

The Acton Free Press Short Story

The Spirit of the House of Foh

By HOPE DARING

AS Neal Monroe neared the river dock of Hupah, a small inland Chinese town, his pace quickened. If he were too late! He was not; among the many boats—big and little, gilded, silk-curtained or rough planked, loaded with farm produce and with passengers—he saw the one whose flag, like his ticket, bore the picture of a black and gold serpent trailing its length over a crimson background.

A boatle who had a few words of pidgin English came to meet him. "From the bridges? To the House of Foh?"

Neal nodded assent, delivering his ticket. The man led him across the lower deck, through a crowd of third-class passengers with their rolls of bedding and baskets of food. They ascended a flight of stairs to a place where on a small upper deck, separated from any other part of the boat and shaded by a silken canopy, three persons were sitting. The coxite pointed to a mat and a heap of cushions that had been reserved for Neal and hurried away.

The young man turned to look at the others. Two were girls. One was neatly dressed, apparently self-reliant, unmistakably an American. The other was Chinese, small, dainty, her oval face of palest bronze touched at cheeks and lips with vivid red. She wore a robe and trousers of green and silver brocade. The third person was a Chinese, a man of forty, wearing the clothes of an American gentleman. He had evidently accompanied the white girl, but he crossed to Neal's side, lifting his hat and saying in English:

"Pardon, honored sir. I am Kan Feng, one of the Kans long of Hupah. You are? You go?"

"Neal Monroe of San Francisco. I am first assistant to the chief of the Nelson & Lane Company. You know they are up in the hills, building bridges and installing electrical apparatus for your people. The chief is sending me to Shanghai on an errand."

Kan Feng knew all about the building. He introduced his companion, in a way putting her in Neal's charge for the river trip. The introduction was to "Miss Lucille Strong, R.N." Even as Neal bowed he repeated the initials to himself. The girl's pink and white face dimpled into a smile.

"Registered nurse, Mr. Monroe. I, too, am from San Francisco, where the Kans have been for three months." She went on to tell of Mrs. Kane having been brought to the hospital for an operation. Lucille had been her nurse. When the couple were compelled to return home before the patient had fully recovered, the girl was asked to accompany them.

"We landed in Shanghai and came up by boat, arriving yesterday. I expected to stay a few days, but this morning Mr. Kane said I must go back to Shanghai on this boat."

Neal frowned as he faced the man. "Is it true, Kan Feng, the rumor that there is an uprising among the people a little way inland from Cuzo which we will pass this afternoon? Even if it was so, it was best for me to take this boat. I must be in Shanghai by a certain time. But I'd say it was hardly the trip for a girl."

Kan Feng attempted to shrug his shoulders without success. Always uprisings came, what the Americans called tempests in a teacup—no, a teapot. Everything was right, no danger.

While the two men talked, the Chinese girl approached Lucille, to say in excellent English, "I, too, go to Shanghai. 'Tis my home; although we come to the house up here for the hot days. Word came to me last night to take this boat. All is well; there is no danger on a Foh boat."

Kan Feng had to hurry his farewells but they were polite and reassuring. The Chinese to the lower deck. Lucille greeted him with a smile. He joined her and her companion. To him the Chinese girl was introduced as "Miss Lucille."

"Yes, I speak English as well as my native tongue. While my family is a high-class Chinese one, much of my education was obtained in a mission school. Then I went to England for a year in a girls' school. While we are American Mission people, it was easier for my father to make the arrangements for me in England."

The trio talked for a little time, then each went to the luxurious cushions that, according to Chinese ways, did duty as a chair. Each had books, but the young Americans forgot all else in watching the, to them, strange panorama of the river trip.

When noon came, each one of the three was served an excellent meal. These were placed on small low tables, but Miss Lucille ordered them to be moved close together.

"A party we shall call it," she declared. "It's Chinese food, but the dishes are all those of which our many American friends are fond." While they were lingering over the desert of cakes and sweetmeats, the conversation touched on Miss Lucille's devotion to American things. The girl shook her glossy black head.

"'Tis not American things I love; I think our ways and customs best, for us. It is—how do I say it? It is the spirit you and your blessed missionaries brought

us, my poor untaught countrymen call it 'the Jesus way.' You who live in a land where the Christ spirit is the inheritance of all, you do not understand what that spirit means to China."

Lucille looked at Neal questioning, helplessly. Thinking she understood their bewilderment, Ming Le went on:

"I grew up in a home ruled by that spirit. To accept it cost my father's sacrifice from his honored family, a ruling one. Later, though, he went then to the Christ. You do not know how it is, to see all about you those of your own race who can know of the one God only through the lives and the teachings of the few Christians they meet. That is to be my—my—our work. The man I love is in your land, finishing his medical course. When he comes home we are to be married and work in a charity hospital established by our families."

Again the eyes of the two young Californians met. In some strange way each sensed that the other did not know, by experience, the joy and the assurance that the possession of what Ming Le called "the Christ spirit" gave. Before either could speak, the middle-aged Chinese woman who was Ming Le's personal attendant appeared, to speak to her young mistress. As the two talked, Lucille and Neal walked to the deck rail.

"What that girl said took my breath," the young man confessed. "I was brought up in a Christian home, attended church regularly even through my college days, but I—well, I haven't it."

"And I have not, although I am a member of our home church. Always I knew my parents had something I did not possess, but—I thought the passing years would bring it to me. I am sorry—nay, ashamed."

When Ming Le joined them, to hide Lucille's embarrassment, Neal said: "What peculiar boats those are that are loaded with hay. See! There is another. Despite their clumsiness there is a peculiar grace in the way the sail is handled."

The boats were little more than rafts. Flat, long, one end sharp pointed. A tiny space was ruled off, for the working of the sail and for the two men who, in every case, made up the crew. The rest of the boat was piled high with freshly-cut hay, the load lashed in place by a few strands of fine rope.

Ming Le, who seemed disturbed, said gravely, "Yes, the river is full of them now. Some are Foh boats, and they go straight on down to Shanghai."

The day wore away. The others noticed that Ming Le was ill at ease. Once again the serving woman came, and twice Ming Le summoned her by ringing a bell. When the day was almost done, it came. When Neal first heard the angry shouts, the firing of guns, he said to himself:

"Here it is—the something for which Ming Le has been waiting."

Even as the girl caught a hand of each of her companions and drew them to the back of the deck, over the rail a Chinaman came. Ming Le ran to meet him.

"It is ready—the boat?"

"Yes, excellent one."

That conversation was in Chinese, but both Americans understood that the man had come to their rescue. As Ming Le explained the noise below increased.

"It is an attack by the rebels. They know two Americans are on board, and they think one of them is carrying something valuable. Of my presence they do not know." She turned to the man going on. "This is Wang Ho. Long he loved and served my father."

Looking down over the rail Neal saw, close up to their boat, one of the rafts loaded with hay.

In the few minutes it took for them all to understand the situation, the attackers had made their way on deck. Ming Le had barred the stair door. Lucille was the first over. Not waiting to climb she jumped down on the rack, and without waiting to rise, scrambled over on the hay. The others came quickly, even Wang Ho.

On the hay they were told to lie down, their faces close to the edge of the stack. Wang Ho deftly climbed up on the mast and pulled the rack in and down over them.

"Your servant?" Lucille asked Ming Le.

"She belongs to the clan that made the attack; they will not harm her, and she will not speak of me. If I had been captured I would not have been harmed, just held for ransom. You, too, I presume, Lucille. But you?" turning her head to stare in the gloom at Neal.

"I have a certified check for a big sum of money, eighty thousand dollars. It is made out to Foh Ching, the owner of this line of boats. We took all our stuff up the river, and we bought lumber—a whole forest—and water rights—from him."

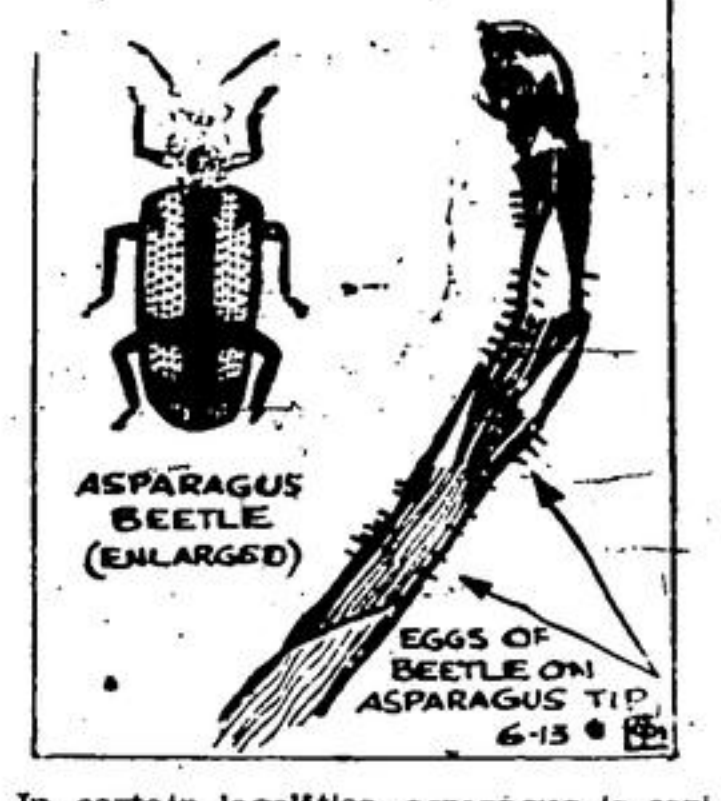
"But, if your check came from San Francisco, why was it not sent direct to me—to Foh Ching?"

"It had to bear the signature of John Green. That Foh Ching stipulated. He had been honor itself in dealing with us; this must reach him as promised. There was a delay in his coming; Green had expected to leave Hupah with 'it' on the boat that went down three days ago. He is desperately ill, and there was no one to take it but me."

"It shall go through," Ming Le said

Weekly Garden-Graph

Written by DEAN HALLEDAY for Central Press Canada



In certain localities, asparagus is seriously injured by the asparagus-beetle. There are two species of the beetle, both about 1/4 inch long. It is believed that these beetles feed only upon asparagus.

The common asparagus beetle is illustrated in enlarged form in to-day's Garden-Graph. It has a dark metallic-blue underbody and head, and its wings are marked with yellow and red. This beetle lays its eggs on the tender asparagus shoots, as shown in the drawing. The only control at this time is to keep the shoots cut every day, thus removing the eggs before they can hatch.

Still another beetle which attacks asparagus is the twelve-spotted beetle. It is orange-colored, and has six black spots on each wing.

Once the cutting period for asparagus is past both of these beetles can be controlled by spraying or dusting with arsenate of lead. Use three pounds of arsenate of lead to 50 gallons of water for spraying. When dusting mix the arsenate of lead with four times as much hydrated lime.

Training of Pilots Speeded to Conform with Allies' Needs

Immediate Contribution in Airmen and Aircraft from Canada — British Commonwealth Training Plan Proceeds

Canada will go the limit to give her full contribution in the air to help the Allies in the present crisis, according to the information made known by James S. Duncan, Acting Deputy Minister of National Defence for Air.

The carefully laid plans of the Empire training scheme, thought to be the most suitable by Great Britain, in accordance with the long range view of the war taken by the Allies at the time the agreement was signed, will be adhered to and pushed forward wherever feasible, but Canada, entirely on her own, will go "all out" to give immediate help to her Allies.

Instructors and pilots, airmen, aircraft and equipment destined for the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan are being sent overseas immediately. The advance party of Canada's second R.C.A.F. Squadron No. 112 (City of Winnipeg), is already in England. More pilots will follow. Planes already on their way to Canada as a part of Great Britain's contribution to the gigantic training plan were turned about by order of the Canadian Government, so that they might be used immediately in fighting over the British Isles and France.

Fighter and bombing planes, besides those already despatched overseas, are awaiting suitable transportation.

Five thousand young Canadians have been called up to swell the ranks of the Royal Canadian Air Force. While maintaining the framework of the original training plan and proceeding with its development so that it can be geared to capacity at the earliest possible moment, every effort is being directed towards the maximum output of pilots, air gunners and air observers in the shortest possible time for service overseas. Some a steady flow of these airmen will proceed at short regular intervals to join the operational squadrons of the Royal Air Force.

Immediate steps have been taken to increase the aircraft industry, not only to replace where possible, the machines which the United Kingdom was to have sent Canada for the Empire Plan, but also to provide Britain with an ever increasing number of aircraft for active service.

To reduce delays in ordering and the letting of contracts, special powers have been given the Departments of Transport and of Munitions and Supply. No time will be lost in the building of aerodromes and the manufacture and purchase of essential equipment and supplies.

BRITISH BOMBERS

Are Now Equipped with Mobile Gun Turrets — Two New Planes on Western Front

Two new types of British warplane and an invention which greatly assists the bomber when attacked by fighters have come into action since Germany extended the war to the Low Countries. The new aircraft, hitherto on the secret list, are Boulton Paul Defiant fighters and Bristol Beaufort bombers. The new invention is the power operated gun turret, now being fitted as standard to bombers and to some fighters.

The Defiants are the first single-engine two-seater fighters to make their appearance. They have the new turret, and one Rolls Royce Merlin engine. The Beauforts, four-seater monoplanes with two 1,100-horse power engines, are designed for the triple purpose of bombing, torpedo bombing or reconnaissance; they are a development of the Blenheim bomber.

Britain's scientific development of the power operated gun turret has given the R.A.F. a long lead over the enemy. German bombers are designed to evade fighter attack using speed and cloud, but the British favor the bomber which can fight out and then carry on to its objective. Great speed makes it difficult for the gunner to hold his gun against the wind when firing from a window or manual turret, and the bomber needs mobile guns to cope with the more manoeuvrable fighter.

The power operated gun turret is the answer. Within its protection the British gunner can instantly deploy his battery of guns in any direction without the effort of having to withstand the great wind pressure, and therefore with perfectly steady aim. He has "finger control." The new turrets on the Defiant fighters enable them to fire broadside instead of having to withhold fire until they can face their target, as other fighters are compelled to do.

STILL THE "HOWLERS"

A smock is a type of nightshirt worn by country people in England during the day.

A dot is a grown-up person.

Mosques are young mosquitoes.

A vacation is when people go to work on their holidays.

REASSURING

A man whose wife was inclined to be jealous was sitting with her one evening when the telephone rang.

"Hello—is that you, George?" his wife heard him say. "How are you, George? Certainly, George. When did you say, George?—Right, for are, George. Good-bye, George."

Replacing the receiver, he turned to his wife and said:

"My dear, that was George."

Lorne Scots Officers Plan for Summer Training

A full complement of officers of The Lorne Scots (P. D. & H. Regiment) attended a special meeting Tuesday, June 4th, in the Brampton Armouries, to hear Col. R. V. Conover, V.D., Commanding Officer, detail plans for summer training and announce dates for Officers' Training Schools.

More than twenty officers from the Regiment will attend schools at Niagara-on-the-Lake during July.

Disappointment was expressed at the fact that the Regiment had not been included in the Third or Fourth Divisions, as announced by the Department of National Defence, but enthusiasm on the part of the officers for their work was undiminished, and the keynote of the meeting was expressed by Col. Conover, who said "We shall Carry On."

Reports by Company Commanders indicated that the prospects for recruiting in the various centres had never been better, and that while certain trained men were being transferred to the C.A.S.F., new recruits were maintaining regimental strength above authorized establishment.

It was pointed out that opportunities to serve in the Militia, and this obtain adequate training for the active service and for the defence of Canada had never been better and that full facilities for such training are available.

Lt.-Col. Leonard Bertram, M.C., Second in Command of the Unit, reviewed Canada's war effort in the last conflict and emphasized the fact that in the present crisis the responsibility for providing the Dominion with trained men lay almost entirely with the Militia.

Regardless whether we are mobilized or not," said Lt.-Col. Bertram, "it is our duty as soldiers and Canadians to continue training in this area so that the officers and men who go forth to serve their country from the Counties of Peel, Dufferin and Halton, which we represent, will be second to none, in the armed forces of our country and worthy successors to those who served from this district in the Great War."

STILL CRITICAL

"Look here, Jones," the boss raged at his mild little bookkeeper, "your work is getting sloppier every day. See this?" It looks just like a 5!"

"It is a 5, sir."

"It is a 5? Well, why does it look so much like a 3?"

LIKE OLD TIMES

According to one of the American correspondents broadcasting from Berlin this week, the greeting "Heil, Hitler!" which replaced the one-time "Gross Gott!" is nowadays losing ground in Bavaria. "I hear that around Munich they are going back to God again."

PLENTY ON HAND

Mrs. Nubridge—Well? Mr. Stranper (at door)—I'm a bill collector.

Mrs. Nubridge—Oh, that's splendid! You just come in and I'll give you as many as you can carry!

TRY IT THE "SALADA" WAY

Infuse 6 heaping teaspoons of Salada Black Tea in a pint of fresh, boiling water. After 6 minutes strain liquid into 2- quart container, while hot, add 1 to 1 1/2 cups of sugar and juice of 2 lemons, strained, stir until sugar is dissolved, fill container with cold water. Do not allow tea to cool before adding cold water or liquid will become cloudy. Serve with chipped ice. The above makes 7 tall glasses.

"SALADA" ICED TEA

FIRST THINGS FIRST

First Tramp—What would you do if you won a pile of money?

Second Tramp—I'd have the park seats upholstered.

SOME TRUTH IN EACH

"To set out to give the public what it wants, as the saying is, is a dangerous and fallacious policy."—Sir John Bethel.

"What the people really want they generally get."—Charles Evans Hughes.

"The people don't know what they want."—J. B. Lohmer.

RECORDS BROKEN IN CONTRACTS AWARDED

All existing Canadian purchasing records were broken by the Department of Munitions and Supplies when 1,089 contracts were awarded during the course of a week—an average of 181 per day. They amounted to \$11,872,710.

SURE ENOUGH

The astor's wife is strange in one way, beyond doubt. Her heart rejoices when she sees her husband down and out.

One That Will Raid No More



View of the tall assembly of a German plane that was shot down on French soil during a raid. Note the close grouping of the holes in the body and tail, grouping that speaks well for the marksmanship of the French pursuit crew that shot it down. Allies claim that they shot down three German planes for every one they lose in the battles over northern France. One neutral observer said that the British Defiants can do better than the best German warplanes.

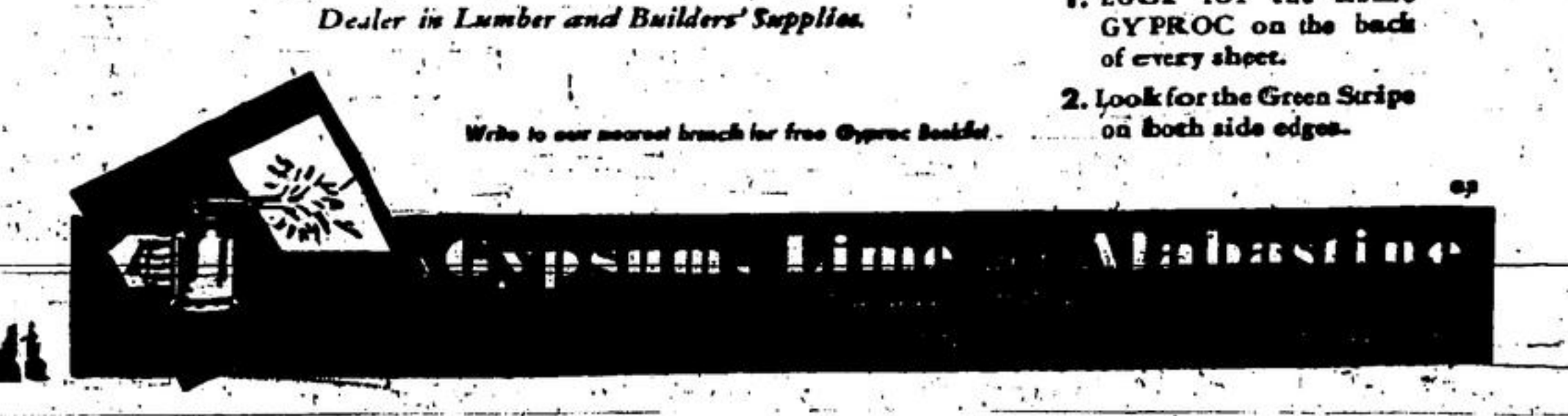
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