

pedantry. He found American schoolman distasteful. "Too much good to know much," he once sarcastically remarked. Of course Yung was only a heathen Chinese who bowed down to wood and stone, his judgment in this and other matters does not count for much.

There was one American whom Yung took to his heart and loved, if a Chinaman can love, and that was old Ponter. Ponter was one of the most learned men who ever drifted into 'Frisco, but his best days were over before he came. He had held the chair of Sanskrit in a western university for years, but he could drink too much beer and was too good a shot at billiards to keep that place forever, so the college had requested his resignation. He went from place to place until at last he drifted into San Francisco, where he stayed. He went clear down to the mud sills there. How he lived no one knew. He did some copying for the lawyers, and he waited on the table in a third rate boarding house, and he smoked a great deal of opium. Yung, too, loved the Smoke; perhaps it was that as much as Sanskrit that drew the two men together. At any rate, as soon as Yung's bazar was closed, they went together down to his dark little den in the Chinese quarters, and there they talked Buddah and Confucius and Lau-tsz till midnight. Then they went across the hall to the Seven Portals of Paradise. There they each took a mat and each his own sweet pipe with bowls of jade and mouthpieces of amber—Yung had given Ponter one—and pulled a few steady puffs and were in bliss till morning.

To Ponter Yung told a good deal of his history. Not in regular narrative form, for he never talked about himself long, but he let it out bit by bit. When he was a boy he lived in Nanking, the oldest city of the oldest empire, where the great schools are and the tallest pagoda in the world rears its height of shining porcelain. There he had been educated, and had learned all the wisdom of the Chinese. He became tired of all that after awhile; tired of the rice paper

books and of the masters in their black gowns, of the blue mountains and of the shadows of the great tower that fell sharp upon the yellow pavement in the glare of the sun. He went south; down the great canal in a red barge with big sails like dragon's wings. He came to Soutcheou that is built upon the water-ways among the hills of Lake Taihoo. There the air smelt always of flowers, and the bamboo woods were green, and the rice fields shook in the wind. There the actors and jugglers gather the year around, and the Mandrins come to find brides for their harems. For once a god had loved a woman of that city, and he gave to her the charms of heaven, and since then the maidens of Soutcheou have been the most beautiful in the Middle Kingdom, and have lived but to love and be loved. There Yung dwelt until he tired of pleasure. Then he went on foot across the barren plains of Thibet and the snow-capped Himalyas into India. He spent ten years in a temple there among the Brhamin priests, learning the sacred books. Then he fell in with some high caste Indian magicians and went with them. Of the next five years of his life Yung never spoke. Once, when Ponter questioned him about them, he laughed an ugly laugh which showed his broken yellow teeth and said:

"I not know what I did then. The devil he know, he and the fiends."

At last Yung came to California. There he took to carving and the Smoke.

Yung was rich; he might have dwelt in a fine house, but he preferred to live among his own people in a little room across from the Seven Portals. He celebrated all the feasts and festivals with the other Chinamen, and bowed down to the gods in the joss house. He explained this to Ponter one day by saying:

"It is to keep us together, keep us Chinamen."

Wise Yung! It was not because of the cheapness of Chinese labor that the Chinese bill was enacted. It was because church and state feared this people who went about