reflected in some outward physical attribute of dignity and majesty.

"Fetch himi" he roared at Tav. "Fetch himi I will have his heart for my supper," and after Tav had gone to fetch me, the giant stood there with his other followers, roaring and bellowing and always about himself and what he had done and what he would do. He seemed to me an exaggeration of a type I had seen before, wherein gestures simulate action, noise counterfeits courage, and wind passes for brains. The only impressive thing about him was his tremendous bulk and yet even that did not impress me greatly—I have known small men, whom I respected, that filled me with far greater awe. I did not fear him. I think only the ignorant could have feared him at all, and I did not believe all the pother about his eating human flesh. I am of the opinion that a man who really intended eating the heart of another would say nothing about it.

Presently Tav came running back up the hill. He was much excited, as I had known that he would be, even before he started off to fetch me.

"He is gone!" he cried to Raban. "They are both gone—Okon-nor and the Yank. Look! he held out the thongs that had fastened my wrists. "They have been cut. How could he cut them with his hands bound behind him? That is what I want to know. How could he have done it? He could not unless—"

"



"There must have been others with him," roared Raban. "They followed and set him free, taking Okonnor captive." "There were no others," insisted Tav. "Perhaps Okonnor freed him," suggested another. So obvious an explanation could not have originated in the pea girth brain of Raban and so he said: "I knew it from the first—it was Okonnor. With my own hands I shall tear out his liver and eat it for breakfast."

Certain insects, toads and men make a lot of unnecessary noise, but the vast majority of other animals pass through life in dignified silence. It is our respect for these other animals that causes us to take their names. Who ever heard of a red hawk screeching his intentions to the world? Silently he soars above the treetops, and as silently he swoops and strikes.

## CHAPTER IX

### REUNION

THROUGH the conversation that I overheard between Raban and his minions I learned that Bethelda was imprisoned in the westerly ruin, but as Raban did not go thither during the afternoon I waited in the hope that fortune would favor me with a better opportunity after dark to attempt her liberation with less likelihood of interruption or discovery than would have been possible during the day, when men and women were constantly passing in and out of the easterly tent. There was the chance, too, that Okonnor might return with help and I did not want to do anything while that hope remained that might jeopardize Bethelda's chances for escape.

Night fell and yet there was no sign of Okonnor. Sounds of coarse laughter came from the main ruin and I could imagine that Raban and his followers were at meat, washing down their food with the fiery liquor of the Kalkars. There was no one in sight and so I determined to come out of my concealment and investigate the structure in which I believed Bethelda imprisoned. If I could release her, well and good; if not I could but wait for

Okonnor.

As I was about to descend from the tree there came down with the wind from out of the canyon to the south a familiar sound—the nicker of a red stallion. It was music to my ears. I must answer it even though I chanced arousing the suspicion of the Kalkars. Just once my answering whistle rose sharp and clear above the noises of the night. I do not think the Kalkars heard it—they were making too much noise of their own within doors—but the eager whinny that came thinly down the night wind told me that two fine, slim ears had caught the familiar summons.

Instead of going at once to the westerly ruin I made my way down the hill to meet Red Lightning, for I knew that he might mean, in the end, success or failure for me—freedom or death for Bethelda. Already, when I reached the foot of the declivity, I faintly heard the pounding of his hoofs and, steadily increasing in volume, the loved sound rolled swiftly out of the darkness toward me. The hoof beats of running horses, the rolling of the war drums 1 What sweeter music in all the world?

He saw me, of course, before I saw him, but he stopped in a cloud of dust a few yards from me and sniffed the air. I whispered his name and called him to me. Mincingly he came, stopping often, stretching his long neck forward, poised always, ready for instant flight. A horse depends much upon his eyes and ears and nostrils, but he is never so fully satisfied as when his soft, inquisitive muzzle has nosed an object of suspicion. He snorted now, and then he touched my cheek with his velvet lip and gave a great sigh and rubbed his head against me, satisfied. I hid him beneath the trees at the foot of the hill and bade him wait there in silence.

From the saddle I took the bow and some arrows and following the route that Tav had taken to the top of the hill I avoided the hedge of roses and came presently before the south archway of the ruin. Beyond was a small central court with windows and doors opening upon it. Light from flares burning in some of the rooms partially illuminated the court, but most of it was in

shadow. I passed beneath the arch and to the far end of the enclosure, where, at my right, I saw a window and a door opening into two rooms in which a number of Kalkars were eating and drinking at two long tables. I could not see them all. If Ra-ban was there he was not within range of my vision.

It is always well to reconnoiter thoroughly before carrying out any plan of action and with this idea in mind I left the court by the way I had entered and made my way to the east end of the structure, intending to pass entirely around it and along the north side of the westerly ruin, where I hoped to find Bethelda and devise means for her rescue.

At the southeast corner of the ruin are three gigantic cypress trees, growing so closely together as to almost resemble a single huge tree, and as I paused an instant behind them to see what lay before me, I saw a single Kalkar warrior come from the building and walk out into the rank grass that grew knee high on a level space before the structure.

I fitted an arrow to my bow. The fellow had that which I craved—a sword. Could I drop him noiselessly? If he would turn I was sure of it, and turn he did as though impelled to it by my insistent wish. His back was toward me. I drew the shaft far back. The cord twanged as I released it, but there was no other sound, except the muffled thud as the arrow entered its victim's spine at the base of the brain. Mute, he died. No other was around. I ran forward and removed his sword belt, to which were attached both sword and knife.

As I arose and buckled the weapons about me, I glanced into the lighted room from which he had just come. It was the same that I had seen from the court upon the other side and directly adjoining it was the other room that I had seen. Now I could see all of them that I had not seen before. Raban was not there. Where was he? A cold terror ran suddenly through me. Could it be that in the brief interval that had elapsed while I went down to meet Red Lightning he had left the feast and gone to the westerly ruin? I ran swiftly across the front of the house and along the north side toward the

other structure.

I stopped before it and listened. I heard the sound of voices. From whence came they? This was a peculiar structure, built upon a downward sloping hill, with one floor on a level with the hilltop, another above that level and a third below and behind the others. Where the various entrances were and how to find the right one I did not know. From my hiding place in the tree I had seen that the front chamber at the hill top level was a single apartment with a cavernous entrance that stretched the full width of the ruin, while upon the south side and to the rear of this apartment were two doors, but where they led I could not guess. It seemed best, however, to try these first and so I ran immediately to them and here the sounds of voices came more distinctly to me and now I recognized the roaring, bull-tones of Raban.

I tried the nearer door. It swung open and before me a flight of stairs descended and at the same time the voices came more loudly to my ears—I had opened the right door. A dim light flickered below as though coming from a chamber near the foot of the stairs. These were but instantaneous impressions to which I gave no conscious heed at the time, for almost as they flashed upon me I was at the foot of the stairs, looking into a large, high-ceiled chamber in which burned a single flare that but diffused the gloom sufficiently for me to see the figure of Raban towering above that of Bethelda, whom he was dragging toward the doorway by her hair.

"An Or-tis!" he was bellowing. "An Or-tis! Who would have thought that Raban would ever take the daughter of a Jemadar to be his woman? Ah, you do not like the idea, eh? You might do worse, if you had a choice, but you have none, for who is there to say 'no' to Raban the Giant?"

"The Red Hawk!" I said, stepping into the chamber.

The fellow wheeled, and in the flickering light of the dim flare I saw his red face go purple and from purple to white, or rather a blotchy semblance of dirty yellow. Blood of my fathers! How he towered above me, a perfect mountain of flesh! I am six feet in height and Raban must have been

half again as tall, a good nine feet; but I swear he appeared all of twenty, and broad!

For a moment he stood in silence glaring at me as though overcome by surprise and then he thrust Bethelda aside and drawing his sword advanced upon me, bellowing and roaring as was his wont for the purpose, I presume, of terrifying me, and also, I could not help but think, to attract the attention and the aid of his fellows.

I came to meet him then and he appeared a mountain, so high he loomed; but with all his size I did not feel the concern that I have when meeting men of my own stature whose honor and courage merited my respect, and it is well that I had this attitude in mind to fortify me in the impending duel, for, by The Flag! I needed whatever of encouragement I might find in it. The fellow's height and weight were sufficient to overcome a mighty warrior had Raban been entirely wanting in skill, which he by no means was. He wielded his great sword with a master hand and because of the very cowardice which I attributed to him he fought with a frenzy wrought by fear, as a cornered beast fights.

I needed all my skill and I doubt that that alone would have availed me had it not been upborne and multiplied by love and the necessity for protecting the object of my love. Ever was the presence of Bethelda, the Or-tis, a spur and an inspiration. What blows I struck I struck for her, what I parried, it was as though I parried from her soft skin.

As we closed he swung mightily at me a cut that would have severed me in twain, but I parried and stooped beneath it at once, and found his great legs unguarded before me and ran my sword through a thigh. With a howl of pain, Raban leaped back, but I followed him with a jab of my point that caught him just beneath the bottom of his iron vest and punctured his belly. At that he gave forth a horrible shriek, and though sorely wounded began to wield his blade with a skill I had not dreamed lay in him. It was with the utmost difficulty that I

turned his heavy sword, and I saved myself as many times by the quickness of my feet as by the facility of my blade.

And much do I owe, too, to the cleverness of Bethelda, who, shortly after we crossed swords, had run to the great fireplace and seized the flare from where it had reposed upon the stone shelf above, and ever after had kept just behind my shoulder with it, so that whatever advantage of light there might be lay with me. Her position was a dangerous one and I begged her to put herself at a safe distance, but she would not, and no more would she take advantage of this opportunity to escape.

Momentarily I had expected to see Raban's men rushing into the chamber, for I could not understand that his yells had not reached every ear within a mile or more, and so I fought the more desperately to be rid of him and on our way before they came. Raban, now panting for breath, had none left with which to yell and I could see that from exertion, terror, and loss of blood he was weakening.

It was now that I heard the loud voices of men without and the tramp of running feet. They were coming; I redoubled my efforts and Raban his—I to kill, he to escape death until succor came. From a score of wounds was he bleeding and I was sure that that in his abdomen alone must prove fatal; but still he clung to life tenaciously, and fought with a froth of blood upon his lips from a punctured throat.

He stumbled and went to one knee and as he staggered to rise I thought that I had him, when we heard the hurrying feet of men descending the stairs. Instantly Bethelda hurled the flare to the floor, leaving us in utter darkness.

"Cornel" she whispered, laying a hand upon my arm. "There will be too many now—we must escape as they enter or we are both indeed lost."

The warriors were cursing at the doorway now and calling for lights.

"Who hides within?" shouted one. "Stand forth,

a prisoner! We are a hundred blades."

Bethelda and I edged nearer the doorway, hoping to pass out among them before a light was made. From the center of the room came a deep groan from where I had left Raban, followed by a scuffling noise upon the floor and a strange gurgling. I came to the doorway, leading Bethelda by the hand. I found it choked with men.

"Asidel" I said. "I will fetch a light."

A sword point was shoved against my belly. "Back!" warned a voice behind the point. "We will have a look at you before you pass—another is bringing a light."

I stepped back and crossed my sword with his. Perhaps I could hew my way to freedom with Bethelda in the confusion of the darkness. It seemed our only hope, for to be caught by Raban's minions now, after the hurts I had inflicted upon him, would mean sure death for me and worse for Bethelda.

By the feel of our steel we fenced in the dark, but I could not reach him, nor he me, though I felt that he was a master swordsman. I thought that I was gaining an advantage when I saw the flicker of a light coming from the doorway at the head of the stairs. Someone was coming with a flare. I redoubled my efforts, but to no avail.

And then the light came and as it fell upon the warriors in the doorway I stepped back, astounded, and dropped my point. The light that revealed them illumined my own face, and at sight of it my antagonist voiced a cry of joy.

"Red Hawk!" he cried and seized me by the shoulder. It was The Vulture, my brother, and with him were The Rattlesnake and a hundred warriors of our own beloved clans. Other lights were brought and I saw Okonnor and a host of strange warriors in Kalkar trappings pushing down the stairway with my own, nor did they raise sword against one another.

Okonnor pointed toward the center of the chamber, and we looked and there lay Raban, the giant, dead. "The Red Hawk, Julian 20th," he said, turning to those crowding into the chamber behind him, "Great Chief of the Tribe of Julians—our chief!"

"And Jemadar of all America!" cried another voice and the warriors, crowding into the room, raised their swords and their hoarse voices in acclamation. And he who had named me thus pushed past them and faced me and I saw that he was no other than the true Or-tis with whom I had been imprisoned in The Capital and with whom I had escaped. He saw Bethelda and rushed forward and took her in his arms, and for a moment I was jealous, forgetting that he was her brother.

"And how has all this happened," I asked, "that Or-tis and Julian come here together in peace?"

"Listen," said my brother, "before you pass judgment upon us. Long has run the feud between Julian and Or-tis for the crime of a man dead now hundreds of years. Few enough are the Americans of pure blood that they should be separated by hate when they would come together in friendship. Came the Or-tis to us after escaping the Kalkars and told of your escape and of the wish of his father that peace be made between us, and he offered to lead us against the Kalkars by ways that we did not know and The Wolf took council with me and there was also The Rock, The Rattlesnake and The Coyote, with every other chief who was at the front, and in your absence I dissolved the feud that has lain between us and the chiefs applauded my decision. Then, guided by the Or-tis, we entered The Capital and drove the Kalkars before us. Great are their numbers, but they have not The Flag with them and they must fall.

"Then," he continued, "came word, brought by the little Nipons of the hills, that you were in the mountains near the tent of Raban the Giant and we came to find you, and on the way we met Okonnor with many warriors and glad were they of the peace that had been made, and we joined with them who were also riding against Raban to rescue the sister of the Or-tis. And we are here awaiting the word of The Great Chief. If it is for peace between the Julian and the Or-tis, we are glad; if it is for war our swords are ready."

"It is for peace, ever," I replied and the Or-tis came and knelt at my feet and took my hand in his.



"Before my people," he said, very simply, "I swear allegiance to Julian 20th, Jemadar of America."

## CHAPTER X

### PEACE

THERE was still much fighting to be done, for though we had driven the Kalkars from The Capital they held the country to the south and west and we could not be satisfied until we had driven them into the sea, and so we prepared to ride to the front again that very night, but before we left I wanted a word with Bethelda who was to remain here with a proper retinue and a sufficient guard in the home of her people. Leading Red Lightning I searched about the grounds around the ruins and at last I came upon her beneath a great oak tree that grew at the northeast corner of the structure, its mighty limbs outspreading above the ruin. She was alone and I came and stood beside her.

"I am going now," I said, "to drive your enemies and mine into the sea. I have come to say good-bye."

"Good-bye, Julian." She held out her hand to me.

I had come full of brave words and mighty resolve, but when I took that slim and tender hand in mine I could but stand there mute and trembling. I, Julian 20th, The Red Hawk, for the first time in all my life, knew fear. A Julian quailed before an Or-tis.

For a full minute I stood there trying to speak and could not, and then I dropped to my knee at the feet of my enemy and with my lips against her fair hand I murmured what I had been too great a coward to look into her eyes and say: "I love you!"

She raised me to my feet then and lifted her lips to mine and I took her into my arms and covered her mouth with kisses; and thus ended the ancient feud between Julian and Or-tis, that had endured four hundred years and wrecked a world.

Two years later and we had driven the Kalkars

into the sea, the remnants of them flying westward in great canoes which they had built and launched upon a beautiful bay a hundred miles or more south of The Capital.

The Rain Cloud said that if they were not overcome by storms and waves they might sail on and on around the world and come again to the eastern shores of America, but the rest of us knew that they would sail to the edge of the Earth and tumble off and that would be the end of them.

We live in such peace now that it is difficult to find an enemy upon whom to try one's lance, but I do not mind much, since my time is taken with the care of my flocks and herds, the business of my people and the training of Julian 21st, the son of a Julian and an Or-tis, who will one day be Jemadar of all America over which, once more, there flies but a single flag—The Flag.