

you to believe in? You said a moment ago that I was the first grateful person you had ever met. Then the rest of humanity are all selfish, and worshippers of themselves, and altogether vile, since you yourself say, as I do, that ingratitude is the unpardonable sin; and God has made a world full of unpardonable sinners, and unless you include yourself in the exception you graciously make in my favour, no one but I shall be saved. And yet you say also with me that God is good. Do you deny that you are utterly inconsistent?"

"I may make you some concession in a few minutes, but I am not going to yield to such logic. You have committed the fallacy of the undistributed middle term, if you care to know the proper name for it. I did not say that all men, saving you, were ungrateful. I said that, saving you, the persons I have met in my life have been ungrateful. You ought to distinguish."

"All I can say is, then, that you have had a very unfortunate experience of life," retorted Isaacs warmly.

"I have," said I, "but since you yield the technical point of logic, I will confess that I made the assertion hastily and overshot the mark. I do not remember, however, to have met any one who felt so strongly on the point as you do."

"Now you speak like a rational being," said Isaacs, quite pacified. "Extraordinary feelings are the result of unusual circumstances. I was in such dis-

treas as rarely falls to the lot of an innocent man of fine temperament and good abilities. I am now in a position of such wealth and prosperity as still more seldom are given to a man of my age and antecedents. I remember that I obtained the first step on my road to fortune through the kindness of John Westonhaugh, though I could never learn his name, and I met him at last, as you saw, by an accident. I call that accident a favour, and an opportunity bestowed on me by Allah, and the meeting has roused in me those feelings of thankfulness which, for want of an object upon which to show them, have been put away out of sight as a thing sacred for many years. I am willing you should say that, were my present fortune less, my gratitude would be proportionately less felt — it is very likely — though the original gift remain the same, one rupee and no more. You are entitled to think of any man as grateful in proportion to the gift, so long as you allow the gratitude at all." He made this speech in a perfectly natural and unconcerned way, as if he were contemplating the case of another person.

"Seriously, Isaacs, I would not do so for the world. I believe you were as grateful twelve years ago, when you were poor, as you are now that you are rich." Isaacs was silent, but a look of great gentleness crossed his face. There was at times something almost angelic in the perfect kindness of his eyes.

"To return," I said at last, "to the subject from which we started, the tigers. If we are really going,

we must leave here the day after to-morrow morning—indeed, why not to-morrow?”

“No; to-morrow we are to play that game of polo, which I am looking forward to with pleasure. Besides, it will take the men three days to get the elephants together, and I only telegraphed this morning to the collector of the district to make the arrangements.”

“So you have already taken steps? Does Kildare know you have sent orders?”

“Certainly. He came to me this morning at day-break, and we determined to arrange everything and take uncle Ghyrkins for granted. You need not look astonished; Kildare and I are allies, and very good friends.” What a true Oriental! How wise and far-sighted was the Persian, how bold and reckless the Irishman! It was odd, I thought, that Kildare had not mentioned the interview with Isaacs. Yet there was a certain rough delicacy—contradictory and impulsive—in his silence about this coalition with his rival. We rode along and discussed the plans for the expedition. All the men in the party, except Lord Steepleton, who had not been long in India, had killed tigers before. There would be enough of us, without asking any one else to join. The collector to whom Isaacs had telegraphed was an old acquaintance of his, and would probably go out for a few days with us. It all seemed easy enough and plain sailing. In the course of time we returned to our hotel, dressed,

and made our way through the winding roads to Mr. Currie Ghyrkins' bungalow.

We were met on the verandah by the old commissioner, who welcomed us warmly and praised our punctuality, for the clock was striking seven in the drawing-room, as we divested ourselves of our light top-coats. In the vestibule, Miss Westonhaugh and her brother came forward to greet us.

“John,” said the young lady, “you know I told you there was some one here whom you got out of trouble ever so many years ago in Bombay. Here he is. This is a new introduction. Mr. John Westonhaugh, Mr. Abdul Hafiz-ben-Isâk, commonly known to his friends as Mr. Isaacs.” Her face beamed with pleasure, and I thought with pride, as she led her brother to Isaacs, and her eyes rested long on the Persian with a look that, to me, argued something more than a mere interest. The two men clasped hands and stood for some seconds looking at each other in silence, but with very different expressions. Westonhaugh wore a look of utter amazement, though he certainly seemed pleased. The good heart that had prompted the good action twelve years before was still in the right place, above any petty considerations about nationality. His astonishment gradually changed to a smile of real greeting and pleasure, as he began to shake the hand he still held. I thought that even the faintest tinge of blood coloured his pale cheek.

“God bless my soul,” said he, “I remember you

perfectly well now. But it is so unexpected; my sister reminded me of the story, which I had not forgotten, and now I look at you I remember you perfectly. I am so glad."

As Isaacs answered, his voice trembled, and his face was very pale. There was a moisture in the brilliant eyes that told of genuine emotion.

"Mr. Westonhaugh, I consider that I owe to you everything I have in the world. This is a greater pleasure than I thought was in store for me. Indeed I thank you again."

His voice would not serve him. He stopped short and turned away to look for something in his coat.

"Indeed," said Westonhaugh, "it was a very little thing I did for you." And presently the two men went together into the drawing-room, Westonhaugh asking all manner of questions, which Isaacs, who was himself again, began to answer. The rest of us remained in the vestibule to meet Lord Steepleton, who at that moment came up the steps. There were more greetings, and then the head *khitmatgar* appeared and informed the "*Sahib log*, protectors of the poor, that their meat was ready." So we filed into the dining-room.

Isaacs was placed at Miss Westonhaugh's right, and her brother sat on his other side. Ghyrkins was opposite his niece at the other end, and Kildare and I were together, facing Westonhaugh and Isaacs, a party of six. Of course Kildare sat beside the lady.

The dinner opened very pleasantly. I could see

that Isaacs' undisguised gratitude and delight in having at last met the man who had helped him had strongly predisposed John Westonhaugh in his favour. Who is it that is not pleased at finding that some deed of kindness, done long ago with hardly a thought, has borne fruit and been remembered and treasured up by the receiver as the turning-point in his life? Is there any pleasure greater than that we enjoy through the happiness of others—in those rare cases where kindness is not misplaced? I had had time to reflect that Isaacs had most likely told a part of his story to Miss Westonhaugh on the previous afternoon as soon as he had recognised her brother. He might have told her before; I did not know how long he had known her, but it must have been some time. Presently she turned to him.

"Mr. Isaacs," said she, "some of us know something of your history. Why will you not tell us the rest now? My uncle has heard nothing of it, and I know Lord Steepleton is fond of novels."

Isaacs hesitated long, but as every one pressed him in turn, he yielded at last. And he told it well. It was exactly the narrative he had given me, in every detail of fact, but the whole effect was different. I saw how true a mastery he had of the English language, for he knew his audience thoroughly, and by a little colour here and an altered expression there he made it graphic and striking, not without humour, and altogether free of a certain mystical tinge he had imparted to it when we were alone. He talked

easily, with no more constraint than on other occasions, and his narrative was a small social success. I had not seen him in evening dress before, and I could not help thinking how much more thoroughly he looked the polished man of the world than the other men. Kildare never appeared to greater advantage than in the uniform and trappings of his profession. In a black coat and a white tie he looked like any other handsome young Englishman, utterly without individuality. But Isaacs, with his pale complexion and delicate high-bred features, bore himself like a noble of the old school. Westonhaugh beside him looked washed-out and deathly, Kildare was too coarsely healthy, and Ghyrkins and I, representing different types of extreme plainness, served as foils to all three.

I watched Miss Westonhaugh while Isaacs was speaking. She had evidently heard the whole story, for her expression showed beforehand the emotion she expected to feel at each point. Her colour came and went softly, and her eyes brightened with a warm light beneath the dark brows that contrasted so strangely yet delightfully with the mass of flaxen-white hair. She wore something dark and soft, cut square at the neck, and a plain circlet of gold was her only ornament. She was a beautiful creature, certainly; one of those striking-looking women of whom something is always expected, until they drop quietly out of youth into middle age, and the world finds out that they are, after all, not heroines of

romance, but merely plain, honest, good women; good wives and good mothers who love their homes and husbands well, though it has pleased nature in some strange freak to give them the form and feature of a Semiramis, a Cleopatra, or a Jeanne d'Arc.

"Dear me, how very interesting!" exclaimed Mr. Ghyrkins, looking up from his hill mutton as Isaacs finished, and a little murmur of sympathetic applause went round the table.

"I would give a great deal to have been through all that," said Lord Steepleton, slowly proceeding to sip a glass of claret.

"Just think!" ejaculated John Westonhaugh. "And I was entertaining such a Sinbad unawares!" and he took another green pepper from the dish his servant handed him.

"Upon my word, Isaacs," I said, "some one ought to make a novel of that story; it would sell like wild-fire."

"Why don't you do it yourself, Griggs?" he asked. "You are a pressman, and I am sure you are welcome to the whole thing."

"I will," I answered.

"Oh do, Mr. Griggs," said the young lady, "and make it wind up with a tiger-hunt. You could lay the scene in Australia or the Barbadoes, or some of those places, and put us all in—and kill us all off, if you like, you know. It would be such fun." Poor Miss Westonhaugh!

"It is easy to see what you are thinking about

most, Miss Westonhaugh," said Lord Steepleton: "the tigers are uppermost in your mind; and therefore in mine also," he added gallantly.

"Indeed, no — I was thinking about Mr. Isaacs." She blushed scarlet — the first time I had ever seen her really embarrassed. It was very natural that she should be thinking of Isaacs and the strange adventures he had just recounted; and if she had not cared about him she would not have changed colour. So I thought, at all events.

"My dear, drink some water immediately, this curry is very hot — deuced hot, in fact," said Mr. Ghyrkens, in perfectly good faith.

John Westonhaugh, who was busy breaking up biscuits and green peppers and "Bombay ducks" into his curry, looked up slowly at his sister and smiled.

"Why, you are quite a griffin, Katharine," said he, "how they will laugh at you in Bombay!" I was amused; of course the remarks of her uncle and brother did not make the blush subside — on the contrary. Kildare was drinking more claret, to conceal his annoyance. Isaacs had a curious expression. There was a short silence, and for one instant he turned his eyes to Miss Westonhaugh. It was only a look, but it betrayed to me — who knew what he felt — infinite surprise, joy, and sympathy. His quick understanding had comprehended that he had scored his first victory over his rival.

As her eyes met those of Isaacs, the colour left her

cheeks as suddenly as it had come, leaving her face dead white. She drank a little water, and presently seemed at ease again. I was beginning to think she cared for him seriously.

"And pray, John," she asked, "what may a griffin be? It is not a very pretty name to call a young lady, is it?"

"Why, a griffin," put in Mr. Ghyrkens, "is the 'Mr. Verdant Green' of the Civil Service. A young civilian — or anybody else — who is just out from home is called a griffin. John calls you a griffin because you don't understand eating pepper. You don't find it as *chilly* as he does! Ha! ha! ha!" and the old fellow laughed heartily, till he was red in the face, at his bleared old pun. Of course every one was amused or professed to be, for it was a diversion welcomed by the three men of us who had seen the young girl's embarrassment.

"A griffin," said I, "is a thing of joy. Mr. Westonhaugh was a griffin when he gave Mr. Isaacs that historical rupee." I cast my little bombshell into the conversation, and placidly went on manipulating my rice.

Isaacs was in too gay a humour to be offended, and he only said, turning to Miss Westonhaugh —

"Mr. Griggs is a cynic, you know. You must not believe anything he says."

"If doing kind things makes one a griffin, I hope I may be one always," said Miss Westonhaugh quickly, "and I trust my brother is as much a griffin as ever."

"I am, I assure you," said he. "But Mr. Griggs is quite right, and shows a profound knowledge of Indian life. No one but a griffin of the greenest ever gave anybody a rupee in Bombay — or ever will now, I should think."

"Oh, John, are you going to be cynical too?"

"No, Katharine, I am not cynical at all. I do not think you are quite sure what a 'cynic' is."

"Oh yes, I know quite well. Diogenes was a cynic, and Saint Jerome, and other people of that class."

"A man who lives in a tub, and abuses Alexander the Great, and that sort of thing," remarked Kildare, who had not spoken for some time.

"Mr. Griggs," said John Westonhaugh, "since you are the accused, pray define what you mean by a cynic, and then Mr. Isaacs, as the accuser, can have a chance too."

"Very well, I will. A man is a cynic if he will do no good to any one because he believes every one past improvement. Most men who do good actions are also cynics, because they well know that they are doing more harm than good by their charity. Mr. Westonhaugh has the discrimination to appreciate this, and therefore he is not a cynic."

"It is well you introduced the saving clause, Griggs," said Isaacs to me from across the table. "I am going to define you now; for I strongly suspect that you are the very ideal of a philosopher of that class. You are a man who believes in all that is good

and beautiful in theory, but by too much indifference to good in small measures — for you want a thing perfect, or you want it not at all — you have abstracted yourself from perceiving it anywhere, except in the most brilliant examples of heroism that history affords. You set up in your imagination an ideal which you call the good man, and you are utterly dissatisfied with anything less perfect than perfection. The result is that, though you might do a good action from your philosophical longing to approach the ideal in your own person, you will not suffer yourself to believe that others are consciously or unconsciously striving to make themselves better also. And you do not believe that any one can be made a better man by any one else, by any exterior agency, by any good that you or others may do to him. What makes you what you are is the fact that you really cherish this beautiful ideal image of your worship and reverence, and love it; but for this, you would be the most insufferable man of my acquaintance, instead of being the most agreeable."

Isaacs was gifted with a marvellous frankness of speech. He always said what he meant, with a supreme indifference to consequences; but he said it with such perfect honesty and evident appreciation of what was good, even when he most vehemently condemned what he did not like, that it was impossible to be annoyed. Every one laughed at his attack on me, and having satisfied my desire to observe Miss Westonhaugh, which had prompted my first

remark about griffins, I thought it was time to turn the conversation to the projected hunt.

"My dear fellow," I said, "I think that in spite of your Parthian shaft, your definition of a cynic is as complimentary to the school at large as to me in particular. Meanwhile, however," I added, turning to Mr. Ghyrkens, "I am inclined to believe with Lord Steepleton that the subject uppermost in the thoughts of most of us is the crusade against the tigers. What do you say? Shall we not all go as we are, a neat party of six?"

"Well, well, Mr. Griggs, we shall see, you know. Now, if we are going at all, when do you mean to start?"

"The sooner the better of course," broke in Kildare, and he launched into a host of reasons for going immediately, including the wildest statistics about the habits of tigers in winter. This was quite natural, however, as he was a thorough Irishman and had never seen a tiger in his life. Mr. Currie Ghyrkens vainly attempted to stem the torrent of his eloquence, but at last pinned him on some erratic statement about tigers moulting later in the year and their skins not being worth taking. Kildare would have asserted with equal equanimity that all tigers shed their teeth and their tails in December; he was evidently trying to rouse Mr. Ghyrkens into a discussion on the subject of tiger shooting in general, a purpose very easily accomplished. The old gentleman was soon goaded to madness by Kildare's won-

derful opinions, and before long he vowed that the youngster had never seen a tiger, — not one in his whole life, sir, — and that it was high time he did, high time indeed, and he swore he should see one before he was a week older. Yes, sir, before he was a week older, "if I have to carry you among 'em like a baby in arms, sir, by gad, sir — I should think so!"

This was all we wanted, and in another ten minutes we were drinking a bumper to the health of the whole tiger-hunt and of Miss Westonhaugh in particular. Isaacs joined with the rest, and though he only drank some sherbet, as I watched his bright eyes and pale cheek, I thought that never knight drank truer toast to his lady. Miss Westonhaugh rose and went out, leaving us to smoke for a while. The conversation was general, and turned on the chase, of course. In a few minutes Isaacs dropped his cigarette and went quietly out. I determined to detain the rest as long as possible, and I seconded Mr. Ghyrkens in passing the claret briskly round, telling all manner of stories of all nations and peoples — ancient tales that would not amuse a schoolboy in America, but which were a revelation of profound wit and brilliant humour to the unsophisticated British mind. By immense efforts — and I hate to exert myself in conversation — I succeeded in prolonging the session through a cigar and a half, but at last I was forced to submit to a move; and with a somewhat ancient remark from Mr. Ghyrkens, to the effect that all good things

must come to an end, we returned to the drawing-room.

Isaacs and Miss Westonhaugh were looking over some English photographs, and she was enthusiastically praising the beauties of Gothic architecture, while Isaacs was making the most of his opportunity, and taking a good look at her as she bent over the album. After we came in, she made a little music at the tuneless piano — there never was a piano in India yet that had any tune in it — playing and singing a little, very prettily. She sang something about a body in the rye, and then something else about drinking only with the eyes, to which her brother sang a sort of second very nicely. I do not understand much about music, but I thought the allusion to Isaacs' temperance in only drinking with his eyes was rather pointed. He said, however, that he liked it even better with a second than when she sang it alone, so I argued that it was not the first time he had heard it.

"Mr. Isaacs," said she, "you have often promised to sing something Persian for us. Will you not keep your word now?"

"When we are among the tigers, Miss Westonhaugh, next week. Then I will try and borrow a lute and sing you something."

It was late for an Indian dinner-party, so we took our departure soon afterwards, having agreed to meet the following afternoon at Annandale for the game of polo, in which Westonhaugh said he would also

play. He and Isaacs made some appointment for the morning; they seemed to be very sympathetic to each other. Kildare mounted and rode homeward with us, though he had much farther to go than we. If he felt any annoyance at the small successes Isaacs had achieved during the evening, he was far too courteous a gentleman to show it; and so, as we groped our way through the trees by the starlight, chiefly occupied in keeping our horses on their legs, the snatches of conversation that were possible were pleasant, if not animated, and there was a cordial "Good-night" on both sides, as we left Kildare to pursue his way alone.