

# PREACHER'S DAUGHTER

By Kyle Crichton

At her Bucks County, Pa., home, in the Pennsylvania Dutch hills, Pearl Buck inspects Artist Martha Sawyers' illustrations for the first part of her new novel

Her great novels of China, where she spent much of her life, gave Pearl Buck the first Nobel Prize for Literature awarded an American woman. Her newest story, *China Gold*, begins in this issue of *Collier's*

THE first picture is this: We drew up at the store in the little town closest to Pearl Buck's home in Pennsylvania and asked a man on the porch if he could tell us where she lived.

He pushed up the lugs of his cap and then ran the cap back on his forehead slowly. Then he looked at us steadily and took two quick chews which made the bones in his jaws stick out abruptly like semaphores and said:

"Don't rightly know for sure, but I think it's down that there road past the filling station."

"No," we said, "that can't be it. We have a letter here from Miss Buck. She says turn left at the store but we don't know which of these two left roads to take."

The man came down off the porch and in the dusk it almost seemed that

he was smiling. We held the instructions out for him to see, in Miss Buck's handwriting.

"Well, I guess she ought to know where she lives, oughtn't she?" he asked jocularly, after looking at the letter. "As a matter of fact, it's that right one of these two left ones there. Just about a mile down."

The second picture is this:

Miss Buck is living in China, where her father has been a Presbyterian missionary for fifty years. The Nationalist armies are approaching from the south in a revolutionary wave that is sweeping China. Preceding them come rumors of an antiforeign agitation that has caused the death of dozens of white men and women. When the army reaches Nanking, the rumors are only too horribly verified. Friends are murdered and the little party is helpless.

With Miss Buck and her husband are her old father and her two children and her sister and her husband and child. Their Chinese friends face death if they help the Foreign Devils. . . . But there is a Chinese peasant woman who dares death to save them. She leads them to her rude hut, a one-room earthen hovel. For fifteen hours they wait in terror. The marauding soldiers ransack the foreign house; they come to the doors of the hut but turn away because outside are playing the children of the Chinese woman, all innocent. By this time other Chinese friends have been recruited. They bring food, they throw the murderers off the scent, they protect the missionaries.

Such experiences leave marks that can never be erased, but Miss Buck prefers to remember the good side.

"If you use that story," she says, "please point out that although it was Chinese soldiers attacking our people, it was Chinese friends who saved us. They were good friends, good people."

The neighbors of Bucks County are also her friends, eager to protect her from the curious. Pennsylvania is millions of miles from China in spirit but the change has not been great for Miss Buck, because in a sense she is back among her own people. She is a Sydenstricker and her Pennsylvania Dutch neighbors recognize that name as belonging to them.

## A Preaching Family

The Sydenstricker family settled in West Virginia before the American Revolution and Pearl's father and five of his six brothers were preachers.

"The preachingest family in Greenbrier County," a reporter once wrote of them, "with dissenting blood as strong as lye."

All his life Andrew Sydenstricker insisted on bringing the message of Christianity to those sections of China that had known the least of it. The family often lived in remote places where no white man had ever before been seen and where the Foreign Devils were hated desperately. There were no houses to be rented; no friends to be found. They were often forced to live in conditions that approached squalor but they always had a home.

"That was my mother," says Miss Buck. "Just by being in a place, it took on the atmosphere of a home."

Miss Buck learned Mandarin Chinese before she learned English. Except for the summer months when the family went to the mountains with the other missionaries, her playmates were Chinese and she attended a Chinese school. Her mother was her tutor in English and the other subjects of an American education.

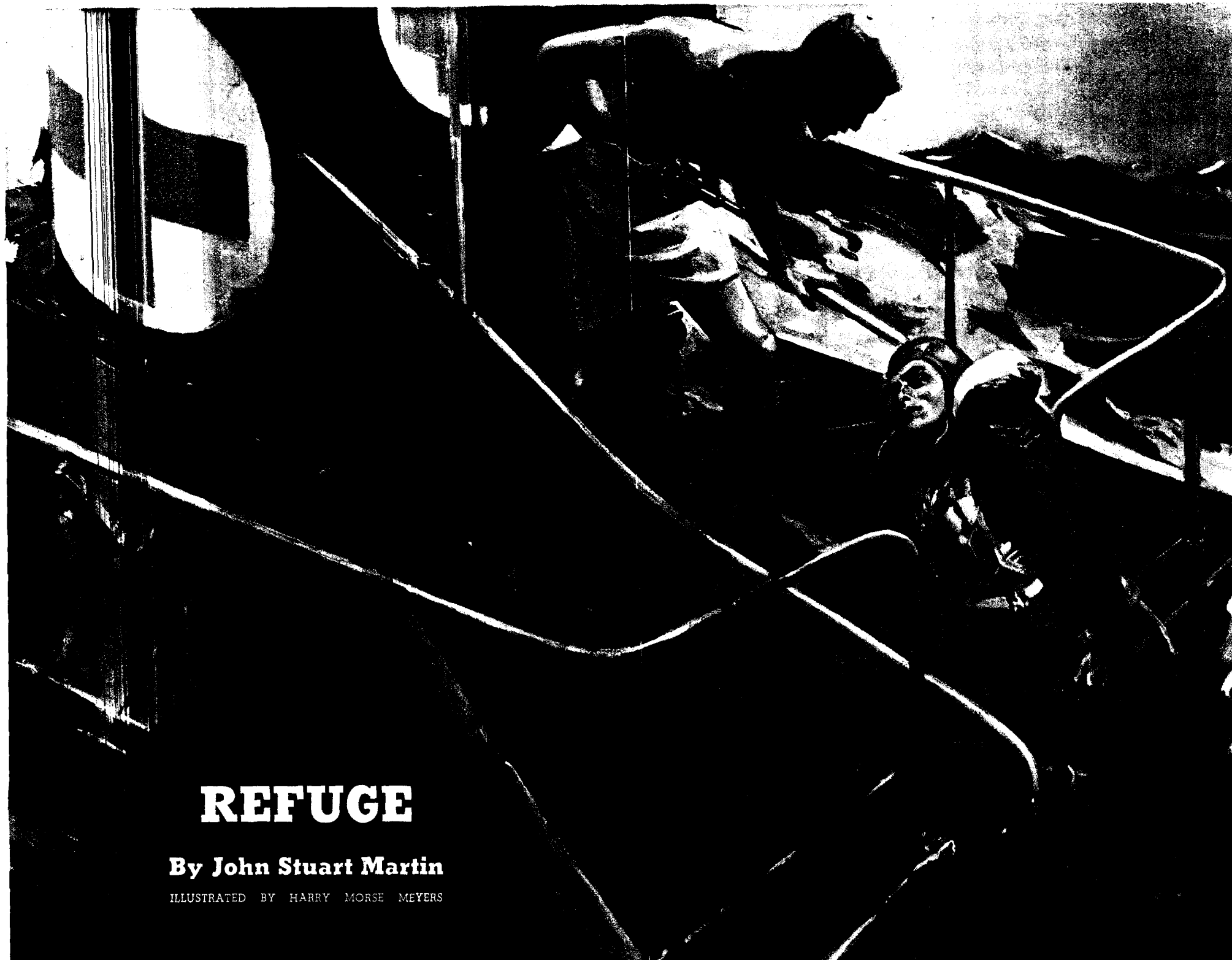
Getting to college was a problem because the Sydenstricker clan was horrified at the thought of a girl doing so. When she tentatively suggested that she had planned to go to Wellesley, the uproar was so great that she hurriedly retracted. The Sydenstrickers had fought for the Confederacy; their niece was certainly not going to a Yankee school. She was glad to settle for Randolph-Macon in Virginia, where her first days were sad because she didn't understand American girls and they knew nothing of her former life. She soon stopped saying that she had lived in China.

"They looked at me with round eyes and seemed to expect me to start speaking pidgin English," she says.

What shocked her more was the cost of education, and she soon found that she would have to work her way through, which she did by tutoring,

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PHOTOGRAPHED FOR COLLIER'S BY W. EUGENE SMITH



# REFUGE

By John Stuart Martin

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRY MORSE MEYERS

Air Gunner Fleming demonstrates that a man's luck increases in direct ratio to the courage of his fighting heart

AIR GUNNER FLEMING sat very still and regarded, as calmly as he could, the muzzle of the young German's pistol. Fleming's back was against a steel wall whose rivet heads, big as shillings, pressed coldly through his wet shirt. The steel decking beneath his outstretched legs was cold, too, and across it sluiced a half inch of sea water every time it heaved to a wave. Fleming shivered a bit but otherwise remained motionless, slouched in his corner, forcing himself to relax so that the young German might do likewise. Also, so that his aching body and broken arm would rest for an ordeal that must be only hours ahead, maybe only a few minutes.

Fleming hoped his face appeared calm. The young German, so very young, had been dangerously tense at first, almost beside himself. It was a wonder he hadn't pulled the trigger when the English face and uniform first appeared, dripping and desperate, in the hatchway. From a country boyhood spent close to dogs and horses, Fleming

knew how fear communicates itself, how necessary it is to compel inner calm so that you don't excite the other animal.

The young German was more self-possessed now, after an hour of sitting there, practically naked, with that deadly pistol in his hand. Now the hand was resting easy, downward across one knee. The pistol's muzzle was lowered and the young German, though still alert, had begun to look thoughtful.

The two men—they were boys in years but months of war had aged them—had stopped trying to talk after Fleming's first quarter hour aboard their strange craft. It was a sea-green German refuge float, swinging at anchor somewhere in the English Channel—Fleming wished he knew just where. It had a conning tower like a submarine's, mounted on an octagonal steel hull about twenty feet long and twelve wide amidships.

Fleming had sighted its bold sanctuary markings—red crosses in white circles—as his bomber staggered down

The German waited until Fleming dragged himself aboard, then sprung at him

through the fog. He had seen its steel radio mast shear off the bomber's left wing just before she smacked the water. That wrench had helped the fuselage to burst asunder just forward of the tail turret so that the nose and right wing instantly plunged under with the engines, and with the pilot and bombardier. Fleming, struggling free, had kept his eye on those red crosses over the wave crests. Supported by his "Mae West" kapok jacket and propelled by his unbroken arm, he had floundered over to the refuge ladder after a long, smothering agony.

ALL this the young German had seen from the hatchway, but he had waited inside the float, clutching his pistol, to confront his first Englishman. He had waited until Fleming dragged himself aboard, then sprung out commanding surrender in a voice so hysterically boyish that it instantly gave Fleming his behavior cue. Neither could speak the other's language but Fleming understood the subsequent commands: to undress, to show that he carried no side arm or grenades, to sit there in the corner.

The German was too keyed up by the situation, or perhaps by the benzedrine which some of Goering's boys are given before combat, to go on dressing in dry clothes from the float's lockers, at which Fleming's abrupt arrival had inter-

rupted him. When he saw that the Britisher knew no German he had continued speaking in bad French. One of his people's rescue launches would be along any minute, he announced; at most, in a few hours. Fleming, a prisoner, would be questioned thoroughly before being sent to prison camp—oh, but so thoroughly—about Britain's new high-altitude fighter.

Those devilish new fighters! Those long-nosed hell-spitters! One of them had shot down the young German's Heinkel in the same brawl out of which Fleming's Hudson had come crumpling down, only a few minutes before Fleming in this dirty fog. It might delay the rescue launch, this fog, but the launch would surely come. It always visited the refuge floats right after Channel air battles from which any of the Luftwaffe failed to return. And the Heinkel, going down, had had time to signal her position. The young German knew, because he himself had sent the signal. There was no one else to send the signal. The rest lay shot in their seats in the Heinkel by that murderous new high fighter. . . .

Fleming's French was no better than the young German's, but now that the boy had calmed down he guessed the time had come to try talking himself out of this hole. At least to see if this Jerry had any of that decency, that  
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