

last of this town of white faces and boarding-houses.

Although a person playing no very important part in this narrative, I owe it to the reader to explain that I had come to Southville when I sold my practice in a rural part of Warwickshire of which guide-book makers speak in glowing terms of praise. Having put in the twenty years that had elapsed since I left the R.A.M.C., as the parish doctor of the place, I was thoroughly tired of the beauties which these good gentlemen extolled in such lavish terms. I knew every tree, I might almost say, for miles round. So I retired upon my savings which, added to the substantial sum that the sale of my practice brought me, and the amount realised by the disposal of what little property I owned in the neighbourhood, were sufficient to yield me an income of three hundred pounds per annum—an income upon which a man of simple tastes, and no dissipations, save a liking for a game of bridge at mild points, ought to manage very comfortably.

When we arrived in Leicestershire I was duly presented to two members of the expedition—Jack, the General's son, and Maitland. Parker, of course, I got to know in a less formal manner. He was an ex-cavalryman, having left the colours when the South African War came to an end. Throughout the war he had acted as the General's orderly, and had not hesitated a moment in making up his mind whether to remain in the army or enter Sir Donald's service. Parker was a Cockney, with all a Cockney's ready wit and, if I may borrow a word from our late