



THE FATAL STAR.

A Fourth of July Story.



It is Fourth of July in San Francisco. The clear, blue sky, like a mammoth bowl cut from one great turquoise and turned over her town, is a background for thousands of flags floating from the roofs of public buildings and windows of private patriots. All the flags are big. Everything is on a large scale in California, the fruit that is exposed for sale, the great roses that enamored youths are buying for their adored ones. The children are playing in the streets with mighty torpedoes, that make an explosion calculated to deafen one. Large men, with ample ladies on their arms, may be seen in every direction. Immense baskets are being borne to the doors of their customers by grocers, butchers and confectioners. Immense suppers are to be given tonight, and many happy returns of the glorious Fourth will be drunk in rivers of champagne. Everything is on a large scale but the Chinese, whose small figures and alert movements are in marked contrast to the bulk and size of everything else on which the eye falls.

Yet little Washy-Washy balances on his head a clothes-basket that would serve him for a cradle, or in his kitchen—for he is a favorite cook with California housewives—stirs a pot in which he might easily be boiled himself. In the arms of San Francisco sleeps Chinatown, the curious offspring of old China, of which Americans think that they know all that is to be known because they can visit the shops and go into all the strange places, and, if they are in the humor, make themselves sick with an opium-pipe among opium smoking Chinamen.

Lin Ham is an ordinary dealer. He keeps no shop. He executes orders for the favored few. In each he puts a surprise—an invention for the day. His are the curious boats, all made of colored fire, moving on the water, apparently by means of a stream of fire at the stern, manned by little men in blue and gold and crimson, and all going off in a wonderful flash and whizz and sputter at last. His are those cylinders which, rising into the air, discharge wonderful sprays and stars and jewels skyward, while at the same time fiery little acrobats let themselves earthward by golden ropes and only vanish as they touch the ground. His was the great green dragon that coiled and darted moonward, and wrote "July"



BLINKS UP AT THE FACE OF A TALL MAN.

across the sky before it changed into the flag of our nation, which every one so admired last Independence Day. At present something that smells very curiously is smoking and steaming in queer fashion, in what looks like a little furnace, and Lin Ham, while still busy with his hands, twists his head about and blinks up into the face of a tall man in a curious, theatrical costume, who stands with his bare arms folded on his chest, and looks down upon him. The man wants Lin Ham to invent a fatal trick.

"Such things are costly," he says. "I do not say that I have anything of the

sort, but if I had, you would not buy them, Min Toko."

They are speaking in Chinese, for Min Toko, though not a child of Chinese parents, has been brought up by them. You can believe the story that his father was a Russian and his mother a Tartar when you look at him.

A little Chinese boatwoman took him from his dying mother's arms and nursed him with her own, somewhere near those quarters where there are English warehouses and the barbarian comes to traffic in tea and porcelain, and he starved and played and swam about with her own, and early in his boyhood came to San Francisco. There he dwelt in Chinatown, and became renowned amongst the showmen of San Francisco for his acrobatic feats. To-night he is engaged to assist in a performance on the lawn before the mansion of Benson Blashfield, Esq. Mr. Blashfield will have fireworks and a great supper, the crowning feature of which will be the feats of Min Toko, who, amongst other things,



"COME TO ME ALL YE BUTTERFLIES."

throws a rope into the air, where it is caught by some unseen power, sends a kitten up its length until it vanishes from sight, sends a monkey to find it, follows himself and draws the rope up after him, and ten minutes after is heard calling from the inside of a great lacquered box to be let out, and there he is, indeed, coiled up like a great serpent. Oh, there is nothing Min Toko cannot do, and no one ever discovers how he does anything.

Now he laughs. "I know you have what I want, or can make it in a twinkling, Lin Ham," he answers. "As for money, I am richer than you think. Name your price. I have told you what I want—to kill a man without a knife or a blow or poison—to kill him so that it seems to be done by the hand of Fate; so that no one can suspect me."

"Is he a Chinaman?" asks Lin Ham. "He is an American," said Min Toko. "He has taken the woman I love from me. This rich man, to whose house I go to-night, has a daughter. I love her. You grin! Why not? I am hand some; I am no Chinaman; I am famous. I am a favorite with the ladies, and she smiled on me. You grin again! Of course, the rich man would say no. I did not mean to ask the rich man. If she loved me, that was enough. I could spirit her away where they would never find us. That is what I mean to do."

"You are mad!" says Lin Ham. "No," says the acrobat. "She could be won. She can be still, if I can kill this man."

"Do you mean her father?" cries Lin Ham.

"No. To-night they celebrate her marriage," said the acrobat. "To-morrow the bridegroom will take her away. To-night I must kill him. She will be a widow for a while; afterward, mine."

"It is the dream of a madman," says Lin Ham. "Does it matter to you?" asks the acrobat. "I know that it was you who made the toy the rich tea merchant gave to his wife when he found she was false to him. The little bird that perched on her wrist and sang and bit her fingers like a real bird, and of the bite she died. I know it was you who—"

"No more reminiscences!" cries Lin Ham. "I admit that I have another toy that, with a slight addition, I could

make in ten minutes would wipe your rival out of existence. But of what avail would it be? Rich American ladies do not marry such as you. Her relatives would kill you if you touched her hand."

"I have kissed it thrice when we were alone," says Min Toko. "Yes, I have kissed her hands three times. The next time it should have been her mouth. Let me kill this bridegroom so that she cannot suspect me, and it shall be yet. Look!" He thrusts his hand into the bosom of his tunic and draws forth a pouch. "See!" he whispers, piling bank notes before Lin Ham. "How much for that toy?"

The eyes of the old man glitter. He gathers up the heap in his claw-like hands, and says, slowly:

"This sum makes me have enough with which to return to China and live there happy for the rest of my life. After all, what does one more dead barbarian matter? But I will tell you this: Unless you can make your rival take the toy in his own hands, it is useless."

"I can manage that," Min Toko replies. The old Chinese goes to a little recess in the room, before which hangs a beaded screen, and comes back, holding in his hand a curious kite.

"You fly it like any other kite," he explains. "When at its full length, you begin to call: 'Come down, butterfly!' A butterfly descends the cord and flies away. 'Follow rose!' you say. A rose glides down the string and drops to ashes. 'Come down, pretty mouse!' you call next. The mouse descends and runs up your shoulder and is gone. Then you call for a blue bird, for a white bird, for a red bird, for a yellow bird, a green bird. Thus it might end with the applause of the people. But let me work upon this kite ten minutes longer and add one trifle more, and then there will be something else to see. Then you may call aloud: 'Come to me out of the sky, bright star.' And far above you may see a star shine, bright as any in the heavens. At this moment, he whom you wish to kill must hold the cord, for that star brings death. As it touches the man's breast life departs from him. Mark me well, the other things that come down the cord are innocent as drops of dew. The star is fatal."

"I understand," replies Min Toko. "Hasten with your work, Lin Ham."

A little later the old Chinese puts into the hands of the younger man a paper box covered with shining roses, butterflies and birds, and says to him: "Min Toko, the great performer, you have bought of me a pretty kite, which brings down from heaven the birds of the air, and the flowers the spirits' pluck. For all I know, you may coax the stars down its cord also. It is well

made. If any accident happens, that is the fault of others, not mine. I am not responsible."

"I absolve you from all responsibility, Lin Ham," replies Min Toko. He throws about him a cloak that covers his theatrical costume, and carries the box downstairs, where a carriage containing the parapermalia used in his exhibition awaits him, and is driven to Mr. Blashfield's residence. There they celebrate not only the glorious Fourth but a wedding.



"I DIE FOR YOU."

Early in the evening, the rich man's daughter, Rosabel Blashfield, had been married to Mr. Arthur Ware, the son of another California magnate.

There has been the usual reception, the usual display of gorgeous presents, a fine band has been playing, professional dancers have done their part; now they are ready for Min Toko and his performances.

The whole lawn is flooded with electric light, and, in mighty tents, all decorated with roses, they are setting forth a feast. The bride and bridegroom sit upon a sort of throne that seems made of orange blossoms. Tiers of seats, occupied by people in evening dress, surround the lawn, leaving an archway through which the performers enter. It is opposite the bridal throne; and, as Min Toko passes through, bowing and smiling, his eyes meet those of the bride, and he seems to give her special greeting.

Standing in the midst of the circle, he begins to gather, from heaven knows where, white roses, of which he makes a mighty ball, how, no one can guess. This he throws toward the throne. As it floats in the air it opens and forth flies a little pink Cupid, who flings kisses abroad and flies skyward and is gone. Thunders of applause follow this compliment to the bride, and then the little boy-in-waiting on Min Toko brings in the chairs, the tables, the fans, the wands, the boxes, and the show begins. It is sufficient to say that the man seems to be able to overcome the laws of gravitation, to stand upon nothing, to fold himself up like a foot-rule, to put himself away in spaces that seem impossible; and to do all this gracefully, with beautiful accessories.

The bride's eyes never leave him. Min Toko did not boast falsely. Though his position and residence in Chinatown seem to her to place him as far beneath her as though she were an empress and he a serf, she has always admired him intensely, and she knows that he is in love with her. She has often wished that he were of her race and kind. He has been made a sort of pet amongst the Californians before whom he has performed, and he has had opportunities to speak a few words to her and, as he said, to kiss her hand thrice. To-night she feels that she bids him adieu and to-night he fascinates her strangely.

When at last, as usual, he inquires if any two of the audience will assist him in some closing performance, she whispers to her bridegroom: "Come, Arthur, let us go."

And the young man replies: "Awfully bad form; but if you wish it, of course."

It is a look that Min Toko has given her that makes her do this thing, and the bridegroom hands her down into the center of the lawn, and they three stand together there.

"Will you be pleased to help me fly this kite, sir?" says Min Toko to the bridegroom, as he flings into the air the thing we know of. "See, this is how!" The kite darts upward swiftly in a moment. Its brilliant breast is no longer visible. Only a long copper-colored cord shimmers in the air from Min Toko's hand moonward.

"Come to me all ye butterflies!" he cries. "Come! Come!" And down the cord sweep a myriad butterflies and cover the performer's bosom and vanish. "Little mouse!" he cries. "Come, little mouse!" and whistles exquisitely. And the little gray mouse creeps down, sits on his shoulder and is gone. "And now, sir," Min Toko says, with a bow to the groom and a smile to the bride, "if you like you may call a blue bird and a white bird, a red bird, a yellow bird, a green bird, and after that one of the stars from heaven." And he puts the cord into the bridegroom's hand, who calls loudly:

"Here, you blue bird, come if you can!" And there is a blue bird and amidst shouts of merriment, and while the bride claps her little palms and showers smiles about her, the birds of all colors come down.

The green bird has arrived and disappeared, when suddenly the bride puts forth her hand playfully and snatches the cord from the bridegroom's hand.

"You shan't have all the fun," she says, with a pretty pout. "I intend to call the star down myself. Ah, how the cord puls! No, you shan't touch it. I will do it alone. What do you say, Min Toko? 'Brightest star of heaven come to me!' Is that right?"

She beams on him and lifts her sweet, shrill voice and calls aloud, and far up in the sky appears a great diamond star, that shimmers and glows as it comes earthward. And, with one wild spring, Min Toko snatches the cord from the bride's hand, saying something that she only hears as he does so, and pushing her fiercely from him so that she falls into her bridegroom's arms.

Then the star is upon Min Toko's breast and he lies upon the ground, and the gaudy kite flutters down and lies beside him; and those who gather about him see that he is dead, with the fearful burn of electricity upon his bosom.

The kite must have attracted it, they say. Plainly, when he snatched it from the bride's hand, he saw that there was danger. Poor fellow! How brave! How noble!

There are no more festivities that night, of course—no feast, no fireworks. All night the bride weeps bitterly, and when, in the morning, her bridegroom bears her away, she is still broken-hearted.

The words that Min Toko whispered as he snatched the fatal cord from her are still ringing in her ears. She will never repeat them to any one, but she can never forget them. They were: "Adieu, my love! I die for you!"

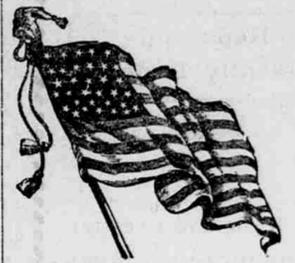
Look Out for Your Boys.

Giant firecrackers this year are fourteen inches long, and contain powder enough to break a plate-glass window when exploded on the curb. Small boys will not only have to look for their fingers on the Fourth, but parents will have to look for their boys.—Kansas City Journal.

REPUBLICAN PARTY.

FOUR OF THE TARIFF PLATFORMS OF 1892.

The Republican Platform as Adopted by the National Convention at Minneapolis, June 9, 1892—Democrats and Populists for Free Trade.



Republican: We reaffirm the American doctrine of Protection. We call attention to its growth abroad. We maintain that the prosperous condition of our country is largely due to the wise revenue legislation of the Republican Congress.

We believe that all articles which cannot be produced in the United States, except luxuries, should be admitted free of duty, and that on all imports coming into competition with the products of American labor there should be levied duties equal to the difference between wages abroad and at home.

We assert that the prices of manufactured articles of general competition have been reduced under the operations of the Tariff act of 1890.

We denounce the efforts of the Democratic majority of the House of Representatives to destroy our Tariff laws piecemeal, as is manifested by their attacks upon wool, lead and lead ores, the chief products of a number of States, and we ask the people for their judgment thereon.

We point to the success of the Republican policy of reciprocity, under which our export trade has vastly increased, and new and enlarged markets have been opened for the products of our farms and workshops.

We remind the people of the bitter opposition of the Democratic party to this practical business measure, and claim that, executed by a Republican Administration, our present laws will eventually give us control of the trade of the world.

The Democratic Platform.

Section 3. We denounce the Republican policy of protection as a fraud on the labor of the great majority of the American people for the benefit of the few. We declare it to be a fundamental principle of the Democratic party that the Federal Government has no constitutional power to impose and collect Tariff duties except for the purposes of revenue only, and we demand that the collection of such taxes shall be limited to the necessities of the Government when honestly and economically administered.

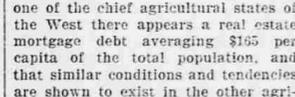
We denounce the McKinley Tariff law enacted by the Fifty-first congress as the culminating atrocity of class legislation; we endorse the efforts made by the Democrats of the present Congress to modify its most oppressive features in the direction of free raw materials and cheaper manufactured goods that enter into general consumption, and we promise its repeal as one of the beneficent results that will follow the action of the people in intrusting power to the Democratic party. Since the McKinley Tariff went into operation, there have been ten reductions of the wages of laboring men to one increase. We deny that there has been any increase of prosperity to the country since that Tariff went into operation, and we point to the dullness and distress, the wages reductions and strikes in the iron trade as the best possible evidence that no such prosperity has resulted from the McKinley act. We call the attention of thoughtful Americans to the fact that after thirty years of restrictive taxes against the importation of foreign wealth, in exchange for our agricultural surplus, the homes and farms of the country have become burdened with a real estate mortgage debt of over \$2,500,000,000, exclusive of all other forms of indebtedness; that in one of the chief agricultural states of the West there appears a real estate mortgage debt averaging \$165 per capita of the total population, and that similar conditions and tendencies are shown to exist in the other agricultural exporting states. We denounce a policy which fosters no industry so much as it does that of the Sheriff.

This is a sample of a campaign button, that we respectfully submit to the Democratic party, fittingly expressive of their Free-Trade ideas.

Siamese Twins. The Tariff became a tiresome subject a few years ago, but the blighting effects of the Wilson law have freshened the country's interest in it. The people have learned through sore experience that Protection and prosperity are indissolubly connected.—Journal, Kansas City, Mo.

"Back Number" in Demand. Major McKinley's favorite subject is a back number.—N. Y. Sun, September 20, 1892.

Is that so? There seems to be a popular and universal demand for this "back number" subject all the same, even four years later.



Senator Mitchell's Sentiment. In its general characteristics the Wilson bill reminds one of the lines of Wordsworth:

The swan on still St. Mary's Lake, Float double swan and shadow.

The bill is sectional in the extreme in its general make-up, giving protection to the products and industries of one section and denying that protection to another. In a word, the Wilson bill is a legislative monstrosity, with the head of a man, the arms of a dragon, the tail of a fish and the claws of a bear. It is un-American, undemocratic, un-republican. It is a dangerous menace to the prosperity and general welfare of the people of the United States.—Hon. John H. Mitchell, U. S. Senator, of Oregon.

Labor in Potteries.

The price paid to labor is 100 per cent more than is paid in the English potteries, and 90 per cent of the cost of the product is labor. With labor equal, or made equivalent by the duty, they can successfully compete with the best potteries of the world. We have good raw material, skilled labor, new and valuable improvements. Our decorated ware is not excelled anywhere. All that is needed is a just and fair protection, and we will fail in our duty if it is not accorded. Forty per cent ad valorem is wholly insufficient.—Hon. Wm. McKinley.

Sprang on Springer.

It is evidently not intended to build up a bona fide tin plate industry in this country.—Hon. Wm. M. Springer, in the N. Y. Times, Sept. 21, 1892.

Yet its production amounted to 193,801,973 pounds during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1895, and there are 172 mills completed to engage in the industry. It seems a pity that so much money should have been wasted in what was not "intended to build up a bona fide tin plate industry."

Wool Enough for England.

There is a shortage in the Australian wool clip. But this can be offset by the surplus in the United States which can be shipped to Europe to supply their deficiency.

Senator Mantle's Prediction.

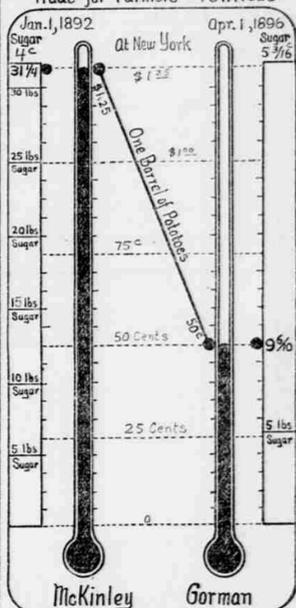
There are those who affect to believe that the industrial situation in Japan involves no serious menace to the labor and industries of this nation. Those who take this position are foolishly and fatuously blind to the real conditions. The Japanese nation numbers 40,000,000 of people, who, in point of skill and ingenuity, and in the power of adaptability and imitation, have no superiors among any of the nations. It is stated on good authority that a Japanese workman can make anything he has ever seen, and that his ingenuity is such that he can reproduce and put in operation without instruction the most difficult and complicated modern machinery of every character. It is this astonishing faculty which enables the Japanese to avail themselves of all the latest inventions of this and other countries, and it is this marvelous power of imitation and adaptation which has not only enabled them in a few short years to become a dangerous rival of our own at this moment, but is destined in a very short time to place Japan among the great manufacturing nations of the world.—Hon. Lee Mantle, U. S. Senator, of Montana.

He Didn't Know It All.

President Galloway of the Merchants' bank, said: "I guess this country is big enough to stand all that comes along. I cannot undertake to define the policy of the Democratic party upon the tariff, but I do not think that it will be changed so as to affect the business interests of the country."—N. Y. Sun, November 11, 1892.

As bank presidents have again, quite recently, been called upon by Democratic papers to sustain their anti-American arguments, we would ask President Galloway what a decrease of \$3,874,365,178 in bank clearings during the first four months of this year, as compared with the corresponding months of 1892, has not affected "the business interests of the country"—also whether a decrease of \$206,000,000 in the amount of money loaned within the four years has not affected the business interests of the national banks?

Trade for Farmers—POTATOES



One Barrel of Potatoes, Would Buy How Much Sugar?

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