

Munroe Kirk

The Blue Dragon: A Tale of Recent Adventure in China



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TO MY READERS

The Blue Dragon, chosen as a title for this story, is the national emblem of China, adopted as such by a desire to flatter and propitiate that spirit of evil considered to be the most powerful. As the dragon is believed to be big enough and strong enough to overcome and devour all the other wicked genii who continually vex Chinese life, the wise men of the "Black-haired People" thought it best to have him on their side, and consequently accorded him the highest honor in their power to bestow. As we of America chose the eagle, strongest of visible air spirits, for our national emblem, so the Chinese chose the most powerful of invisible spirits in whose existence they believe as firmly as we do in the existence of things that we can see, hear, or feel.

In the story thus entitled, I have endeavored to give an idea of what China has been, is, and may become through education and development, how she is regarded, and how her people are being treated by other nations, and what causes she has for resentment against those who are taking advantage of her feebleness to despoil her.

While travelling in China, and trying to gain the Chinese point of view, I met so many charming people, so many men of intelligence and liberal education, honorable, broad-minded, and devoted to the uplifting of their unhappy country, that I became exceedingly interested in their cause, and anxious to aid it. With this object in view I am striving, through the medium of a story, to present it to those young Americans who, in the near future, will be called upon to decide the ultimate fate of the great Middle Kingdom. With them, more than with any other people, even including the Chinese themselves, will rest the decision, whether China shall remain a nation, open to the unobstructed commerce of the world, or become a series of petty colonial possessions devoted only to the interests of their several ruling powers. That my young readers may be guided to a wise and just solution of this great problem, is the sincere hope of their friend,

Kirk Munroe.
Biscayne Bay, Florida,
January, 1904.

CHAPTER I

A STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND

"Chinee! Chinee! Chink! Chink! Chink!"

These epithets, and many others equally contemptuous, such as "Rat Eater!" and "Piggy Tail!" were gleefully shouted by a mob of young ragamuffins who crowded about a single youthful figure, early one summer morning, on the elm-shaded main street of Hatton. The lad thus hustled and insulted was a good-looking chap according to the standard of his own people; though his long-lashed, wide-set eyes were narrower than those of his tormentors, his clear complexion held a tint of yellow, the front half of his head was shaved, and the remaining luxuriant growth of jet-black hair, such as all Chinese have, and of which they are so proud that they call themselves "the black-haired people," hung in a thick, glossy braid down his back. He wore a blue gown that fastened closely about his neck and fell in severely simple lines, without belt or ornamentation, almost to his feet. Below it could be seen a pair of black silk trousers, tightly fastened over a narrow section of white stockings, that in turn were lost to view in black cloth shoes having embroidered tops and felt soles. He had worn a round, visorless cap of black silk, surmounted by a crimson knot, but this had been knocked off, and now was being ruthlessly kicked and trampled underfoot by the hoodlums who, having discovered a victim that could be abused with impunity, were making the most of the welcome chance. Nor were they without encouragement in their cruel sport; for a group of men and young women, on their way to the great factory that was at once the mainstay of Hatton's prosperity and an ever-threatening menace, had paused to enjoy the sight of a crowd of American boys tormenting a helpless foreigner, and greeted the sorry spectacle with shouts of laughter.

"That's right, kiddies!" cried one of the men. "Down with the yellowbelly, and teach him that this country ain't no place fer him nor his kind."

"Dirty, rat-eating scab!" growled another.

"Somehow, it don't seem right, though," said one of the young women, with a tone of pity in her voice, as the badgered lad was suddenly jerked backward and nearly thrown to the ground by a violent pull at his queue. "He does look so like a girl, with his blue dress, his little hands, and his braided hair."

"Oh, hush up, Mag! You're too soft for anything!" exclaimed another. "He ain't nothing but just a low-lived heathen Chinee, like them as runs the laundry over to Adams. They'd take the bread out of honest working-people's mouths quick as wink, if they was give half a chance."

Just then the factory bell rang with insistent clamor, and the jeering group of workers moved on. At a meeting held a few evenings before they had loudly cheered and unanimously passed a resolution to the effect that the government ought immediately to deport to their own country, at their own expense, all Chinese found within its territory. One of the speakers had declared that, if the government was slow in doing this thing, it was the duty of every American citizen to take the matter into his own hands, drive out the Chinese wherever found, destroy their places of business, and hunt them to the death if they offered resistance. Of course, the children of those men, having heard this resolution discussed, and its accompanying speeches repeated with applauding comments, deemed it their privilege to attack, and, if possible, drive from their virtuous village every representative of the hated race they might encounter; and, unfortunately for him, poor, innocent, helpless Chinese Jo was the first to fall into their joyful clutches.

This was the first experience of his first day in Hatton, which he had reached after dark the evening before. He had come to America, from his far-away native land, in company with a dozen others of his young countrymen. These others had been sent over by the Chinese government to be educated and taught the ways of Western civilization; and Jo's father, Li Ching Cheng, a progressive

mandarin, who realized the value of such an education, had seized the opportunity to add his one dear son to the party, that he might gain the priceless advantage of some years of study in the same land.

Now it happened that in Mandarin Li's district labored an American medical missionary, Mason Hinckley by name, who also had an only son. When this boy was four years old, his parents, desirous that he should have an American training from the outset, had taken him to the United States and placed him in charge of his uncle and aunt, the Rev. William and Mrs. Hinckley, of Hatton, a manufacturing village of the lovely Connecticut valley. Then, with aching hearts, they had returned to their lonely post of duty in China, and only twice during the following fourteen years were they able to visit their boy.

When Mandarin Li announced that he, too, proposed to send a son to America, and asked if the Hinckleys could not arrange to have him received into the same family with their Rob, they gladly consented to do what they could. Their hope for their own boy was that he would eventually return to China, and they realized the value to him of a present companionship with a young Chinese of education and refinement. So a letter was sent to Hatton, and finally everything was arranged for the comfort and happiness of Mandarin Li's son. Thus he was sent forth on his long journey, half-way around the world, filled with a joyous enthusiasm over his prospects.

He and his young friends travelled in charge of a home-returning American, who had promised to see them safely to their several destinations in New England. By his advice they adopted English names for use in the country to which they were bound, and our lad chose that of Joseph. As his father's surname was Li, which, in Chinese, is pronounced "Lee," he thus became known to his future teachers and more precise acquaintances as Joseph Lee; but all his American boy friends called him "Chinese Jo," or "China Jo," or "Chinee Jo," according to their several degrees of intelligence, and it is thus that we shall know him as we accompany him through the various adventures which it is proposed to record in the following pages.

They began, as already has been seen, with his very first morning in the new home that he had reached the evening before, tired from his long journey, bewildered by the multitude of strange sights and experiences that had crowded thickly about him from the moment of landing at San Francisco, and terrified at the great loneliness that had come to him with the departure of his comrades, who had been left, by twos, at other places before Hatton was reached. At the last of these points, only a few miles away, the gentleman who had escorted them from China had been obliged to send him on alone, after notifying the Hinckleys by telegraph of his coming.

Rob met him at the Hatton station, looked after his luggage of queer camphor-wood boxes, and took him to the pleasant parsonage that was to be his home in the strange land. Although Jo talked only broken English, while Rob had very nearly forgotten the Chinese of his childhood, they managed to converse after a fashion, and took to each other from the very first. Rob, eighteen years old, brown, broad-shouldered, and sturdy, offered a striking contrast in appearance to the slender lad who walked, with noiseless, felt-shod feet, beside him, and Jo at once conceived a liking for the young American, who greeted him so cordially, took charge of him and his affairs with such an air of authority, and even could speak a few words of intelligible Chinese.

Rob also was pleased with the foreign lad, whose appearance recalled a happy childhood spent in company with many such blue-clad figures on the other side of the world. At the same time he was glad that Jo had not reached his destination a few hours earlier; for he realized that the strangeness of his companion's costume and his general make-up would have attracted much unpleasant attention from the village boys had they been revealed by daylight. He determined to urge upon his uncle the advisability of confining Jo to the house on the following day, or until he could be provided with an outfit of American clothing, and persuaded to wear his hair in accordance with American ideas.

A warm welcome and a good supper awaited the young traveller at the parsonage; and under their cheering influence his homesickness was, for the time being, forgotten. His boxes were promptly delivered at the house, and from them he took the most marvellous array of gifts for various members

of the Hinckley family that ever had been seen in Hatton. To Mrs. Hinckley he presented several superb pieces of embroidered silks from Canton, a centre-piece for a table of pale-blue grass linen, drawn work from Swatow, a cloisonné teapot from Peking, and half a dozen tiny teacups of exquisite Foo-Chow porcelain. For Mr. Hinckley he had wonderful ivory carvings in the shape of chessmen, and a wadded silk dressing-gown; while to Rob, in addition to several jars of Chinese confections, including sugared ginger-root, bamboo-tips, water-melon rind, edible sea-weeds, and palm-leaf buds, he gave a complete suit of Chinese clothing, such as is worn by the sons of wealthy mandarins, and selected from his own wardrobe. It was in striking contrast to the simple scholar's gown of light-blue cotton cloth that he had adopted as an inconspicuous travelling costume; for its dark-blue skirt was heavily embroidered with gold thread; it had a jacket of light-blue silk, with wide, flowing sleeves, a wine-colored, sleeveless over-jacket of the same rich material, black silk trousers, with plum-colored over-trousers, a light-blue silk cap, with a crystal button on top, silken socks, and gold-embroidered felt shoes.

Rob gasped with amazement when the various parts of this superb costume were unfolded before him, and was inclined to regard it with contemptuous amusement.

"All these silk petticoats and things for a boy!" he sniffed. "Catch me ever wearing such a lot of girl's stuff! And, I say, Uncle Will, that reminds me – don't you think we'd better get him into American clothes, and have his pig-tail cut off, before he is turned loose on the street. He'll jump into no end of trouble if he shows outside in anything like these, or even as he is now. It looks funny even to me, and I'll bet he couldn't walk down Main Street without being mobbed."

"I myself think that the sooner he conforms to the dress and customs of the country in which he is to reside for some time to come, the better it will be for him," replied Mr. Hinckley. "But, Rob, I don't like the way you seem inclined to treat his gift, and I am very glad he could not wholly understand what you just said about it. A gift of any nature, offered as a token of friendliness and good-will, should be accepted in the same spirit, even though it may not be just what you would have chosen. I do not know of anything that hurts one's feelings more keenly than to have a friendly overture contemptuously rejected."

"Of course, I wouldn't hurt his feelings for anything, Uncle Will," replied Rob, with a contrite flush mounting to his forehead. "I already like him too much for that, and I wouldn't have said what I did about his present if I had thought. I do thank you ever so much," he added, turning to Jo, "for all this silk stuff. I'm awfully glad to have it, and I'll put it away to wear at my first fancy-dress ball, if I ever go to one. Anyway, whenever I look at it, I'll be reminded that Chinese Jo is my friend, and that I am his."

Although Jo did not understand all the words thus spoken, he was so fully satisfied with their tone and the smile that accompanied them that, a little while later, when he went to bed, he was happy in the consciousness of having gained a friend of his own age in this strange land of strangers.

CHAPTER II

AMERICA'S UNFRIENDLY WELCOME

In spite of Jo's weariness of the night before, and the sound sleep that followed, he was out of bed by sunrise and gazing curiously from his chamber window. The air was sweet and cool, the arching elms stood motionless, as though not yet awake, and between them he caught a silvery gleam of the Connecticut. Beyond it rose soft, swelling hills, and he imagined their green slopes to be thickly strewn with graves, as always is the case in China; on them, too, he could see occasional groves of trees, each of which he supposed must shelter a white-walled temple or sacred shrine, this being the prime object of groves in his native land.

He wondered at not seeing any tall-sailed junks or guard-boats on the river, and at the utter absence of the useless but picturesque pagoda towers that add so much to the beauty of every Chinese landscape. Then, remembering that America is a very new country in comparison with his own, he concluded that its people had not yet found time to build pagodas, or, perhaps, were too poor. Of course, he could trace no resemblance between the broad, well-shaded avenue below him, with its rows of neat, white houses, and the narrow, crowded, shadeless streets to which he was accustomed. At the same time, the green country on which he gazed looked so very like a bit of Chinese river valley that he longed to explore it, with a hope of finding thatched farm-houses, curve-roofed temples, or other homelike features that should recall his own beloved valley of the Si-Kiang. He listened with pleasure to the singing of birds, which were infinitely more numerous than in China, and to the tinkle of cow-bells, a sound he never before had heard. He wished he might go down to the street and begin at once his study of the many strange things it was certain to contain, and he wondered how soon a servant would appear in his room with the bowl of tea that would be the signal for rising.

While he thus was cogitating, he heard a door below him open and close, and then he saw his newly made friend, Rob Hinckley, go whistling down the street, swinging in one hand a bright tin milk-can. If he only had known that Rob was up and going out, he might have gone, too. Perhaps even now he might overtake him and have a walk in his company. He was dressed, and the only thing about him not thoroughly presentable was his queue, which, not yet cared for that morning, looked rough and unkempt. At home some one always had combed and braided it for him, first his mother, and afterwards a servant. Since coming away, one of his Chinese companions and he had braided each other's queues every morning. Now Jo wondered who was to perform this service, but supposed that sooner or later some servant would come to his assistance. He wished the lazy fellow had appeared, and that this most important feature of his toilet had been attended to, for in China no gentleman will present himself on the street or in company unless his queue is carefully braided smooth and glossy. Exposed to public view in any other condition, it is a sign that its owner is in such deep affliction that he takes no interest even in the most important affairs of life.

Having been carefully instructed in this branch of Chinese etiquette, Jo was puzzled as to what he should do. He longed to join Rob on his walk, but hesitated to offend his friend by appearing before him with a disordered queue. He could not put it in order himself, and no one was at hand to assist him. Of course, he might conceal the fact that it was frowzy by coiling it about his head and hiding it beneath his cap; but even this plan had its drawback, for in the Flowery Kingdom it is an almost unpardonable offence for any man to appear in the presence of his superiors with queue coiled about his head or in any other way hidden. Still, the only superiors recognized at present by Jo were the senior Hinckleys, and by going down-stairs very quietly he might slip out of the house without attracting their notice, and so avoid giving offence.

Thus thinking, the lad hastily coiled his cherished but at that moment rather disreputable-looking queue closely about his head, pulled his cap over it, and, softly opening his room door, stole

forth with the noiseless tread of a sneak-thief. He got safely as far as the front door, but there he made so much noise fumbling with the unfamiliar latch as to attract the attention of Mr. Hinckley, who was dressing, and he called down, "Who's there?"

Not understanding the question, and as dismayed at the prospect of being discovered with his queue disrespectfully coiled as an American boy would be if caught stealing jam, Jo made no reply, but redoubled his efforts at the door. Suddenly, as he was pulling it with all his strength, the latch turned and the door flew open, sending him to the floor with a crash. Mrs. Hinckley screamed, and her husband, shouting "Stop thief!" started down-stairs. He failed, however, to reach the bottom in time to discover the author of the disturbance, for Jo, thoroughly, frightened by the untoward result of his efforts to enact the part of a Chinese gentleman, had hastily scrambled to his feet and fled through the now wide-open door. Although the minister did not see him, Mrs. Hinckley, peeping between the half-closed slats of the window-blinds, did, and exclaimed:

"My good gracious, William! If it isn't that China boy!"

"Nonsense," replied Mr. Hinckley, as, realizing the futility of a chase under existing conditions, he hastened back to the room.

"I tell you it is, for I just saw him with my own eyes, blue dress and all, go flying down the street as though the constable was after him. I've no doubt he ought to be, too, for the boy's run away – that's what he's done – and probably taken every mite of silver in the house with him."

"Nonsense!" again ejaculated Mr. Hinckley, as he slipped on a pair of trousers.

"You may say 'nonsense' as much as you like," retorted his wife, "but you'll think something else when you find out that every word I'm speaking is solemn truth. I always did mistrust the Chinese, and so would you if you'd heard all the stories I have about their dreadful wickedness down at the society."

"Didn't know any of them belonged to the society," interposed Mr. Hinckley, unable even at this critical moment to resist a sly joke at his wife's expense.

"You know what I mean, William Hinckley, just as well as I do," was the reply; "and I do think this is a pretty time to be poking fun at your poor wife, when a pig-tailed 'yellow peril,' as he is truly called, is running off with every mite of her own mother's family silver. It's no wonder we are trying to exclude them, and I only wish we'd succeeded before this one ever came to Hatton. They do say down at the society that the Chinese are about to overrun the world; and, from what I've just seen, I've no doubt it's true."

"Of course, it must be so if *they* say so, my dear," answered the minister, as he fastened his shirt-collar; "but I'll try some overrunning myself after this first 'yellow peril' who has ever tried to overrun Hatton. As he is too conspicuous an object to run far without attracting attention, I expect to catch up with him very shortly, and to return with him inside of half an hour. Then I hope breakfast will be ready, for both of us are certain to be extremely hungry after our exercise."

"Perhaps it will, if he's left a bit of food in the house to cook or a thing to cook with, which I doubt," retorted Mrs. Hinckley, as her husband, now wholly dressed, again started towards the street. In the mean time, Chinese Jo, quite unaware of the turmoil he had left behind him, and only anxious to overtake Rob, whom he just could see far down the street, had, as Mrs. Hinckley declared, set forth on a run in that direction. Also, as Mr. Hinckley had predicted, he was too strangely conspicuous to run far without attracting attention. At first the few people on the street at this early hour only stared at him, but after a little they began to call and point at him, and boys began to pursue him with joyous shouts of anticipated fun.

All at once Jo discovered that Rob no longer was in sight, and also that a number of small boys, all yelling at the top of their voices, were running on both sides of him. Fearing lest he might pass the place where he had last seen his friend, and puzzled to account for his present escort, the Chinese lad stopped and looked about him. He had reached the village common, on which half a dozen disreputable young ragamuffins were playing an early game of toss-penny. These, discerning in his presence a more exciting interest, promptly abandoned their game and ran whooping towards him.

Now, for the first time, Jo began to feel nervous and wish that he had not ventured out among these barbarians unprotected. All the terrible stories he had heard concerning the cruel treatment of his countrymen by Americans surged into his memory and filled him with dismay. Never before had he believed them, but now it seemed probable that some of them might be true.

No Chinese is a fighter, either by nature or education, and Jo was not an exception to this rule. Thus he would have fled from his present unhappy position had flight been possible, but it was not. He was completely encircled by his merciless tormentors, who, as they realized his utter helplessness, became more and more bold in their attacks. At first they only hooted, jeered, and called him names. Then they began to hustle and push him. At length one of them snatched off his cap and flung it to the ground, where it was trampled underfoot and kicked from one to another. With the loss of his cap Jo's queue was uncoiled from about his head and dropped down his back. In this position it was caught and jerked by one and another of the yelling mob until its wretched owner was half crazed by pain and fright. Thus he was shoved and pulled, spun giddily round and round, pelted with mud, and repeatedly struck with sticks or clinched fists. His blue gown was torn in many places, and his face was bleeding. Finally he slipped, failed in a convulsive effort to save himself, and fell, carrying to earth with him one of the young miscreants at whom he had clutched as he went down.

Jo's fall was greeted by yells of delight from the imps who had caused it, but directly their jubilations were exchanged for howls of dismay and pain. At the critical moment an avenger had appeared among them, and he was dealing furious blows at their unguarded bodies with a terrible, flashing weapon, that scattered them as chaff is scattered by a fierce wind.

CHAPTER III

ROB TO THE RESCUE

Rob Hinckley had gone out early on that eventful morning for the family milk that he fetched every day from a small farm at the lower end of the village. His mind was full of the strange, new companion who had come into his life the evening before; and, as he went whistling down the street, he was planning how he should introduce him to the boys of Hatton. He also wondered on what terms they would receive the young foreigner, who was in every way so different from any other they ever had met.

"Of course, they'll treat him all right, though," reflected Rob. "They may think him funny and laugh at him a little, to begin with; but when I tell 'em who he is in his own country, they'll be proud enough to have him in the school. I'll have to keep him out of sight of the muckers, though, at any rate till he gets some civilized clothes and learns how to wear 'em."

Here Rob stared with a decidedly unfriendly scowl at the group of young gamblers on the village common, across which he was walking. "Wouldn't it just be pie for them to get hold of him, blue dress, pig-tail, and all?" he reflected; "and wouldn't he think he'd run up against a war party of American Indians, ready to scalp him? They won't have a chance at him, though, not if I know it."

Here Rob straightened himself, clinched his unoccupied hand, and held his head higher than ever, for there is nothing that so increases one's sense of importance as to have a weaker person dependent upon him.

There was much bitterness of feeling existing between two classes of Hatton boys, one of which was more or less connected with the factory, while the other attended the academy for which the village was famous. The latter called their enemies "muckers," and these retorted with the term "saphead." Members of these opposed factions always exchanged sneers and taunts upon meeting, and sometimes these led to blows that resulted in fierce conflicts. None of these fights had taken place on the common, however, for the village constable had declared it to be neutral ground, and threatened with dire punishment any boy who should break the public peace within its limits. As the constable generally was somewhere in the vicinity of the common, ready to enforce his ruling, it had been obeyed thus far, and both the boyish factions had used the open space as a playground in apparent harmony. So Rob Hinckley only scowled at the muckers, who occupied one corner of the common as he crossed it that morning, while they, in turn, pretended ignorance of his presence.

On his return, however, affairs had assumed a very different aspect, and as Rob drew near the common he pricked up his ears at the sounds that came to him from that ordinarily peaceful enclosure. "What could they mean? Were the muckers fighting among themselves?" Rob believed they were, and chuckled at thought of what Constable Jones would do when he discovered them. This belief was strengthened as he came within sight of the fracas, for at first he could only see a lot of yelling muckers, apparently engaged in a furious struggle. Then he uttered an exclamation of dismay, and the hot blood flew to his face. In the very centre of the surging crowd he saw a slender, blue-clad figure, taller than any of those swarming about it, and realized that the very thing he most had dreaded in connection with his newly made friend from China had come to pass. Chinese Jo, whom he had thought to be peacefully and safely asleep in the parsonage, evidently had left it unnoticed, and at once had fallen into the hands of the most merciless of American savages.

With a hoarse yell of rage, and careless of what might happen to himself, Rob sprang forward, swinging the milk-can above his head as he ran. So busy were the tormentors of the Chinese lad with their sport that the coming of a would-be rescuer was unnoticed until he was close upon them. As poor Jo lost his footing and fell, Rob dashed into the mêlée, dealing telling blows with his milk-can, and scattering the horde of young toughs as though he had been a charge of cavalry. The stopper flew

out of the can, and its contents were flung to right and left, impartially drenching friend and foe. Thus, for a minute, the tide of battle flowed with the righteously wrathful Rob and against the cowardly and unrighteous muckers. Then one of the latter, who had not yet been reached by the deadly milk-can, and so could view the proceedings more calmly than could his companions, shouted:

"There ain't but one saphead, fellers! Go for him! Kill him! He ain't no good!"

The cry was heard and obeyed. In spite of the demoralizing effects of the milk-can, the muckers rallied, and in another moment affairs would have gone very badly with both our lads. But providentially sent peace-makers were at hand, and, ere the enemy could rally to an attack, they were put to ignominious flight by overwhelming forces that simultaneously appeared upon the field of battle from two sides. Parson Hinckley and Constable Jones had arrived in the nick of time.

"What is the meaning of this disgraceful exhibition, Robert?" demanded the former, sternly, as the flight of the enemy revealed his nephew, flushed, breathless, hatless, swinging a badly battered tin can in one hand, and with milk streaming from every part of his figure.

"Yes," chimed in Constable Jones, wrathfully, "what does it mean? You can't say that you didn't know my orders again' scrimmaging on the common; and yet here you be, caught red-handed in the very act."

"I'd call it 'white-handed,'" replied Rob, with a grin, at the same time holding out a grimy, milk-dripping paw.

"I don't want no sass, young feller, but a plain statement of facts," retorted the constable, sharply.

"Well," replied Rob, "all I know is this: That gang of muckers were killing my friend, just because he happens to be a Chinese, and I got here just in time to save him."

"Chinee, is he?" queried the constable, gazing curiously at the lad whom Mr. Hinckley was assisting to his feet. "Looks like he'd been doing some killing on his own hook," he added, quickly, as he caught sight of the small mucker who had become involved in Jo's fall, and who still lay motionless on the ground. He had been knocked breathless, but, as the constable knelt beside him and lifted his head, the boy gasped. Then he opened his eyes.

"I'm kilt, and de Chink done it," he murmured, indistinctly.

"It looks like rather a serious case, parson," said the constable, solemnly; "more especial as there's a heathen Chinee mixed into it. I believe it's my duty to arrest all parties concerned, and hold 'em for examination by Square Burtis."

"You needn't arrest these two," replied Mr. Hinckley, indicating Jo and his nephew, "for I am just as anxious for an investigation into this affair as you can be. It is my belief that a most wanton outrage has been perpetrated, for which the guilty parties should be punished, and I give you my word that both these lads shall appear with me before Justice Burtis whenever summoned to do so."

By this time curious spectators were beginning to gather. The dispersed muckers, reinforced by others of their kind, were shouting taunts and derisive epithets from a safe distance, and, rather than invite further trouble, the constable hastily agreed to the minister's proposition. So he departed in one direction, taking with him the small tough, and thus diverting to himself the unpleasant attention of that element among the rapidly increasing spectators.

A number of those who remained walked towards the parsonage with Mr. Hinckley and his companions, plying them with questions and gazing curiously at the tattered young Chinese, who, frightened and unhappy, walked silently between his friends. Realizing that this was neither the time nor place for explanations, Rob's uncle did not demand any, but, cautioning the boys not to talk, replied to all questions that the whole affair would shortly be investigated in court.

When they reached the parsonage, and Mrs. Hinckley, in the back of the house, heard their voices, she called out:

"Is that you, Rob? I'm glad, for I want some milk, right away."

"Here it is, Aunt Alice," answered the boy, presenting himself with his battered tin can, a little ruefully, but at the same time with a twinkle in his eyes, at the kitchen door.

"Good gracious, Rob! What has happened?" cried the astonished woman.

"Only a little scrap, Aunt Alice, that I couldn't help getting into on Jo's account."

"Was that China boy mixed up in it? But, of course, he was. I've felt it from the first that he'd make trouble."

"But it wasn't his fault, Aunt Alice; I'm sure of that," asserted Rob, earnestly. "He was being shamefully abused by the muckers, who came mighty near killing him."

The next half-hour, with breakfast entirely forgotten, was devoted to explanations, and, by the end of that time, the whole affair was pretty thoroughly understood. Jo's sufferings at the hands of his tormentors had the one good effect of transforming Mrs. Hinckley's mistrust of him into a warm sympathy that afterwards developed into a real liking for the gentle fellow.

A little later, while they were at breakfast, came the expected summons for Mr. Hinckley, his nephew Robert Hinckley, and a Chinese lad known to be an inmate of the parsonage, to appear at ten o'clock that very morning in Justice Burtis's court-room for examination in connection with the recent fracas on Hatton common.

While Mr. Hinckley went to see the justice and prefer charges against several of the young muckers, whose names had been given him by Rob, for assaulting his ward, Joseph Lee, the two lads changed their clothing and prepared to make a respectable appearance in court. While they were thus engaged, Rob, to the delight of both of them, found his early knowledge of Chinese returning to him so rapidly that he was able to understand much of what Jo said.

Acting on Mr. Hinckley's advice, the latter arrayed himself in his very richest robes, and Mrs. Hinckley's sympathy so far overcame her prejudice that, when she discovered him making a sorry attempt to do up his queue, she offered to braid it for him.

"To think that I ever should do such a thing!" she exclaimed. "But, Rob, what do you suppose he wants all this white stuff worked into it for?" she added. "I'm sure his pig-tail is long enough without it."

The white stuff thus referred to was some strands of silk braid and a silken tassel, and, after asking Jo concerning it, Rob explained to his aunt that, as white is the Chinese color for mourning, their young guest wore it in memory of his mother, who had died less than a year before.

"Poor fellow!" said Mrs. Hinckley. "But what a very curious custom!"

At length both lads were pronounced presentable, each according to the fashion of his own country, and, Mr. Hinckley having returned, the whole family set forth towards the little building in which Justice of the Peace Burtis held court.

"It is not of my first day the manner I had expected to spend it," Jo confided to Rob, as they walked down the street.

"I should say not!" replied the latter.

CHAPTER IV

A TRIUMPH FOR JO'S ENEMIES

The little court-room was already crowded when our party reached it, and Jo's appearance created a sensation. The muckers and their friends, many of whom were on hand, scowled at him, and made sneering remarks concerning his country, his costume, and especially about his queue, which seemed, more than anything else, to excite their animosity. On the other hand, the better class of spectators were impressed by the intelligence shown in the lad's face, his air of high breeding, and by the richness of his dress, which was much handsomer than anything of the kind ever before seen in Hatton.

Mr. Hinckley was the first witness examined, and he told of the Chinese lad's coming to America, and why he had done so. Then Jo himself was called to the stand, and, with Rob acting as interpreter, he gave his account of the recent fracas, a simple statement that drew forth indignant murmurs from the better class of spectators. After that the witness-stand was occupied by several of the young toughs who had participated in the affair. Their accounts of what had happened were confused and contradictory, but in general were to the effect that they were only looking at the stranger who had so unexpectedly appeared, running down the village street, and laughing a little at his pig-tail; that he had flown into a violent rage, and had flung one of their number to the ground, where he endeavored to choke him to death. They further testified that while they were trying to save their comrade's life by dragging the enraged heathen off from him, they suddenly were set upon by Rob Hinckley, who severely beat and seriously wounded several of them with a milk-can before they could escape from his furious and unprovoked attack. In support of this testimony, the boy who had been involved in Jo's fall was produced and allowed to tell his story, as were several who bore marks of Rob's effective weapon. A statement from the constable was then heard, and it served so to strengthen the testimony just taken that, when Mr. Jones finished his story and an adjournment until two o'clock was ordered, the case of our friends looked very black. Nor did it brighten during the afternoon session, for Rob could not swear that he had seen any specific act of violence committed by any one of those who had surrounded the young Chinese on the common. Mr. Hinckley also failed to help the case, for he was forced to admit that when he reached the scene of trouble the alleged assailants of the Chinese lad were in full flight before his nephew, and that, while they were rallying to an attack, he did not see them commit any overt act. He also was made to describe the relative positions of Jo and the boy who had shared his fall, and, as his testimony on this point agreed with all that had preceded, excepting that of Jo himself, it served still further to strengthen the cause of the muckers.

After this the only effort made to help what evidently was a weak case was Mrs. Hinckley's description of Jo's appearance when he reached home, together with her production of the tattered blue gown he had worn. Her story seemed to produce a good effect upon the justice, until, taking the garment into his own hands for examination, he said:

"Madam, this coat, or dress, or whatever it may be called, seems to be badly stained and still is damp. Can you tell me by what fluid it has been saturated? Is it, by any chance, blood from the veins of this Joseph Lee, and caused to flow by the ill treatment he is alleged to have suffered?"

"No," replied Mrs. Hinckley, shortly; "it's milk."

This answer was greeted by a roar of laughter from the crowded court-room, and, when quiet had with some difficulty been restored, the justice announced his decision:

"The examination of witnesses in this case," he said, "will proceed no further, as the testimony already submitted is more than sufficient to warrant me in committing the principals for trial at the next session of the county court. Moreover, as the case has assumed an aspect so much more serious than I had anticipated, I am obliged to bind over Robert Hinckley and Joseph Lee in the sum of five

hundred dollars each for appearance before said court. I shall require these bonds in each case to be signed by two responsible tax-payers of this district. If such signatures cannot be procured, Robert Hinckley and Joseph Lee will be confined in the county jail until the time for their trial shall arrive. Also, pending the execution of said bonds, they are remanded to the custody of the Hatton village constable, who is hereby charged with their safe-keeping."

"Whew!" ejaculated Rob under his breath. "Prisoners! Jail! In custody! That sounds worse than any scrape I ever got into before; and what a lovely beginning for Jo's experience of free America!"

The decision was hailed with jubilation by the muckers and their friends, who, as they streamed into the open air, gave vent to their feelings through derisive yells and taunting remarks concerning "pig-tails" and "sapheads."

Jo, who until now had watched the proceedings with grave curiosity, though with but slight understanding of what was taking place, was made to realize by these sounds of rejoicing from the other side that something had gone wrong, and he glanced inquiringly towards his friend.

"Yes," said Rob, speaking in fragmentary but intelligible Chinese, "the case has gone against us so far, and you and I must go to prison unless some one will put up the money to keep us out."

"My father is a mandarin, and can furnish enough money to buy my freedom from any foreign prison," exclaimed Jo, with flushing cheeks.

"Yes, of course," replied Rob; "but in this case it happens that only American money will be accepted."

"Then let me go to prison," said Jo, proudly, "for my father does not choose that I should incur obligations."

So determined was the Chinese lad upon this course that even when Mr. Hinckley had arranged the bond business with some of his friends, and the boys were free to depart, it was with the greatest difficulty that he could be persuaded to leave the court-room. Only after Rob had repeatedly assured him that Mr. Hinckley was acting as agent for his father, who, in the end, would be called upon to meet all expenses connected with the trial, did the proud young chap consent to accompany his friends to their home.

Although the case thus far seemed to have gone against our lads, it had the good result of arousing much interest in Jo and creating many friends for him among the best people of Hatton. Thus many times the amount of the bonds demanded by Justice Burtis had promptly been forthcoming the moment his decision was rendered. That evening the parsonage was crowded with those who wished to tender sympathy and friendship to the young stranger who had received so cruel a reception in the land that had promised so much, and to whose honor he had so trustingly confided.

The young Chinese was made to feel almost happy, and much of his homesickness vanished as Rob translated the friendly sentiments of his visitors, and he realized that, in spite of his recent experience, America did contain people of kindly disposition, who held honor and fair dealing in esteem. Thus the darkness that had so heavily overshadowed this first day in his new home was decidedly lightened before its end; and he went to bed that night possessing a wealth of new experience in which evil and good were very nearly balanced.

The following day was largely devoted to procuring for Jo a complete outfit of American clothes, and in teaching him to wear them. For a time these rendered him very miserable. Never had his legs seemed so long or so conspicuous as they now appeared, divested of skirts and encased in trousers. Never before had he worn garments fitting him so closely that he doubted if they would allow him to eat enough to satisfy his hunger, and he was surprised to find that he still could draw a full breath. He was amazed at the number of pockets they contained, since never, until now, had he possessed even one, and he wondered what he should find to put in them. He approved of a hat that shaded his eyes, but felt most noisy and uncomfortable in the harsh leather shoes that replaced his own of cloth.

But all these troubles were insignificant when compared with the great grief that came to him that same day. It was nothing more nor less than the loss of his cherished queue, which both Mr. Hinckley and Rob advised, and almost insisted, should be cut off.

"It is the distinguishing mark of my nationality," he pleaded, "and without it people might take me for a Japanese, or even for a Korean. Also, it is a symbol of loyalty to my emperor, for in China every man without a queue is regarded as a rebel, and is liable to lose his head. Without it I should feel ashamed to look my friends in the face. No, I cannot give it up!"

When all this was interpreted to Mr. Hinckley, he replied:

"Tell him that, while I realize the force of what he says, I still must urge him to make the sacrifice. After all, the wearing of the queue is comparatively recent in China. Jo's ancestors of less than three hundred years ago did not wear them; nor did they shave their heads, that custom being forced upon them by their Manchu, or Tartar, conquerors, early in the seventeenth century. The latter wore the queue, or horse-tail, depending from their heads, and long coat-sleeves, shaped at the end like horses' hoofs, to show that they were horsemen; and when they conquered China they compelled their new subjects to adopt both these features. Now, as Jo says, to discard the queue in China is a sign of rebellion against the government; but it cannot be so considered when a Chinese is in a foreign land, and subject to great inconvenience, not to say danger, if he does not conform to the customs of the country in which he resides. Here, for instance, if Jo persists in wearing his queue with an American costume, it will render him very conspicuous and liable to constant ridicule, if not insult and abuse, from ignorant or vicious members of the community, while without it he rarely will attract unusual attention. When he is ready to return to his own land, he again can allow it to grow, and can supplement it with a false braid until it shall have attained a suitable length. Many Americans residing in China have adopted the native costume, including the queue, in order to render themselves inconspicuous; and why should not the process be reversed by Chinese residing in this country?"

These arguments finally so prevailed that poor Jo, with a heavy heart and tear-filled eyes, allowed the shears to despoil him of what he considered his chief and most becoming adornment. As the heavy braid of glossy hair was severed he exclaimed:

"Now even my own father would not know me, and my wife would no longer render me obedience!"

"Your wife!" cried Rob. "What *do* you mean? You can't have a wife! Why, you aren't any older than I am."

"Certainly, I have a wife," replied Jo, composedly. "We were selected for each other when I was ten years of age; and, as my father wanted a person to look after his house, we were married the day before I left home."

"But she must be a little girl," objected Rob.

"Oh no. She is older than I, and quite grown up."

"Is she pretty?" persisted the other, curiously, "and are you very fond of her?"

"No, I am not fond of her at all; for, you see, I don't know her; and I don't think she even is good-looking. Of course I can't tell, though, for I have seen her only once, and then her face was so hidden by the wedding-paint that I have no idea how she would look without it."

"Well!" exclaimed Rob; "you Chinese certainly are funny!"

CHAPTER V

THREATENED VIOLENCE

The next two months passed quickly, and were full of interesting happenings for our lads. Although the academy was closed, and many of its students were away for the summer, there were a number of Rob's friends left in Hatton, and these promptly taking Jo's side as against the muckers, became his friends as well. In fact, it is doubtful if anything could have advanced him so speedily in the estimation of the better class of Hatton boys than his ill treatment at the hands of their avowed enemies. It alone was sufficient to induce them to make much of him from the outset; but in a very short time they learned to like him for his own good qualities.

He always was a gentleman, polite, courteously attentive when spoken to, and invariably good-natured. Then, too, his taper fingers were marvellously deft in making things out of paper, wood, or clay, such as dragons looking fierce enough to eat one, puzzles at once simple and baffling, flutelike whistles, and other instruments for the production of sounds more or less musical. He also constructed innumerable kites of grotesque animal forms, and he always was willing to show his boyish friends just how these wonders were produced.

They, in turn, taught him the things known almost instinctively by every American boy, and especially by those who live in the country, but of which our Chinese lad had no knowledge – such as swimming, boxing, rowing, how to camp out like Indians, and, above all, how to play the distinctively American game of baseball. To these fascinating novelties Jo took as readily as a young duck takes to water; for, with his hair cut short, instead of hanging in a braid down his back, and with a radical change of apparel, his whole character seemed to have undergone a transformation, and he now entered as heartily into the rough-and-tumble sports of his new associates as though to the manner born. To be sure, he was ridiculously awkward at first, and made such funny breaks as to excite the uproarious mirth of the other fellows; but he didn't seem to mind this a bit, and always joined heartily in a laugh at his own expense.

The thing they teased him most about was his wife, for the fact of his being married had seemed too good a joke for Rob to keep to himself. Even this, however, did not appear to annoy the young husband, for a Chinese marriage is so entirely different from one in America that there is no trace of sentiment connected with it. The most important feature of Chinese life is the worship of one's ancestors, and this worship may only properly be performed by the head of a family. Thus, to provide for the suitable worship of their own spirits, in case of untimely death, parents are anxious to have their sons married as early in life as is possible. Such marriages are purely business transactions, arranged by the elders, and with which the young people have nothing to do except to be on hand at the appointed time. Even this is not essential in the case of the bridegroom, so long as the bride is delivered, as per agreement, at his father's house. He may be on a journey, or undergoing a scholar's examination, or engaged in some other important business that may not be interrupted for so trifling an incident as his wedding, which, therefore, is allowed to proceed without him. As he never is permitted to see his future wife or to learn anything concerning her during their betrothal, he cannot be expected to take a great personal interest in her, or she in him. Thus it happened that Jo was quite as willing to accept, good-naturedly, teasing remarks concerning his marriage as he was those called forth by any other customs of his people that struck his new companions as ridiculous.

He had one possession that excited their sincere admiration, not to say their envy, and this was a wonderful memory. Having been trained from earliest childhood to commit to memory columns and pages of Chinese characters, and not only pages but entire volumes of the Chinese classics, our young scholar now took up the acquisition of English as a mere pastime. The alphabet was conquered in a single day; several pages of short words, together with their meanings, in another; and by the end

of a week he was reading easy sentences. Rob was his first teacher, and, of course, his knowledge of Chinese was of the greatest assistance to Jo in gaining the meanings of the English words that he so readily learned to recognize by sight and sound.

Thus it happened that when the time arrived for his trial in the county court he was able to give his own version of the fracas on Hatton common in intelligible English without the aid of an interpreter.

In spite of the fact that Mr. Hinckley had employed able counsel to defend the boys, the case was decided against them, and they were sentenced to pay heavy fines in addition to the costs of the trial.

"It is an outrageous and unjust decision," said Mr. Hinckley to his lawyer, "and I will never submit to it so long as there is a higher court to which the case may be taken. I desire, therefore, that you move for an appeal, and continue to give it your most earnest attention."

"Very well, sir," was the reply; "of course, I will do so; but I must warn you that there is little hope of such a suit as yours being won in any American court. It is prejudiced from the outset by the existing strong feeling against the Chinese. For them it is almost impossible to obtain justice, even with the bulk of evidence in their favor, which, in the present instance, even you must admit is not the case."

In spite of what the lawyer said, Mr. Hinckley was determined to carry the contest to a higher court, and, the motion for an appeal being granted, the case of *State vs. Joseph Lee et al.* was carried to a superior court, in which the earliest date set for a hearing was four months from that time.

In the mean time the muckers of Hatton and their friends were wildly jubilant over the victory already gained. During the evening of the day on which the decision of the county court had been rendered, they gathered about a great bonfire at the lower end of the village, where they listened to incendiary speeches against the Chinese and all who befriended them. These were received with yells of applause and ominous threats of violence.

While this was going on at one end of the village, a number of Mr. Hinckley's friends were discussing the situation in the parsonage at the other. All at once Rob, who had been doing some scouting on his own responsibility, broke into the room where these gentlemen were sitting.

"They're coming, Uncle Will!" he cried, breathlessly, "and they swear they'll run Jo out of the village. They are talking about tar and feathers, too."

Mr. Hinckley sprang to his feet. "My friends," he said, "if you will stand by me in this emergency I think the evil may be averted; but if you cannot see your way to so doing, I must hasten to remove the innocent lad committed to my charge beyond the reach of danger. What do you say? Speak quick, for there is not a moment to lose."

"We will stand by you," replied one and another, "and there are plenty more who will do so, too. Our village must not be disgraced by scenes of lawless violence."

"Then," said Mr. Hinckley, "hasten and gather the neighbors. Let each man be back here within five minutes, bringing another with him. I will try to find Constable Jones, and urge him –"

"Here I be, parson," interrupted a voice from the doorway, "and I've telegraphed the sheriff that there's a show for trouble. He's answered that he'll be here inside of an hour, and for us to try and keep 'em entertained till he comes."

"Good!" exclaimed Mr. Hinckley. "I rather think we can."

Five minutes later, when a noisy throng of men and boys came surging up the street, the lower part of the parsonage, opposite which they halted, was so brilliantly lighted that they could see a numerous company of gentlemen assembled inside. They barely had time to realize that the house thus was occupied, when, suddenly, every light was extinguished and it stood in silent darkness. For a moment the new-comers, just now so valiantly loud-mouthed, waited in silence to see what would happen next. Then they began to murmur, and the murmurs grew into shouts of:

"Fetch out your Chinees!"

"We'll teach him English!"

"Down with the rat-eaters!" and a confusion of other cries, at once derisive and threatening.

As the mob, inflamed by these utterances, and urged on by its self-constituted leaders, crowded about the entrance to the front yard, it was met by Constable Jones, who leaned negligently against one of the gate-posts.

"Hello!" he exclaimed. "What do you fellows want here?"

"We want to see Parson Hinckley," answered a spokesman.

"Well, you'll have to call again to-morrow, or some other day, for he's busy just now and can't see you."

"Oh, he carn't, carn't he? I rather guess he'll see us before we git ready to leave. Come on, fellers!"

"Stand back!" shouted the constable as the crowd surged towards the gate. "I have instructions from the owner of these premises not to admit any one to them this night. As this is private property, and I'm bound to protect the owner in his rights, the first man attempting to enter will be arrested for trespass."

This announcement was greeted with howls of derision, and it seemed as though Constable Jones was about to have on his hands the job of arresting the entire mob, when another halt was called by the voice of Mr. Hinckley, who came from the house to the front gate as though to investigate the trouble.

"What is going on here, Constable Jones? Who are these people, and what do they want?" he asked, loud enough for all to hear.

"Want to see you, parson; so they say."

"Well, my friends, what is it? I am too busy for an extended conversation; but if you can tell me in a few words what you desire, I am ready to listen."

"Yes, we can," answered one of the leaders, gruffly. "We want the murdering, heathen Chinees that you're a-keeping in your house agin the law. We're agoin' to have him, too, an' run him out er town."

"Against the law!" repeated Mr. Hinckley. "What do you mean? I am not harboring any person against the law, that I know of."

"Yes, you be, fer the law says all Chinesesers must be excluded, and we're going to enforce it, by excluding the one you've brought to Hatton in spite of the law."

For ten minutes Mr. Hinckley held the crowd at bay by his arguments, and his exhortations not to disgrace themselves, their State, and their country, by committing an act of lawless violence; but finally they would listen to him no longer, and again a rush was made for the gate.

This time it was checked by a new voice, the stern tones of which were well known to all of them, for it belonged to the owner of the great shops in which so many of them earned their daily bread. "Hold on, men!" he cried, "and listen to me. I don't think I need tell you who I am, or that I will do as I say, for you all know me, and you know that I never yet broke a promise. For many years you and I have lived in this village of Hatton. In all that time we have carried on business together in orderly fashion, to my satisfaction, and, I hope, to yours. We have had differences, but always have managed to settle them without calling in outside aid. Now, however, you are threatening me, as well as this entire community, with something to which I cannot and will not submit. You are threatening this village with mob rule, a condition under which no community can exist and no business can be conducted. Therefore I give you my solemn word that if a single act of lawless violence against life or property is committed this night by a man or woman, boy or girl employed in the Hatton shops, those same shops shall be closed to-morrow, never to be reopened."

"That's all bluff!" cried a voice from the crowd, as the speaker uttered this threat.

"What do we care fer him or fer his talk?" demanded one who had constituted himself a leader. "There's a-plenty of us here as don't work in his shops to see this business through; so come on, lads,

and don't fool away any more time talking. Hurray for American rights, and down with all Chinese scabs!"

At this the mob uttered a howl and leaped forward, not only putting to flight the little group holding the parsonage gate, but tearing down the fence and swarming up to the very door of the house.

CHAPTER VI

THE SHERIFF TAKES PROMPT MEASURES

Sheriff Hardy, of Hat County, was a fearlessly resolute man, possessed of great bodily strength and of a coolness in times of excitement that admirably fitted him for his difficult position, and he had constant need to exercise all these qualities, for his was a manufacturing county, having a large population of recently Americanized foreigners, who held in scant respect laws not enforced by a military power always in evidence.

On the evening of the trouble in Hatton, Constable Jones's message found the sheriff quietly smoking a cigar on the porch of his house at the county seat, some miles from the place where his presence was so urgently required. Two minutes later he was on horseback and galloping towards the scene of disturbance. Reaching the Hatton parsonage within half an hour, he entered it by a back door, and at once swore in as special deputies the gentlemen whom he found there assembled, and undecided, not having authority, as to how they should act in the present emergency. Then Sheriff Hardy stepped to the front porch, took a survey of the situation, and for a minute listened to the significant interchange of remarks between the owner of the shops and the leaders of the mob.

He was there when the crowd tore down the fence and made their rush towards the house. Until this moment they had not suspected his presence, but now, at the sound of his sharp "Halt!" their advance was checked as effectually as though it had encountered a twenty-foot stone wall.

"Stand where you are!" he commanded. "Any man who advances so much as a single step farther will be arrested. I am not going to ask what you are doing here, nor the meaning of this cowardly demonstration against the peace. I already have heard enough to fully understand the situation. You are proposing to injure and otherwise abuse a person who is legally an inmate of this house."

"He's a heathen Chinee," muttered some one in the crowd.

"I don't care if he's a blue monkey," replied the sheriff, sharply, "so long as he is here with the sanction of the law, he is entitled to legal protection, and he is going to have it, too, just so long as I am sheriff of Hat County. Some of you Dagoes seem to think there isn't any law in this country, but I'll teach you that there is plenty of law, with ample provision for enforcing it. Now I've wasted all the time I mean to on you, and school is dismissed; so, 'bout face, and clear out of here. You want to be spry, too, for in just one minute I am going to march down that street with a posse of armed deputies, sworn to obey orders, and ordered to arrest any anarchist who attempts to obstruct their passage. I may add that they can shoot, too; and, if necessary, will shoot. That's all."

As the mob, breaking into angry murmurs, still hesitated to move, Sheriff Hardy called out, so that all might hear:

"Posse, attention! Fall in! Come on!"

Then, as the tramp of many feet sounded on the porch, he leaped from it, and his impatient followers sprang after him. The next minute they were charging down the main street behind a panic-stricken mob in full flight, and Hatton's short-lived reign of terror was ended.

After this, Mr. Hinckley, acting upon the sheriff's advice, which coincided with his own inclination, did not seek to secure Jo's safety by sending him away from Hatton, but kept him there in attendance at the academy, where the other fellows, under Rob's leadership, acted as a body-guard for his protection.

"It is too bad that I make so much bobble," said the Chinese lad to his friend one day. "Mebbe better if I go my own country."

"Oh, rot!" replied Rob, who at times found difficulty in expressing his feelings other than by the use of slang. "It would just be pie for the muckers to have you cut away, and they would claim

game on the strength of it. As for you making trouble, I call it fun, and so do the other fellows. Why, I've never known so much life in the academy as has been put into it by your coming. Same time, you can't say you aren't getting good by being here, for I never heard of anybody learning as fast as you do. I'm not the only one that's on to it, either; for I heard old Puff – excuse me, I mean Professor Puffer – say the same thing only yesterday. Besides, you couldn't go away till after our trial, anyhow, for we are under bonds to appear, and it would simply mean ruin to Uncle Will if you didn't show up."

"That tial," answered Jo, who had not yet fully conquered the difficulty encountered by all Chinese who come into contact with the letter *r*, "makes for me much bitterness and plenty 'fraid. In my country we say, 'Better it is to die than go in law-suit.'"

"Oh, pshaw!" answered Rob. "It isn't that way in America. Everybody here seems to get mixed up in some sort of a law-suit sooner or later, and not worry much about it, either. As for ours, it'll come out all right; you see if it don't. I'm not fretting."

When, in the early winter, the eventful day set for the trial of the now famous case of *State vs. Joseph Lee et al.* arrived, it seemed as though half Hatton was determined to be on hand. Court was held in the city of S – , distant only an hour's ride by train, so that the Hatton spectators were able to go and return the same day.

Owing to the dragging length of the preceding case on the calendar, that of our lads was not called on the first day of their appearance, and they were forced to spend the night in a hotel, guarded by a deputy. In this same hotel stayed the father of the young tough who had incidentally been thrown to the ground with Jo during the long-ago fracas that began all this trouble. When our lads, accompanied by their guard, went down to supper, this man, together with another, sat where he could see them, and, pointing to Jo, he said, viciously, but in a low tone:

"That's him, and we'll make it worth your while to fix him."

"That well-dressed young fellow?" questioned the other, in a tone of surprise. "He don't look any more like a Chinee than he does like a Dago, and if you hadn't told me, I wouldn't have suspected it."

"No, they've trimmed him up to look almost civilized; but I wisht you'd seen him when the fuss took place. He sure was a savage-appearing heathen then."

"Um," said the other, meditatively; "changed his description, have they? Well, if you can make it worth while, I'll see what can be done."

To the dismay of our lads and their friends, the trial, which occupied the whole of the following day, was, in spite of the efforts of their lawyer, but a repetition of the first one. Much additional testimony was presented by the State, but nothing new had been forth-coming in their behalf. So late in the day was the case closed that the judge withheld his decision until the next morning; but no one had a doubt as to its nature, and the muckers of Hatton held another jubilation that night with bonfires and much noise.

Full accounts of the trial appeared in the morning papers, and our friends read these with heavy hearts.

"Looks as though we stood a good chance of going to prison," remarked Rob, gloomily. "It'll either be that or a whopping big fine that, I'm afraid, Uncle Will can't raise. Maybe it'll be both."

"If my father were only here," said Jo, "he would make things all right quick enough, by giving that mandarin judge much money."

"Oh, would he?" replied Rob. "That's all you know about American judges. Such a scheme might work in China, but if your father should try it on here he would be pretty apt to land himself in prison, alongside of his son, and that son's 'accomplice,' as the papers now call me. We Americans are a pretty tough lot, I'll admit, and our laws don't seem to have much to do with justice, but I don't believe we've yet come to the point of bribing our judges – that is, not to any great extent."

"But, Rob, my friend, it is for you that my heart is aching. For me it makes no difference. When I am again free I will go back to my own country as a hero, whose bad treatment here will only

make my people hate foreigners more than ever. But for you it will mean shame and much sorrow, all caused by me."

"Now, don't you fret a little bit about that, old man," replied Rob, stoutly. "There is no danger of me being disgraced by going to prison in a good cause, in the eyes of any one whose opinion is worth anything. I tell you, honestly, that, so long as you are in this scrape, I'm glad to be in it with you; for it will show that if Americans are sometimes unjust, it is not only to foreigners, but to their own people as well."

So greatly was interest in the case stimulated by the published reports that, on the second day of the trial, the court-room was crowded with spectators. Most of these were hostile in sentiment to our lads and were anxious to hear sentence pronounced, not only upon the Chinese, who had dared assault an American, but upon the white lad who had proved a traitor to his own people by assisting in the outrage. Another attraction in the court-room that morning was a Chinese gentleman, richly clad in his national costume, who entered with the judge, and was accorded the honor of a seat on the bench. He was secretary to the Chinese legation at Washington, hurriedly sent on by his chief to inquire into this case and do everything possible for the relief of his young countryman. Even after entering the court-room he continued to speak to the judge; but the face of the latter remained sternly impassive, as though, having made up his mind, nothing could change it.

When our lads were led to their seats they could nowhere see the lawyer who was defending them, and they wondered at his absence; but he appeared and took his place with other members of the bar just as court was opening. He had no opportunity for communicating with them at that moment, but he beamed upon them with a smiling countenance, for which they could not account.

"Looks like a man grinning at his own funeral," whispered Rob to his friend, who wondered how such a thing might be possible.

In another moment, however, his attention was drawn from this puzzle by the opening of court, and by seeing their counsel rise to his feet.

"Your honor," said this gentleman, addressing the judge, "I beg leave to petition that the case of *State vs. Joseph Lee et al.*, concluded in this court yesterday, be reopened for the admission of new and important testimony in behalf of the defence. Only this morning has a witness been discovered whose story will, I believe, completely reverse all previous impressions gained during this momentous trial. In view of that fact we earnestly pray that you will permit us to place this person on the stand."

After listening to a demur from the district attorney, the court granted this petition and reopened the case, whereupon the counsel for the defence summoned to the witness-stand Miss Annabel Lorimer.

CHAPTER VII

THE SENTENCE OF THE COURT

As the court-crier, amid a breathless hush of expectation, loudly called the name "Annabel Lorimer," a young girl, flushed with embarrassment, but with brave, gray eyes, rose from a seat in the front row of spectators and was escorted to the witness-stand by a gentleman, who evidently was her father, and who remained near her during the examination that followed. After she had sworn to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, had given her name, her place of residence as that very city, and had blushing admitted that, although fifteen years of age, she was unmarried, she was asked to tell what she knew of the case now on trial.

"We were going to Canada for the summer," she began, "so as to learn how to travel and get ready for the great journey around the world that papa and I are going to take this winter. So I went to Hatton to say good-bye to my aunt Marjorie, who lives in a big, white house, just across from the common. I could only stay one night, and had to leave on the very earliest morning train. So I was up pretty early, and was dressing to go down-stairs, when such shouting and laughing came from the street that I looked out of the window. There were a lot of boys, all running, and one of them was a Chinese. I never saw one before, but I knew he was Chinese by his pig-tail and by his funny shoes, that were just like the pictures."

"Can you tell how he was dressed?" asked Jo's lawyer.

"Yes, he had on a long, blue frock, without any waist-band."

"Like this?" suggested the lawyer, at the same time holding up the very gown Jo had worn on that eventful morning.

"Yes, just the same; only at first it wasn't torn."

"Thank you. Now you may proceed with your story."

"Well, while I was looking I saw that the other boys were teasing the Chinese boy, which seemed to me dreadfully mean, when he was all alone in a strange place, especially when he stood still and began to look frightened. Then some more big boys, who had been playing on the common, came running over, and they all crowded around the Chinese boy and began to abuse him."

"What do you mean by abusing him? What did they do?"

"Why, they hit him, and pushed him from one side to the other, and pulled at his pig-tail, and ran round and round with it so as to make him turn and get dizzy, and knocked off his cap, and did everything horrid they could think of."

"What kind of boys were they?"

"Just the very kind that tie fire-crackers to poor dogs' tails, and kill pussy-cats with stones, and – swear."

This last word the witness uttered with some hesitation and in a low tone.

"Would you know any of those boys again if you should see them?"

"Yes, I'd know the two I see sitting over there," replied Annabel, at the same time pointing to a group of the Hatton muckers who had been retained in court as witnesses.

"How can you identify them?"

"Because the little one has such very red hair, and so many freckles, and the other is so big and ugly looking; besides, he is the one who knocked the Chinese boy down."

"How did he do that?"

"He butted him in the back with his head, while the little, speckled one was pulling at his pig-tail in front, and they all went down together."

"Now tell me, Miss Lorimer, what the Chinese boy did all this time? Was he very fierce, and did he strike at his assailants as if he were trying to kill them?"

"Oh no, indeed! I'm sure he didn't, because I hoped all the time he would. He only seemed horribly frightened, and kept trying to get away; only they wouldn't let him."

"Did you see any of the other boys throw anything at him?"

"Yes, mud – lots of it – and stones; and they tore his clothes until he was a sight."

"Please tell the court what happened after the Chinese boy had been knocked down."

"I object to that expression," interposed the district attorney, who was conducting the case for the State; "the witness has expressly stated that the fall in question was caused by a push and not by a blow. She also has testified that three individuals went to the ground at the same time, and we already know from recorded testimony in this case, that the greatest sufferer from the effects of this fall was not the Chinaman, but the very smallest and weakest of those whom my learned friend is pleased to stigmatize as 'assailants,' although it has been repeatedly and conclusively proved during this trial that they were the assailed. Therefore I object to the expression 'knocked down.'"

"Objection admitted," growled the judge.

"Very well," said Jo's lawyer, "since the expression 'knocked down' is objectionable, it is withdrawn; and you may tell us, Miss Lorimer, what happened after my young client was hurled to the ground."

"Your honor, I object," broke in the district attorney.

"Objection overruled," said the judge, sharply, "and I insist that the testimony of this young lady must not be interrupted by squabbles over technicalities."

"After my young client was *hurled to the ground*," continued Jo's lawyer, triumphantly, "with the biggest and ugliest-looking of his assailants on top of him, tell us, Miss Lorimer, what happened next?"

"The big boy scrambled to his feet, and just then Rob Hinckley came along with a milk-can and drove them all away, and the milk flew all over everybody. Then Mr. Hinckley and Constable Jones came; but after that I didn't see any more, because the breakfast-bell rang, and I was so late that I had to get dressed as quick as I could."

"That is all, your honor, and the other side is welcome to our witness," said Jo's lawyer.

"Why did you not come forward sooner to testify in this case, Miss Lorimer, since you seem so greatly interested in it?" queried the district attorney.

"Because I didn't know anything about it until this morning. Then papa read about it in the paper, and said he had no doubt that if the truth were known it would turn out that the Chinese boy had been wantonly abused by a lot of cowardly young ruffians, just because he was weak and helpless, which was getting more and more to be the American way of doing things. I didn't like to hear him say that, and told him I believed I had seen that very trouble the morning I was in Hatton; only I had forgotten all about it, because so many other things began to happen that same day, and have been happening ever since. I said, if those were the same boys, they were not real, true Americans at all, but just a lot of mean imitations, and if the law people only knew what I did, they would punish them instead of Rob Hinckley, and the Chinese boy who had been abused. He asked what I meant, and I told him all I could remember. Then he telephoned to that gentleman (pointing to Jo's lawyer), who came to the house and asked me questions. Then we drove here in a carriage, because it was late. So if you punish anybody, I hope it will be those wicked imitation American boys; because one time that big, ugly looking one set his dog on my tortoise-shell kitty when we were visiting Aunt Marjorie, and threw stones at her when she ran up a tree, and would have killed her if Rob Hinckley hadn't made him stop."

"So you already were prejudiced against the boy, whom you describe as 'ugly looking,' before you saw him in collision with this Chinaman."

"I don't know what you mean," replied Annabel; "but, of course, I hated him, and knew just what he would do when he found a China-boy, or any one else he could abuse without a chance of getting hurt himself. He did it, too, and now I hope he'll be shut up in prison forever and ever."

"Your honor," said the district attorney, with a well-satisfied smile; "I think the animus of this witness is sufficiently shown by that statement, which I shall allow to go on record without comment. I shall also pass, without attempt at refutation, her silly naming of those naturalized citizens, who, with their brawn and muscle, their unremitting industry and their sturdy independence, constitute the strongest bulwark of our glorious republic, for she is but a child, speaking from the ignorance of childhood. Thus we are well content to rest our case upon the evidence, with a certain confidence that the court, in its wisdom, will give us a verdict in accordance with the facts."

With this the attorney sat down. The girl witness, wondering whether she had most helped or harmed the cause she had espoused, was allowed to take her seat, and Jo's lawyer rose to address the court.

"Your honor," he said, "I need not suggest to one so well versed in proverbial philosophy, that truth, sometimes unpalatable, but always bluntly outspoken, is a universally admitted characteristic of childhood. Into the dark mazes of numberless famous law cases, as in the one we now are concluding, has the revealing light of truth been thrown by the untutored testimony of children. I could not wish a stronger witness to the justice of our cause than the fearless little lady who has just now given her evidence in our behalf. Upon it, therefore, we confidently rest our cause, with a well-grounded conviction that it is sufficient to assure a verdict in our favor."

As the lawyer sat down, our lads realized that the critical moment in which their fate was to be decided had arrived; and they awaited the words of the judge with mingled hope and anxiety. For a moment an impressive silence reigned in the court-room, and all eyes were turned upon the judge as he glanced over his pencilled notes. Finally he looked up, removed his spectacles, and, fixing a kindly gaze upon the two young men, said:

"It is hardly necessary to state that the unimpeachable testimony of the last witness in the case of *State vs. Joseph Lee et al.* has completely altered the point of view from which it must be regarded, and causes the decision of the court to be quite different from what it would have been yesterday. I now find the defendant, Joseph Lee, to have been a victim instead of an aggressor, and to have suffered shameful persecution at the hands of a mob of young ruffians, who have been happily termed 'imitation Americans.' This term is most soothing to the pride of all real Americans, who are unwilling to believe that any of the true stock would dishonor the name by assaulting the helpless and innocent. This being the situation, the decision of the court in the case of Joseph Lee is that he be honorably acquitted of the charges brought against him."

This decision was received with looks of scowling consternation by the muckers present, and with murmurs of applause from the better class of spectators. This quickly was silenced by the court officers, and the judge continued:

"The case of Robert Hinckley, however, proves more serious, since it is evident that he did make an assault with a weapon, and without the excuse of self-defence, upon the bodies of certain persons named in the indictment, who are entitled to legal redress for the same. Of this offence the court, therefore, finds Robert Hinckley guilty and sentences him" – at this point poor Rob turned very pale, while his heart sank like lead – "to pay a fine," continued the judge, "of one cent to each and every one of the aggrieved parties whose names appear in the indictment. At the same time the court wishes to express its thanks to Mr. Robert Hinckley for the fine manner in which, forgetful of his own danger, he hastened to defend a helpless foreigner from persecution by a set of unmitigated young scoundrels. Officer, call the next case on the calendar."

"Oh!" gasped Rob, as the friends of our lads gathered about them with congratulations at this happy ending of their troubles; "does he really mean it?"

"Yes," replied the lawyer who had defended them, "he really means it, and if you haven't two cents in your pocket, I'll pay the fine myself."

CHAPTER VIII

JO'S ENEMIES PREPARE A TRAP

After the happy conclusion of the law-suit that had for so long disturbed their peace of mind, our lads left the court-room in company with a group of congratulatory friends. As they went out, Rob exclaimed, triumphantly, "I told you not to fret, Jo, and that that everything would turn out all right."

"Yes, but it is through the goodness of Miss Lolimer."

"Who?" inquired Rob, with a puzzled expression. "Oh, you mean Annabel! Yes, isn't she fine? I say, Annabel, I don't know how we ever can thank you enough for getting us out of that scrape. It was one of the most plucky things I ever knew a girl to do."

"It wasn't half so plucky as the way you saved my 'turtle kitty' that time; besides, I was so sorry for your friend, though I didn't know he was your friend then."

"That's so. I forgot. Let me introduce him. Annabel – I mean Miss Lorimer – this is my friend, Joseph Lee, from China, only all the fellows call him Chinese Jo."

"I'm ever so glad to know you, Mr. Lee," said the girl, at the same time making a prim little bow that was half curtsy. "I never met a Chinese boy before, and I think they are awfully interesting. I mean," she added, quickly, and with a deep blush, "that we are going to China sometime, papa and I, and we want so much to know about the queer people out there. Not, of course, that you seem queer, because you are dressed in civilized – Oh, dear, what a stupid I am! But won't both of you come to our house for luncheon? Papa said I might ask you, and he is going to invite Mr. Hinckley and that Chinese gentleman who sat with the judge. Wasn't he perfectly splendid? Of course, I mean the judge, though the other is lovely, too, in his beautiful clothes."

"My dear," interrupted Mr. Lorimer, "this is Mr. Secretary of Legation Wang, who, together with Mr. Hinckley and, I trust, these young gentlemen, will lunch with us."

Mr. Wang, who, being a graduate of Yale, was quite accustomed to American ways, gravely shook hands with Annabel, as he also did with Rob; but his exchange of greetings with his own young countryman was quite different. Instead of shaking each other's hand and saying "How do you do, Mr. Wang? Happy to meet you, Mr. Lee," as is the American custom, they bowed profoundly to each other several times, all the while clasping and shaking their own hands and uttering flowery compliments in Chinese.

"How funny to shake one's own hand!" laughed Annabel, as she watched with delight this novel interchange of courtesies.

"It does not seem funny in our country, Miss Lorimer," said Mr. Wang, who had overheard the remark. "There all gentlemen, and ladies as well, wear their finger-nails so long that there would be danger of cutting, or at least scratching, each other's hands if they should exchange the courteous salute in the American way. So we shake our own hands, to avoid injuring those of our friends."

"But why do you wear your finger-nails so long?" asked Annabel. "I should think it would be very uncomfortable, and that they would get broken."

"It is an uncomfortable fashion, and a very silly one," replied Mr. Wang. "The long nails are so apt to get broken, as you suggest, that they often are protected by silver sheaths. The reason they are allowed to grow long is to show that their wearers are not obliged to labor with their hands. Chinese ladies for the same reason, or rather to show that they are not obliged to walk, but can afford to be carried about by servants, compress their feet until they are hopelessly and very nearly helplessly crippled for life."

"How dreadful!" exclaimed Annabel.

"Yes. Is it not? But is it any more dreadful than certain things done at fashion's decree in your own country? For instance, in Washington I often see ladies dancing, or shivering through long

dinners, in low-necked and sleeveless gowns, which at the same time are so tightly compressed at the waist as to cause present torture and future misery. I see fashionable men dressed in exact imitation of their own servants, and only to be distinguished from them by a round bit of glass worn with much effort, and with absurd distortions of the face, in front of the right eye – not at all to aid the sight, mind you, but simply because it is fashionable. Yes, both our nations are guilty of following many absurd fashions, and each laughs at the other on account of them; but to my mind the most foolish habit of all is for us to call each other 'barbarians' because our fashions in silliness happen to differ."

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