

of the faithless one. But Fay Lee had first laughed uproariously at what she considered a joke, and later, believing the tale a malicious lie, had turned her sister Celestial out of the house, with calmly expressed convictions as to the fate in store for liars and scandal-mongers who could lift tongue against such an honorable and noble man as her lord and husband, Sing Low. Wherefore Ah Toy had departed, giving expression to many naughty words, and tearfully saying—just as a civilized woman might have done, under similar circumstances—“The next time she meddled in the attempt to open a deceived wife’s eyes—”

Placidly indignant, yet somewhat amused, Fay Lee went back to her em-

broidering and a fresh cup of tea.

The incident did not seem of enough importance to repeat to her husband, and it soon escaped her mind. That any one should dare to tell such things of her most honorable and faithful lord, expecting her to believe them! She did believe, however, when very late that same night Sing Low came home, not alone, and much the worse for liquor. He had brought his new wife, Felipa, to her home, he stated, with drunken dignity, and Fay Lee must wait upon her, and see that she had what she wanted. For she (Felipa) was to be the honorable mistress of the house, and Fay Lee and the servants must bear themselves accordingly.

Your Chinese wife is no creature of high tragedy, and Fay Lee acted under all circumstances as a well-behaved Chinese lady should, placing perfumed water and powders and silken apparel for the new wife. No attentions were neglected, though Sing Low watched vigilantly for them. And only when her services were no longer needed did the supplanted woman go forth, full of murderous fury and hate, from the house of her husband. She had a cousin who was a high official in the secret society; to him she went. Not that there is any recourse for a Chinese wife if her husband wishes to take unto himself a number two spouse, for it is according to the law. But all things, naturally, should be done in order, and the law of dignity and self respect had been transgressed by Sing Low, who had not even advised Fay Lee of his intention. It was an insult to her and all her family, which the cousin was not slow to realize. But insults are not a prison offense, and must be avenged privately, wherefore the cousin and Fay Lee said nothing, but bided their time, having in mind a way in which they could be more than avenged.

For quite a long time, as much as a month, Sing Low was exceedingly happy with his pretty young wife. But Felipa was a young woman of much sprightliness, and she had not married the portly old Chinaman for the sole purpose of

kow-towing to him, and embroidering his clothes and waiting on him hand and foot—not a bit of it. And so she emphatically stated. On the contrary, she wished many friends, and pretty costumes, and boxes at the bull-fights and the one small theatre that Madre de Dios possessed. She had no intention of being any man’s slave!

And so began the tormenting of poor Sing Low. He soon learned that in the bewitching Felipa

Torment. he had caught a

veritable Tartar, and that, unless humored, she could and would make his life a torment to him. Wherefore, like a wise man, he promptly gave in to her, and humored her in all things—that is in all things but one. Despite her every endeavor she could not make him tell her what went on at the meetings of his secret society. On that one subject alone Sing Low remained mute, and no cajolery or blandishments could move him.

As time went on, and the influence of his Mexican wife told on him, Sing Low

High Low. began to sink lower

and lower, both morally and physically. He drank steadily now, and more and more of the “black smoke” became necessary—often he would spend entire nights in his opium-house—and even the apple of his eye, his restaurant, with its American pies, began to be neglected. So that many whisperings and reports got about, and more than one high official of the secret society murmured distrust. Meanwhile, a worn and aged woman (hardly to be recognized as the portly Fay Lee of yore) watched and waited, eager for revenge. And in the secret society of the “Sons of the Silver Land” one of the high officials went about stealthily spreading reports that a traitor was among them; that important secrets had more than once been given away, and that, if not located and dealt with, the traitor would soon accomplish the ruin of the society.

All this came to a head one night, when the most important meeting of the year was held.

The Initiated. For more than an

hour the rooms of the secret society had been filled with an ominously quiet crowd of Chinamen, who were awaiting in perfect stillness the return of one of the officials who had gone to fetch their erstwhile head, Sing Low. For the first time in twenty-one years he had failed to appear at the meeting of the society, and, more than that, all the private records and documents of the “Sons of the Silver Land” had been stolen. No wonder there was perfect stillness in the secret rooms, and that over in the corner one Chinaman waited, holding a huge razor-edged sword. These things are dealt with quickly among Chinese guilds.

They brought him in presently, the

cousin and another society member carrying him, for the honorable head was too much overcome with the mixture of opium and bad cognac to walk of his own accord. He was dropped limply into the corner where the Chinaman and his sword waited, and to a malignantly quiet set of members the cousin showed the precious papers and records that he had just taken from Sing Low’s silken vest. The man had been found dead-drunk, in a low *cantina* in the Mexican part of the town, while the society papers and records—had access to only by two men, the cousin and Sing Low himself—were dropping unheeded to the *cantina* floor, to be seen there of all who might care to read. And, but for the cousin, who had found them in time, the papers would have been distributed far and wide before the setting of tomorrow’s sun, and the society, “Sons of the Silver Land,” with all its important secrets, would have been ruined, and many of its members implicated in all sorts of crimes and given up to prison cells, or perhaps the gallows. The sin of Sing Low had been a tremendous one, for which no atonement could be made, and there was but one thing to do, as far as his punishment was concerned.

The meeting lasted a long time, and finally Sing Low was released from the hands of his torturers, far more dead than alive. His drunken stupor had lasted but a short time under their hands, and, in a frenzy of terror, he awaited what he knew was still to come. The room was very still now, and you could have heard a pin drop as the wretched man was placed on his knees just in front of the masked Chinaman, who held in both hands the great, sharp sword. Another man, the cousin of Sing Low, knelt very quietly in front of him, and drew his bared head and neck down and forward so as to meet the uplifted sword. Then there was deathly quiet as the huge blade ascended. It made a circle and a whistling sweep in the air before it descended slowly, and touched the neck of the condemned. There it stopped. No blood came, and there was no cry or moan from Sing Low, for the reason that the blade had just touched his flesh, and no more. Then the cousin stood up, facing the judge, and the executioner did likewise, holding the sword erect, as he announced, solemnly:

“Honorable judge, this man is dead!”

Five minutes later, the Chinamen were all hurrying from the hall. Sing Low had been dragged, still on his knees, from the room, and flung into the narrow, weed-choked street outside. He had endeavored to beg mercy, but his lips were stiff and dumb. Then he had clung to the judge’s knees, jabbering hysterically, only to be cast aside like a truly dead thing, for a Chinaman lost to caste and his secret society is