

day, came out one by one and stood around the dead tiger, wondering at the tale told by the delighted ryot, who squatted at the beast's head to relate the adventure to all comers. We could see the group from where we sat, in the shadow of the *connât*, and the different expressions of the men as they came out. The little collector of Pegnugger measured and measured again; Mr. Ghyrkins stood with his hands in his coat pockets and his legs apart, then going to the other side he took up the same position again. Lord Steepleton Kildare sauntered round and twirled his big moustache, saying nothing the while, but looking rather serious. John Westonhaugh, who seemed to be the artistic genius of the party, sent for a chair and made his servant hold an umbrella over him while he sketched the animal in his notebook, and presently his sister came out, a big bunch of roses in her belt, and a broad hat half hiding her face, and looked at the tiger and then round the party quickly, searching for Isaacs. In her hand she held a little package wrapped in white tissue paper. I strolled up to the group, leaving Isaacs in his tent. I thought I might as well play innocence.

"Of course," I remarked, "those fellows have bagged his ears as usual."

"They never omit that," said Ghyrkins.

"Oh no, uncle," broke in Miss Westonhaugh, "he gave them to me!"

"Who?" asked Ghyrkins, opening his little eyes wide.

"Mr. Isaacs. Did not he kill the tiger? He sent me the ears in a little silver box. Here it is — the box, I mean. I am going to give it back to him, of course."

"How did Mr. Isaacs know you wanted them?" asked her uncle, getting red in the face.

"Why, we were talking about them last night before dinner, and he promised that if he shot a tiger to-day he would give me the ears." Mr. Ghyrkins was redder and redder in the morning sun. There was a storm of some kind brewing. We were collected together on the other side of the dead tiger and exchanged all kinds of spontaneous civilities and remarks, not wishing to witness Mr. Ghyrkins' wrath, nor to go away too suddenly. I heard the conversation, however, for the old gentleman made no pretence of lowering his voice.

"And do you mean to say you let him go off like that? He must have been out all night. That beast of a nigger says so. On foot, too. I say on foot! Do you know what you are talking about? Eh? Shooting tigers on foot? What? Eh? Might have been killed as easily as not! And then what would you have said? Eh? What? Upon my soul! You girls from home have no more hearts than a parcel of old Juggernauts!" Ghyrkins was now furious. We edged away towards the dining-tent, making a great talk about the terrible heat of the sun in the morning. I caught the beginning of Miss Westonhaugh's answer. She had hardly appreciated the situation



yet, and probably thought her uncle was joking, but she spoke very coldly, being properly annoyed at his talking in such a way.

"You cannot suppose for a moment that I meant him to go," I heard her say, and something else followed in a lower tone. We then went into the dining-tent.

"Now look here, Katharine," Mr. Ghyrkins' irate voice rang across the open space, "if any young woman asked me —" John Westonhaugh had risen from his chair and apparently interrupted his uncle. Miss Westonhaugh walked slowly to her tent, while her male relations remained talking. I thought Isaacs had shown some foresight in not taking part in the morning discussion. The two men went into their tents together and the dead tiger lay alone in the grass, the sun rising higher and higher, pouring down his burning rays on man and beast and green thing. And soon the shikarries came with a small elephant and dragged the carcass away to be skinned and cut up. Kildare and the collector said they would go and shoot some small game for dinner. Isaacs, I supposed, was sleeping, and I was alone in the dining-tent. I shouted for Kiramat Ali and sent for books, paper, and pens, and a hookah, resolved to have a quiet morning to myself, since it was clear we were not going out to-day. I saw Ghyrkins' servant enter his tent with bottles and ice, and I suspected the old fellow was going to cool his wrath with a "peg," and would be asleep most of the morn-

ing. John would take a peg too, but he would not sleep in consequence, being of Bombay, iron-headed and spirit-proof. So I read on and wrote, and was happy, for I like the heat of the noon-day and the buzzing of the flies, and the smell of the parched grass, being southern born.

About twelve o'clock, when I was beginning to think I had done enough work for one day, I saw Miss Westonhaugh's native maid come out of her mistress's tent and survey the landscape, shading her eyes with her hand. She was dressed, of course, in spotless white drapery, and there were heavy anklets on her feet and bangles of silver on her wrist. She seemed satisfied by her inspection and went in again, returning presently with Miss Westonhaugh and a large package of work and novels and letter-writing materials. They came straight to where I was sitting under the airy tent where we dined, and Miss Westonhaugh established herself at one side of the table at the end of which I was writing.

"It is so hot in my tent," she said almost apologetically, and began to unroll some worsted work.

"Yes, it is quite unbearable," I answered politely, though I had not thought much about the temperature. There was a long silence, and I collected my papers in a bundle and leaned back in my chair. I did not know what to say, nor was anything expected of me. I looked occasionally at the young girl, who had laid her hat on the table, allowing the rich coils of dazzling hair to assert their independence. Her



dark eyes were bent over her work as her fingers deftly pushed the needle in and out of the brown linen she worked on.

"Mr. Griggs," she began at last without looking up, "did you know Mr. Isaacs was going out last night to kill that horrid thing?" I had expected the question for some time.

"Yes; he told me about midnight, when he started."

"Then why did you let him go?" she asked, looking suddenly at me, and knitting her dark eyebrows rather fiercely.

"I do not think I could have prevented him. I do not think anybody could prevent him from doing anything he had made up his mind to. I nearly quarrelled with him, as it was."

"I am sure I could have stopped him, if I had been you," she said innocently.

"I have not the least doubt that you could. Unfortunately, however, you were not available at the time, or I would have suggested it to you."

"I wish I had known," she went on, plunging deeper and deeper. "I would not have had him go for — for anything."

"Oh! Well, I suppose not. But, seriously, Miss Westonhaugh, are you not flattered that a man should be willing and ready to risk life and limb in satisfying your lightest fancy?"

"Flattered?" she looked at me with much astonishment and some anger. I was sure the look was genuine and not assumed.

"At all events the tiger's ears will always be a charming reminiscence, a token of esteem that any one might be proud of."

"I am not proud of them in the least, though I shall always keep them as a warning not to wish for such things. I hope that the next time Mr. Isaacs is going to do a foolish thing you will have the common sense to prevent him." She returned to her starting-point; but I saw no use in prolonging the skirmish, and turned the talk upon other things. And soon John Westonhaugh joined us, and found in me a sympathetic talker and listener, as we both cared a great deal more for books than for tigers, though not averse to a stray shot now and then.

In this kind of life the week passed, shooting to-day and staying in camp to-morrow. We shifted our ground several times, working along the borders of the forest and crashing through the jungle after tiger with varying success. In the evenings, when not tired with the day's work, we sat together, and Isaacs sang, and at last even prevailed upon Miss Westonhaugh to let him accompany her with his guitar, in which he proved very successful. They were constantly together, and Ghyrkens was heard to say that Isaacs was "a very fine fellow, and it was a pity he wasn't English," to which Kildare assented somewhat mournfully, allowing that it was quite true. His chance was gone, and he knew it, and bore it like a gentleman, though he still made use of every opportunity he had to make himself acceptable to



Miss Westonhaugh. The girl liked his manly ways, and was always grateful for any little attention from him that attracted her notice, but it was evident that all her interest ceased there. She liked him in the same way she liked her brother, but rather less, if anything. She hardly knew, for she had seen so little of John since she was a small child. I suppose Isaacs must have talked to her about me, for she treated me with a certain consideration, and often referred questions to me, on which I thought she might as well have consulted some one else. For my part, I served the lovers in every way I could think of. I would have done anything for Isaacs then as now, and I liked her for the honest good feeling she had shown about him, especially in the matter of the tiger's ears, for which she could not forgive herself — though in truth she had been innocent enough. And they were really lovers, those two. Any one might have seen it, and but for the wondrous fascination Isaacs exercised over every one who came near him, and the circumstances of his spotless name and reputation for integrity in the large transactions in which he was frequently known to be engaged, it is certain that Mr. Ghyrkins would have looked askance at the whole affair, and very likely would have broken up the party.

In the course of time we became a little *blasé* about tigers, till on the eighth day from the beginning of the hunt, which was a Thursday, I remember, an incident occurred which left a lasting impression on

the mind of every one who witnessed it. It was a very hot morning, the hottest day we had had, and we had just crossed a *nullah* in the forest, full from the recent rains, wherein the elephants lingered lovingly to splash the water over their heated sides, drowning the swarms of mosquitoes from which they suffer such torments, in spite of their thick skins. The collector called a halt on the opposite side; our line of march had become somewhat disordered by the passage, and numerous tracks in the pasty black mud showed that the *nullah* was a favourite resort of tigers — though at this time of day they might be a long distance off. I had come next to the collector after we emerged from the stream, the pad elephants having lingered longer in the water, and Mr. Ghyrkins with Miss Westonhaugh was three or four places beyond me. It was shady and cool under the thick trees, and the light was not good. The collector bent over his howdah, looking at some tracks.

"Those tracks look suspiciously fresh, Mr. Griggs," said the collector, scrutinising the holes, not yet filled by the oozing back water of the *nullah*. "Don't you think so?"

"Indeed, yes. I do not understand it at all," I replied. At the collector's call a couple of beaters came forward and stooped down to examine the trail. One of them, a good-looking young *gowala*, or cowherd, followed along the footprints, examining each to be sure he was not going on a false spoor; he moved slowly, scrutinising each hole, as the traces grew



shallower on the rising ground, approaching a bit of small jungle. My sight followed the probable course of the track ahead of him and something caught my eyes, which are remarkably good, even at a great distance. The object was brown and hairy; a dark brown, not the kind of colour one expects to see in the jungle in September. I looked closely, and was satisfied that it must be part of an animal; still more clearly I saw it, and no doubt remained in my mind; it was the head of a bullock or a heifer. I shouted to the man to be careful, to stop and let the elephants plough through the undergrowth, as only elephants can. But he did not understand my Hindustani, which was of the civilised *Urdu* kind learnt in the North-West Provinces. The man went quickly along, and I tried to make the collector comprehend what I saw. But the pad elephants were coming out of the water and forcing themselves between our beasts, and he hardly caught what I said in the confusion. The track led away to my left, nearly opposite to the elephant bearing Mr. Ghyrkins and his niece. The little Pegnugger man was on my right. The native held on, moving more and more rapidly as he found himself following a single track. I shouted to him—to Ghyrkins—to everybody, but they could not make the doomed man understand what I saw—the freshly slain head of the tiger's last victim. There was little doubt that the king himself was near by—probably in that suspicious-looking bit of green jungle, slimy green too, as green

is, that grows in sticky chocolate-coloured mud. The young fellow was courageous, and ignorant of the immediate danger, and, above all, he was on the look out for bucksheesh. He reached the reeds and unclean vegetables that grew thick and foul together in the little patch. He put one foot into the bush.

A great fiery yellow and black head rose cautiously above the level of the green and paused a moment, glaring. The wretched man, transfixed with terror, stood stock still, expecting death. Then he moved, as if to throw himself on one side, and at the same instant the tiger made a dash at his naked body, such a dash as a great relentless cat makes at a gold-fish trying to slide away from its grip. The tiger struck the man a heavy blow on the right shoulder, felling him like a log, and coming down to a standing position over his prey, with one paw on the native's right arm. Probably the parade of elephants and bright coloured howdahs, and the shouts of the beaters and shikarries, distracted his attention for a moment. He stood whirling his tail to right and left, with half dropped jaw and flaming eyes, half pressing, half grabbing the fleshy arm of the senseless man beneath him—impatient, alarmed, and horrible.

“Paack!!! Pi-i-i-ing . . .” went the crack and the sing of the merry rifle, and the scene changed.

With a yell like a soul in everlasting torment the great beast whirled himself into the air ten feet at least, and fell dead beside his victim, shot through



breast and breastbone and heart. A dead silence fell on the spectators. Then I looked, and saw Miss Westonhaugh holding out a second gun to Mr. Ghyrkins, while he, seeing that the first had done its work, leaned forward, his broad face pale with the extremity of his horror for the man's danger, and his hands gripping at the empty rifle.

"You've done it this time," cried the collector from the right. "Take six to four the man's dead!"

"Done," called Kildare from the other end. I was the nearest to the scene, after Ghyrkins. I dropped over the edge of the howdah and made for the spot, running. I think I reflected as I ran that it was rather low for men to bet on the poor fellow's life in that way. Tigers are often very deceptive and always die hard, and I am a cautious person, so when I was near I pulled out my long army six-shooter, and, going within arm's length, quietly put a bullet through the beast's eye as a matter of safety. When he was cut up, however, the ball from the rifle of Mr. Ghyrkins was found in his heart; the old fellow was a dead shot still. I went up and examined the prostrate man. He was lying on his face, and so I picked him up and propped his head against the dead tiger. He was still breathing, but a very little examination proved that his right collar-bone and the bone of his upper arm were broken. A little brandy revived him, and he immediately began to scream with pain. I was soon joined by the collector, who with characteristic promptitude had torn and hewed some broad

slats of bamboo from his howdah, and with a little pulling and wrenching, and the help of my long, tough turban-cloth, a real native pugree, we set and bound the arm as best we could, giving the poor fellow brandy all the while. The collar-bone we left to its own devices; an injury there takes care of itself.

An elephant came up and received the dead tiger, and the man was carried off and placed in my howdah. The other animals with their riders had gathered near the scene, and every one had something to say to Ghyrkins, who by his brilliant shot and the life he had saved, had maintained his reputation, and come off the hero of the whole campaign. Miss Westonhaugh was speechless with horror at the whole thing, and seemed to cling to her uncle, as if fearing something of the same kind might happen to her at any moment. Isaacs, as usual the last on the line of beating, came up and called out his congratulations.

"After saving a life so well, Mr. Ghyrkins, you will not grudge me the poor honour of risking one, will you?"

"Not I, my boy!" answered the delighted old sportsman, "only if that mangy old man-eater had got you down the other day, I should not have been there to pot him!"

"Great shot, sir! I envy you," said Kildare.

"Splendid shot. A hundred yards at least," said John Westonhaugh meditatively, but in a loud voice.



So we swung away toward the camp, though it was early. Ghyrkins chuckled, and the man with the broken bones groaned. But between the different members of the party he would be a rich man before he was well. I amused myself with my favourite sport of potting peacocks with bullets; it is very good practice. Isaacs had told me that morning when we started that he would leave us the next day to meet Shere Ali near Keitung. We reached camp about three o'clock, in the heat of the afternoon. The injured beater was put in a servant's tent to be sent off to Pegnugger in a litter in the cool of the night. There was a doctor there who would take care of him under the collector's written orders.

The camp was in a shady place, quite unlike the spot where we had first pitched our tents. There was a little grove of mango-trees, rather stunted, as they are in the north, and away at one corner of the plantation was a well with a small temple where a Brahmin, related to all the best families in the neighbouring village, dwelt and collected the gifts bestowed on him and his simple shrine by the superstitious, devout, or worldly pilgrims who yearly and monthly visited him in search of counsel, spiritual or social. The men had mowed the grass smooth under the trees, and the shade was not so close as to make it damp. Some ryots had been called in to dig a ditch and raised a rough *chapudra* or terrace, some fifteen feet in diameter, opposite the dining-tent, on which elevation we could sit, even late at night, in reason-

able security from cobras and other evil beasts. It was a pleasant place in the afternoon, and pleasanter still at night. As I turned into our tent after we got back, I thought I would go and sit there when I had bathed, and send for a hookah and a novel, and go to sleep.