

CHAPTER III

WITH COOLIES TO FRANCE

IT WOULD have been difficult for Yung-fu to tell exactly why he was going to France. Motives with him, as with most men, were well mixed. There was first a boyish pique. He would show them that he was not to be treated like an infant. He could shift for himself. Their threats and their tyranny he would not endure. The desire to assert his independence was strong.

Contact with the college graduate and his stimulating views of personal and social freedom had awakened slumbering and hitherto unknown desires which clamored for satisfaction. It had quickened his curiosity about the outside world. Yung-fu had begun, some time before, to live not in the little village but in the greater world, to roam in fancy the highways of life. This opportunity to visit, not in imagination but in person, other countries, to see alien civilizations at first hand, and to verify his dreams of the greatness of the West, was too tempting to be rejected.

As his aunt had said, he had an inquiring mind. He would see for himself. He could not be a traditionalist. Like most boys, he had passed into the period of agnosticism; he began to question, to doubt. His religious needs were not met by the prevailing faiths. The sight of the crowds of ignorant women worshipping the goddess of maternity, or of men pasting their gilt plasters upon the ulcer god in petition for the healing of their running sores, had filled him with feelings of pity and disgust. The statement of Confucius that he who offends Heaven has no place to pray had, on the

contrary, gripped his groping mind by its crystal clearness and profound simplicity. Here was a norm by which to measure all creeds and claims. Here was a mountain peak of truth which rose majestic above the superstitions which filled the shrines and the temples. He had found stimulus also in the books that the evangelist had loaned him.

With his uncle's stereotyped interpretations of the classics, which, like traditionalism in every land and age, unconsciously aimed to iron out all the challenging truths into safe platitudes, he dared to differ. His mind strove to strip off the husks of conventionality that it might taste the sweetness of the original thought. He cared little for conventions; he was after reality. He wanted to know. That was one of the driving forces in this strange enterprise. He wanted to see whether Western civilization was all it claimed to be.

The educational system under which he had been trained could never produce such a spirit of inquiry, for it was of the cut-and-dried variety. There was in it no science to awaken the habit of investigation, no mathematics to develop the reasoning faculties. Reproduction according to pattern, world without end, was the ideal. No variation was expected; indeed, it was discouraged. The man who introduced new ideas, which might upset the balance of social life, and the promoter of any invention, which might disturb the economic order, had in days gone by been severely suppressed. No one must throw stones into the placid pool of existence. Life rolled on in cycles, to come at last back to the original starting point, and then began again. No one had cared for progress—conformity was the word. As Confucius said that he was a transmitter, not a creator, could those who came after aspire to higher service? Nay, there was no higher service.

An increasing group of young men in the intellectual centers of the nation, trained under modern influences, had cast off these bands of tradition. Mr. Han, who had made such an impression upon Yung-fu, was one of them. These men were discovering in themselves powers of intellect the equal of those in any nation. From their adventures into science, history, philosophy, and religion, launched in the new spirit, they were bringing back rich cargoes of knowledge, experience, and hope. Yung-fu had been caught by a little eddy of this new tide, and, without fully realizing it, was being swept out to sea.

Many days passed before any inkling of where Yung-fu had gone came to the family. Mr. Yao, who had been to the market, came home one day bearing a strange-looking envelope with printing upon it. It was addressed in Yung-fu's handwriting to Yung-li, his younger brother of twelve. The father held it in his hand a long time, turning it over and over.

"Where is it from?" asked his wife.

"Tsingtau," was the laconic reply.

"Well, I am glad he didn't go to Manchuria. That place is full of red-beard robbers," said Yung-fu's mother in a relieved tone. "Humph, Tsingtau is full of red-faced Japs," returned her spouse. "Why should he want to go there?"

"Why don't you open it and find out?" she suggested.

"I was trying to figure out if it were really from the child," said the man foolishly.

At last he plucked up courage and broke the end of the long, narrow envelope and drew out the letter, carefully folded according to rule, with the name of the addressee on top. It was Yung-fu's, all right, and it conveyed information which proved both a bombshell and a balm.

“Own Brother Beloved:

“My honorable parents are doubtless very much disgusted at having so unfilial a son as I, and are, perhaps, somewhat anxious, if they are not really glad to be rid of such a scapegrace, to know what has become of him. I have not written before because I was not willing for them to put any obstacle in the way of my seeing the world. I have made up my mind to travel. Perhaps I shall see London and Paris. The great men of the world have all been travelers within the four seas and to the six continents.

“Already I have seen more of the world in two months than I have previously seen in twenty-two years. I have met visitors from foreign countries—English and Americans and Japanese, as well as Chinese from all prefectures of the Sacred Province. I like the English: they are above all things just and fair. I like the Americans, too, for they are jolly and kind. I do not like the Japanese, yet I can see how we Chinese may learn from them if we will. One of them pushed me violently at the railway station. It was not necessary, for I was not harming any one nor breaking any rule.

“Yes, I have ridden on a ‘fire-carriage’ road. I was glad it did not last long, as I felt dizzy, the train went so fast.

• “I have also lost my queue. The foreigner called it a pigtail, and I was ashamed. I have been wanting to cut it for some time, but I knew my parents thought it handsome, so I did not suggest it. If mother will let you cut your hair, it will be cleaner and your clothes won’t get greasy at the back of your neck.

“I am going to Europe with the Labor Battalion. The ship which will convey us across the Great Peace Ocean arrived two days ago. It looked like a great, gray sea gull steaming into the harbor and is called the *Empress of Asia*. I hear it is one of the largest boats in the world and is owned by the great English nation. When you get this, I shall be gone.

“Please beg my honorable parents to forgive me for causing them sorrow. If father will go once a month to the county seat, they will pay him the sum of ten dollars, or half of my wages. Please ask him to give three thousand

cash out of the first payment to the *lao shih*, as I borrowed it from him.

"Tell them not to worry about their worthless offspring, and for me wish them peace. When I get to France I shall write again.

"Your brother Yung-fu's own handwriting."

It was a long letter, and the reading was accompanied with frequent exposition on the man's part, so necessary for the unlettered mother; and with frequent ejaculations on her part. The passage about the queue seemed to move her most. "That beautiful queue!" she exclaimed. The information about the ten dollars every month was too good to be true. Why, the schoolmaster himself had never earned so much in all his life, and it was only half the boy's wages! It was so unbelievable that he could not bring himself to give credence to the news until, taking the letter, he had traveled the two days' journey to the county seat and back. It proved real fact and no illusion; and this monthly income, which was like a gift dropped from the skies, and which promised to rehabilitate the family fortune, went far to soften the sting of having a runaway son and the shame of a scion of their educated family going with coolies to France.

That branch of the service known as the Chinese Labor Corps was conceived and organized by the British Government. The purpose was obviously to release men for the fighting line. They early saw that man power was going to count. Every Chinese who could handle a shovel released a white man to handle a rifle. Twenty thousand Orientals working at ammunition dumps and digging trenches meant that another army corps could be put into the field.

The British had had experience in this sort of thing before. They had used large numbers of laborers in contract work in South Africa. India's labor market was open for such engagement; and once, at least,

coolies from Shantung had been transported to work in the gold mines of Johannesburg.

For the work in France, however, the Indians would hardly have been suitable. The climate, for one thing, would have proved too rigorous. The Shantung men, on the contrary, were used to cold weather. The winters in the eastern part of the province are often severe. They had great powers of endurance, could stand strain and long hours, and could work on a minimum of food. Moreover, they were reputed to be without nerves. As they were industrious, worked well in groups, and responded cheerfully to discipline, they proved as ideal raw material as could be found anywhere.

To favor the enlistment was the ever-present factor of economic pressure. These boys from the farms of the Sacred Province did not go to save civilization. There was no romantic or idealistic urge with most of them, but the attraction of good wages proved strong. Of course the element of romance was not entirely absent. No man can enlist to go to a warring nation twelve thousand miles away from home without a bit of the viking spirit. But they went on no crusade. It was a purely mercenary enterprise. They were mercenaries. China was not one of the Allies and only came into the war after America had. Though the patriotic appeal was absent, the appeal of self-interest brought thousands of men forward. These had to be sifted. Only the fittest were received. The transaction was a business one, as matter of fact as the buying of draft animals.

The first recruiting station was opened at Weihaiwei, the port which the British had demanded in 1898 when the Russians had wrested Port Arthur from the Chinese Government. While the melon was being sliced, not many of the nations felt inclined to hold aloof. Here the British fleet in eastern waters summered. With the

port they had annexed ("leased" was the technical term) a piece of hinterland. Here they had constructed good roads, established a court for Chinese cases which was a model of justice, opened schools, built barracks, and improved the harbor. It was, however, too far away from those great plains in the central part of the province where humans swarm, and where, owing to their "unrestrained fecundity," man power is raised in such prolific quantities. The eastern end of the province is mountainous and the land comparatively unproductive and incapable of sustaining the immense populations which breed on the plains.

After the Japanese had, according to agreement, captured Tsingtau from the Germans,—a matter of only a few weeks and a few casualties,—a recruiting station was opened there. The wonderful harbor, which the Germans had made so complete, admitted the largest steamers on the Pacific which could dock there and take on board the thousands of Celestials who wanted to go, not to heaven, but to Europe. Furthermore, Tsingtau was at the end of the railroad which traversed Shantung from east to west and which tapped the rich fields where the coveted coolie power was, while Weihaiwei could only be reached, by the slower and more laborious method of walking. Ordinarily, Yung-fu would have gone to the latter station, for it was within two days of home; but he feared that his family might suspect and search for him there. So he went to Tsingtau.

From these two ports the Mongolian myriads were shipped in bulk, so to speak, to France. At Noyelles, the headquarters of the Labor Corps, they were organized into battalions of five hundred men, and neatly clothed in corduroy or khaki uniforms of a semimilitary cut. To many of these simple-minded boys the bright, brass buttons upon which the lion and the unicorn are fighting for a crown were a special

delight. From Noyelles they were distributed, for the most part, to British camps, although some worked with the French.

At least four European officers were assigned to each battalion. Some of these men were specially fitted for the work by previous residence in China and acquaintance with the language and the psychology of the Chinese people. They were missionaries, business men, and officials. Some, lacking this experience, had no other apparent fitness for their task except an overweening sense of racial superiority. They hated their job and despised the men under them. They neither understood them nor cared to. Needless to say, there were many cases of discipline, and at times open revolt. Mutual misunderstanding and lack of sympathy could only bring friction. The Chinese are docile, as the fact that it required only four officers to direct five hundred of them proves, but they do not stand ill treatment joyfully. These Shantung farm lads had not associated with the white man enough to take his kicks and curses without resentment. Sometimes he thought he was being reviled when only being encouraged. "Come on, let's go," the favorite expression of one officer, was the cause of a strike, because to the Chinese ears the word "go" meant "dog." Conditions improved greatly when the men had picked up a little English and French, and when interpreters were numerous enough for each regiment to have one.

The enlisting and transporting of one hundred fifty thousand men halfway round the globe, the directing of their prodigious labors at comparatively small cost, and the invaluable contribution which the Labor Corps made to the conduct of the war stamp it as one of the significant movements of the great conflict. From another point of view it may prove to be one of the fatal errors of history—a brilliant blunder. The plan of taking Orientals to France to save Western civilization

may yet prove to be the very thing which will destroy it. It was not a propitious time for subject races to visit Europe. It was unfortunate for any group representing a nation which had been fed on the superiority of the white man, morally, intellectually, and socially, to see the white man when not on dress parade.

As Yung-fu in his first letter had given them no address, his people could only wait for further information. A second letter came four months after the first. It began :

“Father, Mother, great people,

“Ten thousand joys and golden peace be yours.

“It is now over a month since your child left ship at one of the ports of this great land of France. We were not allowed to know the name of the place. We always speak of this as the West, but, strange to say, we traveled east all the time to reach here. Two oceans and a continent were crossed. Most of the men were miserably seasick and very glad to see dry land again.

“Our captain and officers are English, but we are quartered among the French people. They are very kind to us, and I have come to believe that, if a person will mind his business and be humble, he will make friends among any people.

“We are not near the fighting, so you may rest your heart and not be at all anxious about me. I have not laid eyes on a German yet, although I have seen nearly every kind of man. There are black men with faces like those of the idols in the temple at home. Then there are brown men, and yellow men, and white men—all soldiers. Part of the time we are engaged in loading cars with ammunition for their big guns, and part of the time in repairing roads. The roads are marvelous, as smooth as the top of our brick beds. If you want to go fast, there are railroads everywhere.

“The hours of work are not long. Four hours in the morning and four in the afternoon hardly seem a day's work. We are not complaining, however. The pay, too, is good—a franc a day, or more than a stone mason would get in Muping. The only thing the men do grumble a great deal about is the food. It is not filling enough, nor does it suit

our taste. An hour after eating we are as hungry as before. Six ounces of bread are given us at each meal, and an iron can of cow's flesh. They also give us a piece of yellow stuff made out of cow's milk, called *fromage*. It smells terrible; and most of the men throw it away. They say it is good for us and will sustain life, but I should prefer some Shantung bean curd. Some of the men have been sick because they have to drink cold water. If you can send me some tea I should like it.

"One does not see many men in the villages except old, gray-haired grandfathers or those who have been injured in the war. It is very pitiful to see so many who have lost legs and arms or who are sightless. I do not understand exactly why they are fighting.

"The French women are very beautiful and dress in skirts, not as our Chinese women do in trousers. Nor do they bind their feet, but sometimes wear very high heels. They enjoy a great deal of liberty and come and go without fear. The French men treat them with every courtesy. Indeed, the French are as polite a people as our own Chinese. It is amusing to see the men kiss each other on taking leave.

"The wonderful wheat fields of Canada would have made you open your eyes. They extended for miles and miles along the railroad. In some places they were cutting the wheat with machines drawn by horses. We did not get near to these machines but could see the wheat fall as the horses passed on, and then saw it laid in bundles behind, as if invisible giants with magic scythes were cutting it down, and fairy fingers were binding it into sheaves. In another spot, where the reaping was finished, a great engine with a smokestack was grinding away. They said it was a threshing machine. We could see the grain running out of a chute while the straw was piled up behind in a regular mountain. These are the things which have made America and England great. I have not seen these machines here in France. They seem to farm more as we do in China. Even the women work in the fields.

"There will be much to tell you all when I return to Leafy Banks which I cannot write in a letter. I pray Heaven to keep you safe.

"Your son Yung-fu salutes you."

From this time on the letters passed back and forth with a great deal of regularity. Yung-fu at least was faithful in writing, and they wrote several times a year. It was with considerable satisfaction he read of their relaying the roof of the house. It had needed it long, and now to feel that he had made it possible gave him real joy. They had also replaced with tile the thatch on some other buildings and had bought back some of the better pieces of property which the family had been compelled to sell. His monthly remittance also made it possible for his mother to engage a woman to help with the cooking.

He wrote of things which he felt would interest them, trying to include items for each member of the family, not excepting the schoolmaster. He told of a visit to Paris with the captain, of the stores and the children, the boulevards and the automobiles. But he did not tell them that he had gone as the personal servant of Captain Frayley. That would have been humiliating.

For six months he had worked as one of the rank and file. The work was not hard, but it was monotonous. Most of the men were homesick, and being a man of more sensitive nature than the rest Yung-fu was more miserable than they. He determined, however, not to yield to his feelings, but to conquer them and to see it through. If he had had in those early months reading material, the long hours of leisure would have passed more rapidly. He early decided to learn both French and English, but he did not know where to obtain the necessary books; and so, although he picked up many phrases in both languages, his progress was slow. However, it was due to his desire to learn that he was especially attentive when the officers spoke. His alertness and quickness, together with his general neatness and good nature, did not escape Captain Frayley, who chose him as his bodyservant.

The captain, who signed his reports "D. Frayley,"

but had been christened Dennis, was a devout Catholic. He had a warm heart and a fiery temper. Conditions among the men, their quarrelsomeness and insubordination due to low spirits, gave ample scope for his rich vocabulary of oaths. He never swore, however, at Yung-fu. The only wrong he did him was an unconscious one. Yung-fu by imitation came to speak English with a slight Irish brogue. It was very amusing to the officers with whom he was later associated.

To be a laborer carried with it no sense of degradation to Yung-fu; to be a servant, a cook, a lackey, and that for a white man, severely wounded his pride. It was not that he had any hostility towards Frayley. He simply felt that he was just as good as the Irishman; and for an educated man as he was, with the family background he had, to be blacking the boots and serving the meals to a man who had as little culture and self-control as Dennis Frayley, was almost more than he could bear. Another thing, which cut deeper still, was that Frayley began calling him "Boy." He had acquired it from some brother officers of the Corps as the customary term for a servant, and he seemed to delight in using it. Little did he suspect that it was like the lash of a whip to the impassive man who came at his call. Nor did his mates suspect. One of them, to tease him, started to call him "Boy," imitating the voice and inflection of the captain. Yung-fu could have taken him by the throat for it. Instead, he quickly told a funny story about Frayley using the hated term and turning the laugh from himself to the latter.

The position proved to be more than that of a menial, however. Yung-fu became in time, and as his language improved, a sort of go-between for the men in approaching the captain with their requests. He was a friend at court. They called him "First-born." Frayley came to lean upon his judgment and often used

him instead of calling the interpreter. Every moment he had to himself he gave to the language books which Frayley had procured for him. The former was not to be betrayed into assuming the unconscious rôle of instructor. He was not a talkative individual. He showed no interest in Yung-fu's native land, his family, or his personal history. To him he was "my boy," a good, steady, thoughtful servant. He might boast of him to his fellow officers, but he never encouraged him to talk or tried to draw him out to express his ideas. The fact was that Frayley was not quite sure whether he ought to talk to a "boy."

Yung-fu was more fortunate in Frayley's successor. Captain Harmstead was tall and good-looking, with light wavy hair and a boyish face. His thirty-four years did not burden him greatly. This might have been due to the fact that he had never done a hard day's work in his life, or to his easy-going temperament, which did not permit him to take difficulties seriously. He had generally found some one else to do his worrying for him and had formed the habit of delegating all unpleasant tasks to others whenever possible.

Harmstead was a great talker. He liked to talk and prided himself on doing so uncommonly well. He had a good voice and spoke faultless English. Even with the men he would have scorned to descend to the "pidgin English" which some of the officers used. Talking had been his profession, for Harmstead was a parlor socialist and had been much in demand for addresses among those who are fond of calling themselves the intelligentsia. He was no horny-handed son of toil; but theoretically, at least, he was with the laboring man.

Furthermore, Harmstead was a doctrinaire pacifist, not the type who would make much trouble about his views — incite strikes or go to prison for them; but one who frequently had said that all wars were capitalistic

and so undesirable. He was not squeamish about killing, when it was necessary. However, an officer's commission in the Labor Corps was more to his taste than one in the regular army, and he had friends who obtained it for him.

Harmstead's loquacity was always accentuated by liquor. When he had been drinking, which was not seldom, he would entertain Yung-fu with one of his parlor addresses. In the course of the year they were together, Yung-fu had heard his repertoire many times over, all of which was a great aid to the study of English. Not that he understood one half of the captain's remarks, but his ear was being trained.

The subject one evening had been war and the futility of it from the standpoint of the workingman. Yung-fu was interested in the war. He had said he did not understand why they were fighting. He was eager to learn how Christian nations who claimed to believe in peace could engage in such an enterprise, and he made it his business to ask every one he could. The answers were never satisfactory. He ventured to put the question to Harmstead. The captain had paused a moment, looked at him with a quizzical smile, and then had winked significantly. Why was it men winked when he asked that question? Frayley had done the same thing and shrugged his shoulders. Then Harmstead took from his pocket a silver franc and held it up. "This is the reason," he said.

"You mean for money?" asked Yung-fu.

"For money," repeated Harmstead, "for trade, for commercial advantage. This is only another capitalistic war like all the rest. Whoever wins, it will be the same tyranny, the tyranny of capital over labor."

"Then England is not fighting for Belgium?"

"That is the bunk doled out to the Tommies and to the old fellows at home to get them to support the war, but we socialists know better. Governments do not go

to war to protect the weak or for mere friendship. They fight because they see something in it for themselves. If you have come to Europe to find altruism, you have come to the wrong place. What did you Chinese come for, anyhow; wasn't it to make some money? You did not come because you love to work, and you did not come because you love Great Britain."

Yung-fu nodded. He was thinking. He had not come for money, but most of his fellows had. He had come to study Western civilization. Mr. Han had told him that China was only half civilized and that she must take pattern from Europe and America. He had said that China had no progressiveness, was asleep, was content to follow in the ruts dug by bygone ages. After all, were not those ruts of peace more to be desired than these trenches of war? If it was a sign of progress to use every scientific invention for the killing or for the maiming and blinding of one's fellow men, better the stagnation of primitive life. Was this civilization? Was this the highest man had reached? He was sick of it all.

Yung-fu had expected to meet with idealism but had found cynicism and greed. He had thought to discover nobility in these much-boasted Western lands, and he had found savagery. The drunkenness, the lust, and the brutality had terribly disillusioned him. His visit was inopportune. Visitors are not expected to make calls at hog-killing time, and he had come to find men so engaged in the supremely important and engrossing business of slaughtering their kind that they had no time to show an inquiring young Chinese the best of their civilization. He longed to talk it all over with Mr. Han, and to tell him that he did not find his Christ in Europe. "Oh, why did I ever come to help these Christians kill each other?" he thought.

The assignment of a Y secretary to their camp was an event of far-reaching importance. Carl Henderson,

a fine young American, with a very meager amount of equipment but a tremendously large supply of enthusiasm and good will, began to study conditions. He found the Chinese gambling, quarreling, and generally low-spirited and homesick.

He walked into a group of them one day, when they were not at work, with a football under his arm. "What you got?" they asked. "You look, see," was the response. Henderson kicked it high and far, and what a scrambling there was! Everybody became interested at once. Everybody got into the game. The secret was out. "What those men need is play," he told the captain. "Give them something to laugh over, and they'll fight less and work more."

"Go ahead," said Harmstead; then characteristically added, "If my boy here can help you any, call on him."

Henderson turned to Yung-fu, who was polishing the captain's boots. Yung-fu noted his friendly smile. "Can you tell me what these fellows like? What do they do for fun when at home?"

"Why, yes," said the Chinese; "they like theatricals, boxing and wrestling, and music."

"Will you help me get some of these things started?" the secretary asked.

"I will do what I can," said Yung-fu.

And what he could do proved the saving of the situation. Men were selected to form an orchestra. Instruments were dug out of kit bags, fiddles and cymbals, pipes and flutes. A man was discovered who could play the drum and another to act as leader. Actors were created overnight. Every sort of talent was there only needing the magic wand to reveal it. Yung-fu was himself a good deal of a mimic and droll, and he had attended the home theatricals enough to understand the technique of the stage. Costumes were purchased by popular subscription, and the play which was given was an unqualified success, not merely

because it was a show, but because it was as redolent of the flavor with which they were familiar as the average Chinese is odoriferous with the smell of garlic.

All their old favorites were on the stage, even the friendly tiger with his rolling, papier-mâché head ready to protect the heroine who had been driven from home by the cruel stepmother. One of the younger members of the battalion played the part of the girl with real grace, modesty, and amazing restraint. Great laughter greeted the inimitable impersonation of the stepmother hobbling across the stage on bound feet, her arms gyrating to preserve her balance.

There were the usual comedians, the old scholar with bristling mustaches, scraggly queue, and old-fashioned clothes; the innkeeper, with his hearty and effusive cordiality, which, however, was the sheath of a deadly sharpness when it came to settling accounts; and the stupid menial who always did everything wrong, much to the discomfort of everybody, was kicked and cuffed about by all, and cracked obscene jokes for all the world like Shakespeare's fools.

The officers of the battalion had been invited, and occupied, much against their own sense of fitness, seats of honor on the stage. The orchestra, also, was on the stage, but at the rear of the actors. In spite of the fact that they could not understand a word of what was said, the guests enjoyed themselves immensely.

"Why, this is real Elizabethan drama," exclaimed Captain Harmstead, delightedly. "See the way that stage director walks right on the stage as if he were invisible and hands the emperor a bowl of tea."

If the play was not Shakespearean, the stagecraft was. There were few properties and no scenery. Much was left to the imagination. A gesture of the hands suggested the existence and the opening of a door. A whip in the hand and the act of dismounting were enough to bring the horse to mind. The emperor's

throne was a chair placed upon a table, and his "bannermen" consisted of two men upon whose backs had been fastened a cluster of flags which fluttered as they moved.

Besides the drama there were numerous specialties: swordplay, juggling, legerdemain, and ventriloquism. How they laughed and slapped each other on the back and said, "Just like home," cheered the hero and jeered the villain, and forgot that they were thirty thousand li from the Middle Kingdom!

Yung-fu took up the study of French. He did not have so much time to give to study as formerly, because Harmstead had found that many of his own duties could be attended to by Yung-fu as efficiently as he himself could look after them. Men who wanted sick leave without real cause could deceive the captain but not their own countryman. Gradually this matter, as well as many others, passed into his control. At times, orders had to be given, although Harmstead was not in condition to issue orders. Yung-fu gave them.

To the captain he was much more valuable than the interpreter of the battalion. A vacancy in the latter position which promised not to be filled from above induced Harmstead to send in to headquarters a recommendation that Yao Yung-fu be promoted to the position of second-grade interpreter. The appointment did not materially alter his close relations with Captain Harmstead, except that he was no longer his "boy"; but it made a great difference to him financially and gave him a standing in the battalion, which the men recognized as belonging to him because of his ability and his education. He did not permit his good fortune to isolate him but continued to mingle with the men as he had always done.

Henderson called upon him for help in the Y hut when they opened the classes in the Chinese language. In association with the secretary, Yung-fu found a new

point of view. Their long talks together opened his eyes to see that his early impressions of Western life were partially false. He had had forced upon him the abnormal conditions of army life and of the fringe of the civilian population which lives by pandering to the army. Henderson was able to correct his erroneous views, to point out the wholesomeness of the family life about them, to call to his mind the kindness and hospitality of the simple country folk, and to emphasize the admirable qualities of cheerfulness and fortitude which this suffering people were showing. Besides, Henderson's own idealism was contagious. He seemed to ask for nothing but a chance to help some one. His constant unselfish service for the Chinese laborers, the genuineness of his good will, and his unflinching optimism under all circumstances endeared him not only to Yung-fu but to hundreds of men in the battalion.

The end of the year had brought a new quota of officers. Evidently a general shake-up for the good of the force was being executed. Yung-fu had to part with Captain Harmstead, or, to state it more accurately, the latter regretfully lost the invaluable assistance of his interpreter. Yung-fu remained with the battalion until the spring of the following year and was then transferred to the 138th Battalion located at Valetroi very near the fighting area.

Before moving to Valetroi, he received the one letter which his uncle deigned to write in his own name. All the letters had been penned by him, but only as the family scribe. Now the old man felt called upon to give some advice on his own account.

"Yung-fu, Nephew:

"Your letters to your people have been read by me. You tell many interesting things. I detect in your letters, however, a note of shame because China has not some of the things these Western nations have. I should like to recall to your remembrance that you belong to the oldest race on

earth, that your nation has an honorable history which extends back into the dim past for five thousand years, to the time of the Great Emperor Yao, whose name you bear. You do not need to be ashamed of your civilization: your ancestors dressed in silks when theirs were mere savages.

"They may have modern contrivances, but they have not the sacred Chinese language. What could be more perfect, more admirable, more divine? Europe may have its sage Jesus, but you have Confucius. I have examined some of their books since you went away and find them in no way to compare in profundity and beauty with the writings of our own wise men. Indeed, they are written in the simplest Mandarin which a child of fourteen could read easily. How can they put their Christ above Confucius? Do not forget that we have a past and a golden age to which we Chinese must turn back for inspiration and instruction in virtue.

"You write of much intercourse with captains and colonels. I have a deep-seated prejudice against the soldier class. 'Good iron is not used to make nails, nor good men to make soldiers,' is, from my observation and reading, a true saying. Have as little to do with this class as possible. Hold yourself aloof. You belong to the scholar's grade, far removed from that of fighting men. Take their money but not their manners.

"And shun these foreign religionists. converse with your own countrymen on the subjects of benevolence, virtue, propriety, wisdom, and fidelity, but leave these ranters about sin and salvation, heaven and hell, severely alone.

"One more thing. There seems to be too much familiarity between the sexes in that land. I suppose we cannot expect anything else from barbarians, but the rules of propriety you have mastered do not permit it. Beware of these foreign females. Women are but thorns, anyway; but when they have no one to restrain them they are more dangerous than tigers.

"These few injunctions are given to guide you. I, your uncle, have written it."