

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE JOURNEY

GALAHAD had an unintentional surprise for Jeanne. She had not thought to ask in what sort of vehicle she would travel; and when it appeared, she went off into peals of laughter. It was a sort of palanquin called a *shen-tzū*, but resting upon the backs of two mules. Two poles, fifteen feet in length, had been fastened at the ends to frames that fitted over the wooden saddles of the mules hitched tandem. Over these poles, which ran along the sides of the animals, had been raised a canopy of matting closed at the rear. Ropes between the poles held straw upon which lay their bedding, packed in a large double canvas envelope called a *p'i t'ao*. Within the canopy the rider, surrounded by numerous small packages, boxes, and bags, could sit or recline, suspended four feet from earth between the head and heels of the pair of mules. A pack animal carried the rest of their baggage.

The motion of this strange conveyance is complex, comprising that of the pendulum, a pitching ship, and the plunger churn, with variants of all three occurring. If one is not subject to *mal de mer*, however, he soon becomes accustomed to the odd jiggling. And if the mules do not kick it to pieces before it is firmly placed upon their backs, it stands a monument to the inventiveness of the Chinese mind working with primitive materials, quite as remarkable in its way as the product of the wizard of Detroit fabricated from sheet iron, steel, and rubber.

How Jeanne laughed as she crawled in, using Galahad's knee as a step, and then turned about to face the front

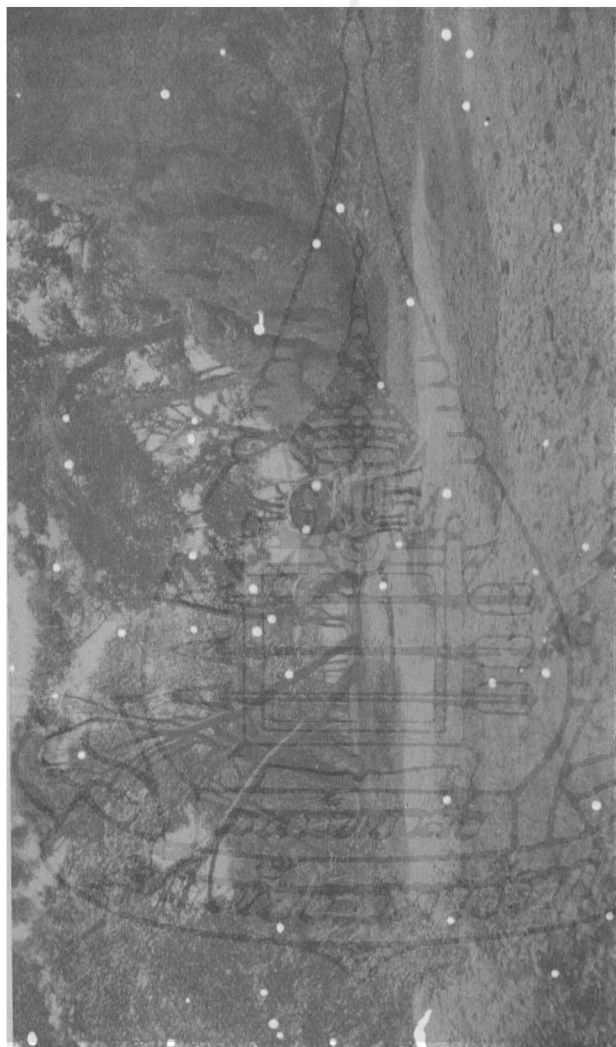
mule! Mrs. Herbeth had given her a couple of pillows which Dr. Herbeth had used in his *shen-tzũ* for years, and with these she made herself quite comfortable. At first she could not seem to find any proper place for her feet. The habit, which is so natural and easy for the Chinese, of sitting cross-legged, had not been acquired, so she sat reclining against the pillows as on a couch and thought of David's picture of Madame Recamier in a similar position.

With warm good-byes to the good lady who had been so kind to them and to the patriarchal old missionary who came out of his study to bid them Godspeed, Galahad and his foreign bride turned their faces toward home, and, for her, the unknown.

Galahad walked the first part of the morning. He could have ridden in the palanquin with Jeanne, although it would have been rather crowded, or upon the pack mule, but he preferred to walk by the side of the *shen-tzũ* so that he could point out interesting features and answer her eager questions.

It took half an hour to reach the hills that they had seen from the steamer. The road was black with mules and donkeys. Men, too, bore heavy burdens suspended from the two ends of a pole carried across the shoulder. As they neared the top of the pass, Jeanne's husband suggested that she might like to have one more look at civilization. She clambered out of the litter and turned with him to look back at Chefoo.

Again the beauty of the sight from a new vantage point called forth exclamations of delight. In spite of the steep sides of the cutting through which the road ran, it was a broader view, because of their elevation. The impression was of a huge gray fan spread out from Consular Hill, its white handle, upon a dress of blue. The foreign houses, some with red tile roofs, the bell towers of the churches, the steamships and the men-of-war lying in the sea of blue, were the last threads



TRAVELING BY MULE LITTER

binding her to the world she had known. The thread was rapidly growing more attenuated.

"Are you sorry to leave it, Jeanne?" asked Yung-fu.

"Not with you, Galahad," she answered, smiling at him lovingly.

They turned from the scene and walked behind their equipage the few steps up the hill which still concealed from their gaze the country on the other side. As they came to the summit of the pass, Galahad said, "Look." Jeanne raised her eyes, and there to the south she saw the hills of Shantung, range upon range, as far as the eye could reach. Like the sea on a morning after storm they seemed, the hills rolling in tumultuous waves from the horizon into the foreground, blue, green, flecked with patches of sunlight, dashed with violet, cream, and amber. Jeanne could almost imagine she must hear the roar of the breakers. Fruit orchards of diminutive trees were at their feet, pine trees clambered sparsely up to the tops of the hills, while the lower slopes were terraced and planted to grain. Willow and poplar fringed the almost dry river beds and clustered about the villages which nestled in the valleys.

Jeanne stood for a few moments studying the details. "I like it," she announced, "*très bien.*" Galahad was pleased and began to seem more natural than he had for days. This was his country, his Shantung, his native heath.

The province is less than one hundred miles broad at this point. China's rough outline is that of a great teapot, and Shantung is the spout of that teapot projecting into the Yellow Sea. Unlike the great plains in the central part of the province, the land in the east is mountainous and less fertile, and consequently less densely populated. The ranges run from north to south, and the main roads of travel follow the valleys. At times the roads follow the courses of the rivers to the watershed, which lies midway between the Gulf of

Pechili on the north, and the Yellow Sea, which is here beautifully blue, on the south. The dry bed of the stream may be the highway, its elevation greater than the surrounding country. On either side, gravel dikes lined with wild rose and willow bushes, stand ready to keep the river at flood time in its course. Or the narrow trail winds in and out among the bowlders and over rocky shelves as it crosses and recrosses some trickling mountain stream.

As they journeyed on, Jeanne wanted to know when they would reach the highway. The road they traveled seemed to grow narrower rather than broader and in places was only a footpath. He laughed. "This is our highway. Not much like your wonderful roads of France, is it?"

All day long they wound slowly among the hills and through wheat fields. There were no fences, and the grain grew right up to the path. Jeanne could almost brush the ripening heads as she leaned from the *shen-tzu*.

The Chinese farmers, stripped to the waist, stood leaning on their mattocks to watch them pass, looking for all the world like "the man with the hoe"; or ran to peep into the palanquin. Here and there men were yoked with beasts of burden, pulling with effort the tiny plow, which only scratched the surface of the soil.

There was not a dull moment throughout the long day. New impressions crowded her gaze more rapidly than could be consciously recorded. The blue and purple mountains were streaked with red or a dash of yellow, and sprinkled with all shades of green. Lichens gave to the black and gray rocks the color of old bronze. The absence of sufficient vegetation upon the hillsides had allowed the rains unwonted license. Erosion was performing a work both sad and beautiful, carving the mountains to the bone, and leaving the brown earth in grotesque shapes, rough-hewn gargoyles, or fluted like organ pipes, as if in some far-off day they, too, had

been left by the receding flood like the ark on Ararat. The picturesqueness of the landscape was enhanced by the many temples which crowned the highest hills. On others clung fortresses to which the peasants had fled during the marauding visits of the Taiping rebels. It was over half a century since they had been resorted to, so that now the ramparts were crumbling and serving no useful purpose except to add romance to the scene. There was, however, no romance then, but grim, stark terror; burned and looted villages, ravished women, abduction, night flights, hiding in the mountains, keen suffering. Women with tiny feet, for whom every step was agony, carrying frightened children and leading others, clambered over the steep rocks to the top of the crags where a circular wall had been built about the crest. There was no shelter. Exposure to rain and chilling winds, or to the heat of the sun with consequent thirst, increased the horror of the experience.

Now the scene looked peaceful itself. It hardly seemed possible that it had ever been scourged by these monotheistic devils. The Chinese called them the "long-haired rebels," because they wore the hair unbraided in defiance of the Manchu regulation about the queue. Some of them painted their faces with red and black streaks, which, with their flying hair, made these wild men look the more terrifying. Nor did the stolen finery, the silks and satins they wore, the silver collars and chains which they had filched from the treasure boxes of wealthy families, lessen their terribleness. Orgies of drunkenness followed upon the discovery of stores of wine. Cattle and pigs were slaughtered to satisfy their gluttony. They wantonly trampled the young grain or burned the standing crops, and from the larger towns demanded huge sums of silver, which were promptly forthcoming.

Yung-fu described for Jeanne a cave which, between the two raids made through Muping, had been built in a

winding mountain ravine a mile above Leafy Banks. Its construction was at the cost of immense labor. Eighty persons could crowd into its narrow confines; but Leafy Banks numbered over two hundred families.

All the elements of life were in evidence as they traveled farther inland—agriculture, religion, war, and even love, if one counted as such the red bridal sedan chair carried rapidly upon the shoulders of four strong countrymen. As the chair, which was closed so that the bride was invisible, paused, Jeanne peeped out, and the girl in the sedan, slightly raising the curtain, disclosed an oval face unearthly white with powder and unnaturally red with bright spots of rouge on her cheeks and crimson lips.

Galahad brought to her many kinds of flowers which grew by the way, for he knew how fond of them his wife was—purple iris, hairy lupine, cerise-colored wild bean, and sweet-smelling thyme. Roses grew abundantly. Birds with gay plumage and sweet song flew from tree to tree along their path. A pair of dark-blue swallows, showing now their white bellies and now the brown button on their backs, darted under the nose of the front mule, skimmed over his back, and circled about the *shen-tzu* again and again. The wheat bird had recovered his voice lost since last harvest, and was mournfully driving the lazy farmer with its

“Sluggard, hoe more,  
Or you’ll be poor.”

Several river courses were crossed, but for the most part they were dry. “Why isn’t there any water?” asked Jeanne, as she saw the wide, sandy beds.

“Our rivers are like the little man in that Swiss weather barometer which hurg outside your door. They come out when it rains,” said Yung-fu.

The road ran through dozens of villages. How pretty they looked from the hilltops, the gray, brown, and



MARKET DAY



white of the stone houses gleaming from the setting of trees! And what a disappointment to find them frequently such dirty places! Many homes had the pigsty located at the front door. Black razor-backed hogs wallowed in ill-smelling muck, and streams of black ooze, fed from the house drains, ran the length of the village street.

However, all were not so offensive. A flag-fringed duck pond, mirroring the soft green of the willows, a pair of "white-fruit" trees, with fluttering, fan-shaped leaves, and the bright yellow of new, clean thatch might atone for much ugliness. Then there were always the human factors of the picture—a peddler displaying his spindles of bright-colored silk thread to a knot of women; a girl making lace; or a group of boys teaching a sparrow to retrieve a red dart thrown against the door of the temple.

A market town was passed, and it was market day. Here, every five days, thousands of men and boys gathered from thirty li about, each eager for a bargain. Squatting behind their wares the sellers of articles of a similar nature were grouped together. As one looked at the array, it seemed as if all the simple demands of Chinese life could surely be met. Here were the grain dealers, there the fruit and vegetable stands, the green spinach or red radishes kept fresh by frequent dipping in water whose uncleanness no one seemed to notice. Baskets of shrimps and fish, hardware and leather goods, ghost paper for ancestor worship and incense, cotton cloth woven on the hand loom and an odd piece of pongee silk, all jostled for the buyer's attention.

Farther on was the firewood market, and beyond that there were cattle for sale. Numerous outdoor restaurants were steaming with savory food, which men ate at low tables, and whose excellence the lightly clad cooks bawled out from time to time. Great crowds gathered

about the tents of the gamblers like flies swarming about a bit of filth.

Jeanne was much amused by the low, conical hats worn by a majority of the people. They were made of split cornstalks and were circular or hexagonal in shape. Within the hat, which was a foot and a half broad, was the hatband, also made of woven splints, which set the hat away from the head, often at a rakish angle. A cord under the chin, or tied under the lower lip, or a string of beads kept the whole in place.

Their passage through this vanity fair was accomplished with no little hallooing on the part of their muleteer. Awnings, fastened by ropes which stretched clear across the street, had to be hoisted to let the palanquin pass under. Luckless hagglers, more intent upon their bargain than upon their safety, had to be pushed out of the way, and curious rustics pressed to one side.

Faces, faces, faces; the number of them was disconcerting. There were masses of them, cumuluslike, a veritable cloud. Jeanne had never believed that there could be so many queer-looking people. Every shape imaginable came within range of her vision as the litter struggled through the crowd—round, long, and flat, square, and pear-shaped faces with prognathous jaws, thin and fat moon faces. Some were dirty, some were bearded, and there were young faces and wrinkled faces.

Perhaps the most disturbing fact was that each face had a pair of eyes and a mouth. What eyes! squinting, leering, staring, glaring. What mouths! lips curling with contempt, drooping at the corners, gaping with wonder, twisted, toothless, grinning. And from the various combinations of eyes and mouths, together with complexions yellow, heated red with wine, or sunburnt, came a most amazing array of expressions. Some were bovine, some foxy, scowling, puzzled, sullen, simpering, amused, sneering; here and there an honest face, now

and then an intelligent countenance. Jeanne was a great deal relieved, though she would not have admitted it, to be free of the surging, buzzing, sweaty crowd.

She was especially interested in the women and children of the country. At intervals, they passed a group of them weeding in the fields. Their garments were for the most part of the favorite blue color, except where a recent bride gave evidence of the fact by a costume of bright red. Twice they met women with staff and basket, plodding their weary way from village to village, the object of attack by all the house dogs, which had been taught to bark at beggars.

The women who were riding upon donkeys or mules were invariably better dressed. They were going a-visiting and must put their best foot forward. Silk coats, often beautifully embroidered and with wide-flowing sleeves of a style long outgrown in the cities, were objects of admiration. Sometimes milady was dressed all in white, showing that she was in mourning. A servant, a younger brother, or some other male member of the household accompanied these traveling females. The children were carried in large baskets swung on the sides of the mule. The whole presented a most attractive picture, the mother perched in the middle and a bright face, surmounted perhaps by a hat of colored silk or yarns, with gilt ornaments, peeping over the edge of the pannier.

The muleteer who guided Jeanne's destiny was a happy-go-lucky fellow. All day he swung along with a loose-jointed stride, snapping his whip ecstatically, and reviling the mules with well-chosen phrases which were calculated to maintain their morale. Cursing is good for a mule. He does not understand you unless you punctuate your commands with choice bits of racy language. With strange syllables, he guided the canny, sure-footed beasts much as the driver directs a yoke of oxen. As the morning wore on and the sun grew hotter,

the muleteer took the towel which hung from his girdle, folded it, and bound it by his queue upon his forehead to shade his eyes. Cheerfully he told a different story to every one who asked whither they were going. Twice he had requested Jeanne to move to one side or the other of the litter to maintain its balance; but, with this exception, he paid no attention to her. She did not know whether or not she could with propriety address him.

Some time after noon they stopped at an inn to feed the mules and to eat the lunch which Mrs. Herbeth had thoughtfully prepared for them. Jeanne was doubly grateful for the lunch when she saw the interior of the inn. To reach the yard the whole procession had passed right through the kitchen, which is frequently located at the front door of inn or restaurant.

The *shen-tzu* was lifted from the backs of the mules, who promptly proceeded to disregard the shouts and blows of their master and to roll luxuriously on the ground. Dirty water stood in puddles in the yard where it had been thrown out. Manure and straw were everywhere underfoot. An employée dumped his buckets of water into the immense earthen water jar which had been sunk in the earth, level with the ground. The packs of the mules, earlier arrivals for dinner, took up a great deal of the open space in the courtyard, and, together with the uncertain heels of the animals, made it difficult to get about. At the inner end of the great court, whose sides were formed by sheds for the hybrids, was a guest room for the humans. There was not a great deal of choice between them.

Galahad purchased a bowl of steaming noodles and ate it in the fashion of the land, with the bowl perched on the fingers of his left hand and the black chopsticks held in his right. The bowl was repeatedly brought near to his mouth, and the meal was accompanied by the sound of loud sucking as the long strings of *mien*

were drawn into the mouth. Jeanne did not like to see Galahad eat that way; it seemed so primitive.

Their arrival, while unheralded, was not unnoticed, and soon the women of the village, taking advantage of the fact that most of the men folks were away at market, came hobbling in on their stumps of bound feet to see the foreign lady. Naked children, in arms or running about, crowded all the remaining spaces left by the women at the door and windows. There was a great deal of giggling on the part of the younger women.

Jeanne felt very much embarrassed to be stared at like a freak in a dime museum, but she was determined not to be irritated. She remembered how curious the people of Valetroi had been to watch the Chinese when they first arrived and how they had made joking remarks about them. She was now vicariously bearing her own people's punishment. Jeanne ventured a few words in Chinese; but, although the sentences were correct, they were not expecting to hear their own language from one so foreign-looking and so failed to recognize it. But she could understand a good deal of what they said, although the remarks were not directed to her. Galahad was not in the room at the moment.

"Will you see the enormous size of her feet!" said one whose own bound feet were not over three inches long.

"Yes, and what funny hair she has!"

"She's lovely and pale, though," complimented another, whose powder box was liberally drawn upon to supply a false complexion.

"What do you suppose he had to pay for her?" asked an old dame, who retreated behind the rest when Galahad returned in time to hear the remark, but did not enlighten the questioner.

The muleteer seemed to be in no particular hurry to start: the mules were not satisfied; the food was not ready. Consequently, it was dark long before they reached the inn where they were to stay for the night.

Jeanne did not especially enjoy this part of the ride. She was absolutely alone during most of this after-dark traveling. Galahad had mounted the pack mule, which was some distance in the rear. The muleteer did not precede his animals but walked behind, and so he was invisible to Jeanne.

Except for the twinkling stars and the various huge shadowy objects which loomed into view, there was nothing to see. The mule bells tinkled on endlessly. Jeanne was dizzy from the swaying of the litter, and the sound of the bells sent tiny injections of pain through her brain. She longed for silence and to put her feet upon solid ground. Nine hours they had been on the road, with a full two hours more added for lunch. Once she attempted to call the muleteer, but she did not know how to address him and incorrectly called him "First-born." He supposed that she was calling for her husband and answered, "He's behind." If she had called him "Big Brother" or "Mate," he would have understood.

Out of the gloom appeared a black wall, then some trees, and the *shen-tzû* stopped before a closed gate. The muleteer came forward and shouted and beat upon the door with his whipstock. Suddenly a face rose at the side of the litter and peered in.

"Where you from?" asked a voice.

"Chefoo," came the response from the muleteer.

"You aren't going to refuse a foreign guest, are you?"

There was a pause as if some one were weighing the question. Again the face peered intently into the *shen-tzû* and disappeared; then the voice shouted to those inside, who hastened to take down the bars and to remove some of the door boards so as to allow them to pass into the yard.

The inn was much like the one at which they had stopped for lunch. When the master of the house found that his foreign guest was a woman, he was rather

taken aback. Galahad soon arrived, and as he took charge of things, was thought at first to be the foreign lady's cook.

Earlier guests who had expected to occupy the only private room in the place were removed to one more public in order to make room for them. Their accommodations consisted of a larger and a smaller room, both equally black and dusty. The latter, which had one window looking out on a brick wall, was stuffy and hot. Its brick bed did not seem inviting. The larger room fortunately had two windows, the paper of which could be torn off to make ventilation. A wooden platform laid on benches and covered with a straw mat served as a sleeping place—one could hardly call it a bed.

The night's rest was neither quiet nor refreshing. The mules chewed their fodder with a great deal of noise, shook their bridles violently when out of provender, and squealed and made a commotion when exchanging friendly nips. These fracasos generally called for an attendant to yell at them in a voice calculated to wake any one but a Chinese, and in language anything but chaste.

The village watchman passed the place every few hours, beating out the watches on a huge, brass gong; and when he was silent, a baby in the next house made the night melodious. Jeanne was only too glad when morning came and they were on their way again.

Instead of mounting her chariot at once, Jeanne walked a few miles beside Yung-fu. How grateful she was for the cool, fresh air after the oppressive atmosphere of the inn! Fluffy, pink clouds filled the eastern sky. Larks were soon upon the wing, spraying the earth with intermittent jets of song. Fields of ripening grain, rippling under the tiny gusts of wind, reminded Jeanne of changeable yellow silk. Everything was green and gold and cool.