KAI WANG;

A TALE OF SOUTHERN CHINA.

CHAPTER XVII.—(Continued).

Some luckless Chinamen by chance were in the way, which was a sorry thing for them, as the big Englishman kept his left arm moving with a flail-like, double-jointed action, and when his fist came in contact with the cranium of a pigtail celestial, the fellow bowled over very much as do the pins in an alley when a well-directed ball strikes the kingpin in the van.

Thus in a measure he was plowing his way through all obstructions, intent only upon accomplishing the duty in hand.

When such a man directs his whole endeavors to reaching a certain end he is apt to cut a pretty wide swath during his advance.

Lord Rackett certainly did.

Petoskey saw him coming, and knew he had about reached the end of his rope for the present. He was a soldier, and had learned the art of deserting his entrenchments.

The first duty was to embarrass the enemy as much as possible while covering his own retreat.

Thus he suddenly sent hencoop and buckets whirling in a hurricane mess directly in the path of the advancing foe, and in the semi-darkness Lord Rackett had about as much as he could manage to avoid sprawling over the numerous rolling objects that bumped against his shins.

These few seconds were valuable to the diplomatic count, and, in fact, they were just what he depended upon in order to carry out his little design.

The bulwark of the junk was but a few feet away, and an energetic man could reach it easily enough with a single bound.

Doubtless the spirits of the vasty deep were calling to Petoskey just then; he may have even heard the mermaid voices such as proved so seductive in the ears of ancient mariners.

At any rate, the man evinced a most decided fancy for immersion that was certainly not founded upon any suddenly contracted religious fever.

Lord Rackett might have let fly at his disappearing figure as it shot over the side, but he saw no reason for wasting ammunition in this reckless way.

Since the bold Russian had accommodated himself to the conditions, and accomplished just what was most earnestly desired of him, what was the necessity for putting a bullet somewhere within the limits of his anatomy or crippling his wing? He would need both arms to gain a landing.

So Plympton brought up at the rail.

He had plainly heard the great splash that betckened the arrival of the man-frog in the water, and could even tell about where he might be at the time, from the series of wavelets that marked his course.

This was fine progress.

Now to scatter the remainder of the Chinese crew like chaff before the wind, and sweep them over the side.

Larry was already engaged in this laudable task, and had succeeded in rounding up several of the followers of Confucius, just as he would have done a flock of sheep.

The wretched Mongolians bore no little resemblance to sheep, and evidently placed the utmost dependence on their bell-wether, for when Petoskey vanished from the scene, with him went the last vestige of their valor.

Panic-stricken, they chased hither and thither about the deck, and the advance of either Larry or his big comrade in any direction sent one or more overboard in hot haste.

A little more of this hustling and the coast seemed clear; no living, moving objects other than themselves and a couple of wounded wretches occupied the deck.

Larry surveyed the scene with some little complacency—indeed, truth to tell, he puffed out his small chest very much as might a pouter pigeon, for such a splendid victory meant considerable in his estimation.

Lord Rackett was more sensible, knowing their victory was not yet won.

"See how Avis is getting along—then look to the wounded wretches. I have other work cut out for me here," he called in a voice of authority.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Larry was only too glad to have some one along with him capable of handling the tiller, of assuming command and giving orders; for being himself modest by nature he did not feel capable of undertaking such a part unless absolutely compelled to do so.

Accordingly he paddled away on his short legs to the cabin, where he found Avis on guard, watching the window eagerly, ready to carry out her instructions to the letter should the occasion have arisen.

She received her cousin gladly, and was apparently well satisfied to know there would be no present necessity for heroism on her part—not that she would have shrunk from the performance had it come to that point.

When she heard what work Larry had upon the deck she insisted on assisting him, nor could he dissuade her.

Of such material are Anglo-Saxon women of to-day made—the cries of the wounded foemen appeal to their brave yet tender hearts, and with gentle hands they bind up his wounds.

In the late Spanish-American conflict the dons learned many things that had not previously entered into their philosophy, and among them was the chivalrous spirit in which most English-speaking people treat a fallen foe.

Those wretched Chinamen who gasped upon the deck of the junk, writhing in the torture of their wounds, must have been amazed when the lady, whom they had been instrumental in abducting from her friends bent over them, and with the rare skill of an army nurse bound up their hurts in a crude but effectual manner, considering the paucity of material at her command.

As for Plympton, there was never a minute that he was not in it.

He knew it was imperative that they should get ashore with all speed, and while Larry had been about the business assigned him, the big man had taken hold of a setting pole with which he was vigorously probing the water alongside, in the hope and expectation of reaching some stable foundation through means of which he could push ashore.

In this endeavor he seemed to meet with continued disappointment.

Plympton was, however, a man of fertile resources; when one idea failed to pan out as favorably as he expected, it was his way to turn and utilize other methods.

The end and not the means, was his motto.

Hence he wasted no more time with the pole that was too short, but slammed it on the deck with a growl of disgust.

They were floating with the current, and unless something was speedily done to counteract this insidious influence they might so continue to pass on down the stream.

Then he cast his eye aloft.

There were the big, mat-like straw sails, quite useless in their clewed up condition; could they not be utilized in some way in order to bring about the desired result?

It was a bright thought.

But even broad sails need wind of the right sort in order to carry the craft on. Was there such a disturbance of the air?

Plympton plainly remembered that some time before he had felt a night zephyr blowing, but had not noticed it particularly of late, which was not strange, considering the series of amazing adventures through which he and his little companion had passed.

As he faced around, he believed he caught a faint puff of cool air; it was not much, to be sure, but possibly all that would be required once the big mating sail had been dropped.

Next he sprang to the mast to discover where the ropes lay and how they were to be manipulated.

Plympton was something of a sailor—that is, he had at various times owned yachts and sloops, and knew about as much as the average amateur nautical man.

What was better and more to the point in the present case, however, he had been on junks before, and the little stock of knowledge thus obtained was likely to prove valuable to him now.

Whether he unfastened the ropes or used his knife upon them, the sail came down with a rush and a roar.

The vast area caught the zephyr at once, as was evident in the turning of the boat.

All that was required now lay in the line of a steady hand at the tiller, by means of which the junk could be turned to the shore line.

It may seem strange that all this racket and riotous proceeding could be carried on without attracting a fleet of other boats around them; but the Chinese are a peculiar people, apt to mind their own business to an extent that may take them past serenely on the other side of the highway while a fellow is being despoiled by thieves, doubtless acting upon the principle that it is none of their funeral after all.

Besides, the junk had been carried below the city itself, with its floating population.

This was a feature of the case that never disturbed Plympton a particle, so accustomed was he to depending upon his own powers.

Indeed, more than likely, if the truth were told, he was grateful at heart that their little circus on board the drifting junk had been without witnesses, for all the chances seemed to indicate that had a fleet of officious sampans fluttered around them, the occupants must, through the ties of race and religion, have sympathized with the coolies who were being worsted on board, and as a result our gallant rescuers would have found their self-imposed task made doubly difficult.

Everything considered, then, Plympton saw no reason to regret the fact of their strange isolation.

It had taken all of their resources, backed by the ever-welcome auxiliary of luck to manage the business in hand, and had their enemies been encouraged by fresh arrivals, the affair must of necessity have gone heavily against them.

There was considerable satisfaction in realizing that they were alive, and with fair chances of ultimate success ahead of them, instead of floating upon the bosom of the dark river filled with punctures from Chinese knives. Lord Rackett seemed to think so, for he moved toward the rounded stern of the junk, in order to grasp the steering gear, with a light step and an air of animation strangely in contrast with the despondency that had grasped him but a short time before.

The tiller, bent in the Chinese way, was knocking back and forth in aimless fashion when Plympton reached it.

He had put out his hand to clutch this adjunct of the primitive steering gear, when he as suddenly sprang back as though the deadly hooded head of a poisonous cobra had appeared alongside the crooked stick.

The cause of this action was not far to seek, for a grim, dripping figure had suddenly shot into view from behind the stern, and the gleam of a knife as it sliced the air told how eagerly the yellow-faced native had aimed to take his life.

He had been overboard, and had clambered up to his present position without trouble; this was a significant fact, since there might be and probably were others.

Well, a miss is as good as a mile, they say, although a close shave is apt to send a cold shiver down one's back; and Plympton, being a man of unbounded nerve, knew just what remedy was needed for the present disease.

His revolver had never left his hand, for he could not tell at what instant such a ready reckonere might be needed, and when a man has use for such a tool he wants it very badly.

So that the ambitious Neptune, who had come up as it were out of the sea, had little time to figure on whether valor or discretion were the better after the absolute failure of his vindictive attack when Plympton sent his compliments, and the vicinity of the rudder was again free from foes.

Perhaps that particular sailor man would stay where he belonged after this—at least he had been led to believe that was his place.

His coming had given Lord Rackett something of a chill.

In imagination he could see all the other natives who had jumped overboard clinging to the sides of the junk, gleaming knives clasped between their teeth, only waiting for a favorable opportunity to strike and spare not.

The prospect was so filled with grim suggestions that it alarmed him, not so much on his own account as for the others, who, chancing near the rail might fall victims to a waiting blade.

Accordingly he called Larry and bade him bring his cousin to the stern, giving both sides of the boat a wide berth.

He had already brought the tiller hard alee, and such was the influence of the air that the boat drifted in toward the low shore, evidently a rice field, and which could be faintly discernred through the gloom.

Once alongside the bank, a landing could be made, and then the boat sent adrift in such a way that it would take time and patience on the part of any who climbed aboard to make the shore a second time.

Plympton believed he was able to accomplish this readily enough if given half a chance. They drifted on, gradually closing the gap existing between them and the shore, and yet in their impatience it seemed as though precious minutes were being wasted while this went on, minutes that were fraught with momentous consequences to them.

Besides, they were all the while increasing the distance between themselves and the walls of the city, and their task of returning would be made the more difficult; indeed, even Lord Rackett was a little appalled at the trials and tribulations likely to fall to their lot while endeavoring to make ignorant and bigoted natives understand what they wanted; and, as for Larry, he would likely pray for the friendly comfort and guidance of the astute Kai Wang, if only for a short half hour.

All of them breathed a sigh of relief as the boat approached land, and preparations were made for quitting the junk with as much expedition as possible, no one being in the least sorry that the tragical voyage had reached its conclusion.

(To be continued).

CAREFUL.

Friend: "Haven't you named the baby yet?"

Proud Mother: "No; we must be very careful to give him a nice one, because there will be so many named after him when he is Premier."

LOOKS DIDN'T COUNT.

"Are these strawberries the best you could get, Jane?"

"They were the best looking strawberries on the market."

"Buy the worst looking ones next time, Jane."

RETORT COURTEOUS.

Mrs. Dolan (boastfully): "Mrs. Carney, the woife of the rich grocer, called on me to-day."

Mrs. Nolan: "Well, well, d'ye moind thot, now! 'Tis a shame for Carney t' be makin' his woife collect his bad bills."

Human remains, believed by Mr. C. H. Read, keeper of the British and mediaeval antiquities in the British Museum, to be those of Saxons, have been discovered at Hawk's Hill, Surrey. The most perfect specimens of the skeletons are to be placed in the museum of the Surrey Archaeological Society at Guildford.

REVOLUTION IN SURGERY.

Clever London Surgeon Originates New Method of Skin Division.

A revolution in operation has been achieved by a clever surgeon, who has discovered a method of incising the skin without leaving any visible scar.

Well known operators at Guy's and other hospitals in London have arranged with this surgeon to do what may be described as the superficial part of their operations, leaving him to begin the operation and to attend to the concluding part of it.

The fact that glands, tumors, and so forth can now be removed without there being the slightest outward trace after the operation is the most important item of progress which has occurred in surgery for many years. When the operation is made in the region of the face or the neck the advantage of the new method will be at once realized.

Not a little of the success of this method is of course due to the practice and skill of this surgeon, but the fundamental difference between the old method and the new is that the new method of skin division consists of dividing it upon the slant, in contradistinction to the usual practice of dividing the skin at right angles to the surface. The reason why a cut through the skin upon the slant and subjected to properly applied pressure heals so perfectly is simple enough. Contact is perfect, and the greater the pressure, within limits, the better is the result.

This surgeon made his first experiment with an adapted hollow ground razor. He now uses hollow ground scalpels made especially for him.

After the operation a magnifying glass is used to see that the edge of the skin is in proper position and a rigid dressing of glass and wool is used to prevent the skin contracting. In many cases massage is used. Old scars and the indications of former operations can be removed by this method.

STRANGE WILL FORGERY.

Concealed Phonograph Disposes of Dying Man's Estate.

A peculiar will forgery case has occupied the law courts at Szegedin, Hungary, for the past few days. It should be explained that the Hungarian law recognizes as valid a verbal will uttered by a dying person in the presence of witnesses. It was a knowledge of this point of law that enabled a certain Alois Szabo to gain the sole control of his deceased father's estate. When the old man lay on his death-bed, the son called all the servants to the sick room where they heard, as they thought, the dying man dispose of all his worldly goods in favor of Alois. This will was afterwards contested by other relatives, who had reason to doubt its genuineness and it came to the ears of the authorities that it was not the father who had spoken, but that the sounds had issued from a phonograph cunningly concealed about the bed. A domiciliary visit paid to Alois' residence brought to light the fateful record, which was seized, and is to be produced as the incriminating object at the forthcoming trial.

WATER THING TO DRINK.

Mrs. Wagg (with paper): "Oh, John, here's something good to know. It says a few drops of lemon juice in a glass of water will kill all the living things in it. We'll try it."

Mr. Wagg: "Pardon me, my dear, not for mine. I'd sooner swallow an aquarium than a morgue any day."

QUITE PROPER.

Guest (suspiciously eyeing the flattened pillows and the crumpled sheets): "Look here, landlord, this bed has been slept in!"

Landlord (triumphantly): "That's what it's for!"

A LABOR MAN.

Mrs. Jones: "No wonder she looks tired; she's up most all night with a sick baby."

Mr. Jones: "What's the matter with her husband?"

Mrs. Jones: "He's busy all the time trying to get an eight-hour day for workmen."

IN MERRY OLD ENGLAND

NEWS BY MAIL ABOUT JOHN BULL AND HIS PEOPLE.

Occurrences in the Land That Reigns Supreme in the Commercial World.

The population of Greater London is 6,581,000, or 61 per acre.

There are now four septuagenarian judges on the English Bench.

Hunsden House, Harts, which was converted into a royal palace by Henry VIII., is being offered for sale.

A small motor-car has recently been adopted for the purpose of business by a firm of chimney sweepers in Essex.

A judge in the Clerkenwell County Court has decided that a bicycle for a domestic servant is not a necessity.

The Dorset County Council has passed a by-law to prevent the destruction of ferns and wild flowers by the wholesale taking of roots in the rural districts.

After being lost for some time, a cheque for £208, sent by a London stockbroker to a firm in Merthyr Tydvil, was recently discovered in a rubbish heap.

A thrush's nest built under a railway carriage has been discovered at Torrington (Devon) Station. The carriage had been in daily use between Torrington and Exeter for a fortnight. One egg was found in the nest.

For stealing an egg, value 2d., nine years ago, a man has just been summoned at Wycombe County Police Court. He had to pay 5s. costs. Defendant went through the South African campaign.

At a wedding presentation at Norwich, the head of the firm was presented with a gift from the manager and staff of twenty-eight employees. The staff represented 760 years of service, an average of over twenty-six years each.

General Lord Methuen, in the course of an address at the Army Temperance Association, said he had tried total abstinence himself lately for three months, and he found at the end of that time in playing racquets his eye was better and his wind also.

The London Metropolitan Water Board sued a number of customers for payment of water rates in the Westminster County Court, among the defendants being a Fish, Gudgeon, Haddock, Hallpike, Ponder, Eddie, Wells, Leakey, and Pipe.

A travelling crane, twenty-eight feet high—used by the Great Western Railway in constructing a new bridge near Neath, Glamorgan—ran away down a steep incline on a recent Sunday, and was wrecked. It attained a speed of 50 miles an hour, and tore down telegraph and telephone poles.

The Dowager Duchess of Beaufort has died at Stoke House, near Bristol, aged eighty-one. Before her marriage in 1845 she was Lady Georgina Charlotte Curzon, being the eldest daughter of the first Earl Howe. Her eldest son is the present Duke, and the present Earl Howe is her nephew.

Damage estimated at over £10,000 was done by an extraordinary cloudburst at Hyde, Cheshire, recently, tramway and railway traffic was interrupted, houses were flooded, and the roof of a local hat factory fell in, while part of the machine-room of another factory was washed away.

The Duchess of Teck opened an Animals' Hospital in High street, Belgrave road, London, which is in connection with Our Dumb Friends' League. The hospital contains a horses' ward, donkeys' ward, cats' ward and dogs' ward. Horses and donkeys will be lent to costermongers, and other poor men while their own animals are laid up in the hospital.

A temporary clergyman having failed to put in an appearance at Ellington Parish Church, on a recent Sunday, it was decided to proceed with a portion of the service. The organist gave out the hymns, the clerk read the lessons and his daughter published the banns, of her own marriage, it being the "third time of asking." It having been subsequently learned that the proclamation of the banns by the bride-elect herself was illegal, a neighboring clergyman attended the evening service and republished the banns.

"Jones is kicking because he only got ten thousand dollars out of the Gotrox estate."

"Was he one of the heirs?"

"No—he was one of the lawyers."