KAI WANG;

A TALE OF SOUTHERN CHINA.

CHAPTER XVI.

When Plympton glanced around the junk's luxurious cabin again, it was with entirely different motives from any that may have influenced his previous hasty surveys.

Then a means of escape had been his only thought, whereas now he was inclined to search the walls for a stock of weapons.

Since the cabin had been occupied by Count Petoskey and his fellows from Neva, it would be only reasonable to suppose that some of their weapons might be left around.

In an affair of this kind a spare revolver or perhaps a repeating sporting rifle would prove quite a God-send to the beleaguered ones.

Larry guessed what motive influenced his comrade, and he, too, commenced to sweep his eyes around the interior, forgetting, such was his earnestness of purpose, to use the noble monocle that dangled unheeded by its cord.

Evidently Larry was of the opinion that this was hardly the time for foolishness. Such follies might do for the gay promenade or the ballroom, but were utterly out of place when the tumult of war was in the air, and human lives paid toll to the passions of men. Again had the heavy thud in the direction of the doors announced the determined purpose of those on deck to force a passage.

It would not be very long ere these tremendous blows accomplished the purpose for which they were intended, and the fight must be renewed.

Such a conviction urged them to better their condition while there was yet time, if it lay within their power to accomplish it.

It was Larry this time who made a discovery that caused him to cry out—Larry, who staggered forward, and, throwing aside some hanging curtains, revealed an object that electrified the other—Larry, who bent down and began to pull and haul as though seized with a sudden desire to become a packhorse. Lord Rackett was by this time at his side, uttering little whoops of tremendous satisfaction, and when the enormous power in his muscular frame was brought to bear upon the object that riveted their attention, it was speedily dragged into the open.

It was nothing more or less than a little brass darling of a modern breech-loading cannon, which the count possibly had aboard in the hope and expectation of surprising some piratical junk by which he might incidentally be attacked while on one of his many cruises in Chinese waters.

A very careful and prudent man was this same Count Petoskey, and our friends were just now in a position to thoroughly appreciate the thoughtful qualities by which he was distinguished.

"Fine! fine! most excellent," gloated Plympton, caressing the little pet, "if only there proves to be some ammunition of the right sort."

Larry had been possessed of the same idea and was already making an exhaustive search in such quarters as he deemed best adapted toward finding a bonanza.

Meanwhile those without were not idle by any means, but continued to force their attentions on the groaning doors that threatened to presently yield up the ghost, being unable to withstand such rude treatment.

It was a period of suspense.

After all, Avis was to be thanked for discovering a store of ammunition, and when his attention was called to the fact Larry shouted in glee.

Quickly, then, one of the little brass-bound cartridges was placed in the chamber and the beauty brought to bear upon the doors.

Then Lord Rackett placed Larry where he might be most valuable, and begged Avis to seek shelter at one side, where she might be out of range, and at the same time could keep an eye on that window, of which Plympton still remained suspicious, since it presented an opening for the advance of the crafty foe, unless kept under surveillance.

These little arrangements were carried out while the inexorable battering-ram kept up its steady pounding on the trembling doors.

Another shot or two from this source would do the business, and open an avenue of communication between the cabin and the deck.

Then they could look out for squalls.

Lord Rackett anticipated what the climax would be.

He could appreciate the tremendous power that lay back of that swinging boom, when once it was started plunging forward.

On this account he was not greatly astonished when, with a fearful crash, the doors, torn from their moorings, were flung into the cabin, followed by a large portion of the boom itself, together with several of the lusty yellow sailors who had wielded it.

Larry found his opportunity to open fire, and while the light was not all he might have wished, there was sufficient to show him the squirming figures of the two evil rogues who had been born across the threshold by the impetus of their forward rush.

From without arose a Babel of confusion.

Many voices shrieked excitedly, and amid all the clamor Lord Rackett felt positive he could detect the gruff tones of the Russian, urging on an advance on the part of his gang.

During the respite that had occurred these fellows seemed to have forgotten the severe handling they received but a short time previous, for they came forward with a rush.

Plympton was ready—Plympton, who knew full well the dreadful power of the little teaser under his control.

"God help them," he muttered, involuntarily, as he waited for the opening to be filled with struggling forms, jostling each other first in their eagerness to get in and immediately by a similar desire to get out.

Of course, no sooner had the leaders pushed into the yawning cavity than they had an indistinct view of what awaited them there.

Naturally, they were frozen with horror. So might a man feel upon discovering that he was in the act of planting his upraised foot upon the coils of a monster rattlesnake or a cobra ready to strike.

Their wish was to back out as hastily as they had started in—no doubt a very laudable design, but not appreciated or understood by their comrades without, who, ignorant of the very warm reception awaiting them beyond, strove with might and main to shove the others on.

Lord Rackett waited no longer.

To have done so would have been to invite disaster, since the crush was so great that it must have ended in projecting the whole living mass into the cabin.

He meant to introduce a counter blast that would clear the atmosphere and bring somewhat of order out of chaos.

So he let go.

The whole fabric of the junk trembled under the concussion.

Avis gave a scream—for the life of her she could not help it, such was the fearful crash.

Besides, it was a wonderful sight to see that struggling, writhing mass of human beings in the doorway one instant, tumbling over each other and the spar that partially blocked the way, and just as soon as the concussion came to discover the aperture as free from human occupancy as though the whole blessed crew had been blown into the river.

Plympton was satisfied.

He would have been indeed hard to please had it been otherwise, for his highest ambition was more than attained.

Indeed, so clean was the sweep that he found it hard to believe his eyes.

"Huzza!" he bellowed, fill[illegible] with the excitement of battle, that c[illegible] every nerve to tingle, "we've got them on the run!"

"Let's follow it up and chase them overboard," suggested Larry, seized with an inspiration to follow the dreadful execution with a charge.

The big man approved the suggestion, since the idea presented some features worth trying.

To strike while the iron was hot applied in a case like this, and promised fair results.

Lord Rackett lingered but a few seconds to place another charge in the little beauty, so that in case they were hotly pressed they might fall back upon the cabin and have the means to spread consternation among their assailants.

Then he called to Avis and begged her to keep an eye on that window so that she might bag any sly miscreant who attempted to utilize it during their temporary absence.

After which he joined Larry in a dash upon deck, to carry further consternation to the already sadly demoralized crew.

The way was clear, save for the boom.

Just outside a number of men were picking themselves up, having been hulr d othteeYbalbd fnoeu ghsot a xav impact.

Others lay still, and it could be readily surmised that these were the unfortunate chaps who had been directly in the upward line of flight taken by the projectile after it quitted its snug retreat in the brass cylinder of the yacht cannon.

"The Russian, if you can locate him," was what Plympton had suggested in the ear of his companion as they rushed forward, and Larry was quick to see what advantages might accrue from following out this advice.

When a leader is placed hors de combat, the desire for further battle is often taken out of his men; this is particularly true of the Chinese, who depend so greatly upon their generals that if a fight is lost, even with great gallantry shown, the defeated commander is supposed to thereupon commit hari kari.

Having, therefore, this brilliant idea in view, to concentrate their fire upon the man from the Neva, Plympton and Larry's first act upon gaining the deck was to strain their ears in the endeavor to locate the fellow.

At sight of the two heroes emerging from the billowy cloud of white powder smoke that oozed from the junk's cabin, those in the immediate vicinity set up a great howl, doubtless believing, after the remarkable experiences of the last ten minutes, that the foreign devils meant to exterminate them; for the awful explosion inside, together with its disastrous result, had knocked away the last props that sustained their wavering courage, and chilling fear now clutched at their hearts.

Such was the confusion at this juncture that the two bold friends listened in vain for the harsh voice of the Russian; he had been barking lively enough just previous to the discharge of the cannon, so that his present silence was the more to be wondered at, and Larry had begun to indulge in a hope that he had jumped overboard, under a belief that the junk was blown up, when something occurred to prove that the Cossack was not yet out of the game.

CHAPTER XVII.

The odor of burnt powder was in the air, and this, together with the shouts of the Chinese crew of the junk, served to lend an atmosphere of genuine battle to the scene.

It was the hope of the two comrades in thus sallying forth to complete the demoralization commenced by the explosion of the brass gun and drive the wretched crew over the vessel's sides.

Such a hope seemed to contain their only hope of gaining control of the junk, so that they might put her ashore and escape.

Perhaps the task might not have been so difficult had they only the ignorant Chinese to contend with, for the recent experience had gone far toward producing a species of panic among these fellows, and one man's fears are speedily communicated to another in a case of this sort.

But then there was the Russian.

He had a deep interest in this game, and would demand a hearing ere the case was decided against his cause.

Lord Rackett had been endeavoring to locate the fellow from the start, and at the first sound of his tuneful voice he was ready to turn his batteries in that quarter.

Suppose he killed the Count, personally he would have no regrets in the matter, since the man was engaged in a piece of business of which he should be ashamed — persecuting a lady in order to reap pecuniary advantage from the dead.

On the whole bluff Plympton believed he would be very well satisfied with having accomplisehed such an act.

The man who kidnaps respectable ladies does so in the full knowledge that his work places him outside the pale of humanity—he is to be treated as a bandit, a wolf preying upon society. Lord Rackett knew how that was himself, though it was love for a woman that had tempted him; and he believed he had some excuse, while with the mercenary Russian there could be none.

When, therefore, the bass voice of this same Petoskey penetrated the night air, and with a great variety of powerful Russian expletives, coupled with the gibberish best understood by the desperate Chinese crew, urged the men to close in on the enemy and pulverize, destroy, annihilate them, Plympton was particularly pleased with the chance that now presented itself to carry his sterling ideas into practice.

Perhaps the doughty count might rue the impulse that led him to thus let loose with his leathern lungs.

There are times in the affairs of most men when silence is golden.

The lack of decent light hampered Plympton in his work of reaching the fountain head, but his was one of those peculiarly aggressive spirits which no difficulties can daunt.

So far as he could judge, the rasping voice of the Russian gamecock proceeded from a natural little barricade formed by a hencoop and some water buckets piled up in a certain quarter.

Doubtless the doughty Russian warrior was coiled up behind this barrier, keenly on the watch, noting every point in the game, and keeping his precious body out of sight.

It was really too bad that his valor had not thrust him in the van when the desperate charge was made through the broken door of the cabin; having experienced the peculiarly elevating effect of that blast, when the discharge of the gun swept the whole mass through the choked opening, he would doubtless hardly feel able to urge his bullies on to another assault.

Lord Rackett believed—indeed, he was quite positive—his Russian rival had been armed in the beginning of the fracas, for bullets had cut by in close proximity to his head, and one Chinaman at least had gone down through a poorly directed shot in his rear.

Whether Petoskey had exhausted his ammunition or not was a problem that could only be solved by actual observation.

Nor was the Englishman averse to making the experiment.

He had the Crimea in mind as he dashed recklessly forward—true, that was before his time, but his sire had led one of the bloody charges in front of the iron-bound Sebastopol, and had yielded up his life on the field, so that the son cherished secret feelings of personal animosity against the people of the White Czar.

Petoskey saw this towering figure heading in his direction—Petoskey, who realized that his Chinese minions were in no condition to come between in order to avert the crisis—Petoskey, whose ideas of valor and daring were of so peculiar a nature that the brave soldiers of the Czar, heroes of many a battlefield during the Turko-Russian war, must have writhed in anguish to have been witnesses to his conduct.

This same Petoskey now gave plain evidence that he was ready to cry quits and resort to every possible means to save his own precious skin.

And, really, who can blame him?

He knew just what the result would be in case he fell into the hands of the enraged Briton who plunged toward him with such zeal, and the same end must inevitably be reached should the other obtain a fair crack at him.

As a dead man he would be of no use either to himself or his country; and Petoskey, being something of a shrewd diplomat, had high hopes of becoming an official possessed of great power when the Chinese Empire had been torn asunder and the pieces allotted among the nations that had had a hand in the dismemberment.

Besides, every human being has a right to continued existence—the desire to live is implanted in the heart of man to an extent that astonishes philosophers and students—the hope of the human race really depends upon this natural instinct that compels even the forlorn, aged and half-starved wretch to still hang on desperately in the hope of he knows not what.

Petoskey had much to live for, and really, he saw no reason why he should, like the Chinese generals and the heroic leaders of old, throw himself upon his sword because, forsooth, one battle out of many had gone against him.

There were other days coming when the tables might be turned—at least he was willing to believe so.

When Plympton had located his enemy behind this barricade, he made a dash for it, intending to drop in on the count in a friendly way, and influence him to call the game off.

(To be continued).

BARBER-SURGEONS.

The Society Was Founded in Edinburgh in 1505.

More than 400 years old is the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh. At the time it was founded the surgeons and barbers of the city were united as one of the fourteen incorporated trades of Edinburgh. On July 1, 1505, they received their charter from the Town Council.

The charter of the barber-surgeons was confirmed by James IV., an early Stuart King of great enlightenment and acomplishment, who took much interest in the progress of the surgeons on account of the needs of his army in time of war.

In the charter leave was given to the incorporation to control the medical education of the city, such as it was in these days; of blood letting, to have the sole right of practice and to put down quacks.

They were to get every year the body of a criminal who had been executed to practice anatomy on, and they promised in return to do "suffrage for his soul." Of the first 158 members of the incorporation, six were surgeons to the Kings of Scotland.

As society improved and medical science developed, the gulf between the surgeons and barbers widened, and in 1772, as the result of a process in the Court of Sessions, the connection was finally terminated. The deacon or president of the incorporation of surgeons was for more than 320 years a member of the Town Council of Edinburg ex-officio, and several of the deacons were members of the Scottish Parliament.

THE CAKE.

Mr. Newlywed: "Did you say this was pound cake, my dear?"

Mrs. Newlywed: "Yes, precious, and I made it myself."

Mr. Newlywed: "Are you quite sure you—er—pounded it enough?"

MONTHLY REMINDER.

"Try to forget me," she said, with a look of pity.

"How can I?" he miserably answered, "as long as I have to make monthly payments on the things I have presented to you?"

NO MUSIC.

"I suppose," said Mrs. Nexdore, "you noticed that my daughter is taking music lessons?"

"Oh!" exclaimed Miss Pepprey, "is that what she's doing? I thought it was a typewriter she was working."

CHINESE IGNORANCE.

Flynn: "Oi tell yez they's no use thrryin' to iddica-ate thim Chionnese."

Mulhooley: "An' phwy is thot?"

Flynn: "Oi jist asked wan av thim the Chionnese wor-rud for St. Patrick's Day, an', bedad, he couldn't tell me."

PROOF OF ENTERTAINMENT.

Mistress: "You can't entertain your company in the parlor."

Bridget: "Oi can't? Why, mum, didn't yez hear him laughin' fit to shplit?

Hostess: "Have you got as much as you would like, Johnny?" Johnny (eyeing the good things on the table): "Well, I haven't got as much as I would like, but I've got as much as I can hold."

GERMAN BURGOMASTERS

WERE DELIGHTED WITH THEIR VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Have Been Studying British Institutions, and Speak Highly of English People.

"Our visit to England has completely changed our ideas of English people.

"We came here half expecting to be received with a feeling closely akin to coldness. We leave charmed with everything we have seen, and convinced that there exists in England the greatest feeling of sympathy for Germany and all that concerns her."

Such were the words in which a German burgomaster expressed himself on Saturday evening before he and his fellow-visitors left London on their way home.

They had only just returned from Bourneville, the charming garden city in which Cadbury's chocolate is made, and where they had been received with the greatest cordiality by the millionaire chocolate manufacturer.

ALL DELIGHTED.

All the visitors were delighted with what they had seen during their visit to London—a visit which had included a reception by the King, a trip to Windsor Castle and Buckingham Palace, and a luncheon with royalty at the Guildhall.

Herr Vossen, of Aix-la-Chapelle, aptly expressed the sentiments of the party when, after luncheon at Bourneville on Saturday, he said that until certain elements had stirred up strife in some way between the two countries there was no bad feeling among the people.

GERMANY'S TEACHER.

"German and English soldiers fought side by side at Waterloo," he said, "and in Germany we shall never forget the many benefits we have received from England. In manufactures England has always been our teacher."

"Such visits as this," said another burgomaster, "do more than the world's greatest diplomats could do to bring the two peoples together. I hope many such visits will be paid by your representatives to our country and by our representatives to yours. War would be impossible. It is only when we fail to know each other that we do not understand."

And so, appreciative, happy and enthusiastic, the burgomasters went back to Germany.

"WUNDERSCHON.

The special train that conveyed the visitors to and from Birmingham on Saturday was gaily decorated with bunting and flowers, and on each table in the saloons were photographs of the King and the Kaiser.

At Bourneville the party was received by the Lord Mayor, and after a short inspection of the City Council House, drove some five miles out of the town to Bourneville.

The German visitors expressed themselves charmed and amazed at the completeness and the beauty of the town, describing everything as "Wunderschon!"

Although much impressed by their glimpse of many British institutions, the burgomasters will probably return to the Fatherland with the same conviction that the English party held when they returned to London from Berlin last autumn, viz., that Germany is far ahead of England in municipal matters.

THE FLIGHT OF SEEDS.

Most persons probably think that winged seeds from trees travel to great distances on the wind. But the studies of Doctor Ridley of the Botanic Gardens at Singapore indicate that winged seeds have a far narrower range of flight than do "powder seeds and plumed seeds. The greatest distance travelled by the winged fruit of a forest tree, observed by Doctor Ridley, was 100 yards. Under the most favorable circumstances he calculates, it would take this plant 100 years to spread 300 yards, and 1,500,000 years to spread from the Malay Peninsula to the Philippines, if a land connection existed.

A NAUTICAL DESCRIPTION.

A sailor who was looking for work, called at a certain farm to see if the farmer could find him a job.

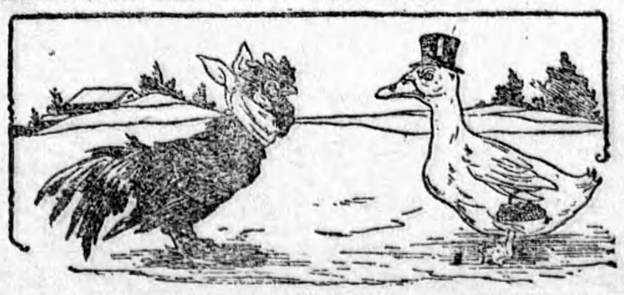
Farmer: "Been working anywhere since you left your ship?"

Sailor: "Yes."

Farmer: 'What sort of work?"

Sailor: "Well, I dunno exactly. It was on some sort of a machine. They put all the wheat down her main hatch an' the straw came right out of her bows, an' there was two bags hooked on to her stern to catch the other stuff."

Buzzards and vultures can scent their food at a distance of forty miles.



"Can't I do something for you?"
"No, thanks, I don't believe in quacks"