

# CATHAY ON THE COAST

BY IDWAL JONES

FEELING that I would take a sympathetic interest in the obsequies, Lee Fan, a rattan-ware merchant of my acquaintance, piloted me through the dark and rain to the joss-house. This one, Wong Sim's in Brenham alley, San Francisco, is unvisited by the police and ignored by the Chinatown guides. Properly speaking, indeed, it isn't a joss-house at all, but a sort of funeral parlor and club combined.

Five very old Chinese, with soft hats on, were sitting in the gloom on kitchen chairs and playing stridently on reed flutes. This was the mourning music for bachelors, and very sad to listen to. The coronach was enlivened with brisk rakings on the banjo by a bespectacled sophomore in a pinch-back suit. Now and then the ancient corpse-washer who mooned in the corner, sucking at a pipe, pounded a brass gong with handsome effect.

Laid out in a row between the celebrants were five tea boxes, each swathed in burlap, corded with split bamboo, and marked with the chop of a tong. Inside were the jumbled bones of fifty-six deceased Chinese bachelors.

"Just came yesterday," whispered Lee Fan. "We are giving them a send-off before they get buried all proper in China."

The bones had been reposing in Chinese graveyards along the Coast for ever so many years, and after being diligently collected, had arrived in San Francisco in barrels, loaded on a truck. They would, without doubt, have been quite forgotten if the tottering old registrar at the Six Companies hadn't come across some hints of them in a sheaf of long-lost records.

It appeared that eleven of the late brothers had been house-boys in Red Bluff, Marysville and Grass Valley back in the far sixties. A few others had lived in mining camps in the Sierras. One, the records deposed, was Hong Wing, the benevolent, who spent a lifetime in building a bridge so that people might cross over a mountain stream without drowning, which happened often in his camp when they were drunk. Some were coolies who had reworked the placer tailings in Mariposa. Others had kept grocery shops on the muddy, steaming banks of the Sacramento. The rest were cooks—of uncommon gifts, so mature citizens of Ukiah will tell you with regret, for it is a deplorable fact that good cooks are scarce these days. In this one respect, at least, the Exclusion Act was a calamity.

*Salut aux morts!* A fat little priest came in, folded his umbrella, tinkled a bell, scattered colored paper on the boxes and drank tea over them. One sip for each dead Chinaman, fifty-six sips for the whole ghostly company.

Wong Sim's staff was slightly flustered by the magnitude of the obsequies, for as a rule only two or three dead men get the accolade at one time. Such occasions, indeed, are no longer so festive as they used to be, when *ng-ka-py* and other cheering and corrosive liquids were wont to flow, when Prohibition Agents were not, and pig was cheaper. This time the funeral baked meats were only a handful of lichee nuts. Veterans with sparse hairs on their fallow chins, and gone vacant in the head, stood in the doorway and babbled over the identity of the deceased celibates. No-

body recalled having seen any of them in the flesh.

Three days more, and the fifty-six bachelors would journey back to the Old Yellow Mother. In the flush of their youth they had come over at a cost of \$150 apiece. Now they were returning higgledy-piggledy in boxes, allee-samee cousins, at a total freightage of \$16, and on the manifest billed as "human bones, five crates." But in their day they had well served California.

"Recollect, they are old-country people," said Lee Fan as we left.

Was there a touch of the deprecatory in his voice? It would not have been surprising, for Lee Fan, though nearly sixty-five, was born in San Francisco and speaks English like a professor. He has a daughter, a lovely Manchu who drives a Daimler with her own golden hands, and is on her way to Bryn Mawr to take a post-graduate course in ethnology.

## II

The acclimatization of the Coast Chinese, in truth, is complete. The cycle began in the Spring of 1848, when San Francisco was still Yerba Buena, and two Chinamen, not without misgivings, set foot on her shore. Two years later, at the public services commemorative of the late President Taylor, the Chinese were courteously prayed to attend. They came five hundred strong, in full regalia, with dragons, banners and flautists. Such picturesque, delightful and charming people! What an acquisition! The grand marshal of the day, when he addressed them in the plaza, was deeply moved, and almost wept as he gave them tracts, "Little Red Riding Hood" primers, and other testimonials of esteem.

Within the next year thirty thousand arrived. Among them, it is dreadful to relate, were many ladies of too-easy virtue. One, the porcelain-faced Miss Atoy, who craned her neck as she walked, and uttered melodious cries like Lilith, became at once

infamous for her conquests. Citizens wrote indignant letters to the papers about her. She became the *Leitmotif* of songs that were indelicate but popular. Later, she had too many rivals, and was forgotten.

Meantime, the more cleanly among the Caucasian pioneers were grumbling. They had been sending their soiled linen by clipper ship to the Hawaiian Islands, and getting it back two months later, with buttons missing on the shirts and serrated edges on the collars. Complaint was loud but futile. A few dandies confided their gear to the Mexican girls who toiled at the Lagoon. The westerly wind came laden with the ominous sound of shirts being banged to rags on the cobblestones. So this alternative was even more expensive.

Hard-boiled shirts and starched stocks were then the symbols of respectability. The former were ruffled, and the latter showed the challenging flare made *de rigueur* by John C. Calhoun, the *arbiter elegantiarum* of the epoch. As contemporary daguerreotypes reveal, no citizen held himself presentable unless his neck were encircled with a collar terrifically starched and pointed. All the San Francisco photographers kept a few of these formidable circlets on hand to spruce up clients just in from the diggings—a very few only, on account of the high cost of laundering. But early in 1850 the *Alta California* printed this sensational item:

Much excitement was caused in the city last week by the reduction of washing prices from eight dollars to five dollars a dozen. There is now no excuse for our citizens to wear soiled or colored shirts. The effect of the reduction is already manifest—tobacco-juice-bespattered bosoms are no longer the fashion.

The next Spring, one Wah Lee—a name worthy to be chiselled in immemorial bronze—painted a legend over his door at Dupont and Washington streets. It read: "Wash'ng & Iron'ng." Thus the first Chinese laundry was founded. Soon prices dropped to two dollars a dozen. Wah Lee hired twenty washermen, but not even three shifts could cope with the deluge of collars, shirts, cuffs and dickies that poured

in from the mines and the lumber camps, as far south as Monterey and as far north as Sacramento. The Kanakas in Honolulu rent the air with wails, but not a shirt came to their tubs from the mainland thenceforth.

Wah Lee, whose refining influence on manners was of such import, had his peculiar gricfs. As soon as his employés learned the washing craft they set up in business for themselves. Rents were sky-high, even in the Chinese quarter, and it was customary for two firms to work in one house, occupying it in shifts, putting up and taking down their signs as their tenure began or ended. This was naturally very confusing to their patrons, for the night company repudiated the checkee of the day company, and vice versa, and the arguments ensuing were usually sanguinary and sometimes fatal.

By the early seventies laundering was the complete monopoly of the Chinese. The city harbored over a thousand wash-houses, often three on a block, and San Franciscans were noted for shirt-fronts that were positively dazzling. Their influence seeped eastward, and an army of conquering Chinese, with washboards under their arms, dispersed over the country.

Prices were incredibly low. In the seventies it was \$1.50 a week for a family of six. The washermen hauled the laundry from poles slung across his shoulders. The blue bag and the basket came in with the eighties, and in the next decade the horse and black van. Just before the Great War, the charge in San Francisco was sixty cents for all a sheet could hold. Much cunning was exercised by customers who trod the soiled linen into a bundle as hard and compact as a boulder. And loud and bitter were the debates over payment on Saturday night—the traditional delivery time. Forty-five thousand Chinese, apprenticed at Coast washboards, did their part in white-collaring America until Troy began spawning over the land its steam-driven laundry apparatus. Hardly fifty are left in the city of their origin.

### III

The advent of a more elegant wave of Chinese occurred at the time when the one fine art of the West, gastronomy, was at its first peak. Those San Franciscans rich enough to dine well patronized any one of a dozen places: Ward's, for example, the first to print a menu card in the West; or Winn's Fountain Head, that glittered inside like a cathedral, and wherein a boiled egg cost two dollars; or the Parker House, where accommodations cost \$50 a day; or the chop-house of Sandy Marshall, where Bass's ale was procurable, and venison, deer liver, grouse and quail at the right degree of putrefaction.

Firm and erect the Caledonian stood;  
Sound was his mutton, and his claret good.

His masterpiece was baked bear's paws in aspic jelly, though boar's brains *en casserole* ran it close as a favorite with the nabobs.

This, of course, was all very well, but only for the superior handful. What of the masses, of the newly arrived, the submerged and short of money? Racked with the pangs of dyspepsia, they went yellow on a diet of salcratus bread and Mexican frijoles, or ship's biscuit and fried seagull's eggs. If they had any small change left, they spent it on patent medicines. Then Chinese by the score went into the catering business.

They opened their first eating-houses at the end of Kearney street: smoky lairs where the cooking was an infamy, and the comestibles barely decent enough to mention. The digestive organs of the patrons rebelled before those awful glutinous compounds—especially that American-born pseudo-Chinese dish, chop suey—, but they were cheap, and the ordeal of engulfing them was lessened by copious drenches of whiskey.

But they learned, did the Chinese. The cooking improved. And the pioneer restaurateur of the race, Tsing-Tsing Lee, was soon doing a roaring business in Dupont street. His refectory seated four

hundred customers, and he named it the Balcony of Golden Joy and Delight. The delight was a monstrous and shiny roast pig that hung at the entrance, diffusing an enticing aroma, with its hind feet knocking the hats off the unwary. The joy was that one got twenty-one meal tickets for \$20.

No hungry man was ever turned away from the Balcony of Golden Joy and Delight. If he had no money he was led into the sanctum of Tsing-Tsing—a stout mandarin with a beard, peacock's feathers, a fan, and sheaths for his finger-nails—, who gave a nod of approval. Then the wayfarer was taken to the kitchen where, standing, he could dine *ad libitum*. Boiled fowl with rice was the common dish at this establishment, and over a thousand hens were tethered to stakes in the back yard. Tsing-Tsing hadn't the heart to coop them up. He gave a third of his income to charity, and when he died he was mourned with loud lamentations.

By this time the Chinese had spread to the mines. In 1852 a company of two thousand were scratching over the abandoned placer fields in a corner of Tuolumne county that soon acquired the name of Chinese Camp. Dissension sprang up between two rival tongs, the Sam Yups and the Yung Wos, and it culminated in a decisive battle that was waged in the light of bonfires and endured until dawn. The noise frightened half the inhabitants to death. The direct carnage, however, was slight: one killed and three wounded. Later they were all chased away by Mexicans who jumped their claims. Ten years ago I had the privilege of conversing with the two survivors of that bloody and historic episode: a pair of withered old men, dressed in black business suits, who lived in a shack overlooking the battlefield. Their minds were almost gone, but they still babbled of the fray like Chelsea pensioners.

The immigration from China increased rapidly. The building of the Union Pacific made labor high, despite the release of

man-power at the close of the Civil War. Enterprising steamship lines brought over from the Treaty Ports uncounted thousands of natives of the Canton province, the villages along the Yang-Tzse, and as far East as Sze-Chuen. The *Great Republic* disgorged nearly two thousand at a time. The sport of the townsmen was to watch the China boys land. Pennants and signs announcing the coming of the boat flapped on the street cars. All who could get away from office and shop rode down to the docks to see the panorama of the Orient unfold. The chief of police, flanked by a company in grey, armed with revolvers and clubs, first passed through the iron gates of the Pacific Mail wharf. Then the forward gang-plank was let down. The first to disembark were the white passengers. Then came the mandarins, followed by the lily-foot women, who teetered, with feet not much larger than walnuts, on stilt-like slippers. Even the Chinese spectators surged forward to admire them. Boats made of silver filigree were skewered to their head-dresses with gold daggers. Bullion adorned their sky-blue robes; bracelets and bangles of jade tinkled on their wrists and ankles. They held two fans before their faces, which were enamelled snow-white, with magenta lips. One might never behold them again, for being the betrothed of rich merchants they went into Carmelite seclusion for the rest of their days. Followed then the children, in long white coats and bangled caps, with the drooping eyes, the adorable swagger and impassive countenances of infant aristocrats. All these first chop arrivals were driven off in shining carriages.

Then, down the after gang-plank, swarmed for two hours the coolies. The agents of the Six Companies, yapping like ferrets, spotted each man and, according to his province, beckoned him to his section. They made no mistakes, these agents. Stature, a slant of the eye, the rake of a lip, an occipital angle—these were signs unmistakable to those learned in the arcana of tribal characters. With cries and

yells, the coolies were marshalled into gangs of thirty. Captained by the agents, they trotted under basket hats down King street and up Third, timorous as sheep and terrified by the sticks and boulders cast at them by the Nordic hoodlums who ran jeering by their side. In half an hour Chinatown and its dark ramifications had swallowed them up.

The flood seemed never-ending. The Chinese spread into the hinterland of the State. Not a camp, however small, but had its Chinese merchant, butcher, cobbler, farrier and house-boys, who usually, through their docility and steadfastness, worked themselves securely into the affections of the community. The newcomers were adept. In the city they made cigars, slippers, bird-cages, coffins, hats and shoes. They were capable masons, carpenters, barbers and fishermen. Perhaps too capable. Murmurings gathered, then arose the cry: "Chinese cheap labor is ruining us!"

#### IV

So the populace howled against them, and began to yank at their pigtails. There was no gainsaying that things had come to a deplorable pass. The great transcontinental railroad had been finished, and labor was again cheap. Wages for the unskilled had dropped below the point at which subsistence was possible for a white man. Yet the Chinese were doing very well. The middle class cherished them as domestics. As farmers, had they not raised the value of lands near San Jose over 200%? In that quarter there were no complaints, but feelings were hot in San Francisco.

Uncle Collis Huntington, Leland Stanford and the other railroad capitalists were blamed. Anson Burlingame, Ambassador to China, was burned in effigy. This statesman, an idealistic malcontent, who had been a Free-Soiler as far back as 1848, and who, as envoy to Vienna had antagonized Austria by his advocacy of Hungary's independence, and was accordingly transferred to Peking by President

Lincoln, had signed the Burlingame Treaty, which admitted China's rights to unlimited immigration. Previously he had done what was considered rather a shocking thing: he had resigned, through friendship with the Ta-Tsing government, his position with the United States, so that he might represent China as her envoy to the Treaty Powers. Sir Robert Hart had taken much the same step, without loss of prestige, but then he was a Briton. Burlingame was now an emetic to the Coast proletariat.

The anti-Chinese agitation partook of a communistic tinge. Largely it had been fostered by English Christian Socialists; a fact that passed unperceived by even so astute a visitor as Lord Bryce, when he looked into it. Its god was Denis Kearney, an extraordinary person who figures in California history as the Sandlot Orator. Kearney, a fighting Irishman, had come to San Francisco from the old sod in 1868, as first officer of the clipper *Shooting Star*. He became a gang boss at the Pacific Mail docks. He was hefty with tongue and fists, abstemious and shrewd, and in four years had saved enough to set himself up in the draying business.

Instead of drinking steam beer at the corner saloons, he went to the lectures at Dashaway Hall. This was the open forum of the city. Here were promulgated the Victorian and post-Transcendental virtues. Everything was discussed: poetry, total abstinence, elocution, animal magnetism, free trade, coöperation, and what not. If anyone wanted to expound an ism, all he had to do was put on a swallow-tail coat, mount the rostrum and spout. Here bands of earnest and forensic youths, with roached hair slicked with macassar, arose in debate and declaimed with the gestures set forth in McGuffey's Third Reader. Dashaway Hall was synonymous with culture. Citizens attended in broadcloth. Fanny Fern wrote luminously to the papers that it was comparable to Cooper Institute.

It was in this forum that Kearney became inspired. He enrolled in its Lyceum



of Self-Culture, and cultivated oratory at the weekly classes. At first he thrashed about like a brontosaurus in a beauty-shop, but even then he displayed flashes of genius—an explosive eloquence that hurled up a conglomerate of communistic ideas, academic jargon and dock lingo. He kept on improving. Then he got in with William Weelock, a cobbler from the London slums, gone blotto over Christian Socialism; a Bible shouter and long-haired demagogue, very much like the old Carlylean in Kingsley's "Alton Locke." It was Master Weelock who crammed Neophyte Denis with the fiery printed stuff that caused him to rear rampant. One of his books, a gem, I once possessed. It was F. W. Dooner's "Last Days of the Republic." This curious, but sincerely written work, is reminiscent of the British pre-war shocker, "The Battle of Dorking." It offers a retrospect of a United States under the thrall of the Mongol, and in spots is quite disturbing. The woodcuts, one showing a bloated mandarin, labelled "The Chinese Governor of California," and another depicting Washington crumbling before the guns of the pig-tailed conquerors, gave the California farmers a nightmare.

His studies over, Kearney began to bel-low for the proletariat. The time was ripe: it was now the year 1878. The Comstock lode was petering out. Mine after mine had shut down, and the depression fell heavily upon San Francisco, where the shares were owned. Collaterals tumbled; a dry year resulted in a dearth of crops; public projects were halted; manufacturing had already ceased. Were not the hell-born Chinese, the pestiferous yellow vermin, to blame? And who else but Denis Kearney could set things to rights? He discoursed at the cart-tail, and crowds followed him to the vacant sand-lots where he harangued the unemployed. He established the Workingman's party, whose slogan was "The Chinese must go!"

The docks of the Pacific Mail were burned by his infuriated partisans. The

homes of the millionaires, where the Chinese did kitchen work, on Nob Hill, were then attacked, and the city authorities armed the youth of the upper classes with pick-axe handles to repel *boi polloi*. After some inglorious shindies, Kearney, Weelock and some humbler aides-de-camp were cast into the iron-house. Kearney recanted, disclaiming any intention to incite violence, and the next day the attorney general informed the court that he had kept within his constitutional rights. Turned loose, he remobilized his cohorts, and revived the turmoil.

But after that nothing much happened. The uproar gradually died down. In 1885 the Burlingame Treaty was abrogated. The Workingman's party became confused in the public mind with the Populist party, and died the death. Kearney, grown stouter and less vociferous, went into the grain business, held without distinction a political office or two, and died quietly in 1906.

## V

For two generations San Francisco's famous Chinatown, a realm of banners and scarlet balconies, as colorful as Soochow and twice as odorous, has maintained its aloof identity. It is pent within a sliver of space, seven blocks long and three wide. It has neither grown nor shrunk in years. It is still invaluable to San Francisco as a lure for tourists, and as a lodging-place for her highly-paid Oriental help. In the face of the great sums the Chinese have spent in building Presbyterian missions, juvenile centers, and movie palaces, it remains invaluable as a locale for the weavers of dime-thrillers.

Yet sin was actually burnt out of it in the holocaust of 1906, and even its ghost exorcised in the anti-vice campaign of ten years later. Not a pigtail has been witnessed on its streets since the fall of the Manchu dynasty. It has never had a Chuck Connors. Its present Nestor is the learned and witty Ng Poon Chew, scholar and journalist. Its only crime of magnitude

within recent years has been that of promulgating the Mah Jong craze. True, back in the nineties it had one bad egg remaining in the person of Fung Ching, yclept Little Pete. But he was a prodigy.

Little Pete began his career as a vender of slippers. He was a dilettante in the arts, played the zither uncommonly well, and delighted in the music of crickets. He became owner of the Jackson street theater, and wrote most of the comedies in its repertoire. He did a little importing on the side, and brought over some scores of frail beauties, to sell at from \$1500 to \$2500 apiece, according to their looks. Next he tried his luck at the Tanforan races, just outside San Francisco. He bet on twenty-to-one shots. He had the Croesus touch. Wagering \$6000 daily, he cleaned up \$100,000 a month.

His system was direct and simple. He bribed the stablemen to poison the other horses. So Little Pete had to go to San Quentin for five years. He came out richer than ever, and more feared, because he knew his enemies. But one day, while he was in a barber-shop getting shaved and his bodyguard was sipping whiskey around the corner, an assassin shot through the door and killed him. There followed, somewhat absurdly, war to the death between the Sam Yups, the tong to which all the professional men and the merchants belonged, and the See Yups the organization of *hoi polloi*. The police were helpless, and so the Manchu consul, a diplomat, cabled to the Emperor Kuang Hsu, who at once summoned Li Hung Chang in far Peking, and asked him what to do.

"It is very simple," said Li. "Cast all the relatives here of the See Yups into jail. And off go their heads, every one, if a single Sam Yup in San Francisco is killed. August Highness, I have already cabled that message to California."

The scheme worked like a charm, and thus it was that a pagan monarch established peace in a Christian city ten thousand miles away.

Little Pete's funeral was the most gor-

geous ever held in San Francisco. The cortege, a mile and a half long, was headed by priests in mortar-board hats and black gowns, swinging rattles; the air was blue with cracker smoke, and vibrant with "Clare's Dragoons," played in ragtime on piccolos and trombones by three Chinese bands, going on the trot. Every hack on Portsmouth Square was hired for the occasion. Twenty express wagons hauled the funeral viands and cases of gin and tea. But woe befell the cortège at the cemetery. It was routed by the hoodlums of the town, who had tramped out to dine on the pork and mounds of snowy rice, the offerings at the grave. And Little Pete's spirit went to the other world hungry.

The last of such old-time funerals was held eighteen years ago. The day of pageantry and festivals is over. Last week I saw the funeral of a quite distinguished Chinese citizen. Six Fords followed the motor hearse, and the sole panoply was an enlarged crayon portrait of the deceased—one of those ugly things the corner grocer will have done for you for ten baking-powder coupons—, held upon the knees of the chief mourner.

Up to eighteen years ago, the Tsing Ming, or Pure and Resplendent Festival, on April 4, was observed with great ceremony. A thousand outdoor booths lined Grant avenue and Stockton street, and fruit, sweetmeats, roast pig and cakes were dished out free to passers-by. The balloon peddlers, the lily bulb sellers, the sword-dancers, the pipe-bowl menders, and the corner shoemakers all had their trays set out, with free victuals for all who asked. No Caucasian, however poor, need go hungry that day. Stout's alley and its basement saloons, the Roaring Gimlet and Every Man is Welcome, sent up patrons by the hundred.

There never was a handsomer dragon than the one that used to parade Grant avenue on the Chinese New Year's Day. It was a block long, ribbed and made of silk and brocades, hung with looking-glasses and mosaics of jade and garnet. Its

head, with staring eyes, out-thrusting tongue, breathing fire and smoke, and with more feelers than a catfish, was as fearsome as Apollyon. Five giants capered inside that head, wagging it, and uttering yells.

Ah Chic, star of the Jackson street theater, led the parade, glittering in a jewelled robe. Back of the dragon, and bearing high the colored lanterns, came the fine gentlemen and the merchants, arrayed in silk and cashmere, with their pantaloons gathered at the ankles. Then came their wives and girls in white, leading their children, all in gold hats musical with bits of jingling glass and metal, so effective in warding off evil spirits. Lastly came the commonalty—two or three thousand men carrying transparencies. A pleasing sight it was, and it made the real holiday of the San Francisco year.

But now that old grandeur has diminished, though a quite eye-filling bout with the dragon is still staged every New Year's. Parades have been done away with. On the Pure and Resplendent Festival the jollification is not visible to the passer-by. The *moon-kwang* and the *semisen* are strummed only within the family circle, and friends who drop in partake of a salad made of a hundred herbs. I remember a reporter calling up a Chinese mission on the great day to inquire how they were celebrating. The Chinese girl who answered, after a shocked pause, replied stiffly: "Those pagan observances are done away with. At the morning's mass, I believe, it was stated to be the Feast of St. Ambrose."

## VI

Chinatown is now very progressive. It supplies the needful ferment and money to Cathay whenever the liberal movement out there seems to be lagging. Here converge the secret influences that establish a printery in Hong Kong, proselytize in Hu-nan, and encourage the irredentists in Liao-tung. The political ramifications are complex almost beyond belief.

But those quaint figures of other days,

the highbinder and the hatchet-man, are as extinct as the Great Auk. Not a queue is left in the entire place. But the Chinese are nothing if not shrewd, and so they keep up a semblance of the old hocus-pocus to mystify and delight tourists. Licensed Caucasian guides—own cousins to the Civil War majors who used to hang around livery stables in the Middle West two decades ago—pilot around the visitors to stare at inoffensive jade workers, bespectacled apothecaries chopping up ginseng, and ancient chaps warming their hands at the corner ginger-root stands.

The primitive flavor of the place lurks only in the recesses of the New China Theater, where drama hot and tumultuous is served up gorgeously by itinerant troupes which travel under bonds from British Columbia to the Mexican border. The younger fry patronize the movies, but it's in the theatre where the oldsters hang out. One wet night I dropped in and was seated in the middle of a row occupied by middle-aged Celestials, all drawing at pipes the size of chair legs. A certain steaminess in the air was inexplicable until I perceived that every armchair was graced with a damp sock drying out. A young mother was suckling an infant. Some dandiacal youths—for the climax of the first act was not due for three hours—were immersed in the sporting pages.

"Here y'are, gents," piped the news butcher, "icey clean cones, clacker-jack, chooin' gum!"

Americanization is proceeding. The odium of the Kearney days has given way to haloes, and the Chinese domestic is now a luxury comparable with, say, a Rolls Royce. In brief, Cathay on the Coast has completed its circle. There is irony in the retrospect. Once the shriek of the Anglo-Saxon was: "No Irish need apply!" Then Hibernian accents were discerned in the later slogan, "The Chinese must go!" Now that Hawaiian-born Japanese are admissible to the mainland, Chinese voices are not at all unheard in protest against the invasion.



# COMMENCEMENT

BY SARA HAARDT

FROM where she was sitting on the left of the stage, Maryellen could see the whole family: Papa, in his new blue suit, his forehead shining pinkly; Mamma and Aunt Mamie in a whispered confab behind Aunt Mamie's turkey-tail fan; Billy, on the other side of Papa, wigwagging his programme at Dick Foster across the aisle, his head as sleek as a young seal's. Mamma looked sweet in her changeable silk, the hairs that straggled down from her knot softly crimped about her face. Aunt Mamie had seen to all the little details that put the finishing touches to their costumes. She might not have the means to do things, she always said, but she knew how they *ought* to be done; and so, as she had nothing but time on her hands, she could fuss around until she accomplished the little things. Maryellen was named for her—and Mamma—and it was natural she should take a special interest in her. Poor Aunt Mamie! She had her rhinestone pins in her hair and a tell-tale bloom on her cheeks tonight.

Mamma was nodding proudly, and Maryellen knew that Aunt Mamie had just said her dress was the prettiest of any of the six graduates. The other dresses, of course, were much more elaborate, the finest that could be bought in Meridian's ready-to-wear stores, but they had what Aunt Mamie called "a set air": Maryellen looked as if she had been melted and poured into hers. Taffeta was *always* good, and Mamma had paid three dollars a yard for the soft, lustrous quality that formed the foundation. Over the full skirt Aunt Mamie had draped the remnants of real rose-point lace, saved over from Mamma's wedding veil.

With a little conniving there had been enough for the sleeves and the fichu. . . .

A lovely being, scarcely formed or molded,  
A rose with all its sweetest leaves yet folded.

So Miss Bingham had quoted at the top of the programme, and Miss Bingham's dictum in Meridian was always the last word. That was why Mamma and Papa had wanted to send their only daughter to her school, though it cost more than they could afford, and the curriculum at the public high-school was much the stronger. Miss Bingham's girls were the sweetest and the prettiest, and Maryellen had acquired something that repaid Mamma and Papa, however much she seemed a stranger to them as she sat there in her shining white, holding the great cluster of American Beauties—the very ones that poor Aunt Mamie had pulled the thorns off—so carelessly in her arms.

What were they waiting for? It seemed a year to Maryellen since she had walked sedately to her place and watched for the little sign that Miss Bingham gave for all of them to sit down.

"Roses, where are you carrying that little girl!" Billy had teased years ago, as she turned slowly for Aunt Mamie to get the general effect. They *were* heavy, holding them so long in one position.

Billy was proud of her, in his shy way, and she acknowledged it with a stinging reproof. "Billy! Your hair looks like a rat's nest—"

"Aw, you give me the jim-jams. Ten' to your own self, an' you'll have a plenty to do!"

Billy—so unlike Mamma and Aunt Mamie, with their moist, shining eyes; or