

permeated my clothes ascended to my nostrils; aromatic, yet pungent and penetrating. I never smelt anything that it reminded me of, but I presume the compound contained something of the nature of an opiate. I took some books down to Isaacs' rooms and passed the evening there, unwilling to leave him to the care of an inquisitive servant, and five minutes before midnight I awoke him in the manner he had directed. He seemed to be sleeping lightly, for he was awake in a moment, and his first action was to replace the vial in the curious safe. He professed himself perfectly restored; and, indeed, on examining his bruise I found there was no swelling or inflammation. The odour of the medicament, which, as he had said, seemed to be very volatile, had almost entirely disappeared. He begged me to go to bed, saying that he would bathe and then do likewise, and I left him for the night; speculating on the nature of this secret and precious remedy.

CHAPTER IX.

THE Himalayan *tonga* is a thing of delight. It is easily described, for in principle it is the ancient Persian war-chariot, though the accommodation is so modified as to allow four persons to sit in it back to back; that is, three besides the driver. It is built for great strength, the wheels being enormously heavy, and the pole of the size of a mast. Harness the horses have none, save a single belt with a sort of lock at the top, which fits into the iron yoke through the pole, and can slide from it to the extremity; there is neither breeching nor trace nor collar, and the reins run from the heavy curb bit directly through loops on the yoke to the driver's hands. The latter, a wiry, long-bearded Mohammedan, is armed with a long whip attached to a short thick stock, and though he sits low, on the same level as the passenger beside him on the front seat, he guides his half broken horses with amazing dexterity round sharp curves and by giddy precipices, where neither parapet nor fencing give the startled mind even a momentary impression of security. The road from Simla to Kalka at the foot of the hills is so narrow that if two vehicles meet, the one has to

draw up to the edge of the road, while the other passes on its way. In view of the frequent encounters, every tonga-driver is provided with a post horn of tremendous power and most discordant harmony; for the road is covered with bullock carts bearing provisions and stores to the hill station. Smaller loads, such as trunks and other luggage, are generally carried by coolies, who follow a shorter path, the carriage road being ninety-two miles from Umballa, the railroad station, to Simla, but a certain amount may be stowed away in the tonga, of which the capacity is considerable.

In three of these vehicles our party of six began the descent on Tuesday morning, wrapped in linen "dusters" of various shades and shapes, and armed with countless varieties of smoking gear. The roughness of the road precludes all possibility of reading, and, after all, the rapid motion and the constant appearance of danger—which in reality does not exist—prevent any overpowering *ennui* from assailing the dusty traveller. So we spun along all day, stopping once or twice for a little refreshment, and changing horses every five or six miles. Everybody was in capital spirits, and we changed seats often, thus obtaining some little variety. Isaacs, who to every one's astonishment, seemed not to feel any inconvenience from his accident, clung to his seat in Miss Westonhaugh's tonga, sitting in front with the driver, while she and her uncle or brother occupied the seat behind, which is far more comfort-

able. At last, however, he was obliged to give his place to Kildare, who had been very patient, but at last said it "really wasn't fair, you know," and so Isaacs courteously yielded. At last we reached Kalka, where the tongas are exchanged for *dāk gharry* or mail carriage, a thing in which you can sit up in the daytime and lie down at night, there being an extension under the driver's box calculated for the accommodation of the longest legs. When lying down in one of these vehicles the sensation is that of being in a hearse and playing a game of funeral. On this occasion, however, it was still early when we made the change, and we paired off, two and two, for the last part of the drive. By the well planned arrangements of Isaacs and Kildare, two carriages were in readiness for us on the express train, and though the difference in temperature was enormous between Simla and the plains, still steaming from the late rainy season, the travelling was made easy for us, and we settled ourselves for the journey, after dining at the little hotel; Miss Westonhaugh bidding us all a cheery "good-night" as she retired with her *ayah* into the carriage prepared for her. I will not go into tedious details of the journey—we slept and woke and slept again, and smoked, and occasionally concocted iced drinks from our supplies, for in India the carriages are so large that the traveller generally provides himself with a generous basket of provisions and a travelling ice-chest full of bottles, and takes a trunk or two with

him in his compartment. Suffice it to say that we arrived on the following day at Fyzabad in Oude, and that we were there met by guides and shikarries — the native huntsmen — who assured us that there were tigers about near the outlying station of Pegnugger, where the elephants, previously ordered, would all be in readiness for us on the following day. The journey from Fyzabad to Pegnugger was not a long one, and we set out in the cool of the evening, sending our servants along in that “happy-go-lucky” fashion which characterises Indian life. It has always been a mystery to me how native servants manage always to turn up at the right moment. You say to your man, “Go there and wait for me,” and you arrive and find him waiting; though how he transferred himself thither, with his queer-looking bundle, and his lota, and cooking utensils, and your best teapot wrapped up in a newspaper and ready for use, and with all the other hundred and one things that a native servant contrives to carry about without breaking or losing one of them, is an unsolved puzzle. Yet there he is, clean and grinning as ever, and if he were not clean and grinning and provided with tea and cheroots, you would not keep him in your service a day, though you would be incapable of looking half so spotless and pleased under the same circumstances yourself.

On the following day, therefore, we found ourselves at Pegnugger, surrounded by shikarries and provided with every instrument of the chase that the

ingenuity of man and the foresight of Isaacs and Ghyrkins could provide. There were numbers of tents, sleeping tents, cooking tents, and servants' tents; guns and ammunition of every calibre likely to be useful; *kookries*, broad strong weapons not unlike the famous American bowie knives (which are all made in Sheffield, to the honour, glory, and gain, of British trade); there were huge packs of provisions edible and potable; baskets of utensils for the kitchen and the table, and piles of blankets and tenting gear for the camp. There was also the little collector of Pegnugger, whose small body housed a stout heart, for he had shot tigers on foot before now in company with a certain German doctor of undying sporting fame, whose big round spectacles seemed to direct his bullets with unerring precision. But the doctor was not here now, and so the sturdy Englishman condescended to accept a seat in the howdah, and to kill his game with somewhat less risk than usual.

This first day was occupied in transferring our party, now swelled by countless beaters and numerous huntsmen, not to mention all the retinue of servants necessary for an Indian camp, to the neighbourhood of the battlefield. There is not much conversation on these occasions, for the party is apt to become scattered, and there is a general tone of expectancy in the air, the old hands conversing more with the natives who know the district than with each other, and the young ones either wondering how

many tigers they will kill, or listening open mouthed to the tales of adventure reeled off by the yard by the old bearded shikarry, who has slain the king of the jungle with a *kookrie* in hand to hand struggle when he was young, and bears the scars of the deadly encounter on his brown chest to this day. Old Ghyrkins, who was evidently in his element, rode about on a little *tat*, questioning beaters and shikaries, and coming back every now and then to bawl up some piece of information to the little collector, who had established himself on one of the elephants and looked down over the edge of the howdah, the great pith hat on his head making him look like an immense mushroom with a very thin stem sprouting suddenly from the back of the huge beast. He smiled pleasantly at the old sportsman from his elevation, and seemed to know all about it. It so chanced that when he received Isaacs' telegrams he had been planning a little excursion on his own account, and had been sending out scouts and beaters for some days to ascertain where the game lay. This, of course, was so much clear gain to us, and the little man was delighted at the opportune coincidence which enabled him, by the unlimited money supplied, to join in such a hunt as he had not seen since the time when the Prince of Wales disported himself among the royal game, three years before. As for Miss Westonhaugh, she was in the gayest of spirits, as she sat with her brother on an elephant's back, while Isaacs, who loved the saddle, circled

round her and kept up a fire of little compliments and pretty speeches, to which she was fast becoming inured. Kildare and I followed them closely on another elephant, discoursing seriously about the hunt, and occasionally shouting some question to John Westonhaugh, ahead, about sport in the south.

Before evening we had arrived at our first camping ground, near a small village on the outskirts of the jungle, and the tents were pitched on a little elevation covered with grass, now green and waving. The men had mowed a patch clear, and were busy with the pegs and all the paraphernalia of a canvas house, and we strolled about, some of us directing the operations, others offering a sacrifice of cooling liquids and tobacco to the setting sun. Miss Westonhaugh had heard about living in tents ever since she came to India, and had often longed to sleep in one of those temporary chambers that are set up anywhere in the "compound" of an English bungalow for the accommodation of the bachelor guests whom the house itself is too small to hold; now she was enchanted at the prospect of a whole fortnight under canvas, and watched with rapt interest the driving of the pegs, the raising of the poles, and the careful furnishing of her dwelling. There was a carpet, and armchairs, and tables, and even a small bookcase with a few favourite volumes. To us in civilised life it seems a great deal of trouble to transport a lunch basket and a novel to some shady glen to enjoy a day's rest in the open air, and we would

almost rather starve than take the trouble to carry provisions. In India you speak the word, and as by magic there arises in the wilderness a little village of tents, furnished with every necessary luxury—and the luxuries necessary to our degenerate age are many—a kitchen tent is raised, and a skilled dark-skinned artist provides you in an hour with a dinner such as you could eat in no hotel. The treasures of the huge portable ice-chest reveal cooling wines and soda water to the thirsty soul, and if you are going very far beyond the reach of the large towns, a small ice-machine is kept at work day and night to increase the supply while you sleep, and to maintain it while you wake. In the *connât* or verandah of the tent, long chairs await you after your meal, and as you smoke the fragrant cigarette and watch the stars coming out, you feel as comfortable as though you had been dining in your own spacious bungalow in Mudnugger.

It was not long before all was ready, and having made many ablutions and a little toilet, we assembled round the dinner table in the eating tent, the same party that had dined at Mr. Currie Ghyrkins' house on Sunday night, with the addition of the little collector of Pegnugger, whose stories of his outlying district were full of humour and anecdote. The talk bending in the direction of adventure, Kildare, who had been lately in South Africa with his regiment, told some tales of Zulus and assegais and Boers in the Hibernian style of hyperbole. The

Irish blood never comes out so strongly as when a story is to be told, and no amount of English education and Oxford accent will suppress the tendency. The brogue is gone, but the love of the marvellous is there still. Isaacs related the experience of "a man he knew," who had been pulled off his elephant, howdah and all, and had killed the tiger with a revolver at half arm's length.

"Ah yes," said the little collector, who had not caught the names of all the party when introduced, "I read about it at the time; I remember it very well. It happened in Purneah two years ago. The gentleman was a Mr. Isaacs of Delhi. Queer name too—remember perfectly." There was a roar of laughter at this, in which the collector joined vociferously on being informed that the man with the "queer name" was his neighbour at table.

"You see what you get for your modesty," cried old Ghyrkins, laughing to convulsions.

"And is it really true, Mr. Isaacs?" asked Miss Westonhaugh, looking admiringly across at the young man, who seemed rather annoyed.

And so the conversation went round and all were merry, and some were sleepy after dinner, and we sat in long chairs under the awning or *connât*. There was no moon yet, but the stars shone out as they shine nowhere save in India, and the evening breeze played pleasantly through the ropes after the long hot day. Miss Westonhaugh assured everybody for the hundredth time that day that she rather

liked the smell of cigars, and so we smoked and chatted a little, and presently there was a jerk and a sputtering sneeze from Mr. Ghyrkins, who, being weary with the march and the heat and the good dinner, and on the borders of sleep, had put the wrong end of his cigar in his mouth with destructive results. Then he threw it away with a small volley of harmless expletives, and swore he would go to bed, as he could not stand our dulness any longer; but he merely shifted his position a little, and was soon snoring merrily.

"What a pity it is we have no piano, Katharine," said John Westonhaugh, who was fond of music. "Could you not sing something without any accompaniment?"

"Oh no. Mr. Isaacs," she said, turning her voice to where she could see the light of his cigarette and the faint outline of his chair in the starlight, "here we are in the camp. Now where is the 'lute' you promised to produce for us? I think the time has come at last for you to keep your promise."

"Well," said he, "I believe there really is an old guitar or something of the kind among my traps somewhere. But it might wake Mr. Ghyrkins, who, I understand from his tones, is asleep."

Various opinions were expressed to the effect that Mr. Ghyrkins was not so easily disturbed, and a voice like Kildare's was heard to mumble that "it would not hurt him if he was," a sentence no one attempted to construe. So the faithful Narain was

summoned, and instructed to bring the instrument if he could find it. I was rather surprised at Isaacs' readiness to sing; but in the first place I had never heard him, and besides I did not make allowance for the Oriental courtesy of his character, which would not refuse anything, or make any show of refusal in order to be pressed. Narain returned with a very modern-looking guitar-case, and, opening the box, presented his master with the instrument, which, as Isaacs took it to the light in the door of the tent to see if it had travelled safely, appeared to be a perfectly new German guitar. I suspected him of having purchased it at the little music shop at Simla, for the especial amusement of our party.

"I thought it was a lute you played on," said Miss Westonhaugh, "a real, lovely, ancient Assyrian lute, or something of that kind."

"Oh, a plain guitar is infinitely better and less troublesome," said Isaacs as he returned to his seat in the dark and began to tune the strings softly. "It takes so long to tune one of those old things, and then nothing will make them stand. Now this one, you see, — or rather you cannot see, — has an ingenious contrivance of screws by which you may tune it in a moment." While he was speaking he was altering the pitch of the strings, and presently he added, "There, it is done now," and two or three sounding chords fell on the still air. "Now what shall I sing? I await your commands."

"Something soft, and sweet, and gentle."