

錢鍾書：圍城

The Besieged City

By Ch'ien Chung-shu

Translated by Jeanne Kelly

THE RED SEA had long ago been crossed and the ship was now on its way over the Indian Ocean, but as always the sun mercilessly rose early and set late, encroaching upon the better part of the night. The night, like paper soaked in oil, had become a semi-transparent body. Locked in the embrace of the sun, its own form was indiscernible. Perhaps it had become intoxicated by the sun, which was why after the gradual fading of the rosy sunset, the night sky was still flushed. By the time the ruddiness dissipated and it awoke from its stupor, those sleeping in their cabins also awoke, glistening with sweat, washed, and hurried on deck to breathe in the ocean air. Another day had begun.

It was toward the end of July, comparable to the "third ten days" after summer solstice by the old Chinese calendar—the hottest time of the year. In China the heat was even more intense than usual. Afterward, everyone said this was a portent of troops and arms, for it was the twenty-sixth year of the Republic.¹

The French mail-boat, the *Vicomte de Bragelonne*, was on its way toward China. Sometime after eight in the morning, the decks of the third class cabins, still damp from swabbing, had already filled with people standing and sitting about—French, Jewish refugees from Germany, Indians, Vietnamese, and, needless to say, Chinese. The ocean breeze already carried with it an arid heat. Fat men's bodies were blown dry by the burning wind and covered over with a frosty layer of salt congealed with sweat, as though fresh from a bath in the Dead Sea in Palestine. However, it was still early in the morning, and people's high spirits had not yet withered and turned limp under the glare of the sun. They talked and bustled about with great zest. Those Frenchmen newly commissioned

to serve as police in Vietnam or the concessions in China were flirting with a coquettish, young Jewish woman they had circled around. Bismarck once said that what distinguished French ambassadors and ministers was that they couldn't speak a word of any foreign language. These policemen, though not understanding any German at all, still got their meaning across well enough to bring giggles from the Jewish woman, far surpassing their diplomats. The woman's handsome husband watched from nearby with pleasure since for the last few days he had been enjoying himself on the large quantities of cigarettes, beer and lemonade that came his way.

After passing the Red Sea, there was no more fear of the heat igniting a fire, so in a short while, besides an assortment of fruit peelings, bits of paper, and bottle tops, cigarette butts as well were strewn about everywhere. The French are famous for the clarity of their thought, and their prose is as lucid as could be, yet nothing they do is without confusion, filth and hubbub, as witnessed the mess on board the ship. Relying on man's ingenuity, loaded full with his clatter, entrusted with his hopes, the ship as it moved forth amidst the noise and bustle, each minute returned one small stretch of water, polluted with the smell of man, back to the indifferent, boundless and never-ending sea.

EACH SUMMER as usual, there was a batch of Chinese students returning home at the completion of their studies. This ship had about a dozen of them, most of whom were youths of as yet undetermined occupation. By hastening back to China at the start of the summer vacation, they could look for jobs at their leisure. For those other students who had no worry about getting jobs, it wasn't until the cool autumn weather set in before they were ready to start off slowly for

¹i.e., 1937.

home. Those aboard this ship, who had been studying in France, England, Germany, Belgium and such, had gone to Paris to add to their experience of night-life and had eventually taken a French ship. Meeting at the ends of the earth, they were at once like old friends, discussing the foreign threats and internal turmoil of the motherland, wishing they could return at once to serve her. The ship moved along so slowly that the homesickness welled up in everyone's heart and yearned for release.

Then suddenly from somewhere appeared two sets of mahjong. Mahjong is of course a national pastime, and besides is said to be popular in America. Thus, playing mahjong not only has a downhome flavor, but is also in tune with world trends. As luck would have it, there were more than enough people to make up two tables of mahjong. So, except for eating and sleeping, the whole day was passed in gambling. Breakfast was no sooner over than down in the dining room the first round was off to a start.

Up on the deck could be seen only two Chinese women and one small child, who was not to be counted as a full person anyway—at least the ship company didn't consider him as one and hadn't made his parents buy an extra ticket for him. The young lady wearing sunglasses with a novel spread on her lap was dressed with elegant taste. Her skin would be considered fair among orientals. Unfortunately the whiteness was not totally fresh, but a little dry and sluggish. When she took off the sunglasses she revealed delicate eyes and eyebrows, but her lips were too thin and even with lipstick on they lacked fullness. If she stood up from the canvas lounge chair, one could see how slim she was. The outline of her figure was perhaps too sharp, as if drawn with a square-tipped pen. One would take her age to be twenty-five or six, but then the age of modern women is like the birth dates and times the old-style women used to have listed in marriage cards—their authentication required what the experts call external evidence, for they meant nothing in and by themselves. The boy's mother, already in her thirties, was wearing an old black chiffon Chinese dress. Her whole face was a picture of toil and drudgery, added to which a pair of eyebrows hung downward from the center, made her seem even more wretched. The child, not yet two years

old, had a snubby nose, two slanted slits for eyes, and eyebrows so high above the eyes that both must have pined for closer union. It was a living replica of the Chinese face as caricatured in the newspapers. He had just learned to walk and ran about without a minute's pause. His mother held him by a leather leash so that he couldn't run more than three or four steps without getting pulled back. Bothered by the heat and tired and irritable from pulling, his mother, her mind on her husband gambling down below, constantly scolded the child for being such a nuisance. The child, who couldn't run off anywhere, changed his objective and made a beeline for the young lady reading the book. Ordinarily the lady had a rather conceited, aloof bearing such as that of the neglected guest at a large party or the young woman at a wedding feast who is ready, willing and unmarried. At that moment her distaste exposed itself further so that not even the sunglasses could hide it. The child's mother somehow sensed this and apologetically pulled back on the strap, saying, "You naughty child, disturbing Miss Su! Come back here! How studious you are, Miss Su! You are so knowledgeable and still you spend the whole day reading. Mr. Sun often says to me, 'It's women students like Miss Su, who really give China a good name. She's beautiful and she's got a Ph.D.—where can you find people like that?' Take those like me who've gone abroad for nothing, never cracking a book and keeping house for the rest of our lives. As soon as we have children we forget everything we learned at school—Hey! You pest! I told you not to go over there. You're up to no good, you'll get Miss Su's clothes all dirty, for sure."

Heretofore Miss Su had scorned the simple-minded Mrs. Sun and disliked children above all else, but hearing these words, she was quite pleased and smiling amiably, said, "Let him come, I love children."

She removed her sunglasses, closed the book she had been staring at vacantly and with utmost caution clasped the child's wrist before he could wipe his hand all over her clothes.

"Where's Papa?" she asked him. Without answering, the child opened his eyes wide and went, "Poo, poo," at Miss Su, spitting out saliva in imitation of the way the gold fish in the dining room blew bubbles. Miss Su let go of his arm in haste and pulled out a handkerchief to protect

herself. His mother pulled him away with a jerk, yelling that she would slap him. Then sighing, she said, "His father is gambling down below, where else? I can't understand why all men like to gamble so much. Just look at these people on the boat, there's not a one of them who isn't gambling his head off. I wouldn't mind so much if it fetches back a few dollars. But take our Mr. Sun, he gambles away a good sum of money and just keeps going. It makes me so mad!"

When Miss Su heard these last petty-minded remarks, she again felt contempt for Mrs. Sun rise up in spite of herself. Coldly, she said, "Mr. Fang, I see, doesn't gamble."

Mrs. Sun turned her nose up and sniffed, "Mr. Fang! He played too when he first got on the boat. Now he's too busy chasing Miss Pao, naturally he can't spare the time. This is the big event of one's lifetime, much more important than gambling. I just can't see what there is in that Miss Pao, coarse and dark as she is, to make Mr. Fang give up a good second-class berth to come put up with the discomforts of third class. I see the two are coming along just fine. Maybe by the time the boat reaches Hong Kong they'll get engaged. It's certainly a case of fate bringing people together from the ends of the earth."

Miss Su felt a painful stabbing in her heart when she heard this. Both to answer Mrs. Sun and to

console herself, she said, "That's quite impossible! Miss Pao has a fiancé. She told me so herself. Even the money for her studies abroad came from her fiancé."

Mrs. Sun said, "She has a fiancé and is still so flirtatious? I suppose we're old antiques. At least we've learned something new this time. Miss Su, I'll tell you something funny. Mr. Fang and you were schoolmates for some time in China. Has he always spoken as he pleased? Yesterday Mr. Sun was telling him about his bad luck in gambling, and he just laughed. He says Mr. Sun has been in France all these years and still doesn't know their superstition: that if the wife is unfaithful and has an affair, the husband is sure to take first prize if he buys a lottery ticket, and sure to win if he gambles. So, he says, if a man loses at cards, he should take it as a consolation. When Mr. Sun told me this I scolded him for not asking that Fang fellow at the time just what he meant. Looking at it now, I can see Miss Pao's fiancé could certainly take first prize in the aviation lottery. If she became Mr. Fang's wife, then *his* luck at gambling would have to be good." The viciousness of a kind, simple-hearted person, like gritty sand in the rice or splinters from a deboned fish, can give one an unexpected pain.

Miss Su said, "Miss Pao's behavior is just too unlike a student's. The way she dresses is quite

Few among the "New Literature" writers of the 1920's and '30's had the native talent and academic training that Ch'ien Chung-shu possessed. Born in Wusih, Kiang-su, (hometown of Fang Hung-chien), Ch'ien was schooled in Chinese learning before going on to graduate from the Western Languages Department of Tsing Hua University and to a B.Litt. degree from Oxford. He is a proficient scholar in the Chinese and English classics as well as the European literatures. All this erudition, and a mordant wit, he brought to his essays, his literary and art criticisms, his stories, and his one novel. From this work we present here the first chapter.

Written during the war years and published in 1947, The Besieged City tells a contemporary story in the satiric tradition of Chinese fiction. From his shipboard dalliance with the vulgar Miss Pao and further entanglements with the posturing Miss Su, from Shanghai to the interior and back again, our "returned student" hero moved through a picaresque odyssey that included many misadventures, a frustrated love, and a broken marriage. In the end Fang emerged an isolated man and the novel, in retrospect, a document of fin-de-siecle society. It is the belief of one authority that "future generations of Chinese readers will return to this book more frequently than to any other novel of the Republican period for its delightful portrayal of contemporary manners, its comic exuberance, and its tragic insight".

disgraceful . . .”

The little boy suddenly reached out both hands toward the backs of their chairs, laughing and jumping up and down. The two looked around and saw that it was none other than Miss Pao coming towards them, waving a piece of candy at the child from a distance. She wore only a scarlet top and navy blue skin-tight shorts. Red painted toenails showed through white leather sandals. Perhaps for a hot day in the tropics this was the most sensible attire. There were one or two foreign women on the boat who dressed like this. But Miss Su felt that Miss Pao's exposed body was an insult to the body politic of the Chinese nation. When the men students saw her, they burned with lewd desire. They found relief by making endless jokes behind Miss Pao's back. Some called her a *charcuterie*—a shop selling cooked meats—because only such a shop would have so much warm-colored flesh on display. Others called her “truth” since it is said that “truth is naked.” Miss Pao was by no means without a stitch on, so they revised this to “partial truth.”

AS MISS PAO approached, she greeted the two of them, “You're up so early. Even on such hot days I prefer to loaf in bed. I didn't even know it when Miss Su got up this morning. I slept like a log.” Miss Pao was first going to say “slept like a pig,” then on second thought decided to say “like a corpse.” Finally feeling a corpse wasn't much better than a pig, she borrowed the simile from English. Hastening to explain, she said, “This boat moves like a cradle. It rocks you until you're so woozy all you want to do is sleep.”

“Then you're the precious little darling asleep in the cradle. How cute!” Miss Su said.

Miss Pao gave her a cuff saying, “You! Su Tung-p'o's little sister, the girl genius!” “Su Hsiao Mei” (Su's little sister) was the nickname given Miss Su by the men students on board, “Tung-p'o” when pronounced by Miss Pao with her South Seas accent sounded like *tombeau*, French for tomb.

Miss Su and Miss Pao shared a cabin, with Miss Su sleeping in the lower berth, which was much more convenient since she didn't have to climb up and down every day. However, in the last few days she had begun to loathe Miss Pao, feeling she was doing everything possible to make life miserable for her—snoring so loudly she

couldn't sleep well and turning about so heavily the upper berth seemed ready to cave in. When Miss Pao hit her, she said, “Mrs. Sun, you be the judge and tell us who's in the right. Here I call her ‘precious little darling’ and I still get hit. Getting to sleep is a blessing. I know you enjoy sleeping so I'm always careful not to make a sound for fear of waking you. You were telling me you were afraid of getting fat, but you sleep so much on the boat, I think you must have already put on several pounds.”

The child was yelling for the candy which he ate as soon as he got his hands on it. His mother told him to thank Miss Pao, but he paid no heed. Mrs. Sun was left to deal with Miss Pao herself. Miss Su had already noticed that the candy had cost her nothing, being just a sugar-cube served with the coffee at breakfast. She despised Miss Pao for the way she acted. Not wanting to talk with her any more, she opened her book again, but from the corner of her eye she caught a glimpse of Miss Pao pulling two deck chairs to an empty space some distance away and arranging them side by side. She secretly reviled her for being so



Cover-design of original edition, *The Besieged City*, Ch'en-kuang Press, Shanghai, 1947.

shameless, but at the same time hated herself for having watched her. At that point Fang Hung-chien also arrived on the deck. As he passed by them, he stopped to say a few words, asking, "How's the little fellow?" Mrs. Sun replied curtly, not paying much attention to him. Miss Su smiled and said, "You'd better hurry, aren't you afraid someone will get impatient?"

Fang Hung-chien's face reddened and he gave a silly smile, then walked off and left Miss Su. Miss Su knew only too well she couldn't keep him back, but when he really did leave, she felt a letdown. Not a word of the book penetrated. She could hear Miss Pao's sweet voice talking and laughing and couldn't resist taking a look. Fang Hung-chien was smoking a cigarette. As Miss Pao held out her hand toward him he pulled out his cigarette case and offered her one. Miss Pao held it in her mouth, and as he made a gesture with his fingers on the lighter to light it for her, she suddenly tilted her mouth upward, met her cigarette with his and breathed in. With the cigarette lit, she blew out a puff of smoke with an air of satisfaction. Seeing this, Miss Su was so furious that chills ran through her body. Those two have no sense of shame whatever, she thought—right in full view of everyone using cigarettes to kiss. Unable to bear the sight any longer, she stood up and said she was going below. Actually she knew there was no place to go below decks. People were playing cards in the dining room and the sleeping cabins were too stuffy. Mrs. Sun was also thinking of going down to ask her husband how much money he had lost today, but was afraid if he had lost badly, he would take it out on her as soon as she asked, and they would quarrel for the rest of the day when he came back to the cabin. For this reason she didn't dare get up impulsively and only asked her child if he wanted to go down to the bathroom.

Miss Su's reproving Fang Hung-chien for being shameless was actually unjust. At that moment his embarrassment was so acute it seemed everybody on deck was noticing him. In his heart he blamed Miss Pao for being overly open in her behavior and wished he could say something to her about it. Although he was now twenty-seven and had been engaged before, he had had no experience in love. His father had passed the second-degree examination under Manchu rule and was an important

squire in his native district south of the Yangtze. Of those from this district who migrated to the big cities, ninety per cent were engaged in three professions: iron-working, making bean curd, and carrying sedan-chairs. The most famous products of indigenous art were clay dolls, and civil engineering was the subject most often studied by young men entering the university. The hardness of its iron, the tastelessness of its bean curd, the smallness of its sedan-chairs, and add to that an overall earthy flavor, these were considered its native features. Even those who made their fortunes or entered officialdom lacked polish.

IN THIS district was a man named Chou who had become wealthy from an iron shop he opened in Shanghai. Together with some hometowners in the same business he organized a bank called the Tien Chin Bank² bestowing the title of manager on himself. Remembering the proverb about returning home clothed in glory, one year he took the Clear and Bright Season of early April as a good occasion to return to the district to offer worship at the family temple and ancestral graves and to make acquaintance with the prominent men of the region.

Since Fang Hung-chien's father was one of the respected men in the community, as a matter of course Mr. Chou paid him a visit. Thus they became friends and this friendship developed into the closeness of in-laws. When Hung-chien was still in high school, he had followed the decision of his parents to become engaged. He had never met his fiancée, and had merely gazed at a bust photograph of her, which left him unmoved. Two years later he went to Peking to enter the university and had his first taste of coeducation. Seeing couple after couple in love, his eyes burned with envy. When he thought how his fiancée had quit high school after one year to practice housekeeping in order to become an able wife once she married him, he couldn't keep down an aversion for her. Thus bewailing his fate and resenting his father, he went about in a daze for several days. Then suddenly he awoke and, mustering up his courage, wrote a letter home asking to be released from the

²Literally, "Turn to gold at a touch" Bank, from the Taoist story of the man who could turn stones to gold by a touch of his finger. Comparable to the "Midas touch".

engagement. He had received his father's guidance in literary composition and placed second in the high school general examination. Therefore his letter was couched in quite elegant style, and in it the various particles of literary Chinese were not used incorrectly. The letter went something like this: "I have of late been very restless and fitful, experiencing little joy though much grief. A feeling of autumnal melancholy has of a sudden taken hold of me and every time I look into the mirror at my own reflection, so gaunt and dispirited, I feel that it is not the face of one destined for longevity. I am afraid my body cannot bear up much longer and may be the cause of a lifetime of regret for Miss Chou. I hope that you, father, will extend to me your understanding and sympathy and tactfully sever the ties that bind. Do not reject my plea as too trifling and thus help to bring everlasting woe."

He himself felt that the wording of the letter was sad and entreating, enough to move a heart of stone, and he was quite unprepared for the express letter which came from his father giving him a sound scolding:

"I did not begrudge the money to send you hundreds of miles away to study. If you buried yourself in your studies as you should, would you still find the leisure to look in the mirror? You are no woman, what need have you to put up a mirror? This sort of thing is for actors only. A real man who gazes at himself in the mirror will only be held up for contempt by society. Never had I thought that once you parted from me you would immerse yourself in such base habits. It is enough to make one sigh in disgust!

"Moreover, it is said that 'when one's parents are still living, a son should not speak of growing old.' You have no realization of how dear your mother holds you in her heart, but frighten her with talk of dying. This is certainly neglect of one's filial duties at its most extreme. It can only be the result of attending a coeducational school—seeing pretty women around has put notions in your head. Other girls have caught your eye and made you think of change. Although you make excuses about autumnal sorrow, I know full well that what ails you are really the yearnings of springtide. It is not so easy to escape this old party's trenchant gaze. If you obstinately adhere to this foolishness, I shall cut off your funds, order you to discontinue

your studies and return home. Next year you will get married at the same time as your brother. Think over my words carefully and take them to heart."

Fang Hung-chien was shaken to the core. He had hardly expected the old man to be quite so shrewd. He wasted no time in getting off a return letter begging forgiveness and explaining that the mirror was his roommate's, that he had not bought it himself. Within the last few days, after taking some American cod liver oil pills and German vitamin tablets, his health and spirits had taken a turn for the better, and his face had filled out. The only pity was that the high price of the medicine had been more than he could afford. As for the marriage, he would have to ask that it be put off until after his graduation. For one thing, it would interfere with his studies. For another he was still unable to support a family and he would not feel easy about thus adding to his father's responsibilities.

When his father received this letter, which proved that his own authority had reached across several hundreds of miles, he felt no little satisfaction. In high spirits, he remitted a sum of money to his son so he could buy tonic medicine.

After this incident, Fang Hung-chien buried his feelings and dared not indulge in vain hopes. He began reading Schopenhauer and often would say wisely to his classmates, "Where is there romantic love in the world? It's entirely the reproductive instinct." In no time at all he was already a senior in college and had only to wait until next year for graduation and marriage.

One day an express letter from his father came. It read as follows: "I have just received a telegram from your father-in-law. I was greatly shocked to learn that Shu-ying was stricken by typhoid fever and, due to the negligence of a doctor trained in Western medicine, passed away on the thirteenth of this month at four o'clock in the afternoon. I am deeply sorry. Marriage was so close at hand, yet now this happy occasion is frustrated. It is all attributable to your lack of good fortune."

A few lines of postscript on the letter read: "Do not despair, this may be a blessing in disguise. If you had married three years earlier, on this occasion we would have had to put out a large sum of money. But with a family of such virtue as ours, if the marriage had taken place earlier,

perhaps Shu-ying would have escaped this calamity to live a long life. One's marriage is pre-destinated, and you have no cause to be overly grieved. You should, however, send a letter of condolence to your father-in-law."

Hung-chien read this with the joy of a pardoned criminal. But for the girl whose life was cut short, he did feel a bit of pity. Himself enjoying the pleasure of freedom, he wanted also to help lessen other people's grief. Therefore he did get off a long letter of consolation to his would-be father-in-law. When Mr. Chou received the letter, he felt that the young man had a sense of propriety. He therefore directed the chief secretary of the bank, Mr. Wang, to make a reply. When Chief Secretary Wang read the letter, he had high praises for his employer's would-be son-in-law, saying that the young man's calligraphy and literary style were both excellent and that the expression of his feelings for the deceased were deep and sincere, proof that he had a very kindly nature and a guarantee that he would go far in life. Mr. Chou was quite pleased at hearing this and told the secretary to reply in the following manner: "Although my daughter was never wed, our in-law relationship will remain unchanged. I had but one daughter and was originally planning to make a big occasion of her wedding. Now I am going to devote the entire amount which I have set aside for the wedding expenses and the dowry, together with the earnings from investments made with the Fang family's betrothal present—altogether a sum of over \$20,000, or 1,300 pounds in foreign currency—to finance Fang Hung-chien's further studies abroad, after his graduation next year."

Even in his dreams Fang Hung-chien had never conceived of such good fortune, and toward his deceased fiancée felt the utmost gratitude. He was a good-for-nothing, who was quite incapable of learning civil engineering and had changed from sociology to philosophy, before finally entering the department of Chinese literature from which he graduated. For someone studying Chinese, going abroad to pursue "advanced study" sounded rather absurd. In fact, however, only for those studying Chinese literature was it absolutely necessary to study abroad since all other subjects, such as mathematics, physics, philosophy, psychology, economics, law, etc., were imported from abroad, and already quite infused with Westernness. Chinese

language, being the only native product, was still in need of a foreign stamp before it could hold its own, just as Chinese officials and merchants have to convert the money they have gotten through exploitation at home into foreign exchange before it can maintain the original value of the national currency.

WHEN FANG Hung-chien arrived in Europe he did not transcribe the Tun Huang scripts nor search for the Yung-lo Encyclopedia, nor seek the records of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. Neither did he study Mongolian, Tibetan or Sanskrit. Within four years he had gone the rounds of three universities, London, Paris and Berlin. He attended a few courses here and there, and though his interests were fairly broad, he gained nothing at all in the way of knowledge, mostly dissipating his life in indolence. In the spring of the fourth year, he found only some 300 pounds left to his name in the bank, and decided to return home in the summer. His father wrote asking him if he had received his Ph.D. and when he would be returning. He replied with a long letter denouncing the Ph.D. title as having absolutely no practical value. The elder Mr. Fang was far from holding this view, but now that his son had grown up, he didn't dare threaten him with paternal authority. So he wrote in reply that he knew very well titles were useless and that he would never force his son. But Mr. Chou had put out a sizable sum and he deserved some sort of explanation. After a few days, Fang Hung-chien also received a letter from his father-in-law with words to this effect: "A worthy son-in-law of such talent and learning and with a reputation extending far and wide does not need to flaunt a Ph.D. But your father was a second-degree graduate in the Ch'ing dynasty and therefore it seems only fitting that you become the foreign equivalent of the third-degree holder, following in your father's footsteps and even surpassing him. It will make me proud of you as well."

Finding himself attacked from both sides, Fang Hung-chien finally realized the importance of a foreign diploma. This diploma, it seemed, would serve the same function as Adam and Eve's fig-leaf. It could hide the shame and wrap up the disgrace; just a small square of paper, but it is enough to cover up all one's shallowness, ignorance and stupidity. Without a diploma, it was as if he

were spiritually stark naked, without anything to wrap himself in. But as for getting hold of a degree at this point, whether by studying toward it himself, or hiring a ghost writer to write a thesis, there was neither enough time nor money. Even a Ph.D. from the nearby University of Hamburg, considered the easiest to muddle through, still required six months. If he simply went ahead to deceive his family by saying he had got a Ph.D., he was afraid he couldn't fool his father and father-in-law. His father was a graduate of the old second-degree examination and would want to see the official "announcement". His father-in-law, being a businessman, would want to see the "title deed". He could think of no way out, so prepared to return home and tell them unabashedly that he had not obtained a degree.

One day, on going to the Chinese section of the Berlin library to see a German friend, he noticed on the floor a large stack of periodicals published in Shanghai during the first years of the Republic—*The Eastern Miscellany*, *Short Story Monthly*, *Ta Chung Hua*, *The Women's Magazine*, and all. He idly flipped through some pages and spotted an advertisement with Chinese and English parallel texts placed by the "Correspondence Division of the Clayton Institute of Law and Commerce" in the city of New York. It stated that for those Chinese students who had the desire to study abroad but no opportunity to do so, the school had specially set up correspondence courses, upon completion of which there would be granted a certificate equivalent to the B.A., M.A., or Ph.D. degree. The regulations would be forwarded immediately upon request by writing to such and such number and street in New York City.

Fang Hung-chien's heart skipped a beat. A good twenty years have passed since then, he thought. There's no telling whether the school still exists or not. At any rate sending off a letter to ask won't cost much.

The man who had placed the advertisement was actually a swindler. Since no Chinese were ever taken in, he had dropped the business for something else, and had died some time ago. The apartment he had lived in was now rented to an Irishman, with all the Irish irresponsibility, quick wit, and poverty. It is said that an Irishman's fortune consists of his two breasts and two buttocks, but this one, being a tall, thin Bernard

Shaw type of a man, suffered a discount where these two items were concerned. When he came upon Fang Hung-chien's letter in his mailbox, he thought the postman had made a mistake. But the address was clearly his, so full of curiosity he opened it to see. Greatly puzzled, he mulled over it for a while, then gave a leap for joy. He hurried over next door to borrow a typewriter from a reporter of a small newspaper and typed out the following reply: "Since you are studying in university in Europe, your level of achievement must be very high, making it unnecessary for you to go through the correspondence procedures. Simply send a 10,000-word thesis and enclose \$500 in American currency. Upon ascertaining your qualifications we will immediately forward to you a Ph.D. diploma. Subsequent letters can be addressed to myself without writing the name of the school. Signed, Patrick Mahoney." Under his name he conferred upon himself four or five doctoral titles.

When Fang Hung-chien saw that the letter was on ordinary stationery and had not been engraved with the name of the school, and as the contents clearly indicated it to be a fraud, he laid it aside and forgot about it. The Irishman meanwhile grew impatient waiting and sent off another letter stating that if the price was considered a bit high, it could be negotiated to mutual satisfaction. He himself had always had a special love for China and as an educator was particularly averse to profit-seeking. Fang Hung-chien thought it over for a while. The Irishman was undoubtedly up to some tricks. If he bought a fake diploma with which to dupe others on his return, would he not become a cheat himself? But—remember, Fang was once a philosophy major—to lie and deceive were at times not immoral. In Plato's Ideal State it was justified for soldiers to fool the enemy, doctors to fool their patients and officials to fool the people. Even a sage like Confucius faked illness to trick Jupei into leaving, and even before King Hsuan of Ch'i Mencius had lied and pretended that he was ill.³ Since his father and his father-in-law hoped he

³Referring to two stories from the classics: Confucius was "not in" to Jupei, but took care to reveal his presence by playing the lute and singing to it. *Analects*, XVII, 20, "Yang Huo". King Hsuan of Ch'i and Mencius tried to avoid each other by mutually feigning illness. *Mencius*, II, 2, "Kung-sun Ch'ou, Part II".

would become a Ph.D., how could a son and son-in-law in good conscience cause their disappointment? Buying a diploma to deceive them was like purchasing an official rank in former Ch'ing times, or like the merchants of a British colony contributing a few tens of thousands of pounds to the royal exchequer in exchange for a knighthood. To bring glory to the family name was what every filial son and worthy son-in-law should do to please his elders. Anyway, when the time came for him to look for a job, he would never include this degree in his resumé. He might as well try knocking the price down, and, if the Irishman was not willing, then he would give it up and save himself the trouble of cheating. So he wrote in reply that he would pay at the most \$100 in American currency, first sending \$30, and when the diploma was received, would send the rest, and that thirty or more other Chinese students there were interested in dealing with "your honorable school" in the same manner.

At first the Irishman would not agree. Later, seeing that Fang Hung-chien held firm to his words and having learned on inquiry that American doctoral titles were indeed fashionable in China, he gradually came to believe that in Europe there were really thirty-odd Chinese muddleheads wanting to buy diplomas from him. He also found out there were a number of organizations engaged in the same business, such as the University of the East, the Eastern United States of America University, the Intercollegiate University, the Truth University, etc., where one could buy an M.A. diploma for as low as ten American dollars, while The College of Divine Metaphysics offered a package deal of three kinds of Ph.D. diplomas at a bargain price. These were all formally accredited and registered schools with which he could never hope to compete. Therefore he kept as his objective a small profit but a wide market, and made a deal with Fang Hung-chien. When he received the \$30, he printed up 40 or 50 blank diplomas, filled one out and sent it to Hung-chien. In an accompanying letter he pressed him to submit the remaining sum and to inform the other students to apply to him. Hung-chien replied that, after making a careful investigation, he had found that there was no such school in the United States as claimed, and therefore the diploma amounted to wastepaper. He would be indulgent toward a

first offender and would not pursue the matter further, in hopes that he would repent and reform, but in addition he was remitting ten dollars to help tide the man over while changing to another line of work. The Irishman was so enraged he cursed without a stop, got himself drunk and, red-eyed, sought to pick a fight with any Chinaman he could find. This incident perhaps marks China's sole victory ever since she began to have foreign relations or signed her first treaty of commerce.

AFTERWARDS, Hung-chien went to the photographer's studio, put on the German doctoral robes and had a four-inch picture taken. He sent one copy each to his father and father-in-law. In a letter he reiterated how all his life he had detested the title of doctor and that though this time he could not avoid the convention, it was not worth mentioning to others. He returned to France where he enjoyed himself for a few weeks, then bought a second-class steamship ticket for the return home.

After he had boarded the boat at Marseilles, he discovered he was the only Chinese travelling second-class and got very lonely and bored. The Chinese students in the third class felt that he, being also a student, was showing off his wealth by travelling second class, and they regarded him with some hostility. Having found out that there was an empty berth in the cabin of a Vietnamese, he discussed with the purser his wish to give up his original cabin and move to the third class to sleep while still taking his meals in the second class.

Among the other Chinese on board, only Miss Su was an old acquaintance from China. She had studied French literature at Lyons and written her thesis on eighteen Chinese poets of the colloquial style, and had just received her doctorate. When a classmate of his in the university, she had never even recognized the existence of the little nobody Fang Hung-chien. In those days, Miss Su valued her affection too highly to bestow it casually. But now she was just like the person who has some fine clothes made and, being loathe to wear them, locks them in a chest, then finds suddenly after one or two years have gone by that the style and pattern are already out of fashion and is filled with disappointment and remorse. Before, she had set her mind on studying abroad and despised those who pursued her for their lack of prospects, being

mere college graduates. But now that she was a woman with a doctorate, she felt the solitude of the lofty, toward whom no one dared climb. She knew a little about Fang Hung-chien's family background, and seeing that he was decent enough as a person and seemed to be quite well-off, thought she might use the trip to give him an opportunity to get intimate. She did not, however, expect that her cabinmate, Miss Pao, would beat her to it.

Miss Pao was born and brought up in Macao and was said to have Portuguese blood. To say she had "Portuguese blood" was the same as for the Japanese to say they have native culture, or for an author who illegally revises a foreign play to state in his revised version, "copyright reserved, translations forbidden", since the Portuguese blood has been mixed with elements of Chinese from the start. But to judge from Miss Pao's figure, perhaps her Portuguese mother had also had Arab strains inherited indirectly from Spain. Miss Pao had a very slender waist which conformed exactly with the standards of feminine beauty whose praises the Arab poet sang and described at length in *One Thousand and One Nights*: "Her waist was slender, her hips were heavy and did weigh her down whenever she would uprise." Under her long eyelashes were a pair of sleepy, seemingly drunken, smiling, dreamy, big eyes. A full, round upper lip seemed to be pouting at a lover. Her fiancé, Dr. Li, lacking a sense of caution, had given her the money to go to London by herself to study obstetrics.

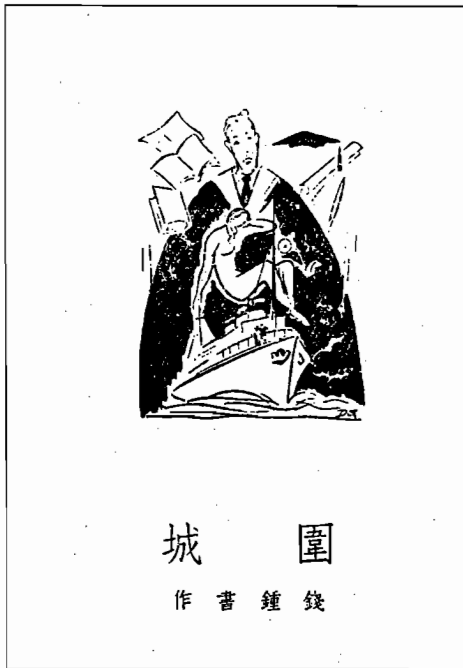
The Portuguese have a saying that for a lucky man the first-born is always a girl, *A homem aventureiro a filha lhe nasce primeiro*, because when the girl grows up, she can be handy around the house and look after her brothers and sisters, thus before her marriage saving her parents the expense of hiring a maid. Miss Pao was used to being at her father's beck and call. Being clever, she realized that she would have to make her own way and seek happiness by herself. She therefore chose to become engaged to a man twelve years her senior and have a chance to go abroad. Englishmen are used to seeing white skin, so when they saw her dark yet not black color with its plump, spicy attraction, they thought here was a true oriental beauty. She believed herself very seductive, so was very quickly and easily seduced. Fortunately, being a medical student, she didn't take these things seriously nor get into any trouble. Having spent

two years in England she was now returning to get married and set up a joint practice with her husband. After she boarded the ship, the Chinese students found out she carried a British passport issued by the Hong Kong government, which meant she was not a Chinese citizen, so they did not quite warm up to her. She could not speak French and she didn't talk Cantonese with the attendants in the third-class cabins, so she felt terribly bored. She saw that Fang Hung-chien was travelling second-class, and felt he was not too bad for a companion with whom to while away the time during the trip.

Miss Su had pictured herself, in the words of the familiar saying, "as delectable as peaches and plums, as cold as frost and ice." She would allow Fang Hung-chien to humbly gaze at her in admiration and then prostrate himself to beg for her love. Who would have thought that, although the temperature stayed closed to 100° every day, this sweet and cool ice cream manner of hers was completely ineffective. By merely letting slip a few lighthearted words Miss Pao had Fang Hung-chien hooked.

The day after Hung-chien had moved to the third class he went up on deck for a stroll and by chance ran into Miss Pao leaning against the ship's railing, taking in a breath of air. He greeted her, and they struck up a conversation. Before he had said more than a sentence or two, Miss Pao remarked laughingly, "Mr. Fang, you remind me of my fiancé. You look so much like him!" Fang Hung-chien heard this with a mixture of embarrassment and pleasure. When an attractive woman says you are like her fiancé, it is tantamount to saying, if she were not engaged, you would be qualified to win her love. A sharp-tongued wag might interpret it as meaning, she already has a fiancé, you can enjoy a fiancé's right without having to fulfill the obligation of marrying her. Be that as it may, from this time on, their friendship grew with the speed of a tropical plant. All the other Chinese men students teased Fang Hung-chien, and made him treat everyone to ice coffee and beer.

ALTHOUGH FANG Hung-chien was privately reproaching Miss Pao for her immodest behavior, he was also feeling excited. When he turned and saw Miss Su's and Mrs. Sun's empty chairs, he was glad the cigarette incident had passed without



Frontispiece of *The Besieged City*, Ch'en-kuang Press, third edition, Shanghai, 1949.

their notice.

That evening a wind arose and the boat was lurching slightly. After ten o'clock only four or five couples were on deck, hiding in the shadows beyond the gleam of the lamps, murmuring sweet nothings. Fang Hung-chien and Miss Pao strolled along side by side without speaking. A big wave violently shook the boat causing Miss Pao to lose her balance. Fang Hung-chien hooked his arm around her waist, and staying close to the railing, kissed her hungrily. Miss Pao's lips were ready, her body was submissive. This stolen kiss, hurried and rough, gradually settled into a full and comfortable one. Miss Pao deftly pushed aside Fang Hung-chien's arm and breathing heavily said, "You're suffocating me. I have a cold and can't breathe—you got away with it cheap. You haven't even begged me to love you!"

"I'll make it up and beg you now, all right?" Like all men who have never been in love before, Fang considered the word "love" to be too noble and solemn to be used casually on women. He only

felt he wanted Miss Pao, but did not love her, thus this evasiveness in his words.

"Anyway, you haven't anything nice to say. You can't get away from that same old line."

"When you put your mouth against mine and I say something to you, those words bore right into your heart. This saves going the long way around—entering through the ear and having to make a turn."

"I'm not going to be taken in by you! If you have something to say, say it like a gentleman. That's enough for today. If you behave yourself, tomorrow I . . ."

Fang Hung-chien wasn't paying any attention and again encircled her waist with his arm. The boat suddenly lurched side-ways. He had not taken hold of the railing and nearly pulled Miss Pao down with him. At the same time, in the shadows the other females gave out a shrill "Oooo!" Miss Pao took this opportunity to slip away, saying, "I feel cold, I think I'll go down. See you tomorrow," leaving Fang Hung-chien abandoned on deck.

In the sky, dark clouds had already formed, disclosing here and there a few stars. The storm sounded like greedy gulping; the broad open sea of daytime had now been completely digested in the even vaster night. Set against this background, the tumult in a man's heart shrinks to nothingness. Only a well of hope for the morrow which has not yet dropped into the vastness illuminates itself like the speck of light from a firefly in the dark and boundless depths of roaring waves.

From that day forth, Fang Hung-chien often ate his meals in the third class. Miss Su's attitude toward him was visibly cold. He asked Miss Pao in private why Miss Su had been snubbing him lately. Miss Pao laughed at him for the simpleton that he was, but said, "I can guess why, but I won't tell you so as not to make you more stuck up." Fang Hung-chien said she was imagining things, but after this, whenever he met Miss Su he felt even more ill at ease.

THE SHIP passed Ceylon and Singapore and in another few days reached Saigon. This was the first French colony since the beginning of the voyage that the ship could boast of. The French on board were like dogs at sight of their master's home: their chests suddenly filled out, their

actions became prouder and the pitch of their voices was raised. In the afternoon the boat docked and would anchor there for two nights. Miss Su had relatives who worked at the local Chinese consulate. They sent a car to the wharf to pick her up for dinner and, while everyone watched with envy, she got off the boat before the other passengers. The remaining students decided to eat together at a Chinese restaurant. Fang Hung-chien wanted to go eat somewhere else with Miss Pao, but feeling awkward about bringing it up in front of everyone else, he could only follow along with them. After eating, the Sun's left first to take their child back to the boat. The rest stopped at a coffee shop and Miss Pao suggested they go dancing. Though Fang Hung-chien had spent some money in France for a few dancing lessons, he was hardly an expert at it. After one dance with Miss Pao, his only recourse was to retreat to the sidelines and watch her dance with others. After twelve o'clock everyone had had enough and was ready to return to the boat to sleep. When they got out of the car at the wharf, Fang Hung-chien and Miss Pao lingered behind. Miss Pao said, "Miss Su won't be coming back tonight."

"My Vietnamese cabinmate has gone ashore, too. I heard his berth was sold to a Chinese businessman on his way to Hong Kong from Saigon."

"We'll both be sleeping alone tonight," Miss Pao said almost carelessly.

It were as though lightning had flashed in Fang Hung-chien's mind, producing a sudden blinding glare. The blood rushed to his face. He was about to speak, when some of the others up front turned and shouted, "What do you two have to talk about so much? Walking so slowly, afraid we'll overhear, aren't you?" The two did not say anything, but just hurried onto the boat. Everyone said, "Good night," and went his separate way. Fang Hung-chien took a bath and returned to his cabin, lay down, then sat up again. To get the thought out of his mind once it had risen seemed as hard to bear as for a pregnant woman to have an abortion. Perhaps Miss Pao had meant nothing by that remark, and if he went to her he might make a fool of himself. Cargo was being loaded on the deck and two attendants were patrolling the corridors to prevent intruders from slipping in; there was no assurance he would not be spotted

by them. He could not make up his mind, but wasn't willing to give up hope. Suddenly he heard the sound of light, quick footsteps which seemed to be coming from the direction of Miss Pao's cabin. Hung-chien's heart leaped straight up, but was pressed back down by those footsteps, as if each step tread down upon it. Halfway, the footsteps paused. His heart also stood still, not daring to move, as though trampled under the foot. It seemed a long while, and the heart was oppressed beyond endurance. Fortunately the footsteps continued with renewed speed to come closer. Hung-chien was no longer in doubt and his heart could no longer restrain itself. So elated he wanted to shout, he got up from bed and without getting his feet firmly in his slippers, opened up the door curtain to a whiff of scent from the body powder Miss Pao habitually used.

FANG HUNG-CHIEN awoke the next morning as sunlight filled the room. By his watch it was past nine. He thought how sweet the night's sleep had been—too full even to dream. No wonder sleep was called the land of dark sweetness. He then thought of Miss Pao's dark skin and sweet smile: when he saw her in a while he'd call her "dark sweetness." This made him think of dark, sweet chocolate candy. What a pity that French-made chocolate candy wasn't any good and that the weather was too hot for eating such a thing, for otherwise he would treat her to a box. Right when he was lazing in bed thinking this nonsense, Miss Pao tapped on the outside of his cabin, called him "lazybones" and told him to hurry and get up so they could go ashore together and amuse themselves. When Fang Hung-chien finished combing and washing, he went to Miss Pao's cabin and waited outside a long while before she was finally ready. Breakfast had already been served in the dining room, so they ordered and paid for two extra meals. The waiter who served them, Ah Lau, was the one who took care of Fang Hung-chien's cabin. When they finished eating and were about to leave, Ah Lau, instead of clearing away the things on the table, smiled at them gleefully and stretched out his hand. In his palm were three hairpins. Mouthing Cantonese Mandarin, he said in a jumbled, roundabout way: "Mr. Fang, I found these just now while making your bed."

Miss Pao flushed a beet red, her big eyes

seemingly about to pop out of their sockets. Fang Hung-chien was so embarrassed he cursed himself for being so stupid as not to make a check when he got up. He pulled out 300 francs and said to Ah Lau, "Take it! Now give me back those things." Ah Lau thanked him, adding that he was most dependable and would certainly not be a blabbermouth. Miss Pao directed her gaze elsewhere, pretending she knew nothing. When they got out of the dining room, Fang Hung-chien gave the hair pins back to Miss Pao, apologizing as he did. Miss Pao angrily flung them on the floor, saying, "Who wants those things after they've been in the filthy hands of that wretch!"

This incident ruined their whole day. Everything went amiss. The rickshaws they took brought them to the wrong place, they paid the wrong amount of money when they went shopping; neither of them had any luck. Fang Hung-chien wanted to go eat lunch at the Chinese restaurant where they had been the evening before but Miss Pao was set on eating Western food, saying she didn't feel like meeting up with anyone they knew from the boat. They then found a Western-style restaurant which looked respectable enough from the outside, but as it turned out, from the cold dishes to the coffee, not a thing was edible: the soup was cold, while the ice cream was warm; the fish was like the marine corps—it apparently had been ashore for several days already; the meat was like submarine sailors, having been underwater a long time; apart from the vinegar, the bread, butter and red wine were without exception all sour. They completely lost their appetite while eating, nor did they hit it off well in their conversation. Fang Hung-chien tried to amuse Miss Pao by telling her the affectionate nicknames "dark sweetie" and "Miss Chocolate." Offended at this, Miss Pao said, "Am I so dark then?" Fang Hung-chien stubbornly tried to justify himself, saying, "But I like you this color. This year in Spain I saw a famous beauty dancing. Her skin was just slightly paler than a smoked ham."

Miss Pao answered none too logically, "I suppose you like Miss Su's dead-fish-belly white. You yourself are as black as a chimney sweep. Why don't you take a look at yourself in the mirror?" Saying this she laughed triumphantly.

Having been given a thorough blackening by Miss Pao, he could not very well continue the

conversation. The waiter served the chicken. What came up in the plate was a piece of meat which seemed to have been a gift from the iron weathercock on a church steeple. Try as hard as she could Miss Pao could not make a dent in it. She put down the knife and fork, saying, "I haven't the teeth to bite this thing! This restaurant is a total mess."

With renewed determination Fang Hung-chien attacked the chicken. Grinding his teeth, he said, "You wouldn't listen to me. You wanted to eat Western food."

"I wanted to eat Western food, but I didn't ask you to come to this miserable restaurant! After the mistake is made you blame someone else. You men are all like that!" Miss Pao spoke as though the character of every man in the whole world had undergone her examination.

After a while, somehow or other Miss Pao managed to bring up her fiancé, Dr. Li, saying he was also a devout Christian. Fang Hung-chien having already stomached enough, was filled with disgust when he heard this. Religious belief has made no impression whatsoever on Miss Pao's behavior, he thought, but he could only imply a dig at her by referring to Dr. Li. He said, "How can a Christian practice medicine?"

Miss Pao did not know what he was driving at and looked at him wide-eyed.

Hung-chien added some rice water "milk" to the scorched bean husk "coffee" in front of Miss Pao, and said, "The tenth commandment of the Christian religion is 'Thou shalt not kill,' but besides professionalized killing, what does a doctor do?"

Miss Pao was unamused and said angrily, "Don't be ridiculous! Medicine saves people's lives."

Seeing how cute she was when aroused Hung-chien decided to provoke her further. "No one who saves people's lives can be religious. Medicine wants people to live, it saves men's bodies. Religion saves men's souls, it wants people not to fear death. So if a sick man is afraid he'll die, he'll call a doctor and take medicine. If the doctor and medicine are ineffective and there's no escaping death, then he'll find a minister or a priest to prepare him for the end. To study medicine and at the same time hold to a religious belief comes down to saying, if I can't teach a sick man how to keep on living at least I can teach him how to die.

Either way, he can't go wrong for calling me in. It's like a pharmacist running a coffin shop on the side. What a racket!"

Miss Pao was really angry. "I suppose you won't ever get sick and have no need for a doctor. You have that big mouth and smooth tongue of yours, talking nothing but nonsense. I studied medicine, too. Why do you slander people for no reason?"

Fang Hung-chien, alarmed, hastened to apologize. Miss Pao complained of a headache and wanted to return to the boat to rest. On the way back Hung-chien was very apologetic, but Miss Pao was in low spirits. After seeing her to her cabin, Hung-chien slept for two hours himself. As soon as he got up he went to Miss Pao's cabin, tapped on the partition and called her name, asking if she were any better. Unexpectedly the curtain opened and Miss Su came out, saying Miss Pao was sick, had thrown up twice, and had just fallen asleep. Hung-chien was both abashed and embarrassed, said something lamely and beat a hasty retreat. During dinner, everyone noticed Miss Pao's absence and to tease Fang Hung-chien asked him where she was. Hung-chien mumbled, "She's tired. She isn't feeling very well."

Miss Su, who was gloating, said, "She ate with Mr. Fang and came back with an upset stomach. Now she can't keep a thing down. I'm just worried she's contracted dysentery!" The callous men students laughed heartily and carried on with more nonsense. One asked, "Who told her to eat with Fang behind our backs?"

"Fang is a real disgrace! When he asks a girl friend out to eat, why can't he pick a clean restaurant?"

"It couldn't be the restaurant's fault. Maybe Miss Pao was too happy and ate so greedily she couldn't digest it all. Isn't that right, Fang?"

"Fang, so you didn't get sick? Oh, I know! Miss Pao's beauty is a feast to the eye. You get your fill just looking at her and you don't have to eat."

"I'm afraid what he ate wasn't beauty, it was—," the one talking was going to say "cooked meat", then suddenly thinking this wasn't very elegant in front of Miss Su and might be passed on to Miss Pao, he picked up a piece of bread and suffed it in his mouth.

Fang Hung-chien had actually not had enough to eat during lunch, but he could not stand every-

one's jesting any more. Without waiting for all the dishes to be served he made off, while the others laughed all the more. As he stood up and turned around, he saw the waiter Ah Lau standing behind him, and giving him an understanding wink.

MISS PAO slept for more than a day before she got out of bed. She still amused herself with Fang Hung-chien, but not in the same unrestrained fashion as before. Perhaps this was because in a day or so they would be reaching Hong Kong, and she had to cleanse her mind and body in preparation for meeting her fiancé.

The Suns and three or four other students were going to disembark at Kowloon to take the Canton-Hankow train. With departure eminent they gambled for all they were worth, only lamenting the fact that lights were not permitted in the dining hall after twelve o'clock. On the afternoon before arriving in Hong Kong, the passengers exchanged home addresses and made repeated promises to see each another again, as if the ship-board friendship were never to be forgotten. Hung-chien was about to go on deck to look for Miss Pao when Ah Lau called out impishly, "Mr. Fang." Ever since the day Hung-chien had given him the 300 francs, he was uneasy every time he set eyes on the fellow. Hardening his expression, he asked what the matter was. Ah Liu said that among the cabins he took care of there was one unoccupied one. If Hung-chien wanted it that evening, he told him, he would only ask 600 francs for it. With a wave of his hand, Hung-chien said, "What would I want with that?" and took the stairs up two at a time, hearing Ah Lau sneering behind him. He suddenly realized what Ah Lau had had in mind and his face burned with shame. He went up to splutter out the incident to Miss Pao, cursing that scoundrel Ah Lau. She gave a grunt, but as others were coming up there was no chance to say more. During dinner, Mr. Sun said, "Today, to mark our parting, we should live it up and play the whole night through. Ah Lau has an empty cabin and I've already reserved it for 200 francs."

Miss Pao threw Hung-chien a contemptuous glance, then immediately focussed her attention on her plate and drank her soup.

Mrs. Sun who was feeding her child with a spoon, asked timidly, "We're going ashore tomorrow, aren't you afraid of getting tired?"

Mr. Sun said, "Tomorrow we'll find a hotel and sleep through for a couple of days. The engines on the boat are so noisy, I can't sleep comfortably anyway."

Fang Hung-chien's self-esteem deflated like a rubber tire under Miss Pao's look. After dinner, Miss Pao and Miss Su were unusually intimate, going about hand and hand and not leaving each other's company for a second. He followed them disconsolately onto the deck; watching them talk and laugh without letting him squeeze a word in edgewise, he felt silly and humiliated, like a beggar running after a rickshaw who after running quite a ways did not get a cent's tip and yet felt unrewarded if he gave up the chase. Miss Pao looked at her watch and said, "I'm going down to sleep. The boat will dock before dawn tomorrow so we won't be able to sleep well in the morning. If I don't go to bed early today, tomorrow when I go ashore I'll be all tired out and will look a wreck."

Miss Su said, "You make so much fuss about your appearance. Afraid Mr. Li won't love you? If you look a little weary, it'll endear you to him even more!"

Miss Pao said, "Listen to the voice of experience?—Just think! Tomorrow I'll be home! I'm so excited, I'm afraid I won't get a good night's sleep. Miss Su, let's go on down. We can lie down in the cabin and talk more comfortably."

With a nod to Hung-chien they went down. Hung-chien was fiery with rage, enough, it seemed, to set the end of the cigarette in his mouth aglow. He could not figure out why Miss Pao had suddenly changed her attitude. But was their relationship to end, just like that? When he was at the University of Berlin, he had heard the lecture on erotic love given by the famous Professor Ed Spranger, who was well-known in Japan, so he understood love and sexual desire were twins which went together but were different. Sexual desire was not the basis of love and love was not the sublimation of sexual desire. He had also read manuals and such on love and knew the differences between physical and spiritual love. With Miss Pao you could not say it was a matter of heart or soul. She had not undergone a change of heart, because she had no heart; it was merely a matter of flesh changing its flavor with the passage of time. At any rate he had suffered no loss, but rather may even

have had the better of it, so there should be no cause for complaint. With these clever phrases and careful calculations, Fang Hung-chien sought to console himself. But disappointment, passion which had met with deceit, and injured pride all refused to settle down, like the doll which when pushed over bobs up again, and even wobbles more vigorously.

THE NEXT DAY, when it was just barely light in the east, the ship cut its speed and the sound of the engines altered rhythm. Fang Hung-chien's cabinmate had already packed his things while Hung-chien still lay in bed, thinking that he and Miss Pao would never meet again, so no matter what, he would see her off with due courtesy. Ah Lau suddenly entered with a woeful look, asking for a tip. Hung-chien asked angrily, "Why do you want money now? It's several days before we reach Shanghai." Ah Lau told him in a hoarse voice that Mr. Sun and the others playing mahjong had been too noisy and had been discovered by the French who had raised Cain. He himself had lost his job and had to pack his bedding and get off the boat. Hung-chien secretly rejoiced at this piece of good fortune for himself, and tipped Ah Lau off, then sent him off. During breakfast, those to be leaving the boat that day were in low spirits. Mrs. Sun's eyes were red and swollen and the corners seemed saturated with tears, like the dew on flower petals on a summer morning—the slightest touch of the finger will cause it to drop. Miss Pao noticed there was a new waiter and asked where Ah Lau went. No one answered her. Fang Hung-chien asked Miss Pao, saying, "You have a lot of luggage. Would you like me to help you off the boat?"

Miss Pao answered distantly, "Thank you! There's no need for you to bother. Mr. Li is coming up the boat to meet me."

Miss Su said, "You can introduce Mr. Fang to Mr. Li."

Fang Hung-chien wished he could crush to powder every bone in Miss Su's thin body. Miss Pao also ignored her and, drinking up a glass of milk, rose hurriedly, saying she still hadn't finished packing her things. Heedless of everybody's jesting remarks, Fang Hung-chien put down his glass and followed after. Miss Pao didn't even glance around and when Fang Hung-chien called to her, she said

impatiently, "I'm busy, I haven't time to talk with you."

Just when Fang Hung-chien did not know quite how to vent his indignation Ah Lau appeared like a ghost to ask for a tip from Miss Pao. Miss Pao's eyes exploded with sparks as she said, "I gave you a tip for waiting on the table yesterday. What other tip do you want? You don't take care of my cabin."

Without speaking, Ah Lau reached his hand in his pocket and after a great deal of time pulled out a hairpin. It was one of those Miss Pao had flung away the other day. When he was sweeping the floor he had only found one of the three. Hung-chien was going to upbraid him at first, but seeing with what ceremony he brought out this magic object, he couldn't keep from laughing out loud. Miss Pao snapped, "You think it's funny? If you think it's so funny, you give him some money. I haven't a cent!" and turning she strode off.

Hung-chien was afraid that a disgruntled Ah Lau would shoot his mouth off when he saw Dr. Li, and had no choice but to give him some more money, charging it to bad luck. He then went alone up to the deck and watched despondently as the boat drew up to the Kowloon wharf. The disembarking passengers, both Chinese and foreigners, also came up. Hung-chien hid himself far away, for he did not feel like seeing Miss Pao. On the wharf policemen, porters, and hotel agents come to welcome passengers were yelling noisily. Another group of people were waving handkerchieves at the boat or gesticulating. Hung-chien was sure Dr. Li was among them, but wanted a careful look at him. Finally the gangway was lowered and after the entry procedures were completed, those meeting passengers swarmed on board. Miss Pao rushed into the arms of a balding, dark, fat man in big glasses. So this was the fiancé who she had said bore resemblance to him! He looked like that? Huh, what an insult! Now he understood everything. That remark of hers was really a come-on. Heretofore, he had been well pleased with himself, thinking she had taken a liking to him. Who would have thought that having been tricked and made use of he was probably even now being held up to ridicule. What was there to say except an expression so old it had grown a long white beard and was already worn

out through repetition: "Women are the most horrible creatures on earth"? While Hung-chien was leaning against the railing thus lost in thought, unexpectedly from behind him came Miss Su's soft voice, "Here you are, Mr. Fang, still on board and dreaming daydreams? Somebody has gone and left Mr. Fang! There's no one to keep him company."

Hung-chien turned around and saw Miss Su, very elegantly and attractively dressed. Without knowing what possessed him, he said, "I'd like to keep you company, but I'm afraid I haven't the good fortune or the qualifications!"

Having made this rash remark, he braced himself for a soft and firm rebuff. A spot of red suddenly appeared on Miss Su's cheeks beneath her rouge, spreading out like oil stains on a piece of paper, covering her face in an instant and making her look bewitchingly bashful. As if barely able to raise her eyelids, she said, "Who, me? I don't think I rate!" Hung-chien spread his hands out palm upwards and said, "Just as I thought, you wouldn't give me the honor!"

Miss Su said, "I want to find a hairdresser's to have my hair washed, would you care to go with me?"

Hung-chien said, "Splendid! I was just about to go have a haircut. When that's taken care of, we can take a ferry to Hong Kong and go up to the Peak to have some fun. When we come down, I'll take you to lunch. After lunch we can have tea at Repulse Bay, and in the evening see a movie. How's that?"

Miss Su laughed and said, "Mr. Fang, you've really thought of everything! You've planned the whole day." She didn't know that Fang Hung-chien had only passed through Hong Kong once on his way abroad. Now he could not even remember the directions.

TWENTY minutes later, Ah Lau took his bag of clothing to the dining hall to wait for the French manager to clear him for going ashore. Through the porthole he glimpsed Fang Hung-chien behind Miss Su, his hand around her waist, descending the gangplank together. He could not help feeling surprise and admiration as well as scorn. Unable to express these complicated feelings, he spat out with a loud "Tsui!" a mouthful of thick saliva in the spittoon.