

Camping in Mongolia

1. James Gilmour, the nineteenth century missionary to Mongolia here describes one of his many adventures while travelling in that country with his young wife and baby son.

2. We had one rather serious adventure. The south edge of the plain is famed for storms, and the night we camped there, just after dark, began one of the fiercest thunderstorms I can remember having seen. The wind roared, the rain dashed, the tent quivered, the thunder rattled, with a metallic ring like shafts of iron dashing against each other as they darted along a sheet-iron sky; the water rose in our tent till part of the bed was afloat. It was hardly possible to hear each other speak. But amid and above all the din of the tempest rose one sound not to be mistaken, the roar of rushing water.

3. There was a river to the right of us, but the sound came more from the left. Venturing out, I found that there was a great, swift-flowing river on both sides of us; that we could not move from the little bit of elevated land plain on which we had our tent; and that a few inches more water, or an obstacle getting in the way of the upper river, would send it down in full force upon our tent. Flocks, herds, and men are said to be swept away now and again in Mongolia, and for an hour our case seemed doubtful; but at about 11 p.m. the storm ceased, and the danger was over, and though we had hardly a dry thing left, we went to sleep, thanking God for His preserving mercy.

Find Mongolia on the map or globe. Which large country borders it on the east? Which large country borders it on the west?

For what does Gilmour say the southern edge of the Mongolian Plain is famous?

What happened to the bed?

What could be heard above the noise of the storm?

Why was Gilmour concerned that the noise came from the left?

What does Gilmour mean by “our case seemed doubtful”?

Why would you consider the state in which they finally went to sleep would be uncomfortable to the adults and even dangerous for the baby?

A **simile** is a figure of speech which compares two things using the words “like” or “as” e.g. “as fat as butter” or “his hand was like iron.” Find a simile in paragraph 2.

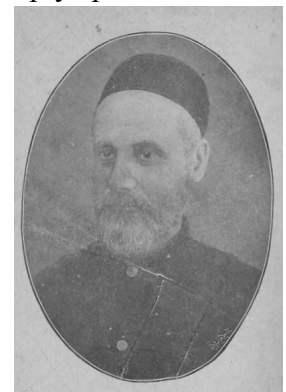
A **metaphor** is a comparison made without the words like or as. The thing is simply spoken of as if *is* the other thing. E.g. “an iron hand.” Find a metaphor in paragraph 2.

Composition:

Describe any experiences you have had camping.

Or:

Continue the account above describing how the family woke, breakfasted, dried their clothes. Use your imagination.



James Gilmour