In the winter farm villages are bleak and bare

CHINA HAND

By

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by
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To
Dwight, Steph and Deb
and
also Everly: friend

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I

MIDSUMMER OF 1911

in July of 1911 an unborn egg leaves his native state for China and receives good advice on the way over—he sees the famous Nectarine No. 9 at Yokohama and is greeted to China by the stench of the Whangpoo

ON A BRILLIANTLY CLEAR AND brisk sunshiny morning in July of 1911 a tall young man not yet twenty-one, dressed in a double breasted blue serge suit and wearing a high stiff collar and black derby, stood in the bow of the S. S. *China* and listened to a five piece brass band play the "Rock of Ages" to three elderly, weary-looking missionaries who stood in front of him waving their handkerchiefs as the boat slowly pulled away from the wharf. But his thoughts were elsewhere. He was wondering if any one, or all, of the three vaccinations he had been given an hour before would take. Perhaps it had been a mistake to tell the doctor that they usually faded out. Perhaps he should not have stayed up so late. Still it had been an education. The Barbary Coast had certainly lived up to its reputation. It is not usual to stroll down a street and have a sailor come flying through a door right in front of your face, land in the gutter and lie there while a cop continues his way swinging his billy and whistling. And the back rooms of the bars and their occupants had been still less usual. After all, the whole night of sightseeing had only cost six dollars and

he still had twenty-five in his pocket and his first month's pay coming to him on the day he arrived in Shanghai. They all had said there were great opportunities in China, a big future for young men and that had their eye on him. He hoped so.

The young man was myself. It was the first time I had been out of my native state of North Carolina and I had left for China with a four year contract carefully stored away in the bottom of my trunk. I was fresh from college and for several months previously had been wrinkling my forehead wondering, like most graduates, how I was going to make a living. Then my father died suddenly and I had to find something at once. After the funeral, I went to Durham to ask advice of a friend, dean of the "tobacco" college from which I had graduated.

"I can get you a job as reporter on the *Richmond Times Dispatch*," said the kindly old scholar, "but it will pay only ten or twelve dollars a week for the first year or so. Before you decide you might have a talk with Mr. Toms, head of the American Tobacco Company here. I'll make an engagement for you to see him this afternoon. I understand the company is taking on young men for China and starting them off with excellent salaries."

China! I had once thought seriously of taking a cattle boat to Europe and several times news items of skyrocket booms had put wild ideas of going to South America into my head—but China was beyond my imagination, a vague, mysterious country on the other side of the world where an explorer, Marco Polo, back in the middle ages, had found untold wealth and marvelous works of art, and not so many years ago an army of natives calling themselves Boxers had tried to slaughter all the foreigners.

I called on Mr. Toms. He told me of a huge tobacco sales organization with its head office in London and branches all over the world, of how each branch had been opened by a few pioneers who were transformed almost overnight into men of wealth. In Japan the sales had mounted so high that the government decided that it could gain more from a monopoly than from duties and taxes. The local managing director sold out for such a large sum that the London office donated him two

million dollars and gave to each foreign member of the staff a lump sum sufficient to retire upon comfortably. China was the last country in the pioneering stage, the largest field, with the greatest opportunities. Young men who went over were getting in on the ground floor. But it meant a steady, hard grind, and it took grit and determination to carry through. Living conditions were entirely different and temptations plentiful. However, there was nothing to prevent a young man who worked hard and kept himself straight from going right ahead. The company started men off at $100 a month plus living expenses. How did it sound to me?

As I listened I saw visions. Here was a new world opening up—more than ten thousand miles away—where everything was strange—where opportunities stared you in the face and yelled at you. Pioneer—ground floor—millions—the words thrilled me. When Mr. Toms put his question I swallowed, and in a husky voice told him it sounded fine, it was just what I wanted.

Ten days later I reported to the New York office. To my dismay I discovered that the company's rule was for men taken on to pay their own way out, with a refund at the end of the first year's services. I finally arranged a loan of $500 with one of the directors from down home. Then, when filling in the details for my passport, the clerk discovered that I was too young to sign a contract. But to my relief the company arranged for a year to be added to my age.

As the ship pulled out from San Francisco I stood alone watching, with a faraway feeling, the crowds on the deck and the other passengers leaning over the rail waving handkerchiefs, then the green hills fade slowly into blue and die out in the distance. Just about now the bunch would be gathering at the drug store. The shade trees along West Street were cool and friendly. Everybody said "Hi" to each other, and old George, the Greek, stopped polishing apples to flap his hand, "Hey!" And quiet evenings on the porch, talking in low voices, the comfortable creak of the swing—who was rushing her now?

I gave a shiver and went below in search of my cabin. It did

not take long. The *China*, I soon discovered, was much the smallest passenger boat on the Pacific, having been originally a sea-going yacht owned by one of the Morgan group. On her next trip over she went on the rocks in a storm off the coast of Hongkong and was discarded.

The only passenger on board under forty, for several days I wandered the deck shrouded in a gloom of lonesomeness. Then two inseparable companions and competitors, professional tea tasters from England, who spent three months out of each year in China grading and testing tea for the home market, discovered that I was also bound for China and that it was my first trip over. At once they shed their native reserve and took me under their wings. One a scrawny, hook-nosed, bony-faced, middle-aged man with bad teeth, hardly more than five feet high, whose shoes ran out flat and straight like two shingles, spoke cockney in a high-pitched voice and when excited, which was often, spattered his talk with "blithering," "bloody" and "silly awss". His friend was a comfortably built, quiet, red-faced man in his early forties, never without a pipe settled snugly in one corner of his mouth. They took cues from each other in giving me good advice.

"You're only a bloody griffin, you know," the scrawny little fellow would say, screwing up his face to emphasize, "and Shanghai's full of blighters waitin' to do you in the eye, and you have to be bloody careful who you know."

From these two inseparables I also learned that the heads of the large import and export houses were looked up to with reverence and respect as *taipans*—a corruption of the Chinese colloquial, *ta* and *pan*, meaning "big boss"—and were of a caste apart from and above the ordinary foreigner; the lowest paid bank clerk, pronounced *clark*, ranked ahead of men in trade, even though he were a blithering idiot; the fast ways and easy life of the mixed nationalities were dangerous to the morals of serious young men going out to make good; and a blighter was lucky to come out of it all better than a bloody wreck.

I eagerly absorbed the advice and warnings of the tea tasters but at night on deck looking out into the silent blackness,

snatches of phrases and sentences flitting through my mind only served to increase my feeling of lonesomeness.

Then two days from Yokohama the missionaries held Sunday evening service. Sitting in the back of the social hall thumbing through a hymn book I suddenly heard a rustling, looked up and discovered that one of the elderly missionary women had slipped quietly into the chair next to mine. Leaning over she softly asked if I did not wish to talk of my troubles. I reddened with embarrassment. I whispered back that I did not believe I did. She said she was sure it would do me good. I was silent. As the grey-bearded man proceeded with prayer she patted my hand and told me in a sweet, gentle voice, if I wanted to weep she would be glad to sing for me, "Nearer My God To Thee". In a panic I slid off the side of my chair and stole out of the room to join the scrawny little tea taster leaning over the deck rail and felt a relief listening to his murmurs about blithering . . . bloody . . .

At San Francisco an aged, emaciated Chinese had come aboard bringing along his coffin. The story had gone about that he had an incurable sickness and knew that he was soon to die. He was returning to Canton where he might breathe his last in peace in the heart of his family and be buried with proper rites and ceremonies in the graveyard with his ancestors. Night and day he lay on the back lower deck on a pallet arranged by the Chinese crew, until late one night, half way across, he clutched his blanket and passed away. The next morning at eleven the passengers stood around the captain on the upper deck. Headed by the petty officers, six of the crew walked forward carrying the body sewn tightly in canvas weighted with lead. The captain read a short piece from the Bible, a sailor played taps on a bugle and the body was gently slid over the rail to disappear in the water below. The empty coffin remained on board to be delivered to his family.

For several days before we reached Yokohama the two tea tasters had been making remarks about the beauty of the Japanese *geisha* girls and their charming manners, always ending with some vague references to "nectarine" and the mysterious

number nine, followed by snickers and nudging. "Never mind," they said, "just wait until we show you."

When the boat arrived at the pier I soon discovered what it was all about. Dozens of coolies with their curious high-seated rickshas were lined up, all yelling, "Number nine—hey, mister, number nine—nectarine—50 sen I take you—nectarine number nine."

In less than three minutes after the gangplank was lowered every man from the ship, excepting the grey-haired missionary, had taken a rickisha and we were off, the scrawny little tea taster, his hooked nose and crooked grin giving him the look of a miniature devil in the lead.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon and, although cool and clear, the city was ugly. Purely commercial and without charm, the narrow streets were crowded with small open-front shops of paper walls with wooden frames, filled with casual shoppers and throngs of coolies carrying loads. It was noticeable not to see a horse.

Fifteen minutes of winding through these alley streets landed us before a doorway above which was a sign reading, *Nectarine —No. 9*. Outside, the building seemed no different from its neighbors. But when the two old women who greeted us with much bowing and sucking in of breath, led us inside we faced a huge courtyard around which ran a balcony with a row of rooms. Before each door stood a plump, giggling Japanese girl, her cheeks a brilliant carmine and dressed in a gorgeously flowered kimono of many bright colors. They looked more doll-like than human. Above was another balcony on the second floor and the same array of striking colors and giggling carmine faces greeted my eyes. I looked around behind. There stood the two tea tasters with the satisfied I-told-you-so expression of Cheshire cats; there were the other men shifting their feet with the hang-dog look of children caught with a jam pot. I must have looked the same, for we all burst out laughing at once and the wrinkled old mamas laughed and the painted dolls on the balconies giggled and laughed. So we followed the two ancients around the balconies, stopping here and there to flirt and chat

in pidgin-English and feel a bit devilish while we drank a bit of beer. All of the girls were young, under twenty. Many of them showed distinct traces of French beneath their make-ups and several of such half-castes had a piquancy that almost made them beautiful.

Later in the evening a party of us wandered through Theatre Street where the night life centered. I had the sensation of entering a toy world of Lilliputian trees, flowers and houses fitted to the size of a people who looked, acted and talked like dolls. Bright lights shone from thousands of paper lanterns suspended from the fronts of shops; they seemed a mass of luminous balloons floating in the air. Japanese of all ages and all classes in colorful kimonos were swarming up and down. The shattering noises of their wooden bottom sandals banging on the cobblestones coupled with the shrieks and yells of coolies made the silence that followed when we were out of hearing, almost deafening.

A few mornings later I awoke to the shrill sounds of chattering just outside the porthole and poking forth my head, gazed upon a cluster of small dingy sampans bobbing up and down close to the side of the ship. They were filled with ragged, half naked dark brown men and women begging alms, selling silver money and crying out their wares of cheap embroideries, carvings, necklaces, rings and other trifles for tourists. Almost every boat, I noticed, carried several small, underfed, round bellied children and one or more babies. The sea had changed its color to a sickly, muddy, yellowish brown and the clear, clean smell of the air had turned faintly rancid and heavy. We had reached the mouth of the Whangpoo. We had arrived in China. A few hours later I was on a tug chugging towards the Shanghai Bund.

II

LATE JULY OF 1911

first impressions of Shanghai—inflated with promises of a glorious future—transferred to Peking

A YOUNG MAN SCARCELY OLDER than I met me at the bund and led me across the bridge over Soochow Creek, around the corner to the Astor House Hotel —a name famous throughout the East—into the busy high-ceilinged lobby opening at the back onto a trellised courtyard with a fountain in the center. We wound through seemingly unending corridors to my room with the musty odor of age. While I washed up the young man with me—named Bartlett and also from North Carolina—explained the reason for the long-outdated commode in place of a flush closet; the number one Chinese boy had a controlling interest in the hotel and derived a huge income from the sale of the contents of the commodes for fertilizer.

In the dining room on the second floor, long and extremely narrow, I burnt my mouth on my first dish of curry and watched, fascinated, two pretty young Dutch girls, passing through from Java, push back their chairs, cross their slender legs and light up black, long, thick cigars, puffing away with relish while the men in the room stopped eating to stare.

After tiffin we strolled in a roundabout way to the office. My first impressions of Shanghai were a mixture of unfamiliar

noises and musty odors; of massive, old-fashioned brick buildings standing out from tiny open-front wooden shops with dull-grey tiled roofs; of countless streaming white banners embroidered with red characters; narrow, winding streets filled with brown faces all alike, men wearing long gowns and women in trousers, coolies pulling rickshas, coolies carrying loads, coolies quarrelling and yelling, beggars everywhere, traffic moving in every direction at once while bearded, khaki uniformed Sikh police blew whistles and no one seemed to care.

The company's office, a four story red-brick building, faced the south side of Soochow Creek which was packed with junks and sampans and alive with coolies who, to ease the burden of their loads, were chanting in time with their shuffling steps. A primitive haunting rhythm. For a moment I was back home watching a negro chain gang build a road, and listening to them sing to the beat of their picks striking the earth.

From two o'clock until almost closing time I sat squirming, waiting and holding my derby, by Bartlett's desk, set back in semi-darkness behind a rail along the ante-room passage full of Chinese clerks. A string of men in long blue gowns, wearing plaited queues hanging down their backs, flowed in and out. As he passed, each one stopped to hand Bartlett a small accordion pleated scroll containing written characters, which Bartlett stamped and handed back. That was all Bartlett did.

To ride halfway around the world and be kept waiting for an interview with the boss had me upset already, but to find another American with the same education and a few years older holding down a job stamping receipts after more than a year's service, almost put me in a sweat. What kind of work would I, just out, have to do?

After an hour I could hold in no longer.

"Is this your regular job?" I burst out.

For a minute he was silent.

"I'll tell you," he finally replied, "but don't talk it around, for Christ's sake. I've heard enough from it already."

It seemed that about a month before, on the night of the birthday of King George, a great day of celebration among the

British, Bartlett, returning from a [illegible] dinner party and still in the mood, decided to have [illegible] nightcap. Stepping into the Astor bar he ordered a [illegible] and soda and was just about to down it when he heard [illegible] from some one exclaim, "God save the King!"

Turning to find three Englishmen in dinner clothes standing with their heels together and glasses raised, he hoisted his own and shouted at the top of his voice, "—queen, jack and ace!"

Then the fight started. Bartlett was doing a good job. But the noise brought a six-foot sikh policeman, blowing his whistle as he came. Bartlett managed to give him one good sock before three others rushed in and joined the battle.

"The next morning about ten o'clock," Bartlett said, "I pried open my left eye and found I was lying with my head at the foot of the bed. But when I finally managed to open the right I saw that what I mistook for bed railings turned out to be the iron bars of a small window. I was in the municipal jail. I still had on my evening clothes with one sleeve and the tails ripped off the coat.

"Since then I've been chopping these damned sales scrolls. The Old Man calls it discipline. But I had one swell scrap while it lasted."

Running around in full dress suits, fighting Englishmen and Indian cops, going to jail in rickshas—I was still in a daze when I was called into the office of the Old Man, a distinguished looking elderly gentleman, white haired and white moustached, tall and dignified, with the skinny wrists and ankles so often seen among Southerners. With his legs crossed and one foot resting on a lower drawer of a battered roller top desk, he offered me a cigar. Then for an hour he talked of the company and my future. The company offered big opportunities to young men with ambition and get up and go; things were still in the pioneer stage and just starting out in a big way, and the company stood by their men. The directors had their eye on me and if I went at things in the right spirit there was no reason why I shouldn't go right ahead.

In a dozen different ways the Old Man enlarged on his subject, painting a picture of the young pioneer who by grit and dogged determination wins his way to fame and fortune. I tightened my lips and swelled inside like a pouter pigeon, saw myself relentlessly pushing ahead, glancing at figures, giving curt orders, sitting at the head of a long oak table in the London board room briefly outlining strategy to dignified, obsequious directors; and in the background of these imaginings drifted thoughts of my need for ready cash, the bitter taste of the long black cigar, the letter I would write home and what small ankles the Old Man had.

At the end of his peroration, when we shook hands the Old Man told me to stick around the office and take it easy until I received instructions, if I needed anything in the meantime to speak to the number one accountant. I walked out on air and, softly closing the door, took a deep breath and squared my shoulders.

On the way to the accounting department a young man stopped me, introduced himself and earnestly asked if the directors had their eye on me. I coughed but made no reply, and walked on, wondering.

A half dozen steps farther on another young American stepped up to offer his hand and to repeat the question. Again I started away without answer, but as I passed, he slapped me on the back and exclaimed in a hearty voice, "Well, don't worry, old man, you'll go ahead."

Before I had time to recover, a third, seated near-by, called me to his desk and, in the same earnest manner, confidentially whispered that he knew on good information that London was watching me and if I stuck to it nothing in the world could hold me back.

By the time I reached the accounting department I was dizzy; I had a sickly feeling that somewhere there was a joke, that Durham, New York and the Old Man had been stuffing me with a lot of bull. Those personal heart-to-heart talks began to take on a suspicious similarity, as if I had heard them repeated on a phonograph record. I tried to make myself believe that the three young fellows so solicitous of my welfare were a bunch of sore-heads.

But it would not work. I felt defeated. The letter I wrote home that evening was more conservative than I had planned.

However, during his ramblings over the years the Old Man made one statement that, on account of the blunt warning it contained, stayed with me. It proved an invaluable aid on many occasions. He said: "Remember that the Chinese are never wrong and that the Company is never wrong; both are always right."

As time went on and I grew to know the ways of the company, I discovered that this casual remark expressed the gist of his whole policy in dealing with the Chinese. In his way he was a great man and his tactics at that time—when the Chinese business man was only slightly contaminated by foreign business methods, and before he fully realized that the English considered themselves superior beings—would have put over almost any product.

For a week I sat at Bart's shoulder while he chopped the little accounts on pleated scrolls. Walking back and forth to the Astor House, loafing around the Bund and on the bridge over the creek to watch the sampans and junks, I steered a narrow course and saw little of the city. The slit-eyes of the Chinese looked so sinister, and tales of their mysterious ways were still so fresh in mind, that I was squeamish about venturing too far into their midst.

Crossing the bridge one afternoon, I ran into the scrawny little tea taster. He grasped my arm and led me to the Astor bar, was solicitous about my welfare, had a whisky soda at my expense and borrowed twenty dollars Mex. until his unaccountably delayed letter of credit should go through. That was the last I saw of him.

At the end of a week the Old Man called me into his office. After I had refused one of his powerful stogies, he leaned back stroking his white moustaches.

"I've decided to start you off in Peking. Best place to learn. Good man in charge there, too; he'll make you work. Some of the young fellows in those legations lead a pretty gay life, though, and you want to keep away from all that stuff. You'll find plenty to do and lots to learn. All you've got to do is keep your head and work hard, and we'll look after you at this end. Traffic department will give you your ticket and tell you when your boat leaves."

He stood up and held out his hand.

"By the way, I just got a letter from Miss C—— (a girl I had known in college) and she asks about you. I'm going to write her you're doing all right. I want to hear good reports from Peking. Good-bye and good-luck."

I walked out almost bursting. I wanted to yell. Peking—what a magical ring it had. All the glamour of the East seemed to be bound up in the word.

When the news spread around the office, men I had never met, English and American, walked up and dug me in the ribs, "You lucky dog—just out and straight off to Peking. What I wouldn't give to be in your shoes."

* * * * *

This was in August of 1911. China was still an empire under the rule of the Manchus. The young boy emperor, Pu I, was on the throne, his cousin, the prince regent, acting as guardian. Yuan Shih K'ai, who later became China's first president, was keeping quiet in retirement at his summer home back in the interior where he had been relegated by the prince regent when the old Empress Dowager died. Sun Yat Sen, the Cantonese reformer and real founder of the republic, was travelling through Europe and America, exhorting Chinese expatriates and raising funds for a revolution. The power in the land at the moment was an ancient white bearded Manchu, Prince Ch'ing, the wealthiest man in the country, whose revenues each year as head of the beggars' guild alone ran into millions. All the color, the pomp and ceremony, of a great old medieval capital was still concentrated within the gates of Peking.

III

AUGUST: 1911

bounced up the China Coast—a sad welcome to Peking

THE LITTLE FAT TUB OF A coast boat left Shanghai at two in the afternoon, and that night we caught the tail end of a typhoon. Two days we spent off the edge of Chefoo bouncing about like a ball, bucking over a wave one minute and washed under the next. Until the boat finally arrived at Taku bar at the mouth of the river leading to Tientsin, with the exception of a sickly looking Chinese who wandered around with a forlorn air, carrying a small brown parcel attached to one finger by a string, I was the only passenger on deck or in the dining room. I thought we were the only two on board until twenty some odd others began pouring out of their cabins as we pulled up the river.

As I was getting off to catch the through train to Peking, another American, an unusually well-dressed man in his late thirties, came up and introduced himself. He was also a member of the company and was supposed to be my companion on the trip up, but feeling a bit distressed, he said, by the blasted storm, he had lain in his cabin drinking champagne to ease himself until we landed. He was taciturn but friendly, and in the afternoon warmth we dozed away the three hours to Peking in the dining car over a bottle of beer. I was struck by the flatness of the sandy soil, and thought how queer it was that the few, isolated trees we passed all leaned over towards the south, looking as if they were making a bow.

After reaching the grey, dusty wall of the city, the train skirted along the side for several miles before entering one of the gates. I asked my companion if he knew why this was.

"On account of *Feng Shui,*" he replied.

"What's that?"

He explained. *Feng Shui* meant, literally, wind and water. To the Chinese the term represented the all-powerful elements—the gods of destruction who must always be catered to and kept in a good humor in order to escape their wrath.

When the railroad was first built the tracks were run on a straight line through an opening in the south wall. But just inside and less than two hundred yards from where the tracks lay was a small graveyard. When the trains commenced roaring by, the relatives of the dead were horrified; *Feng Shui* would certainly bring disaster to the city for disturbing the peace of the buried. They petitioned the old Empress Dowager, still on the throne, and she called together her soothsayers for a conference. *Feng Shui* won the day. The railway lines had to be torn up and run in a semi-circle around the outside of the walls for an added distance of more than three miles.

The longer I lived in China the greater I found to be the power and influence of *Feng Shui* in the lives of the Chinese masses. In comparison, Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism counted for almost nothing. Long ago the gods and their temples became confused and largely lost their identity. Of the many thousands of fine old stately temples scattered back through the interior almost all had fallen into complete decay. On occasions of sickness, death or bad crops the villager or the farmer might go to a temple or not, but he burned his joss sticks to *Feng Shui.*

Only one other deity was ever given such attention. The goddess of mercy, called *Kuan Yin,* was worshipped in almost every household. But the women burned the joss sticks. For *Kuan Yin* helped them bear sons and aided in the healing of childhood ills. And there was this great difference between the

Kuan Yin and *Feng Shui*: she was a per[illegible] he (or it) was a simple superstition.

At the Ch'ien Men station my [illegible] companion shook hands and disappeared. A young [illegible] (named Frost) with a high Harvard accent greet[illegible] platform, had his Chinese boy take over my luggage [illegible] suggested that we stop at the Grand Hôtel des Wagon[illegible] Scotch and soda and chat before going on to the [illegible] only a short walk, up and over a bridge, through [illegible] a big brick wall and we were there.

Entering the [illegible] lobby, we sat down at one of the small round table[illegible] Frost ordered drinks. For a while his slightly protrudin[illegible] eyes gazed gloomily into space. Finally, he opened up.

"You couldn't have come to a rottener hole," he began. "It's nothing but dirt and dust and filthy waunk dogs and these Chink coolies who are always staring at you with their mouths hanging open. You haven't seen the place yet. Full of these mongrel scavengers, half-dog and half-wolf from Mongolia, living on any sort of refuse they can find—more here than Connie Mack ever had, I'll wager. And these coolie Chinks—you can't walk down the street without every Chinese you pass stopping and staring at you with his bloody mouth hanging open and his dirty, yellow fangs sticking out. If you stop anywhere they crowd up against you with those damned open mouths.

"Wait until you've been here awhile; you'll hate the place, too. It's a hell of a hole to stick a man in. And look at the mess; a wornout old compound about to fall to pieces, back in those miserable, dirty little *hutungs*—nothing but alleyways—where anything could happen and no one ever know anything about it. Yes sir, it's rotten. I don't know why I stick it out. Just wait until the mosquitoes—the *pai ling tze*, they call them—start on you. You can't get a net small enough to keep them out, and you wake up in the morning a mass of itching, red bumps. What a life! But just wait and see. Nothing but dirt and filth and mouths hanging open, that's all."

He stopped and again stared gloomily into space. I crossed the other leg and remained silent, gloomy myself by now. Then his face brightened.

"I only arrived two weeks ago myself. The Old Man was on the same boat and the prettiest girl you ever saw in your life. You didn't happen to run into her in Shanghai, did you? No? She had a letter of introduction to the Old Man and I was given the job of taking her around. We were together all the time she was here and have a kind of understanding. She's on her way home now. She promised to write every day but I haven't received a letter in almost a week. I guess they're all alike. She'll forget everything now she's on the way home."

Frost shook his head in bitterness and we went out and called a couple of rickshas. In the dusk we rode down Legation Street past the grey walls of the legation compounds, banks and shops, turned to the left into Hatamen Street, plunged to the right into a maze of alleyways, winding and twisting this way and that until we finally stopped before one of the many similar big black double doors showing at intervals along the crumbling walls sprinkled on top with broken glass. Frost slammed down the brass knocker. A Chinese in a long white gown opened the doors, and we entered a dark courtyard roughly paved with stone. Stumbling around the side of a wooden screen we passed through the circular entrance of another wall into a second courtyard.

In the dim light of an oil lamp on a near-by table set for dinner, another American, thickly built and not yet thirty, sprang up from the canvas deck chair in which he had been stretched out, introduced himself and welcomed me to the mess.

"I'm Johnson." He spoke in a quick staccato. "Bill Johnson, the number one here. Welcome to Peking. Take off your coat—make yourself comfortable. No formalities. The finest mess in the Far East. All modern conveniences. No excess plumbing to irritate or bother. You have a dressing room and bedroom all to yourself—there's a bowl, a pitcher and a towel on the washstand—the boy brings hot water whenever you yell for it, and there's a portable tub when you want a bath. Central heating in the winter from a stove in the center of your dressing room. Good

reading matter—Montgomery-Ward's catalogue in the toilet and you don't even have to pull a chain. Flush service. I'm afraid you'll have to do without a mosquito net tonight—I was too busy to buy one today. But the mosquitoes are native breed and according to native custom do things in a small way. You can get a net tomorrow. Anything you want—call the number one boy." He raised his voice. "Boy, bring chow!"

The three of us sat around the small table lighted by the oil lamp, while the number one boy in an immaculate white gown ran to and from the kitchen located at one side of the courtyard. It was the first of many hundreds of similar meals that I was to eat during the next few years—a thin consommé, breaded veal cutlet, rice, a boiled vegetable and a sticky pastry. English cooking—the flavor cooked out—with the inevitable Lea & Perrin's sauce.

Long before the Americans began to spread around China, the first British settlers, who were set in their ways, had initiated their cooks into homeside methods. These cooks in turn had taught their friends, who also became cooks and passed their knowledge on to others, until the English diet had become standardized.

After having lived with the British for a while, I realized why they never attempted to make improvements. In the first place, they loathed change, to get off the beaten track; new clothes were uncomfortable, so wear the old ones until they fall apart. In the second place, with the good old L. & P. standing by to stiffen one up and put life into the chow, what more did one need? And with a gin and bitters and a scotch and soda to back up tiffin and dinner, fancy dishes were not only unnecessary, but futile.

After dinner, Johnson, or Johnny, and I sat and swapped information on ourselves. He had originally come from Virginia and had gone out to the Philippines at nineteen to run a shoe store; but, as he put it, after he had helped civilize the natives by putting patent leathers on the feet of all who could afford to buy, he had grown tired of listening to their ragtime music played by brass bands in the endless chain of funeral processions, and had come to China.

While we were talking, Frost, morose and silent, marched up and down the courtyard. Tired from new sights and travelling, I turned in early. But it was a long time before I fell asleep; tiny mosquitoes and the heat kept me fidgeting, I could still see Frost's drawn face and hear his bitter remarks on Chinese, and the silence was oppressive.

IV

AUGUST: 1911

Peking street life during the last days of the Manchu dynasty—lessons in manners from cigarette dealers—stuffed with atmosphere

ON MY FIRST MORNING IN PEking I awoke to the chatter of birds and the faint faraway rumble and roar of the city starting its day. Dressing quickly I hurried outside to examine the compound—two courtyards, an outer and an inner separated by a plastered brick wall. In the outer court were two long rooms one on each side, faced waist high with brick. Above was lattice work covered with thin opaque paper. Not exactly weather proof in winter, I thought. But I found out later that paper windows, if tight, can be surprisingly warm. Black wooden pillars jutted through the walls in part relief, holding up a gracefully sloping roof of grey tiles. Inside on the brick floor was a jumble of aged furniture, armchairs with springs sagging to the floor, a chest of drawers with a broken mirror, a small bookcase crammed with English 6d novels. A paper panel partition cut off the bedroom, which was just large enough to hold the springless bed and a nightstand. Not by any means luxurious quarters—yet looking them over gave me the same comfortable feeling as the sight of a pair of old shoes.

I walked through the circular gateway into the inner courtyard, shaded by a huge white oak tree. Here was another, larger

bedroom, a dining room furnished in golden oak, a kitchen—proudly sporting a screen door—and a galvanized iron roofed passage containing an old fashioned commode (there really was a Montgomery Ward catalogue hanging by a string from a hook).

In an enclosure beyond the dining room I discovered two ponies. The mess also boasted two tame turkeys, a brown, short haired, bowlegged dog named Chung, and a brindled cat. The servants consisted of a sulky number one boy, a number two boy, a cook boy, a mafu or groom and two coolies.

Everything about the place was old and shabby and dusty looking, but in the cool air of early morning—the dry, clear air peculiar to North China—with the brilliant rising sun throwing patchwork patterns through the branches of the tree, the whole compound took on rich colors and a friendly warmth. In spite of my mosquito bites I was contented.

After breakfast under the oak tree in the courtyard we left for the office. Passing through the gate we plunged suddenly from the peaceful, quiet compound into a mass of teeming life.

Across the road, sat a little old woman dressed in a black jacket and loose blue trousers, singing to herself and knitting. Around her tiny bound feet an aristocratic Pekinese strutted disdainfully. Through the wide doorway behind we caught a glimpse of an ox slowly pacing around in a circle, grinding wheat poured from a basket by a coolie. Johnny stopped, pointed his finger at the Pekinese, closed his hand and stuck up his thumb. The little old woman threw back her head and burst into peals of laughter, stuck up her thumb in the same way and chattered and laughed until we were out of hearing.

"What's the sign language?" I asked, curious.

Johnny explained that it was the most commonly used gesture in China and meant "good", "fine". The old girl was proud of her dog and was tickled to have it praised in this familiar way by a foreigner. Often today before I think I find myself using the same convenient gesture. It is, I imagine, the reverse of the old Roman thumbs down.

Farther down the alley a coolie was pushing a loudly squeak-

ing wheelbarrow holding a wooden tank of water. Another coolie ladled out the water with a long handled dipper and sprinkled it on the dust. A hawker came past, balancing on his shoulder a pole on which hung two baskets filled with steaming dough balls wrapped in damp cloths. Every few steps he put his open hand behind his ear and let out a long musical wail announcing his wares. Another hawker, squatting on the ground beside his bucket of pancake batter, argued vehemently with his customer who also knelt. Their shrill, high pitched voices gradually drew a crowd, listeners earnestly shaking their heads and occasionally joining in. We stopped to see what would develop, but after a few minutes the customer counted out a few cash—a very small fraction of a cent—and took his pastry; the hawker lifted his pole across his shoulder, let out his long cry and went on his way. There had been no trouble, simply the serious business of striking a bargain.

We passed dozens of other hawkers, each with his own special mournful call. Rickshas rushed past us with clanging of bells, leaving trails of dust. Women hurried by returning from market, carrying baskets filled with green vegetables and fruit. All had bound feet and stumped along with short, stiff-kneed steps. Every dozen yards or so, a beggar, ragged and dirty, smelling to high heaven, stepped out from his shady spot by a compound wall and droned, "*Lao ya, ta lao ye, shang kei wo, lao ya, ta lao ye, shang kei wo.*" Johnny translated, "Sir, great sir, give to me, sir, great sir, give to me." A whine but like a chant, rhythmic and musical. All the noises I heard—and there seemed to be thousands—had a certain plaintive rhythm, musical and appealing.

The officers also were in a compound on one of the *hutungs*. A courtyard separated them in the front from a large godown in the rear. As we walked in, coolies stripped to the waist were carrying wooden cases, each containing fifty thousand cigarettes, on their backs down the outside stairway from the second floor of the godown. As we entered, Johnny called out something in Chinese to the foreman. The foreman grinned and yelled to the coolies; the coolies grinned and yelled to each other. Then a

"*Ta lao ya, ta lao ye, shang kei wo, mei ya ch'ien, mei ya fan* (please sir, give to me, I have no money, no food)."

coolie at the top of the stairs, with a [illegible] on his back, skipped down at a fast trot, his arms [illegible] at his sides, whirled around three times and, with a [illegible] twist, skilfully slipped the case to the ground with [illegible] it. One by one, almost on top of each other, the other coolies followed suit. Each case weighed a good two hundred pounds. I exclaimed in amazement, quickly remembered and stuck up my thumb. The coolies glowed with pride.

Johnny decided that my first task was to learn the city and gave me the number one interpreter to show me around the market and introduce me to the dealers. He was a delightful old man, a perfect gentleman, benevolent in face and manner—named Mr. Sung. We borrowed a ricksha from one of the other interpreters, for me. Mr. Sung stepped into his own and we set off.

Within a few minutes our rickshas reached Hatamen Street, the broad busy thoroughfare from which the main branches of the *hutungs* spread. Straight ahead across the street I saw the *glace*, the international playground where the legation guards held their football contests and officers and attaches played polo, while legation society sat on the side lines watching, surrounded by whisky sodas and tea. In the distance the reflections from gold tiled roofs, which I knew must be in the Forbidden City, shone and sparkled like a myriad of mirrors. To the left only a few hundred yards away towered the massive grey brick wall dividing Peking into two cities. On the other side was the Chinese City, the section of fashionable shops and night life. The side we were on was called the Tartar City; here the Emperor had his palace and the Manchus their homes hidden back in the maze of hutungs, living and loafing in comfort on the yearly rice allowance given by the government to all of pure Manchu birth.

Hatamen was a mass of riotous color and dust, and mixed smells of burnt camel dung, cocoanut oil, strange foods, sweating bodies and animal and human refuse. All the one-storied buildings were old, the wooden fronts of red and black dulled with dirt and age. Many of them, however, were beautifully

carved in open-work design with images of flowers, trees and figures. Shops signs, boldly enameled in vivid deep golds and black, hung above doorways.

Passing us, squads of baggy trousered soldiers, some on foot, others on shaggy Mongol ponies, paraded the streets. Peking carts decorated in many colors jolted past, pulled by mules. Inside Manchu women sat crosslegged, their faces enameled a dead white, lips and cheeks spotted red, their black lacquered hair worked over a high wooden frame. They were dressed in silk with fancy embroidery and were loaded down with shining jewelry and precious stones.

I stared wide-eyed at this pageantry of life and color. No show I had ever seen or imagined approached it for glamour and contrasts. Would I ever get used to living in the midst of such sights?

Down the street came an official seated in a closed chair borne on the shoulders of six trotting coolies all dressed in bright uniforms. A young Manchu swell strolled mincingly past carrying a hooded falcon chained to his slender wrist. Everywhere around us was a continual stream of shoppers, on foot or in rickshas; hawkers or farmers with their long poles over their shoulders; half clothed and naked children, their stomachs protruding like elastic balls, swollen from hunger; and dogs, half wolf mongrels, uncouth scavengers dodging in and out of traffic and always underfoot, cringing and snarling.

We had ridden several blocks when Mr. Sung called out and threw up a hand. The rickshas slowed down and stopped in front of a small shop—the shelves stacked with cartons of cigarettes. Mr. Sung stepped out of his ricksha. Holding together his closed hands and waving them up and down, bowing at every wave, he walked slowly forward. I followed. Until we arrived at the counter the dealer, seated behind on a stool at one side, continued to smoke his long-stemmed pipe, pretending not to see us. The five or six clerks stared impassively.

Then the dealer suddenly came to life. He jumped to his feet, smiled and chattered as if to see us was the greatest surprise and joy of his life. After returning vigorously Mr. Sung's bows and

waves, he turned towards me and went through the same motions.

Having glimpsed Johnson's attitude [illegible] Chinese and their good natured friendly response, [illegible] the kindly faces of the interpreters I had met at the [illegible] beginning to shed my qualms about these sinister eyed [illegible] colored people who seemed to look so much alike. [illegible] formal greeting from a small shopkeeper was so [illegible] and yet so natural and pleasant, that almost instinctively I found myself awkwardly copying his movements. Perhaps [illegible] the tea tasters and Frost had claimed, the Chinese were a dirty, rotten lot and hated all foreigners, but if so their expressions and manners did not show it. At least, I was not [illegible] ready to make up my mind.

After I had been [illegible] duced the dealer opened a section of the counter and led [illegible] into a small room at the back. Half of the room was taken up by a *k'ang*, a raised brick platform about two feet high covered with mats, used both as seat and bed, and common to all Chinese houses. Our host motioned me to seat myself at the left of a short-legged table standing in the center.

In [illegible] careful English Mr. Sung said: "You *must* sit there. Your [illegible] guest of honor and guest of honor must always sit on left side."

By the time we were settled a small boy entered with a basket of steaming hot towels. I took one and waited. The manager and Mr. Sung spread theirs out, mopped their faces, then gave their hands a thorough rubbing. I looked questioningly at Mr. Sung.

"Ah," he said, "it is Chinese custom. Outside have much dust. It is very bad. Hot towel keep face and hands from chap. All Chinese do so. Very good for you."

I followed their example.

Next came cigarettes. A boy opened a packet and laid three on the table. The host insisted on lighting each one with a separate match. I noticed that Mr. Sung held his with both hands while it was being lit.

We smoked quietly until tea was brought. The host poured.

Mr. Sung bent low, grasping his cup between outstretched hands in the same manner as he held the cigarette.

I liked these unhurried formalities. The squalid cell became a drawing room and the grimy shopkeeper a gracious host.

The dealer was now ready to open the conversation. When he spoke he leaned towards me. Mr. Sung translated.

"What is your full name?"

"Ho Ching Shan (Mountain View Ho)."

Before I left Shanghai this name had been worked out for me in characters phonetically nearest to Hutchison.

"Ah! Good! Proper Chinese name. How long have you been in China?"

"Less than a month."

"Ah! You must have Chinese teacher so we can talk to each other."

"I shall get one right away."

"Ah! Good, very good. How old are you?"

"I am twenty seven."

Mr. Sung decided upon this number. He gently informed me that the Chinese respected age.

"Ah! You have many years ahead. How many children have you?"

"I am not yet married, I am sorry to say. How many children have you?"

"I am very poor in children. Only one boy—two girls. They are worthless."

"Splendid. Three fine children. How old are they?"

"Good-for-nothing boy is five. Older trifling girl is six. Younger miserable thing is three. How much money do you make?"

When this last question was asked, Mr. Sung explained that it was a friendly enquiry, a customary part of the etiquette between two men meeting for the first time. He told the dealer that I said, "It amounts to nothing." That was the polite way to side-step.

Fifteen or twenty minutes passed before the friendly talk was over and we settled down to business. Mr. Sung asked what

brands the dealer carried in stock, the best sellers and slow movers, and the retail prices. I noted down the [illegible]. Then the dealer explained his troubles, [illegible] speculated about the heavy competition, cut prices, small profits. Mr. Sung warmly sympathized. Finally [illegible] our feet. Bowing all the time, Mr. Sung and I backed the dealer, backed out of the shop into the street. When we started, we were still waving our closed hands [illegible] at the dealer who stood in the doorway doing [illegible].

All morning we continued our [illegible] pace down Hatamen. For the first time since I had left the States I was enjoying myself fully. These dealers, small shopkeepers living from hand to mouth, where did they get their manners? They all had the natural courtesy of cultured old gentlemen. True, they were continually clearing their throats and spitting on the floor, and they made loud noises sipping tea. But what of it? They did have a native culture. Probably the reason why, in spite of their poverty and crowded conditions, they seemed to get along together so pleasantly. Probably, too, why I saw so many calm, serene faces. Frost could yap about hanging mouths and waunk dogs, but I was beginning to like these people, and since I was going to live among them, I would study their language and learn their rules of etiquette.

* * * * *

In the afternoon, after two hours off for tiffin, Mr. Sung and I rode through the legation quarter—settled into a nap at that time of day—and passed through Ch'ien Men gate, a great oval gap in the wall that separated the Chinese from the Tartar City. Above the gate stood an old temple, of a faded red, with tufts of grass growing between the glazed tiles of its roof, but with a silent dignity that age had emphasized. From early dawn ceaseless streams of traffic passed back and forth through the gate in clouds of dust. But at midnight a soldier blew his trumpet, the huge wooden doors, studded with brass, were rolled shut on their groaning hinges, and the bolt was shot until the sun rose on another day.

The road from the gate circled around an old temple, under whose eaves friendly pigeons nested, and suddenly straightened out into a wide cobblestone street lined on both sides with wooden shops, the edge of the sidewalks crowded with hawker stands. This was the heart of the shopping section.

On the narrow *hutungs* to the right lay hidden the small exclusive shops patronized only by wealthy Manchu families and officialdom.

Each *hutung* was given to a specialty. One was faced with open courtyards of stone filled with potted plants and shaded by mats on tall bamboo poles, back of which were balconies where madam Manchu was shown fancy silks and embroideries while fanned by her amahs. On another, only counters and showcases of jewelry and precious and semi-precious stones. Still others specialized in lanterns, silken shoes, antiques, teas, spices, sweetmeats, carved furniture, bronze and pewter ware, paintings and whatnot. Scattered here and there at intervals were the high-class restaurants, ruled over at that time by the finest chefs in the world. And farther back were the theatres where only China's greatest artists played, and the sing-song houses where visiting officials from the interior and local Manchu roues gambled away fortunes and added to their strings of concubines.

At the corner of Ch'ien Men I watched a *mafu*, or groom, in a tasselled hat, long skirt and high red boots, sitting astride a gaily decked-out pony, appear from one of the *hutungs*, yelling and waving his arms. Traffic came to a halt and the crowds stood back as a Peking cart, with its red padded curtain pulled down in front, turned the corner with two more outriders following in the rear. Again I saw the police importantly clear the way, and another springless cart came bouncing over the cobblestones to stop before the door of a tea shop; a *mafu* placed a small stool in front of the right wheel and helped down a weazened old woman in black, who tottered on her tiny bound feet through the entrance between two rows of clerks holding their hands together in reverent kowtows.

Silks and rags, spicy odors and foul smells, wealth and poverty, mixed together and jostled each other.

Shortly before five we were back at the office. Frost went to the Wagons-Lits. Johnny and I returned to the [illegible]shed most of our clothes, and had tea. Johnny asked me what I thought of Peking. I waxed enthusiastic; I had never dreamed such a place could exist. He was highly pleased. He loved it. He liked the Chinese. Good people to deal with. We planned rides together.

At dinner the turkeys strutted around picking crumbs from the stones. The white pony, named Peace because he was finicky and a pacer, nibbled sugar lumps over our shoulders. Frost had been drinking and was in a mood. He hardly spoke during the meal. After dinner, while Johnny and I discussed in low tones Chinese teachers and the [illegible], he strode up and down with a stick, lecturing on the Chinese, the way they stared and their mouths dropped open, and about the damned, dirty waunk dogs. He struck the stones with his stick to emphasize his remarks, and paused between periods to sip from a glass of scotch and soda. From time to time Johnny would stop talking to listen and kid him. But I was stuffed full of atmosphere.

V

LATE AUGUST AND EARLY SEPTEMBER: 1911

the intricate process of making a purchase—studying Mandarin—I buy a midnight biscuit—picking up street slang and palace gossip—I watch a prince return from a sunrise audience

IT TOOK ME FIVE DAYS TO GET A mosquito net, and a whole week passed before I was able to obtain a Chinese teacher. The delays and excuses were nerve-wracking, but I gained an insight into the way things were done "Chinese fashion", and learned also the futility of haste.

On the first morning I told the number one boy that I wanted to have a mosquito netting made and draped over my bed by that evening. He went inside, looked over the bed a long time and shook his head dubiously.

"Maybe two days," he finally figured.

We left it at that, but after office that afternoon he told me sorrowfully that it was difficult for Chinese to get the right kind of netting—better that I should buy it.

"Master," he said, "if I buy and no can do, then you very angry. I lose face. Master can buy very good at French shop. I no can. Foreign shop cheat Chinese man. I think more better master buy."

This was the first, but not the last, occasion on which I was told of foreigners' tricky ways in dealing with Chinese. The next morning I handed him the material.

Three nights of torment passed before he came with the completed screen. By then my wrists, neck and chest were masses of itching bumps. Why had he taken [illegible]?

"Very sorry, master. Very hard find [illegible] mistake proper. I speak friend. He know one amah [illegible] proper. Take time find her. Take time talk proper [illegible] Youth must come look see bed—so long—so short. [illegible] You look see thread: very small sew. Make [illegible] time. Sorry."

The netting fitted the bed in a [illegible] manner, but it kept the *pai ling tze* out. I asked [illegible] of the Chinese did everything that way. He laughed.

"Sure," he answered. "[illegible] job look important, and they can charge more [illegible] gives them a chance to ring in relatives and friends [illegible] every one makes a few coppers."

The same with the Chinese teacher. Mr. Sung took this weighty problem on his [illegible] and, from what he told me from time to time, he was [illegible] a difficult job to solve it. The teacher must be just the right kind, both a gentleman and a scholar, with a pure Mandarin accent and a clear, distinct voice. At the end of a two [illegible] search, after many consultations with friends (so he [illegible] he called one evening and presented a young intellectual-looking Chinese. He was as thin as a rail, with a skin as clear and [illegible] mouth as a baby's. The fingers of his slender hands [illegible] and delicately tapered like a woman's. From his shiny, [illegible] plaited pigtail to his shoes of black silk embroidery, he was [illegible] ulate. To top it off, he carried a small silk fan with a [illegible] of exquisitely carved ivory. Mr. Sung introduced him as *[illegible] Sheng*, or teacher, which, due to the great respect the Chinese have for scholarship, is also the term in common use for Mr. and sir.

At a quarter past seven the next morning we began our first lesson under the old oak in the upper courtyard. I was only half awake and in a kimono; but he was the same immaculate *Hsien Sheng* of the evening before. I had brought along a second-hand Hillier's—probably the best language textbook for a beginner ever composed. He opened it at the first page and started: "*Tchr-hu-o ko shih shen mo* (this is what)?"

Hsien Sheng drawled out very slowly these long series of consonants and vowels in varied tones I could not catch. I looked at the book. The phonetics read: *chêko shih shênmo*. When I called *Hsien Sheng's* attention to it, he informed me that the way to learn Chinese was, first, to break down each sound into small particles, and as soon as the particles gradually fitted together correctly and the tones pitched without effort the pronunciation could be speeded up.

For half an hour he repeated this first sentence. I attempted to follow him. Then he added on two more: *hao pu hao* (good not good) and *yu mei yu* (have not have). After an hour struggling with these three sentences I was still unable to approximate the true sounds and tones.

Every morning, except Sundays, more and more unwillingly I dragged myself sleepily out of bed and sat half-heartedly intoning after *Hsien Sheng*. For three weeks I worked over the first lesson in the book. Finally I gave up. The strain was too great. The monotonous repetition made it too difficult to keep awake.

I was also having trouble getting to sleep. In spite of its dry climate, during August and the first part of September, Peking can be stickily hot back in the compounds until one or two in the morning. One night as I lay wide-awake in bed wrapped in stillness and sweat, thinking of home, out of the silence my ears caught from afar the faint, dragged-out call of a hawker. It grew louder and louder until it reached a crescendo and gradually faded out. I listened. In a few minutes the wail was repeated. This time nearer. By degrees it was becoming distinct and clear. Then—right in front of the compound—it resounded through the window, a prolonged, ear-splitting yell. I lay with my hands clenched and waited. Another long interval. Ah! There it was—but, thank goodness, not so loud. The noise would be over in a little while. That little while, however, seemed an interminably long time.

For several nights in succession I was still awake when the first sounds of the hawker's call reached my ears. Then I was in for it until he was out of hearing again. I checked the time

on my watch; the noise started at eleven minutes before midnight and lasted until twenty-seven past. That would never do. I tried reading myself to sleep, tried a bottle of beer at bedtime. But soon I found myself [illegible] listening. I decided to put a stop to such nonsense. I would buy him out and tell him to keep away.

The next night I placed a pile [illegible] on the nightstand and laid my kimono across the [illegible] bed. Lying in a half doze, I caught the strain floating [illegible] air: *loi——ao-o-o*—a long pause—*ping*—another [illegible] *ma*—then a final note—*tze-r-r-r-r-rh*—the last [illegible] high, rising scale.

In an instant I was [illegible] into my kimono. Grabbing the coppers, I [illegible] unbolted the front gate and peered down the *hutung*. There he was, slowly shuffling along with a pole across [illegible]. As he drew abreast, I stopped him. I fumbled [illegible] one of his buckets. It was empty. I reached into the other [illegible] one poor, lonesome little dried-up biscuit!

I took the [illegible] handed the coolie the coppers and made signs for him to stop yelling and go home. But the biscuit was only three cents. I had given him twenty or more. He insisted on my taking back the change. It took me five minutes to make him realize that I was actually giving him cumshaw and wanted him to get out. When he did, he grinned from ear to ear and took off at a trot.

But the following night he was around again. I went out, took all his stock, and sent him home. This time he had three biscuits. A third night I stopped him. Six biscuits. Then I gave up. After that I never attempted to buy him off again. I decided that it was useless to bargain with a man so set in his ways.

* * * * *

For several weeks my entire work was limited to calls on dealers and hawkers—the streets were cluttered with small hawker stands specializing in everything from back scratchers and ear ticklers to chow, sweetmeats and cigarettes—checking stocks and seeing that leading sellers were in good condition

and well displayed. The job itself gave me a guilty feeling that I was doing the work fit for the intelligence of a ten year old child, but the curse was removed by the pure enjoyment of the sunshine and air, the busy streets and mixing and passing the time with the natives. Every day it was all new and exciting.

I was beginning to wonder how long I would be kept at this simple work when one morning Johnny called in Frost and me and told us that twenty cases of a new brand of cigarettes had arrived from Shanghai. We were to see that it was properly displayed on every shop counter and hawker stand in the city, and to carry along cartons and sell packet lots to any retailer not supplied by our dealers.

At the first shop visited, after tea was served, I asked Mr. Sung to tell the *chang kuei ti,* manager, that I had seen no stocks on his counter—what was the matter?

The manager threw up his hands. He had none.

Why?

He was stuck with too many brands already that would not sell. Only two or three ever went well, yet the company was always asking him to take on a new one. Too much money tied up.

I took a packet of the new brand in my hand, leaned over and put up to Mr. Sung a long sales talk, well-rounded and complete (I thought). I pointed out the merits of the packet; tore open a cigarette and made a fuss over the color and aroma; had the dealer smoke one; and ended up with a climax on the publicity of the city-wide display and the way it would build sales.

Finished, I told Mr. Sung to repeat what I had said in Chinese.

Mr. Sung hesitated.

"Go ahead," I insisted.

Mr. Sung cleared his throat, held up a sample, and uttered three words: "*yao pu yao* (want not want)?"

The dealer sat back, placed his hands on his knees and exploded in a thunderous voice, "*pu yao* (not want)."

Mr. Sung looked at me apologetically.

"He say he do not want any."

All that selling talk for nothing. I asked Mr. Sung why he did not tell my story.

"Chinese are different. Chinese do not do business that way. I speak what you say then maybe he very angry, not like. He do not understand. Never mind, I talk him later as friend. He take. I think better we go now."

I learned my lesson. Never again did I attempt to make a direct sales appeal to a Chinese. Elegance and elegance and "face" counted first and last in everything. I recalled the Old Man's words at our first talk: "Remember this: Chinese are never wrong and the Company is never wrong. Both are always right."

Between these calls I found the habit of walking part of the time and stopping now and then to ask questions, or to listen to a sentence and note it down phonetically in a small note book. I limited the number to five a day, repeated them over to myself and used them on Chinese until they became automatic. Often we stopped at tea houses to drink and sweat and fan with the other loafers, while I listened to catch a word or phrase. Occasionally, we rested under the tent of a wandering minstrel.

In the heat of the summer the Tartar City was crowded with these tea houses and story-tellers' tents. They were always full. Many of the customers were women and little naked children. But most of them were laborers, up before dawn with their heavy burdens, stealing a few precious minutes to rest their sturdy bent-over backs, sip tea and listen to heroic legends chanted in a soothing sing-song. Usually the men were stripped to the waist. The minstrel sat on a raised platform with a drum and a pair of bones to accompany the story he was unfolding. He usually wore a pair of large horn-rimmed spectacles to make him look scholarly and learned. The listeners sat spellbound, their mouths open in concentrated awe.

Picking up the language this way, I found that a few idioms repeated themselves many times over in every conversation. Checking against the little French and Spanish I knew, I came to the conclusion that these same expressions were the ones most commonly used in all languages.

The word heard most was *hao: good, okey, fine.* With it went

the question, *hao pu hao,* literally, *good not good,* idiomatically translating, *is it all right?* Also, it was the customary greeting under any and all circumstances, expressing the same meaning as *how are you?*

Next came *yu: have,* and *yu mei yu: have you?* Then, of course, were the two questions: *shenmo: what?* and *che ko shih shenmo: what is this?*

Two other phrases were often used and were expressive of an attitude. *Pu yao chin: never mind. Mei yu fatze: no remedy, no way out, nothing to do about it.* The first had an equivalent in a bastard word, *maskee,* used freely in all foreign languages in the Far East. (The Russian exclamation, *nichevo,* with exactly the same meaning, in those days was usually the first word of the Russian language, and also the only one, excluding *lubulu = I love you,* most foreigners learned). The second fatalistic phrase was generally accompanied by a shrug of the shoulders or out-thrust hands.

With these few words as a starter and with no complicated genders, declensions, or conjugations to worry about, learning the street talk reduced itself to picking up names and simple idioms. To learn the proper pitch of a word in one of the four tones (low pitch, up, down and high) was a matter of time and practise in attuning the ear to the rhythm and flow of phrases and sentences.

At the same time that I was slowly and painfully absorbing the local dialect, I was picking up all sorts of odds and ends of information about Chinese ways of business and politics. A curious underground system of communication existed throughout the city. Although the rate of exchange for paper money, silver dollars, small silver, coppers and cash, varied several times daily in the relation of one to all the others, yet at the same time identical rates of exchange were posted on the boards on front of every exchange shop, including those in suburbs ten or twelve miles away, with no means of communication except by word of mouth.

Every Chinese man, woman and child in Peking discussed politics and kept up with all the moves made inside the palace.

Proclamations bearing the imperial seal were posted daily on special boards erected at corners on the main streets. Crowds stood in front of them all day long. Almost the smallest item of the day's happenings, political or personal, leaked out from the Forbidden City through servants of princes and high officials and their wives and concubines, and became common gossip. Even the lowly ricksha coolies and barbers, bound by tradition were supposed to discuss only money, chess and women, squatted in groups around hawker stands and traded imperial secrets and palace scandal over their evening meal.

Through one of these sources I learned that the fabulously wealthy Prince Ch'ing, now in his sixty years old but still the power behind the throne, visited faithfully each morning the secret daylight audience held by the boy emperor in the Forbidden City. The old Prince, carefully guarded, made the trip in a closed carriage from his compound, a half mile outside.

When I asked Mr. Sung if he thought we could get a glimpse of this early morning parade he was dubious. "I think very difficult," he said, shaking his head. "I hear speak but I never see. Soldier stand on street all way his home. All cart, ricksha must stay out when he go. Shopkeeper and people on sidewalk must turn back. But never mind, I ask my friends. Maybe can see."

Two days later he walked into the office with his kindly face wreathed in smiles.

"I have speak my friend. He say all right—only must be careful. Too early see Prince Ch'ing go inside. Can see go home all right."

When Mr. Sung routed me out of bed the next morning it was still dark. The top of the sun was just showing above the horizon as we turned into the road leading to the outer gateway of the side entrance to the palace grounds used by Prince Ch'ing. We left our rickshas and walked through the archway of a huge outer wall into a wide avenue lined with shops backed against the two side walls. Five hundred yards down the avenue we faced the ponderous brass studded doors of the high main wall, a broad stocky temple squatting far above. I stood gazing

up in a trance. The gigantic scale of these solid, massive structures was breath-taking, overpowering.

With an effort, I unfocused my stare and looked around. The shops were like tiny toys, the early risers strolling on the streets like so many pigmies. I felt as if I had suddenly shrunk to the size of an insect.

The spell was broken by Mr. Sung tugging at my coat sleeve.

"Very soon he come. I think better we find place can hide. Cannot stay street. All people must go."

At that second a whistle blew. From nowhere, it seemed, soldiers in brown khaki with cloth puttees and shoes, rushed down the street, double file, charged bayonets. Within five seconds the street was empty of traffic; those in the shops stood facing the rear; on each side a line of soldiers, each ten feet apart, stood at attention.

While I was watching spellbound, Mr. Sung grabbed my arm and pulled me back into a narrow passage between a shop and the outer wall, but I was much too excited to object to the foul smell that explained its function.

With neck craned over my left shoulder and one side of my face against the shop, I stood peeping. A sharp command. The soldiers stiffened. I was holding my breath and could have heard a pin drop. Then the great wooden doors creaked slowly open. Through the tall archway poured a troop of infantry, dressed in black, six abreast, charging at full speed with drawn bayonets. On their heels, amidst rolls of dust, one row of cavalry after another, with swords flashing, galloped forth on their shaggy black ponies.

A short break. Then six black ponies, two abreast, lashed unmercifully by their riders, came tearing through the huge cavity pulling an old-fashioned, delicate black brougham.

Mr. Sung gave me a nudge.

"In carriage," he whispered. "Prince Ch'ing."

The window curtains were drawn. Twenty or more outriders surrounded the brougham on all sides. Two lackeys sat in front and two more hung on behind. But as it swept past in front of us, a hand from inside the carriage pulled back the curtain and

I briefly glimpsed a cadaverous brown face with a small white goatee beneath a black silk skull cap.

The procession vanished. I ran out and looked up the road beyond the outer wall. As far as I could see there were two lines of soldiers and in between only a cloud of dust.

By the time I had collected my thoughts and got my bearings the street was back to normal. The soldiers were out of sight. Traffic moved along as usual. It was like a dream. I stepped into my ricksha and stood there [illegible] in a daze. I turned and looked back. Yes—I had seen it all.

For weeks afterwards when I recalled this scene I was struck with the queer [illegible] face of life in the distant past had suddenly flashed before my eyes and as quickly flared out.

VI

SEPTEMBER: 1911

throwing beer bottles to let off steam—I take in Peking suburbs—a Bostonian gets lit and coins a word—the meanest job yet

EARLY IN SEPTEMBER, JOHNNY called in Frost and myself and informed us that we were to go to Haitien and Tungchow, suburban towns, within the next two days and make the monthly check on godown stocks. Up to this time I had not been out of the city.

During the day Frost and I, except at tiffin, had seen very little of each other. He would be covering one section of the city while I worked another. As soon as the office closed at five o'clock he made straight for the bar and billiard room of the Wagons-Lits. In the late afternoon it was a cool, restful place to sit and, between sips of a long drink, listen to the tall tales of the nondescript loafers who were always lounging in and out.

After spending several afternoons there with Frost, I squirmed out of it. His mind ran in only two channels; the dirty Chinese with their damned mouths hanging open and the fickleness of women. The two subjects had grown into a mania. Fresh from the dusty streets, he began with his usual tirade against the Chinese, but as the afternoon wore on and the whisky sodas took effect, sweet melancholia seized upon him. The more he sipped the more depressing life on the whole became and the broader

grew his Harvard accent. He waxed confidential and drew vivid pictures of Boston and its beautiful surroundings, of the wonderful girls one met, only to have all illusions destroyed by their utterly selfish vanity. He brought up specific cases and took a dismal pleasure in going over each detail of the manner in which he had been led on, then dumped. He always ended with a bitter smile at the way he had let the little wench to whom he had shown Peking, pull the wool over his eyes. Such a beautiful, charming little thing, so trustful and appealing; such large, soft brown eyes; and how they pleaded upon him. And her promises. Now—almost two weeks and not a word. Yes, they were all the same. He was through. As it grew late and the lights were put on we left, dignified and erect, looking straight ahead, feeling the light on our feet, and silently rode back to the mess.

After dinner, when he started again on whisky sodas and let loose his opinions about the Chinese, he grew worse, was full of self-pity. Except to laugh at him and make a joke of it, Johnny continued to pay little attention. I did the best I could. But for reasons of his own, Johnny had stopped sleeping at the mess, and at least after nine disappeared for the night. I had to bear the brunt of the beefing.

Usually I passed the evening with a magazine or book, or running over my Chinese notes. But frequently, in between these restless nights, nights full of vague longings, when I was filled with the need of doing something, getting somewhere, when I felt far from home, as if I were missing life, and wondered uneasily if this kind of job, cut off from the rest of the world, could lead to anything worth while. During such spells Frost's regular after-dinner belly-aching was far from a help. But when at times the going seemed almost unbearable, I joined him in a visit to a Chinese girl house in a nearby *hutung*.

It was the toughest kind of marine joint, but convenient for a bottle of beer. Backed up against the wall at the side of the entrance gate was a small room containing a bar and a few unpainted tables and chairs. A wooden screen, standing about ten feet in front of the open door, shut off a large courtyard

shaded by a number of oak trees. Along the two sides and back ran a porch, a few inches above the ground, leading into a line of rooms with dingy white curtains hanging in the open doorways.

When a guest arrived, the routine was to usher him into the bar and persuade him to have a drink. As soon as the toothless old girls in charge decided that he was filled with sufficient courage, grinning and smirking, they nodded to the boy. The boy let out a howl. The old hags led the guest out in front of the screen and—*v'la*—a girl stood in each doorway under the balcony waiting for him to make his choice. But it took a strong man with his olfactory nerves numbed by stronger drink than beer to carry the routine to its end.

Frost and I followed a system. We had a table and two chairs dragged out under the stars in the center of the yard and ordered Tsingtao beer. Drinking toasts to each other, we ran down the company, particularly the Shanghai office and its off-hand ways and hidden motives, the Chinese and their rotten habits, and reminisced on college days and friends back in "God's country". As soon as we began to feel sleepy, we divided the empty bottles equally and very seriously, and with savage satisfaction, crashed them one by one against the flower design painted on the wooden screen.

The marines had accustomed the house to the queer ways of foreigners and it paid no attention. A splendid way to let off steam. I was able to get to sleep before the midnight biscuit hawker started his call. I felt better, too, in the morning.

However, with Frost's mind entirely focused on the frailties of women and the shortcomings of the Chinese, I was glad that our work kept us apart most of the day. But it was good news that I was going to see some of the country around Peking. As much as I loved the city, covering the market was becoming monotonous.

The night before we left for Tungchow, we had the boy make up a parcel of sandwiches—Frost rebelled at the idea of eating Chinese chow—and were up early the next morning to catch the eight o'clock train. Mr. Sung was at the station with

the tickets. Although our destination was only some twenty *li* from Peking, on account of the many local stops a full hour passed before we arrived. All the stations were alike, a small depot with white plastered walls and roof of red clay tiles, set back on an elevated dirt surface covered with pebbles, which served as the platform. Young elms and [illegible] surrounded the station along the sides and at the back. Everything was neat and clean. The towns were always several *li* away, and the brown dirt walls could barely be seen in the distance.

As the train pulled into a station a railway police sergeant standing on the platform blew his whistle and a small squad of police in black uniforms, carrying long clubs, stood at attention until the train stopped. The station master and his assistants rushed up, the conductor and brakemen jumped off to meet them. Much bowing and talking, clearing of throats and spitting. Hawkers with cloth-wrapped pots of tea and baskets of fruits, peanuts, pancakes, dumplings and cigarettes, squatted by the side of the train or walked up and down yelling. The station master looked at his thick, heavy watch; his friends drew out theirs; they compared with each other, with the clock on the front of the depot, called and gesticulated. The sergeant blew his whistle. The crowd stood at attention. The conductor and his attendant climbed on the platform. Everybody bowed at everybody else. The engine blew a vigorous note. The train pulled out. Every day a big event, something to look forward to, to plan for.

I asked Mr. Sung how far was a *li*. He told me that on level ground three *li* approximated one mile, but that the length varied with the slope of the land. If one were climbing a hill a mile might be four *li*, or even five, depending on how steep the hill was. If one were going down the hill, the length of the *li* was reduced to less than three. The more I thought of it the more logical this system seemed—where most of the travel was by pony, mule cart, donkey or foot—as compared to the Western. (As time went on I found no reason to change my mind).

At Tungchow, the dealer, a fine looking old gentleman in his

sixties, met us with two Peking carts. For another half hour we bumped over a dusty, deeply furrowed dirt road before we reached the crumbling wall of the city, and an added fifteen minutes to reach the compound. But inside was a haven of rest. The shopping district took up only a small isolated section, and was almost lost among the huge old trees that stood in groves back from the road or thrust their branches above the faded walls of compounds. The cool shade and the quiet gave a sense of peace and security.

Tungchow was an old, old town, and, although seldom visited by either Chinese or foreigners, on two occasions had achieved fame. It lay on the Pei (North) River flowing into the Gulf of Chihli. Once the British had landed troops at Tungchow, to bring Peking to terms about their lease on Hongkong; and later the foreign nations had mobilized their forces there during the Boxer Rebellion.

Most of the grain from the north was packed in flat-bottomed boats along the small canals and creeks emptying into the Pei River and drifted down to Tungchow where it was sorted, packed and distributed to all parts of China. Our cigarette dealer was also the largest grain dealer in the place, and his trade in grain ran yearly into millions of Mexican dollars. His agents were scattered among the farm villages and bought the grain as it grew.

The dealer was a delightful old man with charming manners, and a perfect host. When we arrived a boy ran forward and beat the dust off our shoes with rags attached to a wooden handle. We were then ushered through three large spacious courtyards filled with great oaks into the *shang fang* (the upper or reception room). Here we sat for at least an hour drinking tea and pecking at watermelon and pumpkin seeds. Then we checked the godown stocks.

The old man led the way, followed by the three of us and his chief accountant. We counted the number of cases of each brand; added up the stocks on hand the first of the previous month with the stocks received during that month; deducted the sales made, and checked the balance against our count. Good. Everything was correct. The older dealer bowed himself out.

We went into the accountant's office and made out the finished monthly stock report. Our day's job was done. I had already made out and sent in my personal monthly report on my work and conditions of market and conveyance, but the suggestion column; there were no other [illegible] longer an apprentice. It all seemed entirely too [illegible]. But within less than a week I changed my mind.

The accountant was a most [illegible] man. Through Mr. Sung I had a long talk. [illegible] twenty-nine (twenty-eight, really, since a [illegible] year old the day he is born) tall, well-built [illegible] even features and the smooth, fine skin that is [illegible] every Chinese. At his birth he had been appren[illegible]der and now handled all the accounts, receiving [illegible] salary of twelve dollars a year, plus free lodging [illegible] three changes of clothes. He was healthy and contented. I envied him.

Shortly before noon the old dealer invited us to have dinner with him. At first I [illegible] refused, but when Mr. Sung gently pointed out that I was a newcomer, that it was a special occasion and that it would be bad face not to accept, he grumbled to himself and agreed.

The restaurant was a two storied affair. On the ground (literally) floor was a great open room where the lower class ate, seated on rough benches at long bare tables. At one side was the kitchen. By the stairway was a huge earthen water jar with several kinds of fish swimming around inside. Every good restaurant in China had a specialty. This one was noted for the way it cooked fish. We stopped and examined. A waiter pulled out one after another and pointed out the good points. Being the newcomer, I had to choose, and picked out a wide flat fellow which they said was a mandarin.

When we were seated in one of the rooms upstairs, the waiter brought around hot, wet towels with which to wipe our faces and hands, then laid on the table a number of bowls, watermelon and pumpkin seeds, damp, shelled peanuts, melon pickles and dark sauces. At each place he put a small pewter pot and a porcelain cup without a handle. The pot held wine—a rice wine slightly

sweet, served hot. When taking our order, each time the dealer named a dish the waiter yelled it out at the top of his lungs, and another voice echoed it from below in the kitchen. At least eighteen or twenty dishes were served, meats chopped and sliced, dry or mixed with vegetables, the baked mandarin fish deliciously seasoned with a slightly sweetened sauce, ending with bowls of rice and several different kinds of soups. It was all new and I enjoyed it thoroughly, but as the meal progressed I could see the disgust Frost was trying to hide as he fiddled with his chop sticks. Once he leaned over and whispered, "It's all cooked in filthy water, and watch how the waiter sticks his fingers in the bowls when he puts them down. Sickening stuff."

Chow lasted more than two hours, and rather than wait two more for the next local train—Frost was restless—we hired three donkeys and rode along a narrow, winding cobblestone road filled with squeaking wheelbarrows and mule carts, coolies and donkeys, all heavily loaded. We arrived at the East Gate of Peking just before sundown. It was the first time that I had noticed that a moat, half filled with stagnant water ran around the outside of the city wall. Sitting in a pond choked with water lilies was a wooden flat boat gaily painted and decorated with an awning. It was crowded with men and women sipping tea and chewing watermelon seeds. Squatted along the canal were white bearded elders with long stemmed pipes and bird cages, intent on training their canaries to fluff and sing. In the background stood a beggar with elephantiasis, his left hand a mass of grey flesh a foot in diameter and reaching to the ground.

That evening at the mess Frost was worse than ever. He drank steadily, and pacing up and down the courtyard, lectured fluently and bitterly on the physical habits of the Chinese, emphasizing his points by poking the ground with the stick he carried for that purpose.

"Waunks!" he exclaimed, thrusting the end of his stick against the stones, "A country of waunks, four legged and two legged. All going around with their damned mouths dribbled open."

Johnny laughed.

"You make me tired," he said, "and you're getting yourself in

a fix with all this raving. Get yourself a girl and forget it."

Frost paid no attention and continued to talk. Suddenly he burst out, *"Bewaunked!* That's what's the matter with you chaps. You're *bewaunked."*

The word seemed to please him. He repeated it several times with relish. Johnny looked at me and grinned.

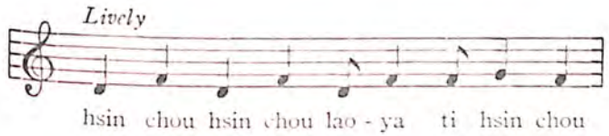
"Yes, sir," Frost went on, his spite and vigour renewed by the word he had coined, "you fellows are damned well *bewaunked*. You're getting so used to this lazy, rotten life that you like the filthy Chinks and their dirt. And you like to hear them hark and spit, and think it's amusing. Well, by god, I can't go it. They're like a bunch of sheep—with their mouths hanging open all the time and their half-witted staring. I tell you, I'm going home before I get *bewaunked* like the rest of you."

The next morning, after a raw egg in a small glass of L. & P., Frost was his taciturn self again, and we left early for Haitien to check the godown as we had in Tungchow. This time we took rickshas. Haitien was not far from the Summer Palace, the retreat (for a while) of the old Empress Dowager and her eunuch advisers during the Boxer troubles. From the north gate the distance was about twenty *li*, nine miles, over a cobblestone road. Our ricksha boys settled down to a steady dog trot and kept it up the whole way. Two or more ricksha boys together could go much farther and faster than one by himself. My boy, a tall strapping young fellow, lived mostly on pancakes, and the days on which he covered a large mileage, especially during the hot weather, I had to allow him an extra five coppers for additional pancakes in order to keep up his weight.

All the way out we were followed by beggars, but only by one at a time. Where one left off another took up. Mr. Sung explained to me that the beggars' guild was one of the strongest in China. Old Prince Ch'ing was the head, laid down the laws and received his percentage of takings. It was ruled and regulated like all the other trade guilds. Each beggar had his allotted beat and paid so much tax. Shopkeepers, according to their size and their business, were levied so much. Each day a regular crew of beggars called on every shopkeeper.

I once saw six unusually filthy beggars, some with open sores, lying in the doorway of a shop on Ch'ien Men Street. Passers-by circled around out of their way. The police paid no attention. "I think maybe," explained Mr. Sung, "they ask more cumshaw and shopkeeper refuse. So they send worst beggars have got. Lie on doorstep and stop business until shopkeeper pay. Police can do nothing. Prince Ch'ing make law."

One of the beggars on the road to the Summer Palace was a small boy of twelve or thirteen, who followed the rickshas both going and coming. He had rosy cheeks, was well-built and well-dressed. He greeted us with a smile and kept up a musical sing-song, repeating over and over, *"Hsin chou, hsin chou, lao ya ti, hsin chou."*



With his pleasant grin, good looks and friendly manner he must have taken in daily more than a great many shops. Every time afterwards that I visited the Haitien godown he was on his beat. I always made him run the full length and gave him a twenty cent piece at the end.

As at Tungchow, our work was finished in fifteen minutes. I found here the same friendly courtesy and pleasant formality that I had met with everywhere so far among the Chinese. Frost ate part of the sandwiches we had brought along. But I took the Chinese chow. I was beginning to prefer it to English dry cooking.

When we arrived back at the office just before five, Johnny called us in and told us that a supply of posters and handbills on the new brand had arrived, and we were to start a posting and sampling campaign right away. Then he handed Frost a letter. Frost was transferred up country. He was to leave for an interior town, called Paotingfu, as soon as another man arrived to take his place.

"Well," said Johnny, "I hope you're satisfied now. You've talked yourself into it."

Frost stared at the letter with his slightly protruding blue eyes. Without saying a word, he left the office and drove to the Wagons-Lits.

On the way to the mess, Johnny said, "Wait 'til he's been in Paotingfu a week. He'll holler then. Peking will look like heaven to him. Sending him there is Shanghai's (men in the field always referred to the main office simply as "Shanghai") way of calling for a showdown.

"The company's policy is to start a new man off the same way you teach a puppy to swim: throw it in the water and let it sink or swim. You're lucky to get a start in a place like this—where you can get used to the Chinese before you're thrown among them away from other foreigners."

"What's the trouble with most of them that get kicked out that way?"

"Booze," replied Johnny. "Anything might start it. But it always ends with drinking themselves out. It's easy to get going with a drinking crowd. As far as I know, I'm the only foreigner in Peking that does n't touch anything.

"Serves Frost right. He had it coming. Always talking about his troubles and the Chinese, and getting half soused every evening. Shanghai knows it—they won't keep on wet nursing him forever. I'm damned glad he's leaving, and I guess you are, too. All this whining of his is bad for us both, and it certainly doesn't help the company's name any."

Yes, there were two sides to it. I loved Peking. I liked outdoor life, and, although the job called for a lot of dirty work, still—broke or not—I had the right at any time to tell the company to go to hell, and get out. I was not quite satisfied, but left it at that. Luckily, drink had no hold on me.

* * * * *

The following morning saw the beginning of the final rites of my initiation into the company as a full-fledged, blown-in-the-glass member with full degrees.

Frost and I started out, each with an interpreter, an extra ricksha filled with cartons, another containing large single sheet posters (a standard size measuring 30" × 40", showing a large open packet of cigarettes with brand name and caption), colored handbills, and two coolies with a long brush, rags and a bucket full of paste. Frost took one section of the city and I another. The procedure was, first, I found a good wall location and obtained permission from the landlord; then the coolies put up as many posters as the space would allow; and when the sight of a foreigner supervising posting had drawn a good-sized crowd, I handed out packets while the interpreter followed up with the handbills.

It was nasty work—deliberately defacing house walls with a lot of glaring, shouting, colored paper. I loathed it. And the sampling: coolies pushing and clutching and snatching. I could give out only a dozen or so packets before the crowd grew too large and started a stampede. Several times I called a cop. But Mr. Sung was a great help. He never became excited, and taught me to keep my head and to time the right moment to leave.

By the end of the first day I was all in and depressed. So this was what I had come to China for. Some of the things Frost beefed about were not so far wrong at that.

For ten days I spent the whole of each spoiling walls and giving out sample cigarettes and handbills. There were nights when I smashed beer bottles with great gusto and satisfaction.

VII

LATE SUMMER AND EARLY FALL: 1911

the ex-Kaiser's cousin—Peking foreign night life—a patriotic scrap on Telegraph Lane—the wealthiest woman in North China

BACK IN THE DAYS OF THE dynasty Peking contained a curious mixture of foreigners, and they lived a curious, mixed life. As a young man starting out with the company to make good, and having to pay my own mess bill, I was a minus in diplomatic society. But the total foreign population was only a handful and most of the foreign life centered around the Hôtel des Wagon-Lits during the afternoon and evening, and for men only, in Telegraph Lane at night. Excluding the exclusives, such as ambassadors, ministers, bank heads and socially ambitious attaches, it did not take long to drum up all sorts and kinds of acquaintances and friends, and find plenty to do during leisure hours.

The young attaches, of course, spent most of their spare time at the Peking Club, at that time the hardest drinking club in the Far East. The European governments had a habit of sending the riff-raff and off-scourings of their nobility to Peking to get rid of them, and there they could cut up and flaunt their depravity to their hearts' content without doing any harm. Some of the tales that leaked out from time to time sounded as if they were drawn as case histories from a psychopathia sexualis. Life in the bungalows back on the Western Hills where legation

wives retreated for the summer, their husbands on week-ends, was noted for its unmorality.

Paul Reinsch, conservative, a scholar, and very much of a gentlemen, was the American minister. In addition to his regular staff, he had under him a group of young men called student interpreters, most of them just out of college, taking a three-year course in Chinese as a part of their training to enter upon a diplomatic career as vice-consuls. Johnny and I saw a good deal of them at the Wagons-Lits and occasionally at the mess. We also made a number of friends among the young marine lieutenants.

Dining at the Wagons-Lits was too expensive for any of us, but on Saturday evenings we donned our dinner jackets, had an early—eight o'clock in China was early—dinner at home, and the first ones to reach the hotel held a table for the rest. This system enabled us to obtain the best location in the lobby, to look over the tourists and other transients and watch the Chinese magician, who appeared weekly as atmosphere, and was called old "*I Ko Leng Teng*" on account of the meaningless phrase he repeated as a part of his patter. Since we sipped after dinner coffee and liqueurs in the grand manner and also added to the atmosphere, in addition to being steady customers, the management could make no kick. Nevertheless, the stout Swiss in his immaculate dinner clothes walked on pins and needles. He could always expect the worst before the evening was over and the party had adjourned to Telegraph Lane—such as the night of the heated argument over the handling of a revolver.

The hour was about ten o'clock. The lobby was crowded with tourists, most of them elderly, and tired, sophisticated faces from the legations. Old "*I Ko Leng Teng*" was in the midst pulling huge bowls of water from beneath his silk cloth. At our table—there were eight of us—three young marine lieutenants were arguing bitterly the best way to handle an army forty-five Colt for rapid fire. Finally, a red-headed, slender chap who had risen from the ranks, could stand it no longer. "Wait a minute," he muttered, "I want to show you fellows a little stunt of mine."

He jumped from his seat and disappeared up the stairway at the back.

We sat looking at each other, wondering what he was up to. He had been drinking heavily and we were a bit uneasy. In a few minutes he returned. Immediately he was seated, he reached inside his coat, pulled out his forty-five, held it under the table and said, "I'll show you a trick about rapid firing. One of you hold a watch, and when I say, 'ready,' start counting. The rest of you fellows watch my hand."

No one had any idea yet what he was going to do. But one of the fellows took out his watch. The lieutenant pulled back his chair, said, "go," and threw up the long barrelled gun, aiming at the big crystal chandelier suspended from the center of the ceiling. The trigger clicked, the revolver whirled swiftly around his forefinger, another click, only softer, and another whirl—all one motion in rapid rotation—six whirls—six clicks.

When the gun appeared above the table, I heard a scream, but was too intent to look up: then the background of my consciousness vaguely took in the sounds of running feet, more screams, furniture striking the floor and crash of breaking glass. At the finish, I looked up with a sigh, and suddenly became aware that the lobby around us was empty; overturned chairs were lying beside broken bottles and glasses trickling out liquids; round, staring eyes peered from behind the tables; *"I Ko Leng Teng"*, the Chinese boys, and the Manchu officials and their wives had disappeared.

From across the desk top at the front the distracted Swiss manager raised his blonde head. "Put that away," he shrieked waving his arms, "Go away—go away—you ruin my hotel. Put that away and go! Go away quickly!"

But we were watching the lieutenant. He had opened the breech and was showing us the chambers, in every other one a wicked looking forty-five cartridge. As fast as he could, barely hesitating in his whirl, he had pulled the trigger full cock on each empty chamber, and half-cock on each loaded one!

Sooner or later in the Wagons-Lits one ran across every one in Peking—from Russian pimps who imported girls from

Odessa to the highest titles from England and Europe. The greatest foreign character the city has ever known was Roy Anderson, adviser to one of the big oil companies, who spent his days with his stout body squeezed into the depths of a club chair receiving Chinese officials and foreign *taipans*. An American born in China, he spoke a half-dozen dialects as fluently and perfectly as the Chinese themselves and, having a reputation for absolute integrity, wielded greater personal influence with the Chinese than any other foreigner in the country.

Another personality was the Baron, cousin of the ex-Kaiser. In his youth he had run through his baronial estates, was thrown out of court, and only saved himself by marrying an American heiress in search of a title. His habits made it impossible for them to stick together, but they had a daughter and if they divorced, the child would lose the title of baroness. The heiress solved the problem by having an agreement drawn up giving the Baron an income as long as he remained within a radius of one hundred miles of Peking.

Standing at the bar of the Wagons-Lits, gravely but graciously accepting a drink, the Baron was an imposing sight. A heavily built man above average height and well over sixty, he stood as straight as a ramrod and swaggered an ivory headed stick. His features, including his white imperial, closely resembled the ex-Kaiser's. And to add to his impressiveness he sported a monocle in his left eye, wore cocked over his left ear a green Italian fedora with a feather stuck in the side, and dressed daytime in a black cutaway, grey striped trousers and patent-leathers—always with a boutonniere—always immaculate. Once a month his doctor stopped his drinks and put him on diet for a week. However, in a Russian *café chantant* over on Telegraph Lane one seat in the orchestra was empty, and one trap drum was silent, except on Wednesday and Friday nights after ten o'clock when the Baron, in full evening dress and wearing his carnation in his buttonhole, played as seriously and strenuously as the rest of the troupe.

I saw him at his best when Georgie and the blue-eyed Britisher came down from the interior for a breathing spell. Before leav-

ing for China Georgie was scene shifter on the staff of George M. Cohan and, like thousands of other boys at the time, Georgie worshipped him and imitated his slouch and nasal twang and the way Cohan talked out of the side of his half-closed mouth. The name, Georgie, too, he had taken from Cohan. Originally, he had come out to make Columbia records.

The blue-eyed Britisher was a thin-lipped little cockney. Both had been up in the mountains for almost a year selling and sampling for the company. Georgie confided over the Wagons-Lits bar that they were both making a killing but hated the very guts of each other. He begged me to put in a request to go back with him, but I refused.

"No," he shook his head, "I don't suppose you would. Probably there's some things you won't do. Me, I'll do anything for money. I sold and wrote off more than a thousand dollars worth of samples in less than three months. I've cleaned up over four thousand since I've been up there. But that goddam limy bastard's slick. He's got me beat. He'd stop with a dame and take the money outter her stockings. . . . *Give—er my—ree-gards to—er—Broadwye—er. . . .*"

When they arrived on the afternoon train they made straight for the Wagons-Lits bar. They were spending freely. By half-past five the news had spread, and the place was packed with young attaches, banl clerks and all the nondescript adventurers continually wandering in and out of Peking on unknown business and mysterious errands. Little Georgie was having the time of his life entertaining the courtly and awe-inspiring Baron. At ten he ordered dinner for the crowd, fifteen or more, in a private room, the table piled high with flowers. At eleven we were mounted on chairs drinking champagne toasts to Cohan, the Baron, the Kaiser and Georgie, crashing glasses into the marble fireplace. At midnight fruit was served, and the Baron, carefully adjusting his monocle, selected a bunch of hothouse grapes and threw them at the face of a beautiful nude frescoed on the opposite wall. As the dish was passed, each one took a shot at the lovely lady holding a water jug. By the time the manager arrived the wall was a vivid spattered purple-blue. Georgie

Shelling peas for the mid-morning meal

gave him a cheque for $750 to cover the damage, and the party left to cool off with beer in Telegraph Lane.

Telegraph Lane was behind the legations, made up of a row of wooden shacks and beer gardens set back on a wide boulevard. Some had orchestras, some had automatic players, but all had Russian girl dance partners. Until ten in the evening they were full of non-coms from the legation guards. After that, any one below the rank of a minister was likely to be sighted. Most of the joints were run by Russians who used them as a cover while trading in girls shipped from Russia, principally Odessa, through Vladivostok or Harbin, and transhipped later to the foreign ports. These slaves were a dulled, bedraggled lot from the lower classes and dressed alike in low-neck, short, fancy cotton print frocks, but the sordid dumps saw many lively nights.

It was at one of them, Jennie's American bar, that I first met the Sarge, top sergeant of the American marines, and later one of my best friends. Already I knew Jennie in a business way from pushing off high-grade brands on her—a part of my job. Early one evening in the late summer—it is pleasant in Peking at dusk in the late summer—I strolled over to Jennie's and she invited me into the back room to have a drink. There, stretched out on a rug-covered couch with his head bolstered up on a pile of pillows, lay a huge bulk in marine uniform with loosened belt and unbuttoned coat. He was a powerfully built man, his hands the size of hams. We talked for an hour or more. He had been in Peking as a young corporal during the Boxer trouble and told tales of the siege. Putnam Weale's (Lenox Simpson) *Indiscreet Letters from Peking* gave a picture that was much the same, but omitted the rank details of looting and slaughter done by the foreign soldiers.

"The Japanese were a murderous lot with their bayonets," said the Sarge, "for three days runnin' wild sticking the Chinymen and grabbin' boodle. The rest weren't much better but hadn't been told the value of things. The poor devils of Chinymen didn't know what it was all about, anyway, and were scared to death. 'Twas like takin' mush from a baby. They finally had to keep all the soldiers in barracks 'til they got their senses back."

The Sarge introduced me to a number of his pals, and a month or so later I was informed that the committee had elected me an honorary member of the sergeants' club. At the annual dinner, held in the yard of one of the joints, I sat by the Sarge and have never before or since seen such wholesale sentimentality.

A great rivalry existed between the American marines and the British Legation guards. At times it broke out into brawls that tore up the Lane and ended with a number of privates on both sides landing in the jug. The "Froggies" and the "Spaghettis" did not count; they were mild little fellows not worthy of attention, and the "Ruskys" were not paid enough to work up a good spree and besides, off their ponies they never knew how to handle themselves. The British were okey scrappers.

The American marines were so tough they were the only guard not allowed to carry bayonets, and the Sarge was the toughest of the lot. By the right of a thundering voice and the might of his massive fists he ruled the roost. He had beaten his way through the entire ranks and had cleaned up the prize bullies of every nationality in Peking. So when a new British top sergeant —a tow-headed, lumbering giant of a Scotchman—came on the scene, excitement ran high. The news spread through the legation quarters; every one, high and low, was placing a bet and waiting for the Scot and Sarge to clash.

The collision came one night when the *Metropole* was crowded. At the end of the bar near the big Russian stove sat the Scot. Beside him a black-eyed Olga (every *café chantant* in China had its Olga; this was the one with the pale face, the one who dressed in black and red and danced with her shoulders). The Baron was beating his little snare drum in the orchestra. Four or five girls were mixing among the guests. When I entered, rough, boisterous good humor flooded the place.

And then the Sarge burst into the room. He swayed slightly —evidently he had been drinking heavily. Glancing around, he caught sight of Olga seated with the Scot, walked over and pulled her up by one arm.

The big Scot slowly unravelled himself. He was a half-head taller than Sarge. He grasped Olga's other arm.

"Look ye, mon," he drawled, "ye be mad; ye canna do thot."

"Who's givin' orders, me bucko?" the Sarge roared back; and leaning over, he planted on the face of the Scot a slap that echoed through the room.

Tables and chairs were shoved back and piled against the walls. The crowd made a circle. The two giants stripped to their waists: the Sarge, powerful of chest and shoulders to the point of deformity, long hairy arms knotted with muscles; the big Scot, splendidly built, like the statue of a Greek wrestler. They shook hands.

They fought with bare fists. No rounds. No seconds. For rules, only a sense of fair play.

For an hour, perhaps more, they beat each other until both were masses of flesh battered almost beyond recognition. No mere slugging match. Both were graduates of the rough-and-tumble school of soldiers. They had more than rudimentary skill; but clinches were few. Towards the end, half dazed, they hammered each other unmercifully.

Then the Sarge whipped across a right with the full force of his body behind it. The Scot ducked and the blow spent itself in the air. But the Sarge had dropped his left guard—for a fraction of a second. As the Scot straightened, he let loose an uppercut that landed a shattering blow full on the Sarge's chin. The Sarge staggered slightly, looked surprised and suddenly lay sprawled on the floor. The crowd yelled.

But the Sarge lay only for a second. When he got up his set grin was displaced by harsh lines of determination.

That blow cost the Scot the fight. He had sprained his right hand and was unable to follow up. When the Sarge regained his feet, the Scot rushed in, raining blow after blow, but the Sarge crouched and covered—and waited. The blows lacked force; their crisp striking power was gone. The right fist of the Scot gave against each shock.

The Sarge must have known. He suddenly straightened, dropped his guard and let the Scot punch at will. Then, as if sensing the end, also opened up. Face to face, they stood slugging with every ounce of their strength, blows sufficient to

stagger an ox. The room trembled from the roars of the crowd.

A contest of brute strength and endurance. Bleeding and torn, groggy and rocking on their feet they slashed away. But the blows of the Scot had lost their crushing force. He was beaten off his feet. Three times he went down on his knees. The third time he remained a second, swaying back and forth, then without warning pitched forward and lay on the floor in a heap.

After their friends had taken them out and cleaned them up a bit, the Scot went back to his table and sat with head in hands, sobs racking his huge body. The Sarge sauntered over and clapped him on the back.

"Don't take it so hard, big fellow."

"Eh, but ye licked me, mon, and a bit drunk ye were at thot. Ye're the first to do ut."

"Ye're a helluva good man, Scottie. 'Tis the one time in ten years a man has knocked me down."

They shook hands.

* * * * *

On the narrow street behind the Lane different kinds of fights raged. Here stood three large, old brick houses, so aloof in their serenity and quiet that they might have been taken for the homes of conservative bankers—and after a fashion the one on the corner next to Hatamen was. It was owned by Frankie. Go to China now and place a glass of scotch before a true old timer and mention the name, Frankie; then watch the faraway look come into his eyes and listen to him reminisce.

Frankie, then a young girl of nineteen or so, arrived in Peking shortly after the Russo-Japanese war. She was loaded with rubles—then worth fifty cents to the American dollar. During the whole war she had been a part of the Russian officers' staff behind the lines, conducting vodka and champagne parties and gathering in their rubles. She was an American, but how she landed in Siberia is her own story.

Arrived in Peking, she wanted to invest her hard-earned capital. Establishing her nationality proved a troublesome affair. She

looked around, found a harmless old man on his uppers—a mysterious Mr. Popper—and married him. Her first investment was the purchase of the three houses back of Telegraph Lane. She took over one herself and set up business. The other two she rented for the same purpose. Everything she did was on a grand scale. The Russian officers had taught her the weakness of men. Peking bankers respected her. She stocked up with almost every foreign nationality except Russian, got them young and made them dress. Legation quarters sat up and took notice. The details of those who were Frankie's close friends and backed her in her ventures are vague in some respects, but many well-known names and stories of unconventional happenings leaked out over the Peking Club bar. In time she grew to be the wealthiest woman, and one of the wealthiest foreigners, in North China.

A young man in China, however, out to make good with one of the companies, was caught between two fires. On the one hand was the costly luxury established by Frankie and her friends —which he could not afford; and on the other was the Chinese *kuniang* (girl) who was never safe. In case a young man did send for a *kuniang*—as was often done, especially by those who were *bewaunbel*—his boy would certainly never fail to fetch a young lady who wore the red cord of virginity plaited in her queue. But even then he was taking a chance, for the Chinese had an old proverb in the form of a pun. The colloquial term for a virgin is *hung kuan* (the red cord mentioned above). The same combination of sounds also has the meaning of "honest official"; and the Chinese proverb said there was no such thing as an honest official. Since all Chinese sayings are based on empirical findings, a young man who was aware of this pun was left in a quandary.

However, Johnny had found a neat way out. Shortly after Frost had left for Paotingfu I entered the mess one evening and was introduced by him to a charming little Japanese girl. She was the answer to his disappearance from the mess every evening after dinner. The Englishman who had taken Frost's place, a reticent, unassuming young man whose greatest weakness was

deep thinking (he kept a pad and pencil tied to a string over his bed to catch thoughts at night—but by the time he was wide awake they had fled, and the pad remained blank), in his quiet way was highly pleased. Johnny brought her to dinner almost every evening and she livened up the mess considerably.

VIII

LATE SUMMER AND EARLY FALL: 1911 *(Continued)*

early morning rides—Manchu social life—week-ends hunting hidden temples

IN SPITE OF THE ATTRACTIONS of the legation quarter and Telegraph Lane, both Johnny and I were too much interested in things Chinese to spend much time away from them. After I was able to find my way around, I started rising early in the morning and rode Percy, the white pony, at random through the city, stopping on my way back at a coolie kitchen to get a hot, crisp Chinese biscuit with sesamum seed sprinkled on top and a fried cruller stuffed inside. It was delicious. (It is a mistake to call the Chinese a race of rice eaters. In the South where it is grown, yes; but north of the Yangtze the vast majority cannot afford such a luxury. They live on wheat, millet and beans.)

At that time of the morning the legation guards were out for drill. Coming out on Hatamen, I would stop and watch the Italian officers on their tall Australian horses, posting around the edge of the *glace;* then turn to watch, in the German drill ground next to the Tartar wall, a determined colonel teaching himself to ride his pony without stirrups. The grace and ease of the Italians and the perfect form with which they took

jumps over the bamboo fences were a joy to see. The German was all a bunch of tensed-up ligaments, a personification of the Nietzschean will-to-power, grimly resolved to hold his seat by pure brute strength. He never seemed to improve, and I often wondered how he felt getting out of bed each morning, his muscles and joints stiff and sore, to face the prospect of being jolted around by his pony.

At the other end of the legation quarters I ran into another contrast; on one side of the street the American marines, clean-cut, well-groomed and snappy; on the other, the Russian cossacks, burly fellows with broad faces and high cheek bones, wearing light khaki uniforms and high, heavy boots, seated on their stuffed saddles. The marines, carrying rifles, marched in fancy formations—smart. The shaggy Tartars drilled on galloping shaggy ponies, threw themselves out of their saddles, across their ponies and back again, and slashed with their swords at targets—stirring.

After I had been riding for a month or more, another Englishman took the place of the cadaverous thinker in the mess, and we rode together. He was a great horseman and when out in the early morning, rode smoothly without stirrups. I tried it a few times but found it useless. Percy was a pacer; and pacing, of course, was easier than walking. For the same reason, a pacing pony was highly valued by the Chinese. The name for a pacing pony is "*hao tsou ma*" (good go horse). Often a passer-by stopped, gave a glance at Percy's movement, stuck up his thumb and yelled, "*hao tsou'rh* (good going)!"

In the evening after dinner Johnny and I often wandered around the night life section of the Chinese city. I never grew tired of watching the rapidly shifting scenes. Between nine and midnight the narrow side streets leading to the restaurants and theatres were lighted up by lanterns and bustling with life. Two unbroken lines of rickshas and Peking carts flowed in and out. Most of the rickshas were private, enameled black and fitted with plush cushions trimmed in white. A good part of them were occupied by pairs of slender young girls wearing long heavy silk gowns with enormously high collars. They were

sing-song girls meeting their engagements at restaurants. Each ricksha was propelled by two boys in uniform, one pulling and one pushing, both yelling, and one of the girls vigorously pumping a large bicycle bell with her foot.

Outriders preceded the Peking carts, forcing a way with their ponies. Standing at the side, peering into the carts as they passed, I saw some containing families of four or five, others with young beauties in colored silks and satins, half hidden by old dames in black sitting in front with one leg hanging over the side. In still others I discovered fat old codgers dressed in silks and highly perfumed, on their way to keep trysts. But to get a real close-up of the Peking four hundred, the best place was at the door of a first-class restaurant or theatre. As in California, the men had beautiful skins and the women terrible complexions. They were all Manchu, and at night the dead white on the women's faces made them look like ghosts or puppets.

I once watched an old amah help a doll-faced lady from her cart and practically hold her up while she tapped, tapped with tiny steps into the theatre. Once seated in her box the lady sat up straight and stiff all evening. Her jackets were so many and tight she was not able to budge. All evening her amah fanned her while she sat, head motionless, without expression, rolling her black eyes around. I have heard said that it took a smart staff of amahs well over three hours to prepare their lady for the evening.

The Manchu elegants were as bad as their women. Even during the hottest weather, they appeared in the evening wearing silk jackets over silk gowns of another color; and under the top gowns were likely to be four or five more, each of a different color. The men looked soft and had the same delicate hands as the women. Both went in for long finger nails to show that they were above the necessity of degrading their hands to any useful purpose.

Inside, the theatres were much alike, similar in many respects, I imagine, to those in which Molière played. The ground floor was a pit filled with long narrow tables and benches, and a

balcony furnished the same way extended along the sides and back above. Right and left of the orchestra was a row of boxes with small round tables and straight back chairs, which were occupied only by Manchu high society. The tables were for tea, peanuts and melon seed, sliced oranges and cakes, served by a staff of uniformed boys who ran yelling up and down the aisles. Other boys worked in pairs, supplying the audience with hot wet towels with which to mop their faces, perspiring freely from too many clothes and the hot tea. The house reeked with the odor of sweating bodies and the pungent smell of cocoanut oil.

The stage had no footlights. Large hanging oil lamps did the job. The orchestra consisted of a violinist, flutist, trap drummer, bass drummer and xylophone player. The star performers—at that time three competing rivals were playing in different theatres—took the parts of heroines and sang in high falsetto. When a star caught a particularly high note and held it, the audience raised their hands, thumbs up; and as the orchestra crashed into a crescendo, shrill, piercing exclamations almost shattered the walls: *"hao-ma!" "hao-hao!" "hao-li-ao-ah!" "ting hao-li-aooo-wah!"* The Manchu ladies gently tapped their slender hands on the railings of the boxes.

But I preferred the first-class restaurants. The cooks were finished artists. I have since had the luck to try famous dishes of many nations but I do not believe that any cuisine has ever surpassed that of Peking in the days of the Manchu dynasty. Each dish stood alone as a rare work of art. To eat much of one would have been a crime. The true gourmet lingered over each morsel, taking care not to let any excess of a course spoil the keen response of gustatory nerves to others to follow.

The first really high-class Chinese meal I attended was a breakfast given on a bet. Johnny, in an argument with three interpreters, made the rash statement that he could tell the main ingredient of any Chinese dish after the first taste. As a consequence, we were invited to attend a Chinese chow the following Sunday morning. At eleven A.M. we sat down. At 2 P.M. we had gone through twenty-one courses, all of them most appetizing and delicious. Johnny guessed two dishes correctly. I was able to

recognize only one. Each of the twenty-one contained the same basic ingredient—*shrimp!*

On the smallest excuse our Chinese dealers gave dinners. They were formal affairs. A coolie brought the invitation two or three days ahead. The time was usually set at seven, but no one thought of arriving before eight or eight-thirty, and the last guest usually strolled in around nine. Until nine-thirty the party loafed about, sipped tea, and ate watermelon seeds. Then the host took the arm of the guest of honor and, with the guest hesitating at every step and protesting that he was unworthy, led him to the seat of honor, the only chair with arms, called the *shang i* or *shang tso* (upper seat). In the order of their importance the other guests were put through the same ritual. Finally, the host seated himself on the right of the guest of honor.

Before each place lay a pair of chop sticks, a small two-pronged fork for picking up sweets, a soup spoon, a small plate, a tea cup and wine cup. The host started the dinner by filling every one's cup with hot wine and toasting the guest of honor. The guest of honor drank the health of the host, and the dinner was on. When wine was poured a guest held his cup outstretched in both hands and murmured polite refusals, but always accepted, and a cup was never allowed to stay empty. Two kinds of wine were served, kaoliang and rice, the former quick in results, both without after effects.

When the meal was well under way the host started the game of *pao ch'uan* (fist play) with the guest of honor—a game similar to that played by peasants in parts of Italy. Soon the whole table had taken it up, and hot competition developed. As the evening wore on the players became excited and boisterous, grew red in the face from the wine, and removed one gown after another, sometimes five or six before reaching the last. Their yells reverberated through the *hutungs*.

With right arms outstretched, hands closed and wrists bent, opponents simultaneously straightened their wrists and called a number, trying to guess the sum total of fingers—including thumbs—extended. After each correct guess the loser had to

down a cup of wine. Endowed by nature with limber hands, from long practise most of the Chinese could manipulate their fingers and thumbs with lightening-like rapidity, and between experts winning was almost wholly a matter of science and skill. Variety was added by using symbolic, poetic terms for numbers.

In spite of the fact that the hot wine shot quickly to the head, I never once saw an educated, cultivated Chinese of the old school grow disagreeable or lose his temper.

During the meal, bones and odds and ends one did not like were spat upon the floor. To belch was a polite way of telling the host that the food was excellent. And should a guest pat his stomach and exclaim "*ch'ih pao lo* (I've eaten to repletion)," the host was highly pleased, for he knew the dinner had been a great success.

Until the weather grew too cold and the fall rains and first signs of dust storms made their appearance, Sunday mornings Johnny and I put sandwiches in our pockets and rode at random, visiting the small temples scattered over the plains. For many miles around Peking the country was as flat as a pancake and bare of trees. The soil was a light brown sand that rose in torrents with the slightest gust of wind. The bright reflection from the sky made it necessary to wear blue glasses. At intervals of every eight or ten *li* we ran into an oasis of tall old cypress trees. Under their shelter we found tucked away a little old discarded temple, its colors faded and enriched by age. Few such temples had priest or keeper. All were surrounded by walls and had small yards in front, overgrown with tall grass. Narrow stone pathways led through center walls into the back courtyards to the shrines. Travelling alone, we never learned the names of the gods, but they were a fierce looking lot, dressed as warriors and their faces fixed in vicious scowls. At one time they had precious stones for eyeballs, wore expensive jewelry and were stuffed inside with gold and silver. But all we saw were empty sockets, bare figures with big holes torn open in the back —traces of the Boxer trouble when the foreign soldiers scoured the country around the capital for loot. After having once

gazed at this vandalism, I had an apologetic feeling when visiting with a cultivated, reserved Chinese gentleman of the old school; and while trying to match his natural gentility and exquisite manners, wondered how much, behind his serene eyes, he looked down upon me as an uncouth foreigner. I have never ceased to wonder.

Some of the most magnificent carvings I saw in China were in these small, hidden temples—tall stone pillars in the form of dragons climbing tree trunks, stone railings in intricate flower designs, inner walls of multicolored glazed tile mosaics, with circular marble insets etched in relief.

Inside we stretched out on the grass in the cool shade and listened to the rustling of the leaves breaking the deep stillness. I imagined an elderly Chinese, retired from the cares of business, devoting his declining years to erecting his family shrine, watching it day by day take form, and, after its completion, bringing his children and grandchildren to stroll and sit, and feel the peace and eternity of life away from all noise and struggle.

IX

OCTOBER–DECEMBER: 1911

the Manchus are thrown into a panic—I visit the Ming Tombs and get lost in a snow storm—news of a raise and Christmas at the mouth of the Gobi desert—a pony-trading missionary buys a yacht for a Living God of Mongolia

IN THE FALL BEFORE THE rains set in, when Peking was at its liveliest and gayest, a bombshell dropped from the sky and turned everything completely upside down, or as the Chinese said, *luan ch'i pa tsao*. On October the ninth news spread through the city that a bomb had exploded in the Russian Concession at Hankow and that an old fire-eater by the name of Li, with a band of young revolutionists known as the "Do-or-Die Society", had taken the adjoining cities of Wuchang and Hanyang, where the government arsenal was located, and had set up a military government.

The legation quarter suddenly awoke from its lethargy, and cocktail parties took on an air of mystery and a new importance. In the Peking Club young attaches stood around in little groups of two and three, talking earnestly in whispers. The Wagons-Lits became packed with Manchu high officials and their families. A new crop of foreigners, selling arms and ammunition or seeking military jobs, popped up from nowhere. Close-mouthed men—German, French, Russian—grouped under the heading of advisers, always with portfolios and in a hurry, drove up in

carriages, disappearing with Chinese officials somewhere into the depths of the hotel, to reappear suddenly and dash off. Every one had an abstracted, faraway look as if loaded down with heavy secrets.

During the days that followed, news of uprisings and disturbances poured in over the telegraph wires: Manchu colonies in many parts of the country were being slaughtered; a small group of young reformers had declared a republic in Shanghai. On the government bulletin boards exciting proclamations were posted daily by the throne: Yuan Shih K'ai is made the head of all the armies; Yuan Shih K'ai's crack regiment has attacked Hankow and taken it back from the revolutionists; the Prince Regent resigns and appoints Yuan Shih K'ai Premier.

The Manchus were in a panic. They saw the writing on the wall. The streets leading to the railway station overflowed with coolies and carts loaded with their bedding and other belongings tied up in boxes and bundles. For weeks crowds sat in the station waiting for standing room on a train. During the rest of October and all through November more than two hundred and fifty thousand Manchus cleared out of the city and went into hiding.

In spite of these daily upheavals in politics, we carried on the dirty work of the company without interruption—selling, sampling, posting and distributing handbills.

With the late fall came the rainy season. Off and on, water poured down in torrents. The dusty streets, with the exception of those of cobblestone, were turned into thick sloughs of mud. But with the first days of winter the sky cleared and the air was dry, cold and invigorating. When riding in a ricksha I wore a Russian cap of unborn lambskin pulled down over my ears, and followed the Chinese habit of sticking my hands in a fox skin muff and wrapping my legs in a heavy sheepskin blanket. Shopkeepers and coolies changed from their thin denim to suits of heavily padded cotton, which they wore all through the winter without change. Over these they put on long coats, also padded with cotton, with sleeves reaching several inches below their hands.

But suddenly, on a brilliantly clear day, a slight breeze from the north stirred small clouds of dust. The Chinese scurried for shelter. Then without warning a freezing, breath-taking wind swept down from the Gobi desert, whistling through the streets and singing against the shops and houses, carrying with it minute particles of dust that beat against the face and stung. Within a few minutes the sky had become a dull brown and where the sun was, only a dim, yellowish circle could be seen. A cart or ricksha could hardly be made out a half block away. Coming in from the street, I found myself brown from head to foot. If I wet the end of a finger and rubbed it on my cheek it came off black. Dust gritted between my teeth and filled my nostrils. It seeped indoors through the tiniest cracks and laid a coating of brown on floors and furniture.

On Thanksgiving morning Johnny and I arose at daybreak, put on army shirts, sweaters and heavy overcoats, loaded our pockets with sandwiches, hardboiled eggs and thermos flasks, and started out on ponies for Nankow to see the Ming Tombs. The morning was clear and brisk and we trotted the ninety *li* steadily almost all the way, reaching the rest house at about two in the afternoon.

Across the flat plain of stubble, several miles away, the Ming Tombs were camouflaged against the sides of hills connected with the chain of mountains on which rested the time-battered remains of the Great Wall. A large stone *p'ai lou* straight ahead of the rest house guided us into an avenue lined with figures of heroic size carved in limestone. They faced the road in pairs, a space of fifty feet or more separating each pair; two warriors, two lions, two elephants, two unicorns, two camels, two *k'in lin* and two horses.

The avenue led straight ahead to the central tomb where lay the body of the last of the Ming emperors. Twelve older tombs stood aloof from each other, more than a mile apart. The center one was a large compound enclosed by a high brick wall. Inside the first courtyard facing the entrance stood a majestic sacrificial temple on a terrace reached by stone steps with marble balustrades. Close to, it was overwhelming, faded

red pillars twelve feet around and sixty feet in height. At the back of the courtyard stood the tomb itself, a huge brick structure with subterranean passages leading to the room where the emperor's coffin lay sealed below a marble monument. As we came out we stood for several minutes looking about. The massive structures of faded brick standing settled and silent on their mounds in the great open plain against the hills seemed as much a part of nature as their surroundings, and older than man. We found ourselves speaking in low voices as if afraid of disturbing this stupendous quiet.

Towards evening as we returned to the Nankow rest house, the sky darkened, a wind sprang up and a drizzle started. We were glad to get back to the little cast-iron stove in the rest room, and went to bed early. In the middle of the night I was awakened by the howling of the wind, the patter of sleet against the wall behind my bed. Icy blasts of air mixed with the sleet and snow were shooting through cracks between the thin wall boards. I lay half awake with the coarse grey blankets wrapped around my head, waiting for morning. While it was still dark, Johnny beat against the wall and called out that we had best leave as soon as we could; it looked as if a stiff blizzard had set in and if we waited too long the road would be covered, we might lose our way and become snowbound. Within half an hour we had filled our thermos flasks with hot coffee and saddled the ponies; as soon as the light was strong enough to see our way we set out for Peking.

During the first part of the night rain had poured down and turned the ground into a frozen sheet of ice. Afterwards the rain had turned to sleet. And now the wind was tearing through the air, shooting stinging flurries of snow across the ice. The ground was so slippery that we had to keep the ponies to a walk. Every ten minutes or so our feet became so cold in the stirrups that we had to jump off and dance up and down beside them. After four, or perhaps five, hours—neither of us was able to pull out a watch—we had lost all track of the road; the wind had blown the snow into drifts and banks until the cart ruts were entirely covered.

We had been riding and walking for about half the day when we came to a small mud hut village where we located a dreary, fireless inn. After much argument we persuaded the owner to sell us a couple of cold hard-boiled eggs—except for stale dough-balls, the only chow in the place—and two large pewter cups of wine. The wine almost knocked us out but it was warming. When we asked the way the innkeeper answered by waving his hand and repeating, "*wang hsi, wang hsi* (work west, work west)." Evidently for some time we had been wandering out of our way towards the southeast.

For the rest of the day we rode and walked at a snail's pace until we began to sight landmarks that Johnny recognized. But it was not until ten o'clock that night that we arrived half frozen at the mess. A warm fire and a hot bath had never felt so good.

* * * * *

About ten days before Christmas Johnny called me into his office and took out a letter from his private file in the safe, folded it so that only a few lines were visible and pointed . . . *although out less than a year, seems to have taken hold of his job and proved a good worker, and has, therefore, also been recommended to London for a monthly increase of Mex. $25* (about $11 American currency) *to take effect as of January, 1912.*

"Just came from Shanghai," said Johnny. "Our mess is the only one in North China paying its own expenses, and we certainly deserve something to help out."

I was thrown into a badly mixed-up state of emotions. I was jubilant over the idea of a raise after five months out. But Johnny's remark about the mess bill hit hard—I had taken it for granted that all the men in the field paid that part of their expenses except when travelling. Now, as I figured it, my total earnings were about Mex. $70 a month less than any homeside man in the company. And the sole reason I had gone out was the money. Here I was remitting all I could back to the States, working hard at the dirtiest sort of job, counting every cent I spent, suddenly to discover what I considered the rankest sort of discrimination. The news of the raise turned sour, and, in spite

of my love for Peking, my spirits sank and life seemed mighty futile.

"Why," I asked Johnny, "does Shanghai make us pay and not the men in other places?"

"Don't ask me." He shrugged his shoulders. "When the company started, every one had to pay his mess bill, no matter where he was located. When Shanghai made the change a couple of years ago, they left Peking on the old basis. They're always doing funny things in Shanghai that seem to have no reason. And there's a lot of hidden politics and favoritism. The best thing to do is to stay on the job, sit tight and keep a closed mouth. Maybe they think a man ought to pay to live in Peking."

Riding around the city I had plenty of time to mull over what Johnny had said. I recalled cynical and sarcastic remarks about the company's ways dropped by other employees passing through from time to time. However, I took Johnny's advice; then and there I made a hard and fast rule to sit tight and never to knock the company. But I became more reserved and silent. I spent more time with the Chinese, more evenings reading what books I could get my hands on and studying Chinese idioms picked up during the day. I ran across a translation of Lao Tze's philosophy and was deeply interested. I was growing closer to the Chinese.

However, I did not let this increasing tendency towards living to myself spoil my Christmas holidays. On Christmas eve morning I caught the train to Kalgan, the trading station for furs, hides and ponies, lying at the mouth of the pass to the Gobi desert.

As the train climbed upward it curved in and out, at times almost turning on its trail, giving fugitive glimpses of the crumbling, broken bricks of the great wall winding and twisting like a serpent over the broken contours of the mountains—so gigantic in length, yet so puny in height and bulk. Like all scenery of China that impressed me, the atmosphere of age and space struck most deeply.

A lengthy, raw-boned Norwegian, Ruckled, was our Kalgan number one, but was away on a nine months' exploration trip

with the aristocrat I had met on the ship from Shanghai. Schneider, his assistant, met us at the station.

He was an ex-cowboy and bronco buster from Arizona, and was a wonder at breaking in and training Mongolian ponies. He made his own saddles and shod his ponies. On long trips he wore the high-heeled cowboy boots. Small but as tough as a piece of salted and seasoned cowhide, his one ambition was to lick his daddy. When he was a kid and got into mischief, his dad would whale the lard out of him. On his sixteenth birthday he ran away. When he reached twenty-one, he returned, challenged the old man to a fight, and received a good beating. Until he went to China, two years before I met him (he was thirty-two then), he had gone back home once a year and fought his dad. So far the old man had licked him thoroughly and joyfully every time.

"A great old boy," Schneider spoke affectionately, "but I'll beat the old son-of-a-bitch before he kicks off. He's getting on towards sixty and ain't as spry as he was. Two years more and I'm going home to take another shot at him; it's the only thing in this hell-hole I gotta live for."

After breakfast next morning in the dingy, dimly lighted living-dining room, we straddled ponies and rode around through the city. Trains of camels passed us, making for the desert. The leader, the bell-camel on account of the brass bell which hung from his neck, tinkling at every step. The dusty streets—even the shops and people were brown with dust—were filled with ponies. A Mongol never walked unless forced to. Several times I saw a family of three or four sitting astride one pony.

All ponies in China came from Mongolia through Kalgan. That morning Schneider introduced me to a Swede named Larsen, pony trader, missionary, and one of the greatest characters in all of China and Mongolia. As a young man he had left his native Sweden as a missionary on his own, and started out to convert the Mongols to the Christian faith while making his living by selling Bibles. For a number of years he pegged away at his trade, but found it poor pickings. The Mongols were not enthusiastic and had no money. In the meantime, however, he

had learned their language and made friends. So he turned his talents to trading ponies.

During the Boxer uprising looting started in Kalgan and the frightened native bankers fled, leaving the vaults of the provincial bank stuffed with silver and the keys in the hands of Larsen. The sturdy Swede locked himself in the bank with a 30-30 repeating rifle and stood off the looters for three days and nights until relief came. He was offered a gift of ten thousand taels (Am. $5,000), but refused it. Since then he had been a kind of super-man, a god to both the Chinese and Mongols. When he travelled over the desert collecting ponies, he lived with the Mongols in their camps, ate their food and was accepted as one of themselves. He was the only foreigner safe alone with a Mongol dog, a big sullen half-wolf that seldom barked, but attacked without warning and fought silently. Almost every racing and polo pony in China passed through Larsen's hands.

Larsen was also a close friend of a little rotund Living God of Mongolia, who bought through him quantities of useless junk picked from old catalogues—sewing machines, bicycles, French mirrors with multi-colored borders, stoves, cheap jewelry, carriages and clocks—not to use, but simply to possess. Once while thumbing through an old American magazine, the little Living God ran into an illustration of a yacht. He was so fascinated that he insisted Larsen order him one to place in a small lake a few *li* from the palace. Larsen finally consented. The boat was shipped out in knock-down condition, railroaded to Kalgan and carried overland on camels. By the time it arrived the lake had gone dry!

Larsen was a man of many virtues. He worked out a crude hydraulic system, dug canals connecting all the wells in the vicinity and pumped them almost dry filling the lake. Then the yacht was unpacked and put together. The lake was too small! However, all the God desired was a pretty toy; he had the yacht erected on the lake as a tea house and was highly pleased.

At dawn on the second day Larsen and Schneider took us through the pass over the camel trail into the Gobi desert. The

sun, struggling from its sleep, slanted its beams across the rolls of mountains, bathing their tops, as we mounted slowly above them, with a riot of deep reds, purples and browns. The stillness was broken only by the slow shuffle of the camels, the tinkle of the leader-bell, and the occasional hoarse yell of a Mongol. When, after four hours of steady climbing, we stood on the plateau and looked ahead across the reaches of the Gobi, silence and space seemed to blend into one, extending into nowhere beyond the horizon.

X

WINTER OF 1912

a Cantonese reformer creates havoc—I have troublesome correspondence with Shanghai—for private and diplomatic reasons Yuan Shih K'ai's soldiers shoot up Peking and loot and burn the pawn shops—the first president of China is inaugurated while the city remains silent

ON MY RETURN FROM KALGAN I found Peking all agog over the news that a rabid reformer by the name of Sun Yat Sen, had returned from abroad and now headed the revolutionist party in Nanking.

Long before the outbreak of the revolution, this man Sun Yat Sen was famous among the Chinese, especially around Canton where he was born. Like so many southerners he was a sickly bundle of bones endowed with a tremendous amount of nervous energy. But unlike most, instead of burning out his nerves with opium, he spent them in a fiery, patriotic zeal and life-long battle for national reforms. As a young man he was a leader among the Chinese students, also from the South, who were sent to one of the large universities in Japan to finish their education, and who, patted on the back and urged on by their far-sighted little Nippon friends, founded the movement that eventually led to the overthrow of the dynasty.

After leaving Japan, the enthusiastic young Mr. Sun, overflowing with the revolutionary ideas injected into his system

by Japanese professors at the instigation of their government, toured the foreign countries spreading propaganda among, and collecting funds from, the Chinese ex-patriates (even today nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand of the Chinese in Europe and the Americas are from Canton or its vicinity). The news of his return threw a fresh panic into the Manchus and had the legations furiously sending cables and almost bursting with renewed importance. Some aspiring young attaches were going so far as to refuse cocktail invitations from highly influential dowagers.

The climax came on New Year's day when the Southern revolutionists declared Sun president and drafted a constitution. The country was now under the rule of two competing national governments, and except in a few isolated spots, the provincial and civic governments were carrying on as if nothing had happened.

But my worries lay outside politics. The first week in January Johnny received a formal notice of his raise in salary. My expected notice was missing. Two more mails arrived and still no notice. I sat down and wrote to the Old Man in Shanghai.

. . . I was informed back during the middle of December that I was recommended for a rise in salary beginning the first of the current year. However, as I understand that notices have been received by others in the field, I am writing to ask if, through an oversight, it was not sent out.

Yours truly,

A week later I received a reply.

. . . I regret to inform you that the London office has passed on our recommendations from Shanghai and that your rise was turned down. I am sorry to state that it is too late now to do anything about it.

I have just received a letter from Miss C., who is well and has asked to be remembered to you.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

I spent a full day pondering my answer. Then I carefully typed it out:

. . . I have considered carefully the matter of my increase failing to go through. Although I have been out for a good deal less than a year, it is my understanding that the Peking mess is the only one in north China in which the men have to pay the expenses out of their own pockets.

Therefore, I am taking the liberty of requesting that one of three things be done: that the rise in salary be reconsidered; that I be transferred to some other point; or that my monthly mess bill be paid.

Thank you so much for relaying the message from Miss C. Please send her my kindest regards and best wishes when next you write.

With kind regards,
Yours sincerely,

While I waited impatiently for the result from this effort, another incident occurred to upset further the Manchus and legations. One morning I was rickshaing alongside the south wall of the Forbidden City and turned into a large open square where a house with a second floor balcony—the only one of its kind on the Tartar side of the city—faced the sharp curve of the southeast road. Traffic was cleared. Chinese soldiers stood on guard at the cross streets. Others were throwing sand on a large dark, wet spot in the center of the square. Knots of gesticulating Chinese stood huddled against the shops at one side.

We stopped. Mr. Sung asked one of the soldiers, what was the trouble? The soldier was almost ready to burst with pent up speech. He leaned his rifle against the front of a shop and accompanied his explanation with vivid, theatrical gestures and poses.

Half an hour earlier, Yuan Shih K'ai was returning from an audience in the Forbidden City. All the way from the gate of the City to his compound the streets were cleared, and soldiers stood guard along the sides (the soldier stood at attention). Three carriages, surrounded by outriders, came rolling down the road, ponies going lickety-split—full gallop (the soldier waved his arms back and forth). When the carriages reached the point where we were (the soldier leaned forward and pointed a quivering finger at the dark, damp spot in the middle of the road), a man suddenly appeared on the balcony of the house across the way (the soldier raised his right arm) and threw a bomb (the soldier shot his fist forward). Then came a big explosion (the soldier waved both arms wildly in the air and drew in a long breath to let out the last word)—*bang!*

A small boy, listening with wide open mouth, gulped and repeated, "bang!" We laughed—all except the soldier, who stood as tense as a pointing setter, his eyes almost popping out of his head in a concentrated glare at Mr. Sung. He waited for his *bang* to take full effect, then proceeded with his story.

But (he placed his finger against Mr. Sung's chest) he missed the carriage altogether (he paused for this to sink in, then shook his head). Ai-ya! the bomb killed a pony and wounded an outrider—ai-ya—a captain! Now they were sprinkling sand over the spilt blood. Ai-ya!

We thanked the soldier profusely and moved along.

Now, according to the rules and regulations of *Feng Shui* (as they stood at that time), a building openly and blatantly two-storied was exceedingly bad joss. That was why, a number of Chinese said, the bomb missed; the thrower was a fool to enter such a house, and in addition, of all places to stand on the second floor balcony. In legation quarters the story went around that a Southern rebel had thrown the bomb. But among the tea houses and restaurants it was whispered that Yuan Shih K'ai had arranged the whole show to scare the Manchus off the throne so that he could play his politics by himself, without being bothered by a lot of weak, depraved nobility whom he had hated since the death of his mistress, the old demon Empress Dowager of the Boxer days. Although *Feng Shui* was a power in the land and the legations occasionally guessed correctly, the last opinion seemed to be nearer the truth.

The bomb-thrower was officially reported to have been cap-

tured and beheaded, but no one ever knew who he was or when he was put to death. It was a simple matter to hire a man, by paying him T10,000 and seeing him safely into Manchuria, in order to complete a political gesture. And that is what the Chinese in the market places said was done.

A few days after the explosion (I recall the two together), I received another letter from Shanghai. It read:

I have been in touch with London and am pleased to state that they have reconsidered your rise. An increase of Mex. $12.50 (American $5.50) will be added to your present salary beginning with the month of February.

With kind regards,
Yours sincerely,

I read it through several times, and then sat and stared at it. I was burning up inside. My imagination was backfiring in a dozen different directions at once. A measly Mex. $12.50! And the lowest the company had ever been known to give was twenty-five. What the hell! The mess bill ran to sixty-five or seventy a month. Running around all day in dust and dirt and filth, doing work that called for the brain of a twelve-year-old child —what the hell! Even with the raise, I was still making less than any other man in North China engaged at home. Did I have to pay a premium to live in the damned old decrepit capital?

I was up in the air. I passed the letter over to Johnny. He read it through, shook his head and handed it back.

"Well—it's too damned bad. But I'd forget it."

"But look at the mess bill."

"I know. I'd let it go. It'll all wash out in the end."

Perhaps he was right, but I chose a time when he was out of the office and took one more flyer.

. . . I have thought over carefully your letter of——, informing me that my salary has been increased Mex. $12.50 beginning with the month of February, 1912.

I have come to the conclusion that I cannot accept an increase for this amount. As I see it, I am either worth the minimum increase of Mex. $25 or not worth any recommendation at all. Furthermore, with the mess bill to meet and other necessities to take care of, it is extremely difficult to make ends meet. I am, therefore, respectfully asking that you do one of three things:

Change my increase to Mex. $25;
Transfer me to some point in the interior;
Accept my resignation.

Please remember me to Miss C. when you write her again.

With kind regards,
Yours truly,

Before I had time to get a reply Peking received its biggest jolt since the days of the Boxer rebellion in 1900.

The revolutionists in Nanking (they had by now adopted the name of *kuo-ming-tang*, or people's party), were stuck. They were broke; whereas Yuan Shih K'ai still had funds, a trained army and the whole of the North under his control. Holding all the cards, he stood pat and waited. At wits' end, the Nanking crowd offered him the presidency, but with the little joker added that they thought it only proper that he proceed to Nanking to be inaugurated. Naturally Yuan, a Manchu, did not like the idea of going down South to mix with strange Chinese, but agreed. The rejoicing Southerners set a date and sent up two delegates to act as escorts.

On the night of January 29th (1912), three or four days after the two delegates from Nanking arrived, while Yuan was entertaining them at a banquet, Johnny, the burly Britisher and I were lingering over coffee when we were startled by a thunderous roar, slightly muffled by the felt padding around the edges of the door and windows; but the room shook from the shock. A sudden silence followed—a hesitating pause—then, as abruptly as before the roar burst loose again—coming back this time to settle down into a steady eruption of sharp, shattering explosions.

At the first violent blast we jumped from our seats, but the room was warm and comfortable and we went back to our coffee. Some nearby family, Johnny observed, shooting off fire crackers in celebration of a marriage.

But a minute or two later the boy charged in through the door, breathless and white in the face.

"Master, come quick," he stammered, "soldiers make much trouble—shoot guns—go crazy—kill all people."

We rushed outside. "The boy's right," said the burly Britisher. "Fire crackers don't make that crisp, sharp crack. Wait! Listen!"

We stood quiet. In the still night air the sounds were clear and close. Yes, it was rifle fire. No doubt of that. We could catch the metallic crash of exploding cartridges—the swish of bullets as they whistled through the air—and the pin-n-n-ng of spent missiles ricocheting from walls and whirring impotently into space.

"Say," exclaimed Johnny, "listen—that shooting is coming from over there at Yuan Shih K'ai's headquarters."

And so it was. The rifle fire was all centered around a large compound which Yuan had turned into barracks when martial law was established. It was hidden away in the *hutungs* less than five hundred yards from our mess. More than two thousand soldiers were quartered there.

But what was the shooting about? At whom were they firing? And why? Had they broken out in a rebellion? Or run wild on a looting party? Or what?

We asked ourselves these questions but had no answer. Only on one point were we agreed: when a Chinese mob was out on a rampage, a foreigner's life was in danger as long as he was within sight or reach.

Our mess was one of the best known in that section of the city. Should they start to attack foreigners we would probably be the first they would go after.

We looked over our defenses. The thick wooden gate was well barred with a heavy bolt in iron slots; the top of the ten-foot wall was protected by broken glass and strands of barbed wire; and our weapons consisted of a sawed-off 12 gauge shotgun, a box of BB shells, a forty-five Colt revolver attached to a belt holding several rounds of ammunition and a large razor-edged Chinese butcher's knife. If the soldiers tried to force the gate, we figured, we could, at least, account for a few as they broke through and a few more as they entered. Our Chinese staff was useless. All five were crowded behind the shut door of the narrow toilet between the center wall and kitchen.

As we stood there in the cold shivering and arguing, huge tongues of flame shot up from a distance of about three blocks away. Within a few minutes the trees around stood out against the black sky in brilliant relief, and inside the mess it was as light as day.

"I know what it is now," Johnny said in a relieved voice. "They're out looting. I heard a rumor the other day that Yuan is about three weeks behind in handing out their pay. That blaze comes from the big pawnshop around the second corner."

By now the firing had become scattered. We could hear shots from all directions and most of the bullets seemed to be flying high, evidently done deliberately. From time to time, in different parts of the city, we could see thin, shapeless clouds of red curling towards the sky—now brilliant, now dull, but always mounting higher, always growing in size. Every minute the rifle shots were becoming more widely scattered, and the bullets seemed to be flying in all directions. The firing nearby was dying down to spasmodic reports. The *hutung* in front was deathly quiet.

After two hours divided between standing behind the gate and over the dining room stove, we grew restless, opened the gate and poked our heads out to take a look around.

The narrow street was empty except for a Frenchman who lived in the second compound above. He stood leaning nonchalantly against his wall with hands in pockets. We strolled up and asked if he could tell us what was going on. With much difficulty, he explained in rotten English that an American marine in a scrap with two Manchu soldiers had killed one; in retaliation Yuan's whole regiment was attacking the American

legation. We were not sure what to believe. Our French neighbor's reply sounded plausible. Just a week before a rumpus had been raised and notes exchanged when a marine had got into a quarrel with three Chinese soldiers, grabbed the bayonet of one and stabbed him with it. We concluded that it was best not to take chances. We barred ourselves in the mess again.

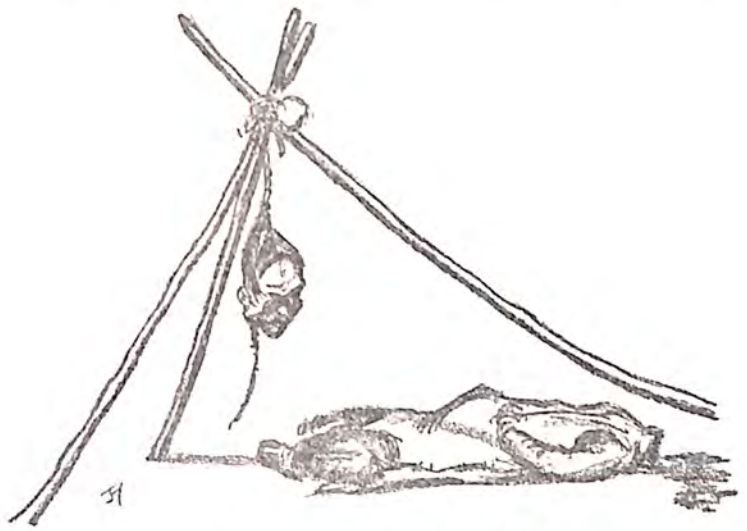
At about two o'clock we heard the rumbling of a truck and the sound of voices. For the second time we went out. The British legation was sending a guard to pick up all their nationals living back in the *hutungs*. The driver yelled to us that Yuan's soldiers were on a looting spree and that the American legation would soon be sending a truck around for us. Later a German truck passed, then a French. But no American truck ever appeared. The American Legation was the only one that did not pick up its nationals. No explanation was ever offered. We hung around until daybreak waiting, then routed the staff out of the toilet and had the boy make coffee and prepare breakfast.

I have never yet been able to decide how much that Frenchman was pulling our legs. He was a complete stranger and such a serious little man.

After a quick breakfast, Johnny and I packed our cameras (I had an Eastman vest pocket) and started out. Every door we passed was tightly closed. Save for the sounds of scattered shots there was a dead silence. Not until we rounded the corner into the last *hutung* opening into Hatamen did we see the first signs of the outbreak. Here lay a body almost absurd in its relaxed sprawl; there crouched a huddled, moaning heap, still clutching tightly a bundle snatched from some pawnshop; shadowy figures scurried up *hutungs*, staggering under their loads of loot; and we passed one well dressed man clutching a blood soaked arm and sobbing with strangled breaths as he staggered by and fell just before two soldiers, who were rushing after, reached him and drove their bayonets into his body.

It was the first cold brutality I had ever seen. I felt sick, but was determined to keep on, and hoped my face had not turned white, and that Johnny had not noticed if it had.

Cameras open, we entered Hatamen. The windows and doors of every shop in sight were boarded up. In the background spirals of smoke from burning pawnshops lazily drifted up above the roof tops and were lost in the blue of the sky. At intervals I could hear a fury of shots and then quiet. Down the center of the street came a closed yellow brougham trimmed with black, drawn by two ponies at a slow walk. Striding behind, two by two, marched ten tall, slender soldiers, wearing black turbans,



An aftermath of looting

long black sashes knotted about the waists of their dark blue padded coats and loose, baggy trousers belted in at the ankles. They were followed by a hard-faced fellow with a turban and sash of red, balancing on his left shoulder a two-handed scimitar. Matching the cold bleakness of dawn, they were a grim, determined procession—a procession of death.

Out from one of the *hutungs* trotted a coolie, his arms laden with stolen goods. An old man, with pure white hair and beard, peering through the window of the brougham, spied him. He thumped on the window-pane. Four men broke from the squad and rushed after the looter. They caught him, roughly stripped him to the waist, tied his hands behind his back and pushed

him onto his knees. The red-turbaned beheader stepped forward with poised sword. One of the black turbans grasped the soldier's hair and pulled until the neck was taut. The sword whistled through the air. . . .

Within a few seconds a tripod was erected with three long bamboo sticks; a head dangled in the air; and the procession of death was on its way. By ten o'clock a tripod stood in almost every large square of the Tartar City.

I had seen the old gentleman in the yellow brougham and his men several times before. He was the general at the head of the Black Turban troops located in Tungchow. On the first of each month, going down to check godown stocks, I passed near the parade ground and occasionally watched the soldiers at manoeuvres. They had no rifles, only long, scimitar-like swords, and their drills had all the rhythm and acrobatic agility of a highly trained ballet.

The old general was past eighty years of age and like his father and his father's father before him, had served all his life under the dynasty. In the mad rush of events the new government had failed to take count of him and his handful of old-fashioned troops. With the throne gone, he was a man without a country. But when the distant thunder of guns and the far-off red lights of fires floated across the walls of his compound he knew that he had a duty to perform and set out to do it. He had done it well.

When we had finished our films Johnny and I rushed them to the photographer, then hurried to the office. After going into a huddle with the interpreters, we visited the American marine headquarters and walked out with Colt forty-fives hanging from army belts buckled around our waists on the outside of our overcoats.

With an interpreter in a ricksha and two coolies pushing a handcart loaded with open cases filled with sealed cigarette cartons, I took a section of the city and visited the shops, delivering from door to door. The shop doors were closed and barred, but business was carried on through small openings in the center having sliding panels. The interpreter and I knocked on the door

of each shop and yelled until the shopkeeper was sure of our identity. Then we slid his cigarettes through the panel, counted and rang the money, threw it into a big canvas bag and moved on to the next shop. For almost the whole of a week we were compelled to stick to this direct method of selling to the retailer. A slow, tedious job—the largest purchase amounting to only two or three dollars—but it kept our sales up, and the big forty-five strapped around my waist gave me a feeling of importance.

Although few Chinese were out on the streets, the shops were all doing a good business. The men of the households were afraid to venture forth and left the shopping to the children and the older women and very young girls, who crept out and then disappeared as soon as they had filled their little baskets with the day's necessities.

On the afternoon of the first day after the looting Johnny and I received a formal notice from the American legation allotting us a bedroom on the floor above a French clothing store at the end of Legation Street. Ten o'clock was curfew. From five to ten the Wagons-Lits was overflowing and did a thriving business across the bar. But Johnny and I went to bed early. The Frenchman who ordinarily lived in the quarters assigned to us had a keen eye for comfort and a sensitive understanding of the tastes of women. The walls were pink, the curtains lavender, and the silk bedspread and chair coverings were lavender and pink. White bearskins were scattered over the polished floor. Only a woman, or a Frenchman could have conceived the soft, warm lighting and the bathroom decorations. We examined one by one every article in the flat, smelled all the delicate perfumes and lay a long time in bed talking, enjoying the unaccustomed luxury of the soft mattresses.

Although at night small fires continued to flare up here and there, and spasmodic shooting broke loose at intervals, after the beheadings of the first morning the real danger was over. The old general had done a thorough job. When Peking finally came to life it was in a most peaceful way. Most of the damage had been done to pawnshops. These jail-like, dignified strongholds

of wealth were always hated by the lower and middle classes for their enormous rates of interest.

The day after the beheading, Johnny and I received our prints from the photographer, a stout, long-haired Englishman, a thorough aesthete who turned out unusually fine work. But unfortunately, he had a flair for ingenious money-making schemes which were continually landing him in trouble or bankruptcy. One of my snapshots, a head dangling from a tripod, came out a splendid design of highlights and shadows. I placed an order at once for six enlargements to be made and matted. A few days after I had received them, friends and acquaintances were showing me their wonderful framed photographs of the beheadings they had bought. All were duplicates of the enlargements from my snapshot. The aesthetic photographer kept the tourist trade supplied for two years.

* * * * *

On a sunshiny afternoon, a week later, windows along Legation Street were crowded with foreigners. I stood at one in a bedroom on the fourth floor of the Wagons-Lits. The march beat of drums could be heard wafted on the air from the wide boulevard fronting Telegraph Lane. The sound grew nearer. It was coming up Hatamen. Now it was on Legation Street. Then the fife and drum corps of the British Legation guards came into view. Behind rode the officers on horseback, followed by the soldiers marching eight abreast, the light artillery bringing up the rear. Then, one after the other, appeared the American Marines, the French guard, German, Italian, Japanese, ending with the Russian Cossacks looking like rough-hewn statues sitting astride their shaggy prancing ponies. One solid formation, in full dress parade, with complete fighting equipment—a stirring sight—breath-taking—but underneath the pageantry of color one could not help but see, and feel, the grim threat of smoothly operating machines, efficient, relentless.

The foreign nations were telling Yuan Shih K'ai in his own language that he should be careful thereafter not to carry his political tricks too far. But Yuan was satisfied. He had played

his last card and won.* The two delegates from Nanking could see for themselves how impossible it was for him to leave when his soldiers were acting in such an unruly manner. The delegates were only too glad to take him at his word and return with his note of polite regrets. If the inauguration were to take place it had to be in Peking.

The Nanking revolutionists accepted the inevitable. On February 9th, 1912, Yuan Shih K'ai was formally inaugurated as the first president of the republic of China. Sun Yat Sen, the Cantonese reformer, came up from Nanking to take part.

Late in the afternoon of the final day of the ceremonies, I stood on the Tartar wall over Ch'ien Men Gate where I could look down the avenue leading to the main entrance of the Forbidden City—an entrance never before opened except when a new emperor had ascended the throne. The two sides of the avenue were lined with soldiers. At intervals of about ten feet, tall flagpoles carried banners inscribed with characters hailing the new republic. As far as I could see was one unbroken mass of Chinese standing on each side of the avenue.

The great gates creaked slowly open: a parade of cavalry at funeral march, a long chain of marching soldiers, then an open carriage in which sat two men. The one on the right, a short, stout man of hard but intelligent features, with bushy moustache and in a general's full dress uniform, the newly elected president, Yuan Shih K'ai.

The man on the left, dressed in foreign formal afternoon attire, had a square, sallow face with high protruding cheek bones, over which the skin was drawn taut, and a long black moustache curled up at the ends, his dark eyes staring straight ahead, unseeing. This sad looking Chinese with the hollow cheeks and fixed stare was Sun Yat Sen, the newly appointed vice-president.

During the ten minutes it took for the carriage to pass through the crowds, from the entrance of the Forbidden City to Ch'ien

* It was significant that only civilians were caught looting. A whole week before the looting started the rumor spread abroad that Yuan Shih K'ai owed his troops several months back pay; but Chinese merchants claimed this was impossible on account of the way the soldiers were spending so freely. They even whispered that Yuan had appointed a certain captain to put out the propaganda and wondered why.

Men Gate, not a voice was lifted, not a sound was heard. The great mass of onlookers stood completely silent and still. I could hear the hooves of the ponies striking against the stones. When the carriage disappeared through the gate, the crowd faded away as silently as it had stood. There was no joy in Peking that day; the last of the dynasties was being buried.

* * * * *

A few days later I received a formal letter from the Shanghai accounting department informing me that my salary had been increased an additional Mex. $12.50 monthly as of March 1st. I was both pleased and upset. Why had they not started the raise as of the first of January—what was Mex. $25, about ten American dollars, to a company dealing monthly in millions? And the mess bill still rankled. All during the trouble our sales had been sky-high; in spite of closed shops we had kept the market supplied; and with the Manchus hiding at home worrying themselves to death and smoking night and day, we had broken all records. A $65 mess bill looked mighty measly beside the profits on fifty million cigarettes.

When Garrod, also a North Carolinian, and head of the Division to which Frost had been transferred, happened to visit Peking for a few days I had a long talk with him about my troubles. He promised to see if he could arrange to have me transferred to his Division.

XI

WINTER OF 1912 (*Continued*)

concerning down-and-out Manchus and sing-song etiquette—Chinese New Year—concession hunters and other swindlers—the sextuple loan—squeeze system—a ten days' trip among village towns—the art of resisting curio salesmen—transferred to the interior at last

ANYONE WHO VISITED PEKING for the first time a few days after the inauguration of the president would have been impressed most by the spirit of placid calm in the daily life of the natives, as if nothing had ever interrupted the even tenor of their ways. To a foreigner who had lived through the rapid-fire of upheavals of the past few months the greatest changes showed themselves in the disappearance of the richly clothed Manchu society and in the Legation quarter where the very air was formerly vibrating with excitement. Internally, the system of government and the life of the mass of shopkeepers had been affected only by the drop in trade.

The poor Manchu was a lost soul. Under the dynasty he had received a yearly allowance equivalent in value to so many piculs (133⅓ lbs.) of rice. The amount varied according to the rank. Consequently, those who had not held active official jobs had never worked, and looked down upon those who did. What became of them (those who had not fled) after their rice allow-

ance was taken away remains a mystery, as much so as the life of a ricksha coolie when after a few years between the shafts his legs go back on him.

Many of the Manchu families had, of course, young daughters to serve as a substitute for the rice allowance. But certainly they accounted for only a small percentage.

As a matter of fact, in China the oldest profession had developed through the centuries to a point of efficiency that would well be worth the study of the modern American go-getting business man. In Peking, the young ladies were graded by a caste system. Roughly, they could be divided into four classes. In each one an old *mama,* thoroughly experienced in the ways of the world, kept and trained a string of girls much in the way race horses are handled. The girls might be her daughters or near relatives, or they might be purchased from some family on its uppers, but from babyhood they were raised in the sing-song houses where the old *mamas* groomed them and taught them all the tricks of the trade.

In the number one houses the strictest formalities were observed. All the girls were young, most of them, by Chinese measurements, pretty. From ten or eleven in the morning they spent two hours or more at singing practice. Afterwards came the hairdressers, the manicurists and the make-up specialists. The old *mamas* stood by watching like hawks, giving lessons in elocution and manners and teaching the gentle art of repartee. In the late afternoon the young fillies took naps until the old *mamas* roused them to dress for the night.

The first part of the evening was spent filling engagements at first-class restaurants. The Chinese men never received their friends in their homes. They gave each other dinner parties, and none was complete without the sing-song girls. A girl sat behind each guest and acted as companion and entertainer. The host arranged for them to come and go in groups at set intervals, often having three or four different groups in an evening. A popular girl might visit eight or ten dinner parties.

The second half of the evening was spent in the sing-song houses receiving. When a party of young bucks arrived they

were ushered into a room. Tea and melon seeds were placed before them. If they were newcomers the girls of the house who were free paraded before the door and the guests made their choice. If a young buck saw a filly he liked and had never known, he could never take her offhand. Certain rules of etiquette were to be observed. He invited his friends to a game of *ma chiang.* The young filly either watched or played, whichever she did she won. Should she not play, when the game was finished the winnings were left on the table. Should she play, the men always lost. These parties continued for a week or ten days. Perhaps a dinner or two was thrown in for good measure. Now and then the young buck left behind a gift of some kind, a piece of jade or a gold bracelet. Finally the young filly decided that the young buck was not such a bad fellow after all, and invited him to remain for a little personal chat. Nothing sordid. No money passed hands, only an occasional gift, and for a month, perhaps several, she was his particular friend.

When a number one girl reached the *passé* stage, either she had saved enough money to set up business as a *mama,* or she drifted into a number two house. The number two houses also contained girls who were raised in them. In these places the formalities were not so strict. The men took their choice and paid their money. The clientele was composed of the great bourgeoisie.

The number three was one step lower in the scale. Clerks and the small shopkeepers supported them.

The lowest houses in the scale, the number four, were mere hovels made of earth and straw, and the women were hags. At these places ricksha coolies recklessly threw away fifteen or twenty hard earned coppers (from $\frac{3}{10}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ of an American cent) in an evening; even the itinerant barber could afford them.

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Towards the end of February our sales again mounted sky high. Chinese New Year, set by the lunar calendar, was coming. The food shops also were doing a thriving business, many of them staying open all night, turning out special succulent dishes,

sweetmeats and gift boxes to last over the holidays. Little old dried up women were busily stumping through the streets smelling out bargains and buying quantities of meats and vegetables. Counters were gay with red and gold wrappings. Rickshas and carts crowded the fronts of the silk shops. The whole city was in a turmoil of bustle and rush. Even the fat dignified *chang kuei ti* (number one managers) of the larger shops had no time to wheeze away at their long stemmed pipes.

By the last day of the old year all debts were settled and on New Year's day every shop and house in the city was closed fast. Long scrolls of red paper bearing black characters were pasted on doors and pillars. For a week the streets were dead. The only noise came from the muffled sounds of families dining behind closed doors. For a week Peking did nothing but stuff with food and sleep, and two weeks had passed before the city gained back sufficient energy to come to life again.

After New Year the foreign governments were busily sniffing the air for concessions. Each wanted to grab off a piece of cake before the others got there. The new government badly needed money and all the foreign countries, with the exception of the United States, were begging for the opportunity to do some swapping. All they wanted in return for loans were ninety-nine year leases on mines, the control of a railway line or a few special trading rights. The Wagons-Lits was teeming with hard looking faces talking in hoarse whispers about such things as "spheres of influence", "adviserships", "backing back home", "new territory" and "concessions".

The only thing that saved China from being pulled to pieces was the fear and jealousy the foreign nations had for each other. If Japan received this, then England must have that, and Germany and France, of course, had to be considered. To parcel out the whole country would have been going too far. The one way out was to get together and come to terms. Thus the four European powers, Japan and the United States finally formed the sextuple loan group, and committees from each country settled down in Peking to work out the details.

The American committee, known as the Morgan group, had

on its staff a number of young men who helped considerably to liven up the starched formalities among the Americans in the legation quarters. Every Saturday night they had a table of poker at which Johnny sat in. I never played; the game was too stiff. The ante was Mex. $10 with Mex. $20 limit. Almost every Sunday morning Johnny pulled a fat roll of bills out of his pocket and counted off his winnings of the night before, a sum running anywhere from thirty or forty to several hundred dollars. Johnny, of course, never drank.

The Morgan group hung around all summer, but too much log rolling among the other foreign nations prevented any progress. Finally, in disgust, the American government called off the agreement and left the other five nations to fight it out among themselves and grab what they could without breaking up all the treaties.

During this period squeeze or graft in the Chinese government circles increased to greater proportions than ever before. With the Manchus out unity was lost. Conditions were much the same as they are in Washington when a new party throws out the old and is determined to knock down as much as it can during the four years at its disposal. In a roundabout way the governors of provinces bought their jobs, paying part down and balance in "promissory notes" based on taxes, and wherever possible they stuck relatives and friends in the minor positions.

All foreign goods that entered Peking paid an octroi. Over a year this tax averaged something like two million dollars Mex. The head official of this important bureau was allowed to hold office for a term of two years. One night Roy Anderson and another foreigner sat in a poker game with three Chinese in a room of the Wagons-Lits and watched one of them lose two hundred thousand Mex. to the other two. The next day the loser was officially announced as head of the Peking octroi.

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In May I took a ten day trip covering the small towns lying on the outskirts of the city. My crew consisted of an interpreter, a cook-boy, and a number one and number two coolie. I travelled

by pony and the rest followed in Peking carts. All of the towns were alike, small market villages supported by the surrounding farmers. The average population was about 1,000, of which at least two thirds were children and babies. The houses were merely huts made of mud and straw packed together inside a wall of the same material. The shops lined a narrow main street stretching between the wall gates at the two ends.

Our routine was simple. When we entered a town we made for the inn, a mud wall compound with one big courtyard, rooms around the sides and an open kitchen at the gate. The boy chose the best room he could find, swept it out, unpacked my things, set up the campcot and brought in a bowl of hot water for us to clean up. As soon as the coolies had made up their hot paste we set out and, starting with the inn, plastered posters all over the town. Then we loaded up with cartons and handbills and started our sampling campaign. I walked in front and handed out the sample packets, followed by the interpreter distributing handbills and the coolies carrying our supplies in the rear. After a rest the interpreter and I called on all the cigarette shops. A shopkeeper would usher us into one of the little rooms; we sipped tea and after discussing the weather and the rotten exchange, we expressed our amazement at his lack of stock, sold him a few cartons and left. Later the dealers called at the inn with their bags of coppers and took up the stocks we had sold them. Thus was the company's business being built up in every village, town and city throughout the country.

If I had not become used to being stared at in Peking, the trip would have been most disturbing. Immediately we arrived at the gate of a town crowds of coolies and children commenced to accumulate. When I went back to my room to wash up, the courtyard was almost empty. A few minutes later, when I again went outside, the place was packed with Chinese of all ages standing in a huddle, perfectly still, eyes and mouths wide open, no expression on their faces, just staring. They followed us through the streets, stood before the shops until we came out, and were crowded at the gate staring with the same vacant looks when we pulled out of town.

Few of the inhabitants of these village towns could read. When the first posters were put on a wall, a number of old cronies squatted down opposite and squinted at the characters. A crowd drew around. One of the squatters filled his pipe, took two long puffs and knocked out the ash. His movements were slow; he was deliberating. The others patiently waited. Finally, with a triumphant twist of his head, he ejaculated the first character. After an interval of hard thinking he called out the second. Then he spoke the two together. His friends and the crowd he had drawn shook their heads in awe and agreement, repeating the characters to each other. Slowly and painstakingly, the full meaning of the poster was worked out and passed along by word of mouth to every one in town. The handbills did their job in the same thorough, roundabout way.

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On Friday evenings Johnny and I often attended the weekly Ch'ien Men night market. At dusk hawkers appeared from the lord knows where, and from bundles brought on their backs laid out their wares on the edge of the sidewalks on both sides of Ch'ien Men Street. Flickering tallow candles in lanterns of thin oiled paper stretched over bamboo frames made dancing spots of yellow.

To the variety of articles sold there was no end: broken pieces of old bronzes, pewter pots and cups, spectacle frames without glass, brass bowls and candlesticks, bone and ivory chopsticks, glazed tiles from some temple, ear cleaners and back scratchers, worthless stones and imitation jade, faded bits of tapestry, cheap second-hand pocket knives, miscellaneous small hardware badly rusted, thick German silver watches, dingy odds and ends of mended porcelains, snuff bottles, buddhas and *kuan yin* (goddess of mercy) in every kind of plastic material, towels, colored glassware, hanging fancy candle lamps and on into infinity.

Bargaining was good sport, however, and also good training in Chinese. I imitated the native fashion of picking up casually a piece of bronze or porcelain, turning it over in my hands, then

laying it down with a discouraged air and turning away. The hawker would suddenly come to life.

"How much you give?"

"No good. Don't want it."

"No good! Very fine piece. Very old."

The hawker would pick it up and caress it lovingly. When an object was battered or dingy, the statement that it was *hen lao ti* (very old) was the final and clinching argument. He would wait for it to sink in, then become confidential.

"I sell you very cheap. Sure. Two dollars. Very cheap. Look —very old!"

I would shake my head sadly. "*Chia ti* (imitation)."

Chia ti was a most useful word. To get out of buying anything the only simple and easy way was always to claim that it was *chia ti* and stick to it.

The hawker would jump with surprise and indignation. He would turn the object upside down and show the marking on the bottom.

"*Chia ti?* Look! Ming. True piece. Look. See maker's name. No *chia ti!* But I give you very cheap— Can have one dollar."

I would take it up and look at the marking as if I were studying every detail. Finally, I would put it carefully back, shake my head again and walk slowly away.

"Hey! Very cheap for you. Eighty cents you give—no more."

By the time the last word was uttered I would be almost out of hearing.

At that time cloisonné work was a great fad. Many shops were scattered about in the *hutungs* near Hatamen, and clerks peddled stocks among the foreign compounds. Bargaining with them I picked up another good word, *mao ping*, meaning a flaw. A close examination of any article as highly detailed as cloisonné will soon disclose a *mao ping;* and if the price seemed too high or one did not feel like buying, the best way out was to hunt down a *mao ping* or two and become horrified. A *mao ping* was also useful when dickering over supposed-to-be old curios of almost any kind.

When the winter was spent and the evenings were becoming

warm enough to lounge under a tree with my friend the Sarge and listen to his tales over a bottle of beer, news came that I was to be transferred down the railway line to take the place of Frost, coiner of *bewaunked.*

Occasionally, Johnny and I had heard indirectly that Frost was drinking heavily, and once I received a short, sarcastic chit from him, saying what a wonderful place he was in, with a compound to himself, nobody to bother him and nothing to do but sit and think all day, shut off even from the harking and spitting Chinese—adding that he had already sent in his resignation to Shanghai and told them what he thought—and pretty soon he would be on his way back to God's country, hurrah!

Frost could not wait for me to relieve him. The day after I received my notice of transfer he turned up in Peking on his way to Shanghai. He was a wreck, thin and white, and mumbled continually and incoherently about *bewaunked,* getting away from staring eyes and "back to God's country". He begged me confidentially several times to join him and get out before I became used to the life and it got me.

XII

JUNE–SEPTEMBER: 1912

getting through the day doing nothing but hold a key—cut by missionaries—fighting to get out—houseboating on canals—grasshoppers for chow—back to God's country

THREE DAYS AFTER FROST passed through Peking I caught the early morning train to Paotingfu, six hours to the south. The company's dealer, a stout genial soul standing six feet two, and a fat little retiring interpreter met me at the station and escorted me to the mess, inside the city wall a half mile away. The only signs of life along the dreary main street of rickety shops and sleepy shopkeepers came from the squeaks of wheelbarrows bumping over the cobblestones mixed with the grunts and curses of the sweating coolies.

When we entered the mess, a small brick paved courtyard with a line of small rooms running around two sides and the front of a godown facing the third, I sniffed the stale air and looked about.

"Where is the cook-boy?"

The little interpreter was apologetic. "Mr. Frost have take when he go Peking. But I think have leave plenty food."

I followed him into the dark little hole used for the kitchen. The stove was a small dobe oven. On the *k'ang* at one side were

fifteen or twenty cans. I glanced over the labels: tomatoes, beans, evaporated milk.

I stepped out into the light and gazed into the distance. I was thinking.

The dealer, Mr. Tsui, came over and patted my arm.

"Never mind," he said in Chinese, "I can fix all right. I send hot dishes from Chinese restaurant until you have boy. Paotingfu have very fine restaurant." He laughed jovially. "Few days you must be Chinese man—eat rice. Very good. Just like Chinese."

I thanked him and we walked back to the *shang fang*. It was topsy-turvy. The cook-boy had left dirty dishes on the table and dust had gathered over the furniture and the worn-out bamboo mat on the dirt floor.

While I was taking this in, Mr. Tsui interrupted. I looked up. He held an empty cognac bottle in his hand.

"No good!" he exclaimed in English, the only two words he knew, then fell back into Chinese. "Mr. Frost drink very much. Very bad for him."

He pointed. Inside the small side room, near the head of the campcot, stood a dozen or more empty quart bottles like the one Mr. Tsui held in his hand.

I started outside. Mr. Tsui grabbed my arm and led me to the table, from which he picked up a letter. He handed it to me with an air of triumph.

"For you!" He patted himself on the chest. "I take very good care. It came today. I hold for you. You read now—I have my coolies make everything clean."

I went outside and tore open the letter. It was from Garrod, the number one at Chentow. I looked around the yard, at the door of the godown, then examined the envelope and sheet of paper. I read it again. Then a third time.

"No wonder," I muttered, "Frost went cuckoo."

Mr. Tsui called and beckoned. I followed him to the door of the godown. From one of his capacious jacket pockets he drew two keys, each tied by a string to a strip of wood on which Chinese characters were marked, and handed one to me. The other

he fitted into the lock, gave it a turn and pulled it out. He motioned. I inserted mine and twisted it. The two coolies who had accompanied Mr. Tsui pushed back the heavy doors. Inside, cases of cigarettes, 50 mille each, were piled to the roof. We entered, counted the number of each brand and checked it against the inventory sheet carried by Mr. Tsui. We came out and the coolies locked the door.

Mr. Tsui pointed to the key and letter in my hand, held up his key, stuck up his thumb and said, "Good."

After every one had gone, I went back into the *shang fang*, sat down in the creaking wicker chair and read for the fourth time the letter from Garrod.

. . . you will keep one key to the godown and Mr. Tsui the other. Your key is not to leave your hands except to open and close the godown doors. The stocks should be checked after each delivery. In your spare time you might see that brands in retail shops and on hawker stands are kept clean and well displayed, and also see to it that the posting is kept fresh. . . .

I gazed at the broken brick floor and rickety furniture, glanced out at the unpainted walls and bare ground of the courtyard and gradually simmered into a boil, and the longer I sat and looked the more I boiled. My whole job was to sit all day every day holding a godown key!

For almost an hour I paced up and down the courtyard. Then I went inside and wrote out a telegram asking for a cook-boy at once. After I had sent this off with the coolie Mr. Tsui had left at my disposal, I wrote a long, sarcastic letter to Garrod, telling him that I could not understand why the company had hired me—they could have picked up a beachcomber for half the price, or even a Chinese beggar could handle such a job as well as I; I was certainly not worth anything to the company sitting and twiddling my thumbs all day; surely the brains of Shanghai could figure out a more logical arrangement.

I felt better.

Early the next morning I was up wondering what I could do to pass the time. I had brought with me Hillier's two volumes on the Chinese language, *Lao Tze's Sayings*, *Pickwick Papers*, *The Three Musketeers*, and a thin paper edition of Shakespeare's complete works, illustrated with photographs of Mary Anderson, Ellen Terry, Ada Rehan, Sir Henry Irving and other actresses and actors of the old school. In the bedroom I also unearthed an out-of-date *Scribner's* and a half dozen dusty and much thumbed 6d English blood and thunder novels. Among these latter was one by an author whose name I have forgotten, but the story was built around such an unusual type of character and and written in such a vivid, unvarnished prose, that I read it several times and still recall the title: *The Flapper* (published in 1909 or '10). It was all about a fresh young thing of sixteen who aped her elders, was ultra-sophisticated, sneaked cigarettes and cocktails and was always out for romance. Not until I was half through my first reading of the book did it suddenly dawn upon me that the author was painting a composite picture of the new generation springing up in England.

At about nine Mr. Tsui appeared and took me over the city. There was nothing to see but the drowsy, rambling shopping street and the water front. But the water front was an active and important place. Canals scattered back in the interior flowed into a main channel of which Paotingfu was the distribution center. Produce from farm villages came down on sampans, was graded and repacked by brokers, and shipped out by train to Peking or Tientsin. In season the water front was noisily busy from daylight until long after dark. Coolies stood in line keeping time with a droning sing-song as they passed along the goods from the boats; and the heavily loaded wheelbarrows ground out discordant volumes of high-pitched squeaks as an unending chain of sweating and grunting Chinese, naked to the waist, pushed their way through the length of the city on to the station.

I saw several sampans tied up along the bank and a lot of unwashed girls lying around on the decks yawning and combing their hair, occasionally stopping to quarrel among themselves or to make a retort to some fresh remark from a passing coolie.

Mr. Tsui told me that these sampans were itinerant girl houses and followed business along the canals.

When we returned from our stroll I walked around the courtyard and tried to figure out what in the hell I could do to get through the day. Nothing. After a tiffin of rice with Chinese soups sent by Mr. Tsui, I lay down on the campcot and read.

When the sun was getting low, I sauntered over the city for a while and out through the farther gate. Near the wall I ran into seven or eight white bearded old men squatted down by a small stream giving their canaries a breath of fresh air. They nodded in a friendly way and I squatted down among them. No one spoke; there seemed to be an unwritten law against any noise; uncalled-for sounds disturbed the birds. Some of the canaries sat on sticks to which they were tied by strings attached to bracelets on their ankles. But most of them were in roomy bamboo cages. One old man was waving his open right hand in front of a cage and the canary was responding by sticking out its chest, fluffing its wings and singing with all its might. Another held out his stick while the bird stood on a rock at the edge of the water and bathed itself. Other ancient codgers were brushing out their cages with small brooms or sitting back listening in silent enjoyment to the music. As the sun set and it grew chilly, one by one they pulled hoods down over the cages or held their sticks close to their chests and meandered slowly back inside the wall. I had found one place to spend a pleasant hour during the day, and returned almost every afternoon.

On Saturday I sent in my weekly report on market conditions and work done. Most of it was left blank. But on the back was a space marked "suggestions," which I filled out carefully with the comments and ideas I had written in my letter of a few days before.

Up to the following Wednesday I had received no mail. Twice I had passed American missionaries on my strolls to the waterfront, but had been deliberately cut—the first direct evidence I had of the protestant missionary's attitude towards the cigarette people. I had done nothing, had heard from no one, talked to no one (excepting Mr. Tsui). Luckily—I stayed in a perpetual state of pent up indignation at everything—on Wednesday a stocky, cheerful little Britisher arrived and introduced himself as the representative of an import and export house, a subsidiary of the company. The men in the field handled its laundry soap, Florida water and candles, but considered them a nuisance and paid scant attention to these products except around Chinese New Year when we sold cases of candles by the thousands.

I made him sit down on the front steps of the *shang fang* and told him not to say a word, just listen until I was through. Then I took my stick, and walking up and down before him, punching the stick against the ground in the manner of Frost back in Peking, I opened up. I explained the job in every small detail, gave him the key to examine and pointed out its merits, lectured on the beauty and strength of the lock, showed him the nail on which I hung the key at night; then I lit into Shanghai and, in the vilest language I could command, expressed my opinion of individual personalities and their brains. Having got all this off my chest, and completely out of wind, I thanked him and we cordially shook hands.

Afterwards, I had the cook-boy take a snapshot with my vest-pocket camera of the two of us holding my stick with the key hanging from the center. I persuaded the accommodating Britisher to stay over an extra day for the finished print, and when he stepped on the train I gave him my blessing and begged him for god's sake to hand over the picture to the number one at Chentow and pass him the word that I had an eagle eye on the godown and that the key hung safely on its private nail in the *shang fang*.

Another week passed and one morning Garrod walked in. He was grinning and wanted to know if I still had the godown key. He explained that he had been away from headquarters for two weeks trying to settle the question of a prohibitive tax put on in Shansi Province by the new governor appointed under the Republic. We had a long discussion over the necessity of keeping a foreigner in my position and it was finally decided that I should make a trip up through the canals and he would

see, in the meantime, if he could not arrange to close the mess and transfer me to division headquarters at Chentow.

A few days later I was sitting in a wicker chair under the curved mat roof of an awkward old houseboat floating slowly away from the city. My quarters in front just barely held the chair, campcot and a small table with only sufficient deck space ahead for a good stretch. On each side, a coolie standing on an outboard, a narrow plank jutting out on each side over the water, manipulated his long clumsy oar by pushing it with one hand, and with the other jerked back a rope tied to the handle of the oar and an iron ring at the bottom edge of the boat. A third coolie loafed at the rudder and cooked meals for the other two.

When we reached a town the interpreter and I went through the standard routine of posting, sampling, giving out handbills and selling in the same manner I had learned travelling out from Peking.

On the second day out we struck a section ravaged by flood. As far as I could see the flat, treeless land was one sheet of water. In order to keep to their course the boatmen laid aside their oars and poled. Standing on one side in the front a boatman grasped his twenty foot pole as if he were going to spear a fish, thrust it alongside into the mud bottom of the canal at an angle reaching his shoulder, held it still while he pushed his way to the rear, then pulled it out and dragged it back to the front.

We were in the flooded district for five days. Farmers were rowing and poling small flat-bottom boats through their fields. In the towns the populace made their purchases moving around in the same fashion. At every place we hired similar boats and visited the shops. The water was about two feet high and the shopkeepers and their clerks stood on boxes. An awkward way to carry on business, but we posted, sampled and sold as if a flood were an everyday affair. Lucky for the farmers, however, that their crops were all in. Even so, they were a starved looking lot.

The last four days we were back to where the land was dry. High banks with footpaths at the bottom ran alongside the canals and again the boatmen changed their propulsion

On summer mornings bird markets are paradise to canary fans

tactics. This time they brought out two long ropes, tied one end of each to the thick center mast and chained the other to a shorter rope looped to a stick of wood. The two oarsmen slipped inside the loops, placed the sticks against their breasts and trudged along the footpath—they reminded me of the woodcut drawings I thrilled over as a kid, in Trowbridge's story of the young hero's adventures on the Erie Canal.

It was Indian summer and in the middle of the day the sun beat down mercilessly. But towards the latter part of the afternoon the air cooled off. In the fields of kaoliang stubble the grasshoppers set up a vibrating clatter that was deafening. Every afternoon, shortly before sundown, we stopped the boat. One of the boatmen fetched a basket, and for an hour we chased down grasshoppers. The stubble was crammed with them, big plump fellows all a bright green.

When we had finished the catch the boat cook pulled off their wings and legs, washed the bodies and fried them until they were a nice crisp brown. They smelled like fried chicken and looked delicious. Several times the boatman begged me to try them, but cursed with the same imagination that prevents some people from touching a snail, I refused.

In the excitement of getting away from doing nothing but hold a key, the only reading matter I had brought along was the half mildewed *Scribner's*. In the back was a short sketch laid in the bazaars of Constantinople describing the author's battle against the cunning and wiles of a Bagdad Jew over the price of a prayer rug. Sitting on the boat for days at a time, I must have read it a hundred and fifty times, and by the end of the voyage I had analyzed it in every way possible, psychologically and physiologically—plot, form, balance, composition, syntax, grammar, punctuation—even to the slightest shade of meaning attached to each word (there were exactly two hundred and thirty-four words). The more I read it the more my admiration increased. Not a flaw could I find.

On my return to Paotingfu I found a short note from Johnny enclosing a folded sheet of paper. The note stated that the company had tried to hold Frost in Shanghai at a clerical job until

he got used to the Chinese; even that slight contact was too much; he stuck to his resignation and was on his way home.

I unfolded the cable—it was addressed to Johnny and myself, was dated two days out on the ocean—and read:

farewell to China on way back to Gods country
good-bye and good luck to the bewaunked

So they had tried to keep him in Shanghai. It suddenly occurred to me that the company did not want their men to return home with bitter feelings and telling long tales about their hardships and privations.

XIII

OCTOBER–NOVEMBER: 1912

a French hotel for a mess—Le Cercle Français—a typical has-been interior city—more beefing—the low-down on running a Chinese retail shop—literally drumming up trade

I WAS BEGINNING TO GET worked up again over the dead life I was leading and falling back on Shakespeare and Lao Tze's *Tao Te Ching* for consolation, when I received the impatiently waited for letter from Garrod instructing me to hand over the godown key to Mr. Tsui and proceed to division headquarters at Chentow. Mr. Tsui patted me on the back and said in Chinese, "Very sorry see you go." He added in English, with a beaming smile, "Good!"

When the French obtained a concession to build a railway up through the mountains connecting Taiyuanfu, the capital of Shansi province, with the main line running between Peking and Hankow they chose Chentow as the junction on account of its convenient location. With visions of its future as a great city of commerce they built an expensive and imposing foreign hotel. But in spite of their enthusiasm Chentow refused to grow and remained the same dull market town for farmers it had always been. For several years the hotel stood facing the station in lonely, isolated splendor. Finally to keep it from falling into decay the French rented it to the company for almost nothing. From then on it was used as a combined office, mess

and godown. Even when all the men were in from the field they were lost in its hollow depths; ordinary conversation and footsteps loudly echoed back from the walls of empty rooms and cavern-like corridors.

Five foreigners—all American—were there when I arrived. Garrod was from the tobacco growing section of North Carolina. One of the other four was my friend Bartlett who had met me at the bund on my arrival in Shanghai. Two of the remaining were also from North Carolina: a tall rawboned, awkward lad who had left a plow behind in the sandy soil where melons and peanuts grew and a flat chested tobacco chewer with a tall memory, formerly a page in the House of Representatives at Washington. The fifth was a good-natured talkative Georgian who had spent most of his life leaning against a drug store and was given to fancy cut clothes. With the exception of the former page, none of them had been out of their native state before leaving for China. All but Garrod spent most of the time on trains and carts and at inns, covering the different division territories. But when I joined them the last week in October they were all gathered at headquarters, making out their monthly reports, getting together food supplies, playing bridge, shooting craps, matching silver, and spending children's hour over cocktails at the *Cercle Français*.

Lady, a tiny aristocratic Pekinese (not the wheezing fat imitation with dangling, dribbling tongue) who had the temperament of an English woman of nobility travelling in a second class coach, and a pair of lazy Shantung cats completed the mess. The cats were a remarkable couple. Both the male and female were a milky white, had light, vivid blue eyes and the quickness and grace of a tiger. The male was almost twice the size of an ordinary cat with hair five or six inches in length. This species was extremely rare and difficult to obtain. For more than two hundred years they had been bred solely by one family in the province of Shantung, and when a male was sold he was castrated.

The *Cercle Français* was on the far side of the town and faced a large grass enclosure around which were grouped the homes of the French staff of the Shansi Railway line. The colony must

have totalled a hundred and twenty-five men plus their wives or Japanese and Chinese concubines. However, those who came out unmarried did not remain so long. Most of them felt the strain to be too great to wait the length of time it took to get *femmes* out from homeside, looked around and bought up nice looking Chinese, sometimes Japanese, girls and eventually, when children were born, made them legal wives. It was considered the only practical thing to do.

In the wooden two room clubhouse from six to eight or half-past several games of bridge were kept going, but the majority of the members sat at small round tables and sipped absinthe frappé. When the card players joined the drinkers and the final rounds of cocktails began, the shack was a bedlam.

The meals at the mess were unusually good. Wild geese, duck and pheasant were brought down from Shansi and the cook had a flair for making delicious semi-Chinese soups, especially consommés with chopped shark fins and sea slugs. The mess was also kept supplied with watercress which the sensitized eyes of the French had discovered growing in the small streams along the railway line.

After a few days hanging around the office studying the files and reports, Harry C., the former page, and I got together camping outfits and several boxes of chow and caught the south bound Peking–Hankow train. With us went an interpreter, a boy and two coolies. We were bound for Shuntefu, a half day's trip down the line, and other points nearby.

From time to time the train stopped to take on laborers and farmers carrying rolls of bedding on their backs. Only foreigners or the wealthy rode in the first class carriages; the well-to-do merchants in the second; those who could afford it in the third; and the laboring class—men, women, children and babies—piled up against each other on the floors of the seatless fourth class cars.

In speaking of the Chinese laboring class, "coolie," or *ku li*, is often used as a blanket word. Although the Chinese character for *ku* means "hard", and the *li* combined with another character means "labor", I have heard educated Chinese argue that

the word "coolie" was of foreign origin. However, its usage dates back to 1780. Whatever the origin, its actual connotation is a laborer who is hired to do the most menial kind of work. An ordinary laborer is known as a *kung jen* or "work man". For this reason the term "coolie class" used loosely for the lower classes is misleading, and to many Chinese, insulting.

We reached Shuntefu in the middle of the afternoon. From the station we could see in the distance an old wall which seemed to spread out for miles. The tops of oaks and elms showed above against the sky. I told Harry C. that I had no idea that cities of such a size were located back in Honan.

"Wait!" he said.

We rode the two *li* to the gate in Peking carts. Inside, the wall was almost empty and deserted. The cart road wove in and out for another five *li* between weeds sprinkled with dust and ancient trees growing around the fallen-in ruins of dobe houses and walls. Not until we had ridden diagonally to the other side did we reach the shops and compounds tucked away in a corner. The street zig-zagged to a side gate more convenient for the farmer than the one facing the station.

Shuntefu was the dirtiest, most dismal and run-down hole I had seen. Even the shop keepers and the coolies carrying their poles were coated with grime and seemed a part of the crumbling ruins, without life or hope.

"Well," exclaimed Harry C., "here we are—here's your big gay city!"

I tried to imagine the huge enclosure as it must have been when the wall was built, when the now peeled and broken tiles glistened on the roofs of the stately gate temples, when the spaces now choked with weeds were taken up with big estates and busy shopping streets. Yes—at one time it must have truly been a gay, bustling city.

But what had happened? Everything I had seen so far was old, run-down, falling to pieces. Even in the arts and crafts only the very old was good. Why this slow, steady deterioration? When did it start? And how? I had asked these questions, of myself and others, many times before. There seemed to be no answers.

They were merely facts. I came to the only plausible conclusion I could see; the race must, simply, have outlived its civilization and culture.

We put up in the dealer's compound. In the front he had a general merchandise shop, dark and dismal on the inside even in the middle of the day. I counted eight clerks, who seemed to have little to do most of the day but hang over the counter and look vacantly into space. The back of the shop opened into a small, evil smelling passage, on one side of which was an open air toilet and on the other a small kitchen. The passage led through a corridor separating two godowns into a large courtyard having a row of mule stalls on the right and a line of rooms on the left where part of the staff slept. At the back was the *shang fang* which was turned over to Harry C. and myself.

In the middle of the yard stood two bony mules tied to a trough, stamping their feet in a mushy puddle of their own water. In another puddle nearby a sleepy sow lay blinking lazily while her small sons and daughters had chow. At the corners were piles of rubbish. The warped door of the *shang fang* sagging open showed inside an old broken table and two stools standing on a lumpy dirt floor. The air reeked of mules, slops and ammonia. As quickly as we could, Harry C. and I arranged with the dealer our plans for the next day.

Harry C. turned to me and said, "Let's get out of this stinking place for a while—I want some fresh air."

We took our sticks and went for a tramp outside the wall.

"How long have you been out?" I asked after we had been striding along silently for several minutes.

"Going on three years."

"How do you like it?"

"Don't be funny. I've been stationed in this same place since I've been out—doing the same work—getting the same little raise each year. At the rate I'm going I'll never get anywhere. And I haven't any pull in Shanghai."

"Why don't you ask for a transfer?"

"What's the use? It's the same any place you go—only a damn sight better here than down south where it's hot as hell in the

summer and rains all the time. Besides, Garrod's a good fellow, and you never can tell what kind of bird you might be up against."

"Do you think a pull really gets you anywhere in the long run?"

"Sure it does. Look at the fellows with the soft jobs in Shanghai. They sit there next to the bosses, write us long letters telling us how to run things in the field, and not a damn one of them's ever been out of the city. They don't know what they're writing about half the time, and get a hell of a sight more than me or you.

"Just between us, I'm pulling stakes when my home leave comes next year. I'd be better off a grocery clerk back home.

"Wait 'til you've knocked around here for six months, living on carts, sleeping on campcots in Chinese inns, and eating nothing but canned foods. You'll see."

We settled back into silence for the rest of the walk.

After dinner, rather than sit among the stable yard odors, we took a corner behind the counter in the shop. It was lighted by wicks stuck inside small iron pots containing peanut oil. Several of these pots hung against the shelves, but smoked badly and gave less light than one ordinary size foreign candle. Some shops did use candles, but to do so was a boastful extravagance. The drives of the big foreign oil companies had not yet broken down the old customs back in the interior; and the day was yet to come when some bright lad had the idea of giving away lamps and showing how they worked. The first and last law of selling (I learned this from sampling) was: to build sales on a product and keep building, it had to be given and regiven the fascination of a new toy.

In the center of the shop against the back shelves stood a tube about four feet high made of bamboo. This was the cash box. When a clerk received coppers or cash from a customer and counted out the change, no matter how far away he stood he threw the balance at the opening of the box. The floor was cluttered with coins that had missed.

All figuring was done on a *suan pan* ("reckon board" or

abacus) lying on the counter where the customer could see and know that he was not being cheated. Like all Chinese, except the laboring class, the clerks had delicate hands with long, slender fingers and handled the *suan pan* with almost unbelievable speed. It came as natural as using chop sticks.

On the wall in a corner hung eight strings of cash on a row of nails, each string attached to a strip of wood with characters on it—like the godown key I had nursed at Paotingfu. I asked what these were. The clerks burst into laughter and all began chattering at once. The interpreter explained. A clerk entered the shop as an apprentice. Usually he was the son of a friend of the owner. When he started in he was given no pay, but allowed one evening off every month and a string of 1,000 cash (the whole string worth slightly less than about fourteen American cents) with which to paint up the town. This spending money was allowed as long as he remained in the shop, but after the first year he was given an annual salary, starting perhaps at two dollars Mex., and after a number of years increasing to as much as five, or even six, dollars Mex. The clerks had a merry time telling us how they spent their evenings off and denying our innuendos.

At ten o'clock the shop closed. The clerks put up the front shutters, leaving a small peep hole open in the center board in case a late customer should drop by while the lights were still on. As soon as everything was tightly shut the bamboo cash box was emptied, the floor carefully swept, and all the coppers and cash were dumped on the counter. Then the owner and his first assistant proceeded to count the day's earnings. When they had finished, the owner felt through the pockets and under the gowns of each of his staff and sent them all to bed.

After a restless night, listening between snatches of sleep to the mules munching and pawing the ground, we were up early to start the day's work. By eight o'clock the yard was almost full of half-starved, half-clothed, unwashed beggars. Slightly apart stood four Chinese all dressed in black cloth coats and trousers and blue caps. One had a fiddle, one a cornet, one a trap drum and one a bass drum. Our interpreter examined the crew

of beggars, picked out ten of the cleanest, and waved the others out of the yard. From a chest we had brought along, he picked out red coats and caps with gold colored characters tacked on them, blue trousers and large red banners carrying bold black characters. The clothes were distributed among the beggars; each banner was strung between two bamboo poles and handed out; and within a few minutes we were outside the compound marching down the street. Playing out of time, but loudly, the four piece band led the procession. What the musicians were trying to play neither Harry C. nor I could make out. We only knew that it sounded neither Chinese nor foreign. The interpreter said it was "special" music.

Following the band two by two the beggars shuffled along in their gaudy uniforms carrying the banners. Harry C. and I walked alongside, each with a carton, handing out samples to the crowds we drew. Behind came the interpreter distributing handbills and the coolies loaded with extra cartons. Every child in town, I believe, including two-year-old tots with bound feet yanked along by their elder sisters, were trailing after us in the dust. Our sampling parade was on its way. We were building the fortunes of directors sitting back in their offices in New York and London checking sales sheets.

Harry C. spat a stream of tobacco juice over his shoulder and said, "It's a joke."

For ten days Harry C. and I barnstormed the towns along the railway and those not over seventy *li*, or a day's cart trip, off the line. The towns and country around were much the same all over—depressing walls, brown earth and poverty. At that time, if anyone had asked me what China was like, I think I should have waved my hands vaguely in the air and replied, "Brown—lots of walls and people in rags—lots of space and very still and quiet—but really just brown, a nasty, yellowish brown."

XIV

DECEMBER: 1912

I start on a pioneering trip and narrowly escape smothering—the pig-face boy full of sex—up the mountains over a 5,000 year old imperial highway

THE DAY AFTER HARRY C. AND I were back from our barnstorming, Garrod called me in his office.

"The company wants someone to take a trip through the central and southern part of Shansi province," he said. "It's all mountain country and has never been opened. Shanghai wants to get a line on the potential market, and the best way to ship in goods and handle the trade. We're still having tax trouble with the new governor in the north, and if we can get goods into this cut-off section by some southern route, all to the good.

"I've decided to send you. It may take two or three months of rough travelling. You'll carry stock and advertising matter, and an interpreter, cook-boy and number one coolie. How about it?"

"Suits me," I said. Across the mountains—new country—and no one else along to start beefing and spoil the party—I was tickled pink.

This was the first week of November. In three days' time, I was all set to go. I was not keen about my interpreter. He never talked, except to answer in monosyllables, and had a set,

sullen face. But he was the only one handy who spoke fluently the Shansi dialects.

By noon on the day I left for Hsin Hsiang Hsien the sky had darkened and a whistling wind from the north was raising waves of dust and hurling them in a steady stream past the train. The fine particles seeped in through the edges of the windows, under the doors and from unseen cracks and crevices. In less than half an hour the black leather seats and the table, the floor, my clothes, face and hands, were all a dull, gritty brown. All afternoon I sat wrapped in my overcoat huddled in a corner. About five o'clock snowflakes mingled with the dust. And by the time the train reached Hsin Hsiang Hsien a blinding blizzard was almost drowning the rattling noise of the train.

Luckily, the company rented a shack less than a hundred feet from the station. But unluckily, it was an unfurnished single room for over-night stops, made of rough boards rudely nailed on a wooden frame, and they had warped and left wide gaps; the bottom of the door sagged from a strap a good six inches above the sill.

After the cook-boy had the portable oil stove going, he brought in an iron basin large enough to hold five gallons of eggnog and started a charcoal fire over which to cook dinner. After I had eaten the thin consommé, breaded cutlet and canned vegetables and fruit, sitting on the edge of the camp bed holding the dishes on my lap, the cook-boy left for the night. My interpreter and coolies had gone straight from the train to a third-rate Chinese inn.

The oil stove was not enough to keep the room warm, so I allowed the charcoal basin to remain. To keep out of reach of the fumes, however, I moved the oil stove and camp bed to a far corner and sat bundled up in my overcoat, dividing my time between reading Shakespeare's sonnets and practising "Nearer My God to Thee" on a harmonica.

Suddenly the flame of the oil stove commenced to flicker, blazed up and expired. Upon examination I found the wick had been used up. Well, I decided, the way that wind is blowing I'll freeze without a fire of some kind, and with the air pour-

ing through those holes in the walls the charcoal fumes can't do any harm. I spread my overcoat over the camp bed, crawled under the covers fully dressed in riding clothes and fell asleep watching the dancing patterns thrown on the walls by the glowing embers.

Some time during the night I woke up gasping for breath. I tried to get out of bed. I could not move. Half conscious, I used all the strength I had to roll over and off the side of the cot onto the floor. I continued to roll slowly, over and over, until I reached the door and by twisting and squirming, finally managed to push it open with my head. For several minutes I lay there with my head resting on the stone door step, breathing heavily, ridding my lungs of the charcoal fumes. I looked up; the wind had died down and the snow had stopped; the sky had cleared and the moon was shining peacefully on the still objects below. The cold air tasted good. I managed to get up and throw the charcoal basin outside, left the door wide open and went back to bed.

In the morning I had a dry taste in my mouth and felt a little shaky, but otherwise was all right, and we started early to pack up for the next stage of our journey, a five-hour ride due west to a small town at the end of another railway line. Originally, it was constructed to carry out coal from the mines of the Peking Mining Syndicate, organized by British capital when the Japanese and British were working hand in hand under "secret treaties," in the attempt to counteract Russia and grab off for themselves concessions of all the potential wealth they could find lying idle in Chinese soil. The mines lay only about two-thirds of the way down the line. But with true British imperialistic foresight (at that time), the road had been extended to a town at the foot of the highway down which mules and coolies carried iron ware, cast from ore dug out by hand back in the mountains of Southern Shansi. However, when the republic was born, the new governor of the province had a then uniquely patriotic belief that the Chinese should own China, and the British will to the underground wealth of the province had failed to carry on.

Shortly before the train left, the station master handed me a telegram. It read:

sending another man to join you wait arrival

That was a jolt. I would be bothered with someone after all, probably some fellow who felt he was under a burden and was finicky and beefed about everything. I hoped it was Bartlett. He took things as they came and was not always shooting off his mouth.

All day I loafed around in the sun reading Shakespeare, admiring the photographs of Mary Anderson's profile, Ellen Terry's eyes, Ada Rehan's figure and trying to blow negro tunes through the mouth organ. When the evening train came in, a breezy young blonde fellow, stout and pig faced, jumped off and started to talk before his feet touched the ground. By the time we had finished dinner I knew his whole past history, except his sex life. Before the evening was over I knew that too. He spoke rapidly and had a habit of sticking out his tongue to moisten his underlip.

His first business experience had been gained as an Ivory Soap salesman. It had been a cinch—easy money. All you had to do was ride around in first class cars, stop at first class hotels, call on the retailers, open up your order book, say how much do you want, and gee, the soap was so well known, that's all there was to it. Of course, you had to stick up window and counter displays, but you got to know your trade and got friendly. And there was always a girl hanging around the hotel or station wanting to go to a movie. Not a bad life.

But he gave up soap to take on the National Biscuit line. Gee, that *was* a job. They had package stands in all the stores and all you had to do was just check up the shortage and put it down in the order book and hand the pencil over to the grocer to sign on the dotted line. Nothing to it.

But life really began when he joined the house to house brigade selling bottled pure food products. (It was after dinner when he reached this point. He was shooting out words like a rapid fire gun and licking his underlip lasciviously.) He got to pull-

ing down over $200 a month in commissions. And the women! Gee, oh boy, the women! He had three or four steadies in every town. Easy pickings. Like taking jam from a baby. Things were going swell. The boss' wife liked him too. She gave him that watch he was wearing now. ("Look at it—ain't it a peach?"). She was always giving him something. But the boss had to get jealous and spoil everything. So the pig-face boy had to throw up his job and figured he'd go to China, but, gee, he had never thought it would be like this. He'd stick on a while though until he'd laid by some money and maybe pick up some more at bridge when he got a chance. He was a fine bridge player, nobody could beat him, he always won. But, gee, he missed the boss' wife. Why, gee, she used to—

He was still talking when I fell asleep.

At nine the next morning we were passing through the same table-like country I had seen since leaving Chentow. At noon the pig-face boy and I dropped off at the mines station and left the interpreter to go on ahead to the end of the line to see about drawing stocks from the dealer and hiring pack mules. We made straight for the walled-in bungalow of one of the English foremen, a shrewd little born and bred Cockney who was on the commissary staff and purchased cigarettes wholesale from the company.

At tiffin I was so intent on catching additions and subtractions of *h's* that I could barely keep up with the conversation.

"H'I sye, h'I'm glad you blokes cyme—h'it's a bloody shime for a bloke to 'ave to h'eat h'and drink h'all by 'imself h'every dye. H'and h'it's no bloody plyce for h'a blinkin' wife."

I had run across such a Cockney dialect in English novels, but I had never before heard it in its pure, unadulterated form. I was fascinated.

After tiffin we loafed around the club, a one story affair facing on a play field, which in the winter time was turned into a skating rink. At five we heard the whistle blow, and shortly afterwards about thirty-five or forty of the English staff trooped

in. The majority were young and a genial, pleasant lot. The next day was Sunday and a tournament soccer match was on between two sections; both teams were short a man and in spite of the fact that neither of us had even seen the game played, the crowd insisted that we fill the vacant places. After a heavy tea and a scotch and soda, followed by gin and bitters, our Cockney friend led us back to his mess.

Dinner broke up past midnight. When I awoke in the morning the roof of my head was floating in the air about a foot above the rest of it. But two hours out in the cold, playing soccer brought it down again. The misplays the pig-face boy and I made, and our awkwardness, turned the game into a circus, and after we had rushed off for the train on top of a round of drinks and "cheerios," I settled in a corner of the compartment with a sigh of relief and took a nap. It seemed impossible to go anywhere, or do anything, without loading up on scotch or gin.

The interpreter met us at the station and took us to the inn at the other end of the town where the road up through the mountains began. Most of the next morning was spent in arranging the mule packs. We found that one mule could carry only one case of 50,000 cigarettes, and each of the twenty cases had to be sawed in half and nailed together again. But by eleven o'clock we were on the trail with a train of twenty-eight pack mules; twenty-four loaded with cases, provisions and travelling equipment, and four carrying two litters, one for the ex-canvasser and myself and one for the native staff. A litter consisted of canvas stretched between two poles strapped to the sides of the mules, with bamboo mats spread in a semi-circle across the poles to serve as a cover. The drivers, burnt by wind and sun until their faces were like worn, dark brown leather, walked at the side cracking their whips and yelling, "Yi-yi-i-i-," to their mules.

From the minute we left the inn we were winding steadily upward. Beyond stretched miles and miles of ragged cliffs, penetrated in between by deep rocky ravines. Not a sign of vegetation was in sight at any time, only the loess formation of

soft, yellowish brown earth driven down from the north, drenched by the spring and fall rains until it was soaked through and through, then baked by the hot summer sun until the contraction split open great fissures that often tore apart the whole side of a mountain and sent it crashing into space.

Five thousand years ago the road had been an imperial highway leading to Pingyangfu, then the capital of China, lying back on the plateau of central southern Shansi. The middle of the road was still paved with the original stones, now so worn that the footprints of mules, donkeys and even of coolies, were etched at places fully an inch into the surface. A continual stream of traffic passed us: mule trains, chair coolies, pedestrians with their belongings wrapped in bundles tied on the end of sticks which they carried over their shoulders, donkeys one or two at a time, and innumerable carrying coolies jogging along in step with the give of their poles. Almost every one of the donkeys and coolie carriers we passed were loaded down with iron pots and pans.

This almost unbroken line of trotting coolies, with their heavy burdens equal to those of the donkeys, interested me more than the scenery. I tried to heft one of the poles. The weight it held at each end must have averaged well over one hundred pounds. The coolie, with the protruding ribs and skinny arms and legs that most of them had, weighed less than a hundred and ten. Although he used a padded cloth, callouses half an inch thick were worn on both shoulders.

I asked him how much the iron-ware he was carrying cost. He showed the remains of his yellow teeth in a broad grin, scratched his head and after much figuring and with assistance of the interested onlookers, came to the conclusion that the total value was somewhere between seventy or eighty coppers. Putting it at eighty, with one hundred sixty coppers to the dollar Mex., that came to fifty cents big money; with $2.40 Mex. worth one dollar gold, the result was roughly 21 cents in American currency.

This coolie's load was about the average. Travelling faster than mules or donkeys, he took only three and one-half days for the

trip down and paid his own expenses. He spent one day at his destination, and on the return trip carried produce of about the same value. I did not have the nerve to ask him what he was paid. But for several days I tried to bring together his wages and living costs but could never make the two meet. I was in a land where daily items were figured in thousandths of a silver dollar originally imported by coolie labor from faraway Mexico, and the problem was too deep for me.

At night we stopped at the rest houses set up along the route twelve hours apart mule time. They were made by the simple method of piling up uncut pieces of rock picked at random. An uneven, useless low wall surrounded an open yard containing rows of hollowed stone troughs for the mules; at the back was one large room for the coolies and mule drivers, with two or three small ones for the other guests. They were without doors and window space, and the insides were filthy.

All night long the mules restlessly shook their chains, stamped their feet and noisily crunched their dried corn and fodder. The drivers divided their time between feeding the mules and lying cramped together on the long *k'ang*, talking and smoking opium to keep awake.

By the time chow was finished the temperature had dropped to 30 or 40 degrees below zero. The drivers kept the brick floor of the *k'ang* heated by burning kaoliang stalks in the open space underneath. In spite of the terrible, stuffy smells, our Chinese staff huddled together with the drivers.

An hour before daylight we were on our way again and never stopped, except for the hour at noon to have chow and feed the mules, until we reached another night house in complete darkness. In order to keep going at such a pace the drivers were forced to take a stimulant; their opium allowance was a legitimate charge.

Late in the morning of the fifth day we came to the town at the end of the highway and gazed out over the level plains of the Shansi plateau. The place was nothing but a junction where transfers were made between carts and pack mules. The few small shops existed on the income from the sale of opium. We

spent the afternoon dickering for six two-mule carts and two coolie chairs.

"Gee," remarked the pig-face boy that night, lying on his cot in the dark, "when this is over, I'm through. I've been out for over six months now, and with what I've saved added to what I've picked up at bridge, I'll have just about enough to get home on and carry me for two or three months until I land a job.

"You'd better come along. This stinking country's no place for a white man. I can get you a job with the Ivory Soap people. Gee—it's a cinch. Easy work and good pay, just writing down orders. We've got no business living like this.

"Think it over. . . . Gee, oh boy, back in God's country . . . I wonder what the old boss' wife is doing now. . . ."

I did think about it. I thought of the George M. Cohan imitator and his British friend, both of whom had been kicked out for squeezing—and I thought of Frost—and of what Harry C. had said. But I was not going to tell Pig-face that all my earnings above expenses went home.

Besides, I liked the Chinese—the unforeignized ones. And there was something about China itself—the colors and noises of Peking—the houseboat floating peacefully through the canals —the past four days up the mountains—the brilliant sunlight —and the silence—there was something about it all that took hold—everything, everyone, was so completely bound up in the earth.

That night home was difficult to bring close—was detached—in the past—as if I had only read about it.

I caught myself—watch out, you don't want it to get you—remember *bewaunked*.

XV

CHRISTMAS: 1912

across the southern Shansi plateau—sunken roads—lone missionaries in a city that was the capital of China 3,000 B.C.—bandits are nearby—the last ferry before the ice closes the river—Christmas morning

FOR THREE WEEKS WE FOLlowed devious roads winding north and south but always verging towards the west in the general direction of Pingyangfu. After the first days the pig-face boy and I discarded our chairs; they had the same motion as a pacing pony and grew tiresome. Chinese officials used them a great deal, but more for face, I think, than comfort. I once saw two officials pass each other and take five minutes to get by. When about ten feet away the lesser one stopped his chair, crept out and began bowing and shaking his hands up and down. The higher official, the one looking better fed, gave a start as if he had just seen the other, then painfully wriggled himself to his feet and went through the same performance. They continued to bow and speak stereotyped, memorized sentences in high Mandarin until they had stiffly backed down into their seats again.

Another time, I saw the bigger, better-fed fellow hold his fan near his face as a high sign that he did not see the other chap and that the ceremony was to be passed up. America's social leaders

might, I imagine, learn many useful tricks from a study of the old Mandarin system of etiquette.

The mule carts were awkward, cumbersome affairs made entirely of wood, having no springs and only two large, wide wheels on fixed axles. Hanging under one shaft was a small pot of grease and a stick, but despite the drivers' pretended efforts to stop the squeaks with frequent smears, the mournful sound of hubs grinding against axles monotonously continued without let up. As the days passed I found they had a kind of comforting musical quality, such as lies back of old folk-songs, a relief of monotonous noise against the background of a more monotonous silence.

Later on, I discovered that the same was true of wheelbarrows. In a section of Shantung province a maker discovered a way to remove the squeaks from his barrows. But a few weeks after he had put his new invention on the market he received a vigorous protest from the wheelbarrow coolies' guild. The coolies who had bought them missed their music; they demanded back their squeals and squeaks.

The same dirt roads must have been in use for thousands of years. They were deep rutted and suddenly at times, where no break in the surface could be seen, we found ourselves descending gradually down a steep incline that flattened out at a depth of a hundred feet or more below the plain. On each side the yellowish brown walls of loess shot up in a straight perpendicular line. At some points where fissures had sprung open at the top, narrow strips of earth leaned dangerously inwards. Every year hundreds of carts were crushed beneath these masses breaking away and crashing down. During the rainy season hundreds drowned in the soft deceptive mud. But traffic never abated.

The roads were too narrow for two carts to pass each other, but at intervals of about every two hundred yards was a short switch, and the yells of the driver of an oncoming cart could be heard twice that distance. Usually these underground roads ran several *li*. After reaching the surface of the plain again and looking behind, we could find no trace of where we had come out. Thousands of carts grinding into the powdery earth and

wearing it down; thousands of dust storms from the Gobi, bearing fine particles and laying them on the ground and building it up; both working together for thousands of years raising the farm land and sinking the cart roads.

In the language of Marco Polo, the towns at which we stopped were inhabited by poverty stricken natives who lived off the small farmer, worshipped idols and used silver and copper coins, strings of cash and paper money. From the moment we passed through the gates of the dilapidated wall of a town we were besieged by beggars and followed by crowds of loafers and children who stuck around until we were again outside of the wall. The carts sank almost to the hubs in the ruts of the main street, on each side of which were rickety, open front shops in the last stages of decay, part of them abandoned. The population was poorly clothed and most of them looked underfed and tubercular. The stray *waunk* dogs stalking around with their tails between their legs and snarls on their faces were mere skeletons, and every once in so often we passed one lying at the side of the road dead from starvation.

I organized the same routine of posting, sampling and selling that I had learned on my first short trip out of Peking. After this work was finished we tracked down through enquiries, the most prosperous merchant in town and offered him a dealership with a special discount for buying a minimum stock to be sold in broken lots to the other shops in towns and nearby villages. We then promised to supply him regularly and assist him further with advertising as soon as we had worked out shipping facilities (we were too far south to be bothered about provincial taxes). The money received from sales was packed in a wooden box and stowed under Chinese bedding and odds and ends in the bottom of the wagon in which the pig-face boy and I rode. One of the staff was always near the wagon, and at night the number one coolie slept in it. There were rumors of bandits, starved farmers who had started out looting villages, increasing in number as they moved along, and now preying on the larger towns.

Our only troubles so far had been among ourselves. The cook-

boy and number one coolie made whispered accusations of "squeeze" (probably because they were not in on it) being made on sales by the interpreter. For some reason too, the cook-boy could not explain why our canned goods were running low. Then the pig-face boy grouched a bit about hardships; he had come on the trip wearing a blue serge suit, leather puttees and a respectable overcoat, and was always complaining of the cold. But the men in Chentow had warned him and, as he admitted, he had no kick coming. As a matter of fact, although as lazy as hell, he had the normal good nature of a fat man, and in consequence made most of the time an excellent travelling companion. At times, however, I had to steal away and walk off the jittery feeling aroused by his trick of moistening his underlip while reminiscing over some conquest back in his pure food product days. I took revenge by practising on my mouth organ.

On a late afternoon, about the middle of December, we drove into Pingyanghsien, and were still at work unpacking when a tall, slender foreigner, with a sensitive, intellectual face and about thirty-five years of age, strode into the inn yard and introduced himself. He was a missionary doctor out from England, had just heard the news that we had arrived and rushed over at once; we must stop with him while we were there; his wife was preparing dinner now and we must leave at once; the boy could lug over our things later.

We told him that we thoroughly appreciated his kindness, but that we had been travelling for three weeks on carts, had not shaved for a month and felt and looked like a couple of dirty tramps. He laughed away our objections. His wife and he had not seen a foreigner for six months and would never forgive us if we did not come right over and put up with them. We grabbed our shaving materials and went.

His wife was a charming and delightful hostess, and a splendid housekeeper. They lived in a made-over Chinese compound set off by itself in a cluster of over-hanging elms and oaks. They had brought over with them fine old hangings and inherited pieces of English period furniture that gave the rooms a homey, comfortable atmosphere of having been lived in by generations

of a cultured family. The living room also served as the dining room. A beautiful old Sheraton table with chairs to match stood in the center; all four walls were lined with shelves crammed to overflowing with books; and at one end around the open fire were grouped a sofa and two inviting leather club chairs. In the guest room we found the same air of tranquillity and repose.

As soon as we had shaved and cleaned off as much of the dust and dirt as we could, dinner was served; tomato soup made with cream, wild duck with jelly, candied sweet potatoes, vegetables, pear salad, a sweet and a glass of port to top it off. The table was laid with Wedgwood plates and lighted by candles in tall silver, homeside candlesticks. We ate with their wedding gift cutlery.

The doctor and his wife had been in Pingyanghsien for two years. A few weeks after he had graduated from Oxford they were married, took the first boat by Suez as their wedding trip, and brought with them their household goods to settle down in China at medical missionary work. Although English high-church, they went out on their own, living on a private income, just sufficient for their slight needs to carry out his ambition of building and running a hospital for opium cases.

The next day, after we had completed the job of posting and sampling and finished selling the shops, I had the interpreter count out the money and write down the amounts against each brand, and at the same time note down the three-way rate of exchange of coppers to small silver, coppers to the dollar, and small silver to the dollar. Hitherto, I had been accepting these figures without question. But this time I requested the doctor to have one of his Chinese get the day's rate for him and let me know what it was. By comparing the figures given with those put down by the interpreter, I discovered that he had been knocking down from eight to ten dollars on every hundred dollars' worth sold. When I asked him about it, he shrugged his shoulders and said that the Shansi province people considered all outside Chinese as foreigners, that they would not give him a better rate. I had no answer.

I also checked up on rations. After looking over the cook-

boy's list, the pig-face boy and I decided that he must have sold as much of the canned goods as we had eaten. According to the doctor, the meat and egg bills were also all out of proportion. I raised cain with the cook-boy, but he followed the Chinese custom of passive resistance by saying nothing and sulking. Since we were a month away from any possible substitute, I had to stand it.

(Upon our return to Chentow I had them both let out).

We spent three days in Pingyanghsien. The doctor showed us through his hospital, located on a ridge a half *li* from the house, a wooden building about a hundred feet long by ten wide. Patients were limited entirely to chronic opium cases. The doctor placed them on a strict diet and gradually reduced their allowance. Ordinary cases, he said, took about three months to cure. When they were able he gave them work around the place; and before releasing them, made arrangements with the local authorities to find them jobs. So far he had been quite successful. Out of several hundred patients treated less than a dozen had relapsed.

Shansi was one of the leading provinces in the consumption of opium. Every town we had visited reeked with it. The doctor and his wife were doing a great work. The building of the hospital had been done by his own hands with the casual assistance of a few Chinese carpenters, lent from time to time by the city officials. He had visions of making it into a great institution, and his wife took pride in his enthusiasm and the good he was doing.

We stopped over three days. The doctor showed us the remains of the old city wall, fallen apart in decay and protruding only a few feet high among the weeds, but still standing after a siege of five thousand years of wear and tear. At the corners old fire towers were still intact. We had passed similar ones on the road and noticed them on the walls of some of the towns at which we had stopped. Many centuries ago, when trouble arose, fires were built on them at night and messages flashed back and forth across the plains.

When we said good-bye to the doctor and his wife I hated to go. Several years later I was speaking of them to some friends in Tientsin. A woman present told me that she had known them. The husband had died from pneumonia the year before, and his wife had returned to her family in England. The irony struck me: two great idealists devoting their lives to cure a disease bred into another nation by their own countrymen—only to meet with such a tragic end.

* * * * *

From Pingyanghsien we made for the south. If we were to cross the Yellow River instead of having to retrace our tracks we must get there before the ice closed the ferries. Our routine at each town worked smoothly and quickly; as we sold stocks along the way our load had lessened, and now we had only four fairly light weighted carts and were making good time.

The bandit scare was growing stronger. At the last town in which we stopped we were told that a band was burning and looting towns and villages only twelve hours away. The next morning around eleven, as we were heading across the plain towards the ferry, a Chinese walking at a rapid pace caught up and breathlessly informed us that the bandits had entered the town less than an hour after our departure. He stuck with us the rest of the way, telling long tales to the frightened cart drivers and coolies. For the remainder of the day we made wonderful time.

When we entered the inn late that night a drizzle, half rain and half sleet had started. The pig-face boy and I sat over the oil stove and figured out the date. It was Christmas eve.

On Christmas morning we were up early and down at the ferry landing, taking a look. The rain and sleet had settled into a steady downpour. The river was a swirling yellow torrent of conflicting currents, with broken pieces of ice shooting past. Two ferries were working across and back. The landing was crowded. This was the last day, the boatman said, the ice floes had started several days ago and the river was fast becoming too dangerous to cross.

I took the interpreter along to get passes from the head official in his office at the top of the slippery hill. For fifteen or twenty

minutes we chatted about the weather and the bandits. Then we got down to business. The official was sorry, but was not sure that we could make it; many people were ahead of us. Besides, no carts were crossing today. The current was too strong; the ice floes had started. Heavy loads were dangerous. Yes, he realized that we could not stay there all winter. No, he did not want to force us to travel back the way we came. Well, he would see what he could do. Please, would we return at eleven o'clock.

I went back down to the landing and stood in the drizzling sleet and rain, anxiously watching the ferries. After the coolies had poled a flat bottom scow out from the wharf, the rope stretched across the river quivered against the strain of the current. If it should break with mules and carts aboard—maskee! We had to make it.

At eleven, I skidded again through the mud up the hill to see the official. He looked worried. He could not take the responsibility. Ye-e-s, he might accept a signed release, but he would have to get in touch with the top official. How long? He couldn't say. Perhaps an hour. Not more than three.

Breathing disgust and impatience, I picked up the pig-face boy whose fat good-humor now thoroughly irritated me, and with hands clenched in my pockets, I walked silently by his side back to the inn for chow.

The rain and sleet were still carrying on as if they had decided to go in for a full day's work. I slipped away and waited around until two o'clock, then called on the official once more. He was out. I hung around for two hours, then left. The interpreter remained with the understanding that he was to send a message immediately the official returned.

At four-thirty it was growing dark. At five or thereabouts I was sent for. At six I had signed a document releasing the officials of all responsibility, had agreed to double the pay of the boatmen and was at the landing with the passes. Daylight was going fast.

Only one boat was strong enough to carry the carts, and only one cart and two mules could be taken at a time. The river

at that point was approximately a half mile wide. I figured that we had about three hours of hard work ahead.

The driver of the first team tried to make his mules pull the cart aboard but, in spite of all his whipping and swearing, they balked. They were unhitched and the crowd of wharf coolies pulled and pushed the cart aboard. Then the driver led on the mules. In order to have a watch on both sides, I sent along the pig-face boy and interpreter. By now it was dark. We could not see ahead, and the cold was biting. In three-quarters of an hour the empty boat was back for another load. This time I sent along the cook-boy and number two coolie, keeping the number one with me.

By the time we crossed with the fourth and last load, the ice floes had increased and were banging and shaking the boat, and the night was pitch black.

When we reached the landing on the other side I called for the pig-face boy. The interpreter's voice floated out of the darkness.

"He not here."

"Where is he?"

"Go topside inn."

"The hell he did!"

A pause.

"Where are the carts?"

"Here—cannot move—very bad hill—mud."

"Oh!"

Another pause. I was swearing to myself.

"Well, come over here and let's pay these birds their cumshaw and then go and see what's wrong."

By the light of a lantern, the interpreter paid off the boat coolies and we walked around the edge of the cliff to where the road began. The third cart stood at the bottom. We went on past. The road suddenly inclined sharply upwards, and the mud was so slippery that I had to walk sidewise and dig in my heels to keep a footing. Just ahead was the second cart with a large stone under one of the wheels. In front the first was also stalled and held by rocks. The drivers were walking about waving their lanterns and talking at the top of their voices.

I had the interpreter call them together and we went into a huddle. After we came out, the drivers hitched all eight mules tandem fashion to the front cart. Two of the drivers stood by the front mule's head, two others at the side with their long whips, the rest of us ready to shove against the back of the cart or grasping wheel spokes. One of the drivers cracked his whip and let out a yell. Amidst the grunts and whoops of the men and the loud snorts of the mules, the cart creaked through the deep mud ruts, moved up the slippery hill, around the corner to the top and through the gates of the inn.

I walked back through the mud and threw open the door to the *shang fang*. There lay the pig-face boy stretched out on his campcot, in felt slippered feet, before a bowl of glowing charcoal. The small room had been swept clean. The cook-boy had spread a fresh white table cloth. It all looked comfortable and cozy.

I stood in the door a minute and looked at him.

"What do you think you came on this trip for?"

"Aw gee, don't get sore. The mules got stuck and I couldn't do anything—so I thought I'd better come on and get things fixed up and have the room warm for you."

I looked at my watch. Five minutes before midnight. I suddenly remembered. Christmas Night!

I called to the boy to bring hot water and towel. Through the meal of onion soup and canned beans I read "Hamlet", then went to bed.

XVI

WINTER AND EARLY SPRING OF 1913

a job of patient waiting—the new republic shears the farmer of his manhood—an American gift to China ends as a junk heap—accused of swallowing a watch and ruining the crops of Shansi Province—a beachcomber as an assistant—China's money barons —wild duck in flight

AFTER A NIGHT IN THE CHENG-chow mess, the pig-face boy and I caught the early morning train and were back at headquarters in Chentow late that evening. Garrod met us at the station and took me aside at once.

"What in the world happened to your letters and reports? Your telegram yesterday was the first word we've received about you since you've been gone. Three or four days after you left the railway line we began hearing rumors of bandits. Shanghai got word of it and wired instructions to call you back. Since then we've been shooting telegrams back and forth almost every day. Why didn't you write regularly?"

I was astonished.

"Well," I replied, "I did sent a short chit at the end of the pack mule trail. But I wrote my first report a week later. Then I came to the conclusion that if I mailed them out weekly, changing conditions might cause me to put down discrepancies and make conflicting statements. I decided to make them out in rough, check back each week and keep them running in a straight

line of argument, with the last made up as a complete summary. That's what I did. I have them with me all ready to hand in.

"About bandits. There were plenty of them around, although we didn't run into any. But as far as I could see, we were safe enough. They were all starved farmers with the crudest kind of weapons. We stuck to the main highways and were in a well-barred inn before dark. They only wanted chow."

"Gosh, I'm glad nothing happened," said Garrod with a sigh, "I'm the one who was responsible, and Shanghai was kicking up an awful stink. We had even arranged with the provincial authorities for a search party to start out a week from yesterday. You want to make it a rule always to keep the company informed."

A happy return—to be met with a call-down when I was all puffed up with the feeling of a job well done and excellent chances of a good, fat raise.

When we reached the mess the first thing I did was to run through my piled up mail. There it was—I could recognize the pale blue envelope at a glance. I tore it open. From the first of January a monthly increase of Mex. $25. The same standard minimum. I guess I'm still pretty young, I said to myself, and the trip wasn't so damned important, after all.

Garrod was still up to his neck in negotiations with the Shansi tax official, and our cigarettes were still being smuggled across the border by independent buyers. A few days after my return he took J. P. with him on a month's trip to Taiyuanfu, the capital of the province, to attempt a compromise. The pig-face boy sent in his resignation, and loafed around the mess waiting for a reply. Bartlett, Harry C. and I made cart trips around the plains. In between times, I took long tramps and ponyback rides, spent an hour a day in the Chinese village talking Chinese and read everything I could get my hands on.

When Garrod returned he was sore. The Shansi tax official, brother-in-law of the new provincial governor, was a lousy opium hound who was holding out for a prohibitive squeeze. The new governor * cared little; he was too busy organizing the province

* The famous Christian general, Feng Yu Hsiang.

into an independent state and going in for wholesale reforms along western lines. Moreover, the Shansi mountaineers were a proud people who considered themselves superior to those of the other provinces. With the newly formed republic in bankruptcy and split into factions, the governor was having a modernizing spree all on his own, and the rest of the country and the grasping, troublesome foreigners could be damned.

Nevertheless, Garrod decided, the Shansi government was losing money, and the tax official was making nothing so long as we refused to ship in our goods; the thing to do was to keep a foreigner sitting in Taiyuanfu and play the Chinese at their own game of "patient-waiting".

Towards the end of January I took the French narrow gauge to Taiyuanfu to do the job of patient waiting. Leaving Chentow at eight in the morning, the engine puffed its way over a winding trail up the mountains, stopping at small stations every twenty or thirty *li* until we reached the end of the line at five that afternoon. The mountains were much the same in color and formation as those of the southern section, but on a smaller scale and with every inch of level space cultivated. All about were rows of terraces banked with rocks to prevent washouts. Many of them were less than a foot wide and only a few feet in length. Huge boulders protruded around the terraces and much of the railway line had been blasted out of solid stone. The road stayed in debt, but the freight traffic was good and the French were said to have cleaned up, by a special set-up of overhead costs, a fortune from it.

The city lay behind a wall about four *li* from the station, separated by a broad, open plaza. As we neared the gate we faced a line of Chinese, mostly farmers, with a row of soldiers on each side. Ahead was a small wooden fence with an opening, the center just wide enough for one man to pass through at a time. At first I thought the soldiers were searching for opium. We stopped and watched. A weather beaten farmer was dragged inside by two soldiers standing within the fence. One grabbed his hat; the other pulled down the queue knotted around his head. The old farmer stood in a daze. Another soldier behind

grasped the end of his queue and pulled it taut. A fourth reached out with a pair of unwieldy shears and cut it off close to the scalp. The old man stood fumbling at his head. The soldiers had to push him along. He stumbled away with tears running down his lined cheeks. He had not heard of the new law passed as one of the steps taken to modernize his country. He only knew that he was, for some unknown reason, shorn of his manhood and that he was hopelessly and forever disgraced.

The queue was thrown into a large bamboo basket along with many others, one of the thousands of such baskets being filled at that time in almost every town and city in China. The foreign countries offered a big market for Chinese hair and paid good prices; the Chinese government needed money badly, and this was a profitable reform.

Our mess on one of the main shopping streets was a narrow compound with a front court for the Chinese and a brick paved back one for the foreigners. Most of the day, shop walls on the two sides cut off the sun, giving the two dungeon-like bedrooms, containing campcots covered with ragged sheets and musty army blankets, the clammy, dank atmosphere of a marsh. I found sleeping a tough job.

Early the first morning I went with the interpreter, a short fat Chinese who wore ill-fitting foreign clothes, to call on the dealers and explain our policy. Afterwards we poked about the city. Dust. At a distance, the red brick of walls and shops, the blue coated coolies and their loads, were all the same brown color. But I was surprised at the city's size. In the center was a fenced-in park spread over several acres, with trees and grass, a fountain and pavilions. Over towards the northeast was the weed-grown campus of the American university, built from the money (or what was left after the squeeze was subtracted) appropriated by the United States government as a refund out of the Boxer indemnity. The buildings were erected a few years after 1900; American professors were engaged; and the school opened with a flourish. But, as was the way in China, within a few more years squeeze had eaten so deeply into the sum laid aside for upkeep that the grounds and buildings had run to seed,

Two old cronies lunch between trains on hard-boiled eggs

and the salaries of the teachers left in arrears and cut until they were forced to leave.

A former teacher was still bunking in one of the empty dormitories. An elderly man with a distinguished white moustache and pointed beard, dressed in a neatly pressed double-breasted blue serge suit with white edging to the lapel of the vest, finishing off with grey spats and a monocle, he looked completely out of place. I asked him to the mess to have a scotch. He accepted with alacrity.

Upon our arrival, I found two representatives from the dealers requesting our presence at a dinner that evening. I took the elderly gentleman along. In that barren country good food and drink were at a premium; we were served a lot of greasy mixtures with pork predominating as the main ingredient. For wine we were given a cheap grade of kaoliang and a Japanese imitation of Hennessey's cognac. I was glad, however, that we had the brandy; the elderly gentleman enjoyed it immensely and left the dinner feeling talkative and spry. When we were back in the mess settled in the two broken-down easy chairs before the little iron stove, between sips of scotch and soda, he unfolded a new system of thought.

Back in the states he had been a promoter and (so he said) had put over many big enterprises. But by nature he was a philosopher. Happening to be in Washington when the University of Taiyuanfu was founded, he had seized the opportunity to land a job as teacher of psychology and economics so that he would have the peace and time to devote to the development of a new philosophy which he had created. Before the school closed a few months previously, he had written over two hundred thousand words, two thirds of the book he still meant to complete, expounding the Doctrine of Relaxation—the final system of philosophy, to supersede all others, and to remain the basis of all future thinking.

Relaxation (he said) was the prime creative spirit behind everything in the world. All creation came out of relaxation. All nature was relaxed, except man. He was bound down by an artificial tensity. The only time when man is completely relaxed is when he is drunk. He is at his highest creative point when his body throughout is relaxed by drink and his mind left free to soar into space without being held back by his conflicting tensions. The greatest wits and creative spirits in history were also the greatest drinkers. But before man could develop beyond his present, badly handicapped powers he must learn the Law of *Natural* Relaxation, physically, mentally, spiritually.

After his third scotch and soda, his mind wandered a bit, and in some roundabout way led him to a tale of his troubles with the new republican governor, who was trying to put over a mess of new laws and reforms, and, consequently, needed a good foreign adviser, a man with a level head and a broad knowledge of world affairs, one who would keep the too enthusiastic governor on solid ground. Moreover, the English and Japanese were trying to grasp concessions all over China, and a good hard-headed, unbiased American like himself was needed to protect and help develop the potential wealth of the province. But the devil of it was that the governor was an arbitrary, narrow-minded man who disliked all foreigners on account of having let himself be taken in by a few petty crooks.

After his fifth scotch and soda, the cultured old gentleman requested the loan of a hundred Mex. until the next two or three days, when the governor had promised him his back pay for teaching. I was sorry that I was unable to make it, and shortly afterwards helped him into a ricksha. A few days later he dropped in to say good-bye, and I heard later that he had passed through Shanghai on his way to Australia where politics was more liberal.

For several weeks I loafed around doing nothing but read. My interpreter was willing but any conversation had to be dragged out of him. The streets were tiresome and outside were bare, rocky fields; and the harsh, mountain dialect was impossible to understand. The light atmosphere and dry climate of North China gave most foreigners, and undoubtedly the Chinese also, a touch of "nerves", which often developed into a jumpy heart. I was getting moody and quick tempered. One night I picked up Zola's *Le Débâcle,* in a 6d translation, and started it

lying in bed. I have never read it since, but it still remains in mind as the world's most morbid, depressing study in degeneration. I finished it at two o'clock. For the rest of the night I tossed about under the musty army blankets in a half-awake stupor; characters from the book stood over my bed and leered at me.

In the morning I was a limp wrung-out rag. I was scared. Something had to be done. I couldn't allow myself to go on this way. So the same day I bought a pony and started morning rides, gave up the paper-backs and limited my reading to Shakespeare, Dickens and Dumas. I felt better.

Riding past the Italian Catholic Mission one morning I suddenly had the idea of taking lessons in French conversation from one of the priests. That would help, too, to fill out time. I made a formal call.

The mission, a three storied, old-fashioned white house set back in a spacious yard filled with trees and flowers, looked as if it might have been lifted bodily from down home in North Carolina. A stout, heavily bearded Italian priest received me in an enormous reception room, furnished rococo style. He was unable to understand my atrocious French, and to me his Italian was simply a bombardment of meaningless syllables. I tried Mandarin, and he threw up his hands. Finally, giving up in despair, he sent for two other bearded brothers. While they were holding a fiery consultation, I had an idea. Sticking up my right hand, I repeated slowly, *"Fran-çaise—Fran-çaise—la langue—Fran-çaise."*

"Ah, si, si! La Française!" They beamed and went into another huddle. One of them shook his finger triumphantly and hurried out. In a few minutes he returned with a tall, fine looking old Frenchman dressed in a long black robe. Speaking mixed Chinese and French, I managed to make myself understood. The old man was delighted. He clapped his hands, said something to the boy in the harsh Shansi dialect, and soon we were sipping red wine, munching a biscuit and in the midst of a pleasant, but slow moving, conversation. He would be glad to give me lessons at four in the afternoon every Monday and

Thursday. How much? Payment? He was insulted at the idea. Never. Life spent solely with the Chinese, he courteously informed me in a wistful tone, could be at times a most monotonous routine, and a visit from an outside foreigner would repay for the lessons many times over.

But when I started I found myself in trouble. I continued to whale away at Hillier's and as a consequence, my Chinese was interfering badly with French. When I started a sentence in French, Chinese words broke into the middle, and I ended up in a splutter. The kindly old French priest wanted me to stick it out, but Chinese was more important, and after five lessons I gave up. However, our friendship remained intact. I made frequent calls; from time to time I received a gift of duck eggs, and in return sent cartons of Virginia cigarettes.

In the meanwhile I had received two formal calls from the opium smoking tax official, a sickly looking, loose mouthed individual with long, dirty finger nails. The tax question was never mentioned until he was on the point of leaving. Then he asked when we expected to start shipments. Both times my answer was the same: as soon as the tax was lowered to permit.

The question remained at a standstill until one morning about a month after I had arrived, when I received from Shanghai a letter and a parcel containing an assortment of four fancy gold watches—big, fat ones that rang chimes and showed the day of the week. The letter stated that Mr. Garrod had suggested these as gifts, to be handed out as I thought best. The next day I sent one of the watches, with the compliments of the company, to the governor, and one to each of the two assistants of the tax official. The fourth and best I held in reserve, told the interpreter to spread the news that I had it, and waited.

Early in the morning, a day later, the tax official called. He was so excited that his under lip hung much looser than usual. All ceremony was cast aside. Where was his watch? Watch? I looked surprised. What watch? The watch the Great Company had sent from Shanghai. I shrugged my shoulders. I was sorry; surely, there was a mistake; perhaps the company was sending him a watch later, or it may have been delayed. But

had I not received a watch with instructions to give it to him? I was hurt. Would I not, I asked patiently, have sent his watch had I received it? Did he not know how the company valued its reputation for honesty? I waxed indignant.

The tax official was drooling at the mouth. Stamping his feet in helpless rage, he turned and stalked out of the room.

I kept the watch for five days, then sent it around with a formal note, stating that the original one had gone astray, but that the company had sent a new, much finer one and sincerely regretted the delay.

My idea was that to give his assistants gifts and pass up the official would start public gossip, but that when finally he received his watch, the best of the lot, along with a written apology for unavoidable delay, he would be forced to make a friendly gesture in turn to save his face; then it would be an excellent opportunity for him to back down gracefully and come to terms on the tax question.

That was what happened. He invited me to a dinner party. I invited him to the theatre. Every one could see that we were good friends. The tax question was settled almost immediately.

A few days later I ran down to Chentow to talk over things with Garrod. When I stepped off the train Garrod, Harry C. and Bart were standing on the platform. I said, "Hello!"

No answer. They walked around me, looking me up and down.

"He's changed."

"No wonder. They say he's queer about his food."

"I understand he's left the company and gone into the watch business. They say he's doing pretty well."

"Yeh, but he played hell with the Shansi climate; they say he killed all the Shansi crops."

They kept this razzing going until we reached the mess. Then Garrod took me by the arm, led me into his office and closed the door. We left Harry C. and Bart standing in the other room shaking their heads. I was puzzled. Garrod unlocked the safe, took out a letter and handed it to me. It was a translation from the Chinese addressed to the Shanghai office and read:

Everywhere in the world everybody knows your great company is famous and is noted as none other for its amazing integrity and fairness. When it makes promise to keep it always keep faithfully. But, lo, a young man from your great company come to Taiyuanfu bringing gifts. Before he come, the sky was clear and blue, the farmers have abundant crops and peace and plenty was in land and everybody was prosperous and happy. But after he come the sky is black and overcast and the grasshoppers swarmed and ruined the farmers' crops and the land is in famine and the people suffer. He have watches from your great company to give your great company's friends. But he is like dog who eats its own vomit. He takes back watches and swallow for himself. That is bad for your great reputation and I tell you so that you may make wrong right and take this evil man out of Shansi that the sun may shine again and you may save your great reputation.

* * * * *

A few days later a new man arrived in Chentow. Business was going ahead at such a rate that the company was picking up every one it could find. When this one was engaged in Shanghai he was a beachcomber. A human skeleton, he stood well over six feet and weighed less than one hundred and thirty pounds. After a week of bridge and craps and matching silver, I took him back with me to Taiyuanfu to teach him the routine of posting, sampling and selling.

He called himself Butch. He had been born and raised by a sister on the Barbary Coast. At seven he was selling newspapers. At fifteen he had risen to the rank of a news-butcher on a local running out of San Francisco to some place in Arizona. When he was twenty he was shanghaied and jumped the freighter at Bangkok. There he obtained a job as foreman of a tin mine located several hundred miles back in the interior, the only white man. He loved the native girls so much that he remained for six years bossing Chinese laborers. When he left he went to

Shanghai and blew in all his money. An incident he told showed the kind of queer quirks his mind took.

One evening he was sitting in the bar of the Astor House in Shanghai. The place was crowded and noisy with non-com. sailors and marines. A big buck American marine sergeant, weighing around two hundred pounds, was half-tight and boasting of his prowess. He had never been whipped in his life and could lick any two men in the place.

"He talked too much," said Butch, "and I always had a hunch that a guy that shoots off his mouth too much ain't got the guts to back it up. He keeps on braggin'. So finally I says, 'I don't believe you're as good as you say you are,' I says. He gets out of his cheer and looks me over and he says, 'Well,' he says, 'if you don't believe it, take your coat off and get up here on the floor,' he says. So I takes my coat off and folds it up and the bunch moves the cheers back and the first thing I know I'm on my back. I gets up and the first thing I know I'm on my back again. And so finally I just set there on the floor and says to him, 'Well, I guess you're right,' I says and goes back to my table and puts back on my coat, and he comes over and sets down and buys a drink. He wasn't a bad feller."

He was also full of love stories about himself and the Siamese girls. He wanted to get back, and from the day he arrived begged me to put five thousand Mex. behind him to smuggle opium into Shanghai from Bangkok. He had it all worked out at both ends and in the middle. His talk was so wild at times that I was a bit afraid he might suddenly go off at a tangent. I stuck him in the bedroom across the dining-living room from mine, but early one morning caught a glimpse of him dosing himself with several medicines in a suspicious way. After that I had the boy take good care to wash our tableware with separate water and cloths, kept a check on the towels and bed sheets, and hid away the boracic acid and eye cup I was using on account of the dust and dryness. Even though business was growing faster than the company could get men out from home to keep up, it did seem to me that it would have paid better to give those in the field an incentive to speed up by an all around

increase in pay than by picking up chronically diseased tramps.

The policy looked all wrong. I started Butch on a trip to the north and wrote a personal chit to Garrod. Then I set out on a trip to the south.

At a junction connecting with the main highway about thirty *li* from Taiyuanfu a country fair was under way out in the open near the station. Hundreds of farmers and their families were seated on stools at the small chow stands or circled around wandering acrobats and jugglers. In the foreground was a wooden platform raised about fifteen feet on poles, with a roof and back made of bamboo mats. This was the theatre. Once every year a wandering theatrical troupe came, and for six days performed a series of classical plays. One play often lasted two days; at the end a speaker came out and translated the plot. From morning to night a large crowd stood intently watching and listening with their mouths open, not understanding a word.

I asked the interpreter how many dialects he thought there were in Shansi. He shook his head. Farmers living three or four *li* apart, he replied, often could not understand each other; many of them never left their homes from birth to death. His answer started a train of thought. On the rest of the trip I stopped at villages along the way and checked on the pronunciation of the word for water, in the Mandarian dialect, *shui*. Within a radius of two hundred *li* I ran into eight variations approximating the following sounds: *shwei, shi, shu, fui, fwei, fwi, lei, luh*. In the whole of China, I figured, there must be several thousand local dialects, and the average vocabulary of the farmer, I was sure, did not run to more than three hundred words. Hillier placed the average ricksha coolie's at five hundred. But, of course, ricksha coolies lived in towns and picked up street slang and sing-song talk, words with which the poor isolated farmer never came in contact.

The next stop on our trip, Taiku, three quarters of a day's journey from Taiyuanfu, was the only important city towards the south, and was different. Lying on a rocky, unproductive plain, all of the walls, houses and shops were built of stone. One main street, the bare width of two carts, ran through the

center. The shops were laid on a stone foundation which rose about two feet above the road and protruded about a foot in front. The shopkeepers did their morning bathing in the doorways and threw their slops and trash out into the road. In the winter the town was bleak and forbidding; piercing, biting winds whistled through the narrow thoroughfare and the surface was rough, blackened ice. In the summer a dead, sultry heat settled over the place, swallows flew swiftly back and forth catching the swarming, buzzing flies and the shopping street was a mass of mud and filth. Winter and summer the town stank.

Yet the Taiku district represented more wealth per capita than any other part of China. As we continued our journey south we passed, one after the other but far apart, great walled estates standing alone and repellent on the silent plain, deliberately shutting out the rest of the world. These were the homes of Shansi bankers who had retired after making their fortunes in the large business centers. Almost all of them were related directly or by marriage, and for centuries they had been the great financiers of China, each generation of men going forth to make its fortune, returning to intermarry, build its own castles and settle down to a life of leisure, and raise sons to carry on the custom. The pride of race and aloofness that typified the mountaineer tribes of Shansi was concentrated to its highest degree in the souls of these aristocrats.

From the outside, their homes were really fortresses, with turrets at the corners where soldiers always stood on watch to guard against the surprise attacks of roaming tribes of bandits. The families forming these tribes had also been raised in their own traditions, and there was a tacit understanding that the constant warfare waged between the two was a strictly private affair.

Few outsiders had ever entered one of these estates, but through the underground channel of servants many stories had leaked out. Each had its own little army running to as many as two thousand trained soldiers. And the main compound was divided into many small ones for different family groups, each self-containing, with its own staff of servants and its own private gardens in which to play and roam.

At our last stop the dealer told us that if we cut across country we could catch the Taiyuanfu train at a small station only twenty *li* away. We started out early in the morning. The wild straggly grass, a sort of witch grass growing out of reddish brown soil peculiar to that part of Shansi, was silvery with frost. Where the road turned, about five *li* from the station, a small river followed it part of the way. Recently I had received a Remington automatic shotgun ordered from New York; carrying it under my arm I crept as close to the bank as I could. Patches of snow were still on the ground and the spring thaw was setting in; I could only get within twenty or twenty-five yards. Slowly rising, I peered cautiously over the tops of the rushes growing along the edge. As far as I could see in both directions the water was filled with white wild ducks. As I straightened, they let out a cry and, with a mighty squawking and a terrific roar of flapping wings, drew themselves a few feet above the water. Heads thrust straight out, they shot down stream in a mass, like lightning. For a second, the sight held me still. Then, as fast as I could pick one out and line it up, I aimed a foot ahead and let go—five shots before the last were out of distance. Three ducks lay floating on the water.

Without thinking, I made for the bank and sank almost up to my knees in the soft mud. The number one coolie, who had kept behind, had to reach out a stick and drag me back. For more than a quarter of an hour the coolie and I floundered around with sticks and stones trying to find a way to reach the ducks before the current carried them too far down, but we finally had to give up, and longingly watch them float out of sight.

When I raised the ducks I also scared up a flock of geese. On our way back to the road they were still out of formation; one lone goose flying overhead was honking desperately for his lost relatives and friends. He was at least two hundred yards away and I was using No. 2 shells, but as I was as anxious now to get

some meat as he was to get away, I took one last hopeless shot. Much to my surprise down he tumbled.

Waiting at the station for the train I tried to run down some ground partridges, but they were colored a russet brown almost the same as the earth. Every time I flushed one I lost sight of him, even less than twenty feet away. Finally, I threw the gun at one, and walked away in disgust, leaving the coolie to pick it it up and bring along.

When I walked into the first class compartment of the train there sat Bart fast asleep in a corner. I woke him up and asked what he was doing there. He replied that he was on his way to join me, and handed over a letter stating that Butch was to be transferred at once.

I said, "Thank God for that!"

XVII

MAY–SEPTEMBER: 1913

I represent the U. S. A. at a celebration of the recognition of the new republic—a cook-boy dies and there is trouble bringing him in and getting him out of the city—a disagreement on etiquette with a happy ending—last word of Frost

BARTLETT STAYED IN TAIYUANFU long enough to buy a pony, then moved to Taiku. He was going to get an American army saddle; but I maintained that the English was far more comfortable for all-day riding, and he gave in. My advice was bad; his short, stocky legs could not accustom themselves to drawn up stirrups. Every ten days or so he rode over to Taiyuanfu for a visit. My first question was always the same: "How are you getting along with your posting?" His answer never varied: "About the same. I fell off two (or three) times today."

During the first week of May America gave formal recognition to the Chinese Republic, the first nation to do so. A few days later a closed carriage, accompanied by an armed guard of outriders, drew up in front of the compound. Two officers in full dress uniform alighted and, followed by four of the guard, marched back into my quarters. Standing at attention, they presented me with a sealed letter. My interpreter translated:

A meeting in celebration of the recognition of the Republic of China by the government of the United States of

America is to be held three days from date in the public gardens, and the Hon. Ho Ching Shan, as representative of the American people, is cordially invited to attend as the guest of honor. A dinner will follow the same evening at 8 P. M.

I bowed to the officers. They saluted, turned on their heels and marched out. Immediately, I had the interpreter write and deliver personally a formal acceptance in which I stated that a fellow countryman was located in Taiku and that I was sending for him to join me in sharing the great honor conferred. In the meantime I sent a telegram to Bartlett.

At three o'clock on the afternoon of the third day the officers presented themselves again and escorted the interpreter and myself to the waiting carriage. Bartlett had not arrived. While the carriage bounced and swayed through the dust I sat furtively eyeing the paper on which I had written a short speech. My interpreter had a copy in Chinese.

We drew up at the gate of the park with a flourish. The two officers stepped out of the carriage and stood by the door. I got out and looked around. The park was packed. I could see nothing but waving banners and staring faces. Twenty thousand Chinese at least were standing rammed together, craning their necks.

As we passed inside, the regimental band at the gate played a salute, and two lines of soldiers stood at attention with drawn bayonets as we walked between them down a narrow path to the back door of a squat summer house at the end. Upon my entrance the room echoed with the shuffling of feet and the clanking rattle of swords as board chairmen, guild heads and officers, ranking from slender lieutenants to beefy, red faced generals, rose from their seats. The merchants wore top hats and frock coats and most of the officers were in dark blue uniforms and black leather boots, although a few had on congress gaiters. They stood stiff and erect.

Without further ceremony, I was ushered to the front door where the head of the staff, loaded with decorations, joined

me. The band struck up a version of *The Star Spangled Banner*, and two by two, top general and I in the lead, we marched slowly up another path connecting with a green, two-storied pavilion two hundred yards ahead. On each side we passed rows of soldiers at attention, school boys and girls and the recently shaved leading merchants dressed in their holiday best. The school boys had on grey cotton cloth caps and suits, long trousers loose at the bottom. The girls wore white blouses and black, short, pleated skirts. All carried small American flags or white banners with black characters, attached to the ends of long, swaying bamboo poles.

My interpreter and I were placed in the center of the balcony, surrounded by generals and high civic officials. I was introduced —cheers and hand clapping. I bowed and cleared my throat.

I said that to be able to represent my country at a time like this was the highest honor that could fall upon any one; it was only fitting that the oldest and greatest republic of the West should be the first nation to extend the hand of friendship to the newest and greatest republic of the East; there was much we could learn from each other; and (peroration) with her new ideals of freedom and equality, backed by thousands of years of culture, China was bound to develop into one of the most prosperous and civilized nations of today.

Prolonged hand clapping and waving of banners.

My interpreter repeated the speech in Chinese. More enthusiasm. Then one of the civil governors made a quiet acknowledgement, followed by two lukewarm speakers who were only mildly welcomed. But suddenly, on my left, a round fiery-faced little general with a shock of closely cropped black hair and long curling moustaches, stepped to the front, stood silent for a second looking over the crowd below, then, without warning shot forth an unbroken stream of words like a bunch of fire crackers popping off. He waved his arms and pounded the rail; he perspired freely all over through his heavy, full-dress uniform; his face grew redder and redder until I thought he was going to burst and collapse. But he kept up at full speed for a half hour, holding the crowd spellbound—while I continually changed from one foot

to the other. At the finish, the audience broke out into one great roar, and clapped their hands for five minutes. I heaved a sigh of relief.

My interpreter translated parts of the speech. The general told the people that they must throw off the shackles of tradition and live in the present; China must be turned into a land of freedom and equal opportunities for every one; every child, boy or girl, must receive a practical education; there must be no binding of women's feet, no queues for men; and the boys must be trained into fighters; a nation stood or fell by the strength and fighting quality of her men.

His fiery speech demanded democracy and modernity. My interpreter added that the general had also expressed the deep-rooted hatred of the northern Chinese for the over-bearing Japanese; the Japanese were always doing underhand tricks, and could not be trusted far in business; they were *hou'rh* (monkeys); they stocked gullible Chinese shopkeepers with loads of cheap imitations of Western products; their importers and exporters had a way of repudiating debts whenever they felt like it, knowing that their consulates would back them up; and only the fact that the other foreign nations were in a position to say, hands off, prevented them from practically taking control of the country.

At the end of the little general's speech the school children sang *My Country 'Tis of Thee* in Chinese as we passed through the lines back to the summer house. Once inside, we sat stiff and speechless while claret and cakes were served. Then an officer rose to his feet, clanked his heels together, bowed and made a toast. We all stood up, the others facing me, and drank. I made my interpreter repeat after me a toast to the Republic of China. After fifteen or twenty minutes of these mutual congratulations, an aide tip-toed up and whispered to my interpreter. My interpreter leaned over and said, "We go now." I arose, the rest of the room arose and stood while the two officers who had brought us, escorted us out. We passed through the waiting crowds; the band played another salute; we entered the carriage and drove back to the mess.

Two hours later Bart, dusty and sore from riding (he had fallen off four times, he said, trying to hurry), walked in. He had been away on a trip and had only received my message the night before.

Shortly after his arrival, the carriage called again to take us to the dinner. Six or eight officials received us with apologies from the governor who was up to his neck in work and was sorry that he was unable to come. Bart and I decided that the governor was acting snooty. We marked it down. When the food came on it was greasy, porky and badly cooked. We marked that down. The drinks consisted of rotten kaoliang, warm beer and a poor Japanese imitation of an English brandy. That was the last straw. All of the representatives, like so many Chinese officials, were stout and soft, so we started to work on them with an endless series of toasts, insisting on a glass of brandy for every one. We toasted everything about the Republic of China that we could think of. To be polite, our hosts were compelled to follow each one with a toast to America. At the finish Bart and I were pretty dizzy and unstable, but had achieved our end. We bade good-night to a sickly, drooling, pie-eyed lot of hosts; they were hardly able to get out of their chairs. As a matter of fact, we did leave some of them folded across the table, staring cross-eyed at half-empty dishes and glasses.

The next morning I wrote a formal letter to the American Legation in Peking notifying them of the reception. In a few days I received an acknowledgement from Minister Reinsch, stating that my letter had been forwarded to the State Department at Washington. Two months later I received a note of thanks signed by Secretary Lansing.

* * * * *

Summer came. In Taiku the sweltering heat and nauseating smells became so unbearable that Bartlett made headquarters with me at Taiyuanfu. In the late winter and early spring bandits had increased and on his last trip over Bart passed a gang on the road. He was riding about a half *li* ahead of his cart

when he looked behind and saw it surrounded. He hurried back, handed them out a few tins of canned fruits and cartons of cigarettes, he said, and they went their way. They were in rags and all told had only one gun, a rusty old muzzle loading flintlock rifle; the rest of their arsenal consisted of knives and small scythes used for cutting grain.

Along towards the middle of July Bart took a cart trip north to Tatungfu, a city not far south of the great wall. On an afternoon towards sundown, three weeks after he started, I was sitting on the door steps of the living room trying to cool off when Bartlett walked in. We shook hands and he joined me. His face was white and he looked peaked and all in. For a long time we sat without speaking. I waited. Finally, he could hold in no longer.

"My cook-boy died."

"When?"

"Three days ago on the road."

"Where is he?"

"Outside—in front of the compound."

"How in the world did you get him through the gate?" A strict law prevailed forbidding dead bodies to be brought within the gates of a city without special permission from the magistrate, and under no circumstances unless the family dwelt there. The cook-boy was from Peking.

"He was lying inside the cart wrapped in mats and the guard didn't see him."

"How did he happen to kick off?"

"He's been sickly ever since I had him, but I kept him on because he was a good cook. I didn't find out until this trip that he was an opium smoker, and it was too late to do anything.

"Everything was all right until we started back. The road was so full of stones that my pony was stumbling all the time, and I fell off so much that I finally gave up and rode on the Peking cart. The cook sat on one side and was acting sort of queer. His mouth was hanging open and his eyes were rolling around, and he kept talking to himself. I thought at first he

was going crazy, and after that I walked until I was too tired and had to ride.

"On the second day out I was sitting there by him, and he started vomiting and fell off the cart. I got the coolies to lay him back inside and spread blankets over him. He lay there for two days, shivering and sweating and talking to himself. I couldn't make him eat or move.

"Three days ago I was walking ahead of the two carts when I heard shouting. I looked back. The carts were standing still and the drivers and coolies were waving their arms and yelling. I ran back and found the cook lying there with head twisted back and his tongue hanging out, dead.

"The Chinese wouldn't go near him. I had to wait until that evening when we stopped at a rest house, then I bought some old bamboo mats and had to wrap him up myself.

"For the last three days we've been travelling steadily all day and night. I've walked all the way and haven't eaten anything but canned fruit."

I tried to buck him up. I said, "Don't worry. It's just one of those things that happen—it's all over now, and we can easily fix it up. Get it off your mind. Go ahead and wash up, and I'll tell the boy to have chow right away."

While Bart was cleaning up I went out and had a talk with the interpreters. While we were eating dinner they arranged for some beggars—the only Chinese who would handle a dead body—to carry the cook into the front courtyard. After dinner the four of us called on the chief of police.

A guard at the gate of the *yamen* (official residence) stopped us, enquired our errand and passed us on to another policeman, who led us to the chief's house at the back of the courtyard. For five minutes we waited in an anteroom until a third one arrived to usher us into the chief's office, a kind of box affair containing a foreign desk and leather chair and several Chinese high-backed blackwood chairs. In a few minutes a fourth policeman entered, saluted our guard and asked him to tell us that the chief was finishing his dinner but would be with us very soon. We waited another ten minutes before the chief, a tall robust

man in his fifties wearing a blue gown, entered chewing a toothpick. We all bowed and he waved us to seats. During the whole conference the policeman, with a big automatic in his belt, stood at attention behind his chair.

The interpreter repeated Bart's complete story in full detail, and at the end explained that Bart had not known of the law, that the Chinese with him were unacquainted with the law about bringing dead bodies inside the city gates and that we had come straight to the chief to ask his advice and receive his instructions.

For a long time the chief sat back, thoughtfully chewing his toothpick and stroking the few long hairs above his upper lip. Then he spoke rapidly, emphasizing his points by pushing his right forefinger on the fingers of his left hand. At the end of his harangue, the police guard ground an ink stick in some water at the bottom of a small clay bowl; the chief shook back the long loose sleeve of his gown, picked up a brush, examined it carefully, flourished it in the air while he cleared his throat, and began to write.

Finished, the policeman handed him a wooden chop and held out a brass container in which was stuffed a ball of yarn soaked with red ink. The chief again held up his right arm and shook back his sleeve, pressed the chop on the ball of yarn, carefully stamped it on the paper, then sat back with a grunt of triumph.

After repeating this performance he handed the two documents to the interpreter and bowed us out.

The chief was a fine old fellow. He had ordered us to buy a coffin at once and have the body kept in it, hidden away in the back compound until the next morning when we must get it out of the city. One of the documents was a permit to keep the body in the city for twenty-four hours, the other to get it out through the gate. By nine o'clock that evening the wrapped up body was lying inside the bulky wooden coffin, well sprinkled with lime.

Unless a Chinese was buried in his family burial grounds he was out of luck with his ancestors; his spirit would be high-hatted. After discussing this matter, Bart and I reached the conclusion that the only fair thing to do was to ship the body to the bereaved family in Peking.

Early in the morning we tramped across to the railway station to obtain permission to ship the coffin to Chentow for transfer to the Peking line. The Chinese station master greeted us but was very sorry, the French inspector was away, he would be back on the evening train; as for himself, he regretted that he did not have the authority to ship dead bodies.

Towards afternoon, the air in the neighborhood of the coffin carried a faint, subtle odor that reminded me of Mark Twain's story of the cheese and the stiff in the overheated baggage car. Bart and I were becoming anxious. We sent for the coolies and ordered more lime.

When the evening train arrived we were back at the station to meet the Frenchman. At first he shook his head doubtfully, but after showing him the magistrate's certificate and finally persuading him that the body was in good condition, he agreed to ship it.

The next day we paraded through the streets and across the plaza at the head of a procession of ragged beggars carrying the coffin on their shoulders. As we neared his house the Frenchman came down the steps and joined us. Occasionally, he sniffed the air and coughed; once or twice he took out his handkerchief and blew his nose. At last he could hold in no longer.

"He is become old, I think. No? One more day—phew—too late!" He shook his head. "I think it is necessary that he have ice. No?"

We agreed. And the train was more than a half hour late, waiting while the ice was commandeered from the railway and laid around the coffin by the beggars. As the train pulled out the Frenchman stood staring after it with a dubious, worried look, and appeared to be murmuring under his breath.

* * * * *

In the early part of October I received a letter calling me back to Chentow. Not far out from Taiyuanfu the train, with a sudden grinding of brakes and a grating slide of wheels, was

brought to a sharp halt. Through the window I could see only the open country, but on the other side I heard a violent commotion of voices raised in shouts and the heavy clumping of boots. Bandits, I said to myself.

Then, through the window of the closed door to the compartment which I had to myself, I glimpsed a bunch of soldiers pushing each other up and down the corridor. They were dressed in black caps and tan khaki uniforms with trousers stuffed into short black, stiff leather boots; around their waists were heavy black leather belts; and over their left shoulders hung thick red cords, to which were attached clumsy wooden holsters holding long-barrelled German automatics. Most of these soldiers were carrying rolled-up bedding or boxes.

A big, burly brute, who seemed to be giving most of the orders, peered into my compartment, stared me up and down, then unlatched the door and slid it open. After standing there for a moment, he turned his head, gave some orders in the throaty Shansi dialect, and drew himself to attention by the side of the door as a slender, delicate middle-aged Chinese woman, followed by an amah, walked into the compartment and took the opposite seat.

While soldiers were bringing in parcels and boxes and laying them on the corner of the seat, I stole a good look at her over the separating table. She had the straight, thin nose and impersonal poise of generations of breeding, accented by the tilted-back carriage of her head and slender delicate hands with long pointed nails. Her black hair was combed back from her forehead in one silky roll, and plaited down behind her back around a black silk cord with a tassel at the end. Her long silk gown was of a soft shade of lavender decorated with medallions; from her ears dangled two pieces of perfectly matched jade in exquisite settings of filligreed gold and, to match, her wrists were circled by a half dozen or more jade and gold bracelets. Her amah, according to custom, was dressed in black, and both had bound feet.

My furtive stare was interrupted by the voice of the soldier who had ushered her in. He was standing with his gun drawn

in his right hand. Behind him stood two other thugs, also with drawn automatics. When I looked up he scowled and waved his pistol towards the corridor. Now, the train had only one car for first and second class and only two compartments in the first class section. Through the partition I had already heard the soldiers dump the Chinese passengers out of the other. I had paid for my seat, was there first and I decided not to budge. I stared at the swashbuckler for a second, then turned and looked out of the window.

There was a moment's silence, broken by the yells of the bully in front and followed by muffled talk in the corridor. Some one plucked at my sleeve. I glanced up. The emaciated little conductor was bending over. Bowing profusely he pointed to the lady in lavender and then to the corridor. I told him in my coolie Chinese to fetch my interpreter. He held a short consultation with the burly leader and rushed off. By now the corridor was crowded with other soldiers, and a large portion of the train crew, drawn by the noise, were all talking at once trying to explain to each other what was happening.

The conductor reappeared with my interpreter, who was riding in the second class and was now almost white with fear. He begged me to move at once; the woman was the wife of a general who had taken the other compartment, and Chinese etiquette demanded that a woman of her high social standing be allowed a compartment to herself; if I did not get out at once there might be much trouble; I might even be killed.

"Mr. Ch'ing," I said, "tell this man that I paid for the seat in this compartment. It is mine by right of first come first served. Besides, the general has taken the other compartment and stuck in part of his bodyguard with him. There's no reason why he can't move his soldiers out and give the room to his wife. And as for making trouble, tell the bird with the gun that I said that I am with a large, well-known company in good standing with the Chinese government, and if he starts playing the part of a bandit he will probably get himself and the general, too, into a rotten mess."

Lord knows what the end would have been had not the general,

attracted by the sound of a foreign tongue, poked his head in at the finish of my little speech. He looked around, asked some questions, and turning to me, gravely put his hands together and bowed. I stood up, stuck my hands together and bowed back. This exchange of courtesy finished, he clapped his hands and issued orders. Within a few minutes all of the luggage was moved out of the compartment and his wife who had sat unconcerned, unnoticing, throughout the squabble, sedately followed, with her quivering amah stumping along behind like a plump upset hen.

When the general had his wife settled in the other compartment he again entered mine with a bow, pulled out a wallet, hunted for a card, handed it to me and with another bow seated himself. I gave him one of mine. He ordered one of his soldiers standing outside the door to bring his own special brand of tea and we drank to each other. For an hour, before he dozed off, we had a pleasant, if difficult, chat. He was a stocky little man, a general high up in the Shansi provincial government, on his way to pay his respects to the president in Peking. He asked me to disregard the lack of courtesy of his soldiers; they were an uneducated lot who did not understand foreign customs. Like every well-educated Chinese I have known, his sense of etiquette was perfect.

When I arrived at Chentow the first words that greeted me were: "What the hell did you and Bart mean by sending down that stiff in such a condition?"

When Garrod received our telegram about the shipment, he sent the Chinese traffic head over to arrange to have the coffin transferred to Peking. As soon as the train pulled in, the French inspector in charge at the station, after one sniff, ordered the car to be shunted to a sidetrack out of the direction of the breezes from the south and insisted on immediate removal of the coffin. The man sent by Garrod finally persuaded some beggars, for a good round sum of money, to carry it a mile down the Peking–Hankow railway below the mess and lay it on a pile of cross-ties. But even at that distance the doors and windows of the mess facing south had to be kept closed. There it remained

for five days until, after much palaver and discreet distribution of cumshaw, the box was loaded by another crew of beggars on an empty flat car which was hitched to the end of a midnight freight. The family received the coffin at the Peking station and, to the best of my knowledge, the cook-boy was laid to rest in peace under the tall trees of the family burial ground.

* * * * *

At the mess I found a letter from Johnny who was still running the Peking office. In part he wrote:

The Old Man was up this week checking up on things. We had him to the mess for dinner one night. We were all sitting around afterwards chewing the rag, when he suddenly turned to me and said, "By the way, I've got a letter here I've been carrying around to show you fellows."

Well, the old man fumbled around in his pockets and finally pulled out a crumpled up sheet of paper, and said, "Read that over. It's a funny damned letter and I wanted to see what you make of it."

Well, the letter was from Frost, begging and pleading for the Old Man to take him back on. He said he was willing to pay his own way back, work for a hundred Mex. a month, and go anywhere the company wanted him to, and never make a kick.

I handed it back, and said, "Sure, I know what it is, he's just discovered he's the fellow that's bewaunked."

Then I told the Old Man about the way Frost used to march up and down and beef, and how he invented the word.

Thought you might be interested.

XVIII

OCTOBER–NOVEMBER: 1913

settling down in the famine section where one year out of four means life or death—along the highways and on the farms—one of the oldest and largest professions in China

IN THE MORNING GARROD TOOK me for a walk down the railroad track.

"I wanted to get you away from the other fellows where we could talk without being disturbed."

What had I done now? Was it the stiff—or had my chit about Butch struck a bad note?

"Shanghai has decided to split up the Division in two parts—it's my idea—and I want you to take charge of the southern section, the new Honan Division, headquarters in Changtefu. I'll check with you for a while to see that you get started off all right.

"In the meantime, don't say anything about it to any of the other fellows. You know how it is; there'll be enough jealousy and talk about pull anyway. Just keep it under your hat until we get all the details fixed and are ready to shoot."

"You bet," I said. "But—I know it's no time to ask—but is there any increase attached?"

"It's a bad time right now—only a few months before the end of the year—but they're sure to come across with a good one then."

That helped. I felt fine.

Looking through some old files not long ago I ran across two torn sheets of paper yellowed by time. They were part of five or six on which, back in 1914, I had typed out impressions of Changtefu:

Harry C. always maintained that it was the vilest place in China into which a foreigner could be wished, and Harry C. was one who knew, for he made a specialty of choosing vile holes—places miles away from nowhere, places where the days had no names and where God was merely a curse. I can swear coldbloodedly and calmly that Changtefu is the most wretched, poverty stricken, filthy hole in the most desolate district of a country where poverty ranks second only to disease in popularity.

On the plains of Honan lies Changtefu. As far as the eye can see in any direction, there is only the vast sweep of the flat lowland, with here and there a collection of dead dobe huts, here and there a few trees circling a mound of graves; and rising up from the plains, the forbidding walls of Changtefu: dirty and crumbling walls, ancient and tottering, silent and grim, symbolical of the civilization they represent.

Changtefu is within the clutches of the Huang Ho, *the slimy winding river that reaches out like an octopus and slowly crushes all within its reach. It is fate—there is no escape—if the river is quiet and stays in its course one year out of four, the farmer can manage to exist.* Hao lo—*it is good. If not, he must turn bandit and prey on others as poor as himself.* Mei yu fatzu—*there is no remedy.*

It has been a bad year in Changtefu. Huang Ho *has been particularly vicious and robbers are thick on the plains. There are many beheadings every morning. But is death a cure for an incurable disease?*

(There are a number of sheets missing here, but it goes on when I was feeling lonesome one night):

At sundown a bugle, an old bugle dented and rusty, cast in the time of Nero, sends forth a long dull wail. It is the signal for the battered old gates to creak shut. Across the fields, a farm hand naked to the waist and sweating, hurries chanting in a high nasal sing-song—happy at the thought of rest and a cup of tea. Carts, coolies, wheelbarrows, pour through the gates, amidst rolls and rolls of dust. It is always dusty on the plains. Dozens of beggars throng the gateway, soliciting every passerby for a cash. All have the same monotonous whine, "Lao Yeh, ta Lao Yeh shang kei wo, mei yu fan," *and bump go the heads on the ground in elaborate kowtows.*

Within the town everything grows quiet; at long intervals smoky oil lamps light the narrow dusty streets. The shop assistants are putting up the shutters; the shroffs are counting the day's receipts; or assistants are crowded around a little table having their evening meal.

By dark, the town will be quiet, deathly quiet and black, with only the night watchman passing by every hour slowly beating a tom-tom,—blackness, stillness, a child's cry, a dog's bark, a groan.

Early in September, 1913, I started out for this center of famine with Chang, my interpreter, his wife and two small boys, a Chinese teacher just out of college, a middle-aged cook-boy, a strapping, slue-footed number one coolie, a nondescript number two, Dumb (the pony) and *mafu*, automatic shotgun, box of books, a foot-high bronze Buddha which was always with me as a luck piece, and a lot of second-hand office furniture and stationery.

Before leaving Chentow I had mailed out orders for a small safe, a typewriter, a punching bag, a year's subscription to *Country Life in America*, *Review of Reviews* and the *Peking Daily News*, this last a Chinese newspaper edited in English by some bright young reformers of the new People's Party (Kuo Ming Tang) headed by the honorable, anglicized Mr. Wellington Koo. I had also arranged for Kelley & Walsh, the leading

English bookstore in the Far East, to send me their weekly list of all new publications.

A broad open space of about a *li* in length separated the station from the city wall, but to reach the main gate it was necessary to pass down the outside of the south wall for another *li*. The combined office and mess hid in one of the narrow *hutungs* that ran into the main shopping street. It consisted of one small courtyard paved with fresh red brick.

My interpreter, Chang, was a gem. I had met him at Chentow, where on Sunday I often sat behind his chair watching him and his friends play *ma chiang* with an astonishing deftness and speed. Although he always sat in, he invariably lost. Once I asked him why he kept on playing when he never won. Did he love it so much?

"No," Chang replied bluntly, "I don't like *ma chiang*. But all Chinese play. All place I go my friends ask me play *ma chiang*. Always I have bad luck. Every month I lose one third salary. But it must be so. It is good business."

Everything about Chang was blunt, his stocky figure, his angular movements and manner of speech and his square face and spatulate fingers. Even the umbrella he carried and the clothes he wore, his foreign grey cap and incongruous pair of high, light tan, square-toed shoes showing from beneath his flowing blue silk gown, were blunt. These outward characteristics expressed the sterling qualities of the inner man, honest, straight-forward, sincere, practical and obstinate. The dealers liked and respected him because he made them toe the mark.

A few days after we arrived in Changtefu I asked him about his two boys. How old were they?

"One eight—one nine," replied Chang.

"What are you going to do about school?"

"Oh, I have all fixed. They go missionary school."

"What mission school?" I knew that French and Italian Catholic missions were located in almost every town in the interior, but had not yet discovered any signs of either Catholic or Protestant in Changtefu.

"Canadian Methodist. They have big compound two *li* out-

side city. Very nice place. Have chapel, school, many foreign brick houses, large garden, tennis courts. Every day my wife take two boys school—every Sunday morning she take Sunday school."

"Why, Chang, I never knew you were a Christian. Do you believe in our foreign God?"

"Oh, no!"

"Does your wife?"

"Oh, no!"

"Then why does she take the boys to Sunday school?"

"Must be so. My wife she not take my two boys Sunday school, they not teach my boys speak English. Like me, I go Methodist University, Peking, learn speak, then I make more money. Same my two boys learn English, make more money when they grow up."

"Did you go to church and Sunday school at the university?"

"Oh, yes, must go. I not pretend believe, then they not allow me study learn speak English."

"Did any of your friends believe in our foreign God?"

"Oh, no! They all pretend. Must do so. Few men I know when finish school have join missionary, but I think they pretend, too. That way can make good living."

After we had spend two weeks straightening things out and getting acquainted with the local market, Bart and Harry C. came down. Since I had seen him last Bart had picked up a short legged, white haired, long faced, mixed breed bitch who had nine pups two days after she arrived. When all of the staff were present the tiny compound looked as crowded and busy as an old home week reunion.

Bart gave me one of the pups, a brownish male, who grew into a shaggy, short faced, snubby nosed dog with the legs and speed of a jack rabbit. I named him Mutt. Although the cook-boy raised him and patiently taught him many tricks, he developed a violent dislike for all Chinese with the exception of the vigorous number one coolie. It must have originated from his sense of smell. When a Chinese knocked at the gate his hair would go up and he would sniff around growling; should a foreigner be outside he would tear about the yard wagging his tail and barking with joy. I think he liked the coolie for his child-like, simple minded honesty and kindness.

The Division was separated into five territories, Changtefu in the center, and north, east, south, and west. Changtefu was the largest, the city itself having a population running between thirty-five and forty thousand. But, except for size and slightly different degrees of dilapidation and poverty, the headquarter towns were more or less alike. Chang and I spent October and a good part of November travelling by cart and pony around the territories getting the lay of the land.

The distance between market towns averaged from sixty to eighty *li*, a day's journey by cart. Usually everything was packed and the mules hitched up by sunrise, and fifteen minutes later we were on our way across country. In the early fall mornings the thin air was nippy and exhilarating.

Back from the winding road only a few hundred feet apart, spotting the level fields like warts, we drove by compact groups of huts of earth and straw standing on small clearings of hard ground surrounded by a few naked trees. Bent-over ancients tottered about carrying their stools, making for their warm spots in the sun. Toothless old women, dressed in coarse blue denim coats and trousers heavily padded with cotton, squatted over blackened pots and kettles, vigorously scrubbing them with long straw brushes. Middle-aged mothers and daughters with their sewing sat on the ground against the sides of the huts, seeking a place in the sun near the old men. Babies in red padded coats with little red caps tilted over their left ears wobbled inside of boxes, beating their tiny fists in the air, or crawled around on hands and knees in the dirt. Small boys and girls, with the seats of their trousers opened to the cold air and carrying small bamboo baskets, followed their elders across the fields, picking up stray pieces of dry straw or sticks—winter fuel. Here a farmer split open furrows with a one handed crude wooden plow which another skinny man pulled with a rope; in another field five or six men and women were scattering seed. Everybody was busy planting the spring grain or preparing for the cold winter ahead.

Each little cluster of mud huts in its clearing housed a family, perhaps a mule or donkey and—again perhaps—a pig or cow and a few chickens. In one family might be ten, twelve, or even fifteen mouths to feed from what was left, after the landlord had taken his share for rent and the government its portion for taxes, of the nourishment extracted from one or two acres of a lifeless, drained out soil injected with human dung and precious, polluted water, laboriously measured and ladeled out by hand.

On the road we passed many other early risers: coolies striding along at a smooth, even pace with their poles over their shoulders, hurrying to the morning market in the town we had left; a venerable old merchant wearing large bone spectacles astride a donkey urged against its will to a trot by the pokes of its rider's stick; a coolie with a strap over his shoulders, balancing a wheelbarrow loaded with a woman and two small children on one side and household goods on the other; hawkers carrying large cast-iron teapots swathed in cotton padded cloth; pedestrians with their belongings in bundles on their backs; occasionally a soldier perched on a high wooden saddle, with his knees squeezed in against the pony's withers; now and then a cart loaded with bags of grain or piled high with strings of brass cash, slowly and painfully negotiating the deep, hardened ruts—and everyone in good humor and friendly. But, in spite of their hardships and poverty, how could they have been otherwise under the spell of the brilliant, clear sky and the bracing air of early fall? And did not even the lowest coolie have a feeling of well-being in his winter suit of clothes (even though the only one) fresh and clean from the cowhide box where it had lain all summer?

Every hundred yards or so we never failed to meet with an old man—sometimes a boy, or a girl or woman—with a bamboo basket and broom gathering up the priceless droppings of man and beast—a profession in China as old and important as the Cyprian. Those engaged in such work labored from daylight to dark, winter and summer, carefully combing clean every inch of the road, keeping it spotless. A standard joke along the highway was to ask a sweeper, "How is business (*mai-mai hao pu hao*)?" Accompanied by a broad grin, the answer was always

Gathering priceless droppings of man and beast

the same: "good, not too good (*hao, pu ta hao*)." This question and the answer were a regular part of the merchant class etiquette in opening a conversation.

Dealing in fertilizer was also carried on as a wholesale business. While riding leisurely along and enjoying the scent of the fresh air and earth, the stirring of a slight breeze would bring the faintest suspicion of a disturbing odor. Not a sign of where it came from. But we knew at once what we were in for, and out came handkerchiefs to be held over nostrils for the next fifteen or twenty minutes—until we were well past a huge compound divided by low mud walls into five or six lots, each containing tons upon tons of graded human dung drying in the sun. The vilest, most putrid, repulsive and nauseating smell on earth—an unheeded warning from the poisons that destroyed year in and year out millions of human beings.

XIX

WINTER OF 1913 AND EARLY PART OF 1914

winter comes—the indignant Messrs. Mencken and Nathan—a travelling girl tells her story—a chat with bandits—another note on missionaries—sleeping next to smallpox

THANKSGIVING CAME AND passed. Bart, Harry C. and I spent Christmas in Chentow making mild whoopee and returned. In the meantime I had at last received the safe; it arrived several weeks before the holidays, but the Chinese station agent had left it lying by the railway track because, he apologized, it was too heavy to move and he had forgotten to inform me.

Now the cold had set in. The third year of drought and ruined crops was ending, and farmers were gathering together looting villages, increasing in number as those they preyed upon joined their ranks. Several kidnappings were reported. At President Yuan Shih K'ai's summer home, a large walled estate five *li* south of the city, ten thousand soldiers were quartered, and any one found abroad after dark was arrested. Every Chinese who entered the city was searched. An ex-coolie gangster under the title of *Pai Langtze* (White Wolf) was said to head several thousand followers who were sweeping through the country destroying everything in their way. Chinese mothers used his name to scare naughty children.

In the latter part of December I wrote home:

It is an ugly day here today. It snows, blows and then in disgust rains—so you can imagine how pleasant it is—there, the wind has blown the door open again. Yet I hate to look forward to summer. The winters are very cold but not too bad—not much rain and not so much snow—only big winds—but the summers are extremely hot. North China has the most well defined seasons in the world, you know. And in July you spend most of your time panting.

During these months I must have read hundreds of English 6d novels. Stacks of them had accumulated in the small interior messes, and on trips I left behind batches of those I had read and picked up new ones at every mess. These were the books that George Moore in his *Confessions of a Young Man* wrote about with such cynical humor. I was struck with the large number bearing the word, blood, as a part of the title: *Blood On the Door, The Bloody Key, Signed with Blood, The Cross of Blood*. Then one day I ran across one with a cover illustration of a dripping dagger and the one word blazoned across the page in red: *BLOOD*. I was thrilled. The author who created that title, I decided with enthusiasm, was a pure, untainted genius; he had reduced titling to its simplest, most elemental and telling terms.

Bartlett and I were together a great deal during this winter. On account of the cold, he used Changtefu as headquarters from which to travel. I doubt if I could have stood any other foreigner around for any length of time. In fact, I am sure of it. Bart had fallen into the same silent state of rumination that I had. The stillness and space had eaten into me until I felt a part of it. Aside from my passive reading of English stories, I was ordering books on Chinese from Shanghai and delving into their thought and customs, and every evening spending an hour intoning sentences after my Chinese teacher. I had a deep respect for these good-natured hard-working, patient souls among whom I dwelt.

In the cold winter nights, however, after we had knocked off reading, before going to bed we had many lively discussions. Bart subscribed to the *Smart Set*, edited by H. L. Mencken and George

Jean Nathan. We dissected Mencken's editorials, and laughed over the wording of his furiously bitter attacks on what he called, "the American boob of the hinterland". Then we turned to Nathan's write-ups on the stage and roared at the voluble animosity with which he tore into American acting and play-writing, listing unpronounceable names of heavy, unknown German plays and actors as shining examples of perfection. We could not figure out why the two should act so sore and upset about life at home. Did they have dyspepsia? Or indigestion? Or were they just being humorous for each other's benefit? We were never able to decide whether they were just two old soaks with a grudge against the world in general or two very young men who had not yet outgrown a youthful tendency toward exhibitionism.

* * * * *

Without these books and magazines the winter would have been almost unbearably long. On trips, the roads were almost bare of carts and coolies. The bleak huts of the farmers, framed by leafless trees swaying and groaning in the wind, looked less like shelters for the living than like desolate mounds of the dead. Occasionally we saw children or old women in their heavily padded clothes walking through the fields or on the road, bent over peering at the ground in search of stray sticks of wood or overlooked pieces of straw that might be used for fuel.

On a bitter cold afternoon I saw at a distance a bonfire on the bank of a frozen river. Two Chinese squatted by. A third stood close, arms outstretched, *stark naked!* I trotted over and watched. The naked Chinese slowly pivoted, heating himself on all sides. Soon the other two arose, deftly looped a rope around his body beneath his armpits, hastened him across the ice to where they had opened a hole and lowered him down until his head was barely showing above the shining edge.

For several minutes he hung there, then muttered something and his two cronies pulled him out. In each hand he held a fish. Under his skinny arms pressed tightly against his body were several other fish. And between his two taut, straightened legs were several more!

Chang remarked casually that fish made straight for an air hole and *clustered around any heated object* and, consequently, fishing this way in winter was much better than summer fishing.

The inns were almost deserted. On an all day journey through a whipping flurry of snow blown against us by a blinding wind, I had walked most of the time to keep warm, pacing several *li* ahead of the carts. Just before dark the wind died down to a still cold, and the sun came out as I stumbled into an inn keeper's room at the side of the entrance gate. Built into the wall was a small mud stove with the remains of a few dirt and coal-dust balls giving a faint glow. I pulled off my gloves and stood rubbing my hands over the stove. But no warmth came. I yelled for the inn keeper. No answer. I stepped over to a side door and threw it open.

In a tiny room, almost hidden in the dim light of a smoky peanut oil candle, the inn keeper lay huddled on the *k'ang* under a stack of ragged old blankets. The atmosphere, heavy with the odor of stale breath, almost knocked me over. Like all Chinese during the winter, the inn keeper kept his bedroom as air-tight as he could make it, from the first cold snap of fall until the lice woke up in the spring. One reason why, in spite of living so close to nature, millions of Chinese suffer and die from tuberculosis.

The old man threw off his blankets and sat up stretching and yawning, fully dressed in his long sheepskin lined gown and thick camel's felt shoes. He was sorry about the fire, but so few people travelled at that time of the year and fires were dear. However, he added a few coal-dust eggs to the top of the stove, put a wheezy little bellows to work, and I soon had a cup of vile black tea which I was unable to stomach, but used to warm my hands.

I stood by the little mud stove until the carts arrived some twenty minutes later, when I made the boy bring in my oil heater. He also carried along his basket, and I read while he cooked my meal, a dismal onion soup and two skinny quail, over the coal egg fire.

Not until an hour later did I venture to take a look at my

sleeping quarters in the *shang fang* at the back of the small courtyard. The door was gone and the windows without paper; the temperature outside and inside was the same. It was only around eight o'clock (I am not really sure; I had packed away my watch many months before, and figured time in the Chinese manner, by the sun and the way I felt), but there was nothing to do but to go to bed.

Luckily, as I was peeling off my overcoat, Chang walked in and said, "Travelling girl and small brother and *mama* have room on one side. Room very warm. I think maybe can pay visit."

We paid visit.

The travelling girl and family had set up housekeeping. A large iron pot of charcoal stood in the center of the floor and the *k'ang* had been turned into a bower. A dingy white sheet was spread over the top with pillows scattered about; three other sheets supported by a frame of bamboo sticks made a canopy. Chang and I received a cordial welcome and settled ourselves on the *k'ang*.

The girl was still young. She and the wrinkled old *mama* were sewing, and the small brother of ten or thereabouts was monkeying with a two string fiddle.

Our first question was about the state of business. Things were bad. No one had any money this winter and the inn was too much out of the way. Two months they had been there and only two or three guests a week had called. No one could live long on business like that. But *mei yu fatze*—there was no way out—a bad winter for everybody and no use to complain. Perhaps the spring would bring a change. Anyway, they were leaving in a few days; luck might be better at the next inn. Yes, they travelled all the year—through the province, living at inns. Not so much competition now; most of the travelling girls went south of the river during the winter; but one could never tell when bandits might come along. At the last inn—*ai ya!* They were "turtle eggs," rough, and never gave money, only laughed. They took everything she had. But the inn keeper lost everything, too, and let her go without paying.

Her father had been a mender of tools in a small market town. He had died when she was fifteen and ever since she and her mother and small brother had been moving from inn to inn. Some day when her brother was older maybe he could learn a trade, then they could settle down and have a home.

The little brother played his fiddle; the travelling girl sang; and *lao ma* sewed away. After two hours' listlessly lounging around, we put some small silver on the table and left. As I pulled on my mongol felt boots and slipped between the sheets lined with wolf skin, I looked through the doorway at our bulky carts standing in the moonlit yard, and listened to the mules restlessly stamping their feet. What difference was there between the life and manner of living of the Chinese now and those in the years of B.C.? Or of the Chinese now and the people of Nazareth when Christ was born? Was I not seeing, and living in the midst of, a civilization that was universal, only at different times in different places?

* * * * *

Only once did I meet up with bandits. I saw them well ahead, some twenty-five or thirty, stopped the pony and waited for my carts. When the bandits came abreast they halted and looked me over. I spoke to the leader. He smiled and returned a polite greeting. We passed on. They were all ruined farmers, with no hostile feeling towards any one, only determined to live. Although I often heard children call out, "*Yang kueitze*" (foreign devil), when I passed, no more feeling was attached to the term than to the word, "froggies," by American doughboys in France. At no time did I run into any show of feeling against foreigners; nor do I believe that any foreigner did—except upon the rare occasions when he overstepped the limits of Chinese etiquette, or was caught in a mob when it ran amuck.

About this time I wrote a letter home:

. . . and don't believe all you read about China, for the people who really know very much about her do not write, it seems.

When I spoke of trouble, I did not mean any danger to foreigners—for there is absolutely none. The only foreigners killed in last year's trouble were a few adventurers and some pig-headed missionaries who would not move from the interior when ordered to do so by their consulate or legation.

Speaking of missionaries, there are a few who are really good ones, and who are doing some good work. This applies mostly to the medical side. But as for those who are simply trying to convert the Chinese to Christian religion, their work is entirely in vain, I think, and most of the Chinese who profess Christian religion do so because there is a graft in it. And some of the missionaries too live a rather grafting life; and some are missionaries because they are lazy. With some sects, when a new missionary comes out he or she does nothing for three years but study Chinese.

My interpreter told me that there had been a lot of talk among the Chinese about the way proselyting is carried on, and they think it funny that the Catholics and Protestants should try to convert them when they can't agree among themselves as to which is the proper foreign god, "Shang Ti" (*Above Earth*), *or* "T'ien Chu" (*Heaven Ruler*).

* * * * *

During the whole winter the only danger I ran into was smallpox. News travelled slowly back in the interior, and I was on a trip towards the northwest not far from the Shansi border before I discovered that I was in the midst of a plague. On an evening when we drove into a miserable little inn, we found mule drivers hitching up their carts and pulling out; local residents were leaving town with their bedding on their backs; and vehicles of every kind were at a premium. In the town and surrounding villages people were dying like flies in the fall. Chang was all for starting back at once, but since the mules had been going steadily all day, I decided that we could make better time getting out of the circle by staying over until daylight.

Chang and the coolies, afraid to take a room, slept on the

carts out in the yard. But as usual I took the *shang fang* at the back. By its side, separated by a thin wooden wall, was another small room which a Chinese traveller had taken. For the first part of the night I was kept awake by the sounds of groans and an occasional hacking cough coming through the partition; once I got up to examine the wall but could find no cracks, and looking outside saw the man's door and window were also practically air-tight.

Early in the morning before sunup Chang rushed into my room; his face drawn and pale.

"Must go quick." He spoke in a tense voice. "Chinese man next door you die last night smallpox!"

Before we were out of town news came that cholera and dysentery were also spreading through the district. I had a sudden fit of anger. "What the hell do those old soaks in Shanghai, resting their bellies against a club bar and rambling along in a superior way on the subject of "griffins" (tenderfeet)—what the hell do they know about China! Let 'em try the interior once and see what it's like. Keeping men shut off in these rotten holes full of diseases, doing all the dirty work and living like a waunk. When I get out of here they'll never get me back."

XX

LAST OF FEBRUARY–APRIL: 1914

I take a holiday in Hankow and throw away a bag of silver—the story of the Great War between the North and the South—I make over an old temple—foreign influence on retail merchandise—farmers and lice come to life after the Big Cold

IN 1914 CHINESE NEW YEAR started on January 26. For almost a year and a half now Bart and I had been knocking around back in the interior, spending most of our time on ponies with trains of mule carts, eating canned foods, drinking boiled or bottled water, sleeping in dirty, decrepit inns belonging to the time of Christ, and seeing other foreigners only a few days out of a month.

Even a year was much too long for such a cut-off life. I had tightened up considerably, become taciturn, in-grown. Even Bart got on my nerves at times, I was quick to lose my temper with the servants, and the slightest break in routine irritated me. I liked to be alone.

At bottom I realized the direction in which I was heading, and where I would eventually land if I did not jerk myself up. Since the evenings back in Peking when I listened to Frost expound his theories on the *bewaunked,* I had seen, and known of, too many foreigners who had "gone native" and landed on the rocks. There was, for instance, the Swede who had been stuck

out in Sianfu, ten days cart trip west from the end of the railway line at Honanfu.

He was chosen for this distant out-of-the-way point on account of his sturdy build and phlegmatic temperament. For more than a year he had lived there alone without seeing a foreigner. The first three months he corresponded regularly; for another two he answered his mail at spasmodic intervals of ten days or two weeks; after that, for six months Shanghai received only monthly sales and stock reports written by his interpreter and bearing his initials.

The machinery of the company slowly went into action. Shanghai sent special delivery letters and telegrams which remained unanswered. Finally, after much consideration, a man was sent out to check up. Two months later he returned with his report.

When the investigator arrived in Sianfu at noontime and entered the mess, the big Swede was seated at tiffin, dressed in Chinese clothes and eating Chinese food with chopsticks. By the side of his plate lay an open book on the Chinese language and a stack of cards, each labeled with a Chinese character; hundreds of similar cards were tacked on the wall.

"When I entered the dining room," the inspector said, "he looked up, nodded, waved his hand towards a chair and went on reading. When we went into the living room after chow, I was ready for anything and not in the least surprised to see every inch of wall space filled with these character cards and Chinese books piled on the table and chairs and scattered all over the floor.

"The Swede swept the books off two of the chairs and said, 'Now we can talk. What is it you want?'

"After I had fully explained the purpose of my visit and told him the way Shanghai felt, he shrugged his shoulders and said, 'It's ridiculous; the company's business here is not enough to bother about; I don't see why Shanghai should expect me to take the trouble to write about such a small matter.'

"Then he picked up one of his Chinese books and refused to talk any more."

The inspector got hold of the interpreter, a mild worried little man, who told him that the Swede had not made a trip for months and seldom left the compound. The interpreter made up reports each month but the Swede had stopped mailing them. Most of the day and late into the night the Swede studied and read Chinese.

Upon the inspector's return to Shanghai, the Swede was fired and the depot closed. Among the Chinese he had achieved the reputation of being a brilliant sinalogue, but no foreign firm would have him, and he disappeared.

Many foreigners became *bewaunked* in a different way. Living alone, with interpreters to do the work, with unaccustomed servants to look after them, even to putting on and lacing their shoes, and with girls at the beck of a finger to meet their special needs, they degenerated into confirmed loafers, satisfied to drift along as they were.

I decided that it was high time to get out for a while and loosen up among my own kind. Having received permission from the Old Man in Shanghai, I relayed the good news to Bart, who had temporary headquarters in an old market town a day and a half's pony ride away, and at one o'clock on the night of January 24th, after two hours of stamping up and down among the Chinese wrapped in their cotton padded coats, crouching against their rolled-up bedding, we swung onto the Peking–Hankow express.

Since paper currency was not circulating locally—the North and South were still at odds and the exchange was knocked to pieces—each of us carried a large canvas bag weighted down with silver dollars.

The next evening around six o'clock, within twenty minutes after the train had arrived in Hankow, we were sitting on the bar of "Husky" Sam's cafe with our money bags at our sides, distributing free drinks to the oil and tobacco slaves and the mixed nationality importers and exporters who gradually drifted in.

"Husky" Sam (his voice was a husky whisper that sounded confidential, but could be heard a block away, and had been cul-

tivated by years of close contact with Japanese scotch) ran a joint of a type found in every treaty port in China: a square room with turkey red hangings and red plush sofa and chairs, topped off by a potted palm and tall shining brass cuspidors, and the bar, ruled over by Sam and his alarming whisper that was famous throughout the Yangtze valley.

Gracing these garish surroundings were three or four Russian girls. They were a part of the shipments imported from Odessa and by the time they reached a river port were a bit passe but helped along business as dance partners and, when the time was ripe, boosted the sale of champagne. On Saturday and holiday nights such places were jammed. All nationalities, with the exception of the Chinese and Japanese, met on a free and equal basis. Many an old timer today still bears the battle-scars of the free-for-alls that were a regular part of the evening's entertainment.

Bart and I spent the better part of the night taking in these cafés, but were up early the next morning inhaling fresh air on the bund. As in all the foreign ports along the Yangtze, the bund was a wide, imposing boulevard lined with the banks and shipping houses, great old mid-Victorian buildings of red brick, high-ceilinged and spacious. In honor of the holiday the German troops were out in dress parade. It was highly symbolical: the soldiers wearing heavy steel helmets with straps under the chins, arms and legs as stiff as ramrods, goose-stepping double-time over the rough cobblestones behind a fife and drum corp led by a tiny rooster of a sergeant manipulating a shining baton larger than himself and whose knee, at every step, touched his goatee as he doubled up. They would not have been so amusing had they not been so deadly in earnest.

Shortly before noon we strolled over to the Race Club for punch and eggnog. All of Hankow's leisure was bound up in the Race Club. Twice a year, fall and spring, the two big annual racing events of the year were held and every one, from the lowest Chinese coolie to the highest foreign *tai-pan*, put up all the cash he could scrape together.

At the entrance to the grounds, on the side away from the

race course a gully descended sharply some twelve feet deep. Half way to the club house one of my companions stopped us and pointed down the bank.

"We used to have great sport creeping down there and watching the North and South fight."

"Where were they fighting?"

"They were firing at each other across the race course. The Southerners stood right in front of us."

"Pretty dangerous, wasn't it?"

"No, it was a joke. Neither side knew how to shoot. The Southerners had out-dated, rusty old rifles some Germans and Japs had palmed off on 'em, and both held their guns down at their sides when they fired. The bullets all went miles high in the air.

"It was funny to see this Southern crowd when they heard the bullets whizzing over their heads. They'd stand there staring up in the sky with their mouths open in amazement, saying under their breath, *'ai-ya—ai-ya!'* They thought it was some sort of magic.

"Tom —— was here at that time. He was so disgusted he got permission from one of the officers to run a machine gun. But he began mowing 'em down on the other side so fast the officer went into a panic and made him quit.

"The opposing leaders had a definite understanding as to how the fight should be carried on. The idea seemed to be to do just enough killing for face, so they could call it a big battle, and then for the opposing leaders to sneak off somewhere at night and hold a conference to decide which should be the winner. It was all a matter of buying and selling."

In such manner was the War waged between the North and South for supremacy in the formation of the republic—by brokers at the head of starving farmers and laborers who were glad to enlist for the security of two bowls of food a day and a quilt to sleep under at night, none of them trained, and most of them sufferers from malnutrition from childhood, dumb weaklings who lived on the supplies seized from their equally dumb and helpless brothers.

On my arrival back in Changtefu, Chang, his eyes shining with excitement, greeted me with the news that he had at last found just the place we wanted for new headquarters.

"I think you like very much," he said. "Broker wait at mess show you. We go now."

For several months I had been trying to find larger quarters. Back in the first part of October one of the directors from Shanghai on an inspection trip, stopping over for the night, remarked that the compound we were in was too small. If for face-pidgin and no other reasen, we should have something more imposing. Immediately I had Chang get in touch with a house broker.

In January I had written home about it:

I have been trying to write you more regularly but we lose sight of time, in a way, in the interior, except by giving special attention to the end of the month. Time is probably worth less in China than any other place in the world—to the Chinese, that is. Give a carpenter an order for a chair, make him promise to finish it in four days, and you can expect it in two weeks. I have been trying to rent a larger house here and the "house broker" found one that was suitable, and promised to let me know the price in three days. A month later he came around and gave me the "first price," which is always several times more than they expect to get. I told him my offer, and he hibernated for another four weeks, then came around and told me he was sorry but the owner had decided not to rent at all. I have been going through something similar for several months.

The place Chang had to show me was in the heart of the residential section, the roads lined with walls, away from all traffic and noise. We stopped before the gate of a wall set back on a high embankment. The broker led us inside.

At first I was disappointed. The woodwork had fallen apart, doors were gone, the paint had worn away and the rooms were mere dust bins and refuges for spiders and rats. But pottering around among the ruins I discovered, in the middle court, remnants of a once costly and beautiful temple. I was enthusiastic.

"How in the world," I asked Chang, "does a temple happen to be hidden away in a place like this?"

Chang gave a broad, pleased smile.

"Before, very rich man live here. He have own private temple. Many rich Chinese man do so."

"All right," I said. "We'll have one, too. You get busy with this broker and make him give us a good price. And don't let him keep putting us off."

"I think can fix good price very quick. Our dealer is big man in Changtefu. He make much money buy and sell grain. I speak him."

The dealer brought his influence to bear, and three weeks later we had signed the lease.

After dozens of conferences with carpenters and painters over the cost of complete restoration and a bit of modernizing, we arrived at the ridiculous estimate of Mex. $200 (G. $85). The results were beyond all my expectations—the graceful lines and rich colors of the temple—the quiet tranquillity of the tree shaded courts.

Outside the plastered brick walls, beneath the overhanging limbs of the gigantic oak, hawkers set up their stands of sesamum seed balls and candied crab apples, passers-by stopped to rest and children played their games and made mud pies—but once within, the outside world was forgotten. I was in my own little principality; and with my books and pony and dog for company, and my staff of five Chinese to carry on, I reigned supreme.

On the first morning we moved in I sat in my office in the second court looking out of the window at the cobblestone yard, watching the pigeons strut and preen. In his office opposite Chang was proudly entertaining the visiting dealers. Suddenly I had a vivid awareness of my surroundings. Here was I living within the walls of an ancient town, shut off almost entirely from the rest of the world, in a native compound with my own temple. I thought of my friends back home; most of them were now in offices over one of the drug stores or banks—or learning the cotton mill business somewhere on the outskirts of town. The

country club had been built since I left—what had become of the old "play out" crowd—some married, others still playing around. And here I sat alone. But, although not yet twenty-four, I was practically my own boss and was living and working in surroundings that would equal many a millionaire's home in beauty—if not luxury.

I walked outside and examined the old bronze knocker, felt the surface of the massive, black lacquered gates, then swaggered into the first court and looked about with satisfaction at the Chinese guest rooms, the coolies' quarters with its own little yard, my pony's stable. I strolled around the screen through the opening into the second court—my office and Chang's. The dealers had departed and Chang stood on his porch, dressed in fine silk clothes and looking serious and important. I called to him and we passed through another gate, peak roofed, and faced the temple—a glowing mass of colors as soft as those of a Ming porcelain.

The roof of the temple, glittering in the flecked sunlight, was green and gold glazed tile; the walls—broken into columns and trellis work and papered windows—were white marble and red lacquer—a brilliant red, but not raw. Inside, in the dimmed light, we could make out the intricate pattern in the black and white mosaic floor, faintly see the two rows of pillars, white marble carved in the form of entertwining dragons, supporting heavy wooden beams painted with legendary scenes in blue, green, red and gold.

From the temple we stepped down into my living quarters in the rear. I had sodded the ground between the brick paths and planted evergreens—the only growing things I could find at that time of the year. Three bedrooms opened onto this court along one side, the kitchen, pantry and a fourth bedroom along the other. In the back we faced my dining-living room opening on a stone terrace. When the sun was warm I could have breakfast here.

Chang turned his honest face towards me and said solemnly, "Very fine."

Coming from Chang that was whole-hearted enthusiasm. From

that day on he wore only the most neatly ironed, spotless silk gowns, and in the mornings, every half-hour or so he dropped his work to stroll about the yards and stand before the temple. A few weeks after we moved in he bought a cross-bow and practised shooting small mud pellets at leaves—it helped express himself and filled a need he felt to key himself to his surroundings.

Now that spring had arrived Bart had taken up permanent headquarters in the northern section. I commenced to open the office at eight, and in the morning or afternoon covered the shopping district each day. No matter what the weather was like shopkeepers and their assistants stood behind the counters with the fronts of the shops wide open. Changtefu was the large market and distributing center for the smaller towns and villages within a radius of several hundred *li,* and the streets were packed from daylight to dark. A metropolitan touch was given by the display of foreign goods, mostly French and Japanese.

A number of merchants specialized in gaudy French mirrors of unholy shapes and with designs in brilliant reds, greens, yellows and blues painted on the edge. They did a thriving business with officials who purchased the mirrors for their concubines. Fancy French clocks also had a great sale. One shop had hundreds of wooden clocks, most of them carved in jig-saw shapes and with super-long pendulums swinging below. They hung from the ceiling and were always kept running, the tick-tock making such a racket that an ordinary speaking voice could not be heard. But the shopkeeper was a shrewd salesman: customers chose clocks by the way they ticked and struck the hour, never by the way they kept time. No one wanted a clock to keep time—that was a matter of no importance—but a good, sharp ticker and a sonorous, resounding striker were concrete —real—they meant something—they made friends sit up and take notice. A clock that clanged the quarter hours, or one with a cuckoo, was a priceless possession.

Horn rimmed spectacles were also purchased for a purpose other than the one originally intended—for the same reason, in fact, that numbers of business and professional men buy them in America: to add dignity and give a look of age and wisdom.

Some had no glass, others were fitted with window glass and a few—for the aged—with magnifying glass. Anyone who desired set up a stand and sold spectacles—just as anyone who could get hold of a pair of pincers and collect enough old teeth for a display might put up a stand and make an honest living as a dentist.

The toilet goods shops were crammed with Japanese products, cut price imitations of French and American tooth pastes, rouges, soaps, toilet waters and perfumes. But the biggest Japanese seller was a product that looked and smelled like sen-sen, called *Jin Tan,* which the advertising claimed would give men vitality and boy babies to women. Huge tin cut-out signs and posters advertising this marvelous fake showed the bust of a man with Japanese features wearing a long turned up moustache, a Napoleon cocked hat and chevrons. Although I made many enquiries, never did I received a satisfactory answer to, why the Napoleon cocked hat?

At four o'clock I closed office and with shotgun under my arm, took Mutt for long tramps outside the city to see if I could run across any geese on their return trip from the South.

All around, the farms had come to life. Men, women and children were ploughing fields and sowing spring crops; where the winter grain was planted, the brown earth was stippled with green, and bent-over figures were picking weeds. Passing by bamboo groves at the edge of huts, I could hear a crackling, popping sound, and actually see the new shoots jump in their rapid growth. The wrinkled faces of the farmers relaxed into broad grins and the small boys pushed each other and laughed as I stuck up my thumb in approval.

Here and there we passed a group of coolies seated under the shade of a tree, their padded coats open for the first time since the cold weather had set in, and their hands soaked with blood from the awakened cooties they were executing with sharp pops between their long finger nails.

Less than a quarter of a mile below Changtefu was a sandy, rocky gully which many years before had been the bed of the Yellow River. A spring seldom passed, however, during which

she failed to rise and spread over the land, burying crops and shifting her course through the loosened soil, finally dying down and for miles around leaving a residue of soft mud that the sun baked and cracked. She had changed her course so often that now she rolled sluggishly through the plains almost a half day's journey by train to the South. Back in Shansi, passing mule carters said, the ice was already melting and she had started to rise; if she kept on at the rate she was going she would break her boundaries again.

With the coming of the few early spring rains a tiny stream had found its way down the gully, and Mutt and I followed this until we saw white specks where a gap had formed a water hole. From then on I slowly crawled on my stomach inch by inch along the edge of the steep bank until at a distance of a hundred yards I stood up, and as the geese rose, picked one out and fired. An hour or more of hard work, and if I were lucky I had one shot, at the most two.

At eight in the evening *Hsien Sheng,* my teacher, bowed himself in and my Chinese lesson began, lasting until nine. *Hsien Sheng* took the book, picked out a sentence, and slowly intoned it. I repeated. Over and over, again and again. *Hsien Sheng* never raised or lowered his voice, sat staring into space monotonously droning, and I after him. His patience was appalling. At times I deliberately failed to follow. He never moved, never changed his expression, but kept repeating the sentence until I took it up again. At other times I said, "Let's talk." And for a while we conversed. But I had to make all the leads and the conversation soon languished. The dullest task I have ever undertaken. However, the company paid a bonus of G. $500 to those who passed an examination in the spoken language, and in spite of the moments that I sat with clenched hands undecided whether or not I should throttle him, I kept it up.

After the lesson was over, for a while I walked out under the stars breathing *Hsien Sheng* out of my system, read until 10:30 and went to bed.

For the first time since I had been in China I had a settled feeling.

XXI

MAY AND JUNE OF 1914

the Yellow River has changed its course again—no rain but crops are kept green by artificial hand irrigation—soldiers patrol against bandits and kidnappers—heads in cages—Changtefu has every-other-day holiday beheadings—Butch meets with a horrible death—another foreigner arrives and is queerer still

THE LATE SPRING WAS NEAR the end and the first hot weather arrived. Bart was transferred to Shantung province and Butch, the tall skinny beachcomber who had been with me for a while at Taiyuanfu, came down to take his place. He was thinner, more yellow and unhealthy looking, than ever. I got rid of him at once by sending him to a town a day and a half away to take charge of the eastern territory, then loaded up carts and set out on a trip through the south and west.

On the roads coolies and cart drivers had shed their winter clothes, and their dried out, work-worn bodies were stripped to the waist. In the brilliance of the sun the sprouting plants had turned the landscape into dancing tones of green against a background of vivid blue sky.

But this was the beginning of the fourth year after three dry years of ruined crops; not a drop of rain had fallen for several weeks. Farther south the Yellow River had again this year sprawled over her banks, sweeping away homes, and after having

found another bed six *li* to the north, had covered the winter sowing with a slimy coating of mud.

Where the land remained untouched by the floods the farmers and their families, from the oldest to the youngest, were anxiously watering crops. Criss-crossing canals, about a foot wide and eight inches deep, divided the land into small plots. Feeding these canals were wells and deep ditches, the latter still containing remnants of stale water from the early spring rains. Here an eighteen-year-old girl monotonously turned the handle of a roughly set up windlass, emptying the bucket from a well into the mouth of a canal. There a man rapidly tread the steps of a wooden water wheel to which was attached an endless chain of cups, picking up water from the ditches and pouring it out at the top. At another well an ox plodded slowly around and around, turning a wheel that turned another, revolving cups in the same way as did the one worked by man power. And in some of the fields where the ditches had run dry and the wells were far removed, a man carried two buckets on a rope across his shoulders while his companion with a long handled wooden ladle sprinkled it on the soil.

Where the floods had swamped their lands and destroyed their homes, those who were left had turned beggars or joined with the gangs of looters, bandits and kidnappers who were wandering over the provinces of Honan and Shansi.

In the villages through which we passed and at the towns in which we stopped, detachments of mounted soldiers carrying carbines were quartered in the shady courtyards of old temples. At times we met them patrolling the highways. They were a part of the ten thousand Yuan Shih K'ai always kept on hand at his summer estate near Changtefu. Rumor had it that the mysterious *Pai Langtze*, White Wolf, was now somewhere in the neighborhood adding the new isolated groups of starved farmers and villagers to those he had brought together during the fall and winter.

On the way back to Changtefu I was riding ahead of the carts through a grove of trees near the entrance of a small walled town, when I happened to glance up and see a large freshly made

Hand irrigation

cage hanging from the limb of a tree at the side of the road. As I drew nearer I saw that the dark object inside was the head of a man. A white cloth bearing scribbled characters in black was tacked on the trunk below.

When I turned in at the gate I saw suspended from the top of the archway two more cages containing chopped off heads. A banner with writing similar to that on the cloth outside swung between the two. When the carts pulled up I asked Chang what the characters translated.

Chang replied, "*Beware! This is what happens to bandits and kidnappers.*"

That was the beginning.

On my return to Changtefu I discovered that a systematic, wholesale beheading campaign had been started during my absence. Three mornings a week a squad of Yuan's soldiers rushed their catch of kidnappers and looters to the plaza behind the railway station and sliced off their heads.

The first morning I walked over to take a look. The beheading was a gala day affair. Dozens of outdoor restaurants had been set up under awnings and mat sheds. The air was full of the cries of peanut, melon seed, fruit and sweetmeat hawkers; some of the more patriotic were selling badges with pictures of the new president and vice-president under draped flags. At one side a small rustic theatre had been erected. Farmers sat on their haunches playing checkers on dirty cloths marked off in squares; others squatted in circles silently smoking their pipes; still others sat hunched over tables noisily consuming big bowls of spaghetti. Their wives stood apart fanning themselves, all talking at once in high screechy voices; at their elbows daughters listlessly listened with wide open eyes and hanging mouths. Strolling among the crowds, superior and detached, were the townsfolk dressed in their best silk garments, women and girls in black gowns with high stiff collars, carrying daintily embroidered fans in one hand and ridiculously small handkerchiefs in the other. Scattered through the crowds, half clothed ragamuffins ran and played and yelled and heightened the excitement.

All at once the noise was hushed, every one froze to attention and eyes turned towards the corner of the city wall. Eight or ten girls, faces dead white with round red spots on their cheeks and wearing all the colors of the rainbow, came marching mincingly towards the plaza. Behind, in washed out blue, stumped the *mamas*. One of the girls had on a knee length violently purple jacket and baggy, bright red padded trousers tucked in at the ankles. Others matched golden yellow with pink, light lavender with blue and carmine with green. All of them had jasmine buds tucked in their rolled up hair and in spite of the weather bulged with several layers of thick underclothes.

The silence was broken by the thin, shrewish voices of the tense, watching wives, all of whom burst out talking at once, daughters avidly listening with downcast eyes. The squatting men held their heads down and squinted sidewise. Those standing shuffled their feet uneasily or kicked at non-existing stones. But the small boys walked around the sing-song girls making painfully honest, unrestrained comments as they boldly looked them over.

A bugle blew. The crowds stiffened. And around the side of the wall soldiers appeared marching two by two. As they neared the plaza a whistle sounded, the front ranks broke and ran back the crowds with charged bayonets, rapidly forming a large circle. Through a narrow opening two soldiers entered, dragging between them a dazed eyed coolie stripped to the waist. Two more followed with their burden; and two more. Three men in all were to be put to death.

Then with measured tread and no sign of haste, a lone soldier with a red sash knotted around his waist and carrying a two handed scimitar on one shoulder, marched in alone. When he reached the center the first two soldiers forced their man to his knees; one leaped to the front and grasped the end of his queue and pulled it taut. There was a deathly silence as the soldier with the red sash stepped forward, raised his scimitar high above his head with both hands, and swung it down with all his strength. But the blow was not clean or the edge of the sword was blunt;

four times he hacked away before the head rolled to one side in a pool of blood.

When the first deep gash was made a long stream spurted from the neck and shot a yard into the air. One of the soldiers from the ranks forming the circle dashed up with a pronged stick holding two dough balls on the end and thrust them into the stream until they were thoroughly soaked. Chang told me afterwards that a great many of the soldiers were having stomach trouble, diarrhea and dysentery, and the dough balls were made up into small pills which sold for as high as ten coppers apiece for use as an antidote.

After the head was chopped off—each time the beheader took several strokes to do the job—the body was kicked over front side up and the stomach sliced into ribbons. Thus mutilated all chance of the body ever joining its ancestors was completely removed.

When the last criminal was killed the three heads were hung by the ends of their queues to a telegraph pole where any one going to and from the station was bound to see them, and a warning banner was stretched below. For a few coppers beggars carried the bodies to a near-by mound, growing larger every day, threw them on top and spread over a few inches of earth dug from a pit at the side.

Strong measures. But, until ideas borrowed from foreign nations forced a chaos called a republic, the strict enforcement of such codes had bred a law abiding people in a nation of overcrowded hundreds of millions.

* * * * *

In the midst of these happenings I received from Butch a chit that made me jump. He was worried, he wrote in his cramped, jerky style; lately he had been bothered about the way his hair was falling out and sores coming out on the top of his head; he had tried vaseline but it didn't seem to help. His interpreter, he scrawled, who seemed to know something about such things said that he was sure it was a terrible disease he had

known Chinese to have and that Butch should go to a foreign doctor at once. He was trying a local Chinese doctor now but his head seemed to be getting worse. What did I think he had better do?

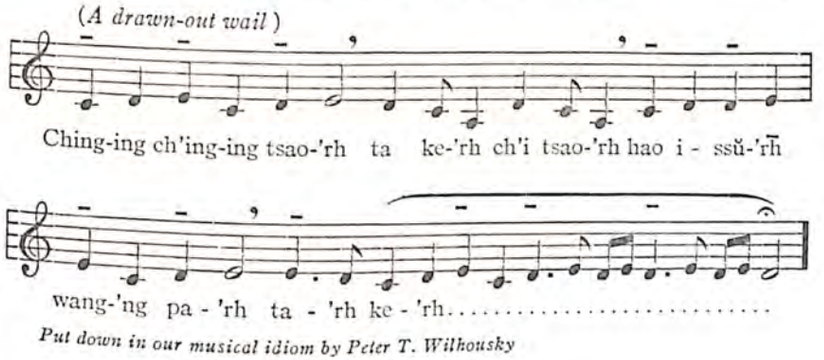
I wired back the same day telling him to pack up and take carts as quickly as he could across country straight east to the German controlled railway line at Tsinanfu and catch the first boat out of Tsingtao for Shanghai, that I had wired ahead for him to be met on arrival.

A week later I rode over to the mess where he had been living and after thoroughly smoking it out, had everything in the house either burnt or buried. Several months later I received news that Butch had died a horrible death in an isolated hospital on the outskirts of Shanghai.

Another man was sent down, this time an Englishman who had been taken on at home, but one queer egg. Although the thermometer was running from 85 to 90 degrees he stepped off the train wearing a double breasted heavy worsted coat over a stiff bosom shirt, an extremely high collar with a black string bow tie, a pair of grey broadcloth trousers stuffed inside brown leather puttees and black high shoes. He stuck to the same costume all summer.

On account of the heat I was getting up at six in the morning and taking the two coolies with me to sample the farmers who were hoeing their crops on the outskirts of the city. I made a discovery. Although in the towns and villages, the Chinese rapidly turned from their long stemmed pipes to cigarettes, and even more women than men smoked them, the majority of these farmers had never seen one. I had to show them how to put the cigarettes in their mouths, then light them. They enjoyed it thoroughly—it was like a game to them.

At that hour of the morning the air was still cool and the fresh smell of the soil filled one with the joy of just being alive. Men and women worked in groups and often kept time with a high wailing chant, one of which I heard frequently. The theme concerned a young man sitting on his doorstep feeling lonesome and longing for his girl. Something like this:



Put down in our musical idiom by Peter T. Wilhousky

When I walked across the fields towards them and yelled, "*T'ien ch'i hao'rh* (fine weather)!" they leaned on their hoes and greeted me with bows and "*haos*". And when I asked about the crops thumbs flew up in the air; they insisted vociferously that they could not be better. I think it must be true of farmers the world over that they are the most courteous, kindly and friendly of any class of humanity. Among the Chinese I found this true.

I told Deekin, the Englishman, the day he arrived, that I wanted him to go along with me on these early morning sampling outings. But he failed to get up in time. For several days I had to drag him out of bed. Finally I had to threaten to have him transferred before I could break his habit of over-sleeping. What made me sore and arbitrary was his habit of going to bed at one or two in the morning. Some nights he was up until daylight.

The first evening after dinner he fetched the Bible and Byron's *Don Juan* from his trunk, spread them out before him on the table in the living room and delivered a long sermon. For the whole four hours we sat there he talked steadily or read passages from the two books with a cigarette glued to his under lip, leaving it in his mouth until the lighted end was about to burn his moustache, then taking it out to light another from it. This chain smoking had given a contrasting color to the entire lower half of his moustache. I listened and watched fascinated.

After several evenings spent taking in his discourses and side remarks, I was able to piece together bits of his past into a fairly complete outline.

He was born in London and had lived there all of his life until he joined the company and came to China. He finished school at sixteen and, as expressed in the vague manner of the English, "entered an office in the city". On his eighteenth birthday the Great Change came into his life: he attended his first grand opera, read *Don Juan* and, following in his father's footsteps, put on a stiff bosom dress shirt for daily wear. From that day on he never changed from a stiff bosom shirt and spent all his spare time refuting the Bible with *Don Juan*. Unfortunately, he had been unable to find the opportunity to emulate in any way the life of the *Don;* his slim funds only permitted him a top gallery seat at the opera once a week and the fascination was too great to give it up for first hand romance and adventure; but in spirit he was the *Don's* earnest disciple—the complete atheist, he proudly put it. He read passages in the Bible in order to jeer at their lack of beauty or logic, turning to *Don Juan* to show how much more clearly and beautifully Byron expressed the same thought or completely upset it. Byron stood for the glorious freedom of life while the Bible chained men down.

The world existed for Deekin only in these two books. After listening to him the first few nights, he began to get on my nerves. I wanted quiet. At ten-thirty or eleven I went to bed and could still hear the mumbling sound of his voice coming from the living room, followed by quick exclamations, "Ha! Now let's see what Byron says? Ha! Listen to this!" I finally stopped it by threatening a transfer, but I was unable to prevent him from sitting up most of the night.

After a week I packed him off to take over Butch's territory. I only saw him occasionally after that, but his interpreter once told me, "Mr. Deekin is very good sleeper—we always start very late on trip in morning—very fine sleeper."

XXII

JULY AND AUGUST: 1914

the big heat comes and the wells are dry—sleeping out of doors develops a mania for temples—I visit a missionary hospital and am dumbfounded—my interpreter kills his sons—almost daily I read of declarations of war in Europe while thousands are dying daily around me

THE *Ta Fu* (GREAT HEAT) came but no rain. The sun beat down fiercely. Robberies, kidnapping and beheadings increased. As much for relief as for business I took a trip west to the edge of the mountains where it was said to be cooler and more peaceful.

In the sticky, sizzling white heat of midday dizzy waves like wide ribbons of streaming water vibrated against the blazing blue sky, and the dazzling green tones of the vegetable plants and melon vines shimmered and spasmodically jumped. The glaring monotony of brilliant color was only slightly broken by the strings of white cloth hung between poles to scare away crows and the platforms shaded by bamboo mats, under which lounging farmers kept watch day and night against hungry sneak thieves.

But the green was dangerously tinged with yellow and it was not yet time; the ditches and most of the wells were as dry as dust. In the small village *t'u ti* (soil) temples the baskets before the gods overflowed with cash pieces and coppers dropped by

the farmers when they entered to kneel and burn their joss sticks of camel dung in the ash-filled brass bowls before the altars in order to bring rain.

In the evening when we approached the town where we were to stop for the night, I scouted around for a temple court where it would be cool, and had the boy place my cot on the raised stone terrace facing south to catch the breeze. After a while my interest in temples almost became a mania. At every place we visited, even along the highway, I was running down temples with my vest pocket camera, and was amazed to find three or four, sometimes six or eight, small but exquisitely carved and tiled temples in and around the smallest and most squalid towns. Most of them, it is true, were in a bad state of decay and ruin, and some had almost completely disappeared, but once there must have been in Honan Province alone, literally tens of thousands of painstakingly built shrines that were works of art.

In one of the most poverty stricken districts of China, near the border of Shansi and many *li* away from any town, I stopped for lunch at a temple in one of the courtyards of which was a pool surrounded with marble balustrades, filled from a spring of bubbling hot water. After a long series of enquiries I learned that several centuries back this spring had been famous for its healing powers, and thousands of pilgrims had visited it every year to cure their ills.

Once, entering a small run-down town I suddenly faced an inner wall temple with a dome-shaped roof of glowing green, red and yellow tiles, the pillars a glazed porcelain in the soft, creamy tones of old ivory, shaped like bamboo stalks. In sheer beauty of design and color and for classic balance it equaled any I have ever seen, including the tourists' mecca, The Temple of Heaven in Peking.

At every temple I asked questions about its history and gods. But the origin of most had been lost in the past and the gods they stood for had long ago become mixed with others. In a Confucian temple might be a hundred gods belonging to Buddhism. On the other hand, a Buddhist temple might contain not

only Confucius and his disciples but also Lao Tze and a miscellaneous lot of Taoists. Then there were the more abstract gods, such as that of agriculture or of learning, and any number of local deities. The additions and changes had been so many that to the local natives themselves the gods and disciples were *luan ch'i pa tsao*, all upside down. *Kuan Yin*, the Goddess of Mercy, and that terrible bugaboo, the impalpable *Feng Shui*, seemed to be the only ones remaining aloof and undefiled.

On the final day of this trip, entering Changtefu my cook had a stroke of paralysis and I called in the Canadian Mission doctor. A pleasant friendship followed. He invited me over to see his hospital, tentatively remarking that he held no narrow minded religious views about the sale of cigarettes and that I need not meet any of the regulars.

His hospital was a revelation. I had no idea that such human misery existed at any place in the world. The entire group of buildings was given over to the treatment of syphilis, and was divided into wards according to the stage developed. What I saw I cannot describe. The great, great tragedy of it was, the doctor said, that the good he was able to do was so infinitesimally small. The hospital had been stretched to its limit. He was forced to turn down almost hundreds of applicants daily, many of them brought by relatives on carts from faraway parts of the province, even from Shansi. The disease took many forms unknown to medical science in the West and was prevalent throughout the country; at least one third of the population, he estimated, had it in some form or other. No one could tell who might have it; in ordinary contacts one took many chances every day.

I never visited the hospital again, but whenever the opportunity offered, played tennis with the doctor in the missionary compound. My visits reminded me that I had not seen Chang's two sturdy little boys since the cook's illness. Knowing that I was taking several cold rubdowns a day in my tin-lined cigarette case bathtub, about a month before Chang had conceived the idea of setting up one for his kids in the Chinese guest room. Formerly I had watched them splashing about in the hot after-

noons having a great time, but for more than a week I had missed them.

I asked Chang what had become of them.

He looked me straight in the face without expression. "I kill them," he said calmly.

For a moment I was too shocked to speak. Then, "What do you mean?" I exclaimed. "You're no murderer!"

"Oh, yes. I kill my two small boys. I build bathtub and let them go in cold water. They get sick and die. It is my fault. I kill my two small boys."

I walked away. It was not Chang's fault; it was mine. Cold baths, cold drinks, cold food—no Chinese, ordinarily would dare take a chance on any of these. I remembered a statement Mr. Sung once made, that he had never in his whole life tasted cold drink or food.

Chang had loved those two boys deeply; his stoical acceptance of their fate saddened me. Did nothing happen in this country but tragedy?

While I was asking myself this question it was answering itself.

Walking around the top of the city wall one late afternoon, a habit during the sweltering months, I heard a snarling and growling and looked down over the outside edge of the wall. At first I could see only a jumble of dogs tearing at something; a second glance and I made out two of them fighting over a human arm and others pulling and gnawing at a torso.

A few days later I started across country to Deekin's headquarters. The scenery and traffic along the road was changing. The fields had turned yellow and a good part of the crops had shriveled and died. Half naked coolies I passed were skin and bone. In the still occupied villages farmers and their families sat listlessly under the shade of walls, and naked, grimy children walked about, protruding spines curved in and stomachs distended. Several times I saw small boys in trees with long sticks, knocking off the last few top leaves to boil for nourishment; others with empty bags searched the ground beneath.

Families went by in rags, barely able to drag their feet—

starving farm folk who had given up their homes and were wandering off blindly to anywhere, to find something, anything, to eat. When we came in sight the whole family, from grandmother to baby, would fall to its knees and kowtow in the dust until we were out of distance of the sound of their voices. And more than once a cringing waunk dog sneaked back from the side of the road leaving behind a huddled heap, the remains of a baby discarded by its helpless father and mother.

* * * * *

On my return I found in the mess a week's supply of the *Peking Daily News*. On the front page of the first was a news item, ten lines single column, "Austria Declares War on Serbia". In a later issue appeared, in the same amount of space, "Russia Mobilizing Forces". In another, "Germany and France Mobilize". Items containing only such broad, bare statements continued. Then, five days after it had happened, I opened the paper to read the further startling announcement, taking up a half column, "England Declares War on Germany".

After going over this last article I sat for a long time thinking. Here are five of the greatest—four of them the most highly civilized—nations ever developed, deliberately going out of their way to murder and rape. Germany, who has been preparing for many years, and since the nineties, drinking toasts to *Der Tag*, the day when she would go to war with England. Here is England, tied up with Japan by a "secret" treaty to support each other against the force of any other nation, both afraid of Russia and both aware for years of Germany's ultimate intentions. Here is France, in a trembling state of hatred and fear since the time Germany marched on Paris and snatched away Alsace Lorraine. And here are Austria Hungary and the Balkans, a mass of squabbling, spiteful tribes. And finally, Russia—unwieldy—half western and half oriental—always ready and waiting to reach out for more. What a hell of a mess to call civilization!

And then I thought: I can imagine the breathless suspense and excitement, the newspaper headlines, the talk at the break-

fast table and the arguments and surmises in offices, on the streets and on trains; for all this war stuff is news, the greatest and most fascinating of all news.

My mind turned back to what was going on around me. Here were innumerable gangs of looters and kidnappers; one man alone, *White Wolf,* had gathered together forces that now totalled more than sixty thousand men scattered through Honan and southern Shansi, leaving desolation and ruin in their wake, still gathering new recruits as tag ends swept north through Shansi and westward into Shensi.

Now, it was the fourth year of crops burnt-out or flooded, a cycle that occurred almost with the regularity of the ticking of a clock. Families of farmers were dying like flies from starvation. And through the fall, winter, spring and summer one plague had followed on the steps of another—smallpox, cholera, many kinds of fever, and now dysentery—not to mention the steady toll of lives taken year in and year out by tuberculosis and syphilis.

How many lives were lost that year—1914—in this one section of China—from such unnatural causes? A million? Two million?

I wondered; but I could find no answer. I decided between the two and left it at that; for I did not believe that anyone knew or had ever known; there was no way to figure—just as there was no way to estimate truly whether the country had a population of 400,000,000 or 700,000,000—when such a large proportion was nomadic, without homes or friends, and so many were born and died overnight.

But this I did know, that in Shanghai and the other treaty ports, and among the foreigners in general in China, only missionaries and a handful of foreigners working back in the interior for one of the companies, had any knowledge whatsoever of that year's slaughter of human lives by murder, starvation and disease. Those who lived in the midst of those appalling tragedies seldom spoke of them after they were away—such happenings were too far removed from the world of the outsider to interest him. Therefore, they were not news.

XXIII

LATE AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER: 1914

the cleanest city in China—Japan hands an ultimatum to the Germans—farewell parties—the siege of Tsingtao and Japanese atrocities—business troubles with Mohammedans—I decide that selling is advertising

IN THE FIRST PART OF AUGUST I received a letter of transfer to Tientsin. The company had made one of its sudden sweeping changes; the dozens of small sales divisions were discarded and replaced by five large ones—Shanghai, Hongkong, Hankow, Tientsin and Manchuria (Mukden). I was to go to Tientsin as soon as possible as assistant to Garrod, who was made Division manager.

In less than two weeks I was sitting in the twilight on the porch of the rambling old Astor House, wearing a regular suit of clothes for the first time in almost a year, and sipping from a tall glass the Kaiser's favorite dark Munich beer, the smoothest, richest, most delectable drink my taste glands had ever touched. I squinted at the soft, shadowy foliage of the trees in the little formalized English park across the street and felt civilized—but I had changed—considerably.

Those two years in the interior had instilled into my very bones a feeling for quiet and space. The busy life going on about me, the small talk of groups gathered around the club in the late afternoon and on the hotel verandah in the evening, were things

apart. I was in the background, an onlooker, interested only in the most impersonal way, and with no desire to get closer. All this nervous movement and chatter reminded me of sparrows hopping and twittering.

For the first few weeks I spent a great deal of my time to myself. I left my companions to wander off to my room and read from the small library of Chinese philosophers I had gathered together, or sought a bench in an isolated section of the park where I could watch the play of lights and shadows thrown by the arc lamp through the trees, and ruminate. Too many people around made me restless. I found a contentment in being alone. This feeling has never completely left me.

When I arrived, foreign Tientsin was in a highly mixed up state and much excited. China had issued a statement to the effect that she desired the Far East to be excluded from the area of hostilities in which the Great War was being waged. But the day before I arrived, the Japanese, with an eye on Germany's possessions in Shantung province and taking advantage of her "secret" treaty with England, sent a message strongly objecting; and two days later delivered an ultimatum to the German Legation to hand over the Kiaochow peninsular. Germany's reply was an immediate mobilization of all her subjects.

The hotel was filled with young Germans from outside points stopping over on their way to Tsingtao and Tsinanfu. There was no ill feeling between the individual English and Germans. The second evening after I arrived a small group of Americans and English invited me to join in a farewell party they were giving to a German friend who was leaving the next day. The German was heartbroken, and the English thought it a dirty shame that the "dwarf bandits"—the Chinese nickname for the Japanese—should take advantage of the state of affairs to seize more territory in China—for no one believed that she would willingly ever hand it back.

Late in the evening we adjourned to the German Club bar where we ran into a large crowd of mixed nationalities having farewell drinks with departing members. Our friend showed us his identification book, called the "fifteen day" book, which he had carried since he had left home for China. In it was listed a number instead of his name. Starting from the day on which Germany might fall into a war, entered as "1st day of the war," every move he was to make each day thereafter from the time it took to reach his business headquarters, was marked down for the following fifteen days. It even gave the number of the key to the locker in which a uniform to his measure would be found.

On the twenty-third of August the Japanese started their assault on Tsingtao, the German treaty port in Shantung with one of the finest harbors in the world, which the Germans were fast developing into the most beautiful summer resort in the East. From day to day news came through that the Japanese soldiers, after seizing the railroad headquarters at Tsinanfu, had fired all the Chinese staff, were commandeering their supplies from local native shops, and throwing families into the street in order to use their homes for barracks. Also, with the sorry excuse that the Chinese were trying to stand in their way, Japanese soldiers were forcing fights and plundering and murdering. The Chinese made a few futile attempts to resist, but after much brutal wholesale slaughter, were compelled to lie down and allow the Japanese to go as far as they liked. Several foreigners who were on the ground told me that it was evident that the Japanese were playing their old game of deliberately starting an uprising with the idea of demanding reparations in the form of more concessions. But the local Chinese authorities, well aware of Japan's aim, managed to keep peace, though many lives paid the price.

Not until the seventh of November—two months and a half after the siege was started—did the Japanese take Tsingtao and intern the Germans. Considering their number and equipment, the Germans put up a wonderful showing. Every one thought that it would be merely a matter of days. The Japanese broadcast the propaganda that they had desired to refrain from doing too much damage. However, through the arbitrary, high-handed way they walked over the Chinese and their totally unnecessary destruction of property, the "dwarf bandits" lost a considerable amount of face with the other foreign nationalities. Immediately after the fall of Tsingtao they tried to build a Japanese

colony in the vicinity of Tsinanfu, and offered a premium to settlers, but few families were willing and the plan petered out.

While all this was going on, we in the company were busy straightening out our own affairs. Garrod and I had connecting offices, and my job was handling the field correspondence, checking orders and okeying reports to Shanghai. In another set of offices a separate foreign and Chinese staff handled the local market. But in the beginning we were all working together to coax our group of Tientsin wholesale dealers out of a bad case of sulks.

About six months before the big Divisions swallowed up the little ones, a young American in the Shanghai office was breaking all records for a reputation of brilliancy. He had come out as a secretary and, although he had never been outside Shanghai and had no experience working close to the Chinese, in less than a year he was carrying on correspondence with the Division heads. As a shining example to the old timers in the field of what a little pep would do, and to round up the young prodigy's experience, the Old Man shipped him up to Tientsin to take charge.

The men in the field resented his sudden rise. In the first place, they had a hearty contempt for ideas and instructions handed out by anyone who had never roughed it in the interior and gained a first-hand knowledge of the Chinese and conditions. In the second place, they had gradually arrived at the set opinion that once a man was out of Shanghai he was forgotten, and that, consequently, the only ones getting ahead were a bunch of boot-lickers in the Shanghai office who got "on the inside" by playing up to the Old Man. Several friends of mine had already developed a chronic grouch and cleared out for good when they left on home-leave. Harry C. had turned in his resignation when he passed through New York. So had J. P.

The young American from Shanghai arrived in Tientsin to face a fixed handicap arranged by the local foreign staff. They had discussed the appointment among themselves, decided that it was unfair and agreed to treat him with the utmost respect, faithfully follow out his instructions, but to offer him no suggestions or advice.

He was a slender, quick moving young chap keyed up with an excess of nervous energy, and the basic idea which he brought along was, from our American point of view, sound to the core: under any and every condition increase sales, and continue to do so without let-up.

He started off as if he were making a hundred yard dash, but overlooked the fact that in the summer—he arrived in May—sales of cigarettes dropped naturally. Or, perhaps, he may have felt that he was forced to back his basic idea against nature in order to retain the Old Man's high opinion. When sales started downward he hammered the trade, put on drives and sat up nights figuring out schemes. When he asked opinions he was stalled off. Finally, he commenced to harangue the dealers. That was his worst mistake. The foreigners under him made no comment.

Now, in Tientsin we had the hardest boiled and crusted set of dealers in all of China. They were Mohammedans. Every one of the five stood well over six feet and weighed more than two hundred pounds, divided equally into three parts: shrewdness, stubbornness and passivity. Moreover, they had a mosque in the style of the Russian Greek Catholic, abhorred pork and, like the Indian Mohammedans (those whom I have seen), had powerful Jewish noses which could scent out money where the imagination of a Wall Street promoter in the same circumstances would have never dreamed it existed.

When the young man from Shanghai harangued, they went into silence. As sales continued to drop during the hot weather, the more he harangued the more stubborn became their silence. Until the strain broke him. To bolster up his nerves he took to drinking a bit; and then—like the British who drank scotch and soda to cool off and were forced to keep drinking in order to counter the heat caused by the alcohol—to stave off the after-effects he increased his allowance until nothing but a woman could soothe him. The two combined to end his brief career in China. He was in a sanitorium for a while, then the company returned him to the States.

When Garrod took over Tientsin the Mohammedans were

salving their injured pride by drying up the market, allowing the retailers only sufficient stocks to keep them barely going and occasionally running a brand short in order to drive home their spite.

Only by ignoring their actions and bad temper, and by friendly talk with no mention of business, was Garrod able to make any headway. And the sky was not completely cleared until he gave them a big formal dinner, taking care beforehand to see that no pork was served. Following the dinner, we attended a special service held at their mosque, at which they all wore their caps and hats and listened to a priest intone a reading from the Koran. After that the sun shone again and business went back to normal.

These Tientsin Mohammedans were an exceptional breed, entirely different in make-up from the regular Chinese. Every one of the fifty odd men at the special ceremony was powerfully built and of a Jewish cast, and some had blue eyes with deep brown hair. They were also light in color.

For the first few weeks I lived at the Astor House, a faded green, cavern-like wooden structure, with tall rooms smelling of must and mould. But the Astor was a tradition and drew all the trade—also it was less than a stone's throw from the Tientsin Club, a great convenience at the end of cocktail hour. For the big time of the day was shortly before eight in the evening when the cocktail gang gathered around the semi-circle club bar. It was an exchange mart of risqué stories, scandals, politics and friendship. Usually it was packed three or four deep, and one could always tell how and where a man was spending the evening by the way he was dressed, with whom he was mixing and the number of cocktails he drank.

After I had become somewhat accustomed to the radical change from the dirt and poverty of the wide open spaces back in the interior, I began to sum up. I had been out for almost four years—my home-leave was not many months off. I had handled every kind of job there was in the field; now I was holding down next to the highest. Where was I heading? If I did move up to the top seat, what more could it mean beyond

receiving one fat increase, a pat on the back and settling down to the standard yearly raise from then on, until retired with the gift of a gold cigarette case or watch, engraved with good-wishes and initials. There seemed to be definite limits to "going ahead"; the sound of the word, pioneer, had a romantic and inspiring ring, but the actual meaning was most matter-of-fact.

Yet back home what could I do? My three and a half years of work had been no training for any kind of job in the States. I spoke Chinese; I knew North China better than I did any part of my own country. I was fitted for nothing except for what I was doing.

Then I went at the question from another side. We were called salesmen. But, actually, we did no selling. The large majority of the foreigners in the company spoke no Chinese; interpreters and dealers took care of that end. The foreigners were really inspectors, overseers, advisers. More than anything else, it seemed to me, our job reduced itself to advertising.

There my argument ended. I would specialize. I wrote to the agent of the I.C.S. in Shanghai, and within a few weeks' time had signed the dotted line.

XXIV

LATE SEPTEMBER OF 1914–EARLY JULY OF 1915

English social customs—bargaining in beauty—the efficiency expert who broke up the Tobacco Trusts looks over unusual correspondence—a Shensi official ends the beauty trade—Japan's twenty-one demands—the birth of "War Lords"—the original Philadelphia Jack O'Brien and the Fourth of July—I go on home-leave

IN 1914 AND '15 TIENTSIN WAS booming and in spite of many upheavals going on both in China and abroad, the import and export houses were doing a thriving business; in many lines the Great War had opened up new markets. The different nationalities packed close together were kept busy and, consequently, friendly. There were many young people and parties were frequent. Most of my evenings out were about equally divided between English and Americans. As with business and politics, I soon discovered that the English had entertaining fixed along traditional lines of least effort. I was much surprised my first time out when in the midst of after dinner coffee my hostess leaned over and whispered, "And what's yours?" I answered that I didn't care for a thing, thanks. "Oh,"

she exclaimed, "I mean what do you do?" And when I replied that I thought she knew my business, she created much merriment by informing the guests of our conversation and asking some one please to explain. A guest diagramed to me the expression, "and what's yours"; it was in common use with all hostesses and meant, what were one's parlor tricks? Every Britisher, I believe, has one or more, plays the piano, recites or does things with a handkerchief or a glass of water; and a splendid tradition it is for small cliques or communities. Suburban America might well take note.

When fall came and the weather grew too cold for tennis, I took long rambling walks in the bracing evening air through the Chinese city, practising my Chinese on shopkeepers and hawkers, picking up street slang. The shops were still the old fashioned kind that one reads of in ancient and medieval tales, and it was good to enter again the native atmosphere of smells and noises, and the shadowy mass of crowds weaving back and forth under the dim lights of shop and street lamps. After an hour's tramp I often dropped into one of the first-class sing-song houses for a chat and a cup of tea with tangerines and dried, salted pumpkin seed. Occasionally I called for a song. *Lao mama* (old mama) screeched for the fiddler, who was always sitting outside waiting; while he tuned his two string violin the girl spat and cleared her throat; then, for ten or fifteen minutes I listened to a few of the old popular Chinese love songs sung in a high, wailing pitch.

For a month or more I had been knocking around through the city in this manner, when one evening I dropped into a house and one of the *lao mamas* ushered in a young *kuniang* who almost knocked me off my feet. I had read, and been told, of the micrometric measurements by which the old Manchu nobility judged beauty, and the method by which each feature had to bear comparison with a flower of fruit, and now for the first time I gazed upon perfection. By eastern or western standards Little *Mei Mei* (most beautiful) was rightly named. Her hands, too, were exquisite and her skin flawless.

She was, *lao mama* said, just seventeen. Naturally, with her

Haiso Yatze, "Little Duck", registered with a number and wearing a sing-song license badge

beauty and youth she wore the red cord of virginity plaited into her hair.

After a pleasant quarter of an hour the young lady stepped out for a few minutes, as was the custom, and I asked the old mother what price. She leaned back and forward laughing, then opened and closed her hand three times and exclaimed, "fifteen thousand taels (about Am. $6,000)!"

After figuring for a while on what might be a safe sum, I named twenty-five hundred. She rolled her eyes and pursed her lips in indignation. For such a lovely girl—so young—who had never known a man? Surely, I made a joke.

Before the evening was over I had gone up to three thousand, and *lao mama* had dropped her price to fourteen thousand five hundred. There we stuck. But I continued to drop in several times a week, and when the girl was out of the room went back to the bargaining. After a month of dickering *lao mama* had come down to twelve thousand and I had raised my ante to four. Two or three friends whom I had taken to see this raving beauty had spread the news, and by that time almost every one I knew was drawing me aside and requesting an introduction. (After one visit after dark, it would have been impossible, even for a Chinese, to locate the house. One of our interpreters estimated that, including all classes and kinds, more than forty thousand such places existed in Tientsin. Although I cannot vouch for so high a figure out of a total population of less than a half million, later in the year Bartlett and I gave up one night to cover the district, and it took us from nine until five, moving along at a steady pace and stopping only a few minutes at less than a dozen houses).

In the midst of my negotiations a metaphorical bomb exploded in the Shanghai office and, in the language of foreign correspondents, its repercussions echoed throughout all the branches in the field. When the United States government went out to break up the Tobacco Trust, it hired a chartered accountant to work out all the details. He made such a clean job of it that the real power behind the company, in New York, was stricken with admiration. He decided that a man who was so good at

tearing a machine to pieces should be as well qualified to put one together. He took on the accountant, under the well-known disguise of "efficiency expert", at an enormous fee to revise the company's entire accounting policy in China.

After the acountant had gone over the books at Shanghai, he started out with his wife on a tour of the field. The first day in the Tientsin office he asked to look over the field correspondence. One side of my office was filled with files dating back to the opening of the company. The dead files, packed in boxes on the bottom shelves, contained thousands of letters. Only a few were typed, the rest were scrawled with pen or pencil on all kinds of cheap paper, and many were almost illegible. But the worst part of it was that the contents were utterly lacking in formality; although the first two or three paragraphs of a letter were always strictly business, the last part was usually a conglomeration of broad wisecracks, dirty jokes and personal complaints, worded without restraint. With a sinking feeling I handed over the first box.

For two solid weeks the efficiency expert sat at the long table in the center of the room pouring over every letter and taking notes. During that time he never smiled nor uttered a word. At the end, when he had closed the last folder, he called me over and, after staring at the table for a minute, quietly remarked, "It seems to me that some of this correspondence is unnecessarily long."

I cleared my throat and explained that the men who wrote the letters were living in the interior alone, putting up with all sorts of hardships and having foreign contacts scarcely once a month, that the dry, dusty climate was not too good for nerves under the best of conditions, and a man in such circumstances often got touchy and made mountains out of molehills. "If a straight business letter without any personal touch were written from this office to any one of those men," I said, "he would jump to the conclusion that either we here, or Shanghai, had it in for him, and more than likely would wire in his resignation or come tearing into Tientsin to find out why he was singled to be picked on."

The efficiency expert continued to stare at the table without moving. Finally he said quietly, "That's all, I think."

Nothing more was said. Later he told Garrod that the field correspondence looked a little long but that he thought it was all right.

A few days later the efficiency expert asked me if I knew the Chinese City. I admitted to some slight knowledge. Then he wanted to know if I would show his wife and him around after the office closed. After much hesitation, he added that his wife was anxious to see—that is, if it were all right—not too er—out of the way—a sing-song girl; she had heard so much about them.

That evening I took them to call upon Little *Mei Mei*. In a few minutes the two women were examining each other from head to foot and having a glorious time. Neither one had seen anything like the other close-up. Little *Mei Mei* was fascinated by the wife's hair and made her take it down and put it up again to see how it was done. The wife had to feel the girl's silk clothes and scrutinize her hands. When we came away she carried a pair of tiny embroidered slippers and one of Little *Mei Mei's* jackets, having left behind a tortoise shell hair comb and a bracelet. All the way back to the hotel she raved about the girl's dainty beauty and her aristocratic hands.

After six months in the field the efficiency expert returned to Shanghai, turned the accounting department upside down and established a completely new system. The day after he sailed for the States the Old Man threw it out and put back the old.

* * * * *

One afternoon, on entering the house of Little *Mei Mei* I saw in front a highly decorated Peking cart with two soldiers on ponies standing guard. The boy inside the gate told me that she was engaged. I was away for two weeks at Chentow and called again soon after my return. Little *Mei Mei* and old *mama* had gone.

The Peking cart belonged to the military governor of Shensi province, and he had carried Little *Mei Mei* back with him to join his concubines. Price paid, ten thousand taels. In my last

talk with the old mama my offer had risen to three thousand; she had lowered her limit to twelve. From beginning to end our bargaining had been carried on with the utmost seriousness but, as a matter of fact, at that time, when old customs were still in force, it was unlikely that a foreigner could have bought a first class girl at any price; her face would have been completely lost forever.

With the winter came skating (under a closed mat shed on account of the dust), dinner parties and dances, amateur dramatics, and in the short evenings at the club, bowling, dominoes and bridge. I discovered that an American bridge player would invariably win in the long run from a Britisher in the same class; the latter learned a system by rote and never broke away from it; the former learned the same system and used it as a gambling basis. On Saturdays and Sundays, until the ice was heavily coated with dust, picnic parties sledded up the river on Chinese mule-pulled sleighs.

On January 18th (1915) Japan, now in control of the German concessions, placed her famous, outrageous twenty-one demands before the Chinese government. Among others were all the German rights in Shantung, new treaty ports, a new ninety-nine year lease on Dairen and Port Arthur in Manchuria, mining concessions, Japanese financial, military and political advisers for the betterment of the Chinese government, sole rights to sell arms, a jointly owned arsenal. The Chinese were highly indignant, and some of the guilds expressed their feelings in attempted boycotts. President Yuan sparred for time and made counter suggestions. Negotiations dragged along, but Japan had declared her hand and every one knew that, sooner or later, she would gain the main points towards which she was driving.

In the early spring news came that a Chinese private in one of the Shantung regiments had aroused dissatisfaction among his fellow soldiers at the pay and treatment they were getting, ending by throwing out the officers and putting himself and his friends at the head. He then declared the section in which he was located under his rule and protection, for which he charged the people heavy taxes. Since he kept his soldiers well-fed and

therefore contented, he soon increased his army to alarming proportions, but provincial affairs were in such a condition that no measures could be taken against him.

Chinese friends told me that he amassed a fortune in a very short time by forcing his men to gamble with him after pay day each month; any soldier who won was punished for cheating. He was one of the first of the many coolies whose names have continued to appear on the front pages of newspapers in Europe and America as China's "War Lords".

Rumors were that the Japanese were connected with this uprising—but who knows?

With the Great War growing in Europe and trouble almost at the gate, the fifty or more civilian Americans organized a volunteer corp, training under officers and sergeants from the 15th infantry. For the first few weeks we had drill and sighting practice at the barracks, and later took tramps and shot at the range. I made several friends among the top sergeants who persuaded me to join their club as an honorary member. They rented a room in one of the buildings on Victoria Road where Saturday nights they held a smoker; every one pitched in to buy a good supply of beer. A well set up, fine looking bunch, as soft hearted as a pre-war woman. To three of them I acted as a kind of adviser to the love-lorn, and sooner or later almost every one of them showed me a picture of his girl and told me the story.

As usual in treaty ports—or elsewhere—after I was settled, life went on in a more or less fixed routine. President Yuan was compelled to give in to Japan's most important demands, and on May 18th the nation established a new holiday, called "Humiliation Day", on which at a certain time every one went into silence and emitted a sigh.

A break came on the 4th of July. All Americans took a holiday and after the morning ceremonies the 15th infantry paraded in full dress uniform. In the afternoon a baseball game was held between the civilians and soldiers. But the great event was the special celebration of old Mr. O'Brien, which was repeated every year. He was the original Philadelphia Jack O'Brien, father of

the champion middleweight bearing the same title, and had been one of the great old timers who fought with bare fists. He had a large trunk stored with medals and belts presented by kings and princes. Now he was over eighty years old and the head of the Tientsin branch of the Robert Dollar Company, but still packed a powerful punch.

When he awoke on the morning of the Fourth—the only time he ever drank—he started off with a few scotches to get the feel, then mixed with the crowd at the free drink booth where all Tientsin turned out to join in the festivities. After several toasts, his mind went back to the wrongs England had heaped upon the States to cause the Revolution, and the more he thought about them the more indignant he grew, until he decided it was time to make reprisals. Then he started out to clean up every Englishman he could lay hands on. Before any one knew what was happening he had smacked a couple of men off their feet, and within a few minutes the place was empty and he was swaggering down Victoria Road looking for more meat. But the street was also deserted.

My home-leave was due the 15th of July. A few days after the Fourth I was relieved and took a coast ship to Shanghai. The minute I landed I discovered to my intense surprise that, in spite of the fact that I had found it necessary to adjust myself to Tientsin, compared to Shanghai it was dead. The Shanghai noise and rush were so entirely foreign that they seemed to have increased ten-fold since I had been there. Driving through the bustle and racket of the traffic, later standing on a corner along Nanking Road, then in the Astor House where every one was busy dashing to and fro, I listened and watched in amazement. Had I at one time actually been tearing around in this jerky, strained, hurried way? It was hard to believe. The people are mad, I said to myself, completely mad; it all seems so unnecessary; they can't possibly get any more done by moving around at such a rate; and yet this insane, useless rush of cities is what we call civilization; why, no one takes or has the time to think or live.

I passed the examination in oral Chinese and copped the $500,

went on a wild farewell party given by the new Number One (the Grand Old Man from the South had retired) and the next afternoon stepped aboard the S. S. *Siberia* bound for San Francisco. I had been knocking around China for exactly four years.

HOME-LEAVE

Middle of July to Middle of November: 1915

August, September and October I spent in different parts of the States and saw only what seemed to be a few minor changes but which I later recognized as having a great deal of significance.

On the first morning of our arrival in San Francisco (five of us, including Bartlett, came across together) I stood in the entrance of the St. Francis Hotel enjoying the air and the colors of the park and surrounding buildings, sharpened by the city's boasted rarefied atmosphere, idly thinking of what I had missed during those four years in China. I was recalling the day, a week before in Honolulu, when, slipping away from the others, I stood on a hill above the city looking down over the ocean, staring at the exquisite tones of blues and greens brought out by the brilliant sunlight reflected from the coral reef, then turning to gaze at the gorgeous array of foliage and flowers filling the city. Something purely physical inside welled up and almost brought tears to my eyes, and I suddenly realized that the whole time away I had really seen no color but dull, drab browns, broken in the summer time by the monotonous green of small, isolated patches of trees and fields of grain and vegetables. All that China—the real China of the interior—had to give was the feeling of age and space—the spirit of melancholia and loneliness that seeks outlets for its vague yearnings in folk-songs and religions. That was why, I decided, all the foreign paintings I had seen of China missed; artists raved over Soochow bridges and Peking temples; but they failed completely to get the feel of the soul of the country—its age and space and stillness.

My thoughts were broken by two of the other fellows rushing up all out of breath and calling to me to come quickly; they wanted to show me something; never mind what it was; come along.

Leading me down to a corner on Market Street, they excitedly pointed their fingers at the traffic, "Look!"

I looked but saw nothing out of the way. Then they checked off as before us passed open model T Fords, running near the sidewalk, almost on top of each other, carrying cardboard signs reading, "5¢ to the station". Jitneys. For almost an hour we rode up and down the street, simply because it only cost a nickel a trip.

But the big surprise was to come later. Another chap had run across a restaurant where he waited on himself and ate five courses for thirty-five cents. We thought at first that he was pulling a joke, but tracked it down and found he was telling the truth. We passed through a turnstile, picked up waiters and cutlery, chose dishes from a long counter and paid checks to get back out to a table. San Francisco was innovating the cafeteria.

Bart and I decided to go home by the way of the Grand Canyon and New Orleans. We spent our last day in San Francisco exploring. On one of the busy side streets we ran into six small movie houses, all jammed into one block. The fronts, plastered with white banners, screaming with gigantic headlines scrawled in red and black, looked like the midway of a thriving county fair: "Today—Charlie Chaplin in —— —A Riot of Mirth—A Knockout—A Bellyful of Laughs—At His Greatest—A Scream—Latest Triumph—Sensational Hit—"

All for one nickel. We had never heard of Charlie Chaplin, but standing across the street and watching the crowds pouring in and out, we looked at each other, decided there must be something to it, forked out ten cents and walked in. Seated on camp chairs in the narrow, stuffy hall, inhaling stale, heavy air, we watched this Chaplin and listened to the audience. Chaplin fell down stairs—the crowd roared. A bulldog took a good grip on the seat of his trousers—the crowd shouted—Chaplin ran down the street with shuffling, slue-footed steps, waving a small cane—

the people around us whooped. Then some one smashed a pie against his face, and he mopped it off with a look of reproach and infinite sadness—the house rocked with laughter.

We came out into the light and walked slowly down the street, wiping the sweat from our faces. We stopped and stared back at the banners.

"Pretty sad," said Bart.

"Pretty sad," I echoed.

"What is it?" he asked.

I thought awhile.

"People are going crazy," I offered.

Bart thought awhile.

"People are going crazy," he agreed.

We walked on.

The only innovation that New York seemed to have made during our absence was the establishment of orange drink stands. We could hardly turn a corner without running into one. The noise and rush remained unchanged, intensified the same feeling I had when passing through Shanghai, that the people were stark, raving mad. Such haste was senseless; they had not learned to take time and live.

At home I found a Sunday Blue Law in effect, no soft drinks or cigarettes sold and all street cars stopped during church time. I took my mother to the mountains.

Three months later, when I went aboard the *Shinyo Maru* bound again for China, I was still thinking: what a wonderful, beautiful country we had but how we worked to destroy its charm. And the terriffic rush! After all, the Chinese could teach us a lot.

XXV

LATE FALL AND WINTER OF 1915–SUMMER OF 1916

back to China to live in Shanghai—night life—English society and the strain on bank clerks—Americans, Jews, Portuguese and half-castes—the Great War starts a business boom

WHEN I ARRIVED BACK IN Shanghai in the early part of November, 1915, the company had added a new line of cigarettes—high grade Turkish—and put a man in charge to handle it direct with London. He was soon due for home leave and I stepped in to take over.

For the next eleven months I remained in the city, intensively cultivating the local high-grade market, Chinese holes-in-the-wall and sing-song houses, beachcomber and sailor hangouts, leading hotels, clubs and restaurants. The scattered foreign population was still small; the movies, Americanized cabaret and night club had not yet added their taint to the unmoral atmosphere; and most of the people still rode in rickshas and carriages or on the trams. The motor car, with the model T Ford as the pioneer, was just beginning to make headway. It was used mostly by business men, four or five chipping in to hire one to haul them back and forth between offices and homes.

Shanghai's night life was limited—in an unlimited way—to an institution, famous throughout the East in its heyday, called Louis Ladow's Carlton Café and Restaurant.

Ladow catered to all the big parties and receptions and served excellent dinners with music to the city's foreign society—full dress, please. But by ten o'clock the mixed dinner parties ended and only men were left. That was understood. From ten on until bleak dawn other ladies of various nationalities, American, English, French and perhaps German, Russian, Italian and Spanish, from forbidding looking grey stone houses in Kiangse and Soochow Streets, drifted in and out, shooting up the sales of champagnes and sparkling burgundies to enormous quantities. They were known as the Kiangse Road Women.

Almost every afternoon at four one of these Cyprians, arrayed in the latest style from Paris and loaded with diamonds and jade, was seen driving a swanky dog cart down Nanking Road into the country for an airing, a *mafu* in uniform sitting at her left holding a silky haired Pekinese in his lap, and two in similar uniforms seated with folded arms in the rear. Another drove the most fashionable motor car in Shanghai, custom built brougham design body of black, finished inside with expensive mauve tapestry. The remark was often made about several *taipans* that they could always tell when their wives had glimpsed one of these ladies on the street by the way dressmaking bills took sudden, alarming jumps.

Shanghai foreign society was divided by sharp lines. The English were strictly subdivided; a man was known by his type of business, the clubs to which he belonged and the number of ponies he owned. Like the Boston Cabots and Lodges of yesteryear, the *taipans* of the leading import and export houses acknowledged only bank *taipans,* and the bank taipans acknowledged only themselves and brigadier generals and admirals. In similar manner, bank clerks (pr. clarks) were all ex-public school boys and stood a step above one who was in trade, even though the latter had also received an exclusive education.

Holding up their end, however, kept the poor bank clerks under a continual financial strain. The most convenient, and at the same time the most disintegrating, part of life throughout the Far East was the insidious chit system. The word, chit, has two distinct meanings: personal message and I. O. U. Since

the cost of sending a personal note was almost nil and had none of the drawbacks of a telephone conversation, every one communicated, both in business and socially, through the medium of a chit book. The only trouble was that the receiver always left his or her initials in the margin; as a consequence the percentage of scandals and social quarrels was far above that of even a very small American town. The wives of several *taipans* had a habit of visiting their husbands' offices at regular intervals to look over the signatures of their personal chit books, forcing them to hide extra ones in private safe drawers known only to themselves and their secretaries.

Since the total Shanghai foreign population was less than twenty-five thousand, excluding the Japanese, and contained no laboring class, almost anyone could sign chits for anything anywhere instead of paying cash. Now, all foreign banks and every large trading house had compradors, the real heads of many firms, handling all the cash and accounts, and under them were bill collectors called shroffs. To hold up his end properly the bank clerk coming out from home had to run a decent mess, keep a pony and belong to the right kind of clubs and all that sort of thing. Since, in line with some quaint old tradition, they were always lowly paid, within a year of the time one arrived the comprador held him in his clutches to the tune of several thousand taels.

During the year of 1915 and '16 shroffs with warrants swarmed around the Bund and on outgoing ships, forestalling every move hundreds of young fellows were making in the effort to return home and join in the War. Some old dowagers and loose talkers hinted that many of the *taipans,* especially the bank ones, encouraged the chit signing habit in order to be sure of keeping their foreign staff intact; but I cannot vouch for the absolute truth of this rumor.

The Americans were a friendly lot and made few discriminations. We lacked the colonizing spirit of the British or French; most of us had the feeling in the back of our heads that some day before long we would go back home to live. For that reason, probably more than any other, we had formed no clubs of our

own, and lived in more or less furnished houses or at the Astor House. Social life was limited chiefly to swapping tea, tennis and cocktail parties and Saturday night dances at the Astor.

During the week I spent most of my evenings in my room in the English boarding house where I had settled, digging away at advertising. Our advertising manager, a finished technician, and I had become good friends, and I was up in his department what spare time I could manage. I kept away from the main office—I was afraid of getting caught in internal politics.

Inside the race-course grounds a section was laid aside for a baseball diamond and a small grandstand. Through the summer the different ships played off a series of matches; and on Saturday and Sunday afternoons one of them or the picked team of the fleet, played against the Shanghai civilians. I held down center field and a well-wishing friend of mine with a voice like a foghorn at times created rather embarrassing situations.

A big, husky lad of about twenty-seven or eight, he was in charge of one of the sailor bars, the lowest kind of dive, back of the Astor. He was tough, and with his flattened nose and wide, loose-lipped mouth, looked it. On hot summer mornings around eleven I had the habit of dropping in now and then on business. At that time of the day the place was empty, and I stayed awhile to chat over an ice cold lemonade, one of the two drinks—the other a pick-up—that only the toughest and lowest barkeeps seem to be able to mix properly. Our discussions started with the last scrap in his joint and ended on baseball. Every Saturday and Sunday afternoon he was seated on the bottom row of the bleachers, dressed in his tight-fitting best blue serge suit, rooting in a voice that could be heard across the entire race course, every time I was up to bat or a ball came my way in the field: "Hey, Hutch, old boy, I'm witcher, old boy! Right at 'em, now!"

Aside from the French, who never strayed from their own small cliques, the Jew, Portuguese and half-castes also lived segregated social lives. Most of the Jews carried on business in such a secretive way that no outsider was ever quite sure of the source

of their incomes. Also, excepting *taipans*, they were the only ones who were either already wealthy or in the process of accumulating fortunes. Some were Bagdad and some American. Opium was the best paying product in which many of them dealt.

To discriminate between the Portuguese and the half-castes was difficult for one who did not mix with them freely. They had somewhat the same color and features and spoke the same English learned in local schools, so perfect in shaded vowels and enunciation that it might have been called the true English speech. But one great difference separated the two. The former had his own exclusive circle of which he was very proud. More often than not the immediate family ran to eight or ten; and when all of the relatives, making up a dozen families of the same generous proportions, gathered together once a week, as they usually did, they made a good sized social circle, sufficiently large to satisfy anyone. They were a religious people and constantly intermarried, one reason why such a multitude divided among themselves so few New Testament surnames.

But the half-caste was neither fish nor fowl nor good red herring. He floated in a vague space between the foreigner and the Chinese and was never accepted by either. He reached maturity early, spoke better English than most Englishmen, was quick-witted and often brilliant; but he lacked stability and a sense of proportion. The majority of the girls before eighteen were richly beautiful, endowed with the same appeal, and to an equal degree, as the high yellows who draw quantities of bankers and brokers to Harlem night clubs. Unfortunately, they aged quickly and grew stout. Tragedy lay in the fact that among both men and women many were descended from a fine line on each side and were themselves a highly cultivated type, only to be socially outcast.

These Portuguese and half-caste men were the clerks, bookkeepers and assistant accountants of Shanghai. Their sisters acted as file clerks, typists, stenographers and secretaries; sometimes they married one of their own kind, sometimes (in haste) an outsider.

Except among males, the Chinese and foreigners mixed socially only on semi-public occasions such as a reception, banquet or garden party. The few Chinese women who appeared were westernized, usually wore semi-foreign dress and spoke English. The vast majority of Chinese families, however, was still ruled by the ancient laws of Confucius. Even in broad-minded Shanghai hundreds of thousands of women saw the outside of their compounds only once a year, on Lantern Night, when paper lanterns were hung at the gates and all females of the households stood in the entrances.

The Chinese men were hesitant about mixing socially with the foreigner, least with the French who met them as equals, most with the English, the majority of whom were innately patronizing. I often heard Englishmen make slighting remarks about the country and its people with Chinese listening, and have seen them lose their temper over a trifle and bawl one out unmercifully. This attitude of superiority, adopted chiefly by men in minor positions, cultivated a deep and lasting, silent bitterness on the part of the Chinese, a feeling of helpless rage.

Soon after my arrival in Shanghai I joined the American volunteers. Every nationality had its corps. With the country at loose ends, conflicting parties, the rise of the new profession of "war lord" and the ever present possibility of some small incident breaking out in mob violence, they were a necessity. At regular intervals we drilled, practised on the rifle range in the outskirts of the North Side, and on rare occasions had sham battles.

* * * * *

The stout Jew whose place I had taken while he was on home leave returned in the spring with a wife, and that summer took her with him on a trip to the north and through Manchuria. I stayed on in Shanghai. He returned in the late fall with glowing accounts of the wonderful Turkish high-grade market in Manchuria and its marvelous future. The Number One decided that I should follow up on the good work started.

When I left for Tientsin in October, Shanghai was on a rapidly rising wave of prosperity. Broken down production in Europe

was sending up the export trade by leaps and bounds. Ships were at a premium. An acquaintance, a ship broker who had been dragging along for seven or eight lean years after a lost tussle with the rubber market, got hold of an old warped hulk and cleaned up a commission of twenty thousand taels, many times its actual value. Hides and skins, tallow, dried eggs, oils and spices were selling abroad at unheard of prices. The import trade reacted by an increase in new lines of foreign goods, new projects and motor cars.

Sun Yat Sen, the reformer vice president, was crying louder than ever for railroads—China's sorest need—and it seemed as if he were almost on the point of being given attention.

XXVI

OCTOBER–DECEMBER: 1916

Tientsin also booms but ruble buyers are unhappy—an ex-cowboy loses his last chance to lick his father—Peking vultures—Mukden is a shocking surprise—a New York horse-car dying on its feet—Dairen a modern western city—lost in a Japanese hotel—the Englishman who hated correspondence—Japanese and their money and girls—a Japanese dinner party—the French consul's birthday

AT TIENTSIN I STEPPED INTO the same electrified business atmosphere I had left behind in Shanghai. Old timers who had been passing their days placidly placing and receiving their standard orders and accepting regular fixed commissions, were now running around in circles, paying any price to meet the increased demand for standard products cabled in by their correspondents abroad, and invoicing them back at ten times normal value. A number of shrewd business men turned brokers, buying from Chinese for future deliveries and milking the market dry, thus forcing the exporter to buy the notes at hold-up prices in order to fill his requirements. Spunt, an American Jew, so stout that he had to use a special size reinforced ricksha with three coolies to move it along, gambled on a large scale in grain, and was said to have cleaned up overnight several million taels.

Not every one, however, was sitting so pretty. The mourners'

bench was over-crowded with former purchasers of Russian rubles. Every year thousands of coolies from Shantung trekked to Manchuria to harvest the soya bean crop, at the end of the season returning to their homes loaded down with rubles, which they immediately exchanged for silver, thereby knocking down the normal rate ten or fifteen per cent. But within a few months the ruble was up again at par. By buying and selling at the peaks many foreigners were cleaning up a greater annual profit than that brought in by their regular business. In 1915, when the ruble continued a steady decline, the mourners, certain that the Great War could not go on any length of time, bought to lower their margin, and watched in a panic, borrowing and covering, until they had nothing left but worthless paper. One well-known exporter had even mortgaged his safe. Another, as a touch of sarcasm, papered his walls with 100-ruble notes.

In the company's office I ran across a box containing tiny silk strips, on each of which was embroidered the flag of one of the twelve leading nations. Sample lots had been shipped to each Division, but as no one wanted them they had been written off the books. I cabled orders to Shanghai for further shipments to Tientsin, Peking, Mukden and Hankow, then started off a premium scheme, a complete set of flags in return for three empty cartons, backing it up with window displays in the most exclusive Chinese shops and two full page spreads in the leading Chinese dailies. Returns were good, and I moved on to try my luck in Peking.

Before leaving, I ran into Schneider, the ex-cowboy I had met in Kalgan on the holiday trip from Peking a few months after my arrival in China. He was a wreck. His eyes had gone back on him and he could hardly see across a room. Scotch. The first thing he said when he recognized me was, "How about a drink; I'm a little short right now, but for old time's sake—" And when we parted his last speech was a request for a couple of dollars. But in spite of all his troubles, his greatest concern was about the death of his father, the old rancher in New Mexico with whom he had fought a losing battle every time he returned home for a visit.

"I don't know," said Schneider, blinking his eyes, "I always counted on going back and licking him just onc't afore he kicked off. But it's too late now. He was a good old son-of-a-bitch; they don't make 'em any better. I ain't cared much fur nothing ever since I got that letter saying he'd kicked off."

The Wagons-Lits in Peking was more crowded than during the period when the dynasty fell. From what I could see, the pickings in Europe were thin, and the financial and political vultures had skipped to China to try their luck with the new government. After a week spent putting my merchandising scheme to work I caught the night express and arrived in Mukden late the next afternoon, the latter part of November.

Bartlett, who had been transferred from Shantung, met me at the station and led me across cheerless, bare, open fields to the company's mess, an old temple court with a square room at the entrance made into a living room, on the back side of which a door opened into a long, narrow yard with crude Chinese bedrooms along the sides. The dining room was a wooden shack roughly thrown together at one side of the living room. Including myself, six men, English and American, were putting up at the mess. The number one for Manchuria, a snooty Englishman who high-hatted his staff and was in turn openly knocked, had a house apart. The only foreign hotels were the Japanese where shoes were discarded at the entrance, and beds were blankets spread on mat floors with lacquered wooden head-rests for pillows.

The next morning, Sunday, after a late breakfast Bart and a couple of others took me around to see the city. Even at that time of the year the cold, dry air was penetrating. The land was one vast level stretch of treeless space with a deeply rutted road straggling towards the city gate about a *li* away. In the winter after snow fell it froze on the ground and was gradually lost under a coating of dust, until by the middle of the season a road might be buried several feet below the surface; when the spring thaws came carts and carters at times disappeared and were lost in unexpected cavities filled with slush; as a ship's pilot must know every square inch of his channel so a good

driver had to be aware of every turn and twist of the roads he travelled.

The Old Marshal, as he was called, who through nerve and Chinese finesse had risen from a coolie to be ruler of Manchuria, had the reputation of being the most progressive official in all of China, and Willard Straight, former consul, was supposed to have started him on a lavish program of reforms based on American ideas and ideals.

When I saw along the way scattered groups of shops, modeled more or less after western style, I was beginning to feel enthusiastic about the improvements the Old Marshal was putting over. But when we reached the time and weather worn wall, with deep gaps where bricks had decomposed and fallen apart in pulverized pieces, I received a great surprise. Looking ahead down the main street the city inside appeared to be dead. Only one out of every eight or ten shops was open; the others were merely a row of wooden shutters. A few shopkeepers stood in their doorways with hands tucked inside the sleeves of their gowns padded with sheepskin and stared dejectedly at the half-dozen stragglers tramping by with eyes on the mounds and hollows before their feet.

In reply to my questioning I was told that the city was in a state of bad depression. The previous spring the Old Marshal had started off an expansion boom in a big way but it had slowly petered out. He had hoped to persuade a goodly portion of the Shantung immigrants to send for their families and remain as permanent citizens. But the coolies loved their birthplace and all but a few carried away their earnings at the end of the soya bean harvest. One by one the over-hopeful shopowners had seen their savings and credit dwindle away, were unable to pay rent, said "*mei yu fatze,*" shrugged their shoulders and closed shop.

The ambitious Old Marshal was getting along in years and had started his reform campaigns too late. He had a son, much too young yet to be of any use, and, too, the Chinese said, he was a delicate child, even if he lived to manhood he would never be able to follow in his father's footsteps.

The only modern touch I saw in Mukden was a narrow gauge street car pulled by an aged pony. In its youth these broken down remains had been one of the first horse cars in New York City when the stern eighties were giving way to the gay nineties. But it could have had no better ending; although the glass was gone from the windows and all the paint had been scratched off its sides, it was still doggedly doing its bit bringing happiness each day into the lives of hundreds of Chinese who overflowed standing room.

On Monday morning I got hold of our Chinese assistant, a spindly, sheep-faced yes-man, and spent the day going over the market. The first dealer I called on had almost his entire shelves loaded with our leading brand. That looked splendid. I asked the dealer how sales were making out. He shook his head despairingly. Not so good. How many cartons did he sell a day? Some days one, some two and occasionally none. Who bought them? Japanese. How much stock did he have? Three and a half cases—1,750 cartons. Why had he bought them? They were taken on consignment, and he was told that after two months he could turn back what he failed to sell—could he return them now?

At every shop in Mukden I found the same situation. When I asked the assistant how it had happened he meekly informed me that the stout Jew had insisted on overstocking all the dealers and getting a good display; now they all wanted the company to take back their stocks.

Back at the office I had a talk with the Division number two who gave me the low-down. Two months before three top directors from the London office, on a trip through the East, had stopped over for a few days. The stout Jew had arranged his trip to get there two weeks ahead. By the time the directors arrived, he had persuaded almost every Japanese and Chinese shop in the city to load up their shelves and put out banners and display cards. Then he took the directors around and proudly showed his handiwork. With many adjectives and gesticulations, backed up by the shops' signed orders, he soon had them all worked up over the marvelous market Manchuria offered and

the way the consumer was taking to the product. All that was needed, he pointed out, was a little intelligent follow-up work. The directors okeyed his orders on London for three hundred cases (thirty thousand cartons) to be shipped to Mukden at once. This was the reason I had been sent up to carry on.

I set myself two tasks: to find out the exact state of the market and to appoint, if possible, a Japanese distributor for the entire Manchurian market. After failing in Mukden to locate a Japanese business man or banker who was willing to sign up a contract without some tricky clause attached, I took a sleeper on the South Manchurian Railway line to Dairen. In every respect, except for their smaller size, the cars were the same as the American pullman. The S.M.R. at that time was one of the best paying railroads in the world; the income from the yearly haulage of bean and kaoliang crops paid into the Japanese government treasury, after deducting the overhead for the terrific costs in colonial administration and developments, came to almost as much as the total income tax in the Japanese islands.

At the railway station I was met by a Japanese porter in a regular foreign gold braided blue uniform, deposited in a motor car and whirled through broad, clean boulevards into a circular plaza with garden plots in the center and at one end an imposing foreign hotel of the size and looks of a leading hostelry in one of the larger American cities. The tiled lobby was so huge and empty that, arriving on a cold day, it gave me a shivery feeling as if I were in a morgue.

After the desk clerk had finished politely inhaling his breath through his mouth and bowing over my name on the register, a boy carried my bags over to the lift (always lift in the Far East), whisked me up to the third floor and ushered me into an enormous double room with two windows shaded with Venetian blinds overlooking the plaza. To the left was the administration building designed in a sweeping curve, only two stories high but as modern in its striking lines and simplicity as the American modern architecture of today. The only other piece of architecture I had seen previously that could be classified today as modern was the hotel at Tokio, done by Frank

Lloyd Wright and finished shortly before I had gone on home-leave.

My room also had a double size bathroom, but before he left with his twenty sen tip the boy showed me an array of showers, about ten in all, off the main hall. So far I had seen no other guest. After cleaning up I went down to the dining room, another voluminous chamber, part paneled and decorated with fresh flowers. My isolation was relieved here by three plump little Japanese waitresses in native dress, who stood at one end whispering. Strolling through the corridors after breakfast, I discovered an auditorium large enough to hold several hundred people, with a lacquered screen for a curtain that, I was told, cost twenty thousand yen. Next I tracked down a combined reading room and library, back of that a bar and billiard room where the Gargantuan proportions of the interior reached a climax. Yet still no sign of another guest. In a wondering daze I wandered back to the desk and asked the clerk how many were in the hotel. Not counting myself there were three: two Japanese and a Russian colonel.

The Japanese were investing so heavily in Manchuria that I could form only one conclusion: only one-eighth of the Japanese islands was inhabitable, and sooner or later, by quick, sudden moves or by slow, forced evolution, Manchuria would be added on as an annex to the badly over-crowded empire.

A little after ten I sauntered down one of the wide boulevards, which for cleanliness and spaciousness would have done any foreign city proud, to call on the Englishman in charge for the company. I had never met him before but had been told that he was a curiosity and something of a freak. When I walked into the office and asked the Chinese clerk for Mr. Hazleton, he coughed in embarrassment.

"He not up yet; he never like be disturb before ten," he said in a low voice, looking cautiously over his shoulder, "I think last night he out dinner very late."

I asked where he lived and the clerk pointed to the back. I stepped inside and threw open the door. There sat Hazleton in a brilliantly flowered dressing gown, having breakfast, with

the *Manchurian Daily News* (Japanese paper in English) propped up before him. He slowly unravelled himself from the wicker lounge chair in which he was sprawled, and held out his hand.

"Oh, I say, I'm sorry, old chap, I never expected you until tomorrow." His low voice had the slow, deep vibration of a bass-piano chord. "Oh, yes, that's right; today's Monday, isn't it? Days of the week are such a devil of a bother in a place like this. A bally rotten hole to put a fellow in. Like they want to get rid of a fellow and that sort of thing. Nothing to do but play a bit of bridge at the club when one can make up a foursome. But I'm satisfied if they are; gives me time to get in some good reading—serious books, politics, biography and all that sort of thing. Couldn't do it most places. Excuse me just a minute, old man, while I glance over the mail."

While he sorted out the mail, which was lying on the table by the side of his plate, I looked him over. He was an enlarged image of George Arliss with the outstanding features emphasized. A long horse face with a powerful hooked nose, small supercilious mouth and bored, deep-set pale blue eyes under sandy shaggy brows. When he stood he had the same bent-over posture as Arliss, but was well over six feet in height. Completing the whole, he had the most impersonal and detached, the calmest and most deliberate, manner and mode of speech of any man I had ever met. He seemed almost inhuman, as if he were a character out of one of the English 6d novels.

He sorted the mail into two heaps, and while doing so talked half to himself and half to me. "Hmn. This one doesn't need an answer. It can go into the file stack. Now they'll want one to this, I imagine, so I'll put it in the abeyance file and think it over. They ask such asinine questions and always expect an answer. A lot of bally rot. Here's another. I dare say I shall have to reply to this bloody thing too. Into abeyance. I have a system, you know, and a jolly good one, old man, if I do say so. I have the Chinese clark hold all the mail that comes during the week until Monday morning. After I look it over, if it seems to call for an answer I lay it aside in the abeyance file until Tuesday the following week. On Tuesday I take it out

and give it a fresh look-see and decide what I shall do about it. But I put it back again, you see, to give myself a chance to mull over my reply and be sure it's right. So, you see, when I write my reply on Wednesday the week after, I know it's correct. I find it an excellent system. If they would only adopt one like it in Shanghai they wouldn't write such bloody, silly letters, cut their stationery costs in half and not cause so much useless bother. You see, I've gone into this question as a hobby in my spare time, and, frankly, old man, most business letters should never be written. But I suppose Shanghai has to have something to do."

For the next two days I trotted around the city talking to Chinese dealers and getting in touch with Japanese bankers and importers and exporters, knocking off at five to have tea and play bridge in the little club with Hazleton, the French consul and a nondescript whom I have forgotten.

The more I checked on the market and asked questions, the more clearly I saw what I had guessed in Mukden, that the potential sale of a Turkish brand was limited almost wholly to the Japanese. With the assistance of Hazleton and the French consul I managed to find an interested banker who might possibly do business on a strictly straightforward contract basis. After a couple of conferences he invited me on a *sukiyaki* party at the leading Japanese restaurant. Hazleton was also asked but disliked to be bothered.

Although Dairen—with its wide streets containing three and four story foreign office buildings, its administrative offices, docks and railroad and shipbuilding yards—on the surface had the appearance of a prosperous western industrial city, stuck off in one section was a purely Chinese city of shops and homes, and in another a crowded quarter of regular Japanese wood and paper houses. In one corner of the latter the first class restaurants and girl houses combined to keep even the highest paid of the Japanese government servants heavily in debt.

Most of the Japanese in the city were in government service on a replacement basis after a few years' term, and there was a common rumor to the effect that not one had ever returned

home at the end of his time with money saved. A well-known saying explained how Dairen managed to carry on financially through an automatic circle of exchange: the government employees spent all their earnings on the girls; the girls passed it on to the shops; the government took it from the shops in high taxes and gave it back in salaries to the employees. From what I saw, this saying did not greatly exaggerate.

The restaurant to which I was taken was of the ordinary kind, only more elaborate. We left our shoes at the door and sat on a mat floor around a small table. My host had invited five of his Japanese friends, all in foreign clothes, and before the dinner started, sent for geisha girl partners. The main dish was *sukiyaki*, made up of a mixture of fresh vegetables and small slivers of meat or chicken brought in raw on trays and cooked by the diners in an open metal bowl over a charcoal fire. It was eaten with rice and a stirred raw egg poured on as a sauce. Foreigners loved it, always over-ate and had nightmares afterwards, but were always eager to stuff it down again.

When the meal started I discovered that I was in a famous place; the plates and bowls were of solid gold and the restaurant was widely known as the *Golden Dish*. The girls in beautifully colored silk kimonos and obis sat at the sides of the guests, keeping them supplied with beer and *saki*. At the beginning every one was polite and formal, but as the beer and wine began to work, faces grew red, coats and vests came off and the dinner settled down to an old-fashioned, noisy, good-natured, rough-house necking party. Around eleven some of the guests had become so amorous that those present had dwindled down to two who were standing with arms around each other singing and drinking toasts to dear old alma mater, or its Japanese equivalent, so I bade my host good-night and returned to the emptiness of my huge double room at the Yamato.

The next day was the French consul's birthday. He invited Hazleton, the Russian colonel and myself to a tiffin party. The only other foreigner, outside the Japanese, was the nondescript, who for some reason was left out. The colonel, a real Tartar, was in Dairen buying mules for the Russian army.

Tiffin started promptly at noon with cocktails, and Russian *zakuska* in place of the ordinary hors d'oeuvres. When we entered the dining room it was two o'clock. I have often wondered how much time and money that meal cost the consul. Flags of the four nations represented stood grouped in the center of the table. The first course was composed of many varieties of grapes and oranges. The second was *borsch* with *vodka* in honor of Russia. This was followed by Mandarin fish with sauterne. Then came the roast beef with scotch and soda for England. And in between a dozen delicious French concoctions, each with its proper wine. In honor of the U. S. A. we were served fried chicken. The consul was deeply apologetic that he was unable to obtain either of our national drinks, rye or corn.

At four thirty, by assisting each other, we managed to get on our coats and pile into a *droshky,* riding around in the cold air until it was completely dark, then stopping at the Yamato bar for a beer as a nightcap, and so to bed.

I remained in Dairen for three more days dickering with the Japanese banker, but we were unable to reach satisfactory terms. Neither Hazleton nor the consul knew any one else to recommend as dependable, and I was forced to appoint the company's Chinese dealer our agent.

XXVII

JANUARY AND FEBRUARY OF 1917

early morning carts gathering up the frozen—in the zone of Russian atmosphere—Japan plans years ahead—fortunes in freight cars—Harbin night life is different—women and business seem to mix—Japan has smothered Korea—to Hankow where I attend six dinners in one evening and leave for Shanghai

AFTER A DAY IN MUKDEN BART and I took the night train to Changchun, getting in just after daylight. The brick railway station and concrete platforms were in the latest foreign style and on a more elaborate scale than the ones in Dairen. Coming out on the other side we found a broad open space filled with pony carriages similar to the Russian droshkys, driven by weatherbeaten Chinese who swarmed all over us tugging at our sleeves. But beyond a broad avenue we could make out the dim outlines of a foreign hotel, another Yamato, behind a concrete fence in a large grove of trees. Turning over our bags to a Chinese porter, identified by a white jacket with red markings, we walked across in the face of a piercing wind and roused the sleepy Japanese clerk to ask where the company's mess was located. It was only a few blocks down the avenue and, hungry and cold, we started out again.

On the otherwise empty street we passed a mule wagon drearily lumbering along in the semi-darkness. It was different from any Chinese cart I had hitherto seen, more like a homeside street

cleaner's. Our local manager told me later that it was a special outfit for picking up frozen stiffs. Every morning at daylight during the winter a small fleet of these carts combed the city for coolies and beggars who had died in the night, huddled in corners against buildings. Depending upon the temperature, the average was anywhere from five or six to a dozen a day. They were hauled several *li* outside the city. After their clothing and personal effects had been removed for whatever they might bring, the naked bodies were thrown into one of several large pits.

I didn't have the nerve to go out to see them, but the local manager showed me snapshots of the bodies piled on top of each other. They remained petrified through the winter in the same frozen fixed poses as when picked up.

We had to bang on the door for several minutes before we aroused the boy, who stuck out his head still buttoning on his gown. He insisted that we should not enter. Master had company and it was too early. But we wanted coffee, pushed him aside and found our way into the living room. The slight odor of perfume struck our nostrils. We looked at each other and grinned, then let out a yell at the top of our voices. From behind a closed door came a muffled, "in a minute," mixed with repressed giggles and laughter and sounds as if someone were swearing. In a minute or so we heard a swishing sound like the rustling of skirts, then the slam of the front door. Immediately afterwards a good-looking, ruddy faced American lad with a sheepish smile entered and welcomed us to Changchun. I had reached the border of the zone of Russian atmosphere.

Changchun was as surprising as Mukden. The Japanese had laid out wide avenues and boulevards, leading off into the country in such a way that the city could grow almost indefinitely and still be artistically and efficiently landscaped. The hotel had also been built so that at some future date it could be greatly enlarged with the present one as a core.

But the city was lifeless. Except for the usual run of mule carts passing back and forth along a side street lying parallel to the South Manchurian Railway line, only a few stragglers

were to be seen, and on the exceptionally spacious main street half the foreignized shops, Chinese and Japanese next to each other in neat rows, were closed fast. The Chinese walled-in section, lying on a hill the other side of a small stream over which ran a carved stone bridge, had the same battered, forlorn appearance as the one in Mukden. The shops were in even worse condition.

That the Japanese had definite plans for Changchun's future was patently certain. It was a strategical central meeting ground of three railways: the terminus of the Russian line running north to Harbin, connecting with the Trans-Siberian and the northern point of the Japanese; the Chinese railway running east to Kirin; and Japan's main lines, connecting at Mukden with the Chinese line to Tientsin, and running to her seaport, Dairen, and to Seoul, Korea. The eventual Japanese control of the Russian and Chinese railways would turn Changchun overnight into a great military and commercial distribution center. Before my eyes was the skeleton of a future metropolis, or capital, already laid out, complete in every way for an overnight transformation.

A few mornings later I took the express for Harbin and around nine o'clock that evening I walked into the lobby of the Grand Hotel. Against the left of the wide stairway facing the entrance stood a galvanized iron bin packed with ice, on which lay dozens of trays containing tempting *zakouska:* black and red caviar, salads of all kinds, fish, sausages and fruits. To the left was the dining room decorated in a brilliant red. A number of tables had been drawn together in the center of the room and all the guests were gathered in one intimate party. When I entered a tall, dark, lanky American, whom I recognized as an exporter from Shanghai, called me over and introduced me. They were all Americans; the consul, a young dancing couple who were winding up a tour through China, and a half dozen other exporters. Every one was half tight on *vodka* and, although they had been at the table since seven, were still ploughing through *zakouska.* Every one, too, was in a gay, noisy mood, with the exception of the dancing couple; the girl had caught her part-

ner flirting with a pretty young Russian and was calling him every name she could think of.

The middle-aged consul was in great shape. He was, the lanky exporter informed me, an old soak who spent most of his time accepting free drinks and chow from the American visitors; but he had been there for a long time and knew the ropes, how to get things done with the Russians, a bunch of squeeze artists who never kept their promises.

Most of the Russians, through their connection with the railway, were making fortunes. The freight cars on the Trans-Siberian line were all supposed to have been commandeered by the army; but the local authorities had hundreds of them stowed away on sidetracks outside the city, and had written them off as lost or in service. When first an exporter went to them, they shrugged their shoulders and threw up their hands in despair; it was impossible, not a car left in Harbin. If the exporter were persistent, within a week or ten days they might discover one that had just come in—but, as every one knew, of course, the war had sent rates sky high; the charge would be double or triple the normal rate; an impossible situation but what could one do?

Dinner was finished at midnight. By that time the prolonged drinking had almost sobered every one. The lanky exporter, however, decided that since this was my first night they ought to show me the sights. No one in Harbin ever went to bed much before daylight; and business did not start until ten or eleven in the morning. *Nichevo,* no hurry.

We piled into *droshkies* driven by red faced Russians in fur caps and long, heavy, fur lined overcoats. Since the ground was covered with a thick crust of snow the *droshkies* had runners instead of wheels, and sleigh bells jingled over the backs of the big, bony horses.

When we stepped from the dark into the sudden light of the first place visited—the *Red Mill*—I had a fleeting impression of cadaverous faces, unkempt hair and straggly dark beards, dirty shirts and misfitting dingy clothes, fat painted cheeks and snub noses, short pink dresses and enormous pink legs, tea and beer

spattered tables, all dancing before the background of a gaudy colored curtain, surrounded by a halo of smoke and guttural voices and smelling of heated bodies, stale tobacco and liquor.

The lanky exporter yelled to an obsequious waiter, who pushed back the tables of protesting Russians, and within two minutes we had a long table running down the center of the room, directly in front of the small stage. The men in our party looked around and crooked their fingers at girls seated at other tables with their friends. One by one, followed by threatening looks and muttered words, they joined our party.

The lanky exporter turned to me and waved his hand.

"Which do you want?"

I looked around and hesitated.

"They're all taken," I said.

"Never mind. Pick out the one that looks best to you and call her over. These Russians won't do anything about it. They know we could clean up the lot of them if they started something; and anyway, they spend the whole night here on a glass of tea and never buy the girls any drinks. The manager and waiters would back us up."

I called over a brunette just as the curtain went up on an enormously fat girl with the face of a baby, dressed in a low-neck, pink cotton frock that reached to a few inches above her knees. In a tiny voice, she burst into a Russian love song, glancing coyly out of the corners of her eyes at the audience. For the finale, six more girls—not so stout as the star, but each with several chins and also clothed to the knees in pink—crowded behind and joined in the chorus, keeping time with heavy, ungainly steps, their loose flesh jiggling from head to toe. At the end, the Russian audience clapped their hands, stamped their feet and yelled until several encores were given. As the star entered the room again through a door at the side of the stage, four or five Russians rushed up, exclaiming and kissing her hand. One sad faced young man, wearing a muffler in place of collar and tie, unpinned a wilted rose from the spotted lapel of his coat and handed it to her with a military bow. His friends beamed and clapped their hands.

We called on three more places, more or less alike, and arrived at the hotel between half past eight and nine, with most of the girls still in the party. When I left for the office half an hour later the others were running up and down corridors, visiting back and forth in bedrooms, routing out late sleepers and still drinking.

That ended my glimpse of Harbin night life.

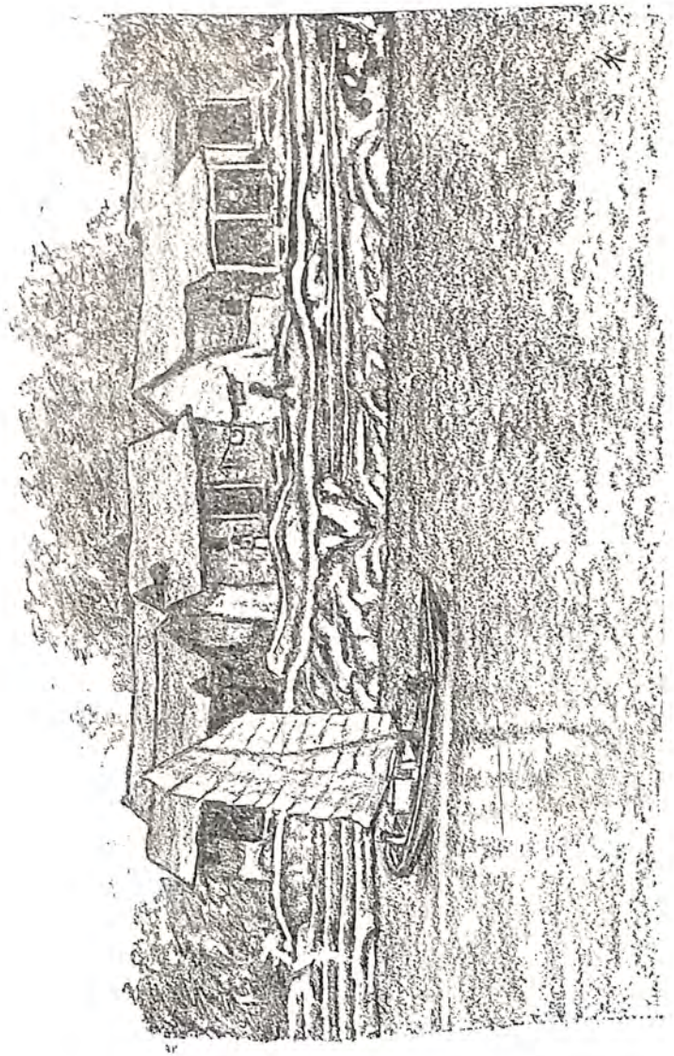
I was at the company's office by ten, in time to meet the local manager at the door. We had barely started a discussion of the market when the boy announced a visitor. The manager swore a bit, but excused himself and told the boy that it was all right. A minute later a handsome, well-dressed blonde, still under thirty, tripped in. For two hours, while I fidgeted and waited, they sat talking Russian in subdued voices.

When she finally left, the manager apologized profusely. He explained that she was a married woman who for several months had been friendly with an American boy, and was worried because for two weeks she had not heard from him. She was begging the manager to get in touch with the boy and deliver a note.

With my lack of finances and knowledge of the language, I came to the conclusion that business and social affairs in Harbin were too complicated for me to get caught in. So that afternoon and for the next two days, I borrowed an interpreter and walked the cobblestone streets getting my data direct from warm, vest pocket shops in the Russian section, and from the cold, dingy ones in the Chinese city.

On the afternoon before leaving I had tea with the local manager and his black-eyed Russian wife in their flat on the top floor back of the Grand Hotel. The walls and carpet of the living room were a deep brown, and heavy deep brown curtains shut out all light from the windows. A cushioned bench built around two sides of the walls took the place of chairs, and a huge oak table filled the remainder of the space. We sipped Russian tea by the dim light from small blue electric bulbs in the center of the ceiling.

I was glad to get back to Mukden and plain, ordinary Amer-



Farm village along the yellow, murky Yangtze

ican and English ways. Harbin was too much like the descriptions in a Dostoievski novel; only the abnormal seemed to be normal.

After the Christmas holidays I took two days off to write my report letter to London and Shanghai. It contained ten pages of statistics, leading to the two page conclusion that, (*a*) a certain type of innate shrewdness made a Japanese agent impossible, (*b*) without competition and with consumers limited to the Japanese, the total quantity of Turkish cigarettes then on order would fill the market's needs for more than two years. Before mailing, I had the number one and two check on my figures, then caught a sleeper for Seoul, Korea.

In the late morning, when I awoke to look out the window, the train had crossed the border and the change in scenery was as different as a jump from black to white. On both sides were rolling hills of luxurious forests, a beautiful picture, but after the monotonous flatness of Manchuria, strange, almost out of place.

Seoul too was strange. The foreign hotel was built around the remains of a Korean temple. It was entered through a restored wooden gate similar to the Japanese *tao,* and part of the roof was covered with the original tiles. In front of the hotel Seoul was like a bowl. A street of shops circled around a large open space, with mountains gradually rising behind them. The shops were mere hovels and the natives sat around on the floors. But to pass a middle-aged man, or an older one, on the street was to see a very dignified gentleman. In a long grey robe, a tiny black stovepipe hat perched on the top of his head, held in place by a sash tied under the chin, and with a parchment skin face decorated by a slender goatee, he had the appearance of a philosopher as seen in old Chinese paintings, emphasized by his leisurely gait and long stemmed pipe. But since the true philosopher's appearance, as I had always seen it pictured, was typified in elderly Chinese beggars, I had my doubts as to the quality of his thinking.

Back of the hotel were two wide shopping streets running parallel to each other, and outside the government buildings

and homes, this was all the city I could discover, a much smaller place than I had supposed. And dead.

However, I did manage to unearth and have shipped to Shanghai a fine old Korean chest with splendid finish and brasswork, full of secret compartments and convertible into a desk.

It was one of the two desks in which treasury files were kept under the old Korean government; the other piece had been destroyed by the Japanese soldiers when they looted and burnt all the precious belongings of the natives. The story of the Japanese conquest as described by a native shopkeeper was one of utterly futile, brutal slaughter and rape—literally, rape.

Before returning to Mukden I took a day off to visit Chemulpo, once marked for a busy seaport but relegated by the Japanese to the minor position of a fishing village. A picturesque little town, all cut up with narrow streets twisting and turning uphill and down, as in Marblehead, Massachusetts, with little fishing smacks bobbing up and down in the cove by crudely built docks. A city fallen into decay. The Japanese had smothered the country.

* * * * *

Upon my return to Mukden a week later I found a telegram:

meet me tientsin biederhof

Three evenings later the stout Jew and I met in the bar of the Imperial Hotel. With all his persuasive powers he tried to argue me into believing that I was doing him wrong by writing my letter to London and Shanghai knocking down his set-up. But after three cocktails his growing good humor gradually destroyed his argumentative mood and we ended with a beefsteak dinner with his wife and a few friends. The next morning, however, the argument started again and continued for two days, at the end of which time he gave up and returned to Shanghai. I moved on to Peking and caught the express to Hankow to start there my flag scheme.

Hankow was on the crest of the same money-making wave that had struck Shanghai and Tientsin. War time shortages in

the Western countries were piling up orders. But I had barely started my little scheme when I received a wire to report at once to Shanghai. I prepared to leave the same night. But the dealers—there were six—insisted that I must attend a farewell dinner. We started out early. At seven we sat down to a meal. The dealers were acting mysteriously. At eight one of them arose, made a short farewell speech, informed me that the dinner was given by Mr. ——, and that since it was growing late and we had somewhere else to go, we had best leave at once. I expected, of course, a sing-song house. But no. We walked into another restaurant and stood around the wall as a corps of waiters one after another brought in steaming dishes, marched before us opening them up for our inspection and passed out with every dish untouched. Then I was told that this was Mr. ——'s (one of the other dealers) party. This act was repeated in four more restaurants. Having only one night at their disposal, to save face, so that none might outdo the others, each of the six dealers had given a farewell dinner, only one of which we had eaten! When I walked into my stateroom on the old side wheeler there lay a large parcel, ten pounds of tea, with a card bearing the chops of all.

XXVIII

MARCH–JULY: 1917

the downfall of the little Napoleon of China—business in Shanghai continues to soar but much of it is gas, wind and water—transferred into advertising—calendars as salesmen—I resign and return home—last traces of China: staring eyes and open mouths

IF IT COULD BE SAID OF SHANGhai that business was booming when I left for the north in the fall of 1916, then, by comparison, upon my return by way of Hankow in the early part of March, 1917, it was fairly bursting. And this in spite of the shakiness of the government and spirit of rebellion that was spreading over the country.

On the sixth of June, 1916, Yuan Shih K'ai, first president and the little Napoleon of China, gave up the ghost. Although successful in holding the country together in a unit, when he had been forced to give ground to the Japanese on their vicious twenty-one demands, he lost a tremendous amount of face with the people—especially with those of the South.

As the last straw, at the instigation of a group of Northern monarchists (supposedly) and after a vote behind closed doors, Yuan with much hesitation (outwardly) declared himself emperor "at the desire of the people". From then on the country drifted into disorganized, chaotic factions, divided among a lot of scheming politicians—glorified by the glib foreign press under

the high-sounding title of "War Lords". Some of them were former ministers or civil and military governors and others, like the ex-private in Shantung, merely shrewd coolies with brutal, forceful personalities.

Much of the truth about China's first president has been clouded. What I have read in periodicals and books about the man, Yuan Shih K'ai, by no means coincided with the gossip and ideas I picked up in Peking from Chinese on the streets, in tea houses and shops and from native friends—information that leaked out from Yuan's headquarters through personal servants and attachés.

Stripping away the trimmings and decorations, the story of the rise and fall of the mighty Yuan as I pieced it together from the tales told by the Chinese is, I believe, the true version which, to the best of my knowledge, has never been written.

Yuan Shih K'ai was born in a lower middle class family. As a bright young Manchu, hard working and good-looking, he held a minor job in the imperial stables. His personality, and the way he once handled unruly ponies, pleased the old Empress Dowager so much that she raised him to the position of number one *mafu*. No different from other governments, positions were won or lost by personal politics, pull and scandal. The shrewd young *mafu* with the tight mouth worked himself into the confidence of the old lady, and rose to be head of the army, becoming as powerful an influence as old *Hisao Pi Li*, her chief eunuch, had been in his prime.

Shelved after the old dowager's death by the prince regent, long jealous of his power, Yuan lived quietly on his estate outside Changtefu. But he still controlled the army; and when the country's distaste for their depraved foreign rulers reached a climax the regent was compelled to call on him for help.

Yuan Shih K'ai was pure Manchu, belonging to a race apart which had never penetrated beyond Shantung Province in order to conquer China. Although the press was silent on this point, from the time he entered office as president, discussions in tea houses and restaurants always eventually evolved around the questions: what was Yuan working towards—a dictatorship—

to put the boy emperor back on the throne—or to be emperor himself? No Chinese or Manchu believed that he could, or would, continue as a president.

On the other hand, newspaper correspondents and historians wrote that Yuan *unwillingly* accepted the throne, only after being strongly urged. True, he put it up to a vote; but every one in Peking knew that his signature was the only vote that counted.

It was published also as a fact that he died from overwork and worry. This, too, was less than a half-truth. He died from an overworked stomach.

One of the chief and most absorbing topics of interest to every beggar, barber, hawker, ricksha coolie and shopkeeper in the capital was the long list of rich foods he was served at each meal and the huge amounts he stowed away. Leading a sedentary life, after years of action, and holding midnight banquets lasting until dawn, he began to break; the worse he grew the more frantically his physicians tried to cut down his diet; but eating was his sole relaxation (his own statement) and in the end it killed him.

* * * * *

In spite of China's many political sorrows, the demands of the warring nations were bringing soaring prices for all staple native products, and the individual buying power of the Chinese was raised in direct ratio. In Shanghai import and export houses were still springing up like mushrooms, and old ones were taking on new foreign products and increasing staffs. The American lines were principally motor cars and drug and toilet articles. I ran into many new faces at the hotels, on the streets and at the Carlton. The Americans were playing with the idea of forming a club and were divided on the question of which it should be: town or country.

Gaston, Williams and Wigmore ("Gas, Wind and Water," it was aptly called), a New York house that was promoted overnight from nothing to a second W. L. Grace, with millions tied up in credit on stocks placed with agencies in almost every country in the world open to trade, sent over two representatives

to open the most imposing and expensive office on the Bund and put up a mammoth show window jammed with the most gorgeous, miscellaneous array of products—expensive motor cars, intricate ploughs, reapers and mowers—at which Shanghai had ever cynically gazed. (In the export crisis of 1921, when ships could not be had for love or money, the firm in New York crashed with hundreds of other over-enthusiastic import and export houses).

When I was called back to Shanghai at the height of this wave of prosperity, I was appointed assistant advertising manager. The high-grade subsidiary the stout Jew and I were running was absorbed by the company. The Manchurian fiasco had killed the only chances it might have had to stand on its own legs.

I was much pleased with my new job. It gave me the opportunity to work and continue my studies under a highly trained technician. A half year or more should give me sufficient training to leave me free to make decisions unprejudiced by the fear of the personal element. In a large company, where politics is played to the limit, such fear, to some extent, lies in every man. Also, I was nearing my goal of a specialized profession.

Across the Whangpoo was a stretch of land, called Pootung, facing the Bund. Here the company had its own engraving and printing plant, as modern and well equipped as the leading ones at home. In addition to cigarette packets, cartons and stiffeners, the factory turned out booklets, handbills, posters and highly complicated full-color calendars. In the lithographic department, a staff of Japanese did the work of transferring colors to zinc sheets.

In the advertising department we worked out the original ideas and drawings, as well as advertisements placed in the leading newspapers throughout the country, and distributed finished jobs to the field. We employed a large staff of artists, Chinese who entered as apprentices, and one or two Japanese. Since the average educated Chinese was by nature artistic and well trained in drawing characters with a brush, the trained Chinese artist was an unusually highly refined specimen. He turned out beautiful work, but always with a tendency towards the delicate, bordering on the effeminate.

The calendar was the big advertising smash each year. Leading popular Chinese artists, chiefly girl head specialists, were paid a good retaining fee to submit preliminary sketches nine months ahead of Chinese New Year, usually falling around the end of February, the date on which the calendars were simultaneously distributed in every nook and corner of the nation. These roughs were then sent out to all Division headquarters for the Chinese members of the staff to vote on their respective merits and check the titles to see that the characters carried no local double meanings.

The check on the calendar's value as an advertising piece was the price at which it sold on the market. Within ten days after distribution had started, picture hawkers all over China displayed them with their other wares on the main shopping streets. If the price rose to eleven or twelve cents each, the calendar was a success.

* * * * *

Until the first part of July life went on with clock-like regularity. I went back to golf, tennis and a bit of rowing and swimming, and dug away faithfully at the I.C.S. books. During this period I fell in with a clique of mixed nationalities—American, English, French and Danish—going on dinner parties about twice a week, being devilish by staying up Saturday nights (just to stay up) until every one was too stupid to talk and closing with a flourish by "driving around the Rubicon," a road that circled out into the country and back, stopping along the way at a shack to put away daylight ham and eggs. Shanghai's gaieties were limited but, as in New York and other crowded centers, were taken seriously and thereby achieved an importance.

For several months before July I had been considering seriously the advisability of resigning and returning to the States. The same standard raises came in faithfully each year, but it seemed to me that it would be a long time before they amounted to a great deal. Even the picked favorites were not advancing faster. Each year rumors went around about a watermelon to

be cut, an allotment of a special stock issue to be allowed to China hands who had been out for a certain length of time; but they never materialized; in some curious way, by the time the few executives at the top had received their allotment, the shares always ran short. Too, life in Shanghai was becoming a treadmill: drink, dinner parties, drink, golf, drink, tennis, drink—around and around in the same little circle. Besides, the hold that China had on me ended when I left the interior—Shanghai was merely an international trading center, an ugly, crowded, hard-drinking seaport, a place to accumulate a fortune quickly, or get out.

Letters from an elder brother decided me. The States was on the verge of entering the war; it was sure to come soon; he wanted to be among the first to get over, but hated to leave without having me there to be with our mother. The latter part of June I cabled him to go ahead and join up.

I sent in my resignation. The number one called me in. He was an old timer, had lived all over the East, was as tough as a hickory nut and as square as a die.

He talked about my age and my opportunities with the company.

"Think it over for two weeks before you finally decide," he ended, "and then come back to see me."

At the end of two weeks I returned and told him that the company had always treated me fairly and I hated to leave such a good bunch of fellows, but that I had not changed my mind.

He looked at me quizzically.

"You seem to want to go back pretty badly. I reckon there's no use trying to stop you. Most of the men that leave are usually out about three months before they start to write and wire us to take them on again. But you seem to want to go pretty badly—I'll give you two years as a limit before you're cabling out you want to come back."

* * * * *

Not until I crossed the Canadian border on the train to Chicago was I shed of all traces of China. The ship went off its regular course to stop at Tsingtao to take on two thousand Shantung coolies, bound for the labor camps in France. In the holds where freight was ordinarily carried bunks had been built in tiers from bottom to top. They were all filled and an overflow huddled together on the lower deck in the stern.

On the first day out the whole two thousand were seasick. Moans and groans and unpleasant odors penetrated to the upper decks. The lower deck was cleared at once and thoroughly flooded and swabbed, but the hatches had to be left open to give the poor devils air. All the way to Japan I found it advisable to sit in the stuffy salon or smoking room behind doors and windows tightly closed and locked.

When I passed through Canada the Canadian Pacific Railway was in a mess. Every ship from China brought in a thousand or so Shantung coolies, more than traffic could bear. At each station the express was held up by long lines of third class coaches, armed guards patrolling the tracks. My last glimpse of China was one of car windows crammed with staring almond-shaped eyes and gaping mouths. I thought of those first few months in Peking, back in 1911, of Frost and his word, *bewaunked*.

INTERLUDE

1917–1929

Homeside

I ARRIVED IN NEW YORK FROM Shanghai one week before the States joined the Allies. During the eleven years following the Armistice I was one of the infinitesimal parts of the gigantic machine grinding out national advertising and merchandising campaigns that quickened competition, forced new scientific inventions, expanded industries and played a prominent part in herding independent manufacturers into the corrals of enormous holding companies. A boisterous, economic march of triumph to the staccato accompaniment of jazz.

I watched prosperity reach its peak during the first quarter of the Hoover period, symbolized by a helter-skelter rush and scramble for the first issues of radio and aeroplane stocks and by a fever of tearing down and building up. Not two blocks could I walk in any direction without running into skeleton frames of steel and ragged excavations cutting through the streets, with my ears half deafened by the continuous clatter of riveting guns.

But I could detect a rumbling deep beneath the earth in reply to the shattering noises above. The foundations of this mighty economic structure were groaning and trembling under accumulating pressure. My mind turned inwards and thoughts of China came back.

During the last few weeks of August of 1929 around noontime now and then I dropped into one of the up-town broker offices

on the ground floor or mezzanine of the mid-section hotels. In every one I found the seats filled, all standing room taken, mostly by women, secretaries and stenographers, and very young men. A mass of white, set faces and unblinking eyes were glued on the board where shirt-sleeved boys rapidly and competently shifted figures.

The first week in September I left again for China.

XXIX

1929: OCTOBER 15–NOVEMBER 15

Shanghai changed and yet the same—first glimpse of Young China—wealthy Chinese only go out guarded—Manchuria bound

ON AN AFTERNOON IN THE latter part of October 1929 when I stood on the swaying jetty facing the Shanghai bund, surrounded by a pile of luggage and yelling coolies, I looked around not knowing quite what to expect. During the twelve years away I had been almost completely out of touch with things Chinese. From time to time I had run across articles in the *Atlantic Monthly:* a series of essays by Bertrand Russell, the looting of Nanking from a missionary's diary. The front page news columns of the *New York Times* and its Sunday supplement articles had kept me informed of famines, kidnapped missionaries, battles and skirmishes of various war lords and struggles between the government and communists with which the names of Borodin, Chiang K'ai Shek and the Old Marshal of Manchuria, Chang Tso Lin, were usually mixed. These news items were so terse, however, and came at such spasmodic intervals that it was almost impossible to see more than the vaguest outlines of the picture of conditions as they might have been in reality.

Luckily, I had used the English phonetics of Chinese words as shorthand in taking notes and had also met a young Chinese with

whom I was in constant contact for almost a year. He represented the Commercial Press in Shanghai, a native firm of publishers of home magazines and educational books with a branch or agent in almost every town in China and probably the greatest single influence in educating the Chinese on foreign subjects and affairs. Once a week we had met and had Chinese chow, and week-ends in the summer played tennis, making a hard and fast rule to speak only Chinese to each other.

The bund was familiar and yet it was not. Many of the old buildings I recognized, but they were almost lost between the silhouettes of the new, several of which were starkly modern, shooting up flat-faced and unadorned. The traffic—that was different. I sniffed the pungent odors that were strictly Shanghai's own, gazed at the lines of rickshas and flapping blue gowns, listened to the grunts and cries of the coolies and was as filled with the city as if I had never left.

I walked across the bridge and registered at the old Astor House Hotel, then went to my room to clean up. The same subdued, cavernous lobby with the same white-gowned boys leaning against the tall pillars, the same mystic maze of halls leading to a sparsely furnished bedroom where again I gazed inside the icy-cold bathroom at the same old mahogany commode still holding out doggedly against the flush toilet.

When I returned to the lobby it was filling with women in afternoon gowns and men returning from work, settling down to their tea and whisky sodas. In the background I heard the faint strains of Rudy Vallee's *Stein Song*. I was curious. What was it about? I looked around to see if I recognized any of the faces. Why there was old—no, surely not—but of course— I walked over to a short, stocky, middle-aged chap bent over a newspaper, and slapped him on the back.

"And how's the good old Paotingfu key?"

He looked up, startled, hesitated a moment, then jumped to his feet with a grin: "Why, hello, Hutchy, old boy!"

He was the Londoner who, back in 1913, had stopped over a couple of days in that God-forsaken spot, Paotingfu, where my sole job had been nursing a godown key.

After preliminaries, I asked about the jazz music which was starting up again.

"Oh, that!" he exclaimed. "It's the regular afternoon tea-dance. Shanghai's changed, Hutchy, me boy. You'd never know the old town. Come on and take a look."

We strolled to the back of the lobby. At the side of the door a Chinese boy sat behind a small table on which stood a placard, reading, "Tea-Dance Tickets—$1.00". Peering inside, I could make out under the dimmed lights a large ballroom, empty chairs and tables around the sides, the center floor crowded with dancers. I studied the dancers as they passed near the door.

"They're all Chinese."

"Sure. That's young China you're seeing, me lad. I said you'd find Shanghai changed. The Chinese go in for this sort of thing now more than the foreigners do—and that's saying a lot. These in here are the elite, Shanghai's high society—all turned foreign—hitting it up. Hot stuff, Hutchy."

I looked again. Slender young Chinese girls with sleeked-back bobbed hair, dressed in tight-fitting, long embroidered silk gowns of vivid colors with skirts split up the left side to the thigh. Young Chinese beaus even more slender, also with sleeked-back hair, wearing the latest in exaggerated shoulders, wasp-waisted jackets and loose, double-pleated "bags" hiding all but the tips of their black patent leathers. Under the soft lights they performed intricate steps and an abandon to make an American gob weep with envy, yet delicately smooth and graceful and lithe as was natural to the race.

I was actually shocked. The outside staid appearance of the old Astor had deceived me. I recalled the by-gone days when, except on rare occasions accompanied by her parents, a Chinese girl of good family was never seen in a public place. And here she was dolled up like an American flapper, showing her well-turned ankle and leg, with her boy-friend dressed in Bond Street style, fox trotting to Vallee croon-jazz played by a Russian orchestra. In all of history could there ever have been so great an evolution in so short a period of time? Overnight a leap from the strictest formalities and conservatism, rigidly observed

for thousands of years, to the wholly unrestrained modern Western jazz expressed in its most extreme outward form.

The next morning I strolled across the Soochow Creek bridge

Young China

to the office. As I entered the door a Ford motor car drove up. A tall young Russian in his early twenties, dressed in a blue uniform and carrying an automatic in his right hand, jumped from the seat beside the driver and opened the door. Another Rus-

sian, also with a drawn automatic, stepped out to be followed by an elderly Chinese in native costume with a third uniformed Russian bringing up the rear. The elderly Chinese walked sedately through the door down the corridor surrounded by his guards and entered his office at the back. I turned to a Britisher coming up the steps and asked him what it was all about.

"Kidnappers," he said. "That was our comprador. All the wealthy Chinese in Shanghai—bankers, merchants and newspaper owners—have bodyguards, mostly Russian, ex-officers in the White army. Even so, there's hardly a week goes by you don't read about some bird carried away for ransom. Any Chinese who has a lot of money is out of luck. He can't go anywhere or do anything alone. Still, he's better off than he would be if he remained in the interior."

"Who does all the kidnapping?"

"Chinese gangs, mostly, but on the north side and around the edges of the Japanese concession gangs of down-and-out, cut-throat Russians have their hang-outs in the back alleys among the Chinese and they go in for it quite a bit too."

I shook my head. Shanghai had certainly gone American modern. I wondered what it was like in the other large treaty ports—Tientsin and Hankow.

For the next several weeks I saw little of the city. Most of my time I spent in the company's office seeing old faces, meeting old friends, acquainting myself with the advertising and discussing policies. The company had settled down. Most of the foreign staff were English. The majority of my old American friends had gone back home and, whereas the company was in the old days a monopoly in all but name, now dozens of Chinese manufacturers were bombarding the market and raising cain with literally hundreds of fly-by-night, cut-price brands of cigarettes.

"We're not satisfied," I was told. "Our advertising needs stiffening up. As soon as you get a line on things here, we want you to cover the whole field. You'll see what the job is when you're on the ground. It's up to you to find the weak points

and work out your own ideas. Manchuria is in the worst fix right now. You can start there.

"There's one thing you'll have to make up your mind to. It's going to take you two years at least to cover the field. We're leaving everything up to you, but keep out of places where it's dangerous—you'll get no thanks for landing in trouble."

Good enough. But I smiled at the idea of two years and wondered, what trouble? I figured that one year at most would be more than enough. I was wrong—I had forgotten how slowly the wheels of business turned in the Far East. Before I had finished building the machine I started in Manchuria and making it fool-proof three and one-half years had passed. During that time I covered every part of China—except, to my undying regret, through the Yangtze gorges to Chungking in the far west —that a foreigner could visit with any reasonable amount of safety, travelling by train, motor car, boat and mule cart. Most of the larger centers I returned to several times.

XXX

NOVEMBER OF 1929

Mukden has gone modern but the Chinese squeeze and starve as of old—the Japanese plan railways far ahead—White Russian refugees on their uppers make whoopee—high taxes and low paper money—Mukden foreign social life

IN THE MIDDLE OF NOVEMBER, after three days shut in behind glass, due to the cold, on one of the comfortable Japanese liners, I arrived early in the morning at Dairen. A dozen or more unattached men of different nationalities were also on board but only one woman without a companion, a highly rouged Russian who was reported to be a trained nurse. From the minute the boat lifted anchor at Shanghai until the gangplank was rolled up at the Dairen docks she was followed and surrounded by all the unattached males. I marked it down that no matter what other changes had occurred in China during the past twelve years at least that side of the foreigner's life remained crystalized, unaltered.

After the ceremony of waving handkerchiefs and throwing ribbon confetti—a custom never passed up by any Japanese ship at any port of call—the squat, bowing, efficient porter whom I had known before whisked away my bags, tucked me into a motor car and half an hour later as I was standing in the morgue-like lobby of the Yamato after breakfast, presented me with train and pullman ticket and baggage check to Mukden.

The busy Mukden station and platform might have belonged to any large city in Europe. A young Englishman, the local advertising man who went under the nickname of Felix, led me through the biting cold blackness beyond the station into a waiting motor car driven by a Chinese chauffeur in uniform.

"Mukden must be a swanky place," I said. "When I was here before there were no roads a motor car could travel, especially at this time of year."

Felix said, "This is the company's car. You probably won't recognize Mukden now. The roads are all paved. We even have a bus system."

After winding through innumerable streets we stopped before a gray plastered brick wall. The chauffeur honked. A Chinese boy unlocked and pulled open a creaking wrought iron gate and we drove around a circular driveway to the steps of what seemed to be an old English manor. Inside, the spacious hall and the enormous, high-ceilinged living room with its built-in carved oak mantle and log-burning open fireplace only deepened the strong feeling I already had that I was in England. However, this sensation was sidetracked when shown my bedroom. The bathroom's modern plumbing took me back to the States.

So this was Mukden. So far it seemed to have gone ahead in the ways of the Western world much more rapidly than Shanghai. I asked myself, "Who has been back of all this—the Japanese or Chinese? Before the Old Marshal died in 1928 his name was always popping up in the *Times* as being messed up in squabbles between Peking and Canton, so most of it surely must be the Japanese. Anyway, I'll find out soon, I guess."

In the morning the uniformed chauffeur was at the door with the company's "sales car" to take us to the office. We turned out into a broad avenue, blank, open spaces at the sides spotted here and there with foreign office buildings. On the way we passed Chevrolet busses loaded with Chinese and driven by Russians in sheepskin coats and high boots. Set off apart the upper stories of foreign stucco houses protruded above spotless white compound walls.

"Who lives in these shut-off mansions?" I asked Felix.

"Chinese," he replied.

"Who are they and where do they get all their *ch'ien?*"

"That's difficult to say. Some are civil and military officials under the Young Marshal. Others are retired bankers and merchants who came here for safety after making their pile in China proper. A good many, however, are ex-war lords and ex-bandit leaders who beat it up here in a hurry to get under Japanese protection. Nobody cares as long as they have money to spend. The Young Marshal is—well, you'll find out about him and his ways soon enough."

The Young Marshal. I remembered him as the sickly young son of the wily old Chiang who, at the time I was there during the winter of 1916–17, was playing along with the Japanese, building up and ruling Manchuria as an independent state. What a life of political intrigue and finesse the old fire-eater had led! Bandit, scout for the Russians during the Russo-Japanese war, officer in the Chinese army, head of the Manchurian troops, finally military and civil head of the entire province. Now he was dead and the province was under the rule of his son whose delicacy as a child had led the Chinese to shrug their shoulders and lay odds against his ever reaching manhood. So the little weakling had lived after all.

The company's offices were in a new three-storied, red brick building facing on the road leading to the Chinese City, the old mud road now a paved highway with three or four other foreign buildings mixed in with the rickety one-story Chinese shops. Off at one side set back in a yard enclosed by a white plastered wall was the company's huge modern cigarette factory—eight or ten English and Americans supervising a thousand or more Chinese. This was all new to me. I was told that the company was also building a new factory in Hongkong. This meant one in every important treaty port: Tientsin, Hankow, Tsingtao, Mukden and Hongkong. With complete sales, advertising, accounting and traffic offices in each of these cities, the company's business was now divided into self-containing units, each almost wholly independent of the others. When, as was usually the case, some section of China was cut off by banditry or local wars, business could carry on for a good length of time without interruption.

Felix introduced me around the office—eleven English, three Russian stenographers, and about three hundred Chinese. No Americans. The foreign sales staff was less than half of what it was fifteen years ago and, I soon learned, the men had practically given up travelling. Most of their work now consisted of checking, reading and writing reports and letters. The Chinese staff, mostly clerks, had increased ten times over. I had noticed in Shanghai this same miniature evolution. From what I could see the company had gradually grown, as the pioneer days came to an end, into a ponderous, unwieldy, old-fashioned English accounting machine, and it seemed to me significant: the company had gone completely British and, too, the foreigner was moving into the background.

I had a long talk with the number one foreign manager who was in charge of sales covering all Manchuria. He was a Scotchman, a keen, hard-headed, accounting-minded Scotchman whom I had known in former years. For the several past years in Mukden he had made a thorough investigation and study of Japanese railway plans. He had showed me his figures. The Japanese were systematically mapping out three thousand miles of railway lines to be built within seven years. A new main line was to run past Kirin to the eastern border, parts at that time infested by bandits, and also south to the corner where Korea meets Siberia. Other connecting lines were to be added here and there until the whole of the fertile Manchurian soil in which the soya bean and kaoliang could be grown was dotted at strategic points with stations from which the crops could be shipped directly to Dairen or—already the Japanese had started quietly to build a new port on the southeast near that corner where Korea touched upon Soviet Russia—many knots closer than Dairen to the Japanese islands.

That was interesting. I knew the information he had gathered was far more than hearsay or merely the result of rambling reports and surmises. The company had a Chinese agent or dealer

in every town and village throughout the country. Direct information, political and economic, interspersed with local news of human tragedies and suffering, poured unceasingly into foreign headquarters, often important items that failed to reach the ears of foreign news correspondents and frequently much that differed in many essentials from what appeared in the "alleged" statements on the news pages.

The foreign number one said, "You were here in the old days and know what Mukden was like. Have you noticed the changes?"

I recalled the dusty and muddy cart roads, foreigners living in dilapidated old Chinese compounds. "Have the Japs done all this modernizing?"

"Of course. The Old Marshal was wise and played along with them, but when he got mixed up with the scrapping between the North and South it went to his head. The old fire-eater figured that he was powerful enough to make himself head of the whole country and mortgaged crops and everything else he could get his hands on until he had to turn to the Japs to get money to keep going. The Japanese were willing because it meant more control. The shopkeepers and farmers are still plastered from head to foot with taxes.

"Old Chiang finally got in so deep that he began issuing *feng p'iao* (provincial notes) for currency with no silver to back them. Since the old boy has kicked off, his son, the Young Marshal, has gone from bad to worse. Not long ago he threw another supply of *feng p'iao* on the market and now the notes are almost worthless. Whatever silver a Chinese can get hold of he buries, or if he's one of the itinerant laborers who come from Shantung every season to work on the soya bean crops he takes it back home."

"What is the Young Marshal like?" I asked.

He grinned. "He's a pleasant, affable little chap. Speaks English. Rather delicate. But very difficult to get hold of to talk business."

He laughed. "After you've been around for a while you'll get a line on him."

I spent the day in the office. That evening at five Felix said, "We'll trot over to the club and I'll sign you up."

We were early and sat around the open fire in the lounge watching the crowd come in, most of them English and their wives, a few American oil slaves, several from the company's factory and a smattering of uncertain European nationalities. I was introduced and soon joined the crowd around the bar where all the men, except the contract and poker players, were gathering. It was filled three and four deep, split into small gossiping groups.

"I tell you, the foreigner's day is damned near over—the Japs are mapping out connecting railway lines way out to—"

"No sir, the foreigner doesn't move around like he once did. We leave the dirty work to the Chinese these days. Why not? They'll do you in the eye, anyway, as much as they can. And it's not safe any more two *li* away from a railway. Bandits are scattered on the—"

"—to make a date to see the Young Marshal for the last three days, but the little opium hound's been laid up doped for a—"

"—Japanese are crooked as—"

"—took on another concubine a few—"

"—chits ran to more than $400 last month and—"

"—time of the evening I always stick to gin and bit—"

"—can't trust a Jap, anyway. You never—"

"—Russian girl will get him if—"

Felix nudged me.

"There's a cinema on at Longmueller's tonight at 9:30," he whispered, "and if we leave now we'll just have time for chow."

As I was putting on my overcoat I heard the high-pitched voice of a woman coming from the lounge, "I've been trying now for three months to find some kind of job so I can keep from getting tight."

Outside the night was cold, dry, invigorating. And there was space, space, space—I could feel it to my very bones. This was the China I had loved—this without-beginning and without-ending space—and the brilliant, wide-open sky brought close, very close, by the lightness and clarity of the air, so light that

it lifted the body and soul and made them a part of the night itself.

We were leaving the mess for Longmueller's just as the others poured in from the club. Longmueller's was a German hotel with a wooden shack in the back yard turned into a combined cinema and dance hall. From 9:30 to 11:30 we sat wrapped in overcoats on wicker chairs watching an aged silent picture. The lights went on. Part of the audience, two-thirds Chinese, left and the rest stood waiting in the center of the room while coolies rushed about arranging chairs and tables around the sides. A Russian jazz orchestra took the stage and the dance was on. The other three lads at the mess—two English and one Irish—joined our table and we ordered beer. Most of the guests were Russian. My curiosity was aroused. Where did all of these Russians come from and how in the world did they manage to live in the winter-time in a place like Mukden?

"I'll tell you," said the Irishman who had divided some twenty years between Mukden and Harbin. "They're all Whites and Tartars. The Tartars are from eastern Russia and thoroughbreds, and though they're Whites themselves, they look down on the others almost as much as they do the Reds. They're a race to themselves, and they're proud and haughty.

"But what I started to say was, the Tartars and Whites both have been slipping in from across the border to Harbin since the time Kolchak was knocked off. Thousands upon thousands. Nothing they can do to make a living in Manchuria, so they all want to get down to Shanghai—big city with opportunities—over-run with them already. But the only way they can get there is to work their way down gradual like.

"I'll tell you and you won't believe it, but there's damned near two thousand White Russians right here. They run shops, clerk in banks and the companies, drive busses and act as chauffeurs and take in each other's washing. There's one woman I know who supports her family by manicuring in the daytime and working as a 'fruit' in the *Paris* at night. All sorts of small jobs. Those who can't find anything to do are supported by the others. They have a charity ball almost once a fortnight."

The Irishman was interrupted by one of the other fellows who sat up suddenly and exclaimed, "Wait—look what's coming!"

Preceded by several Chinese boys hastily pulling out tables and pushing them together, five Chinese men, all in their thirties and wearing dinner jackets, swaggered across the center of the floor. In their midst, slightly ahead, were two young girls, one Chinese, a stunning aristocratic figure emphasized by a tight-fitting, slit silk gown. The other, in an expensive evening dress of the latest Parisian mode, was a blue-eyed, blonde Russian.

"See that little stocky chap in the lead," said the Irishman. "He used to be the chief-of-police in Tientsin, but they caught him mixed up in a lot of crooked squeeze and playing in with the Japs, and he had to make a quick get-away. He cleaned up about a half-million, they say, before they caught him at it. The Russian blonde married him last week. She'll milk him dry before she's through, drop him and move on to Shanghai."

This was a new China—if ever Mukden could really have been called a part of China. It seemed to be more on the order of an independent principality, a kind of Chinese Monaco, where anyone with money was accepted with open arms and no questions asked.

* * * * *

For a week I stuck in Mukden going over the market, calling on shops and hawkers and checking on the advertising. The city had grown in a curious way. On the second morning Felix and I rode in the office motor car down broad paved highways across country for at least two miles, then suddenly ran flush into rows of shops. Everywhere my eyes met Russian signs and the few pedestrians who walked the street were Russian, women and girls in gray cotton stockings, worn-down shoes, and shawls over their heads. Looking closer I saw that three-fourths of the shops were closed.

"This was a busy street," said Felix, "a few years ago when the Russians were travelling through by the wholesale on their way to Shanghai. It's all finished now."

I stopped the motor car and got out. I went into the shop of a Russian dry goods merchant.

"How's business?"

"Bad. Very bad. No one to buy. If I can only find a way I go to Shanghai."

I stepped into the next open shop, a Chinese tailor.

"How's business?"

He shook his head woefully. "*Ai-ya*—very bad. Very bad. Before have plenty money. I bring family this side but now have send home Shantung. Little while I think I go too."

"Why no business?"

"*Feng p'iao*—and tax—all the time more tax."

We drove across to a Chinese section where the large red brick girl-houses stood and where most of the high-grade cigarettes were sold to Chinese. The plate glass windows of native shops lent an air of prosperity. At each shop I asked my same question, "How's business?" And at every shop I received the same answer, "Very bad." For the same reasons: *feng p'iao* and tax.

We returned to the main highway and drove farther along to arrive upon a circular plaza. The circle led around the outskirts of a formal park, at the other end of which towered the modern foreign hotel, another Yamato similar to the one in Dairen but a newer and better Yamato—more imposing and impressive and on a grander scale. Down the sides ran the rows of Japanese government buildings, also done in modern Western style, the one housing South Manchurian Railway officials, streamlined to a degree that would have warmed the heart of a Wright or Lascaze.

From the street on the opposite side of the hotel I heard the tramp, tramp, tramp of heavy boots striking the hard paving. Around the corner came marching a troop of stocky Japanese, padded uniforms, full fighting outfit. All the traffic police I had seen were Chinese but not yet had I run across one of the Young Marshal's soldiers.

We drove on past the hotel and I could have sworn I was in an American city in one of the districts of small, exclusive shops. This was also a Japanese section.

We continued our journey, circling back and shooting a curve to come upon a dusty gray wall that looked as if at any moment it might collapse. As we passed through the gate I felt at home. I caught old, familiar landmarks. We were in the native city. Here the narrow, dusty, filthy, foul smelling roads bustled with life. But the shops themselves, like the wall which enclosed them, looked as if they were slowly dropping to pieces from age and, too, this seemingly thriving shopping center took up only a slight section within the wall—the remainder had already decayed and returned to earth.

For the last time that day I put my questions and heard the same answers. Mukden was doing business with a fiat money which had degenerated to such a worthless state that the Chinese were really swapping credits and living on practically nothing.

* * * * *

Going over the advertising I discovered that all outdoor advertising except on shop-fronts was taxed almost prohibitively, and although one fixed provincial tax was supposed to cover all Manchuria, actually each magistrate in the smaller districts clapped on his own local fees, the amount depending solely upon his mood and immediate state of finances.

Up to this time the company had followed the system of sniping—plastering posters on walls indiscriminately, by the dozen, like rows of soldiers. I decided to have this stopped, to use only picked locations for individual framed posters numbered and listed, then on account of the fluctuation of taxes and the shortage of silver, to arrange for permanent locations on shop-fronts—untaxable—for smaller posters and to dress up every shop in the city until they all looked as if they were units of a chain system.

After starting this I arranged on the following Monday to commence a tour of the branch cities.

On the Saturday before I left, at noon I joined Felix to march catty-corner-wise across the street from the office to a three-story apartment building, standing aloof from its surroundings in lonely majesty, where the number one lived. There I ran

into the rest of the foreigners of the company drinking cocktails. Then every one left for the Club, the men making straight for the bar for additional cocktails and gin and bitters, to theorize on Chinese politics and kick about the lives they had to lead and the idiotic ideas and actions of the head office in Shanghai. This, I said to myself, is the same old seven and six. I could see myself fifteen years back sitting in the lobby of the Wagons-Lits Hotel in Peking, or leaning over the bar of the Tientsin Club, vigorously running down "things as they were" in just about the same manner. But too late now to start this pastime all over again.

Sunday afternoon between five and five thirty I called at several homes to drop cards, but I had forgotten my China. Every one was still in bed.

XXXI

DECEMBER OF 1929

Japanese are behaviorists—travelling native style—cut-throat competition—Mr. T'ing gives the low-down on the Young Marshal and Manchuria's troubles—Kirin's P'ing K'ai Li *by the full moon and talk of bandits*

SHORTLY BEFORE DARK ON Monday afternoon Felix and I stood on the pebbled platform of the station waiting for the Japanese express to Changchun.* At the north end beyond the station a mass of Japanese school children, tiny boys and girls in dark blue uniforms, carrying small flags. Nearby a troop of Japanese soldiers standing at rest. Pigeon-toed Japanese officers in long belted coats and high shiny brown boots strutted up and down to keep warm. A whistle blew. Sharp guttural commands. School children and soldiers drew themselves up at rigid attention. The incoming train ground to a stop. Five Japanese officers with clanking swords stepped down from the chair car, greeting the waiting ones with many bows and intakings of breath. The school children waved their flags and cried, "Hurrah." Another brusque order and the children and soldiers stood at ease.

I said to Felix, "Looks like a big event."

"Nothing unusual," he replied. "Japanese generals travel up

* *The present capital of Manchukuo,* Hsin Ching, *or, in the Shantung dialect,* Hsinking, *meaning, new capital.*

and down all the time. The same thing happens every day all along the line."

It was true. Before I left Manchuria late in April I had seen the performance repeated dozens of times. Even in the kindergarten in the morning and at noon recess the uniformed tiny boys and girls marched soldier fashion and sang patriotic songs. The Japanese are the true believers in the psychology of behaviorism.

At ten o'clock that night we swung off the train into the mouth of a blinding snow storm. In the blackness the small junction town seemed to be totally uninhabited. As we waited shivering a Chinese carrying a lantern stepped forth into the light from the train. He beckoned. We followed stumbling over the deeply gashed, frozen road to a small wooden Japanese inn. At the door we took off our shoes. A giggling old *mama* and two giggling young servant girls led the way up a dimly lit stairway and down a creaking corridor. We squatted on the padded mat floor while one of the girls started a charcoal fire in a large iron pot and the other padded about the room making up our beds by spreading blankets on the floor. When we finally lay down still half dressed, the small wooden head rest started such an ache in my neck that I had to get up and fold my overcoat for a pillow.

The next morning we were up at dawn to catch the Chinese train for the trading center, Cheng Chia Tun. This train was everything that the Japanese was not. It carried one car divided between first and second class; the steam heat was running a temperature of about 90°; and even the best dressed and most prosperous looking Chinese carried several smaller pieces and at least one huge, bulging bundle of luggage wrapped in his bedding, piling them in mounds on the seats and in the aisle, then proceeding to make himself comfortable by slipping off his shoes, lighting up his pipe or cigarette, and without let-up to the end of the journey shouting to his friends in a harsh voice, sipping hot tea with loud gasps and wheezes, cracking watermelon seeds between his teeth and constantly, with preliminary coughs and grunts, spitting freely on the floor.

When, after three hours of this hot, stale air punctuated with disturbing noises, the train pulled into Cheng Chia Tun the snow had stopped but the sky remained a dull gray and the cold air struck against the skin like driven needles. Except for a few forlorn tea houses opened wide in front to the gusts of whistling wind, the solid little brick station sat on the plain alone and aloof like a passive Buddha. Chinese *droshky* drivers, a tall, powerful, ruddy-faced breed, the most villainous looking human beings God ever made, crowded over us, calling out huskily and plucking at our sleeves. Our Chinese interpreter picked out one and in a minute we were flying across country, holding on for dear life as the little two seated open carriage bounced up and down, rocked and swayed, to the gallop of the shaggy ponies and wheels rolling against the rough, irregular frozen furrows.

Cheng Chia Tun was strictly a farmers' trading center of the plains. Most of the shops, roofs and all, were of mud and straw. The traffic was confined to creaking and groaning carts slowly and painfully dragged through the ruts by mules and ponies. It was difficult to realize that three hours away we had stepped off a modern pullman equal to any in America.

In the compound of the dealer we sat around the little iron stove and discussed business. "No," said the dealer, "business not so good. Before native competition come but now it fall off. A year ago man from Chinese company in South come Cheng Chia Tun, put up many painted sign boards, sell much stocks to all dealer and hawker at very low, cut price. After he go he never come back. Still Chinese farmer all buy only very cheap cigarettes now, anyway. This year crop very bad. And only paper money. Sales not too good."

An echo of the story in Mukden. I looked over his reports then glanced around at his clerks sitting at their desks and tables, writing. They revived old memories. I leaned over behind one of the clerks and watched him entering figures on a sales sheet. His bony body crouched close to the table, his sleeve was drawn back from his wrist and slowly, ever so slowly and carefully, his slim sensitive fingers guided the pencil deftly in straight lines and curves, producing drawings that were perfect designs, a

sheet that was a perfect composition. He worked with the intensity, the love and concentration of an artist.

Wrapped again in our heavy coats and trailed by a gang of street loafers, we followed the dealer through the market. He was right: business *was* bad. We found the shops and hawkers' stands stacked high with cheap, faded competitive brands, a half-dozen different Chinese makes, products of some of the fly-by-night companies of Shanghai, in business one day and out the next. Many of these firms made a good income by buying on credit cigarette stubs picked from sidewalks and gutters, making them over and selling for cash, then going into fraudulent bankruptcy. The trouble was, however, that with the shortage of money and so many such firms constantly springing up, the total sales of cheap cigarettes mounted high. This was an entirely new phase of the cigarette business to me. I put it down as a part of a slow-motion process. I was already beginning to see vaguely, in other ways, a cumulative, inevitable process, working directly and indirectly, passively but persistently, to push the foreigner out of China. First were the three-cornered discussions of China with England and America about extra-territoriality, then the decreased activities of the foreigner in the field and the consequent increased responsibilities of the Chinese, and now cut-throat competition.

After a late lunch of *sukiyaki* squatting on the mat floor of the Japanese inn, we took the train back to the junction on the main line, changing to the express to Changchun farther north, this time spending the night in the modern foreign Yamato Hotel, now greatly expanded.

In the morning through the window of my bedroom I studied the wide boulevard on the other side of the garden fronting the hotel. Neat rows of grey buildings towered like those of a foreign city, but the street itself was bare of all traffic and the silence was almost a hush. When we walked down to breakfast our footsteps echoed through the corridors and back from the highly varnished floors of the dining room, large enough to seat at least two hundred guests. We sat alone, with three plump Japanese waitresses to serve us American chow.

At the office I asked the territory manager, Mr. T'ing, a stout talkative little fellow, to give me the complete low-down on the *feng p'iao* business. I had heard it talked of so much and yet I was still a bit mixed. Mr. T'ing sighed.

"Ah," he said, "very bad, indeed. Few years ago North fight South. Old Marshal lose many soldier, cost much money. He put high tax on everybody. Not enough. So he borrow money on railroad from Japanese. Then he print *feng p'iao,* provincial paper money, no silver behind. Old Marshal say, 'My word is good, I stand back of, okay. This note good money, worth so much, must use.' What can people do? Old Marshal take up all silver money, only leave *feng p'iao.* Old Marshal die, and he son, Young Marshal, bring out more *feng p'iao.* Now *feng p'iao* all time go more bad. No good, I think."

I pieced together the scraps of information I had heard in Mukden about the Young Marshal's personal habits. What was he like?

"He squeeze poor farmer and shopkeeper very bad. Young Marshal like father. He keep on spend money on big arsenal, aeroplane, soldiers—cost very much. People must pay. He have bank plenty money for himself in America and England and he spend plenty more money on himself and concubine. Plenty concubine, so he must buy plenty jewelry and clothes. He also buy expensive curio. I hear speak in his palace have very many rare piece."

"How about opium?"

"Everybody know. I am not afraid speak you. Sure, he smoke plenty opium. Sometime three, four day, maybe week, he no good. All this thing cost money. He squeeze poor people very bad, more all time. Very bad."

We drove in a motor car through the city. Like Mukden the Japanese section of Changchun had grown enormously. Where before they had faded out into the open country, a few blocks from the hotel now stood rows of gray brick buildings with closed fronts and foreign windows, but there were no customers to be seen.

We crossed a beautifully carved, small stone bridge. On the

other side we jumped out and entered through the gate into the Chinese walled city, one straggling, muddy street of cobblestones with open latrines whose stench hovered in the air. We hurried to finish.

Early the next day we were off on another Chinese train, this time eastward bound to Kirin. The same overheated bodies, boisterous chatter and harking and spitting as on the one two days before. We were met by the dealer's motor car, the only one in the city. The dealer, a wealthy man, was a wholesale merchant and a magistrate. Since Kirin was off the main Japanese line, it had no foreignized hotel, so we stopped at the dealer's compound inside the city. He put us in a large room at the back fitted with finely carved blackwood furniture and two foreign club chairs. I was struck with three scrolls hanging on the side wall, color paintings of flowers. The technic was so unusual in its looseness and boldness of brush strokes that I commented upon it. It turned out that the dealer was a rabid collector of Chinese paintings and before I could have lunch I had to spend an hour crawling around the floor on my hands and knees carefully examining some of his most precious findings. Too late I realized I had made a mistake. I had overlooked an old Chinese custom. After lunch the dealer, very much of the old school, made a formal presentation of a scroll, an outdoor scene done in exquisite tones of brown with touches of rich red and greens. I was forced to accept and was rather embarrassed, but the knowledge that there were still Chinese who clung to the old formalities and customs gave me a solid satisfaction.

That evening, as was the custom, the dealer had us out to Chinese chow and later to visit the *p'ing k'ai li* (girl houses). At nine, however, the night police called curfew. With many apologies *lao mama* informed us that within the past week the house had been raided twice by bandits and begged us to come again.

From the stifling shut-in air into the brilliant cold light of a full moon. The snow had ceased to fall and the pale blue houses surrounding the courtyard cast sharp, deeper blue shadows outlined against the almost blinding pure white of the snow. I felt I was in a dream, in another world. It was night and it was not night. It was neither night nor day. And the air had become so still, the silence so penetrating, that time itself seemed to have stopped, to be holding its breath.

At the mess another company foreigner was at the dealer's compound to greet us, a gaunt Britisher in the Mukden sales end. He was all decked out as if he were prepared to travel in the polar regions—a long officer's leather coat with wolfskin lining, thick corduroy fleece-lined riding breeches and heavy, fur-lined leather boots, gloves and cap.

"Where're you bound?" I asked.

"Well," he said, "I was thinking of motoring across country to see the dealer at —— (a small interior town three days east across country)."

The dealer and company's Chinese local manager looked at him aghast. Throwing their arms about in the air they held a rapid-fire conversation. Finally the manager spoke in English, "Everywhere that part of country have plenty bandits. Every day news come some town have loot. Very much danger. Impossible you go."

A day later Felix, the gaunt Britisher and I departed.

I had found no advertising in Kirin. The chief magistrate was so short of money he had plastered on a prohibitive, sky-high tax and it was a matter of patient waiting until he came to terms. Here, too, I had found Chinese competition running wild and the city struggling on the edge of starvation. The street of restaurants and tea houses looked down upon a frozen river a hundred feet below. Day and night blasts of icy winds from the north blew down this river, whining through the street, shaking the puny shacks and sending shivers through the half-clothed bodies hugging shop fronts, squeezed in doorways and crouched against the rampart.

XXXII

CHRISTMAS OF 1929–MARCH OF 1930

the dissipated Young Marshal and his overworked English adviser—Harbin Russians are on their uppers—Russian New Year's eve turns out to be a jolly event—Chinese cities go down and down while the Japanese are on the rise—the art of forcing progress—Changchun seems to be waiting—"Please you take me Shanghai"

In my absence a new arrival had joined the Mukden foreign sales staff and I moved my belongings to a small German residential hotel a few blocks back of Longmueller's cinema and dance hall. For the next three months I made this headquarters during my travels out from Mukden. Several other Americans and a few British from the cigarette and oil companies also made the hotel their home. After dinner I sat in the lobby eyeing the motley crew of foreign adventurers, Chinese officials and wealthy merchants drift in for a few days' stay in the attempt to put across business deals with the Young Marshal, then quietly slip out. I learned to tell the importance of a Chinese by the number of thugs making up his bodyguard.

Within a few days after I had settled the heating apparatus in the house of the Young Marshal's foreign adviser froze and burst, forcing him to take a suite in the back part of the hotel. A short, stockily built, grey haired Englishman in his early fifties,

he had lived on the same *hutung* in a compound one hundred yards or so above the company mess in Peking when I was there from 1911 through 1913. At that time he was Peking correspondent for the London *Times*. An intellectual, he had given up his life to the study of Chinese political economy and now concentrated all his time and energies on the Young Marshal's affairs, working over documents and papers until late into the night. His influence reached far. He passed judgment before any foreigner or Chinese was allowed to approach the Young Marshal on politics or business of any kind.

A company's stenographer, the foreign adviser's secretary and I sat at the same table in the dining room. After serviettes were unfolded the stenographer usually started off, "Well, how've things been going today?"

"Rotten," from the adviser's secretary. "They've started another Northern separation movement down in Peking and D. has a stack of cables and documents that he can't do anything about because the Young Marshal's been on another opium jag for almost four days. This is his third this month and his doctors are having a fit."

Or the news might be, "Well, Marshal Chiang has bought another concubine."

"What's his number one wife doing about it this time?"

"Oh, the same as always. So far she's made him give her a jade necklace and some furs that've sunk him about 50,000 taels."

Thus it went, D. devoting day and night to the hopeless task of keeping the Young Marshal's business straightened out, steering as best he could through the crooked course laid out by a skinny, delicate affable little degenerate who divided his time among opium sprees, treatments getting over them and playing with his women.

Over the Christmas and New Year holidays I loafed, taking tramps, wishing the dealers, *kung ssu fa tsai* (happy New Year or, literally, business good luck), going to Chinese banquets where healths were drunk with beer and brandy and on New Year's Eve attending the number one's official dinner at which

the "good old company" did its duty nobly by offering the opportunity for innumerable toasts which called for quantities of excellent champagne and high-proof vodka.

A few days after the foreign holidays I was off north to Harbin.

On the morning of January 5th, Russian New Year's Eve, one of our men, an Austrian, met me at the station with a motor car. When I was there before only *droshkies* existed. Now outside were dozens of motor taxis driven by hard-faced Russians. We passed the old Grand and into a busy looking paved street lined with tall, faded brick and stone buildings. Open motor cars, packed and jammed, flew back and forth.

"Lot of traffic. Business must be on the up," I said.

"Oh, no." My companion laughed. "Those are what you call jitneys. For twenty cents Harbin money (about 4 cents Am. money) you can ride almost anywhere in town."

We drew up at the Hotel Modern in the center of the Russian shopping district. Three old men with lined cheeks and white beards, wearing frayed second-hand clothes, stood at the edge of the sidewalk with outstretched hands. One opened the door of the car; another that of the hotel. The Austrian handed each a small piece of silver. The old men touched their caps and murmured thanks. My companion looked at me a bit sheepishly.

"I always keep a pocketful of small change to give the poor devils," he said. "They're in a pitiful fix. Harbin's running over with starving White refugees. They've been thrown out of their own country, have no place to go and no one they can depend upon, and all the jobs here have been taken up long ago. So many of them have had to turn beggar. Two or three stand at the door of every shop. The shopkeeper closes his eyes—usually he gives one of them the concession to open and close the door for customers."

After I registered and we were outside again, I stopped for a minute. A pleasant street—the buildings old-fashioned and rococo, with a dignified, homely air. On the sidewalks a steady stream of pedestrians ran in both directions: Russian women and girls, all dressed in black coats with cheap fur collars, grey cotton stockings with black high shoes; Russian men, young and old, shrunk within light, shabby overcoats with turned-up collars. They seemed to be going nowhere—just walking off time.

That evening the Austrian and the company's number one for North Manchuria, a Polish citizen who had been president of the Russian Tennis Club in Tientsin when I was a member back in 1916, accompanied by two Greek brothers who were the leading manufacturers of Russian one-end cigarettes, took me out to celebrate. At nine-thirty we started with dinner at the *Kasbek* cellar restaurant.

I danced once with our young waitress. Half way around the floor she spoke.

"Please, you are from Shanghai?"

I said, "Yes."

"Please, you go back soon?"

I said, "Yes."

"Please, you take me Shanghai?"

I said nothing.

Earlier in the day I was looking over the cigarette display in the hotel lobby. The Russian girl in charge had asked me the same three questions in the same wistful manner. I thought of what the Irishman had told me on my first night in Mukden, about the sole ambition of every White Russian in Manchuria: to find a way to get to Shanghai. The Chinese Eastern Railway had built Harbin, was its very life blood and the Reds still controlled it with a firm hand. Without a country, their only identification a special Chinese pass, the Whites were a people in search of a home and Shanghai was their only hope.

Back at the table, I asked the Polish number one, "How many Whites altogether do you figure are in Manchuria?"

"Oh, possibly 100,000. Several thousand are camping near the Russian border—no one really knows how many. The Reds have a habit of flying across every so often and bombing them. But small lots still manage to keep dribbling in."

"How many Japs?"

"About 250,000."

After dinner we went to the *Moulin Rouge*, Harbin's famous

(in China) cabaret with a capacity of at least a thousand guests. But it was a sad, sad New Year's Eve. The waitresses outnumbered the guests five to one.

As we were leaving after the midnight toast, the Austrian nudged me and whispered, "Stick with me. I'll take you where it's lively."

We drove for several miles to the outer edge of the suburbs to draw up finally before a large two-story stucco house sitting alone on a hill. Inside the hallway a dried-up little Italian, with skin like parchment and huge grey pointed military mustaches, bounced up and squeezed the hand of the Austrian. From another room I heard a string orchestra and the stamping of feet and shouts.

"Wait," said the little dried-up Italian. "Don't go in yet. I must show you the house. I have just newly decorated. You will appreciate it."

He led us into the back room furnished with a banquet table and chairs in the ornate period of Louis 16th. He twisted his mustaches proudly.

"Now, we go upstairs." He threw open a door at the top of the staircase. "The great men of Italy," he said, extending his arm in a majestic gesture. Above the molding were mural portraits of the most famous men of Italy, Caesar, Dante, Garibaldi, Angelo, d'Annuncio—in all twelve or fifteen heroes. Then the little man pointed a finger at two large portraits, twice the size of the others, above the facing doorways. One was of Mussolini, the other of himself.

So much did we exclaim and show our pleasure that he insisted on showing us his very private bedroom and bath, only for his most intimate friends to see. One of his acts was changing her costume, but never mind, "See the shaded lights, and feel the soft bed. Like a white cloud, is it not? And notice, if you please, this fine lace on the canopy and the pillows. It is the best. I myself imported it straight from Burano."

Of the bath it need only be said that it was the creation of Latin genius and imagination burning their brightest.

We joined the stampede in the intimate ballroom. Save for

myself and the Austrian all were Russian, some almost in rags but every one overflowing with the joy of living. They greeted us with smiles and cheers. And when Regi, once a Moscow star, stood on the small platform with the orchestra, the flag of old Russia slung across her shoulders, and sang in a deep, powerful soprano the Czarist national anthem the crowd went mad. They banged the tables and stamped their feet; they yelled and roared; they hugged each other and cried. Then one after another couples whirled and jigged and squat-danced—impromptu folk dances—while the rest stood on tables and chairs, clapping their hands in time and cheering them along.

We drove back across the hills as the sun slowly rose a fiery red above the dark horizon.

After a week in Harbin covering the shops and looking over the advertising, I brought up the idea of calling on a few dealer towns in the interior. But the main district headquarters were only to be reached by rivers. It was too late, the rivers were frozen, all stocks for the winter had been shipped and no contact could be made until the spring thaw.

As in the other native cities I had so far visited, however, the Chinese business district had for years been disintegrating steadily. Walking through the slushy, gloomy streets, with shops facing each other so closely that even in mid-morning the small electric bulbs only served to enhance the drawn paleness of the owners and the twilight bleakness of their surroundings, gave me the feeling that I was in the midst of a plague. And in Russian Newtown wherever I turned I was faced with sniffling old white bearded beggars wearing thin grey mufflers in place of overcoats and with marching women and girls in grey cotton stockings. Wherever I was I felt the pressure of poverty settled around me like a fog.

* * * * *

From Harbin I made straight south for Antung, near the Korean border on the line that led to Port Arthur.

Today when I think of Antung two pictures enter my mind. I see a row of dignified, white-haired Chinese neatly gowned in

black sitting on small benches before tables containing inkstands, brushes and paper. It is sunny, but in this sun-lighted space the icy wind blows down from the north. They sit without moving. Their imperturbability remains undisturbed. They are earning their living as professional letter writers.

I also see a Chinese on a sled loaded with freight, gliding down the frozen Yalu River. His hands clutch the ropes binding his load. The toes of his left foot perch perilously on the edge of the back board and his right leg works like the pendulum of a speeded-up clock, pushing his foot against the ice and sending the flying sled along at the rate of an express train making up time.

My first complete trip around the chief commercial and trading centers of Manchuria ended with a short tour of Nuchuang, its neighbor Chin Hsien, and Dairen. Down, down, down—everything Chinese I had seen in Manchuria was the same: Japanese sections, Westernized and immaculately clean, building up; native sections going to rack and ruin. In what direction were the Chinese heading? In what direction *could* they go? All they seemed to have left was their pleasant formal etiquette, and even that was lost by those who had been touched by the foreigner. The thought was depressing.

When again I was seated on the Japanese Pullman bound for Dairen I felt better, and better still when I slipped between the sheets that night on an American mattress at the Japanese Yamato hotel. Japanese Dairen had gone ahead—far. A new broad macadamized avenue cut through a shopping district of which any American city would have been proud. In the heart of it was a large, recently erected arcade building designed in the most modern Western architectural style, the ground floor taken up by exclusive shops displaying the latest fashions in imported merchandise through shining, plate-glass windows. On the opposite side of the hotel, hidden by the Japanese official buildings, Chinese shops huddled together like beggars pressing against each other to stave off the cold and loneliness.

Back in Mukden I worked out plans and laid the foundation of the advertising system that was eventually put into effect in

every town and village in China. For three months I worked in and out of Mukden, visiting the railway cities time and again, starting off my "chain-store system" idea. On each repeat visit I found native conditions worse, the Chinese sinking lower into a state of poverty. In Changchun, Kirin, Antung, Cheng Chia Tun and Nuchuang and north in Harbin business was almost at a complete stand-still. Shopkeepers wringing their hands and local magistrates still piling on taxes, squeezing the merchants and farmers harder than ever, while the paper money kept on dropping.

One morning on my last visit to Changchun, a mild, sunny day with the first restless feeling of spring in the air, Felix and I took a stroll down the avenue extending out beyond the back of the hotel. We came to a park and walked up and down hill, over winding paths past shade trees and flower beds. We stopped at the first tee of a nine-hole golf course and watched two Japanese drive off into the pleasantly rolling space. On our way back we circled around the park, to run smack into the Japanese army post, equal in size and similar in equipment to those in the States. A grove of trees shaded the long rows of permanent barracks. And a few hundred yards away we came upon a group of foreign red brick buildings, officers' headquarters, facing an athletic field where stocky privates in undershirts were playing earnestly at soccer.

Although the avenues were silent and empty and the city as dead as a doornail, the picture of Changchun as compared with the Changchun of thirteen years before was that of a carefully planned model foreign city, finished to the last detail, as compared to an architect's first rough, pencilled draft. Yes, a model city, standing at attention, spick and span, as if poised and waiting for some signal to bring it to life.

When I made my farewell excursion to Harbin in March the Soviets had for several months been negotiating with the Chinese over the sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway. It was supposed to be governed on an equal basis by a board of Red Russian and Chinese directors. But on several occasions the arbitrary action of the Russian chairman had driven the Chinese to strike. The

Russians claimed that the Chinese were dilatory and inefficient. Undoubtedly the truth was that Russia was so deeply concerned over her internal industrial program that she did not care to have her concentration interfered with by any extraneous matters and wanted to force a sale.

She was, however, taking no chances on her eastern frontiers, and still kept a flock of airplanes busy flitting across the border hunting down White refugees.

She was, too, at the same time making a move towards cutting into the Chinese market by dumping low grade one-end cigarettes, cotton piece goods and low grade oil on the Harbin market at prices far below those at which any competitor could make a profit. But she made one great mistake: even for down and out Harbin the low prices could not make up for the shoddiness of those first shipments.

Rumors had reached Shanghai that Russia expected to exploit North Manchuria in a big way by an appropriation of six million rubles to start the ball rolling. Representatives were in and out of the hotel sniffing the air like cocker-spaniels, with big question marks in their eyes. Utter strangers stopped me in the red lounge of the hotel and asked what I thought of the chances of a branch bank or real estate office. My ideas about the future turn of business was probably a great deal more mixed than theirs but I managed to reply in an off-hand manner that if the Russians kept shipping in other goods like their cheap one-end cigarettes they'd soon glut the market and business would get nowhere.

The last night my Austrian friend called up Regi, the husky soprano, and the three of us made a final round of the cabarets, five in all, three in cellars. Five sweating, hard working orchestras played and sang American jazz to empty tables. Five young Russian waitresses uniformed in black and white bent over as they served and whispered wistfully in my ear, "Please, you go Shanghai, you take me Shanghai."

XXXIII

APRIL OF 1930

Tientsin is like an old codger dozing in the sun—a modern street without atmosphere—the decline of the foreigner—painted blue and white walls sell republican principles—another growing White Russian community—Peiping: city of mausoleums without a soul—more blue and white walls and bitterness

ON A MORNING IN THE EARLY part of April I looked through the windows of a spick and span new motor bus taking in the old familiar smells, noises and dust of Tientsin on my way to the Astor House hotel. As I followed my luggage to the sidewalk curb the porter, white around the temples, looked me over scratching his head.

"I see you before. Long time ago."

"Sure," I said. "B-A-T 1914–1915."

He grinned all over and we shook hands. A brass band at the station could not have given me more pleasure. Neither the hotel nor the porter had changed except to ripen with age, and immediately I felt at home.

The first day I spent in the office, the same old office slightly enlarged, going over notes on the policies I had started in Manchuria. Tientsin had adopted the same distributing system as Harbin: the company sold direct wholesale to a Chinese agent under his own company name; the foreign Division manager acted as "adviser". Also, the foreigners had reduced travelling

and Chinese contacts to a minimum. The foreigner was quietly removing himself to the background. How much of this was forced?

With the American advertising manager I roamed the city for several days. *Requiescat in pace!* My imagination clings to a personified picture of Tientsin as an old codger with nothing to do and nothing on his mind, comfortably squatted against a wall, dozing in the sun. True, street cars clanged and broughams clattered down the *Ta Ma Lu*, the "Great Horse Road", made over with new foreign shops and buildings run by, and catering to, the Chinese, many of them selling foreign clothes and all kinds of foreign gadgets. And most of the well-to-do Chinese on this street were dressed in Western style: the women, more conservative, going only so far as the felt hat with a saucy feather.

But, in spite of these imposing rows of foreign buildings, displays of foreign merchandise in the windows, the ill-fitting men's suits and women's saucy hats, I noticed in all the stores that clerks leaned sleepily over their counters, scratching and yawning, their minds on chow or sleep or going over the *ma chiang* game of the night before.

"None of these places seem to be doing any business—they must be having a tough time keeping up all this front," I remarked after my third or fourth visit.

"God knows how they do it. Live on nothing I reckon. This town's as dead as hell, anyway. Tientsin has been going down ever since they moved the capital from Peking. All this scrapping between the North and South keeps every one down and out except the fellows making the trouble. These shops are just a lot of face pidgin.

"The Chinese have changed, too. They're getting foreignized, and when they get that way they're too damned cocky to be any good. It's all false faces. They lose all their old manners and honesty and become tricky—they're neither foreign nor Chinese, they ape the foreigner and at the same time hate him.

"They're gradually taking the business away from the foreigner, too. The only foreign firms here that amount to anything any more are the oil and cigarette companies. The Dollar Lumber Company and one or two others do pretty well, perhaps, but that's about all."

Off the *Ta Ma Lu*, in the regular Chinese section, along the narrow, winding alley roads, which before were always bustling and busy, the shops had disintegrated into hovels and a few stragglers wandered aimlessly here and there through the dust. The liveliest place was the open air second-hand market.

After what I had heard and seen in Manchuria Tientsin's lethargy was no great surprise. I did receive a big one, however, the beginning of a discovery that led me to believe that there might still be hope for a united, centrally controlled China some day in the future, even though distant. On all the best wall spaces in the Chinese city bold light blue characters stood out in relief against a background painted white.

"Who's doing all this heavy advertising?" I asked. "All the best locations seem to be taken."

"That's not advertising. It's government propaganda. They've commandeered all the good outdoor space to write up Sun Yat Sen's principles. It's crazy, all this quarreling and fighting, and then to see these principles of good government—of, by and for the people—staring you in the face every time you turn around. Every Chinese who can read carries Sun's book, *The Three Principles,** and studies and talks about it. But it's just like them to stand up in theory for one thing and to do the opposite. It's not all their fault either, when you come to think of it. They have a pretty tough time digging out a bare living."

What struck me forcibly, however, was the fact that the ideas of a hated Cantonese, a despised Southerner, should have taken such a hold on the North. Was it simply the repetition of slogans, from the beginning of history the real ruler of the masses, generalissimo in wars and maker and breaker of businesses, religions and governments? Or was it merely passive sufferance?

In the offices of the companies across the river, as in Manchuria,

* *Briefly: (1) a democratic government—(2) a raised standard of living for every one—(3) economic and political independence free from all foreign interference.*

the foreign staff was reduced and the Chinese increased. Wheelbarrows and mule carts still creaked by at a funeral pace, carrying the heavy loads of cigarettes, oil and coal. Office work had become grooved into a similar sleepy, plodding routine. Foreign business had muddled along in the same way for so many years that every one seemed to have settled into the same fixed mold of inertia as the Chinese.

My first afternoon an old acquaintance took me out to the Race Club. The new building had been erected in 1924 or '25 when the Mex. dollar was shooting sky high and every one had the feeling prosperity had come to stay. The second story was a huge ballroom with a suspended dance floor. When we entered I was almost ready to change my mind about the decline of the foreigner; men, women and children sat around tables laden with the inevitable whisky sodas and tea.

"I had no idea there were so many foreigners here," I exclaimed.

"Don't kid yourself. You're looking at all of Tientsin there is. When this place was built, they took in every foreigner in town, except the broke White Ruskies. Anybody who can afford can join. Half of these people—or more—belong to one of the regiments—American, English, French or Italian. I tell you, fellow, this place is far from what it used to be."

"I suppose every one spends his spare time here."

"You said it. There's nothing else to the place."

My last Sunday I took a walk alone through the section of curio shops and soldier drinking joints. On side streets were rows and rows of semi-detached, small brick houses and on the sidewalks and porches I passed hundreds of Russians. There must have been at least several thousand Whites jammed together in this one small district. More than ninety per cent. of the pedestrians I had seen on Victoria Road, among the park loungers and cinema audiences, were also White Russians. No one, however, was able to explain how they managed to make a living.

After a week of Tientsin I caught the eight-thirty morning train for Peking. Seventeen years since I had lived there!

Passing up the old Wagon-Lits I took a ricksha across to Telegraph Lane and put up at the new Grand Hôtel de Pekin—a suitable name if *grand* is translated, "large". Outside the hotel on the plaza several hundred ricksha boys were lined up like a fighting brigade, their rickshas gleaming with gadgets of highly polished brass. I had the porter pick me a boy for daily hire—a weazened, talkative little old fellow. It was good to hear again the pure, clear accents of unadulterated Mandarin. After the garbled Shantung talk in Manchuria, even coming from a ricksha boy the Peking dialect had a rich, musical ring. His charge was surprisingly low. Competition, he said. Jobs were few. Not long ago there were getting to be so many—more than ten thousand at one time—that no one could make a living. The authorities had to cut down and establish a maximum limit.

As we turned into Hatamen I sniffed the air—different from that of any other city in the world—keen and dry, with hardly a trace of atmosphere—bracing. All the little shops were still there with their delicately carved fronts blackened with age. But I found myself looking continually up and down the street and back over my shoulder towards Telegraph Lane. I missed something. Then I suddenly became aware that *I had not seen one Peking cart!* Several motor cars had passed, many rickshas and mule carts—but the colorful Peking cart rattling down the road—the "*Ch'ieh kuang—ch'ieh kuang*" of the driver running alongside importantly waving aside the pedestrians—all that was gone—finished forever. The streets seemed barren and depressed. It was a tragedy.

Back in the familiar *hutungs* we pulled up before the old office compound. The porter recognized me. He was there in 1911, looking the same. He kowtowed (I had almost forgotten the word), bending his right knee and letting his right arm hang straight. When I shook his hand he grinned, embarrassed. As I walked inside I heard him behind me exclaiming to the ricksha boys and godown coolies and felt their excited stares.

I entered the office—the old office, with battered desks and chairs, musty smelling and dank—and lo and behold—there stood Mr. Tsui, for whom I guarded the godown key in Paot-

ingful! And with him, Mr. Kung, whom I had known as the number two Peking interpreter. Elderly, white haired men now, but still two of the finest specimens of the old school Chinese of the North, honest, kindly, gentle and courteous, complete gentlemen. It was good to see them but my pleasure was mixed with bitterness. I thought again of the absent Peking carts, the lack of life and color in the streets—and then that new name, *Pei Ping*—United North—it sounded like a slogan! I felt a swift surge of anger. It all seemed an insult of youth to a glorious personality grown old and left without resistance.

But the worst insult of all was the blue writing on white walls. When the South came into power they had gone much farther in painting up the walls of Peiping than they had those of Tientsin. Every available space—some in the ex-Forbidden City—bore long inscriptions from the writings of Sun. Progress—of a kind, yes—but did those writings carry a stronger appeal, a more progressive appeal, to the best instincts of humanity for a good government and a good life, than did the sayings of Confucius and *Lao Tze*? Were they better adapted in a practical way to a nation of craftsmen and farmers? After all, what was progress?

Moving around the city the uneasy feeling of desolation that had been stealing over me since my arrival grew. Peiping was an empty shell. She had lost her soul. Everything was on the surface, which was kept scrupulously scrubbed and polished. But Peking had been a capital in every sense—never a trading center—and now the people dragged out a living from the Cook's tourist trade and around-the-world cruises. I was reminded of Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*. Only life, vivid, colorful vibrating life made a city—not empty, stately buildings and show places. The foreigners living here in their artistic little compounds back among the *hutungs*, picking up little odds and ends of curios, talking little talk eagerly and knowingly of politics and attending cocktail parties, were desperately pretending that they were surrounding themselves with an atmosphere that no longer existed, gathering living warmth from a cold, impersonal museum.

City types of the younger female generation

Unless on account of the expense, I could not understand why the legations remained. Since the high officials of the recognized government were all in the South, with whom did the ambassadors and ministers confer? Or did they hope for the impossible—that the South would some day consent to the return of the capital to the North? Or were they there merely to exchange notes and gossip, and to keep an eye on Manchuria—and the Japanese? Or was it simply atmosphere?

That evening I went to an early dinner party given by Mr. Tsui and Mr. Kung. Three other Americans, all of whom I had known before, were there. It was a glimpse of old times. But the food had changed—the fine art of cooking had degenerated with the fading out of Peking as a capital. Even that was lost in the past!

Sunday I wandered around through the Summer Palace and the temples in the Western Hills. Something was wrong here, too. I still had that lonesome feeling that Peking had died and was buried. The Summer Palace was full of staring, curious soldiers, would-be guides who pestered me, and I could not overcome the belief that the greasy Buddhist monks had not washed or changed their clothes in all the years I'd been away.

I had loved *Pei Ching*—but she existed no longer—here was a city of the dead—without a soul.

XXXIV

MAY OF 1930

China pushes England and America on the question of extrality—faces at the Cercle Sportif—American Clubs and customs—Americans have learned from the English the gentle art of "muddlin' through" which gives the answer to a bothersome question—a nice old suburb has gone madly White Russian—"Chinese are different"—Shanghai has no white and light blue walls

In the first part of May I was called back to Shanghai to discuss the changes and innovations in policies I was putting into effect. The front pages and editorial columns of the *North China Daily News* and *Shanghai Times*, the two English newspapers, were filled with news and arguments on the three cornered discussion among the States, England and China over the question of extra-territoriality. I was astonished. I could see how the States might good-naturedly play along with England. She had a habit of following England's leads. Too, she had always played with the Chinese the part of a disinterested and kindly uncle. But England was actually nearing the point of setting a fixed date to drop extrality completely. That was beyond all understanding. Did they want to get out of the country altogether? Did they not realize that no foreigner would be able to run his own business in Shanghai and that it would be impossible to travel anywhere

in safety? Even at present it was dangerous to get off the beaten track of treaty ports. Three-fourths of the country was under the control of communists, bandits or provincial officials who were bandit leaders in all but name and thumbed their noses at the Nanking government. North, Central and South were at loose ends. Of course the Chinese wanted to do away with extrality; they wanted the foreigner out of the country; they were pushing him out as much as they could; to squelch his power and influence was one of Sun's basic *Three Principles.* Young China in the treaty ports might dress foreign fashion, talk the foreign language and fall in love with the foreign jazz, but after all how far did these external changes reach below the surface—how much was he changed beneath the skin in his feeling towards the foreigner as an arrogant intruder and trouble maker and a glorified bandit?

A friend invited me out to the *Cercle Sportif Français* for cocktails and dinner. I was still a non-resident member and looked forward with pleasure to sitting again on the veranda with its stately columns, enjoying the moonlight and perhaps a *dubonnet* for old times' sake. My imagination, however, was on the wrong track. We motored into Frenchtown to draw up before a stucco palace that from the outside had somewhat the appearance of a public casino and from the inside more so. We gravitated automatically straight to the bar. The noise was deafening. When I was able to adjust my sight to the smoky atmosphere I found we were in a large room with a bar taking up one side and the rest of the space jammed with tables at which sat every nationality in the world with the possible exception of pure orientals. The faces of the women were so overlaid with highly contrasting red and white make-up and mascara that for quite some time I was unable to tell them apart, and after several hours they still looked like so many puppets without expression.

"What is this," I asked, "some special occasion?"

My companion looked up surprised. "No, it's nothing out of the ordinary. Just the regular bunch at cocktail time. This is a sort of international meeting place. You won't find many

Americans here though. Most of them are at their own hangouts, the American Club or the Columbia Country Club.

"But who are they and how do they keep it up? The Mex. dollar is going way down, the import and export business, from all I hear, is pretty well shot to pieces and every one I meet is talking about the rotten state of finances."

"Well, that's one of the reasons. That's why you'll find everybody playing harder than ever—because business and exchange *are* getting to be so rotten. Another thing, too, of course, you've forgotten that the foreigner in Shanghai usually spends all he makes and often signs chits for a good deal more. Most of them are here for life, so why not make the most of it?"

"That's so," I agreed.

The Columbia Country Club was at least two miles beyond the point where in 1917 Shanghai ended and the farmland began. For many years increasing numbers of Chinese had been moving into the city, the only place where they were safe from kidnapping, bandits and official squeeze. They were pushing into the foreign settlement, buying up real estate and either driving the foreigners into the new apartment buildings springing up or pushing them farther out into the country. As a consequence a moderately sized American community had built up around the club.

I discovered a difference in attitude of the Americans I had known of old, most of them from small communities, the majority from the South. Drinking had been looked at askance and the young ones were told off when they were hitting it up too heavily. But times had changed. I sat on the veranda with a group of old friends and acquaintances watching the sunset across the tennis courts. By the time the sun had died down tables overflowed the veranda onto the lawn and until after nine Chinese boys were rushing back and forth at full speed to the musical clink of ice-cubes in tall glasses.

I was put up for the American Club in the foreign business section. At noontime the bar was packed from twelve to one, and after lunch until two every chair and sofa in the library

was filled with a sprawling figure fast asleep. Between seven and eight the bar came to life again, roared with talk and laughter for an hour or so, ceased and again went into a coma awaiting the following noon.

The viewpoint of the American in China had switched to almost the opposite from what it had been in pioneer days. This settled existence of a few rounds of drinks at noon, a few more rounds after office, followed by a few more before dinner, added to the mixed array that always went with the almost nightly exchange of dinner parties, answered a question that had been stirring around in my mind since my return from the North. The Americans had been going through a minor evolution of casting off homesick small-town inhibitions. Gradually they had adapted themselves to the drinking habits of the English.

Adapting the British sophisticated attitude towards drinking as a part of their daily routine, the Americans had developed, as a natural sequence, the British comfortable attitude towards life in general, the habit of "muddlin' through". Business ups and downs should be taken comfortably. If things were bad now, *maskee*—cheerio—sooner or later they would pick up. Time would see to that. One always "muddled through" somehow and if one had managed to get along all okay with the old tried and true methods, why bother oneself to go out of one's way trying to change things. As one of my fellows in business was wont to say when an argument arose, "Peace be with you, brother. Peace be with you."

This was one reason why, as far as I could see, the *western* foreigner was turning over gradually to the Chinese the running of his business, spending less time travelling and more at the office, acting chiefly as adviser and getting information second-hand by reading reports and writing letters instead of keeping up direct contacts.

This partly explained, too, the discussions over extra-territoriality at a time when bandits, communists and war lords had the country severed into bits, making central governmental control utterly impossible. "Muddlin' through."

On my first Sunday I took a stroll through Frenchtown. I

wanted to see Avenue Joffre where I had lived the summer of 1916, falling asleep at night to the sonorous symphony of a chorus of frogs led by an old *basso profundo.*

The conservative, dozing boulevard had been transformed into a shopping street, block after block of ugly, crudely fitted and furnished stores selling all kinds of cheap European merchandise, half stocked delicatessens, shabby tea rooms and confectioneries, grimy bars and stale smelling, intimate cabarets with such names as *Black Cat, Pigalle, Moulin Rouge, Tkachenko.* The open spaces were now terraces of concrete and stucco, two-family houses and two-storied buildings with shops below, flats above. At a corner I almost stepped on three grey-bearded men in dirty khaki, Russians, lying on the sidewalk against the wall, dead drunk. Through the windows of the tea rooms and confectioneries I saw faces with high cheek bones sitting silently drinking tea and nibbling pastries.

Where once had been the open country was now a large settlement of White Russians who had fled from the Reds by way of Harbin and Vladivostok.

On my way back to the hotel I cut through a Chinese shopping section. Business was going at full speed. Portable phonographs stood on a counter facing the open doorway, some screeching Chinese music, others American jazz. From one of the side streets I caught the sound of an American fox trot. The traffic cop blew his whistle. I waited. Around the corner slowly marched a Chinese brass band in foreign uniform, followed by ragged coolies carrying carved symbols attached to the end of long poles, then professional mourners in white gowns with more coolies carrying tables of food, a big paper dragon and other images, another brass band also playing an American fox trot, then the ponderous bier on the shoulders of coolies wearing red jackets, ending with a line of motor cars in which sat the families and friends of the bereaved. Before I reached the hotel I had run into four of such funerals. My room boy explained that the Shanghai Chinese made it a custom to hold all the funerals on the foreign weekly holiday.

During these weeks I was sitting in conferences at the offices

working out the final policies to be adopted for advertising throughout China. To the original one started in Manchuria I had added the idea of doing away with simple package designs on posters except for very occasional showings, to line up all advertising in campaign form, telling the same story, using the same illustrations for posters, newspapers, magazines, window displays, hangers and handbills, and to throw a change each month in the illustrations and copy—the same as at homeside. At one of the meetings I made the suggestion that we use the same type of illustrations and appeal as we do in America.

One of the men, an Englishman, immediately was up in arms.

"The Chinese are different. They don't think the same way we do."

I thought a moment.

"Of course," I said, "China has its own customs and superstitions just as every western nation has, but at bottom every one, it seems to me, is ruled pretty much by the same instincts, emotions and passions. I've never found the Chinese different from anyone else."

"That's where you're wrong. Chinese look at things in an entirely different way from what we do. Their lives are so different that their emotions and feelings don't re-act in the same way as ours."

I saw ahead an endless argument. I was stumped and took the only possible way out I could find.

"Let's try it out in just one section and see how it works. It can't do any harm anyway."

So it was finally agreed. As it later turned out I was right.

At the end of a month's stay in Shanghai I was again on a coast line ship bound for Tsingtao to follow up.

In my meanderings around Shanghai I had missed something: there were no white and light blue walls painted with Sun Yat Sen's *Three Principles*.

XXXV

JUNE OF 1930

quarreling War-Lords force me to travel for naught—examining chens while the North mobilizes hungry looking troops—Lenox Simpson joins the northern clique in a separation movement—a visit at the home of the three kindly gentlemen—modernizing, monopolizing and tenseness—across the mountains in a broken down Model T Ford and a night ride by train in a third-class coach—furs feel the depression in America—thoughts on the Japanese in Manchuria

IT WAS DRIZZLING STEADILY when the boat arrived at Tsingtao and I was there only a day. That was sufficiently long to see one of the most beautiful harbors in the world and a coast line that, with its red tiled roofs might have been a fashionable Mediterranean bathing resort. At the hotel facing the breakwater I picked up the Shantung Division adviser just back from home-leave in England and that night we took the express for Tsinanfu. The adviser was dubious about my trip.

"I'm afraid you won't be able to see or do much right now," he said. "Two generals are having a scrap on the other side of Tsinan and there's nothing worth seeing in between. However, we can get more details about it when we arrive."

I found Tsinan to be just another city on the decline. There were the large grey buildings the foreigners had built years

before and on which the China dust had quietly settled and was taking its accustomed toll. The only sounds came from the barrows loaded with produce from the interior.

The American holding down the office backed up what the Division adviser had said.

"It will take less than an hour to see all there is here. Nowhere else you can go. The railway line all the way up to the northern border is cut off and fighting is going on."

I said, "I'll move on to Tientsin."

"You'll have to take a ship across to Dairen and change there to another or go back to Shanghai and start over. You could motor to Chefoo but the road's shut off. There's no boat from Tsingtao to Tientsin any more."

That was that. I was damned if I would take a boat all the way across to Dairen to cut back at an acute angle to Tientsin. That night I returned to Tsingtao, caught the next boat to Shanghai, waited over a day and was off on another for Tientsin. This time I was after a peep at the interior.

When I was knocking around in China in the days of the Manchus, towns and cities were classified, as they had been for thousands of years, under four headings. The smallest villages and farmer market towns, known as *chen*, were grouped under *hsien* towns, district heads or county seats, which in turn were under the supervision of a civil and a military magistrate who had their *yamens* in the *chou* city, three of four to a province, of which the capital was a *fu* with a civil and a military governor. Once a year the two governors reported to the emperor at a daylight audience, bearing choice gifts as a tribute for the positions they held, and turned over what was left of the annual taxes collected after each official from the headman in the farm village on up had squeezed his share. A humanly perfect economic system, for the squeeze of each official was fixed by custom and every one was happy. Within recent years the Nanking government had reduced this grouping of towns and cities to two classes, *chen* and *hsien*.

As long as I was out to establish the new policy in every city, town and village in the country, I decided that I might as well

see what the typical *chen* town was like. I confided my idea to the Tientsin Departmental adviser. He scratched his head and called in the Division adviser; the Division adviser scratched his head and sent the boy out for the Chinese distributor; the Chinese distributor, a gentle little man in full native costume, stroked his thin grey mustaches deep in thought.

"You see," said the Departmental adviser, "foreigners haven't been travelling in these smaller interior towns for a number of years and we are not quite sure what conditions are like. And right now we don't know how far north the fighting is going on between here and Tsinan. It may not be safe. What do you think, Mr. Liu?"

The passive faced little Chinese thought it over.

"I am not sure," he said in slow, deliberate English. "I will speak to my friends and tell you tomorrow."

The following morning he agreed that it might be safe to travel as far south as three *chens* down. The Division adviser, not having visited one in years, concluded that he would also like to take a look-see. So early the next day with an interpreter and cook-boy we took our seats on the hard wooden benches of a third-class coach tagged to the end of a local freight and were on our way.

The local dealer was at the train to meet us with two Peking carts, the first I had seen since my return. We followed the road through a gateway and straight ahead I could see the other where the road passed on and disappeared. Turning into a side street we drew up before the dealer's compound, walls and houses of baked mud. The inside courtyard was hard earth, also the floor of the room given us for eating and sleeping quarters.

Refreshed by tiffin, we went out to do the town. No one on the streets but soldiers, sickly looking fellows, dried up and scrawny, wearing ill-fitting cheap uniforms of patched and faded light blue cotton, cotton puttees of the same color and a poor Chinese imitation of foreign sneakers. Up and down the one main street we passed these soldiers loafing along in twos and threes, or lounging against shops.

Through the interpreter I asked the dealer, "Why are all these

soldiers loafing around here? I thought they were supposed to be down in Shantung fighting."

The dealer shook his head mournfully and spoke to the interpreter for a long time in his local dialect.

Finally the interpreter said, "He say many soldiers come and go every day. Must. Up and down line is much talk about another war between North and South. He say, North likely to leave South, make own country north of Yellow River.

"That wouldn't be such a bad idea, would it?" I remarked.

The interpreter smiled politely.

"Yeah," the foreign adviser said, "They've always hated each other. They're as different as night and day. Almost like different races. You can do business with these Northerners. They have a sense of honesty. Those little high-strung runts down South you can't trust as far as you can throw a dead bull by the tail."

I warmed toward him. I had always felt the same about the Northerners, especially the Pekinese. They had always been a hard working lot with a fine sense of humor and attended strictly to their own business—except officials, of course, but politicians were the same the world over.

The interpreter said, "Dealer say we come wrong day. Shops only do business once a week on market day when farmers come to trade."

I asked what was the total population.

"Fifteen hundred."

Up the street before one of the shops two voices rent the air with screams. We stopped. A shopkeeper and a soldier were wildly waving their arms at each other and screeching at the top of their lungs. Several more soldiers gathered. A lone policeman sauntered over casually. Every one joined in the argument. In a few minutes the voices died down, the cop waved the soldiers away and went on as casually as he had come.

The dealer was muttering again to the interpreter. The interpreter nodded.

"Soldier man try to give shopkeeper bad money. General make his own paper money to pay his men. Soldiers all time want to buy some small thing from shopkeeper, make shopkeeper give him silver change. Paper money no good. Shopkeeper very angry. Soldier always make trouble."

I had heard that last sentence at least a thousand times.

In the middle of the afternoon we made our dusty way back to the station and started for the second *chen*. Our car was filled with soldiers. One, sitting on the floor in a corner nursing a baby with his girl wife crouched by his side, had a bandage around his forehead. He looked far too small and young for a soldier. I asked how old he was.

"Sixteen."

I pointed to his bandage, "Wounded?"

"No, bad headache."

He rocked the baby back and forth in his arms staring miserably at the floor. I looked at the army rifle lying beneath his bent knees. It seemed impossible such a bent-over puny body and such spindly arms and legs could support that heavy rifle. Yet gazing up and down the car they were all much the same—like those I had seen on the street—badly fed and dressed in the cheapest padded cotton clothes that must have been clinging to their bodies for months without once being removed.

After covering two more *chen* and finding them similar in every way to the first, we shrugged our shoulders and returned.

* * * * *

I arrived in Peiping on a Friday afternoon and joined friends at the Peking Club. An under-current of excitement flowed through the talk. Would the North be able to break away from the South? Would there soon be two separate countries? Already the Northern crowd were quietly working towards a sudden coup in an attempt to gain their ends without blood-shed. The solution lay, as always, in the answer to the one question: could they raise sufficient cash?

On the following morning one of the company travelling executives, also an American, asked me to make a call with him on Lenox Simpson (the Putnam Weale of *Indiscreet Letters from Peking* fame).

"Simpson is working with this bunch of Chinese who are trying to break away and set up a Northern republic. He persuaded them to start an English language newspaper, *The Peiping Leader,* as a propaganda organ. In case things work out right he has hopes of its leading to an advisership. I don't know that we want to do any advertising at this stage, but there's always a chance that the Northerners might put it over and if so we would want to be in on the right side. So I thought we might at least see what sort of policy he's following."

We found the editorial office hidden in a compound on one of the *hutungs*. Simpson greeted us in a small paper-windowed room opening onto a dusty courtyard and bare of furniture save three straight-back Chinese chairs and a disheveled table at which he was writing. I was rather shocked at his appearance. When I had last seen him in 1917 on board ship crossing the Pacific he was as spruce and dapper as a New York bond salesman. Now his hair had turned almost white, his features were flabby and slack and his clothes were wrinkled and frayed.

When he began to speak his manner was distraught, but as he continued his voice grew crisp and his face lighted up.

"We're just starting out," he said, "and naturally need all the cash we can get our hands on to keep the paper going. Of course, the circulation is still small but it's picking up right along. The few thousand dollars necessary to put it over doesn't mean much to a company like yours, but if we could get you and the big oil companies to take space the little fellows would follow along and we'd be on easy street.

"Confidentially, the main point is the *face* it would have with the Chinese. It couldn't possibly do you any harm to advertise in a foreign language paper like this. It's entirely in my name and on the outside there's no connection whatsoever between the paper and the leaders of the Northern movement. Anyway, the movement is bound to go over this time. Things have gone too far now for anything to hold it back and the right men are behind it. You'll see things happen pretty soon now. Then we'll have a real United North,* an independent separate country."

* *Pei Ping.*

His hands trembled as he lighted a cigarette and he mopped his face with his handkerchief.

That was the last time I saw him. I took the train the next morning for my old hunting ground—Honan and Shansi. It was one of those North China spring mornings when the air was so cool and exhilarating and the sun struck the earth with such clarity that the soul sang with the very joy of living. I was relieved when a tweedy young Englishman entered to share my compartment and could, therefore, open wide the windows and drink in this beatific atmosphere.

The tweedy Britisher was in the salt gabelle, China's greatest single source of internal revenue, and since the Boxer Rebellion administrated in a most efficient manner by the British. The only form of taxes that had not been reduced enormously by squeeze. In this move for a separate country the Northerners were fighting desperately to gain control of the salt gabelle bank deposits above the Yellow River. The young Englishman was hastening to Taiyuanfu to clamp down on one of the banks in which was stored away some 40,000 to 50,000 *taels.*

As the train approached Chentow I was standing in the vestibule peering into the darkness. When it stopped and the door flew open a lantern was thrust before me. Behind it I made out a brown face with mouth stretched in a broad smile. An outstretched hand.

"Hello, Mr. Hutchison. Welcome to Chentow."

It was Mr. Chang, my old interpreter, good old honest, blunt, reliable Chang.

With a boy carrying the lantern ahead we felt our way across the tracks to the dark mass of bricks that had been the old B-A-T mess. Across the threshold we were in a small lobby filled with Chinese. After many years the building was at last serving its original purpose as a hotel. Picking our way through the crowd up the stairs we opened the door to a room lighted with one small electric bulb hung from the center of the ceiling. Around a table beneath sat Mr. Tsui, Mr. Kung, several other Chinese whom I did not know and the foreign adviser, George Bolton, the Englishman whose masterly carving at the 1916 Christmas

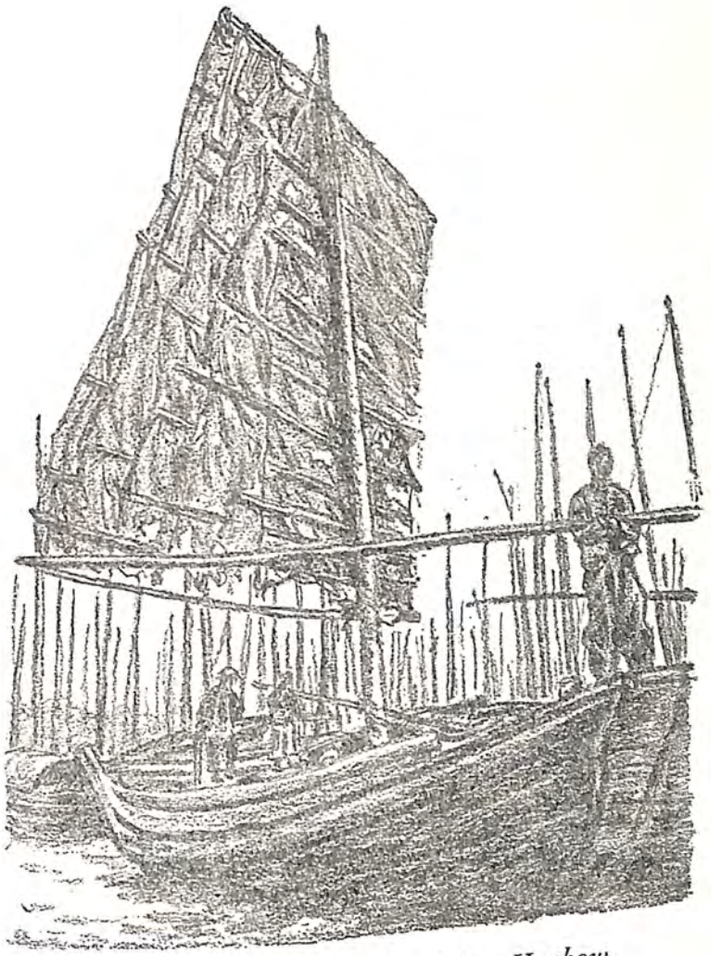
dinner of the Mukden mess had always held a warm spot in my memory. They were playing ten-cent ante poker. It was good to be in Chentow—to see these three together—three of a kind—three of the very best.

The next morning, Sunday, we had a late breakfast and George showed me around the mess. A rambling two-storied house, like an old southern mansion built before the Civil War, with wide screened verandas running around the two sides of both floors. High ceilinged rooms, cool and restful, furnished harmoniously half Chinese, half foreign. Steam heated, running water, baths and flush closets. One side of the ground floor was given over to the offices.

In the manner of an English squire showing his cherished possessions, George led me through the grounds. The big German police dog, three white cats, several turkeys and chickens followed us through the neatly tended vegetable garden, which extended to the compound wall, covering almost one-half an acre. George grew all his own vegetables.

That afternoon I played tennis with the younger members of the Chinese staff. This was the first time I had seen them and I received the surprise of my life. All five were dressed in foreign sport clothes and spoke perfect English. Three of them had graduated from American universities. Yet none had even a shade of the false, artificial mannerisms in speech and gesture which seemed to have become so much an outstanding characteristic of all the treaty port Chinese I had met and which made me wince. It was difficult to reconcile this quiet, self-possessed, easy mannered group with the Young China I had seen elsewhere flaunting his thin Western veneer.

Late that afternoon George took me to call on Mr. Tsui. Although his home town was only a half day away by train, he had bought a huge compound nearby the mess and divided it into eight or ten smaller ones, each with several courtyards and separate unto itself. One of these he and Mr. Kung had taken, renting the others at absurdly low sums to the young members of the staff and watching over them like fathers. There was something very fine about it all and I am sure that the vast dif-



Mouth of the Han River below Hankow

ference between these young Chinese educated in foreign ways and the others I had seen, was due rightly to the influence of these kindly gentlemen, God bless them.

On Monday with two of the young Chinese I tramped around the streets of the city. Although we had a good display of posters, where formerly they were plastered over every inch of wall space available, now, as in Tientsin and Peiping, the predominating displays were the light blue and white announcements in bold characters of the *Three Principles* of Sun Yat Sen.

The business section of the old Chentow I remembered as a collection of squalid shacks merged around a mud hole. In this new Chentow the streets were spotless, the shop fronts neatly painted in light blues, greens and reds with neat glass windows. The windows of the general merchandise shops, also like those in Peiping, Tientsin and the towns of Manchuria, showed native imitations of foreign clothing, men's ready-made suits, women's felt hats, and leather shoes for both sexes. The dress of the Northern Young China reminded me somewhat of that of the Japanese back in the 'teens when dignified merchants paraded the streets of Yokohama and Tokyo in American crushed hats, kimonos reaching to just below their knees advertising imitation Paris garters attached to back cotton socks, their feet tucked in congress gaiters, and usually swanking tightly rolled umbrellas. The age of transition.

But here, too, despite the signs of evolution going on in dress and cleanliness, shopkeepers and clerks as usual idled away their days in the doorways, gazing up and down the yawning streets, or kept themselves busy rearranging and dusting off their stocks. The only break in the silence was the creak of an occasional cart or wheelbarrow.

On Wednesday, with the three friends, I took the French narrow gauge up through the mountains to Taiyuanfu. In the bare open space of hard-packed earth behind the station a busy little combined trading community and political lobby had sprouted. I put up across the way at the mess of the salt gabelle representative who was busy from morning until late at night arguing with the local Northern leaders who were trying to per-

suade him to sign over the bank receipts for the tax deposits. He was grimly holding out.

I had forgotten how dusty Taiyuanfu was. On the ten minute ricksha ride to the dealer's compound inside the wall I had to spread my handkerchief over my face and, when inside, to be well beaten for several minutes from top to bottom with a dust rag. In the business district, however, the shops and streets were much as in Chentow.

"What is it?" I asked the interpreter. "Everywhere I go, in every town, everything seems to be as neat and orderly as the home of a good housewife, even prosperous looking; the shops are filled with merchandise; yet there's never any one about. No trading. What's going on? How the devil do they all make a living?"

The interpreter tried to explain. "When government tax shopkeeper and fix up new road he speak shopkeeper also must keep shop clean and neat just like new road. But nobody have money. Local government have tax and tax to pay soldier until nobody have money. Just go on this way, maybe later times get better. Just now everybody 'fraid, much talk about more fighting.

"Cigarette same way. Everybody smoke very cheap cigarette. Local government put special tax on dealers who handle our brands. Now much talk about starting local government factory, making Chinese monopoly."

Everywhere Sun Yat Sen's plea for liberty, equality and fraternity stood out on the walls in the regulation blue and white and everywhere khaki clad soldiers were lounging in the streets or loafing about the temples which had been turned into barracks.

That evening Mr. Tsui had us to a Chinese dinner. Over the final courses of soups and rice I said, "As long as I am up this way I'd like to make it a round trip, working on up north to Tatungfu across to Kalgan back to Peiping. How about it? I understand the company has a Ford and that there's a good motor highway."

They were a bit doubtful. Yes, the road was good and the company had an open five-passenger model T Ford, but it was

on its last legs and on the last trip the rear axle had broken. And the Chevrolet bus line wouldn't do at all. The busses were crammed with Chinese all the way, some lying on the top with the luggage. However, Mr. Tsui would see what could be done.

They sent for the chauffeur, a lean, taciturn coolie who had run the car from the time it had been bought about six years before. He loved it, and swore by it as if it were one of his closest relatives for whom he was trying to get a job. Yes, the rear axle was broken, but he had roped it up tightly with his own hands, and certainly we could make the journey.

At 7:00 on the following morning we started off with a rattle and a wheeze that brought to mind Oliver Wendell Holmes' one-horse shay. Every minute I was expecting to be seated in the middle of the road the next minute with every piece fallen apart. The chauffeur, humped over the shaking wheel, assured me, however, that he knew every squeak and rattle by heart and so far every one was a natural part of the machine; if anything went wrong he could tell in a jiffy.

The provincial government had done a splendid job on the road. Blasted out of the side of the mountains and banked up with shale, it wound smooothly upwards, with the top ridges of mountains towering against the sky on the right, and on the left a sheer drop of several hundred feet. By the time we had pulled up at noon before the bamboo shed which served as a rest house we had passed six Chevrolet busses jammed to the limit inside and on top with men, women, children and bundles of bedding. Along the side of the road trickled endless streams of itinerant laborers carrying their *lares* and *penates* tied to sticks swung over their shoulders.

At 2:00 we struck the flat plateau, an ocean of sand reaching out to the horizon in all directions. The battered old Ford was puffing and blowing, laboring with all its strength and energy, plowing through the fine particles. Then a dust storm started, sweeping down in a gale from the north and covering the tracks of the road. Until we reached the wall of the city at seven that evening a steady blast of these particles of sand stung against our faces, piling up on our bodies and the luggage

in the rear. Four times we had to get out and shake off the thick coating that had settled on our laps. At each lurch and lunge as the car heaved its weight from a soft spot, the axle banged the ground. But the taciturn chauffeur knew his stuff. The old Model T rolled into the city with a triumphant gasp.

In the dusk the main street gave me a sinking feeling of dread. Even in the interior of China such complete silence was ominous and everything was grey and forbidding. When I walked into the agent's compound it, too, was all a drab grey, and the dust-coated flowers in the clay pots lining the side of the court-yard had taken on the same dreary, monotonous tone and drooped wearily. The agent looked worried.

"You have come at a bad time," he said in perfect English. "The town is under martial law. The general who has taken over charge here is in a squabble with the one at Kueihuacheng, who is said to be moving on the city."

I asked how business was holding up.

"Very bad. The general has put an attachment on all our stocks and allows us to sell only one case at a time every two or three days. There is nothing on the market and most of the people have gone back to pipes."

There was still time enough to look over the market before curfew was called. We picked up the number one dealer who led us around.

I stopped at a hawker stand and examined his piles of cigarette packets. The colors had faded to a dirty white, I picked one up and took a sniff, the rank odor of mildew.

"All the same," said the agent. "Most of it is many weeks old. Some of it has been on the stands for months. We put a case on the market and in fifteen minutes it is all finished."

I said, "This is hopeless. When is the next train out of here?"

"The first-class train goes in the morning, but tomorrow it cannot go. A party from the English legation in Peiping has borrowed it to go to make trip to Kueihuacheng (one of the oldest cities in the north—an ex-capital at the end of the railway line bordering Mongolia, running west from Kalgan). I think maybe in two three days it will run again."

"Isn't there some other train?"

"A freight with one third-class car goes tonight at nine o'clock."

All right, that would have to do. There was nothing in this place and the drab greyness was too depressing, and the feeling of tenseness in the air.

At a quarter to nine I crowded into the third-class car, taking my seat on a narrow, backless bench next to a window. The only light came from the smoky lantern carried by the brakeman. A coolie smelling of garlic squeezed in to share my bench. Soldiers and coolies lay sprawled out on the floor. A woman sat with her back against her rolled-up bedding nursing a baby. The train started with a jerk and ground slowly, noisily through the dark. All night the baby cried and the brakeman talked with a friend, and all night I sat with my head resting on my arms spread out on the table, listening in a stupefied half-doze until the dim light of dawn appeared as the train stopped at Kalgan.

I crossed the tracks to the mess and opened the compound gate to stare in amazement at a one-story bungalow with a broad roofed veranda facing a tennis court. It looked like a miniature country club. No one was up, but my banging finally brought a sleepy-eyed, half-dressed boy. I made him fix a hot bath and depression faded out of the picture.

An American was in charge here. The only foreigner in the place he told me, with the exception of a Frenchman who, like the tweedy English lad at Taiyuanfu, was sitting tight for the salt gabelle.

With the Chinese agent, a Fukienese who had been my number one salesman when I was running the Turkish high-grade subsidiary, I routined through the city. Kalgan gave me the impression that some one had come along, seen it lying there gathering dust, had turned up his sleeves, given it a good scrubbing and left.

"The depression in America," explained the adviser, "has practically killed Kalgan. The fur market is shot all to pieces and the fur buyers who come up here every year are about the

sickest lot of men in China. Most of them are back in Peiping and Tientsin wondering how in the world they are going to get back home."

This was the first outward sign of the western depression that I had run into. All other signs of deterioration had seemed to be only due to internal ills and the decline in the price of silver. When I looked at the walls with the blue characters preaching the three principles of Sun Yat Sen, they seemed tainted with bitter sarcasm.

Two days later I managed to catch the first-class train carrying the British legation party back to Peiping. From Peiping I went directly to Tientsin, picking up the local advertising manager to join me on a run up to Mukden for a look-see on my way back to Shanghai. The company had reorganized the Manchurian branch as a limited distributing company under a Chinese name, and another foreigner joined the ranks of "advisers". As in the rest of North China, the company was shedding foreign titles and going Chinese.

Although our visit was short, it gave the time to see that conditions had grown considerably worse. The *feng p'iao* was at rock bottom, almost two thousand to one dollar Mex. Dealers and others off the railway lines told tales of the continued rise of bandits recruited from starving coolies and farmers. The Young Marshal was hitting up opium harder than ever and had recently added another concubine to his already well-stocked harem and paid for peace once more with expensive presents to his highly indignant number one wife.

Passing through Dairen on the way to Shanghai I stopped over Sunday with three other B–A–T men who happened to be in the city at the same time, and motored out to Hoshigaura Beach. In spite of all the marks of Western modern civilization along the Japanese railway lines, the motor to Hoshigaura brought home my first realization of the extent to which the Japanese had gone to work systematically organizing the country to their own ends. The other sections were Japanese developments. The actual number of Japanese families who had settled in the commercial centers were a mere handful. Since the time of the Russo-

Japanese war the Japanese Government had offered bounties and premiums to draw immigrants from its over-populated islands, but even the poorest rebelled at leaving their fatherland, shivered at the thought of the cold. But this *was* Japan.

A two-way macadam road as smooth as glass ran its way past a gorgeous expanse of rolling mountains tinctured with rich tones of yellow ochres, brown siennas and Indian and Venetian reds. Sparkling sunlight reflected the rich soil of valleys below, every inch of which was carefully cultivated. At Hoshigaura we entered a pavilion and had lunch on a screened veranda and watched waves break over the sand. We might have been at any first-class coast resort in America. After chow we sauntered across the road to a golf course laid out through overlapping, undulating hills.

Later we drove to Port Arthur. The museum was a revelation of Japanese patriotism. We filed around show cases looking like window displays advertising a cut-price sale, chock-full of Russian uniforms, medals, rifles, bullets, cannon balls, pieces of schrapnel, photographs of Japanese officers standing at attention, looking through field glasses, giving orders, pictures provided with descriptions below telling of heroic and mighty deeds, ghastly scenes of the shelled enemy, and dated documents outlining legends of superior grit and strategy overcoming brute strength and force.

On the way back to Dairen I ruminated over the huge investment the Japanese had thrown into their self-chosen task of cleaning up Manchuria, of the way they were systematically planning and extending their railways, of the broad macadam highways and the Yamato hotels, of Changchun's scientifically laid out avenues lined with shade trees. Then I looked back at North Manchuria, the Chinese Eastern Railway connection in Manchouli, the Soviet chairman and his continual squabbles with his Chinese directors, and of the Soviet bombing planes swooping across the border after White refugees—and asked myself: where was Manchuria heading? What would be the outcome of all this messed-up, topsy-turvy state of affairs—this undercover struggle and tension?

XXXVI

JULY OF 1930

a Yangtze ship captain has chronic indignation over the "Hankow fiasco"—communists and false fronts inhabit the banks of the river—why Chinese handicrafts have stagnated—Hankow is under martial law—modern main streets versus hutungs—foreign industrialism seems to bring squalor in its wake—Young China shows his hand—fired on by communists—The Race Club and gimlets—gentlemen and "dumps"—the Russian ex-consul is an artist—stoned by oil company labor—down in the lake country where the communists are thick

I WAS IN SHANGHAI ONLY A few weeks before I was off on an English Yangtze River boat, one of a half-dozen foreigners, bound for Hankow. The deck rails of the ship were lined with sheet iron and three fully armed British marines were on board. I asked the captain what it was all about.

"From Hankow on," he said, "bandits or communists, or whatever you want to call them, are hiding back of both banks of the river. Some times at night they try to board the ships and we have to take every precaution we can. I keep a small arsenal locked away in my cabin."

The captain, a white haired, stocky fire-eating old-timer, had a case of chronic indignation. He had been piloting ships up and down the river for more than twenty years. And the sudden

turn of affairs in 1927 had aroused his ire to such a pitch that his temper had never returned to normal. In the evening before dinner he invited a few of us into his cabin to oil the larynx. Then, giving the passengers plenty of time to be seated after the gong sounded, he entered the dining salon with a flourish, greeted the table with a formal bow, seated himself with a grunt, unfolded his napkin, for a second glared into space with cold blue eyes, cleared his throat and began his daily lecture.

"England's day in China is finished—all on account of that asinine blunder in 1927. There they were, our men lined up before a lot of Chinese riff-raff, and all because a bonehead officer in charge thought he ought to wait for parliament to vote a measure telling him what to do in such a crisis—instead of giving the order to fire he ordered his men to retreat! Because he had no instructions! The demmed idiot!"

The captain banged his fist on the table and looked around for approval.

"And that was the end of the British concession and the beginning of the end of the British in China. We are finished forever. There they were lined up facing each other, a bunch of hoodlums calling themselves communists and the British marines with rifles cocked and levelled. The Chinese jeering and throwing things. Some of the marines were hit. Mind you, the officer in charge had only to give the command—one volley, and it would have been all over. Instructions be demmed!

"The French and Japs don't let the Chinese get away with any such bluff. Not they. What did the Japs do? They lined up their machine guns and gave the Chinese exactly ten minutes to clear out—and the Chinks cleared. Today the Japs and the French are the only foreigners the Chinese have any respect for. That was our one big blunder—and our last. It's too late now. The 'Hankow fiasco'—bah!"

This mob of bandits, as the captain called them, had their beginning in the South in 1920 under the leadership of General Chiang K'ai Shek, at that time Sun Yat Sen's most earnest disciple, and in it lay the germ of the present Nanking Government. In a desperate effort to gain control of the central government

Chiang had taken on Borodin, Soviet Russia's greatest propagandist, as his right-hand man and started from Canton with a small band of followers working his way north gradually to Hankow, drawing enormous numbers of small farmers and ruined shopkeepers into the fold. After the Hankow coup the young Southerner turned suddenly against Borodin, threw off his cloak of communism and installed himself as head of the present Nanking government.

A portion of the foreign press and several historians have laid his quick turn-about-face to the fact that he discovered documents proving that Borodin was working with the Interdocuments proving that Borodin was working with the Internationale with the object of eventually leading China into the Soviet fold. But this, to me, is more than doubtful. Long before the march on Hankow Sun and Chiang had jointly reached the conclusion that the only way to achieve their ends was to get the masses behind them and that this could best be done by the efficient Soviet system of spreading propaganda. Shortly before his death in 1924 Sun remonstrated with his disciple, fearing he was carrying his enthusiasm too far. Chiang had. Communism had grown beyond all control. But he had made his goal, he held the government in his two hands with the opportunity at last to start a thorough house-cleaning and enforce his master's reforms. He had been compelled to be an opportunist, to use the first tools to hand at times in order to steer his boat to the wind. Crooked politicians, lack of finances, warring factions, intrigue and interference by foreign nations and their suspicions of each other, disbelief and misunderstanding of his own people who fail to realize his handicaps and demand quick action—all have since combined to stall his every move. These—and China's greatest curse: overpopulation by natural overbreeding among the illiterate masses.

After a stop at Nanking, too short to go ashore, the ship continued its way through the muddy brown waters. On the second day the monotonous scenery of flat green fields spotted here and there with mud huts, occasionally interrupted by fishing villages along banks, changed to an imposing line-up of foreign buildings of brick and stone. We had arrived at Kiukiang. The

night before the Yangtze Valley had started one of its annual sprees—rain was falling in a patient drizzle as if settled down for good. The slippery stone steps to the bund and the road at the top, blocked by hawkers resting on their haunches, were thick with slimy, slippery mud. Close-up I noticed that most of these imposing buildings had their shutters closed—and so no foreigners. I asked a miserable looking Chinese police, where was the *Ying Mei Yen Kung Ssu* (the company's office). He brightened and came to life. The coolies and hawkers rose from their haunches. All talked and pointed at once. The policeman was struck with a brilliant idea. He picked a small boy from the crowd to act as guide. I followed the *hsiao hai tze* into another mud road between grey plastered walls and through a gate, behind which was hidden an old two-story house in the midst of a lawn of over-grown grass, weeds and tall elms. It might well have been mistaken for an old southern home in some run-down South Carolina town. An Englishman, another adviser, greeted me in the small office behind the house.

I said, "I have only three-quarters of an hour and would like to see the town."

He laughed.

"It'll take less than ten minutes."

As we skidded along, pushing against the walls to keep from slipping and falling, he pointed out one half-hidden foreign house after another.

"That's where so-and-so used to live but his company closed up in 1927. Business is rotten now. Those bloody, looting thieves who call themselves communists control Nanchang (back a hundred miles at the end of a railway line, long famous for its pottery). The pottery makers only turn out rotten stuff now and just enough to pay for food from day to day. If they turn out any good work or try to accumulate any money the bandits take it away from them."

Yes, the newly macadamized main street was here, too—four blocks long. The shops were also new, three out of four stacked to the ceiling with porcelain ware glistening with its bright new glaze. My companion waved his arm.

"Here we are," he exclaimed. "That's all there is to see. You've plenty of time. We'll trot along to the club and have a spot."

The club was a cozy two-story house with a weedy tennis court at the side. From the room on the second floor we passed through a door out on a deck over which was spread an awning. After seating ourselves in two wicker chairs, the Englishman picked a mallet from the table and swung a resounding blow against a battered and dented brass bell hanging above the center of the table. From nowhere a white-gowned boy appeared and soon we were overcoming the effects of the Yangtze humidity with long draughts of cooling shandygaff. My companion wiped his lips with the back of his hand and sighed.

"Ah, you should have seen the club in the good old days. Only three of us here now. But there was a time when twelve or fifteen sat around this table in the evening. Sometimes 'til midnight—take dinner right here—ham and eggs. And the way we punished that old gong! It almost makes one weep to think about it. Ah well, that's finished. The foreigner's day is over in Kiukiang."

As the ship pulled out, looking across at the imposing foreign buildings drooping under the dismal drizzle, I repeated, "Yes, the foreigner's day is over." And added, "False fronts."

A day and a half later I stared in surprise at another long line of foreign buildings majestically staring back—of bright red brick and stone on a much grander scale than those in Kiukiang and there seemed to be no end of them. A half dozen freighters, a few gunboats and a British warship were anchored along the bund, and carrying coolies swarmed the floating docks. I turned to a passenger leaning over the rail.

"This is the busiest and most prosperous looking place I've seen outside Shanghai. It makes Tientsin look like a cemetery."

He grunted.

"Busy? Prosperous? Wait until you get inside, m'lad. Sure, the coolies and sampans always make a lot of fuss and noise when a ship comes in. Business here has gone to pot. Ever since the Chinese took the British concession things have been going

down, and past here all the way through the south along the river is in the hands of communists. As a matter of fact, they're camped only a few miles out of Hankow."

The picture of Kiukiang flashed through my mind. I waved at the sky line of buildings.

"False fronts," I said.

"False fronts," he repeated, nodding his head. "That's right."

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Hankow was steaming with the nasty July heat of the Yangtze Valley. Under the morning sun on the way to the hotel my clothes clung to me like damp rags. Inside, the streets were clean and well paved, with neat sidewalks and more foreign buildings and shops. But the ex-British concession was like a graveyard. The sound of each step my ricksha boy took was repeated by a hollow echo.

At the office the Departmental head, adviser, greeted me with the news that the local advertising man had started a trip up the river the day before my letter was received.

"However, I think he's just about reached Shasi and you can catch one of tomorrow morning's boats and I'll wire him to wait for you."

I borrowed an interpreter and the company's motor car and went out to see what the city was like. Three blocks back on the side of the river the foreign section ended and we were on an enormously wide macadam boulevard, parts of which were still under construction. The shops were entirely new, built in Western style and proportions. The amount of merchandise they carried was so small they looked as if the owners might be itinerants putting on a temporary sale.

The interpreter spoke with pride, "The local government ordered the new street and shops."

"And I suppose it's making the shopkeepers pay and none of them have enough business to keep going."

"You have today first time come Hankow, how you know?"

"Never mind," I replied.

He called my attention to the right where a barbed wire

fence extended across the street and four soldiers with rifles paced up and down.

"Hankow is under martial law. Communists everywhere outside city. Every day think may be uprising. Must be very careful. Soldiers search every Chinese who come inside city."

We drove to the other end of the avenue.

"Old Chinese shopping district begins here. If you like see, we must get out and walk."

We entered a cobblestoned *hutung*, shops facing each other so closely that the sun could barely peep through. But here was life—hustling, busy, exciting life. Shopkeepers and their clerks, naked to the waist, twisted their faces in ferocious scowls, arguing vociferously with shrill-voiced women stamping their tiny bound feet as if in a rage, and one and all enjoying themselves immensely.

Through one *hutung* after another, bumping and jostling, old women and young smelling out bargains, children and babies decked out in bright colored finery in search of sweetmeats and toys, rich men, poor men and street gamins moving along with the shoppers, carried away by the pure joy of seeing, hearing and smelling and being a part of all the noise and excitement. I loved it. This was the China of old. Here lay a reason—and a good one—why the broad avenue with its newly painted shops and air of formality and prosperity was passed up and why these sunless dwarfed alleys, scented with the mixed odors of meat, vegetables, spices and sauces, sweating flesh, Florida water and cocoanut oil, overflowed. The same reason that Peking had appealed to me so deeply in years gone by. We of the West look back through history with a longing for the things that have ceased to exist since machinery drove them out—more often than not never realizing what they were—eating, drinking, working, playing and trading in a friendly, neighborly way out of doors in the open air, making and doing things with the hands, sensing the warmth of close, personal human contacts with no self-conscious formalities. The satisfaction and joys to be found in life only by living close to nature.

All night it rained and was still pouring in the early morning when the ship sidled up to the bund before the "false fronts" of Shasi.

The Hankow advertising man had arranged for me to put up at the mess on the second floor of the office building attached to a modern press packing plant (belonging to Jardine-Matheson, England's leading mercantile house) where every season raw cotton grown in the Yangtze Valley was pressed and baled for shipment to Shanghai. Our host in charge was the lone foreign inhabitant.

After a bath and change to fresh clothes borrowed partly from the Hankow advertising man who was twice my size and partly from the Chinese agent who was half my size—the Terminus Hotel boy in Hankow had failed to bring my luggage to the boat—we gathered up umbrellas and went out. From within the neatly walled compound I could hear the efficient hum of the imported machinery. Immediately we were outside we were back in the days of Christ. For eight or ten blocks we were holding our noses amidst the most miserable, abject squalor in the filthiest and most evil smelling hole I had ever seen in all my days in China.

At noon, after we had picked up the plant manager and gone up stairs to the dining room (all modern improvements—a Frigidaire stood in one corner), I looked through the window at the Chinese pouring out of the factory. Half of them were women and girls. All of them were weary and worn. This was the second town invaded by industrialism that so far I had visited, save Shanghai (which like New York or any large seaport, only exaggerated the high-lights of a nation), and within me the question arose more strongly than ever: how much has the deadly monotony of machinery and its close, jail-like confinement cost humanity in living—simply living? If the condition of the town and the looks of people resulted from industrial progress—since the population depended almost wholly on the plant for existence, this seemed to be so—God help the country if it ever started to progress in a big way!

The Chinese agent had accompanied me to Shasi. The local

dealer and his staff came aboard to greet him. After the formal greetings the agent made a remark to the dealer in Chinese. The dealer looked embarrassed and started to sputter.

Chinese poker-face passivity and calm? The agent's face slowly turned a beet red, he waved his arms up and down helplessly, then exploded, and for five minutes he stamped up and down in a fury, shouting at the dealer and almost foaming at the mouth. I finally stopped him by telling him to shut up.

I knew what the trouble was. A cog had slipped. The day before I had left Hankow the foreign adviser had received a strictly private cable from Shanghai requesting him to raise the price of the most popular brand of medium grade cigarettes, to be put into effect without previous notice. Although not more than three men in the Shanghai office and the foreign adviser in Hankow were supposed to have any knowledge of the coming rise in price, and though a private code was used, the agent had known the minute the cable was released exactly what the new price was to be and the date it was to go into effect. At once, through underground channels he had spread the news to the dealers. Some hitch had prevented the Shasi dealer from receiving the message and he had failed, therefore, to write off all the cases he had in stock as sold at the old low prices.

In all the large foreign companies news of such kind usually leaked out ahead of time. But, before this outburst, to the best of my knowledge no Chinese had ever admitted openly that he was in on it. At first I was dumbfounded. After thinking it over I realized why this particular man should be so free with his talk. He had been educated in English, he wore foreign clothes. By playing good politics and paying out money in the right places his brother was sitting pretty as one of the top police officials in Hankow. Therefore, having adopted foreign ways and manners, and with his brother a power in the local government, the agent was not afraid to show his contempt. Little he cared that we had understood what he said. It made no difference. For the rest of the day he sulked outright over his loss of squeeze. (Back in Hankow I reported what I had heard and later he was let out).

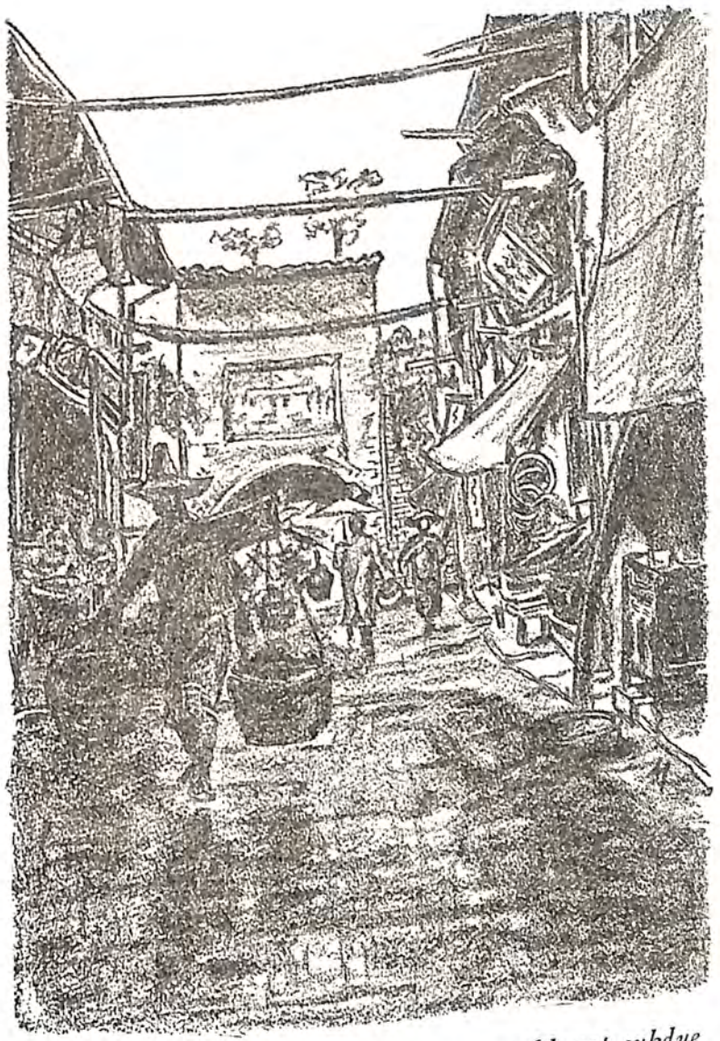
In Ichang, one day farther west, we were back in the new China. Blue and white walls blazoned forth the three principles of Sun Yat Sen; women seated in groups were breaking rocks to macadamize the newly broadened main street. There was no industrialism in Ichang. For a while the sky cleared, and shopkeepers in the cool shade of their doorways, hawkers under awnings fanning flies off their fruits and sweetmeats and loafers lounging under shade trees, gave the city a leisurely air of contentment.

In the afternoon the customs head, a pleasant bearded Englishman got together a party for a trip to the edge of the gorges. I was surprised to meet five other foreigners, but one proved to be a nurse from Hongkong on a vacation, two were officers from river gunboats and one the wife of a Frenchman on special service. We rode the customs launch to where the rapids began, climbed the sides of a steep cliff, walked a swaying, suspended bamboo bridge across a deep crevice, passed through a small fishing village up and around over a rough stone footpath to where a clear mountain stream trickled down forming here and there small ponds of icy cold water, and took a delicious, tingling plunge. Afterwards we lunched in a Buddhist temple constructed within a cave whose roof and walls were of solid rock. The monks were dopes.

At dark, on the boat back to Hankow, curtains were pulled and all lights that could be seen from the shore were put out. Seated at dinner a sudden volley of shots from a distance whanged against the deck rail metal sheeting. The captain remained unmoved.

"Don't worry," he said. "It's probably only a flash in the pan. We'll have them spotted with a flashlight in a minute and can soon tell if anything is going to happen. They're shooting from the shore. Everything is ready if they attempt to put out a boat. They fire a few loads every now and then just to let off spleen."

When I slipped on deck a minute later one of the marines showed me a dent where a bullet had struck the sheet iron, and off to the north under the circle of light thrown from the deck



Even the steady downpours of rain could not subdue the filthy street odors

above, I could make out a red flag and dark figures retreating through the rush grass on the river bank.

I was several days in Hankow. After work in the afternoon all the foreigners, except the Japanese, made directly for the Race Club, which had been slightly enlarged and also boasted an eighteen-hole golf course around the outer edges and tennis courts in back. Toward sundown, after the games were over, members moved out to tables spread on the front lawn and, while boys in white trotted to and fro shooting Flit at ankles, sipped gimlets—gin, cracked ice and a touch of lime juice, served in a champagne glass and insidiously pleasing to the palate. As the sun set and dark came the more pleasant and soothing became the gimlets, and by the time it was necessary to leave to get home for dinner the pleasure of sitting and the effort of rising were so great that many remained as they were, dining on ham and eggs and beer.

On Saturday evening I ate at an Italian restaurant and later in the evening visited the "dumps" ("You must be sure to see the 'dumps' "), a block of cabarets and dance halls that had sprung up with the coming of the White Russians. At midnight I was seated with three friends in the *Metropole* when a party of men, in full evening dress, entered and stood in the doorway to survey the crowd before taking a table, reminding me of Oppenheim's descriptions of his sophisticated, well-bred criminals gathering for a conference in one of their low-dive meeting places.

"See the one in front with the white goatee and band across his shirt? That's the British admiral. They've just come from a dinner party. All the bucks in Hankow doll up Saturday evening for swank dinner parties. After they break up the men spend the rest of the night making a round of the 'dumps'. It's a ritual."

At eleven Sunday morning I met a bunch at the old Russian Club to go to Jap-town for a *sukiyaki* breakfast. A few old timers out of sentiment kept the bar open as a place to meet and discuss the good old days and unload their minds about what a hell of a mess things had come to. The room was empty except for a gaunt, unshaven Russian some seven feet tall. His

clothing was limited to a shirt open at the neck and a pair of patched blue serge trousers. After I was introduced we asked him to join us at breakfast. Embarrassed, he pointed at his bare feet. He was sorry but he had no socks. The local advertising man sent one of the boys to his mess to fetch a pair and took me aside to explain.

"He used to be consul under the Czar—Hankow's leading social light—gave the biggest parties and spent more money than any man here before or since. When the Whites cracked up he was left high and dry. Knew nothing about business, only how to entertain and play the piano. Composes, too. And, boy, can he play! Some bird touring through here who heard him is sending him to Hollywood and is going to try him out for concert work."

He turned to the Russian, "Come on, play us your latest composition."

We went upstairs to the remains of the old concert hall containing only an outworn piano. The Russian's long powerful fingers ran a few chords, then turned loose, loud pedal. *Cossacks marching, marching, singing, marching, black eyes dancing, drink, drink, drink, icons and pale, burning candles. Little Father watch over us. Burn, burn, burn at both ends, drink, drink. Streets of Moscow, march, march, you Cossacks, drink and march and fight for the Little Father—for we are Russians, one and all, Russians. Russia, the glorious, the glorious, our fatherland. Russia the glorious, march, march, march, my Russia!*

A powerful, throbbing burst of emotions, the intense yearnings and bitterness of weakness and the carefree, reckless joy of strength. The Russian soul. It was easy to understand why the Hollywood sponsor was making his bet.

After breakfast we motored into the country to a laborers' village opposite the Standard Oil tanks across the river. We got out to stretch our legs and quickly collected a following of coolies and small boys. Soon they were cracking jokes and making rude remarks. As we passed the last shop on the way out a clod of dirt whizzed through the air and struck the advertising man plump in the back. We turned to see them picking up rocks,

but continued without haste towards the car. By the time we were inside, however, missiles were flying through the air hitting against windows and sides. Luckily, the car was protected by safety glass and the white faced driver was off in a cloud of dust before any harm could be done.

The middle of the week the advertising man and I boarded a ship to Changsha, in the communist section to the south through the lakes. Rain started again as we left and for two nights and days it rained steadily. We anchored among the British and American flat-bottomed, river gunboats between the walled Chinese city on the mainland and the runt of an island where the foreign community lived. When we motored across in a Chinese launch to the office at the entrance of the Chinese city rain still poured steadily, heavily. The foreign adviser, a chunky, keen-eyed Britisher, was full of news and worries.

"I can show you through the city if you want to wade out in all this rain but there's positively nothing you can do here in the way of advertising. The communists have been in control for about a week and just left last night. They've looted all the officials who hadn't run away and taxed the shopkeepers out of all their cash, and commandeered most of their stocks before they cleared out. Most of the shops are still closed.

"It goes on all the time. Every month or so they march on the city, seize what they can get hold of in money and food supplies and are off again. It's impossible to do any systematic advertising.

"I've been having enough trouble worrying about getting silver transferred to Hankow. I've stored 10,000 *taels* of silver in one of the American gunboats to carry along when it goes—but that may be a week or a month. You fellows are a lifesaver —now I can have it transferred to your ship for you to look after."

All day a heavy downpour. After office that afternoon we took the launch across to the island and played bridge on the veranda of the club. A half-dozen members were there.

"How many foreigners live on the island?" I asked.

"Five families. It's a very small island and we're sitting right on top of each other. Our first floor dining room looks down on a second floor bedroom of the house behind us. At times it gets pretty monotonous meeting here every afternoon and swapping dinners once or twice a week—always the same faces and chit-chat. Officers from the gunboats help out a lot though."

"Are you ever in any real danger?"

"At times. You never can tell when the communists are going to try to steal up. We have a code of signals among ourselves and the gunboats, a certain number of timed shots with a revolver. When things get too hot and we have to clear out, we have a spot at the back of the island where rowboats are hidden. We're pretty well protected."

At midnight, the boxes of silver transferred, we went back on ship. As if by miracle, the sky cleared and the advertising man, the captain and I stood on the rear deck in the cool silence watching the blue and silver ripples reflected by the full moon. Until four o'clock we stood still gazing, talking in whispers in order not to disturb the deep feeling of peace that seemed to embrace the entire world. It seemed impossible, utterly impossible, that somewhere beyond this stillness there could be creatures, such as ourselves, fighting, struggling, killing each other and starving. Nature was so big and man so small.

XXXVII

MID-SUMMER OF 1930

waiting in Shanghai for the Big Heat to end—the North Side underworld—Chinese asleep under the sky—a former company man now sells expensive American coffins to Chinese—Hongkong laws and habits are inconsistent—the Cantonese hate foreigners—the South goes modern with concrete—nearby "bandit-communists" keep Swatow and Amoy on a dole—Foochow's first foreign settler—dickering over a kidnapped missionary—the anniversary of the Chinese Republic is celebrated on a Japanese ship—Southern gunmen murder Lenox Simpson and end the Northern split—what does it all amount to

BACK IN SHANGHAI FROM THE Yangtze Valley I was due to make a voyage to the south to complete the circle. But China lay gasping in the clutches of the Big Heat and down Canton way, I was told, the high humidity was greatly intensified. So I took a room in the Cathay Mansions across the way from the *Cercle Sportif*, waiting for a break in the temperature. The modern Cathay Hotel on the bund and the Cathay Mansions were a part of the heavy investments of the Sassoon family, private bankers whose enormous wealth accumulated by devious ways and means had led to English titles. With the decline of silver the cost of erecting such buildings at a large annual loss paid them better than did the attempt to keep down their swollen bank balances by transmitting in gold to

England. The silver dollar was now dropping steadily and most of the large firms were in a similar quandary.

For several evenings I roamed through the sections where the foreign and foreignized Young China night life was concentrated. On the North Side, along the dimly lighted criss-crossing streets behind the Astor House were dozens of international dance halls and cafés, some with Chinese dance partners, some with Japanese, some with Russian and some with a mixture of the three, including sensual mixed-breeds. Back in the narrow alleyways bordering on the Japanese sections down-and-out Russian refugees crowded in with the Chinese, hang-outs of petty thieves, footpads, kidnapping gangs and communists.

For a conglomerate mixture of nationalities, for petty thievery, drunkenness, stabbing, shooting, suicide and other well-known vices common to low-dive sailor sections of large seaports Marseilles in its hey-day of the nineties could never have equalled Shanghai's North Side. Drinking joints, cafés and bars selling Japanese imitation cut liquors, with their shoddy waitresses as come-ons; filthy back alley brothels housing degenerate crossed-blood strains; and bedraggled consumptive looking women walking the streets.

In this water-front district gangs of ricksha boys played a game that was hard to beat. When one had the luck to pick up a well soused sailor he trotted by round-about ways to the entrance of a dark alley. Three or four other boys who were waiting dragged the drunk from the ricksha, beat him up, took all his possessions and left him lying there. A Yorkshire lad, "one of Shanghai's finest", once told me that the most dangerous and futile work in the police force was the almost nightly job of chasing down strong-arm thugs and gunmen and raiding houses for communist presses and literature among these winding and twisting, black, blind alleys.

On my way home I passed down Avenue Edouard VII, the main cabaret street of Frenchtown. Only the street lights glowed softly in the darkness and, but for an occasional cough, everything was quiet. The avenue had gone to bed—literally. As I entered the street a few blocks back of the bund I almost

stumbled over a body and from then on had to keep to the middle of the road. Shopkeepers and their families, women, children and babies, naked to their waists, lay stretched out on mats, one continuous line, block after block. In the gutters a string of rickshas, coolies curled up in the bottom snoring. Brown bodies twisted in awkward poses on the concrete safety zones. From midnight to the first light of dawn thousands upon thousands of exhausted bodies snatching momentary respite and oblivion from dull, drab work and worry and the depressing waves of heat.

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On a Saturday evening I stopped for a minute in the lobby of the Astor House. A lanky, red-headed American in his mid-forties stopped me and held out his hand.

"You don't remember me, do you? I used to be with the company up in Shansi back in 1916."

I remembered. From time to time tales about his unusual adventures during the intervening years had floated back to me even in far away New York. While still with the company in Taiyuanfu he had persuaded the governor, known as "The Old Christian General," to back him in a cattle ranch. Whereupon he resigned from the company, returned to his native Arizona where he had been raised a cowboy, gathered together a gang of riders and five hundred head of cattle and shipped them to Shansi to set up a regular western American ranch on the plateau back of the provincial capital. But the upkeep was costly, the cattle failed to breed properly on the strange grass, and at the end of two years the cowboy had to clear out on the run with the irate general gunning for him. Before he left, however, he had managed to run up a bank account in the States amounting to about a hundred thousand dollars.

"What are you doing now?" I asked.

"Selling coffins to the Chinese. I have a contract with a home-side manufacturer. I get out the fanciest coffins they make, all decorated with silver and chrome plating. And boy, do the Chinese fall for it! I make a thousand per cent profit on every coffin I sell. Two years and I retire for good."

"How do you work this end?"

"I work it under the name of 'The Artificial Flower Trading Company' with a Chinese as a figurehead. I have to stay in the background—the old general up in Shansi is still sore and would send some of his gunmen after me now if he knew I was around. Come on and meet the wife."

We drove to his apartment in his Packard limousine and I met the wife, a pretty blonde young Russian.

"Isn't she a beauty? She's dumb—it's all right, she doesn't understand English—but she's sweet and willing to do anything I say and that's the kind of a wife I like. If she died tomorrow I'd marry another Russian. Best wives in the world. We get along fine, don't we, baby?"

He patted her on the cheek.

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Early in September I took the Dollar line to Hongkong. British Hongkong must be the tidiest of all the tidy cities of the world, and the most completely inconsistent. It looked in the early morning as if overnight a corps of efficient charwomen had given it a thorough sweeping. Even the foliage of the undergrowth and trees softening the contours of the hills seemed to have been dusted and polished to silvery high-lights against the vivid green. And like good boys and girls, the foreign element went to bed at 10 o'clock, at which hour everything closed by law. Yet the Chinese shops on the sides of the stone steps at the bottom of the hills were brown with dust and smelled to heaven. And the night life among the native residents was only starting at midnight and was about as free and unmoral as in New York during prohibition.

Before going to Canton I attended a Chinese dinner that was supposed to start at 9 P.M. Knowing the Chinese custom, I arrived at 10. The banquet room of the restaurant, located two blocks back from the water front, took up an entire square. Ten or twelve tables of *ma chiang* and *twenty-one* were in full swing. One side of the room was taken up with a row of black-wood *k'angs*, on each of which an opium smoking outfit was

neatly arranged. Occasionally one of the slender silken gowned guests would leave off gambling to lie down and relax with a smoke. I wandered around watching, wondering hungrily when dinner was to begin. Finally, around eleven-thirty, I asked the company's number one, who was concentrated on a *ma chiang* game. He pointed to a door at one side. I entered and found a long table piled with food, then suddenly realized that the meal went on all evening and that guests drifted in and out, eating when they felt like it. A Southern custom that was new to me. The food, too, was different from that of the North, with many thin soups and fish and highly seasoned snake dishes—like the Southerners themselves, a thin, nervous diet.

While I was seated at the dining table, the air was rent with a terrific noise as if a light artillery had let loose. I looked around but no one was paying any attention. I asked my neighbor what had happened. He shrugged his shoulders, "Perhaps a wedding —shooting off giant crackers." I looked at my watch—it was half an hour after midnight. I walked to the window and gazed out—the streets below were as light as day, echoing with the clatter of pedestrians' wooden clogs, motor cars, rickshas and chairs. Chinese night life was at its height. I stared up toward the peak—a few lights blinked here and there against the black mass silhouetted against the sky. The British were tucked in their beds, quietly sleeping.

Some one had told me the day before that the English imposed a fine for taking off one's coat in public—even on the hottest day. I thought of all the formal cleanliness I had seen, of the 10 o'clock curfew, then of the tremendous racket going around me and the open consumption of opium. What a curious mixture of contradictions the Englishman is—morality as such plays no part in his life—he is ruled by the one and only law of "it's done or it isn't done".

I went to Canton by boat. It was worse than I expected. An inferno of heat that sizzled in waves against the sun, and on the business street facing the river came an uproar from the loading and unloading sampans and junks that never let up. Outside the office windows was the hangout of the prostitute

boats from which high pitched chatter and noisy quarrelling penetrated into the room all the day long.

The feeling against the foreigner and foreign merchandise ran high—it could be felt in the air. The walls here, Sun's home town, were not painted with his *Three Principles* but carried messages invoking the citizens to buy only native goods and to support Chinese labor. Through newspapers and word of mouth local manufacturers of cigarettes spread tales of the poisons that went into foreign-made brands.

An interpreter showed me around the streets. The local officials were widening and building new roads with a ruthless indifference to cost and damage to shopkeepers and land owners wholly unequalled by what I had seen in the North. On one street we entered, shops were being torn down and a wide thoroughfare cut through at a meaningless angle. Why? When a new road was built, explained the interpreter, the land was condemned and the road officials bought it at their own price, erected new buildings on loans from the local government, okayed by themselves, and rented out the new shops to any one who was willing to pay the rent. The approach to progress in the South was far more subtle and paid far greater dividends than that of the North.

The buildings going up were of a new type—a cheap, thin layer of concrete, three or four stories with casement windows, the bottom of the second story projecting and supported by pillars on the edge of the sidewalk, making a shady arcade.

As in the north these newly laid-out streets were bare of traffic and the shops deserted. All business concentrated on the waterfront. The so-called progress was purely forced and artificial, materials were skimped, sure to sweat and go to pieces quickly in such a climate, and no thought was given to the problem of how the buildings were to be used and the roads made a profitable investment.

Back in Hongkong I bought a round trip ticket on one of the English coastwise steamers to Swatow, Amoy and Foochow. The local advertising man, a Portuguese, accompanied me.

Through the mouth of the river to Swatow we passed miles

of beautifully rolling hills. Mansions of wealthy Chinese nestled in the slopes among groves of semi-tropical trees. As the ship neared the city, coolies stood in sampans ahead waiting, and, as it went by, fastened the hooks of long poles to the upper deck railing, swinging perilously into the air, back and forth like huge pendulums, until they were able to steady themselves by gripping at the sides with their toes, then crawling up the poles like monkeys.

The ship left that evening. But for business one day was more than sufficient. Less than twenty *li* back from the city the "communist-bandits" (local Chinese called them) were in complete control and had cut off all communications. Although the town still did a thriving business in embroidery, one of the few handicrafts in all of China that had maintained its high level of workmanship, yet it was above all a trading and distributing port, and now that the farmer's produce had ceased to pour in the people were forced to live piece-meal on donations of food supplies shipped in from Canton.

The next morning, passing through the mouth of the river, I could have easily mistaken Amoy for Swatow. Inside, the cities, too, were much alike, with streets shaded by mat roofs and isolated districts of the modern, shapeless, three-storied monstrosities of thin concrete. But Amoy was in a worse fix than Swatow for she had nothing in the way of a handicraft to fall back upon and the communist-bandits back country had killed her trade, leaving her even more dependent upon Hongkong and Canton for food.

Foochow rambled up and down hills. Here we put up at the "hotel" for the night. At the side of the entrance compound I stared in awe at twenty or more highly polished brass *hong* signs strung together by a chord and hung from the top of the wall, each bearing the name of some well-known English insurance or trading company.

"What kind of hotel is this?" I asked the Portuguese.

"S-sh! Not so loud. You must be careful. The man who runs this place doesn't like to have it called a hotel. He's very touchy. He looks upon rooming and chowing guests as doing them a favor. He's Foochow's oldest foreign resident and opened the first *hong* more than thirty years ago. His business has gone to pot, but he still keeps his office open and hangs out *hong* signs of all the foreign firms he used to represent."

A powerfully built old man seven feet two in height, with flowing white hair and beard greeted us in the spacious hall on the second floor. He was beyond eighty. He ushered us into a vast room the size of a four-room bungalow. Literally thousands of wood carvings and bronzes, from miniature figures and temples to armor plate, were strewn about the room in glass cases and on tables or hung from the wall.

With a disturbing formality he served tea. I admired his extraordinary collection of bronzes. He was pleased.

"What you see are only the remnants of what I once had." His voice rumbled like a bass violin from deep in his chest. "The best I've sold to collectors or given to friends. It took many, many years to bring them together. I was the first foreigner, you know, to settle in Foochow.

"My most precious possession, though, is my bed, especially made to my own dimensions. The largest bed in all of China. Come with me."

He led us down the hall to a shaded, airy room, three or four times the size of an ordinary bedroom, but the bed, taking up almost one whole side made the room look small.

Our host pointed with pride.

"Eleven feet long by ten feet wide. There is in all of China no bed to equal it. Even in old St. Petersburg among the nobility they had none so large."

Of the city there was little to see. One raid of "communist-bandits" after another had left it a mere shell. Hardly more than a hundred *li* back in the interior was the communist headquarters, the town of Huei Hsien, whence the communists spread all up and down southern China, extending north as far as the Yangtze and scattered in bands through the west as far as Szechuen. The gang which had left Changsha the day before I arrived was a part of this vast organization unwittingly started by General Chiang K'ai Shek, and has grown beyond all control.

The famed Foochow lacquerware was a sorry sight to behold. For centuries families had carried on the tradition for fine craftsmanship, but years of strife had destroyed its meaning. The skill and care, the time, that went into aging the wood, mixing, brushing on the many coats of lacquer, allowing each its proper period of drying, tracing and carving the symbolic designs, had given way to a careless rush to turn out standard pieces for foreign consumption, made of badly seasoned wood that quickly warped and cracked, of adulterated lacquer mixtures, each coat laid on before the one beneath had properly dried. I went through shop after shop, examined one piece after another—there was nothing worth a second glance.

That afternoon we joined an excited group of foreigners at the club, the British consul, several customs men and oil slaves. About a month before an English missionary had been kidnapped and ever since the British consul had been dickering through Chinese messengers. Word had come in that day that the kidnappers had accepted the consul's figure and the consul was preparing to leave that night to deliver the ransom in person. Leaning against the bar, most of the men spent their time quietly damning the missionaries for the trouble they were all always making for other foreigners by not coming in when warned by their consuls. It was always happening. Just plain, downright stubbornness.

I never knew the outcome. Such cases were too common to keep a check.

Starting the next afternoon we retraced our trail along the coast back to Hongkong. And a few days later I was on deck of the super-modern Japanese motor liner, *Chichibu Maru*, bound for Shanghai. A beautiful job of streamlining, built like a compact battleship, with all latest improvements and the interiors decorated in the most modern French manner.

Two days out from Shanghai the founding of the Chinese Republic was celebrated. The dining room walls and tables were decorated with Chinese and Japanese flags. After dinner passengers were ushered into the social hall where the captain introduced a Chinese high government official—a fine looking old

Modern South China architecture of thin, over-decorated concrete

gentleman in native dress. His speech was mimeographed in Chinese and English and handed around:

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great pleasure to me to be with you tonight in the commemoration of our National Holiday.

I feel particularly grateful to Capt. Y. Arakida, Commander of M. S. Chichibu Maru, for his kindness in preparing for us this pleasant occasion.

The tenth of October, the National Holiday of the Chinese Republic, is being celebrated to-day everywhere in China, but it is a rare opportunity for us to be able to gather here and to have friends from various countries who happen to travel on board the same boat, participating in our celebration. I, as a citizen of China, wish to express my deep appreciation to them all.

A man, in a narrow sense, is a member of a nation, but, in a wider sense, a member of humanity. He has duties to perform for his country, but at the same time he has also obligations towards humanity and the world at large. I believe that his ultimate object of life lies, in fine, in promoting peace for the world and in increasing the happiness of mankind. We are journeying in the same boat not only for this time only, but we are and shall be sailing in the same vessel through the destiny of humanity. We, while celebrating the National Holiday of one nation, are looking forward to the day when the whole world will be united and at peace.

Therefore I propose this toast: Long live the Republic of China! Long live the world peace! And long live the Happiness of Mankind!

Cheng Ming-Shu

On board M. S. Chichibu Maru,
October 10th, 1930.

A quiet, retiring old scholar in long blue silk gown reading through thick lens spectacles, enunciating his ideals in the clear, bell-like tones of pure Mandarin. On a Japanese ocean liner. What a pity there are not more of you left in this quarrelling, squabbling, suspicious world of today. What a pity, too, there are not more of your kind bred.

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In Shanghai I was greeted with the news that the Northern clique had at last come out in the open and thrown down the gauntlet, declaring North China a separate country. Lenox Simpson made the first move, one that startled both Chinese and foreigners. On October the first he had unexpectedly stepped in and seized the Tientsin customs, placed himself in charge, and went about the business of handling it in a thoroughly systematic and efficient manner. It was a bold stroke, the only way the Northern clique could, under any circumstances, have gained a foothold, the only possible way for them to raise sufficient money to hold their ground.

A few weeks after the seizure, about nine in the evening, Simpson was sitting in his living room reading. The door bell rang. The Chinese boy opened the door. Before he could make a move three masked Chinese pushed the boy aside, emptied their automatics into Simpson's body and swiftly made off in a motor car waiting outside.

Simpson was rushed to a hospital. For weeks he lay on his back, conscious and clear minded, completely paralyzed. On November the eleventh he passed out, and with him went the hopes of the North. He had lived the greater part of his life in Peking. It was his home. He knew the Northern Chinese and loved them, and died a martyr to their cause.

Who was behind the murder? No one outside those implicated knew. But naturally Chiang K'ai Shek had his staff of spies and gunmen distributed among all the strategic points in China.

* * * * *

I looked back over the past twelve months. With the exception of Szechuen in the far west, I had covered the provinces of China about as completely and thoroughly as could be done

at that time with any reasonable safety. What had I seen going on? What was the meaning of it all?

In Manchuria I had travelled through a country that was neither a real part of China nor an independent state. The only taxes that the so-called central government in Nanking could have ever glimpsed were those from the salt gabelle and, partially, the customs. To all outward appearances it was under the rule of a marshal, a title assumed by an ex-bandit who had passed it on to his son. The son had also inherited from his father one of the largest and most modern arsenals in the world, an aerodrome, a good-sized, neatly dressed standing army and a following of shrewd grasping officials and magistrates. A woman chaser, an opium fiend and a general all-around depraved weakling, the Young Marshal left his political and economic (except his personal squeeze) affairs almost entirely in the hands of a conscientious, badly overworked English adviser. The door was wide open to every kind of corruption and form of squeeze these shrewd officials and magistrates could have hoped for in their wildest dreams.

To complicate matters there was the paper money without backing which the merchants and farmers were forced to accept in trade, while taxes, levies, tributes and payment for imports had to be paid in solid silver.

In the cities and towns along the Japanese railways the Japanese sections were like most modern western cities, only cleaner, more prosperous looking and without the slums. The Chinese sections, in spite of the newly macadamed main streets with their freshly painted shop fronts, were in a process of deterioration and decay that could almost be watched from day to day. As the winter wore on and I made repeat visits I had become accustomed to seeing each time a few more shuttered and barred doors and windows, and to be told of steady increases of bandits looting the country off the railway lines.

I considered what I had seen and heard in North China proper, the provinces of Hopei (old Chihli), Honan and Shansi. The foreignized business sections with the blue and white walls carrying the messages of Sun Yat Sen in contrast to the thousands upon

thousands of farmer trading centers, which had remained totally unchanged from what they had always been. Everywhere I went were soldiers, emaciated, sickly creatures in padded cotton clothes and sneakers, and an air of tension as if at any moment might come some kind of catastrophic crash.

On the streets and in the shops tired, limp bodies without energy, as if without hope. Stories and rumors without end, from interior points, north, east, south and west, of death by the wholesale from famine and disease, of intrigues between provincial "war lords" in their efforts to squeeze an already starved-out people.

Yet underneath it all I could sense a spirit of unity: in spite of the deep, unspoken hatred of the North against the South, among the youth I could sense a fanatical belief in the tenets of Sun Yat Sen, a burning desire to reform and unify the government, to make it a tool solely for the welfare of the people, and a bitterness against the interfering foreigner who was to blame for so much of their troubles.

In Shanghai and along the Yangtze I missed the quiet restrained poise and deliberate manners of the Chinese of the North. (In Shanghai, of course, everything moved at a rapid rate; the city was founded on greed and the one idea and ideal that pervaded the atmosphere was: *money*). There were still the youth, the students, plenty of them, who stood as one fighting for their ideals. But there was also another class, the young modern westernized Chinese, who aped the foreigners' manners and who had fallen for jazz, whose ideal was to accumulate wealth as quickly as possible by any means possible, a class which had lost its illusions in small political jobs and which used the knowledge gained to feather its nest.

In the Yangtze ports I found the type of Chinese much the same as the mixture making up Shanghai: smaller than those north of the river, nervous, talkative, tense, shifty. Shanghai, however, had no blue and white painted walls. Wall spaces advertised highly competitive Chinese and foreign-made cigarettes and the latest cinemas.

In the North I had found "war lords" aplenty but no trace

of bandits or communists. Shanghai was full of both and along both sides of the Yangtze they were gathered in bands extending from one end to the other.

Then my thoughts ran to the cities I had recently covered on this trip through the South. Everywhere the feeling against the foreigner ran high and displayed itself openly, in the newspapers and by word-of-mouth propaganda. And a few *li* behind the cities on the coast bandits and communists controlled huge slices of the country back to the border of Thibet.

As I pieced these thoughts together I began to find they fitted, each in its place, like the parts of a cross-word puzzle, and suddenly I realized that most of China's troubles (other than the bare facts of land, an automatic static state of over-population beyond human control and the foreigner) began and ended in latitudes.

In all of Manchuria I had heard only one dialect spoken: the Shantung Province talk. Nowhere were the pure, musical open sounds of the Mandarin of the Manchus spoken. The title, Manchuria, was a misnomer. In the uprisings following the fall of the dynasty the Manchu colonies in the different provinces had been completely destroyed and the few families who escaped slaughter were widely separated in flight and scattered to the four winds. Almost the entire Chinese population of Manchuria was made up of those tall, sturdy Shantung coolies and farmers who were responsible for the huge soya bean and kaoliang crops on which Japan was growing stout. With fifty thousand Russians controlling Harbin's Newtown and the Chinese Eastern Railway, with the 250,000 Japanese owning a network of railway lines, vast coal mines and the only shipping port, and with the Young Marshal and his gang of squeeze-artists running Chinese politics, Manchuria might far more truly have been called, "No Man's Land".

Beginning with Peiping (God save the word) and working south, what I had seen was a gradual degeneration of type in direct ratio to the change of latitude. By the time Shanghai was reached the Chinese had lost inches in height, his voice was raised to a higher pitch, his body was thinner, his movements quicker

and his gestures jerky. Even his food became much more highly seasoned with far less body. In Canton he had dwindled to a shrivelled, highly strung dwarf as compared to a husky, phlegmatic giant of the North, and his speech came from a mouth almost closed, with diphthongs and gutterals substituted for vowels, his food was fish-bits and he was as jumpy as a rat.

Out of these extreme opposites could there ever be a leavening that would produce a national unity and peace? After all, at bottom were not all governments, like all religions, founded on the same ideals and rules of conduct? Under different names did not all governments pyramid from the village community to the county township to the state capital to the central national governing body, with a cabinet (or advisers) and one man, weak or strong, at the top? Could a republican form of government, a socialistic, communistic or dictatorial, or the ideas or ideals behind any one of them, bring peace and order out of such a chaos of extremes?

XXXVIII

WINTER OF 1930–'31

a last look at Manchuria before the knockout—tragedy in Harbin—a Russian artist stranded in Mukden—Dairen has a surprisingly prosperous air—the sad tale of the American prodigy—the American minister is on his way to a summer resort for one reason and the Young Marshal is there for another

CHRISTMAS IN SHANGHAI BROUGHT dinner parties and on its heels New Year followed with eggnog receptions. Then foreign life settled down to its accustomed routine until the first part of February when, in spite of the fact that the Nanking Government had adopted the foreign calendar, most of the Chinese shops closed their doors to celebrate the old calendar New Year and balance their books.

Toward the end of the month I again took a Japanese liner to Dairen, my third and final visit to Manchuria. Since my last trip the company had been reorganized under a Chinese name. Now a Chinese agent sat across the desk facing the South Manchurian foreign adviser.

The first evening I went to the Mukden Club. It was almost empty.

"Where is everybody?" I asked Felix.

"Companies have been cutting staff and a lot of special representatives have beat it, too. Chevrolet has closed its office,

so has the Swedish Match Company, and the airplane salesmen have gone back to the States. The club's not like it was when you were here before. All that gambling and drinking has been cut out. Things are in a bad way. Nobody knows who's going to be the one kicked out next."

The depression had struck Manchuria hard. Next day when I went the rounds of the market I could see that it was not only "the repercussion", as the newspapers say, from the depression in the West. It was also the tail-end of the long winter siege of tax squeeze and worthless *feng p'iao* money, sealing the doors of one shop after another, steadily increasing the hordes of beggars and bandits. The company's leading brand, a well paying medium grade whose sales over a period of years had been built up to an enormous amount, almost overnight had dropped to a back number, to be replaced by the cheapest low-grades costing almost nothing.

From the suburbs of Mukden Felix and I caught a Chinese train to San Cheng Tze, a grain trading center composed of one road of shops and a pony cart inn. It was not even enclosed within walls, and the town was so old that intricately carved symbolic shop signs erected on poles in front of shops still remained after hundreds of years of wear and tear. The spring thaw had set in and the road was knee-deep, soft, gooey mud.

At noon we caught the train to Kirin and the next day to Changchun. Everywhere the same: more closed shops, more beggars.

We took the Wagons-Lits to Harbin. Here, too, in the north the spectre poverty was taking its toll. The Harbin dollar was down. All hope of a future boom had died months before. Bandits were scattered all over the country, on the very outskirts of the city, and inside both Russians and Chinese were going in for kidnapping. Every one was broke. Harbin was drifting.

On the afternoon before we left we had tea at the home of the company's factory accountant, whom I had known in Mukden. He and his wife had just taken a house in a pleasant suburb of Russian Newtown where they could have their garden

and where it was convenient to the school for their two children.

A few months later when I was in the Shanghai office a cable came with the startling news that the accountant's wife had been killed by kidnappers. She was in a taxi taking the two children to school. Three Chinese rushed in front brandishing automatics. One of the bandits opened the door, pulled out the older, a girl, and started off. The mother jumped out and rushed after him. He turned and shot her down.

Two Chinese police were standing in the background less than one hundred yards away, saw it all and made no move. At a distance two Russian inspectors heard the shot and gave chase, but too late.

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On my return to Mukden an acquaintance, a young Russian clerk in the office, told me that he would like me to see some paintings by a friend. We took rickshas to the Japanese community of rows of tiny wooden and paper houses, such as they have in Japan. The artist greeted us at the door in a tattered shirt and patched trousers, with bare feet tucked into a pair of old carpet slippers. His sensitive face was thin and drawn. His little boy, who was also there, had the same tightened-up look.

The artist's wife was out. She was supporting the family, the clerk explained, on her earnings as governess for friends only slightly better off, while the artist kept house, looked after the child and worked away at his painting. For months they had lived on nothing but bread and canned milk.

The artist showed me his paintings, a series of twelve partly finished canvases picturing the family's flight with other white refugees across the wilds of Siberia, old men, women, children, all in rags, straggling in long drawn-out file across the snow-covered, rocky mountains, hiding their trail by walking through icy streams, in the evening crouching around small open twig fires, stewing in a community pot what they could find along the way for sustenance, and at night sleeping close to each other in what clothes they had in order to keep from freezing.

The artist and his family had been a part of one of thousands of such small bands of refugees that, since 1917 had fled across Siberia towards Harbin and Vladivostok, into Manchuria or China proper, to escape slaughter by the Reds. Many died, starved or froze, along the way. How this delicate, temperamental, highly strung artist and his family lived through those terrific hardships, I could not understand. It seemed an utter impossibility.

He was almost crying his heart out to get to Shanghai where he would have a chance to sell his pictures and give support to his wife and child.

Before leaving Manchuria in the latter part of April I also covered Nuchuang with its shrunken foreign community, Antung in the Japanese coal mining section, and Dairen. The first two seemed to be dried up like the other places, but Dairen—that was different. The great arcade and new office and apartment buildings that were under construction when I was there before were now completed, and the broad avenues of the Japanese city glittered and shone with prosperity.

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On the first of April as I was pacing up and down the platform of the Mukden station waiting for the midnight express to Tientsin, a skinny young towhead in his early twenties, with a pale blue right eye, black patch over his left, stepped up and handed me a card. His full name was printed across the middle, and below in the right hand corner, "confidential secretary of ——, adviser to the government of China."

I looked at him enquiringly. He grinned sociably and waved his hand.

"That's me," he said. "That's my father's name down below. I'm not really his secretary, you know. But my father thought it was a good idea to put it on there so that I could use it to get interviews with Chinese officials and gain experience while he's away. He's back in Washington now trying to raise a loan for the government and left me with an allowance to travel around and meet the big men in politics.

"I came up here to talk to the Young Marshal and see if I couldn't get him interested in a project my father has been working on for the national party. Father's very clever thinking up projects."

"Did you put it through?" I asked.

"Well—no. I got an interview with him. He's a nice fellow, but funny about giving himself away. I couldn't get him to say anything. He kept changing the subject and asking me questions."

The train pulled in. I had reserved a compartment to myself and was getting ready for bed when there was a knock and the door slid open. I turned to see the conductor smiling apologetically and over his shoulder, the grinning face of the towheaded boy.

"I am very sorry," said the conductor bowing, "but this gentleman have no berth. You have only one vacant. If gentleman can stop your compartment, I thank you very much."

I said, "all right."

Hardly inside, the towhead was off again. I went on with my toilet.

"You don't seem to know who I am," he started out. "My name is famous all over the States. I'm the boy prodigy. I was the one who graduated from —— university at fifteen. You must remember having seen my name in the papers. They ran columns about me."

Too late to stop him. He continued.

"Still, with all my learning here I am a failure. Here I am going on twenty-two and I really don't know what to do with myself. Must seem funny to you—with all my knowledge. My father wants me to learn all about Chinese politics and follow in his steps. He's lived out here for a great many years and knows all about the inside of the Chinese government. But I'm not interested. I want a wider field. I'm only making this trip because he wants me to, but when he gets back I'm going to try to find something suitable to my unusual type of intellect and talents. What would you advise?"

"Right now," I said before he had a chance to wind up again, "I'd strongly advise going to bed."

He grinned.

"Oh, I'm awfully sorry, sir, if I'm keeping you up. I'll get ready myself right away. It's such a problem. You must see what a problem I face. I know everything in books, but I don't know how to use my knowledge. That's a queer fix to be in, isn't it? I'm extremely clever and my brain is just teeming with ideas, but I don't know how to make practical use of them.

"Do you know many people in Peiping? I'm going there now. I have the most interesting friends. Most of them are Russian. We used to get together in the evenings and have the most exciting intellectual discussions—philosophy, sociology, politics. Deep subjects. Sometimes we would sit up all night talking and drinking tea. One of our little group was a young Russian lady a few years older than me, but she's very intellectual, like me, and we had some marvellous arguments. We're not exactly engaged, you know, but have an understanding. I'm afraid to marry, really. I'm too young and I must think of my future. She runs the lingerie shop in Hôtel de Pekin lobby. Much too good for such a job."

I interrupted to ask him if he would mind turning off the switch, adding that it might be better to discuss his problems in the light of day.

I dropped off at Tientsin in the early morning before the prodigy awoke.

Two days in Tientsin was sufficient to see that it was travelling the same downward path as Manchuria. From morning to night a gang of too-neatly dressed American Jews with woebegone faces lounged in the Astor House lobby chewing half-smoked cigars, rattling pocket change and paring their finger nails.

"Who are those birds?" I asked the stout Swiss manager. "They look as if they had been lifted in full make-up out of a Hollywood gangster movie."

"Ah, yes," he said, "they are very down in the mouth. They

are broke and are waiting for money to get them home. They are fur buyers. The fur market was bad last year—but now—tche—tche—tche! Now not even is there a market for their dog and cat skins."

I went to Peiping (damn that new name). I almost hated to go. I had loved it so much in the old days and having sufferred already the bitter disappointment of returning to see it transformed into an empty shell, a tourists' show place, I rebelled at the thought of finding it going through this drying up process that I had felt on my last trip to Manchuria and Tientsin.

As soon as I had pushed through the doors of Hôtel de Pekin, however, my mind was switched to other directions. My young friend, the towheaded prodigy, and his intellectual Russian girl friend had decided that, since marriage was impossible on account of the interference with his career and also since life itself was impossible without marriage, they would form a suicide pact in the best of the old Czarist traditions. So they had engaged a room on the top floor of the hotel and during the middle of the night took poison. In a sudden panic the girl screamed. The number one floor boy, unable to open the door, raised an alarm. A doctor appeared in time to fix up the young lady with an emetic, and the next day she was on her feet again. To clean out the badly frightened prodigy, however, he made use of a stomach pump, and for several days the boy was unable to move. He left Peiping a sadder and wiser prodigy—and a quieter one.

On the train back to Tientsin I shared a compartment with the American minister, Nelson T. Johnson, or rather together we shared it with a young French girl whom I had met in Mukden.

Minister Johnson said he was off for a short vacation to Peitaiho but expected to see the Young Marshal who was there, he understood, holding conferences with some of the Northern group who were still working for a split with the South. I asked him if he had heard anything about the Young Marshal being sick. He replied, "No."

I wondered what was really in his mind. For the Young

Marshal had been ordered to Peitaiho by his doctors for treatment and fresh air. He had been removed from Mukden as near dead as a chronic dope after a prolonged opium spree could be and still live. That was his only reason for being there. The Northerners were in touch with him in Mukden when I was there, before he was hauled away.

XXXIX

EARLY SPRING AND SUMMER OF 1931

in Nanking where East meets West and where daily hundreds of pilgrims come to visit the shrine of a martyr—mid-summer sees silver and business drop to a new low, foreign companies cut staff and a fever of kidnapping and whoopee strike Shanghai —only a few foreigners but many Chinese in Shanghai make much money and are wealthy and the foreigner is fast giving ground—while Shanghai plays the Nanking government burns midnight oil.

BEFORE I WAS ABLE TO SETTLE down in Shanghai I was called to Nanking, the capital. The old Chinese city of the waterfront remained untouched by progress, but beyond on the plain below the hills with Purple Mountain in the distance, the government had made an excellent beginning of a beautiful capital. The local foreign adviser motored me through broad avenues decorated along the sides with a style of architecture I had not seen before, gracefully sweeping curves of the native glazed tile roof, half protruding columns and skeleton framework adapted to foreign construction. Official buildings had all the color and flowing lines innately Chinese combined with the modern improvements for health and comfort belonging to the West. It struck me as symbolic of the transformation Chiang K'ai Shek was at bottom really fighting, against almost overwhelming odds of

misunderstanding, squeeze and suspicion, to effect throughout the country.

Past the government buildings a long stretch of road ran through the gateway of the dignified old wall of the original capital of a long ago dynasty. Beyond we entered into an open park laid out on the slopes of rising and falling hills, freshly planted with bushes and flowers. Workmen were laying out pathways and erecting carved stone benches. At the top we stopped and I caught my breath.

Stretching straight ahead for at least one-half mile was a broad avenue of pure, virgin white stone arched at intervals with tall *p'ai lous* of the same pure white stone carved with entwining dragons, and narrowing down in perspective to the bottom of a stairway, also of this original stone, rising up, up, up to a temple, whose golden roof tiles sparkled and shone, nestling against the mighty, imperial purple breast of the mountain . . . the Sun Yat Sen memorial . . . a fitting and worthy tribute to a great and good man who, through a life of hardships and ill-health, had fought and died a martyr to the cause of a government of the people, by the people and for the people.

Two unhurried lines of Chinese clothed in their best freshly ironed silken garments passed each other treading softly and sedately on the white stone highway, to and from the temple. Every day in the year hundreds make the pilgrimage from afar to do obeisance.

On a hill not far away, where he could stand on his porch and look across to the temple on a moonlit night, was the newly built house of General Chiang K'ai Shek, a Western style brick house, plain and unassuming.

Farther down the hill on a flat surface rose a newly built stadium for track meets, and near-by a swimming pool also constructed in the modern Western manner, but wholly Chinese —the old Chinese of yesteryear—in its arching, roofing and colorful tiling and decorations.

General Chiang was away, somewhere in the interior south of the Yangtze, on one of his so-far unsuccessful drives to

squash the communist movement he had started as a strategic stroke and which had since kept on growing.

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For the rest of the year I was in Shanghai, and beginning that summer, in spite of the depression that was rocking the rest of the world, Chinese and foreigners both went "whoopee" mad. Perhaps it started with *ta fu,* the big heat, or was a natural depression reaction. Who knows?

The exchange, which back in so-called normal times had hung around $2.00 Mex. to $1 gold, and which at one period (spoken of in awe as if it had been part of a dream) during 1925 and 1926 had been on a par, was now running up and down between 4.50 and 5. The company received orders from London to cut the staff to the bone, and old timers, men who had spent all their business life in China, many who were married and raising children and still by no means old, were let out and sent home. Other big companies were doing the same. And the import business was shot to pieces.

Yet the *hai alai* and the dog races were drawing larger crowds than ever. A fever of building cabarets started. In Frenchtown, on Avenue Edouard VII, without warning an enormous cabaret decorated in the most modern French style opened with a bang—*one hundred beautiful Russian dance partners—only the best drinks served—every night a gala night—noise makers and balloons—everybody happy*—and Shanghai turned out *en masse.* In the foreign business section a more intimate club, *The Parisien,* opened its doors. Soft lights and hot music. Crowds, foreigners and foreignized Chinese, stampeded. On Bubbling Well another cabaret threw wide its doors, *The Majestic,* the largest and most elaborately fitted of all, run by Chinese with Chinese dance partners in smart evening gowns, catering to the foreignized Chinese. Farther out on Avenue Joffre the old Russian cafe, *Tkachenko,* moved its quarters to a remodelled stone mansion with a garden, installed a sunken dance floor with a concert stage at one end on which the formal Russian ballet acts were given between

American fox trots. On the lawn guests drank beer, hot tea, high-balls and vodka under striped umbrella awnings. In farther out Frenchtown smaller cabarets sprang up like weeds in a cow pasture after a shower in spring, getting well under way only after midnight. On the outskirts dozens of open-air Chinese dance pavilions ran full blast, drawing foreign and Chinese guests alike.

The winter of 1930 and 1931 one or two indoor wee golf courses had come into being. Now the summer saw them multiply by the dozen, costly courses lighted at night by suspended colored electric bulbs, with pavilions where one could sit under the awnings and watch the slender silken gowned Chinese debs and sub-debs awkwardly wield their putters.

In the foreign settlement old musty office buildings gave way to strictly modern structures. Chinese banks were moving out of their old quarters into new ones many times larger and complete with foreign equipment.

Frenchtown was also going in for enormous apartment buildings in the purest modern style—straight lines, sharp angles, flat undecorated surfaces.

The Russians, too, were doing their bit transforming Avenue Joffre, even pushing their way into other parts of the city, with shop fronts in plastics and metals and cubistic window display designs.

Several new cinemas opened up, one on the North Side, strictly Chinese yet strictly modern, with hidden lights, and walls paneled in tones of grey and bands of silver. Shanghai now had twenty-one cinemas, five of them foreign, picturing America's love-life in penthouse and speak-easy through the jazzed-up eyes of Hollywood.

And then came radio. An English advertising house opened a broadcasting station. The company decided to try it out on a high-grade cigarette and I spent the best part of a week selecting records from the vast stocks imported by the four leading music houses. Then the company presented me with a small receiving set to check up our tri-weekly programs, and from six in the evening until eleven I listened to a rare mix-

ture of Chinese falsetto singing and American jazz. For some time I had known that a half-dozen Chinese stations were shooting programs of legends, songs and string music, but I never realized what they were up to on the side until, upon enquiry, I discovered that, although the Nanking Government had supposedly allotted wave lengths so there would be no interference, the Chinese stations were pooled together to have at least two of their stations edging in so closely on both sides of a foreign program that they made it a bedlam.

I decided to take a look through the Chinese shops to see what kind of business they were doing on receiving sets. On Nanking Road and North Szechuen, busy marts trading in native and Japanese imitations of foreign wares, I found dozens of shops stacked to the roof, not only with the receiving sets, but also with phonographs and gramaphones, portables especially. Most of these shops had one or two loud speakers and two or three phonographs stuck on the counter facing the open door, all going wide, high and handsome, a chop-suey of Chinese sing-song and American jazz.

However, Shanghai life for the foreigner was not all scotch, Russian girls and jazz, nor was it all *ma chiang*, sing-song girls and jazz for the Chinese. Outdoor sports had always played a big part in the life of the Shanghailander and the city probably had more clubs per foreign capita than any community of similar size anywhere in the world. Naturally, the dice box and the bars were a great indoor attraction but, season and weather permitting, either actively or as a rooter, almost every foreigner went in for outdoor sports of some kind: baseball, basket ball, tennis, golf, American football, Rugby, soccer, cricket, yachting, swimming, polo, paper hunt, lawn bowls and what not. Even the Chinese foreignized students (there were six universities) in shorts, could be seen on the wide avenues of the foreign residential section practising the Marathon or the twisting and jerking long-distance walking. And several times a month I dropped into the Y.M.C.A. to watch the tall Navy Wives and American school teachers fight out basketball games with the

stocky, scrambling teams from the Chinese girls' schools. The big sporting event, however, for both foreigner and Chinese was gambling on the pony races, two big events a year with smaller ones weekly, at all of which every one played the pari-mutuels.

Foreign Shanghai also had its cultural and aesthetic side, amateur dramatic clubs, women's clubs, an active art club and a splendid municipal orchestra. Most of the culture, however, was isolated and cultivated in private by the few who travelled alone, studying and working, collecting their porcelains, paintings and bronzes for their own personal pleasure and satisfaction. So it was, too, with the Chinese who divided their treasures of the mind among themselves and enjoyed practising their hobbies of craftsmanship within the peace and quiet of their homes behind high walls with locked and guarded gates. Every sunny week-end that summer a closed clique of the company's Chinese artists stole away on parties into out-of-the-way beauty spots in the country, exploring, snapshoting and sketching. Every one of these six or more friends read and spoke English, and one, whose family had produced artists for generations, had every old Chinese legend at his finger tips and painted Chinese scenes that were masterpieces, yet could turn out a foreign poster drawing equal to that of a Chambers. They met the foreigner on his own ground, accepted the good and discarded the bad, and remained *un*foreignized. Many of the younger Chinese were like this, seldom seen or known by the foreigner, for away from business they kept to themselves and were hidden among their kind.

With the exchange gone hay-wire and companies cutting staff, who was paying the price of this sudden spurt of merry-making and building? Where did all the money come from to support the daytime sports and this fast-moving night life?

When I asked myself these questions it took a bit of digging and searching to find the answers. At first glance a visitor would have thought that Shanghai had a far greater foreign population than it actually had. Including all nationalities it came to less than 60,000. Among the Western nations Great Britain led

with 10,000, the Russians coming next with 8,000,* the Americans, followed by the French and other European nations, numbered slightly more than a measly 3,500, representing three hundred American firms whose total business amounted to something like 3.5% of the States' foreign trade. In this huge, steadily growing seaport of more than three and one-half million population where once it took me five days of straight driving and three motor car licenses—International, French and Chinese —to make a complete inspection, the foreigner was a mere tadpole in an ocean. Although the Shanghai average cost of living was about one-fifth of what it was in any other city of similar size in Europe or America, almost every foreigner stayed in debt from one end of the year to the other and, segregated in a few connecting small sections, each stood out among his own and made a noise like a big frog in a tiny puddle.

But this explained only one side of the situation. Nosing around I discovered on the foreign side that the wealth of Shanghai was concentrated mostly in the hands of two realty companies, a large trust company and several insurance and banking companies. This was the merry-go-round: over a period of years, before the Chinese had caught on and up, the two realty companies had accumulated many tracts of valuable land on which they had erected office and apartment buildings and terraces of houses. Also out of forced bankruptcies they had gained large interests in cabarets, lunch rooms and tea shops and many other day-to-day and fly-by-night affairs.

The trust company † did an enormous business closing out heavily mortgaged property and buying up outstanding uncollectible *chits* of the dance halls, nightclubs and various other businesses in which the *chit* system ran amuck. After the *Casanova* had been going strong for six months the promoters were trying desperately to sell their *chits*, amounting to Mex. $90,000, to the trust company for Mex. $60,000 and were being offered

* *Since the steady influx of White Russians has never let up the population has probably increased greatly.*

† *Since the above was written this company was forced into bankruptcy, smashing a number of other American firms and ruining many Americans, some in the States. The number one was jailed for embezzlement.*

Mex. $30,000. Eventually, the *Canidrome* corporation added it to its list, imported an American female orchestra and catered to young China.

After all, though, the foreigner's money was only chicken feed. Chinese controlled the real wealth, were the big investors, promoters and spenders. When a Chinese living in the interior, be he merchant, landowner, governor, magistrate, war lord or thief, could gather a sufficient supply of silver, at once he moved family and household effects into Shanghai, the only spot in all the country where he (except for the off chance of being kidnapped) and his belongings were safe. There he bought land, retired or started business anew and raised his children in the ways of the foreigner. In 1931 increase of communists and the consequent incentive for quick clean-ups drove them into Shanghai faster than ever, and there was hardly an enterprise of any kind or size in which these restless gamblers did not stick their fingers. Most significant was the fact that many of them had learned the foreign methods of import and export trade and were carrying on directly with firms abroad, eliminating the local foreign representative. Slowly, too, but surely they were buying up foreign homes, forcing the foreigners to erect and occupy the new apartment buildings, and pushing him nearer the bund. Slowly but surely they were doing their share in assisting the Nanking Government (and the rest of China) to push the foreigner, except, of course, the wily French and bulldog Japanese, over the bund and back across the sea for good and all.

As always and everywhere, these wealthy ones had their troubles. Shanghai's sudden boom in building and whoopee boosted kidnapping. In the late spring a Chinese friend trained in America, who handled the engraving for the Sunday supplement of one of the leading local Chinese dailies, invited me for Sunday to a country estate a few hours outside the city, belonging to the newspaper owner. We spent most of the day rowing leisurely around an artificial stream, almost smothered under the sweet scent of hundreds of varieties of flowers in bloom along the banks, all imported from the States and Europe and carefully tagged.

On our way back in the train the engraver made delicate apologies, "I am very sorry that my friend the owner was not there to greet you. He was unable to come. A few days ago he was kidnapped driving home from his office. His family is negotiating and I hope he will be back very soon. I am very sorry, indeed. You will come again when he can be there."

This was far from an isolated case. Since the end of 1930 cases of kidnapping had tripled or quadrupled. Despite his armed guard, any Chinese known to be wealthy was compelled to spend his days sticking close to his office and limit his evening pleasures to dinners, *ma chiang* and concubines in his home.

It was during this period that Hollywood began to rush across their first talkies with plots laid in the underworld, gangsters for heroes and kidnappings and murders for themes. I wondered how much they had to do with the abnormal rise of Shanghai's kidnapping.

While Shanghai was in this mad, mad mood of whoopee jazz General Chiang K'ai Shek was painfully going about his task of reorganizing the government, harmonizing the conflicting provincial elements and attempting to wipe out the communists. The front pages of the Shanghai Chinese papers were filled with news and transcripts of long, tedious manifestoes issued from day to day. General Chiang assembled representatives from all the provinces to hold a vote for president and cabinet. Interminable discussions were held and the papers reported flowery speeches interspersed with such phrases and by-words as "period of tutelage," "stage of transition," "rehabilitation" and "reconstruction." From time to time news leaked out that the old conservatives were at loggerheads with Chiang's liberal policies and occasionally rumor reported that he found it necessary to put the most recalcitrant behind locked doors for a few days to straighten out their thinking. Both newspapers and students voiced their protests against these strong-arm methods Chiang was using to organize his government—and the way he played up to the foreigner.

General Chiang was in a mess.

XL

1931: SEPTEMBER–DECEMBER

while the Young Marshal of Manchuria lies ill in a Peiping hospital a Japanese express train is strangely derailed at Mukden and the Japanese take charge of the Three Northern Provinces—incidents of the Mukden "incident"—a one-sided war—the Nanking government makes no move and newspapers and students denounce the "Sung Dynasty"—a bitter boycott is raged and students march on Nanking—the minister of finance makes a blunt statement and the Young Marshal departs for Europe—Hankow is in a bad way after a flood and the foreigner is slipping backwards.

On SEPTEMBER THE NINETEENTH I picked up the *North China Daily News* to read of a startling event: the night before in Mukden—the Young Marshal was in Peiping, lying in bed in the P. U. M. C. (Rockefeller Institute) Hospital under opium treatment—the Japanese express had been derailed at the entrance of the station yard and immediately the Japanese had declared martial law and taken control of the city.

Statements issued by the Japanese accused the Young Marshal's soldiers but accounts of what actually took place were garbled and confused and significant details were missing. Felix, who was in Mukden when the "incident" occurred, told me later that the derangement of the rails was much too slight to do

any real damage to either train or passengers, and that by daylight the next morning the Chinese police had disappeared and squads of Japanese soldiers patrolled every street in the city—as if all had been carefully planned and rehearsed far ahead and put through without a hitch.

No direct reports came from the Chinese. Only a few Chinese officials remained for long, and those who did afterwards took positions with the government of the new state. Most of the riff-raff, made up of the retired "war-lords", gamblers and bandits and the Young Marshal's right-hand men cleared out in haste. Some, with the shrewd instinct of the criminal, turned over their fine estates to company foreigners, hoping thereby to save them from being confiscated and to return to reclaim them when the storm had blown over. Young Americans and English holding down lowly paid jobs rode to and from work high style like *taipans*, lolling back in expensive, high-powered limousines.

A few days later I was told an interesting item of news that was passed along by the grapevine route from Peiping.

The Japanese number one general in Mukden gathered together and shipped to the Young Marshal several carloads of his personal effects. With them went a note of flowery politeness stating that, since through some unforeseen event the Young Marshal's stay might inadvertently be prolonged, the general was taking the liberty of sending a few belongings that might add to his comfort. The note closed with hearty best wishes and hopes for the Young Marshal's speedy return to health.

I asked a company director who was born and raised in Manchuria, "What do you think of this Mukden mess?"

"The Japs have taken over Manchuria, haven't they?" he asked.

"Yes," I said.

"Well, what else is there to it? History's only repeating itself. America, England and every country in Europe have done the same thing dozens of times. It's only a question of whether or not they can get away with it. So far Japan seems to have pulled it off without any trouble."

China types—old and new

And practically every foreigner I knew passed up the Mukden "incident" with the same cynical and fatalistic shrug of the shoulders.

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One of the most curious parts of the whole Mukden "incident," to me, was the joint action taken by the Young Marshal and the Nanking Government. In spite of the fact that the last move and the final failure of the Old Marshal before he died was an attempt to make a swift onslaught on the South and to put himself on the throne in Peiping as sovereign of all China, and although after his death the Young Marshal had continued to run Manchuria, to all intents and purposes, as an independent state, taking good care to keep his hands strictly out of the Nanking Government's affairs, yet as soon as he was out of the hospital after the Mukden "incident" he took office automatically as the provisional head official representing General Chiang in the North. The only logical reasons that seemed to explain such a situation were, that a goodly portion of his army had followed him into Peiping as protection, that the Nanking Government was afraid he might take sides with the Northern clique and take advantage of upset conditions to make another break, and finally, probably the only real reason, that, like a bunch of gangsters quarreling among themselves but quick to band together against outsiders, China stood as one against the foreigner—and this time a foreigner had torn a limb from China's body.

Cables sizzled back and forth between Peiping and Nanking and the Young Marshal's personal airplane (containing a special messenger—not himself) was kept busy exchanging notes. In the beginning the Young Marshal did send his generals up the railway line with large numbers of troops. But as the Japanese moved in they evacuated the walled towns near the border so quickly and with such little loss of life that it was plainly evident that both the Young Marshal and his soldiers were unwilling to stand up against the superior Japanese equipment.

The old Northern conservatives were furious. They accused Chiang K'ai Shek and the Young Marshal of betraying their country, of deliberately playing into the hands of the Japanese.

With troops ill fed, equipped with long out-dated, second-hand firearms, some trained only in the old Chinese methods of sword play, they marched their men to sure death on the front. They were going to such extremes as to send to the front what supplies they could get hold of by Peking carts, mules, donkeys, even by wheelbarrow, covering twenty-five to thirty miles a day. It was from among these soldiers that the starved, diseased and wounded poured into the Peiping hospitals.

General Chiang in Nanking did not send a single soldier north. He broadcast through the press that he could not afford to take chances on the communist uprisings south of the Yangtze. The Chinese press and students from all over the country were rabid in their denunciation of the Japanese and loud in their demand that the Nanking Government ship all its soldiers to the front and put up a real fight. In Shanghai and Peiping small sniping posters reviling the Japanese were secretly plastered at night on walls, telegraph posts and shop and window fronts.

The sarcastic reference to the government as the "Sung Dynasty" came to be a by-word. The title was drawn from the relationship of the Nanking leaders. T. V. Soong, the minister of finance, a brilliant, cool-headed, American-trained young man in his thirties, had three sisters, also educated to Western standards of culture, and politicians in their own names. One was the wife of General Chiang K'ai Shek. Another the wife of H. H. Kung, Soong's assistant in finance. The third was Mrs. Sun Yat Sen. Mrs. Sun, however stood aloof from the "Sung Dynasty." When General Chiang threw over Borodin and turned against the communists after they had served his purpose and started his mailed-fist rule, Mrs. Sun became his bitter enemy. She expressed her opinion outright that the thirst for power had turned him into a dictator, had led him to cast aside all the principles of good government bred into him by her deceased husband. A frail, intellectual little woman, from that day on she had kept in close touch with the Moscow Internationale and fought passionately with tongue and pen against the ruthless, high-handed methods of General Chiang and for the communist cause, in which, she believed, lay the only hope for the unity

and happiness of her country. With all her heart, soul and body she was carrying on the good fight for the cause death had forced her husband to drop.

As the days passed and still General Chiang made not the slightest gesture, the students saw red, held mass meetings of protest. The immediate effect in Shanghai was a strict boycott on all Japanese merchandise. The native newspapers enthusiastically backed it up, opening the way to one of the best paying rackets Shanghai had seen in many a day. Although the merchants were compelled to smile and go through the patriotic motions of falling in line, internally they writhed; their business was almost entirely on a competitive price basis; and for many kinds of merchandise, especially piece goods, Japanese brands fitted this need. For the time being, however, most of them hid away what they could of their Japanese goods. In order to see that none of the merchants were breaking through the boycott, the students formed committees to picket and investigate shops. Thereupon gangs of hoodlums with badges, cards and clubs visited shops, condemned as Japanese whatever stocks they desired and carted them away, tagged them with Chinese labels and sold them back as native goods.

Gathered from all over the country, several thousand students marched on Nanking. With banners and flags they massed on the plaza before the capitol, demanding that General Chiang send his soldiers to the front to fight, that they also be taken on as a junior corps, equipped and sent to the front. General Chiang tried to persuade them to leave and offered to pay travelling expenses back to their homes. But for several days they remained sleeping on the ground. Lack of food and mob hysteria led to a number of pitched battles with the police and the loss of lives. Finally, starvation and illness from exposure forced them in despair to break ranks and retreat. General Chiang gave orders for free transportation to their homes.

In their pent-up indignation and wrath neither the students nor, apparently, the newspapers, the old conservatives of the North and fiery radicals of the extreme, far-away South, saw the utter futility of their demands. The only sensible, straightforward admission of facts I heard or read coming from a Chinese was that embodied in a public statement by T. V. Soong after a short visit to Peiping. He said simply, without money and with untrained, unseasoned soldiers equipped only with the most obsolete weapons, it is utterly ridiculous for China to even think of declaring war against a nation like Japan, with a highly trained army far greater in numbers, geared to every form of modern warfare and backed by unlimited resources.

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When later Lord Lytton and his dignified party came over to make their investigation of the Mukden "incident" and determine its cause and the logic of its after-effects, the anti-Japanese posters in Peiping were scraped off the day before their arrival and a smiling Young Marshal with his adviser met them and presented his side of the case. Having left behind in his Mukden palace a sum in bullion variously reported to range from 2,000,000 to 4,000,000 *taels*, which the Japanese had taken over, he was already up to his old tricks. Short of ready cash to keep up the pay of his puppet soldiers he was raising funds by legalizing open traffic in opium and placing theron a good fat tax. In the early part of January, while Lord Lytton and party listened to the Japanese in Mukden, his English adviser and staff established themselves in a hotel at Shanghai writing up and documenting the final appeal for the Chinese. Not many months afterwards the Young Marshal plead the need of vacation abroad, or perhaps his friends in Nanking felt he needed it, and sailed for Europe, where his remaining fortune was safely stored away, with the avowed worthy intention of making a close study of aeroplanes and modern methods and instruments of warfare.

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Around the first part of December I was off on another trip to Hankow. The Chinese were running a daily aeroplane service, with American pilots, between Shanghai and Hankow, but in order to make stops along the way I took a river boat, going and coming. That summer the Yangtze Valley was deluged

by one of the worst floods in its history. Crops were destroyed and famine spread through the land. Col. Lindbergh out touring kindly flew over the devastated areas to report the damage and America followed through by shipping out large supplies of wheat.

The only signs of flood I found left in Hankow were the high-water marks left on walls. On the ground floor of the company's offices the water had risen three feet and floated the furniture. Snapshots of the streets showed traffic moving back and forth in sampans, coolies living on rafts. Most of the wheat shipped from the States for famine relief, I was told, was seized upon arrival by Chinese soldiers. What they did not keep for themselves they sold to merchants at exorbitant prices.

Although communists' flags were waving from the banks 15 miles up the river and outside of Shasi and Ichang, in the *hutungs* of the Chinese city the shopping district seemed as lively as ever. In the far west province of Szechuen things were quiet again. The general in Chungking city, having gained control over the competing general in the city of Chengtu, was doing well through opium smuggling. Information was always slightly vague about this traffic in opium, but from the amount consumed (based on the frequency with which I casually ran into individual cases) it must have been of enormous proportions—almost as common as gambling in *ma chiang*. Conditions along the Yangtze were worse than they had been for years—crops ruined by floods and provinces over-run with more bandits and communists than ever before—and yet the students and press would have had this crippled, broken-down country, stripped bare of finances and food, declare war on Japan.

XLI

1932: JANUARY 28–MARCH 4

the Japanese bombardment of Shanghai's North Side as seen from an office window and an apartment house roof—the mysterious Chinese 19th route army—whys and wherefores of seemingly futile destruction and slaughter

ON FRIDAY MORNING, JANUARY 29th, 1932, I was lying in bed in my Frenchtown flat when the boy brought in tea and the *North China Daily News*. He was trembling with excitement.

"Very bad, master," he said in a shaking voice. "All night I no sleep. Japanese big gun go bomb-bomb. Master look-see paper what say."

So the trouble had started. For several months things had been coming to a head. On the day before the Shanghai municipal council had declared the city in a "state of emergency" and the foreign troops and volunteers had received orders to stand by ready for immediate action. I ran through the headlines: at 11:10 P.M. the Japanese had opened fire on the Chinese in the Chapei district on the North Side. Living in the extreme south of the city, I had slept through it all.

On my way to the office everything looked as usual. Rickshas, motor cars and busses were wending their way towards the business section; shopkeepers were standing in doorways mopping their faces and chests with steaming rags; and little old women

squatted on stools at their regular early morning occupation, scrubbing *pots de chambre* with relentless vigor and concentration.

My desk at the office stood by a large double window on the fourth floor facing an uninterrupted view of the North Side section roofs across Soochow Creek. When I entered, an excited group of men stood staring out of the window. I joined them. To the north-west, a mile or more away, I could see clouds of smoke slowly rising and disappearing into the grey sky; occasional tongues of flame shot up in their midst. Also to the north-west, but just across the creek, towered the grey stone post office, on the roof of which stood a guard of British volunteers behind a barricade of sandbags. The street below leading to the bridge was empty except for a squad of Japanese soldiers who stood guard with bayoneted rifles, cutting off all traffic. Slightly to the north-east was a parallel street also guarded by Japanese soldiers, but left open to let through civilians; and a steady stream of Chinese, men, women and children—walking, in rickshas, pushing wheelbarrows, loaded down with personal and household effects—poured out from the north, were stopped for inspection, then passed on over the bridge through the International Settlement.

Except for this slow-moving caravan of refugees the streets were still; and save the occasional sharp report of a rifle or splutter of a machine gun, the city was deathly quiet.

Then, out of the silence came a metallic reverberating buzz, and across the sky flew six Japanese planes in V formation, swooping around in spirals above the settlement, to the north and back again, showing off their pretty tricks before they got down to work.

The planes disappeared. Then far to the north the Chinese section, called the Chapei district, suddenly came to life with a steady crackle of machine gun and rifle fire. The aeroplanes again appeared, one by one behind each other, flying low, straight ahead above the firing. From the bottom of each in turn a small dark object flashed through the air, a cloud of smoke burst forth from among the roof tops, followed by a dull thud. By noon

dozens of sectors in the Chapei district were belching forth smoke and flames. News came through that the Japanese were bombing the North Station (terminus of the railway line to Nanking) and the Commercial Press—the huge, modern printing and engraving plant, editorial and publishing headquarters of Chinese home magazines and translations of foreign text books.

On this first day of the bombardment guards of foreign troops and volunteers with tanks and machine guns were placed at all strategic outlets of the International Settlement and Frenchtown; a curfew hour was declared, and from that night until the conclusion of hostilities any one found on the streets after 10 o'clock at night was arrested and thrown into jail until 7 the next morning. Cabarets and night clubs increased trade enormously; couples and larger parties considered it a great adventure to enter these joints shortly before curfew hour, then have to spend the night. Others went out deliberately to be arrested for the excitement of a night in the police station and returning home parading their evening dress in the morning sunlight.

During the day from my window I could see Japanese planes working away systematically at the destruction of Chapei; at night on the roof of my apartment house I could see the brilliant red glow of the sky reflected by the burning buildings and hear the thundering of the big guns turned loose on the Chinese 19th Route Army intrenched in the background. All day, day after day, Chinese refugees with their personal effects poured over the bridge to be herded into relief camps. On my way to the office I passed groups of families huddled together in open spaces or against the walls of compounds.

The office ran out of coal, and two weeks passed with everyone sitting around shivering before a ration permit was obtained from the municipal council and delivery was put through. I did very little work. The window by my desk was always crowded.

The Japanese were having a difficult time cleaning out snipers. Almost all of Chapei was made up of extremely narrow streets and alleys cutting into each other in every direction, forming a

catacomb in which only those born and raised there could find their way around; and the houses were so close together and had so many hidden back entrances that it was possible for a sniper to go almost the entire length and breadth of the district without ever coming into the open or even touching the ground.

On Sunday, January 31st, the third day of the fighting, General Chiang K'ai Shek in Nanking gathered together the government archives and fled by plane to Loyang (formerly known as Honanfu, far back in the interior just below the Yellow River, where in 1914 I had caught the train at the end of a pack mule and cart trip across the southern part of Shansi province) and declared it the temporary capital. Probably he was lucky, for just two days later Japanese ships stationed on the river outside of Nanking opened fire on the city.

On February 6th a day's truce was declared to remove the killed and wounded and allow the remaining civilian Chinese to move out of the fighting zone. Soochow Creek and the Whangpoo River were full of sampans and ferries packed with Chinese running away to safety.

On February 15th a Japanese transport landed 7,000 additional soldiers, and beginning two days afterwards I could hear the big guns pounding away steadily for two whole nights, one ceaseless roar. Then the Japanese issued an ultimatum calling for complete surrender. It was rejected, and the Japanese started an advance. The 19th Route Army held fast under terrific fire.

On March 2nd the Japanese landed 8,000 more men. The next day they drove the Chinese out of their trenches. On the 4th peace was declared. The fighting had lasted five weeks and two days.

* * * * *

At 9 o'clock in the evening on the day the fighting ended I was listening in on a radio program I had put on advertising a high-grade cigarette, when the continuity was broken by a voice, "Just a minute, please, don't be alarmed at the noise you hear. The Chinese are . . ." The voice was interrupted by a high screeching wail in Chinese. The Chinese stations were at

it again cutting in on the foreign. I ran up to the roof to see if I could discover what was going on.

The roof was crowded with men and women, many wearing overcoats thrown over negligees. Most of them were French and Russian—talking and gesticulating in great excitement. Sharp, crackling reports seemed to be popping from all parts of the foreign settlement. Surrounded by a group of hysterical women, a little rooster of a French officer was stating in broken English that no one need fear, if the Chinese were rioting the French Concession was fully protected with tanks and machine guns. I listened carefully to the noise; the explosions lacked the sharp edge of gun fire. Then it suddenly occurred to me what the end of the uncompleted sentence of the radio announcer must have been. The Chinese were shooting off firecrackers, celebrating the declaration of peace and the way the 19th Route Army had stood their ground.

* * * * *

What was the primary cause that led to the fight? What was this mysterious 19th Route Army, where did it come from and how did it happen to be around the vicinity of Shanghai? Finally, why did the Japanese take so long to drive it out?

I heard these questions asked in many quarters, and the answers varied, more often than not biased by personal feeling. However, from what I ran into and picked up knocking around the country, I could see a perfectly logical list of sound reasons.

On a night in July in the tough Chapei district three young Japanese started a quarrel with a Chinese policeman ending in the policeman's death (so the story was told—and certainly the policeman was killed). At once the native press throughout China was in an uproar, heaping bitter invective on the Japanese and calling for action. Chinese journalists were past-masters at the art of writing nasty editorials and blackmailing and a great many of them made their living this way. Nine-tenths of the newspapers in the country were useless as advertising mediums, but the largest foreign companies were practically forced to take advertising to head off faked stories that might lead to

boycotts. These papers had no press service, stealing or faking their news items and playing up to the young students and shopkeepers by attacks on government policies and the tricky, grasping methods of foreigners, both good for splendid scareheads.

With the newspapers urging them on students rose up in an indignant mass calling on the Nanking government to take action. Then the Mukden "incident" on September 18th, set the flames rolling high. Both the Chinese and Japanese were worked up to a high fever pitch. That was when the students formed committees and with the aid of the press started a nation-wide boycott,* and from one end of the country to the other sniped anti-Japanese posters. My company was forced to cancel all outstanding orders for Japanese paper and galvanized iron sheeting.

Then about ten days before the fighting started the Chinese held a mass meeting in the native city. The next day Japanese were attacked near a Chinese towel factory and three monks were killed. Two days later fifty Japanese set fire to the factory, following it up with a mass meeting protesting against the murder of the monks.

While all this was going on, however, the Nanking government became involved. One of the Chinese newspapers had come out with an editorial in which the name of the Japanese emperor was taken in vain. After paying no attention for more than a month the Japanese suddenly saw fit to demand an apology through the Chinese government. Negotiations as to the kind of apology and the wording were strung out until late in the day of January 28th, when the government delivered the apology word for word as asked. But it was too late. The Japanese took advantage of the "state of emergency," called by the municipal council on account of the increasing high tension, by sending out troops to request the Chinese to withdraw the soldiers stationed in Chapei, then gave out word that they had "met with resistance," and that night at 11:10 the fight started.

* *Actually the Chinese had kept up a spasmodic boycott on Japanese goods since the "Hankow fiasco" when they failed in their attempt to seize the Japanese concession. On account of Japan's exceedingly low prices, however, few merchants could hold out very long.*

Such were the incidents that, externally, set off the spark that blew up Chapei. But behind the scenes the layout of causes and effects looked entirely different. The incidents were used by Japan to do a job she had itched to do for a long time. Chapei had always been a thorn in the flesh of Shanghai. It was a hotbed of communism, the well-spring of all the previous uprisings against foreigners and many against the government, and was also the prime source of boycotts. Furthermore, almost the whole district was made up of filthy hovels falling to pieces, a breeding ground for every kind of disease. Some day, for the peace and health of the city and for the economic good of Japan, it would have to be cleaned out—the alleged insult to the Japanese emperor offered a good excuse—why not take advantage and do it now—thoroughly and completely? Conditions in Manchuria undoubtedly decided the answer. Four months before the Shanghai fight Japan had started on her complete conquest of Manchuria. Most of the student rioting and boycotting at this time were really due to that; everything else was practically forgotten, had become merely local and purely incidental excuses only.

Thus, in order to clean up Chapei, Japan could have cooked up any reason she desired at any time, and undoubtedly she chose the absurd one she did, when she did, to draw attention away from her activities in the north.

Japan had made up her mind to stop boycotts for good and all, to clean out a dangerous rat-hole and establish her power in Shanghai to the point that it would never be questioned again, and—with the Western nations in a state of chaos, unable to act—she struck deliberately in Manchuria and Shanghai at most propitious moments, to achieve the goal toward which she had worked, and for which she had patiently waited, for many years. It was too good an opportunity to miss.

* * * * *

The past history of the now famous 19th Route Army had about it a certain vagueness and mystery, but significant details stood out. It was organized in Canton and first made its appear-

ance in the Yangtze Valley in 1926 as a part of the original forces with which Chiang K'ai Shek and Borodin had started out. After Chiang's coup this Cantonese regiment was still moving about in the Yangtze Valley section supposedly to stamp out communism.* The situation was a doubtful one, containing a touch of irony. For during their wanderings the soldiers lived on the towns and cities they visited and took what they wanted. They were scarcely more welcome than the bands of communists they were supposed to be chasing.

The fall of 1931 found them in the section between Nanking and Shanghai towards the south. With the cold weather coming on, no pay for months and badly in need of food and clothing, they were seized with a great desire to return to their mild southern climate. They were, however, in a quandary. To get back they would have had to cut their way through a solid mass of bandits and communists a few miles back from the coast all the way down.

Why did the soldiers establish themselves in the trenches back of Kiangwan on the outskirts of the Chapei district? By his flight from the capital on the second day of the fight, General Chiang disclaimed all intention of declaring a war, or even putting up a show of defense. The 19th Route Army was in such desperate straits that it was willing to take the long chance of making a surprise attack on the foreign settlement, loot the city—there was only a total of six thousand foreign troops—and make a quick getaway. Should it succeed then the soldiers would become national heroes and fixed for the rest of their lives. Many foreigners believed that General Chiang conceived and put up to them this brilliant piece of strategy. Why not? Success or failure, it would have meant one step towards the goal of getting rid of the foreigner. Perhaps the Japanese were also aware of this.

But why did the Japanese take so long? It was obvious that the Japanese prolonged the fighting for two excellent reasons. They earnestly desired to give the Chinese a lesson they would never forget—to drive home to them that the day had arrived when boycotts and other forms of "passive resistance," even armed force, must be shelved for all time. And, equally important at the moment, the Japanese were also determined to destroy Chapei so completely that the rathole hide-outs of petty criminals, anarchists and communists would be left a shambles. Such a job took time.

It was interesting to note that the Japanese never declared war on China, only "military action" against Chapei, and, too, that the new barracks the Japanese had started before the trouble looked, when finished, like a fort and was as impregnable.

* *They were the troops who put over the "Hankow fiasco" in 1926, the looting of Nanking in 1927 and who were lying back of Changsha in 1930.*

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aftermath of the Chapei scrap and contrasting news from the interior—meeting with surprises in the city of temples over the Easter holidays—young America teaches young China how to fly—the days of the Big and Little Heat and remarks on Chinese music—with the cool weather come short trips to neighboring cities—the winter brings a decision to return homeside—a final tour through the middle-west and north—young China speeds up on Western lines while General Chiang K'ai Shek prepares for another drive against communism—farewell China

THE BOMBARDMENT OF CHAPEI only served to intensify the boom in building and night life under way the year before. All spring and summer the number of well-to-do Chinese fleeing with their families from the dangers of the interior increased greatly and real estate changed hands faster than ever. Shanghai was in the same state as New York the last two years before the depression. Every few blocks in the Settlement and Frenchtown poster boards and bamboo mat walls hid old shops being razed to make way for new Chinese banks and apartment and office buildings. And the craze for the "modern" also spread like a prairie fire. With the new fast liners shooting through Suez it took only a short while for Paris modes and European fashions to be displayed in all the foreign shops on Nanking Road and Avenue Joffre. The Chi-

nese shops took their key from the Russians, and native confectioneries with American soda fountains, restaurants, tea rooms and chocolate shops appeared with glittering fronts of shining alloys and plastics, interiors done in solid contrasting colors and straight lines, with angular uncomfortable furnishings.

The Chinese themselves did much to spur on this craze for the "modern". Whenever a foreigner imported a new idea or gadget that seemed to have merit, since there were no patent laws, the Chinese copied it at once and sold it at a far lower price. Two foreign interior decorating firms specializing in modern furniture had their displays on Bubbling Well Road. On any clear afternoon or evening I could spot two or three dignified Chinese craftsmen squatting before the windows gravely measuring with their thumbs and taking down notes. Farther out on one of the cross streets were their shops, side by side with fifty or sixty others, all displaying suites in standardized ultra-modern French styles at marked-down prices. They sold to both foreigners and young China alike. Native movie productions also used these designs. They were hideous but (or therefore) popular.

Jazz too set a new pace that made life the year before seem conservative and staid. Two new foreign radio stations opened and the Lord only knows how many Chinese. To top it all a dog racing course on the North Side that had been closed for several years opened in the late spring under the name of Lunar Park, with everything a good old-fashioned American county fair had to offer in the way of entertainment, including hot-dog stands, one-baby-one-cigar booths and a champion flagpole sitter imported from Portland, Oregon.

Jazz was eating into the very soul of young China. Practically all of the cafes, combined restaurants and cabarets and dance halls riding in with 1931 by now either had been forced into bankruptcy by the *chit* system and fallen into the hands of the big American trust company or taken over by Chinese, and the new investments were strictly native capital. Young China filled them nightly. Yes, Shanghai Chinese had absorbed Western jazz and were beating the foreigner at his own game.

It seemed as if human nature in China was running to extremes much the same as it was in America.

* * * * *

Over the Easter holidays I slipped away to Hangchow, center of Buddhism. On the way down, a half day's journey, I shared the suit case of a friendly Chinese as a seat in the narrow passageway of the first-class compartment car. Upon arrival I found that every room in the two semi-foreign hotels had been booked weeks ahead. Finally by much questioning I located the best native inn and from midnight until seven in the morning, with my overcoat folded up for a pillow, lay wide awake wrapped in a blanket on two wooden boards that served as a bed, listening from necessity through the thin pine partition to two Chinese guests in the next room jabber away at each other, and cocking a weary eye at an old locust tree in the weedy garden below lit up by the moon.

At the end of the following evening, however, I felt the hardships were well worth the trip. Hangchow had always been famous for its temples but I had no idea that Buddhism in its pure form still existed, except in a small way, anywhere in China. Hangchow was a Buddhist Mecca.

In the morning I wandered through five temples, two of them privately owned by wealthy Chinese. The afternoon I spent rambling over the grounds of the great Yin Ling temple. From the entrance I followed a beaten path lined with gigantic trees. At the left a thin mountain stream trickled through a narrow ravine separating the path from a row of hills formed of solid rock. At one place, carved out of the stone surface, was a fat laughing Buddha from twelve to fifteen feet high. Every few seconds I was accosted by hawkers selling sweetmeats, walking sticks, joss sticks, rosaries and cheap porcelain gods.

Standing in the main doorway of the temple I looked across a worn stone courtyard at the columns, imported from Oregon, reaching aloft four stories high to support the sloping roof of shining titles. Across the hills at the back the top of the sun sank below the horizon. A gong sounded. Immediately through

the air floated the hollow echoes of the dull monotonous thud of a drum, *bon-n-ng—bon-n-ng—bon-n-ng*. The three sides of the courtyard fronting the temple filled with Chinese. The temple doors creaked slowly open. A stocky Buddhist priest in a silk gown, a gold bordered shawl around his neck, appeared holding in his two hands a bronze bowl of water. Behind him minor priests followed in single file, then came a corps of small ragamuffins wearing over-sized, dingy black and red coats that trailed the ground and carrying long poles, to the top of which were attached different kinds of symbolic designs, the remainder blowing flutes or playing the two-stringed violin.

Like a snake coiling, from the outer edge of the courtyard the priest led his followers around and around in a narrowing circle until they closely surrounded the center shrine. They stopped. The mighty, slow, even tones of the hidden drum echoed monotonously through the dusk. With his left hand the number one priest dripped water from his bronze bowl onto the top of the shrine, rubbing it against the stone with his right forefinger until the bowl was empty. Then the circle uncoiled and disappeared in the depths of the temple.

The *bon-n-ng—bon-n-ng* of the great drum still kept up and I was intrigued. Where was this thundering drum? How were such powerful, resounding bongs achieved. I marched in behind the procession. As soon as I could adjust my eyes to the semi-darkness I saw the last of the sun-down brigade slip through a side door. I was alone. The roaring noise from the drum was now overpowering, vibrating through my body. In front of me was a bronze-painted Buddha whose head almost touched the rafters of the four-storied room. I looked cautiously around, but was still unable to place the drum. I walked over to one side and gazed up at the wall by the entrance doors—and there it was! On a scaffolding reached by a ladder the top part of the drum curved over the edge of a rough wooden partition. An ancient, weatherbeaten drum more than ten feet in diameter. In front on a low stool sat a hairless, scrawny skeleton, as ancient as the drum—ageless—at least past a hundred years, perhaps two or even three hundred—crouched on a stool, naked to the

waist, skinny right arm swinging back and forth like a pendulum. As I stared the ancient stopped, scrambled down the ladder with an uncanny agility and, mopping protruding, sweating ribs, shuffled off into the darkness. For a few seconds I stood spellbound with the queer feeling that I had not actually seen—but had imagined—him—or it. And to this day I speculate on his—or its—place in ethnology.

When I came out of my coma I found several well dressed young Chinese men and women had entered. They lighted joss sticks and stuck them in the sand box before the gold lacquered Buddha, then stood for a minute bowing in obeisance. Upon leaving, each dropped a few small silver coins in a money receiver, shaped like a beer keg and lacquered in stripes of red, gold and black. A dozen or more of these brightly colored gift receivers were scattered about the room at strategic spots, and when, after exploring into the side courtyards, I ran into the kitchen where richly smelling, succulent looking dishes were being concocted, I decided that these stout Buddhist fellows of the South knew their business. Upon inquiry I learned that every day in the year hundreds of Chinese from every part of the country visited Yin Ling temple, each, according to his means, leaving behind small silver coins or coppers.

An odd coincidence, it occurred to me, that Chiang K'ai Shek should be a Christian and that when governmental affairs became too burdensome he was wont to return to Hangchow, his birthplace, to commune with himself and God.

* * * * *

A party of friends who were taking a two-day jaunt to other temples back in the hills kindly turned over one of their rooms to me and my second night in Hangchow was spent in the semi-foreign hotel where I met a fine looking lot of young American aviators, between fifteen and twenty, who were conducting a flying school for the Nanking government. A half-hour away by motor they had a full-fledged training field equipped with hangar, school buildings and barracks, and work was almost finished on a community of foreign homes.

Taking the morning sun in the doorway of the Yin Ling temple

This flying school was one of General Chiang's pet promotions. He was already planning to add to the air mail system in effect between Shanghai and Hankow by installing another from Shanghai to Tientsin, and was also visualizing the possibility of extending the Hankow service on west to Sianfu in Shensi with the idea of tying up with a service straight through to Berlin. It was more than possible, too, that the General had his eye on China's military needs.

I asked one of the teachers, a strapping young Texan who had done a good deal of pioneering work in the States, what kind of students the young Chinese made.

"Good—for straight stuff," he said. "They're hard workers and quick at getting the technical side down pat. But when it comes to flying out of the ordinary routine, or if they're called on for a quick reaction—you know, a split-second decision—most of them are not quite there. They make good sound pilots but when it comes to fighting—

"The Japs impress me the same way. They can memorize and perform every manoeuver perfectly. But put a Jap up against an American—or British or any European—in a crisis where he can't depend upon his little book of rules and has to use his own judgment—and the white will beat him to it every time. The same way handling a fleet of ships—the Oriental simply can't snap to it on his own like a white."

Which to me has always been the final answer to the "Yellow Peril".

* * * * *

Shanghai sweltered through the months of the Big and Little Heat and foreigners and Chinese took it easy. Sunday mornings I took strolls through Chinese sections soaking in the medieval atmosphere—stands in front of shops piled high with shiny red apples, melons, giant persimmons, dwarf bananas and the inevitable trays of peanuts and black melon seeds; hawkers seated in the shade on six-inch-high stools fanning persistent swarms of flies off trays of sliced fruits; other hawkers, surrounded by naked and half naked children, industriously peeling the skin

from slices of sugar cane or filling small glasses with shaved ice and sticky, colored cordials. At times I paused to join the crowd of men and women with their small children and babies, drawing in their breath and exclaiming as a Chinese Punch was socked with a stick for being fresh. Then there were the fortune tellers, itinerant jugglers, magicians and strolling acrobats who spread their carpets and performed wherever traffic seemed sufficiently brisk to warrant.

Afternoons, often from sunset until after dark, I hunted down hawkers on the Chinese residential streets, following a dozen paces in the rear, enchanted by the sound of their haunting chants to the time of ingenious, primitive noise makers. Although the instruments used were specified by the merchandise carried, the sing-songs differed, and in Shanghai alone were thousands of varieties, each with its own individual rhythmic swing and flow.

To me the finished and highly polished falsetto singing of the theatre was only a depraved, hot-house culture originated as a fungus growth in girl houses and imitated so successfully before ultra-sophisticated audiences by painted youngsters in boy houses that in order to meet competition adult males were forced to adopt it on the stage. Under the Manchu system the actor was one stage in caste above the barber, who was very close to the bottom. But the hawker chants and the simple melodies of the farm and country highways were of the earth and sky and the sun and moon and of man as a part of nature. I found in them a startling likeness to the old Irish folksongs, and with the same note of gaiety and yearning and of noble simplicity running through the music of all races before they began to spend their days behind closed doors, looking at the world through windows.

With the coming of fall, in the company of my Irish-American friend, who through wide and varied experience had reached the highly civilized state of realizing the full meaning and satisfaction of a peaceful mind and an even temper (*peace be with you, brother, peace be with you*), I stepped back a few centuries on one and two, day look-see trips to nearby dealer

cities. Although the *tempo grave* had remained undisturbed by repercussions from the seething metropolis, local magistrates and ward-heelers were well up in politics. The advertising of our products was not prohibited but applications were politely shelved. The official in charge was aware that we were aware that idle sites were plentiful, but he was always extremely sorry to inform us that every one was rented. The few spaces that did carry displays, we found, had all been leased by a large native cigarette company with headquarters in Canton, to warn citizens against the cheap, tainted cigarettes sold by the foreigner and to exhort them to "help native industries—buy only native goods made by native labor". No mention was made of the manufacturer's own products.

The arrival of winter put thoughts of returning to the States in my head. I had been away slightly more than three years. A goodly portion of those years I had been moving around and found them interesting—sometimes exciting—but now that was more or less finished. The small instrument I had started in Manchuria had now grown into an enormous, co-ordinated, smooth-working machine that only needed oiling from time to time to keep it shipshape. That meant settling to the routine of Shanghai and the idea palled. The only feeling I had ever had for China was the China of the Chinese and, too, the next October would be the regulation four-years home-leave time. I decided definitely that I would leave then for good and take my last look at the Orient on a leisurely going ship around by Suez.

The middle of January, 1933, I left Shanghai for a final tour through the north, by boat to Hankow, up the railway line with stop-offs at Peiping and Tientsin then down to Nanking and back. It lasted a month and a half. What I saw all along the way was a complete, spiritedless let-down, a staleness and lethargy, both native and foreign. Perhaps I was wrong. It may have been a point of view that had taken hold of me. But I do not think so. It seemed as if every one had been going on a series of sprees, intoxicated by events, the rising tide of communists and bandits, the attempted split of the North with the South, the Manchurian joke played by Japan, ending in a peak of excess

with the bombardment of Chapei, followed by a hangover of purely mental and bodily exhaustion and lassitude.

On the way to Peiping I stopped over at Chengchow where everything was so much of the same brown as the earth that even the beggars lying in the streets were easily mistaken for lumps of dirt. Behind the doors of our agent's compound, however, I came upon results of some of General Chiang's efforts toward Western progress. When the agent ushered me inside I faced a neat, compact foreign house and in the yard his fourteen-year-old boy, dressed in Boy Scout uniform, was skillfully buzzing a diablo.

The people in Chengchow were very poor, the agent said, and the bandits were giving a lot of trouble. I should have seen it, though, in 1925 when the Old Marshal brought his troops down from Manchuria to fight with the South. Aeroplanes, at least a hundred thousand soldiers, much heavy artillery and machine guns. And the supplies of food! They set up camp. In the middle of the night there was a tremendous explosion. The soldiers went into a panic. By morning the whole outfit had fled and were already across the Yellow River. They left behind several thousand sacks of flour and hundreds of cases and barrels of all kinds of food—enough to last Chengchow a year. The first time in history, exclaimed the agent, the town had ever had enough to eat.

He added, "the Southerners were still two days south of the city; a pile of ammunition had caught fire and the Northerners thought they had been attacked."

The second day the agent and I took the train to Loyang (formerly Honanfu) to the west, passing one village after another made up of caves dug out of the sides of the mountains. We spent the night in the station master's quarters. He insisted. About two thousand bandits were camped only ten or fifteen *li* below the city and had a habit of raiding about once a week. It was just about the time they would be coming.

I was interested to see what kind of quarters General Chiang had used when he fled to Loyang during the Japanese bombardment of Chapei and made it the temporary capital. There it

was on the main street, not noticeable, a run-down magistrate's *yamen*. That afternoon, however, I saw a sight that struck me as most significant. Far out past the shopping district the agent and local dealer led me to the temple on the old outer wall. Inside, instead of a Buddha, on the wall within a fenced-off space hung a badly painted portrait of Sun Yat Sen with flags draped above and his *Principles* carved on a stone tablet below. As we stood there Chinese, most of them young, passed in and out. Down below on the stone road double lines going in both directions disappeared through the gates of the inner wall.

In Chentow only two of the three kindly gentlemen were there to carry on. Mr. Kung had died a few months before of a high blood pressure that had troubled him all his life. I was more glad than ever that I had decided to return home-side. The best of my friends were getting old, many had retired and others had dropped out, and these new Chinese—

In Shanghai White Russians were still dribbling in from Vladivostok and from across the Siberian border by way of Harbin. They entered penniless but with spirit unbroken. A highly cultured Pole, one of the most liberal minded and widely read men I know, explained their attitude perfectly. One evening when I was dining with him he was late. He had been to tea, he apologized, with a newly arrived Russian family whom he had known in their better days, and had become so engrossed in the tales of their hardships that he had forgotten the time.

"You know," he observed, "the Russians are a funny people—they are like children. This family is completely down and out, without a cent, with no idea of how they'll make a living, and they've been going through hell for several years getting out of Russia. And yet—they were laughing and joking about it—it was a gay party—you'd think they simply didn't know what trouble was. All Russians are like that—they shed worries like a child; shrug their shoulders and say, *Nitchevo*—there's always tomorrow; something will turn up. They swear that there are millions in Russia right now like themselves who would give their souls to get away."

Starting from nothing the Shanghai Whites now had two excellent newspapers and their own schools. Until they were able to get a start, new arrivals were sustained by friends and from the proceeds of charity balls and concerts. Seldom a week passed when I was in the Shanghai office that I was not besieged with requests to take advertising space on charity programs.

These White Russians were making China their home because they were forced to. But one and all looked forward to returning some day to their own country. They said with faith, "Most of the people today in Russia are still Whites at heart—but they dare not whisper it to their closest relations or friends—they are forced to fall in line—but wait—"

Even so, they were settling down, going about their business and raising their families as if China were their permanent home —and every day the Shanghai community was growing in size and influence.

That summer, too, the old Russian consulate, closed since the World War, was renovated and a Soviet consul moved in. Not far away in an office building on the bund the Amtorg Trading Co., the Soviet's foreign trade bureau, opened its doors and started a cut-throat campaign on oil and gasoline and, probably, propaganda.

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In contrast to the foreign element Shanghai's young China was as lively as a cricket. The foreign cabarets and dance halls that had been driven against the wall by unpaid *chits* from foreigners came to life again by charging cash and thereby leaving room on the floors for the natives. And all through the Settlement and Frenchtown young China opened new ones for themselves alone. With no foreigners around to stiffen their manners and ruin their fun they made whoopee wholeheartedly and by the wholesale.

In July the Nanking government held a national track meet that also stirred the blood of Young China. Where before two might have been seen trotting in their shorts and spiked shoes down the middle of a crowded street to the disgusted honks of stalled motorists, now were large groups. The native press played up the track meet big—almost on the scale it had played up the

heroes of the 19th Route Army in its stand against the Japanese. The meet was a huge success. Boys and girls represented every province in the country. And the Shanghai papers issued special editions, running photographers back and forth in aeroplanes.

Up to this time General Chiang K'ai Shek had sallied forth five times with his troops to stamp out communists. So far he had lost out each time, part of his troops deserting and going over to the other side. Seemingly undaunted, he was scraping together the money and equipment to start out again.

A curious situation—yet similar in so many ways to what was taking place in the rest of the world.

* * * * *

When news spread that I was returning to the States for good, my friends and acquaintances—and some who were not—approached me with brows wrinkled into question marks: "What in the—you're crazy to go back—you'll hate it over there after Shanghai—"

That was a month before I sailed. Within the last few days one after the other took me aside and whispered in bitter, longing tones: "God, you're lucky—I'd give anything in the world to get out of this stinking hole."

The first remarks made were spoken automatically—because it was so unusual for any one to pick up and leave of his own accord. The second remark was made after the idea had sunk in and imaginations had started to work.

Most of the foreigners in Shanghai—and in other parts of China—had gone out as young men, very young men. They had, in a way, reached their maturity there. Shanghai was their home. They had lost touch with the States, England or Europe. They would have liked to return to their native lands, but they had no idea of what they could do and feared, even, to think about it.

As for me I had seen enough and heard enough. Life even in far-away China was fast becoming regulated to the American tom-tom staccato pulse-beat, to the speeded-up tempo of the Western world. I would go back to the source and take it straight.

EPILOGUE

WHEN I LOOK BACK UPON THE days when I first lived in China, consider the changes that took place during the years I was back home and then sum up what I saw happening between the years of 1930 and 1934—I am saddened.

I first went out to a medieval empire, saw the last of the dynasties fall and watched a republic rise in its place to the cry of liberty, equality and fraternity.

I returned to a nation writhing in a chaos of disillusions, torn to pieces by hatred and greed, with warring factions eliminating all semblance of government control.

I remained to see the country sink deeper into the morass of chaos and despair then left when it was at its most critical stage since the collapse of the empire.

Noting down and sorting out the individual changes that occurred between the years of 1911 and 1934 I discovered that each bore a direct kinship to all the others and fitted into its logical position as a part of an inevitable, natural evolution made up of two directly opposing forces: unity and progress fighting against the overwhelming odds of disintegration and degeneration.

Before the coming of the foreigner China was settled in a state of civilization and culture that had followed one straight path from the beginning of history, totally untouched by any outside influence save that of Buddhism, whose ethics and teachings fitted in closely with those of Confucius and Lao Tze. So thoroughly fixed was her system of government that her Mongol conquerors, and later Manchu, had only to overcome a small section of the country around the capital and carry on with things as they were.

More than eighty-five per cent. of the vast population was

made up of small leasing farmers, coolie laborers and shopkeepers in the farm trading centers. Actually, it was the life of all the peoples of the world before the machine murdered handicrafts and when men worked as individuals instead of slaving in the mass; it was a life close to nature that, in spite of extreme poverty and B.C. comforts, bred a serenity and repose, a spiritual and mental poise, a deep, unconscious feeling of being a part of nature itself, nature in the sense of the cosmic, that expressed the creative instinct, innate in every human being, through the use of the hands and developed the artistic sense as naturally as a baby develops its faculties.

In the breasts of the Chinese dwelt a spirit of timelessness, a oneness with nature, the highest plane of happiness man can achieve, in rhythm with the unhurried, even flow of the cosmic order that is really the soul of man.

I know this is true—from all I saw and felt living in their midst. I saw results in their architecture, paintings, statues and handicrafts. I saw and felt it in my daily contacts, watching and joining the Chinese at work and play. Men plowing or hoeing their crops with the smell of the earth in their nostrils. Women under shade trees in the courtyards of temples sewing and mending or spinning silk to the hum of twirling brass balls twisting together the strands. Cart drivers and carrying coolies resting over a cup of tea and passing a cheerful time of day under the mat shed of a road house. A craftsman seated on his stool at the counter of a small shop putting the finishing touches to a pewter pot, hammering out a brass bowl, carving a baby's crib, tooling harness. Crowds of villagers and farmers with their families at a fair, dining *al fresco,* racing, playing checkers, swapping ponies, mules, donkeys and cattle, gaping at jugglers and acrobats, listening to minstrels and, perhaps, to a legendary drama in an outdoor theatre. A pleasant, white bearded merchant seated in his cleanly swept upper room rolling a pair of lacquered walnuts in his right hand or smoking a water pipe, enjoying the faint aroma of a bowl of pears or peaches placed on the upper table for that purpose. The musical ring of the language, the deep respect for age and learning and the arts, the

pleasantly formal manners. Such things I saw and felt, a few of the thousand and one details that brought happiness to the lives of the Chinese, from the lowest to the highest. And they were all built on a background of life in the open and creating with the hands.

There is, of course, another side to this medieval picture. The large majority of the farmers were practically serfs, ruled by wealthy, squeezing landlords, and they were up against the natural handicaps of a drained-out soil and regular cycles of droughts and floods. From time immemorial such catastrophes had yearly turned so many starving laborers and farmers into bandits. But after all, their troubles differed little from those of the Western world. The farmer in America has always been in the same sorry plight, his condition made worse by the rise of industrialism. And the number of bankruptcies each year among American retail stores is appalling. The farmers', laborers' and small shopkeeper's condition and struggles at bottom have been much the same the world over, the only difference being the slight one of degrees.

Then came the foreigner with the single purpose in mind of giving as little as he could and taking away as much as he could. With him also entered, via Japan, the ideals of Western democracy inter-related—so closely that the two were as one—with the ideas of industrialism and its resultant rush and demand for speed. (The Japanese were such a compact race that they had swallowed and digested industrialism almost overnight and by 1933 the control of the country was in the hands of the militarist expansionists and a few large bankers and industrialists who, by means of subsidies and co-operative effort, were taking foreign markets from their western teachers, even ruining England's textile trade in India.)

With the revolution proceeding along Western lines, with foreign nations joining in, using the country as a football in the game of finance they were playing against each other, and with increasing jealousy between the North and South, communism slipped in from Russia.

In November of 1930 at the town of Jui Chin, a few hundred

miles from the coast west of Foochow, a communist congress was held and a shrewd idealist by the name of Mao Tze Ting was elected as president of the "China Soviet Republic."

From 1930 through 1933 General Chiang launched five (one split into two) campaigns against the "bandit-communists" south of the Yangtze. Each time he failed completely—with a tremendous loss of arms and ammunition and of men who either deserted or were killed. After each drive the communists greatly increased in numbers and fighting strength. When I left the country at the end of 1933, estimates of the total number of communists varied between 50 million and 75 million—from about one-eighth to almost one-fifth of China's conjectured population.

Back of this astounding growth I could see four perfectly sound, interlocking reasons. First, the general run of hoodlums who are always on the lookout to get something for nothing and love a rough-house. Second, the farmer and shopkeepers were given the opportunity to throw off the yoke of the landlords, "war lords" and squeezing officials. Third, to a mass whose numbers were controlled by starvation and disease the promises of the communist propaganda meant a heaven on earth. Fourth, by his enforced lack of action (due to squabbling factions, poorly trained, half-starved soldiers and totally inadequate equipment) against the Japanese in Manchuria and their attack on Shanghai, while he was at the same time emptying the government treasury and appropriating foreign-made loans to war against his own countrymen, General Chiang K'ai Shek turned against himself two of the most powerful elements in Chinese politics: a goodly portion of the native press and the youth—the latter made up mostly of students and young graduates who had been growing up during the most sordid period of foreign imperialism and had been compelled to stand by watching with helpless rage as their country was bled by outsiders into whose hands Chiang seemed to be playing consistently.

However, in roundabout ways, despite all his setbacks, Chiang was trying hard to reconcile the old with the new, to make a civilization and culture based on the farm and crafts fit in with

the conflicting ideas and ideals of foreign industrialism—attempting to mix oil and water.

Chiang did his best to pacify the public by issuing daily manifestoes declaring reforms and innovating improvements, most of which he was never able to put through. Undoubtedly, however, general social and economic improvements progressed along a number of lines.

In Shantung Province, for example, an experimental school was started with the idea of teaching the farmer to read and write. Only adults were admitted and were given a three months' course to learn the five hundred basic characters most in common use. They were also trained in simple laws of health and sanitation. At the time I left this experiment was turning out to be a great success and plans were under way to extend it to other provinces.

Lack of communications was being overcome by the promotion of motor highways and interurban bus systems. During 1931 and '32 I travelled through several provinces by motor car over macadamed roads with hourly bus service linking together leading trading centers. Aeroplane lines also were being opened up between the principal treaty ports.

Finally, in recent years the Nanking government has enthusiastically encouraged outdoor sports and gymnastics. Almost every town of any size has its Boy and Girl Scout corps. And the stadium back in the hills near the Sun Yat Sen memorial in Nanking has been a wonderful influence in promoting outdoor sports in all the provinces.

So the fight goes on: unity and progress versus disintegration and degeneration. And as the foreigner and internal politics have eaten deeper into the life of the native, they have increased the chaos, the kind of chaos the Western world has brought upon itself—that has taken much of the meaning out of life—made *good* craftsmanship futile. In consequence the arts and crafts (the outward show of culture) have degenerated into a purely financial proposition of turning out products as quickly as possible as cheaply as possible. Thus the artistic sense and appreciation developed through centuries have been completely stifled.

Today everything is Western expediency, as much so as it would be were the country industrialized.

The Chinese who have taken on Western culture have become neither fish nor fowl—they are sorry hybrids—with their innate aesthetic sense smothered under a veneer of Western shrewdness, business and political cunning, that make of them self-conscious gigolos posing as men of the world.

The foreigner in China, on the other hand, freed from ordinary restraints of his own civilization and raised in importance by his small number and low cost of living, and by force of arms, has assumed a superiority the Chinese loathe and yet are forced to cater to.

Blue and white walls versus latitudes . . . democracy versus communism . . . nationalism versus foreign imperialism . . . unity and progress versus disintegration and degeneration . . . chaos . . . and jazz.

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Farewell to Eastern culture! Hail to Western jazz!