



I recognized Sergeant Starne, one of our best non-coms, but I did not know the woman

Mixed Marriage

A STORY

By Captain John W. Thomason, Jr.

U. S. M. C.

Illustrations by the Author

THERE had been fighting between our people and the French Colonial Infantry, in the *hutungs* east of Hatamên Street, and I was on detail as patrol officer until matters quieted down. Patrol duty is not exacting, because the fighting is finished by the time it is officially reported, and the actual shock troops are either laid up in the sick bay for repairs, or clapped into the brig; but our colonel likes to have a commissioned officer on the ground until the ugly passions of revenge are purged from the hearts of the soldiery concerned by the drastic action of courts-martial. The normal military police go on station through the district during liberty hours, and the officer has merely to take a look around at dark, and another about midnight,

and to be in reach of a telephone between times. It was late summer and a fine evening, and I left my ricksha on Hatamên, to go on foot up the *hutung* which leads to the Guard Y. M. C. A., and thence by a twisting course through the dark regions of the cabarets where our young men take their pleasure. As I approached the Y. M. C. A., there emerged from the door of its restaurant a marine in dress blues, with a woman on his arm.

The *hutung* here opens to the west, and the sun was down, but the afterglow filled the narrow way with ruddy light. The marine repelled a pack of ricksha coolies that sprang up, yelping for custom, and came along towards me with his lady. I recognized Sergeant

Starne of my machine-gun company; one of our best non-coms, large and magnificent in his dress blues; but I did not know the woman. She was large too, and on the buxom side, in a light mandarin coat of figured silk that followed her lines—what you might call a fine figure of a woman, if you like them that way. She turned her face toward me when the sergeant saluted, and it was a high-colored, rather handsome face. She had thick yellow hair, worn as a Chinese girl would wear it: cut square at about the angle of the jaw, and banged across the forehead. Her mouth was curved and red, and her brows were remarkable: they were very dark, and almost joined in a thick bar across her nose, an effect of distinction rather than beauty. For the rest, there was a firm chin, with no fat under it, and a strong round neck, like a column, and eyes that were neither blue nor violet, but of an odd color, somewhere between. I remember faces. And I knew that I had seen that face before, in another place, and a long time ago.

The *hutungs* were entirely tranquil: even the Yen Lee Bar, wrecked last night, had made repairs and was doing business. Our people drank their beer and cultivated their Korean girls with conscious virtue, under the eyes of the bored patrol. I rode home through the dusty Peking twilight, searching my memory for a name and place that evaded me. When I went back for my midnight round, I finished at the Du Nord bar, a German place of famous food and drink, and always orderly: but sometimes a marine goes to sleep in a corner there, and a deck court follows. Sergeant Starne and his friend sat at a table on the ladies' side, deep in serious talk. The woman was not, I thought, quite sober, and her face was raddled in the light, as though she had been crying; while the Sergeant had the bleak look that I have seen him wear when matters are not going well.

II

Now, I could have put a question to my sergeant, next day, but one does not intrude upon the personal affairs of enlisted men. And the thing stayed with me, like some old tune half-remembered, that throbs in your head but will not shape itself into notes. It annoyed me, and annoyed Leda also, because she found me abstracted when I should have made cheerful talk, or given correct attention to her own remarks. She said, it was plain that I had something on my mind, and she declared that she couldn't bear secretive people.

Then, of an afternoon while we drank tea with ourselves in the garden of our compound, and she rehearsed to me the seating arrangements for a little dinner we were having that night, it came to me. I straightened up, and said aloud, "I remember her—of course—" "Of course, what?" asked Leda, with a brittle note in

her voice. "Who is this you remember? I wasn't talking about a girl. I was asking you where you thought I ought to place old Colonel Rantor. You know I can't put him on my right, because there's M'sieur Braile, and he's a *chargé*. Really, I think you might be a little help to me. You might at least listen to what I'm saying. It's as much your dinner as it is mine. If you weren't in the Guard, I wouldn't have to worry about these official dinners. And here you are, mooning over some girl——"

I told her about it.

It goes a long way back, far enough to make me realize that I am getting old. In 1911, I entered the State University at Austin, where I took my meals in Mrs. Nettie Pine's boarding house with a dozen other freshmen. Mrs. Nettie Pine was a lady of the grenadier type. An air of pious gloom hung about her pale features, and pervaded the dustless spaces of her house. The authorities recommended her establishment to the anxious parents of new students, because of its high moral atmosphere, but she had few second-year boarders: when you are a sophomore, you are able to make your own arrangements. She was a lady mighty in good works, a pillar of her church, and a notable supporter of foreign missions, especially those in the Chinese field; and she loved to discourse on such things to the young men at her table. It is fair to add that she fed abundantly and well, although you had to be on time to meals, and to bow under Grace before them. And then there was Mrs. Pine's daughter, Maydelle.

Maydelle was hard to account for. Her mother might, you considered, have been good-looking when she was young, but Mr. Pine was a dim little reddish man with a stringy neck and a pot-belly, who had some vague job in the Capitol. He ate with us, silent and apprehensive under Mrs. Pine's formidable eye, and smoked a corn-cob pipe on the porch afterwards. He never said anything, except on Saturday nights when he came home with a moist look, and the smell of cloves about him; then he was apt to lash out with surprising opinions on the Spanish War, in which he had participated to the extent of going to Corpus Christi with the Texas volunteers and having typhoid fever. Mrs. Pine made no secret of the fact that she regarded him as a weak vessel, unfit to be trusted with his own spending money.

But Maydelle, their daughter, was lovely. She was, as the freshman from Uvalde said, as pretty as a painted pony. She was eighteen or so, and, across the years, I remembered a tall girl, just rounding out, and not too much of her anywhere. She had a great wealth of yellow hair, which she did in thick plaids wound around her small head, with a fringe in front, just short of her brows. And those brows were nearly black, and joined across her nose, while her eyes had very long and dark lashes, and were the color of the purple

iris, that bloom on the Texas prairies in the spring: the flower they call the blue bonnets. Her mouth was long and curved and red, and should have been good-humored, but it was usually sullen. For Mrs. Pine had—as she would tell you, frequently—the strictest ideas on the bringing up of girls. Maydelle could not join a sorority: they were frivolous and foolish. She could not have engagements with young men; they turned a girl's thoughts from the worth-while things of life. She could not dance: that was against the Discipline of the Church. Maydelle was being brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and that was all there was to it. Many were, in Texas, twenty years ago. One afternoon, passing the house, I saw her drying her hair at an upstairs window. She had let it out in the sun, and it hung over the sill, nearer two yards long than one, like Rapunzel's in the fairy tale. I stood and gazed, with my mouth open, until she noticed me. The shade banged down, and Maydelle would not meet my eye for a week.

Of course all of us fell desperately in love with her, but, as Mrs. Pine grudgingly admitted, she was a sweet, good girl, and we were not encouraged, neither in the house, nor in class, nor around the campus. I remember my attempt, for I tried to fall in with her on the way home at noon. "I wish you'd go along," she said, evenly, looking me in the eye. "You'll only get me into trouble with Mother." Then she gave me a steady view of the prettiest profile in the University, and I retired in bad order. What else? But it was worth while, just to look at her three times a day, and for the rest of your leisure, there were plenty of delicious girls, not guarded like Danaë in her brass tower.

That year, the autumn was running into winter when there came to Mrs. Pine's boarding house a Manchu gentleman named Chang—Mr. Chang, the first Chinese student our university ever received. Now, they tell me they are all over the place. He had credits from some Northern college or other, and he entered our School of Law. He turned up at Mrs. Pine's by chance, but Mrs. Pine was delighted. She had, for many years, contributed to the uplift of the yellow heathen, and now she was rewarded by being able to receive one of those interesting creatures under her own roof. Although she did not, in ordinary, take lodgers—except two desiccated ladies of the Fine Arts Department—she gave Mr. Chang her best room, and seated him on her right hand at the table, with Maydelle at his side.

This Mr. Chang was a slender man, with narrow shoulders and small-boned, beautiful hands that seemed of little use to him. He had a pale, triangular face, the color of old parchment, and a head of glistening black hair, brushed back and never disarranged. His narrow bright eyes were set at the slightest of angles, and his nose was low in the bridge, thin, and faintly aquiline.

He had a ready smile, but his usual expression was one of bland indifference, and in those first months, a stranger, he only spoke when spoken to. His voice was high and small, but his English was precise, and rather better, I imagine, than our own lazy Southern dialect. To most of us he remained a stranger. He had the unfailing, flawless courtesy of an ancient people, and nobody ever knew what went on behind those smooth eyes of his: we wrote him off as an inscrutable Oriental, and were a little proud of him. Now that I have served some years on the Chinese Station, I consider that he was not mysterious at all; he was merely bored, a Chinese gentleman exiled among the Outer Barbarians. The Chinese are not, as a race, inscrutable. They are incapable of concealing anything, and they pass their lives on the edge of hysterics, with nerves as tight as fiddle strings.

Mrs. Pine made the most of him. She drew from the university library all the books on China—there were not many—and read up the reports from the foreign missions of her church. We heard a great deal about China at the table that winter—most of it from Mrs. Pine. Mr. Chang listened with his invariable politeness, and said, "Yes, the missionaries did a great deal of good," and words to that general effect. From the first Sunday, she took him to church, along with Maydelle: Sunday school and the service in the morning, evening services, prayer meeting on Wednesday nights, and song service Fridays. The three became a familiar sight, pacing sedately: Mrs. Pine, majestic as a line-of-battle ship under full sail; Mr. Chang, quiet and decent in his good new English clothes, with his hat set precisely on the centre of his head; and Maydelle on the other side, handsome and a little sullen. We were told plainly, one evening, that Mr. Chang was a reproach to us—a living, breathing reproach. Here he was, redeemed from the error in which he was born, walking in the light; while we, sons of Christian homes, devoted the Sabbath to idle courses, such as reading magazines, and picnicking on the Colorado River, and playing dominoes. Mrs. Pine said we ought to be ashamed.

Spring is always a pretty time of the year in central Texas. The brown fields of southern winter come green again, and the purple iris colors the prairies. Soft new foliage, yellow-green and emerald, brightens the dark masses of pine and cedar on the low hills. The budding tall cottonwoods around the campus are crowded overnight with congregations of blackbirds—the great noisy grackles, with iridescent plumage and yellow eyes, loafing north with the sun. The cardinals go about the business of mating like darts of flame in the gardens, and the mocking-birds sing marvellously from among the pear blossoms. The canoes break out with fresh paint on the river, and we buy light spring suitings and new neckties, while each co-ed is more beautiful

than the next. Those days, Maydelle and Mr. Chang began to walk home together from classes, and we assumed the benediction of Mrs. Pine. But spring is no time to watch another affair—you have your own in hand. I remember in that April a dark girl from San Saba County: her first name was Clem, and she was a Tri Delt sister, and her last name I have forgotten, but it is probably changed now. Maydelle was as easy to look at as ever, but I did not linger after supper, when they sat out on the porch in the glamorous warm evenings—I had another place to go.

Then, one Monday morning towards the end of May, with Commencement in sight, and the pleasant bustle of proms and germans in the air, Maydelle did not appear at breakfast, nor did Mr. Chang. Mrs. Pine was in her chair, with a face like death, and the Negro boys looked pop-eyed and scared. By noon, the campus buzzed with it: Maydelle had run away with the Chink, or the Chink had run away with her, Sunday night after church. It was reported that they had been seen, getting aboard the eleven o'clock Katy Flier to San Antonio. Mrs. Pine's house, in the evening, was full of friends condoling with her, as Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar condoled with their friend Job. It was understood that she stated: she had warmed a viper in her bosom, or two vipers, and that the girl Maydelle was dead to her. There was some talk of lynching, but nobody was available to lynch. Mr. Pine got drunk. A group of sophomores, inflamed with beer, on the way up from Second Street, tossed brickbats through the windows of the inoffensive Cantonese laundrymen



established in that quarter; and a week later vacation was starting, and we forgot it. By next term it was a legend of the university, and I have not thought of it for twenty years.

"Well," commented Leda, after listening politely, "if this should happen to be the same person, it would be too much of a coincidence, really. Now, about Colonel

Rantor—I wish you'd get me the date of his commission—I'll ask somebody about that woman, if you'll find out her name. There're lots of funny people in Peking that you never see or hear of."

III

Soon after this, mounting guard as Officer of the Day, I observed with pleasure that Sergeant Starne had the Wall detail of the Guard. It was in the midst of one of those periodic spells of nervousness peculiar to Peking, when the air grows suddenly electric with rumors, and the sentries are enjoined to exercise especial vigilance. The high mass of the Tartar Wall is the backbone of our defence, and with Sergeant Starne holding it down, I knew that I could dismiss it from my mind, for he is that kind of a non-com. I finished my forenoon inspection with a walk along his sector, ending at the blockhouse by Chien Mên where our bastion overlooks the railroad station and the entrance to the teeming Chinese city, and I leaned in the angle of the old gray sun-warmed stone to rest, and to regard the swarming purlicus of Chien Mên, which is a sight that never tires you. Camels, rickshas, motor cars, ponies and mules in Peking carts, and little laden donkeys, and porters loaded beyond the limit of any respectable beast, and aimless leisurely pedestrians with no engagements, and beggars, and priests, and soldiers, all mill below you in noisy confusion, which is the way China does its business. And Sergeant Starne came along the wall, saluted, and stood easy near me.

I have known the Sergeant for a long time: we remember each other in great battles, when he was a company runner in the 8th Machine Gun Company, and I was in the first battalion of the 5th Marines, and we were both lighter on the feet and slimmer in the waist than we are now. A policeman, passing underneath us with two prisoners, drew our attention, and the Sergeant said he had seen an arrest made on the Ta Chan An Chih yesterday: the Shimbo ran up to his man, with that little coil of rope they carry instead of handcuffs, and made three motions, quicker than you could see with your eye—and there the bird was, all hog-tied, so that if he kicks any, he just strangles himself. We agreed that the Chinos had some very clever tricks. Then he said, stiffening, that he wanted to ask the Captain for advice. There was trouble in his broad, good soldier face.

Certainly, I told him, ask ahead. I never take advice myself, but giving it is easy.

"Well, sir, it's like this. I've got sixteen years in, this winter, and I want to get paid off out here and go in the Fleet Reserves. There's nothing for me back home, except more soldiering, and old Gimpel is offering me

half a share in his business, if I go in with him. He says he's getting old, and he wants to slow up. I think it's a good chance for me."

I thought it a good chance too, and told him so, much as I'd hate to see him leave the service. Gimpel's Restaurant and Butchery Shop, on Hatamên, is much patronized by the Guard and the foreign colony, and very like a high-class German establishment in Hoboken. Gimpel himself is an old Marine, who was discharged on the station years ago, with much the same opening that he now offered Starne. "We can get you a special-order discharge, of course," I told him. "And as I remember the last pay roll I signed, you have money on the books—"

"Yes, sir. And considerable on my clothing allowance, and a little in the bank. A gold dollar goes a long way out here, now, with the exchange at four for one, and I don't blow it around, like some do. But that ain't what I was speaking to the Captain about. I want to get married."

As I have said, one does not ask questions. So I remarked, merely to show that I was following with attention, "Yes. Saw you the other night, coming out of the Y—"

"And in the Du Nord, sir. No, that wasn't her, sir—that old battle-ax. That's her mother, old Maydelle—Mrs. Maydelle Chang. I was giving her some state-side chow in the Y restaurant, which she said she craved. Then she wanted a brandy, and we went on to the Du Nord. I was trying to bring her around to my side. But I had no luck, sir. She wasn't takin' any."

"What did you say her name was?" I asked him. "She looked like somebody I used to know."

"Chang, sir. Maydelle Chang. She married a Chino student—ran off with him from the States, and thought she married him, but it seems like he put one over on her. I don't think that the Captain knows her. She's been in Peking twenty years. Told me all about it, the other night. What I think," the Sergeant concluded seriously, "is that she's crazy. Crazy as a bedbug. And if what she tells me is true, it's no wonder."

Then I heard, in the Sergeant's clipped laconic phrase, the latter end of the love story which we saw begin in that forgotten April on the other side of the world. For it was Maydelle.

IV

They did, indeed, board that Katy Flier out of Austin, but they did not stop in San Antonio: they went on to Mexico City, where they were married by a *juez de instruccion*. The Sergeant was definite on that point; she had shown him a certificate, which he, having served much in the Latin Americas, recognized per-

fectly. Then Mr. Chang explained that urgent family affairs summoned him home to China, and he had already described to her, at length, the splendors of his ancestral halls, the courtyard, and the rock gardens, and the deep pools lighted by the languid flashes of the gold fish kept therein; and the numerous servants, and



"I want to get paid off out here and go in the Fleet Reserves"

the jades, and the silks, and the Siberian furs, and the glory of Peking, which was, he said, the centre of the world. No doubt it sounded better to the girl than Austin, Texas, and the elevated austerities of her mother's house. She went gladly with him to Mazatlan on the West Coast of Mexico, and they took passage on a Japanese ship for Taku.

"The way she told me about it," he said, "I blame her old lady, who was a holy kind of a party, always going to church and such, and turning out Maydelle for all formations. That's all right, if you like it; but she gives the girl no liberty, which is bad. Wouldn't let her have any dealings with boys. Kept her in all the time, same as a runnin' guard. But the old lady had a boarding house, and this Chang billets himself there, right on the inside track. Maydelle musta been pretty in those days—she's no bad looker now, considering what she's been through—and the Chino likes a big blonde woman sometimes—look at all these Russkys. Maydelle says he was the first man that ever touched her: used to hold

her hand in church, right under Mama's nose. And then she let him in her room, nights. She learned about men from him, she did. Pretty soon there's a kid on the ways. If this Chang had been an American guy, that's when he'd a left town. Chang beat it, all right, but he took Maydelle with him, and she says she was glad to go. It's strange to me, but I never hear her say a hard word about that fellow. She says he treated her decent, as long as he lived, accordin' to his lights. I wonder," commented the Sergeant thoughtfully, "if these Chinamen haven't got something we don't know about. I've seen women crazy about them.

"She told me," continued the Sergeant, "That the trip across the Pacific was the happiest time she ever had in her life. She cried, talking about it. It took two brandies to get her sensible again."

They came on to Peking, it being 1912, with the dust of the first revolution just beginning to settle; a troubled time. She found that Mr. Chang had set forth with accuracy the details of his father's house: it was one of those old sprawled-out palaces in the West City, courtyard on courtyard, and pavilion on pavilion, with a miscellaneous horde of servants and hangers-on. There were, also, the silks and jades and ivories and porcelains, such things as she had never seen before. And goldfish pools in the Ming garden, not quite deep enough to drown you. But Mr. Chang had neglected to mention one detail—there welcomed him, with the rest of his clan, his wife, a fattish Chinese lady with two girl-children. And it was at once plain to Maydelle that her Mexican marriage was in Peking no marriage, and that her status in the house was that of a concubine.

Concubines have their place in the society of old China, authorized by law and confirmed by custom; a place not at all dishonorable, but hardly satisfactory to a Western woman with Maydelle's background. The Sergeant's impression, from her account, was that she went out of her mind at this time, and stayed that way until her baby was born. The head of the house was Chang's mother, a terrible old Manchu lady, "very hard-boiled," Starne considered. "Maydelle says everybody was afraid of her, Mr. Chang just as much as the rest of them. Dressin' the old lady, in the mornings, was a sort of a ceremony, like guard mounting, which all the women turned out for; and Maydelle says she's seen her stab the servant girls with those long silver hairpins they have, when they were fixin' her hair, and pulled it. Says she'd stand them at attention in front of her and stick the pins through their cheeks. And Maydelle was the foreign devil in that layout, an' no mistake. This Chang was so scared of the old madam that he hardly ever came to see her, and the only other person decent to her was the number one wife. Maydelle says she was as kind as could be—taught her to embroider—taught her some Chinese game or other

that they played to pass the time—taught her enough of the language to get along on, and helped her out when the kid came. She had a pavilion all to herself, and an old hare-lipped woman to wait on her, but she was all-same prisoner. She tried to smuggle a word out to the Legation, but she never heard from them. She even wrote home to her mother—and she says that was the hardest thing she ever did in her life—and the number one wife slipped the letter out for her. After so long a time the letter comes back, in a big envelope with a state-side stamp—just torn across in its envelope, without being taken out. Maydelle's mother must have been hard-boiled herself I reckon, from what she told me, that old lady would have been a good running mate for the Manchu woman."

Her standing improved after the baby came, because it was a boy-baby. Maydelle moved to a better pavilion, with a little more latitude; but for years she was never outside the palace: its walls bounded her life. There were three more children: a little boy that died, and then two girls that lived. And Maydelle noticed that the household was running down. Courtyards, occupied when she came, began to be emptied. Mr. Chang was away more and more; the old mother grew more angry and more savage. Outside in the world, things were happening: there was a great new tide flowing through China, and the house of Chang was in the path of it.

As it was with the house of Chang, so it went with all the Tartar families around the throne of the Ta Ch'ing, the Great Pure Dynasty. When the Manchus broke into China from the north, to sweep out the decayed Mings, they were a virile people, hard riders, ardent in war and keen at the chase, mighty eaters and drinkers, and strong begetters. Tall, big-boned men, they were at home in iron armor and the skins of beasts. They took the land of the Three Kingdoms as a soldier takes a fine girl, and they settled at ease when the fighting was done, to enjoy their conquest.

Then China had its way with them, as it has had with all its conquerors, even the terrible riders of Ghengis Khan. They bedded soft, who had slept in sheepskins on the bare ground: they bred their sons from the perfumed lily-footed women of the south, and those sons wore padded silk in place of iron plate, and forgot the saddle and the bow. In the room of K'ang-si and Chien Lung, opium-sodden degenerates came to sit on the Dragon throne. The Manchus were, in numbers, the slightest fraction of the inert millions of the land, and the state maintained them as a military caste, too noble for any kind of work. When the last revolution burst upon them, the iron-capped princes were a legend, and the virtue had gone out of their children. Ornamental and ineffective, they passed with their Emperor, and the savage slaughters and confiscations of

the Republic left only a few of them, shorn of their great possessions, to fade with their memories in their dwindling palaces.

Mr. Chang had been sent abroad through some whim of the Prince, his father, in the last years of the Empire. to study the new learning of the West. Returning after the Revolution, he found that the old Prince had committed, as they say, self-ending, unwilling to survive his fortune; and that he himself was, by that same new learning, alienated from his own people. This is the common lot of the returned student. He fished in the troubled waters of counter-revolution, and tried his hand at politics, which is the resort of glib emptiness, but he had little luck.

The palace in the West City had been saved from the general ruin by his furious old mother, and it was presently living on the sale of its treasures, piled up carelessly in the lavish days. First went the few *mow* of land, overlooked by greedy republicans, outside the Antingmên. Then, piece by piece, each yielding a handful of silver to carry them a while, they sold the porcelains, the scrolls, the jades and the ivories curiously carved, and the rugs and the snuff-bottles, and the r'ang horses, and the heavy red-wood furniture. As a courtyard was stripped, they closed it, and the servants fell away, and the years slid by, for time is a thing without meaning in China. Mr. Chang fell sick, one winter, and died slowly, between the hands of his wife and his yellow-haired concubine—poisoned, Maydelle thought; and the sale of certain old gifts from the Empress Dowager paid for the mean funeral procession that wound through the fields to the tombs of the ancestors. The old mother died. Maydelle, and the number one wife, and the children, now growing up, were huddled in one courtyard, with an old servant or two; and the weeds thrust out between the flagstones, and grass sprouted on the broken tiles of the roofs, and the Ming garden was a thorny wilderness where Maydelle's youngest was once lost for a whole morning.

"You know, sir," Starne commented, thoughtfully, "Maydelle has guts. After that one squeal to her maw, she never asked anybody for anything: she took it on the chin, and went on takin' it. Now, the way she tells me, she sort of comes out of it. She sees that steps have got to be taken, and she takes them. There's a Chinese swell that she remembers, a politico, pretty high up, a friend of this Chang's. She sends for him, and he gets her a job in one of these here middle schools, as they call them—you know, sort of high school, teaching English. That's a little money, enough to eat on regular. Besides this, she has some support from the politico. She was always a big, good-looking woman, strong as a horse, and she had kept her health. She'd come to where she didn't give a dam' for anything, and she did what she could. Through this politico, she gets her son, who's now

coming on, appointed to a military academy of the government in the south—Nanking?—and he graduates with a commission in the army. He seems to have been a pretty good boy: came to see her when he could, went through some of these wars, and goes in for aviation. He was killed in Shanghai last winter, fighting the Japs. I remember when it happened: it was in the papers, but nothing else about him. You wouldn't have noticed, sir. The girls grew up. The oldest one—she was red-headed, Maydelle says, and a good looker—was always a sort of warm baby, and runs off. Maydelle don't know where she is, and don't want to know. But the youngest—her name's Louise—takes an education, such as it is, around here, and Maydelle got her placed, through a friend of hers, in that Caravan curio store—thus disrespectfully did the Sergeant refer to the establishment of my friend Enid Bond, the Caravan, which is one of the rare shops of the world, having connections in New York and Paris and Moscow. "Wait," I said, with excitement, you mean that Eurasian girl in the Caravan—Enid calls her by a Chinese name—clever as she can be—very pretty—"

"Yes, sir. That's her." The Sergeant chuckled. "Hwa Mei, that's her Chinese name—means Golden Mouse. That's just part of the joint's window-dressing. She's a dam' fine girl. She's the girl I'm telling you about. Lives at the Chinese Y. W. C. A. and works in the Caravan. That's Louise."

"Her mother don't keep her at home?"

"No, sir. Not for some years. You see—now, Captain, I ain't criticisin' Maydelle. She's had the hardest time of anybody I know, and the worst breaks. She still lives out in the old palace, with the number one wife and the number one wife's girls, and keeps them up. But she's fixed up a courtyard off to one side, for herself, and she has her friends come to see her. She stands in with some of the Chino swells, and there's a few of the senior non-coms that go out now and then. You can have a little game there, if you want: everything is very quiet and decent. She's still in the school—I don't know how she runs her affairs—but she runs them. And she don't want Louise to see that kind of thing, so Louise lives outside, and goes there, maybe, once a month. They get along."

I thought it over, while the Sergeant looked down into Chien Mên. Finally, I told him that I didn't see the difficulty. Louise, I supposed was willing—"Well, sir, it's all right between her and me." "Why," I told him, "I should think the old lady would be delighted. What's the objection? She know too much about you?"

"No, sir. All I ever took at her place was a few beers. I don't gamble, either, except a little penny-ante, and now and then some craps at the N. C. O. Club. And before I started going with Louise, I had my own little arrangements east of Hatamên. And she knows I

stock up as well as anybody around here, and better than most, if I do say it myself. What she's down on is these mixed marriages. She says, I'm an American—like she was. And her child is neither American nor Chino—she's nothing—neither one thing nor the other. She says, mixed marriage won't do. She says, she'd better have died, than to have done like she did, and her children better never been born. She was glad when that boy crashed. She says her children would be better dead, for there's no place in the world for them, and no place for their children, and that the way to stop a bad thing is to stop it. So she says she rather see her daughter dead than married, and that if she couldn't stop it any other way, she'd kill her. And she meant it. She told me, that night in the Du Nord. She means what she says, that bird, and you know, sir, people die in this country—they die quick and easy and mysterious, and how do the police know what goes on back in a compound? They tend to their own business, the police do.

"But that ain't what stops me," the Sergeant finished, miserably. "I can take care of my wife: I ain't scared of the old lady, or anything else, that I can think of right now. The war cured me of being scared. It's Louise. She's as bull-headed, in her way, as her mother is. She says the old lady's had all the hard luck she rates, and she ain't going to add any to it. She won't go against her."

"Well, I don't see what I can do," I told him. "What do you want me to do? Tell me, and if I can, I'll do it. You think it would help if I went and talked to her?"

"No, sir: if it was me she was down on, I'd thank the Captain for a good word. But that ain't it. I don't

know. I just hoped the Captain would think of something—" Seven bells struck at the Guard House below us, and we both had duties. I told him, as we moved off, that I'd see about it. I didn't believe that it would help for me to recall to her the old days, because, if she had wanted a contact with her own people, she could have had it; and it was plain that she was through with all that. I might make a bad matter worse. So I did nothing.

The other day, while I signed papers in my company office, there entered Sergeant Starne, and formally asked permission to request a special-order discharge on foreign station, with transfer to the Fleet Marine Reserve status. Certainly, I told him: we'd write the letter and forward it approved. That affair disposed of, my First Sergeant congratulated him, informally, on the housewarming of the night before, and I then understood why that invaluable non-commissioned officer's hand was so shaky, when he indicated the places for me to sign my name. And I observed that the face of Sergeant Starne was the face of a happy man. "You settled your affairs to suit you?" I asked him.

"Yes, sir: everything's lovely." He grinned. "I was dam' dumb, not seein' it quicker. I told you the old lady was crazy. Well, what she kicked about was marriage—gettin' all tied for good an' all. Now me and Louise are shacked-up—got a swell little Chinese house over by the Observatory—and everybody's happy. I don't know but what, after I get paid off, me and Louise will take a run down to Shanghai, or somewhere, and get church-married—if she still wants to. But any way you take it, it seems to me like it's another one on the old battle-ax."



After the Family—What?

By Ella Winter

Family life is weakening all over the world, but nowhere so much as in Soviet Russia where new conceptions have almost completely replaced the old. Mrs. Lincoln Steffens, from her experience in Russia, throws much interesting light upon the evolution of morals from the early excesses of the new freedom to the present.

WHAT struck me particularly in America," said a Soviet educator on her return from the United States, "was that over there you think of the child primarily in relation to the family. We stress his relation to society."

"The family is not such a vital educational influence as it once was," said another, "and we do not believe it should come first in our considerations. Our children are not only members of a family unit, they are members of a class-room, a school, a Pioneer or Comsomol (Young Communist) group, a community. And these, not the family, should play the vital and predominant rôle in training and shaping them."

Family life is weakening in Russia because many functions the family used to perform are now undertaken by other agencies which perform them better than did the old individual home. Crèches and nursery schools take charge of small children, placing them in trained and expert hands; mechanized laundries take over Monday's washing and Tuesday's ironing from the housewife; meals are provided in restaurants and communal kitchens attached to farm and school and enterprise, so that no meals need be prepared in the individual apartment if the housekeeper does not wish it. Or if the family wants to eat at home, and yet not cook, a meal can be bought ready prepared at a factory kitchen and carried home in thermos containers. Some of the new workers' apartments are built with only a gas ring, no kitchen, for those who want to eat their main meals at their place of work or play. Others again have kitchenettes which "can be turned into closets when life is altogether communalized," as one architect explained.

It is true that some Communist writers advocated the break-up of the family long before the Revolution—but the break-up of the "bourgeois" family. What they railed against in the bourgeois family was its hypocrisy, its enslavement of women, its double-standard of morals, its difficulty of divorce, and the unjust penalizing of illegitimate children. Communists also disapprove of

the domination of parents over children through their economic power. "From this the conclusion must not be drawn that men in the Revolutionary movement should not have families, nor the women bear children," said Lunacharsky, ex-Commissar of Education. "The main kernel of society is the family." But, he added, Communists could not decide in advance what form the new family would take. Trotsky, in his little book *Problems of Life* published in 1925, wrote: "Family relations are being shattered, some big chaotic process is going on"; but no one knew what would finally happen. Communists are as interested as any foreign observer in what is developing in their new society.

In other countries many of these changes are taking place also though perhaps in less organized fashion and in different proportions in different classes. While more children of the well-to-do spend their school-days at boarding schools and holidays at boys' and girls' camps, more workers' children utilize public playgrounds, parks and libraries. Material conditions, and therefore social life, are changing in the rest of the world enough for President Hoover's Committee on Recent Social Trends to report that "Many of the economic functions of the family have been transferred to the factory; its educational functions to the school, its supervision over sanitation and pure food to government." And elsewhere the report states: "The church and the family have declined in social significance. . . . Church and family have lost many of their regulatory influences over behavior." In these respects therefore it is not Bolshevism that is "destroying the family" but rather the same tendencies in all countries, the result of forces characteristic of our century, that are modifying social institutions everywhere.

It is a misapprehension which believes children are taken from their parents at birth in Soviet Russia. Parents and children live together; a few Communist parents send their children to pioneer homes as American children may go to boarding school; but the great majority live with their parents. Children are not the