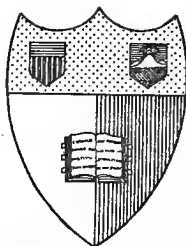


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*OF*  
**A MAIDEN**  
**OF CATHAY**



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A MAIDEN OF CATHAY



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The Love Story of  
**A MAIDEN *of* CATHAY**

*Told in Letters from  
Yang Ping Yu*



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## THE LOVE STORY OF A MAIDEN OF CATHAY

HONGKONG, May 20.

MY DEAR BEI LI:

For a whole month before you left us, I spent my days making and discarding schemes to keep you in the land of your fathers; they availed me nothing, and here I am left without you and with seemingly nothing to think about. What huge benefits you must expect to heap upon your fellowmen in the future, who dare to be the cause of so many heartaches now! Your father sits in his chair and smokes all day. He grunts for reply when spoken to. Your mother weeps—the way of the world of folks, I suppose, that grief should shut a man up like a clam, and open every pore in a woman's body. However, your mother does more than weep: she came over to our house yesterday and brought her pearls—

that perfect pair that have been hers by direct inheritance since the days of the Mings. "Sell them," she said, "I do not want Bei Li to suffer, even if she is a girl."

I bade her keep them until I found out if you were likely to be in need. And then for the first time I sat down to consider the matter of your maintenance. Shêng Bei Li, daughter of an ex-Viceroy, basking in his smiles and sheltered under his roof, was a girl of unlimited means. But Shêng Bei Li, a medical student in Edinburgh, followed by the wrath of that ex-Viceroy, must look elsewhere for funds. That much I knew. I was as witless as your mother, and at that moment you could have had my jade bracelet.

I sent for your brother Kwang Ling, to see if between us we could not manage secretly to keep you from want. How he laughed at my small plans! "No fear," he said in his pidgin English (we were in the common room and supposedly keen on a game of chess), "no fear, Bei Li plenty

savvy. My pay she three hundred pounds year; suppose wantchee more, can catchee." He was bursting with pride, and eager to tell me all about it, but I could not understand his business English, so we had to wait for hours while my father and mother had their daily wrangle about the number and position of the rooms in our great hall which shall be allotted to his latest treasure, a small wife.

They left off finally and withdrew; and then out came the whole matter in plain Chinese. You have befuddled your brother. He is very proud of the modern woman in his family, and proposes to finance her in all her mad doings. He even dreams of a great hospital here in Hongkong with you at its head!

He did not convert me, though I love him for his loyalty and enthusiasm. You are my cousin, my schoolmate, my dearest friend—and I have earnestly tried to understand this "call" of yours: I have failed, so I hope you know I did my best for you

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when I said nothing. Let me give you here an honest opinion: I believe that any Chinese lady who dresses herself up in a weak imitation of foreign clothes and goes aboard one of those outgoing steamers unaccompanied by a gentleman to whom she belongs, should be arrested and brought back and treated as though she were affected with a defect "top-side," as Kwang Ling would put it in pidgin. Be assured, however, I shall love you always.

Your loving

YANG PING YU.

HONGKONG, May 24.

Oho, my dear cousin, what a mighty row you have raised! They have almost dragged your name into print. Several Chinese papers have noted your departure, but one of them in a way that will surprise you. I translate for you out of to-day's issue. "The daughter of a certain well known ex-Viceroy took passage on a late

steamer for Europe, where she goes to study medicine and the mysteries of her body. In this she makes herself common with many hundreds of young men as well as women, for, as is well known, foreign men do not protect their women. His Excellency the Viceroy does not lend his countenance or financial aid in this enterprise. The daughter has lately been graduated from M—, and it is rumoured that her expenses are largely borne by this institution. We seriously advise parents who desire continued filial respect and modesty in their daughters to place them in one of the many good academies under Chinese management.”

Poor old M—, our dear fostermother, that one of us, her first graduates, should have furnished the whip to belabour her! Kwang Ling was angry enough to eat a box of matches. Together we have worked out a proper denial to appear in to-morrow's issue, but we well know that, in spite of anything we can say, that article will cost M— twenty pupils in September.

And the crown of my sorrow is in this fact. I am fully persuaded that nothing present or future can separate us in our love; but this great difference of opinion concerning the post-graduate end of a Chinese maiden has strained the bond. You have been my elder sister always, though we call each other cousins; sisters since the day when one milk-mother fed us both, through the prattling joys and falling tears of childhood, on, on to those most precious and wonderful years under our foreign teachers. And as you were elder sister to my heart, so was your clear mind the elder and superior, though I followed fast. How well I remember the day your venturesome spirit led you where I could not follow—where my whole being shrank back appalled! We sat on the porch at M—, and, unskirted, were enjoying a clear view of our first leather shoes, meanwhile discussing the joys of unbound feet. Here you suddenly declared: “Ping Yu, I’m going to study somewhere and be a doctor”; and then our



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paths divided, yours to lead you, dear knows  
where!

I am, with love,  
YANG PING YU,  
who doesn't quite understand you.

HONGKONG, June 1.

The day you left, Miss Dixon, while she and I were watching your steamer disappear, spoke in exultation of you as her first-fruits. I answered with some heat that on the contrary you were the first blot on her record. You know that is just what I think; yet to be rude to one's teacher is unpardonable, and I've been sorry ever since. To-day I bought her an ivory fan as an apology, put on the grey crêpe dress that she fancies and went over to M— to see her. I also wanted to know how much she knew of the newspaper attack.

She knows her Chinese girl, and graciously accepted my gift. Then we talked about everything under the sun, from majes-

ties to microbes, except that which we wanted to discuss, which was you. Finally, when I arose to go, she said in her most painfully didactic manner: "Ping Yu, I believe in you, just as I do in Bei Li; but in your case my faith is blind. For my enlightenment I've a favour to ask of you—write me a post-graduate essay with this as subject"—She handed me a chit on which was written: "In the Social Economy of China, What is the Place of the Educated Young Women?" "You would do me a great service," she continued, "if you could make me understand the conservative Chinese girl." Dear me, am I that?

At first the idea seemed impossible, for well I know that such a thesis from me must contain something distasteful to her. Mind you, I do not think Miss Dixon would enjoy a following of blind apes. But I do think she gets her surest enjoyment out of those pupils who are open-eyed, alert, but yet adoring. She is a foreigner, Bei Li,

and they are all like that. Who does not use the well-known Chinese sneer: "He argues like a foreigner?" However, I'm going to do it, it is my great battle, and I am keen for the fray—perhaps I'll try my guns on you first.

HONGKONG, June 14.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

Your first letter from Edinburgh has just been read and I am full of love and desire and resentment. My heart is baffled in its longing for companionship with you, and is disappointed that in the first great decision of our lives we could not agree; but it cannot fail to leap with joy at your courageous words, "Write me all you think and hear of me—if my zeal in my chosen life-work is insufficient to bear criticism, I'll gladly hasten home." Bei Li of the Brave Heart wrote that and I shall never fail her in love or interest, though I can't approve of her. As for writing her what I think

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and hear, I fear I have done so very thoroughly.

I have been driven finally to a close consideration of my position in regard to the ideal of Chinese young womanhood and what Life means to me, and I am sending you some of the results, which I intend to put into my paper for Miss Dixon.

It is impossible to believe that in all her centuries of civilization, China has failed to evolve some great principles. In commerce, science and industry she has been left far in the rear; but what of her heart? Has she failed to cultivate it? Is she cruel? or cowardly? Where does she place her women? Did your father place the pearl of pearls on his own finger or in your hair? Who holds my brother's purse? Who rules your father's Hall with its thirty servants? Indeed, who has held the destiny of our great nation in her hand for more than half a century? A woman affords the answer to every question—she whom your Western seer sees and writes down as a degraded

woman of China! From the security of her position, Lily-foot laughs at the ignorant impudence of the many who think they know her. Yes, she is secure. Do you number among your friends a divorcée, or a rude, rough girl? Not unless you have found her beyond the borders of the Flowery Kingdom, I know. Safe in the arms of those who love and understand me, I rest; I live my life, a life as full and large and busy as yours can be. Of course, I dream my dream of my own home and my own children, as every normal girl does. Some day, not a distant one, perhaps, my father will tell me of a husband he has chosen for me. In my nineteen years he has not failed me; what should I fear in the great event? In all things I consider him more capable than myself.

Bei Li, I do maintain that when no Chinese husband demands a lily-footed wife, and when our girls in general receive what has come to you and me in school (and how rapidly our men are bringing these very

things to pass) the lot of the girl in the Middle Kingdom is beyond compare! But let them ever be Chinese ladies—not semi-foreign, nameless things, roughened by promiscuity, cheapened by contact with men, and on a level with the common herd beyond the sea! I hold my cup high and exultingly cry, "Here's to the dainty, refined, educated Eastern girl, she stands tiptoe on the mountain top!"

HONGKONG, June 30.

DEAREST BEI LI:

Coming home to live again, after practically seven years of absence in school, is like exploring a new country. I like it. There are five new babies to get acquainted with. Three are my brother's children, as you know, and two are none other than my own small brothers, just a week old to-day. So is my father's wisdom in taking the second small wife vindicated; and she, poor child, whom we have always called Father's

Mistake, is high in our esteem. To have borne twin sons in a family where men children are scarce, gives her new claims to consideration. Heretofore she has not led a roseate life among us. You see, my mother, and the first small wife belong to well-known families, while this small number three my father bought in Shanghai, paying out seven thousand taels for his bargain. So, her superiors in our household have never let her forget her place.

The day of reckoning for these same superior ladies would be at hand if "old custom" did not have so firm a grip on my father. As it is, he cannot establish her, but must content himself with hugging his precious boys to his heart and presenting his girl-wife with pearls and bracelets. Being only nineteen, these things are more to her than rank, so everybody is happy. It has been a gala week with us, filled with feastings and protestations; and the household ladies have worn their broadest smiles, though I fancy you

could almost have washed them off the "upper ladies'" faces.

These jealousies and petty rivalries are quite a question in our great ancestral halls, and oh, my dear, what a field for the educated young woman of China! George Eliot says one only lives who makes life easier for others, and if she is right I have consciously earned my living this past six weeks for the first time. I have been giving our ladies something to do. You should see us at croquet.

We had the back court smoothed off, and hid away those tubs of goldfish as old as our old Hall itself, and the hoops are set up in their places. The change is a luxury. Madame my Aunt cut off her long-cherished fourth finger nail, because she couldn't get a grip on her mallet; while my own dignified mother, finding her tiny feet too small and rheumatic to follow the balls, taught her favourite *amah* the rules of the game, and now enjoys it as much as any of us, as she plays by proxy. I tell her she is like King



Edward, who has a jockey do all the riding of his prize-winning racers.

I am already looking ahead with regret to the chilly wet days when we shall be cut off from this amusement. I've heard of a game, sing-song or ping-pong (it sounds very Chinesey), which might help us a bit when we are driven indoors. Do you know of it, and could you send us a set if it is suitable?

I had forgotten, I think, what life means to people who cannot read, or make music for themselves, and are left with only their minds and tongues as entertainers. And oh, if you have the mind of a chump and the tongue of a shrew, what a fix you and others are in!

Among the nine ladies here, I alone can really read and play. They would smoke and listen to me all day, but there is a limit to what one is able to give. Besides it is especially trying to read the "Three Kingdoms" to them. They know the stories as well as I do—but where shall I go for fur-

ther material for them? If only out of the world of English stories a few were put into Chinese! I shall give some of my future days to that; in the meantime these present ones are very busy and very happy for

Your stay-at-home-friend,

YANG PING YU.

HONGKONG, July 7.

Your fine, clear May letter has just come. I have devoured it greedily and am consequently very uncomfortable. I always am when I sit for an hour and try to place you in your surroundings.

I think my mind perceives a beautiful, clean Western city, such as you describe; perhaps when my "Prince" comes along, if he is like-minded with me, we will take a trip around the world, call by Edinburgh and bring you home with us. The idea has just entered into my soul, but it has blossomed into a gorgeous lotus as I write.

You say: "There are twenty girls in.

my class and perhaps a hundred young men—but they are to me as if they were not—I only know and see the Demonstrator.” Now, Bei Li, if I had said that, you would have said: “But, cousin, you can’t do that—make nothings of somethings—everything we touch marks us by a dot or tittle.” That is just what you did say when I had a fancy for learning those rag-time pieces we found in Miss L.’s study.

When it comes to fact, it is the man of it—these men of it—that I worry most about. You are so pretty, your fingers so like spring bamboo buds, your ears so like two peach petals, your brow so cool and soft! And should any one of these hundred young men see you as you are, and love you and finally wed you,—how would the papers put it? **MARRIED TO A CHINESE GIRL**—just as if the young man in question had **BLOWN HIS HEAD OFF WITH A GUN**. His family would disinherit him, and you and he would hide yourselves in shame, because he had lowered himself by taking a queen for his wife!

Oh, my Bei Li, they don't know us—and how shall they ever, with the great beam of conceit in their eyes? The Dragon's teeth are set on edge by the sour grapes these foreigners have crammed between his jaws for a century! And you, beautiful child of the dragon, live among his scoffers, and are not ashamed!

*Later*

It is quite odd that while up here in my chamber I grew hot and even feverish over your future, my own was being discussed and planned for in the grotto-garden below. Of course I was not surprised—though perhaps I feigned a bit; it is natural and right that I should give up my home and go into another. You know how old I am—surely I am honoured if some suitable man is willing to overlook my years, my large feet and my modern education, unless he too has been under foreign teachers.

“The man in the case” is the son of a wealthy pearl merchant in Canton. It was

his desire to go to the College there, but at the beginning of his second term, the death of his father made him head of the family, so he had to leave school. Of course I am sorry about that, but very glad to know that of his middleman he required but two things in his bride, namely, a foreign education and a knowledge of music. I do hope I'll please His Excellency!

The final arrangements are not made—the betrothal ceremony will occur in the eighth moon of next year, and the wedding some months later. The period of mourning for his father admits of no earlier date.

My venerable father is much pleased and says the best things of his life are coming to him in his old age. How happy I am to add to the contentment of his latter days. In the affair I am content; I shall use the spare moments of the intervening eighteen months in embroidering many pairs of satin shoes and gorgeous bridal-bed hangings, just as though I had never been to M—. Education did not change the *me* of me, nor

make my small mind eager to manage affairs of large importance.

HONGKONG, July 5.

MY VERY DEAR SHÊNGBEI LI in Edinburgh:

Listen to the plaint of your cousin, Yang Ping Yu:

The click of the croquet balls is heard no more in our back court, the voice of my piano is stilled; a breathless silence reigns in our halls, where formerly was heard the gabble of many voices. We knit, in fine. All of us knit all of the time. It is our present passion and has been for days. With one exception not one of this household had seen a knitting needle until a week ago—they now are the axis around which we revolve! You remember those little half-hand mittens we girls at M— affected last year? Yours are packed away in your boxes somewhere as mine were until, in sunning some things last week, they turned up. My venerable mother, who looks on,

picks them up. "What are these?" says she. "Gloves," return I. "Where did you get them?" "Made them myself" (with some pride). "How?" "Just so,"—and I take up the needles lying near and some left-over wool, and instruct Madame in the art—henceforth we knit. At the present rate it will take the flocks of a thousand hills to furnish the Yang family with wool. Among us we have attempted everything, from shoes to trousers. The latter is the task set me! When my father saw my mother's hands so neatly encased, he decided that his limbs might be likewise adorned, much to their comfort on a winter's day. So appeared this gentleman, some days ago, with ten pounds of four-ply beehive fingering, dark red in colour, with the request that I knit for him awhile! "It does not seem half enough to cover them," he said, stretching out a long leg rather dubiously—"but it's all that they had of that kind." I'll admit myself, those limbs are very long. The infants' milk-mothers join

us at the game, and between them they will have the youngsters knee-deep in booties before they are out of swaddles. There are afghans and nubias, wristlets and socks; I assure you we cannot stop, any more than the sun or the moon or the measles—we also have our course to run through the knitting-book I have borrowed.

My father comes in and, instead of asking me to play for him as has been his custom during these summer days, he walks over to see how much progress I have made on his garments, holds them up and measures them, looks for a dropped stitch, and then goes off to play for himself. He has worked out with his great thumb the air which the children used to sing every Sunday in the chapel across the street—"Jesus loves me"—and is very proud of his accomplishment. But before I get away from the subject on which I have written so much, let me point my moral: Beware of teaching the art of knitting to people-who-haven't-much-else-to-do.



To return to the subject of music, I do not believe I have told you lately how much it means to me here. If I loved it for its own sake at M—, here I cherish it for what it means to others besides myself. We have put my piano in the grotto-garden guest-room below for the summer, and there we all go in the twilight (when we can no longer see to knit), and I tell them all I know of the glad sound world. The voice of my good angel has been known to stop quarrellings, ease headaches and make dull business cares vanish, since she has presided here. "Music hath charms."

HONGKONG, August 1.

MY DEAR DESERTER:

You should reprimand me for filling my letters so full of me and mine and leaving your nearer kin out of the tale. The reason lies in the fact that I have not gone to your house as often as I used to do. They always wish to discuss you, and I am not callous enough to hear your character assailed

without wincing. Recent events, however, make your place so attractive that my ricksha coolie goes there undirected when called into service. Do you know that Su Shung, our dear little schoolmate at M—, has already come into your home as your brother's fiancée? And Kwang Ling tells me you were his middleman, and arranged for his betrothal! I don't believe a Chinese girl ever did do such a thing before, and I dare say, if Bei Li can make an effectual middleman in Hongkong, she can be a first-rate doctor man in Edinburgh. You expected Su Shung would go back to school for a year or so, but Taotai Kong has been ordered into Honan, so they have hurried up the betrothal ceremony and she is established in your rooms. They are extending a new wing to your house and as soon as it is finished they will be married. (These new rooms are out over to the Lotus Lake). Taotai Kong has sent over her beautiful piano—such good times we have! She does not play so well herself, but her very good-

ness makes my fingers supple. Of all the girls in "our set" at school she was the best, wasn't she? Miss Dixon grieves to give her up, and says that in all of her five years at M— Su Shung never broke a rule or appeared in a classroom unprepared. The teachers called her the "Pearl of the Garden," which is the name of a flower, I think. Well, flower she is; her presence has filled all your place with perfume, the odour of which intoxicates me—I'm fairly drunk with joy. And Kwang Ling will have a chance to fall in love with his sweetheart before she is his wife, in good foreign fashion. He is the luckiest fellow alive, though I daresay he feels he has quite paid for his prize when he foots the bills of a certain middle lady, who attends medical lectures in Edinburgh.

August 15.

DEAR BEI LI:

These precious babies of our household being thirty days old, we have been having

the biggest head-shaving ceremony ever heard of in Hongkong. I am quite sure if the smallest of the wives of Yang should present him with several more pairs of boy babies, the family fortunes would be dissipated on barbering. We began in the good "old custom" way, and sent to each family invited, fifteen eggs blood-red in colour. I've forgotten how many were ordered but it produced an egg panic in this metropolis. On the day appointed it kept two servants busy testing and weighing the silver presents sent in, for my father would have everything just right,—10 per cent. of the value of each gift must be returned to the donor. Since he cares not a rap for Buddhism or Taoism, he must needs have five priests of each order at the ceremony. How does the adage go—"Too many cooks spoil the soup"? Well, ten pairs of hands so lengthened the process that our dear babies were tired out and squalling before they got the final seal of rouge on their tiny noses. So each little nose was cuddled on an amah's

soft breast, and off go our heroes to sleep, leaving us to enjoy their first party. I daresay it was just what was expected of them.

Then we followed up with a three days' "Hsi." (I'm always ashamed when word poverty makes me use Chinese in an English letter, but what in the world is a "Hsi" in English?) Well, we had three of the best actors in China, with their trunks—for whose services my father paid a thousand taels a night. The three great rooms below were thrown into one hall and tables were placed to accommodate a hundred guests a night. Here, while they were feasted and drank from six o'clock to twelve, they watched the plays staged in front. For the ladies of the family and their guests (we were limited to twelve) a platform was raised in the rear of the room, well railed off from the crowd below, and here we had our feast and looked on as long as we liked.

One night I invited three of the teachers from M—, Miss Dixon among the number.

They enjoyed the feast and the play until about ten o'clock, when Miss Dixon noticed the presence of some well-dressed women in the crowd of men below us. "And are some of your ladies so very modern that they dare stay among the gentlemen?" she asked. "Oh dear," laughed I, "please don't call them *our ladies*, they are what you call the *demi-monde*." She looked so shocked that I hastened to add, "They never come until ten o'clock and we may leave whenever you wish." Well, we withdrew at once, and while waiting for their carriage, Miss Dixon said, "Ping Yu, will you kindly tell me why you invited me on the same night those creatures were to be among your guests?" "Oh, not guests," I insisted, "My dear Miss Dixon, they buy the privilege of helping to entertain my father's friends." She said no more about it, but I could see that she was offended. I have about decided never to invite my teachers here again. You know how I love and honour them, it is beyond mere words, but

when you come down to facts, you must admit they are queer. They break the old, familiar rules of Chinese etiquette into tiny bits and fling them away; but let one of us dare offend their own notions of propriety and see how quickly and surely they resent it!

Now Miss Dixon circulates about Hongkong as free as the air itself, where thousands of these demi-monde flourish and ply their trade. She may meet them anywhere, and she knows it. Then why should the presence of a few of them in our Hall so trouble her? When I asked her as much, she looked like a funeral, and replied, "Ping Yu, my child, you can't keep the birds from flying over your head, but you can prevent them from building nests in your hair."

HONGKONG, September 1.

MY DEAR COUSIN:

That very small bark, the "Ping Yu," accustomed to float in quiet home waters, is

about to venture upon the high seas and she is therefore quivering with excitement in every timber. I know I can't hold in the sail of that metaphor very long, so coming down to plain prose, I may say, "I have great news for you." A week ago Miss Dixon dropped in at tiffin time, and calling for me said, "Ping Yu, one of the teachers out at Kenwood is ill of typhoid, and many months of weakness are before her. Twenty of M—'s former pupils are entered out there for the Fall term, thanks to that newspaper attack. Their teaching force, already small, is yet further shortened by this illness. They came to me in their distress, to know if among the Chinese students who have passed through our hands at M—, I could recommend one in this emergency. I told Dr. Hart, the President, that I knew the pearl he needed, but that it was so securely locked in its casket of prejudice and conservatism that I had little hope of his obtaining it. However, I am here to do my best. Ping Yu, you are the pearl." After



hesitating a moment, she continued: "You are well able to give them what they want, music and elementary English; you need the work for your own development; they need you. I earnestly desire you to consider it. Dr. Hart calls on your father to-day, but I know the decision remains with you." She hurried away without giving me an opportunity to think or reply—you must know we have never been very free in our conversations with each other, since I sent her that paper she required of me—I told you so.

Well, here seemed the chance to raise the curtain on the second act in the drama of my life, and the idea pleased me.

When my father came in, I opened the subject at once. He had already heard my news, and announced rather gruffly that the "foreign devil" from Kenwood had called to see him earlier in the day.

"Aren't you happy here, daughter?" he asked.

“I am,” I replied, “and, moreover, here I will stay if you desire it.”

“That sounds very well,” chuckled he, “but what have I to do with it? You belong to the man in Canton.”

Cousin, I don't think I quite enjoyed the laughter which followed, for I had not even thought of the man in Canton in connection with this affair. What a poor little ship that does not know its own Captain! I may also say in your ear, I knew at once that I should be provoked if it suited his purpose to deny me this. However, I was hopeful, for since His Excellency wished his bride to possess a foreign education, and other modern accomplishments, he might not be displeased or surprised at unusual developments. Well, I'll make a long story short. We hailed the middleman and sent him post-haste to Canton with our request, and back comes he with word from the before-mentioned Captain of the small bark “Ping Yu” that, “it being a very small affair, we might do as we please.” Much con-

cern he gives himself for his little ship! But I am not holding that against him; my chief concern lies in the fact that I am lent to Kenwood for ten months.

All day long I have been packing my boxes and picking up the small odds and ends of me scattered over this great house. There is a sadness about it which I cannot explain; all of my folks are feeling it, too. My father said awhile ago, that if he didn't have his new babies, he would not be willing to lose me, whereupon my mother tartly returned: "As for the household ladies, they have only their knitting and croquet."

I laughingly reminded them of the Master's words: "It is only when the cold season comes that we know the pine and cypress to be evergreens." No one has a thing to say about the best part of me I've given them in my music, but I shall have my revenge. With my first month's salary I shall buy and present to this family a raucous, scraping gramophone!

KENWOOD SEMINARY,  
LIANG KWANG COLLEGE,

September 5.

I feel like one who has taken a rapid walk uphill, all breathless and suspended. (I believe one gets the same effect going down hill, but the up sounds better.) I arrived at Kenwood yesterday, feeling so important that I almost expected a brass band to begin to blare when the great gates were opened for me. Alas! the only sound I heard was caused by the turning of my carriage wheels upon the gravel walk.

You know the spot: quiet little Kenwood, dressed in grey, sitting in the corner of the green like a demure sister of the lusty college opposite. Little sister she really is, too, for many of our girls (I trust you notice the possessive) have brothers or cousins or prospective husbands over there. One little girl in the Kindergarten cries to see her father, who is a student in the College. I should like to spend a half-hour telling you how beautiful it is, but I remember you have

seen it many a time. It is enough to say that it isn't nearly so pretty to one who passes by as it is to the one who "comes in and takes off her hat," as Miss L. used to say.

Miss Duval is the Lady Principal, and I've just had an hour with her, finding out who and what and where I am. Inasmuch as school opens to-morrow I have very few hours left in which to get acquainted with Yang Ping Yu, Professor. I hope to know her better when I have talked over her prospects with Shêng Bei Li, Physician! Before I enumerate my duties, let me remind you, in the words of Lun Yü, that "The higher type of man is not like a vessel which is designed for some *special* use."

I am to work five hours daily and get sore muscles in consequence, I suspect. An early hour in primary English comes first, then follow three hours with music pupils, ranging from know-nothing and-never-saw-a-piano-grade up to fourth-year girls. Then last of all comes a whole sixty-minutes hour of English conversation with pupils who are

supposed to know a little. Can't you see the hand of Miss Dixon in that? She said I needed Kenwood to complete me, and this conversation business will—to a finish. It is odd how much harder it is for me to speak English than it is to write it. How does a course of medical lectures in Edinburgh affect this disease?

So much for my work. As for bed and board it is found for me at "Common Ground." This so uncommon place is a very interesting two-years-old experiment in the form of a teachers' residence. It is a plain, substantial house to the right of Kenwood proper, but almost hidden from the road, so I suspect you have never noticed it in passing. They tell me it is the special hobby of Dr. Hart, our President, and the money for it came from his mother as a peace offering. The Harts are wealthy Scotch people, and they were much cut up when their only son came out to the ends of the earth to live. It is Dr. Hart's idea, and certainly a worthy one, that more fel-

lowship between the foreign and Chinese teachers in the institution would work to the general good of Kenwood. You know well enough that the relation of the native teachers in a faculty out here is that of pupil-once-removed to the foreigners in the body, no matter what the age or experience. So in this Home the first step has been taken toward establishing an equilibrium. There are a dining-room, a living-room and the servant's quarters on the ground floor, the two floors above having five rooms and a large common bath each. These rooms are very simply furnished and, with board, are included in our salaries. At present we are a company of ten: four English, one American, five Chinese—all ladies, of course.

We breakfast as we choose, have a Chinese tiffin at twelve, and an English dinner at seven, after which, all who care to, gather in the living-room for music and social glee. They tell me that last year there was a bit of Heaven on earth at Common Ground; may we be like angelic this year!

In all the arrangements I find but one fault: there is a Lady Principal of Kenwood, but the real boss is Dr. Hart. Miss Duval assures me I make all reports to her, but that the President is supposed to make a daily inspection of classrooms, and meet the teachers once a week at Common Ground. Now in all my life I've only known three men: my venerable father, my elder brother and my cousin Kwang Ling, your brother. I have steadily maintained the apartness which is becoming in a young maiden, and I had hoped to present myself thus pure and uncontaminated to my bridegroom some day. Even now I propose that the next man with whom I am to do at all shall be H. I. H. The Merchant Prince of Canton. I may find it more difficult in present circumstances, but I feel sure I can manage it. Dr. Hart will hardly be interested enough in a-b-c's to inspect them at eight o'clock; he can't in reason disturb a music lesson: and if he should enter that conversation class I'll order him out.



The weight of this letter will cost me double postage but it is worth it as a sedative. My dear doctor, though you may not realize it, the Professor is yawning in your face!

KENWOOD, September 20.

Two golden weeks have passed since I last wrote you. That silver and even leaden ones may follow does not dim the glory shine of these present moments. I shall, in honour, be ashamed to accept a stipend for what is termed my work at this present rate, and then, alas! how shall I get that gramophone?

We have just had our first faculty meeting. Now what does that mean to you? I had supposed we should all go into the parlour and sit on the edge of our chairs, notebooks in hand, while the Boss gave us yard-long instructions on how it shall be done; that then each one would read her weekly report—I had already decided to tie mine

with black ribbon—meekly confess our failures and chronicle our hopes to do better.

But that is not the plan out here. As Dr. Hart told me to-night, a faculty meeting at this school is simply a meeting together of the faculty. He reserves these two hours a week out of his busy life at the college, to hear and make requests and complaints concerning the feminine side of this great educational work. Every member of our teaching force over here has a chance to air her hobby-horses if they need it, but for the most part we talk and sing and play. To-night Miss Duval made a delightful something on her little silver stove; I've forgotten what she calls the stove, but the sweet was Fassar Budge if I remember rightly. While we were waiting on her cookery, the President asked my opinion about keeping on two children of an actor at Kenwood. They were here last year, but the father had carefully concealed his identity, which has lately been discovered. Dr. Hart was for returning them to their home. You will

hardly believe me, but I took issue with him! Why, Bei Li, one of those girlies is the brightest music pupil I have. Now I am very glad my father is of official rank, but since my pupil's papa is not, and belongs to a low estate, I propose to help the maiden out and make such an attractive little lady out of her that some official will be keen to have her as his wife, and thus I argued with Dr. Hart. He laughed at my enthusiasm and drily remarked, "I had heard you were a conservative, Miss Yang!" I hardly know what a conservative Chinese woman is, and if I have gained that reputation by my former conduct at M—, then God forgive me! Really, I never knew that such people, that is, commoners, could be and feel like us who have come from generations of gentlemen, until I saw my little pupil's soul rushing from her finger tips.

I quite forgot myself in my zeal for the child, so I monopolized the President for an hour. It makes my face burn to think of it—but I gained my point, which is pride-

pleasing. I'm sure Dr. Hart is not like other men. I do not feel any difference between him and a strong-minded woman, except that he is more willing to hear you out. He should be adopted by China, for he certainly has given himself to her and for her. He thinks of nothing beyond those two hundred and fifty boys under his care, and these hundred girls. I am reminded of Bishop Galloway's darkey: If Dr. Hart's skin is white, his heart is streaked with yellow.

My music work is all in order: I have my own study with my name in bold letters on the door. Inside there is a lovely new Bechstein, which almost sings of itself. Miss Rush, our American, is Musical Director, and she should have this new piano, but at Kenwood nobody seems to be hunting the best things for herself.

And did you know that c-a-t, and "see my ball," could be as interesting, my dear cousin, as Paddie's Minuet? Just step in some fine day at eight A.M. and I'll prove it

to you. Dr. Hart is supposed to be here at about eight-fifteen and he rarely misses an "inspection." It is an affair of no moment. You should time your visit to meet him here and see how Miss Yang is in no wise disturbed. I hardly know why I dreaded it so much. I really much prefer that he come, for he seems to set us off on our day's journey merrily, like a *zhen fong*.

There is left only my conversation class to tell you about. I should never get through it were it not for my good angel, Miss Rush, who helps me prepare for it every night. We are already comrades; of course, she has direction of my work in music, but we were friends from the first tiffin, where we sat side by side. I daresay in my weak way I was flattered when she admired my skill at carving a duck with chopsticks; at any rate, by dinner-time she had the boldness to advise me not to eat bread with a fork. In the living-room afterwards she allowed me to stumble through accompaniments to her violin.

KENWOOD SEMINARY, HONGKONG,

October 15.

MY DEAR BEI LI:

The few weeks I've spent at Common Ground make your last letter plain to me; thus does experience expand and unfold our intellects. A home, such as I have entered here, is a revelation to me, and I had fancied the absence of men gave it its peculiar and beautiful freedom and charm. But, across seas, you have found another where "the father and brothers and sisters join to make Bei Li, their week-end guest, so happy and cosy." These old ancestral halls of ours are very precious and imposing: do you suppose they could be made cosy if one tried very hard? "We needs must love the highest when we see it." I have visions and dream dreams. When you and I become mistresses of our ancestral domains we will take a root of this exquisite little flower "The Cosy," and see if it won't survive transplanting!

And I am reminded,—I must tell you of Su Shung, who, within a month becomes

your brother's wife, and who, for years, has been our heart-sister. You would never find the happy sprite we knew at school in the sad-faced woman at your home. She has tried hard to be pleasing to your mother and older sisters, but they are horrid to her, horrid to Su Shung! I can but feel it is because she is so dainty and sweet and good that they are jealous and ashamed. They do everything to humiliate her except ill-treat her body,—I do not suppose that Kwang Ling would permit that. Madame, your mother, did not enjoy piano noises, so the beautiful gift from her father was sent to the auction rooms. Your elder sister says that Su Shung snores, therefore, the "Pearl of the Garden" sleeps in the amah's room while her own rooms are building. I was so angry when I found this out that I hunted up Kwang Ling and reported it to him. I knew that as only son in your home, he could make the way smooth for his fiancée, if he chose to do so. I am almost ashamed to write you how he treated the matter. He

laughed, and remarked that when Su Shung had daughters-in-law of her own she would do well to remember and get even!

I came home and cried, a weakness to which, you know, I am not given. I tried to devise a way for her out of her misery, but failed. What if she took the well-known route, raw opium! But Su Shung would not do that. She is the kind that suffers and smiles, even when she serves as a hireling in your household. You must write to Kwang Ling; you stand high in his estimation, and your words might have some effect. They will be married before this reaches you, but they will continue to live under your father's roof; yes, Su Shung will have to eat bitterness for many a day, even until your mother's death gives her a more exalted position among the Zungs, unless you can make your brother realize what an inconsiderate man he is. What a condition of affairs! I groan under the burden of my dear friend's woe, and other nameless imaginings.



I wonder what the Canton merchant-prince is like—do you think Madame his mother will like piano noises?

KENWOOD, November 15.

Do you remember that queer English song we used to sing, "My days are gliding swiftly by"? I recollect your saying you wished yours did, but on the contrary they crawled by on two legs and a stick. Well, my dear, mine are "gliding swiftly." I realize with a pang that a third of my allotted days in this haven have rushed by, days brimful of work and precious associations. With the great Sage I can say: "It is the spirit of charity which makes a locality good to dwell in." If I had not had so much else to do, I should have written you long letters with only Isadore Rush as subject. Her sweetheart says she is worthy a book of sonnets—she let me read the letter.

I think perhaps she is pretty in a foreign way. She is not a bit like you, but I sup-

pose beauty has no prescribed forms. Her eyes and hair are the colour of an oldish copper kettle and her mouth is in the shape of a smile. I never saw a Chinese mouth cut by that pattern, did you? Our rooms—Isadore's and mine—adjoin, and last night, when I peeped in to bid her good-night, she was sitting before her window in some sort of loose garment, long and flowing. Her disobedient, curly, red hair was all about her shoulders, her throat was bare, and I realized that I was face to face with something very beautiful. "A happy entrance," she cried. "I am feeling communicative, so you must sit here by me and let me talk." There in the moonlight, she told me about Jim. I suppose he has another name, though she did not mention it.

"You will be much happier for knowing more about Jim," she assured me. (Up to this time she has only given me an occasional glimpse of a letter.) "I hardly know how I have withheld him from our confabs so long. Everybody who knows me has to

know Jim sooner or later, and the sooner the better, say I. He will be coming out in less than six months, and then, 'Oh, happy day! oh day so dear!'" she broke into song like a happy child. "You know, Bunnie," she continued after a bit, "Jim and Leonard Hart were kids together, and later, when they were in college, they decided to come out here as missionaries—doctor and parson. It was all smooth sailing for the parson—his people own a copper mine over in America—but Jim was poor and had to help his family out a bit, so, when Leonard Hart was ready to start for China, Jim had just begun to study medicine. However, he finished, and was ready to come out last year. We were deep in our wedding plans, for he was coming by Baltimore for me, when in walked the Bishop with some plans of his own. He thought it best for Jim to take some work at the Orthopædic for another year. Kenwood had been expecting me, so I finally agreed to come by myself—to the very ends of the earth—and wait for

him. You don't know what it meant. You see I've known Jim for centuries,—always, it seems to me,—and I depend on him entirely. Folks out here think Leonard Hart is fine, but when my doctor comes, the parson and boss hereabouts will take a back seat!" Then she took both of my hands, and looking straight into my face with her great, honest brown eyes, she solemnly said: "Squirrel Nutkin, there's nothing in the wide world like loving a man!" With that she broke out into the ballad always on her lips, which I begin to understand,

“ Oh, happy day, oh day so dear,

Thou art so far, and yet so near!”

I wish you were here, Bei Li. I should like to sit in the dark and talk with you about many things. For instance, this amazing joy called love—between a man and a woman. It is not for you or me, though we might be worthy. Isadore knows her Prince as well as I know you; she confesses her love with glowing face and shining eyes; she shows me his picture, and far

above all she expects to live his life—be one with him—when they are united. Using one of her pet expressions,—it beats me!

KENWOOD, December 1.

Bei Li, cousin, I have gritted my teeth, and gripped my pen, and you shall have the report of your brother's wedding before I rise from my chair. I've tried to bring myself to this point for a fortnight, but a line in your last letter has dried the ink in my pen every time I set it upon paper. You say: "Thus far in my life there is but one act with which I am perfectly pleased. That is the bringing together of Kwang Ling and Su Shung." Well, my dear, I'll have to vomit out my sad conviction—you never did anything so unfortunate. I am the unwilling chronicler of some sad history.

To begin with, Su Shung is a Christian, and since she has lived at your home she has gone regularly to her Sabbath services. No one has said her nay in this, though I've expected it.

You know I care nothing for the Christian religion. I have always felt it was a weakness to have to be bolstered up with prayer and preaching as well as the hopes of eternal life, in order to be a decent, honourable woman here. When it comes to a matter of right and wrong, I have never found it necessary to grovel on my knees to keep from sliding down the wrong direction. However, if there are people to whom such genuflections are a help and a comfort, why should I object? Why should any one? When all is said and done, Christianity is but a harmless fad. I may say in passing that I have been more nearly persuaded of its helpfulness by the everyday life of Su Shung than by any abstract thinking on the subject.

But coming back to the subject of the wedding, when the plans for her marriage were under discussion, Su Shung begged that everything be very simple and that her minister officiate. Whereupon your mother decides that everything shall be very elabo-

rate; that every "heathen" rite and ceremony possible shall be gone through with, and in order to complete the merry jest, all shall take place on Su Shung's Sabbath. Even I, who have no religious scruples, was revolted at the endless kowtowings of your dignified brother, as he stood by his blindfolded bride, to whom he was fastened with a little red string. And who was Master of Ceremonies? A miserable Taoist priest who lives by serving soup! At his command, and under the direction of a paid woman-who-knows-how, Kwang Ling bowed and bumped his head and otherwise made an ass of himself. I've seen such things before, of course, but this time I happened to be an interested, thinking onlooker. What followed made me a defiant woman fighting for a newly-born principle. You remember the vow which six of us girls made two years ago at your suggestion, when we had been present at Miss L.'s wedding. "That, so help us, the indecencies of the bridal chamber should fall to none

of us." You were away, but the four of us here decided to do our best for Su Shung's protection.

Our plan was to take with us each a reliable amah to the wedding, and at the end of the ceremony proper, we would follow the bride into her chamber and remain with her, until her husband came to claim her—meanwhile keeping the boisterous crowd out of the room. It worked like a charm for a time, for none of Kwang Ling's companions dared pass our guard of amahs and come into the room where there were four unmarried young ladies. Su Shung had just said, "I am so glad that none of those men touched me," when in walked Madame Zung, your mother. She marched to the bedside, took her daughter-in-law by the arm and roughly pushed her into the other room and barred the door in our faces, with a laugh. Being guests she could hardly ask us out of the room, but one need not consider the feelings of a member of the family. We heard her open the doors into the court



and those into the hall of feasting, and the rabble from both sides rushed in to see and tease the bride. Such ribald jests, such coarse laughter as never before defiled my ears, were flung at the "Pearl of the Garden" for two mortal hours! Until, in fact, the rowdies were so heated with wine and passion that they durst not stay longer.

Kwang Ling's best friend boasts that he tore her veil from her head and had the first peep at Kwang Ling's "Beauty," thus thwarting another friend who had cut her cheek with his long finger-nail in his desperate attempt to be first in lifting her silken head covering. That accounts for the blood stains on her wedding gown. Bei Li, Bei Li! Our dainty rose had better been a flaunting hollyhock! For four days she was prostrated from the shame of it.

I hold up my fingers and count: one-two-three-four-five-six. Six moons, Ping Yu, and you also are a bride, the bride of the Canton merchant-prince. What is he? How can I know? And then, Bei Li, I look

at a small package I have bought. It contains raw opium. What is cowardly? What is heroic? Who can decide? I at least shall not suffer from religious scruples.

KENWOOD, HONGKONG, January.

Bei Li, dearest, it lacks only a few minutes to twelve, but I must use those in writing a note to you. I've been so free to criticise your faults in the past, that I am duty bound to confess to you some of my own indiscretions.

We have lately had a three-days' holiday at the "Jesus' Holy Birthday" season. The Chinese teachers here planned a trip to Canton on the new railway. I could not join them in this—if good old signs don't fail I shall get to Canton soon enough! I had expected to go home, but could not. I am too much of a coward to look at the hopeless white face of our little Su Shung—she of the sunny smile!—to be near for three succes-

sive days. So I determined to spend the time in quiet rest in my room at Common Ground. I should, *I would*, shepherd my flock of scattered principles, for well I know they have strayed, and sadly.

All of us had been invited to the President's home for Christmas dinner, but as usual I had refused. (We begin to realize out here that I am a conservative, sure enough.)

Well, Bei Li, cousin, for two tired days I wooed my flock with dulcet tone and sharp command—they would have none of me! I know not if the flock is changed or the shepherd, but they no longer belong to each other, and you who know me must also know that it breaks my heart to admit it!

I arose on Christmas morning tired, oh, mortal tired of my losing fight. Isadore sang like a lark in the adjoining room, where she reviewed her finery for the evening. With all my soul I envied her with her light heart, and finally I went in and told her so. "Now, Squirrel," she said, "you are taking

life too seriously. Why don't you just turn loose and have a good time? I dare you to go to Dr. Hart's dinner! It would do you heaps of good just to sit on your scruples for once." (One never forgets Isadore's odd speeches.) "But I have refused," I weakly replied. "Well, you blessed child," cried she, "if you will just let me take Leonard Hart word that you have changed your mind, I need send him no other gift this day," and away she ran with the message.

I did not stop to consider, but sent for my hair-dresser and manicure, and spent the day in her hands. I was the guest of honour that night, being the only Chinese lady present at that dinner of twelve, and I am really ashamed to tell you how deeply I enjoyed every moment of the evening.

Your straying

YANG PING YU.

MY VERY DEAR COUSIN:

Anything I write you to-night must bear the stamp of Isadore's personality. She

came in just as I opened my desk: I had expected to spend an hour with you, or perhaps more, talking drear, solemn things, but she has chattered away like a magpie, and I am left with my mind full of her and hers—dear knows I am glad enough to lose myself.

I am most thoroughly interested in that "affair" of hers, anyway. I find it far better than a story book, this living love-tale, and seeing I have written you so much about it, I do hope it interests you. What each of the two says and does and is, every day, is duly jotted down, and when ten such records have accumulated, they annotate the whole with love, and send it overseas to the other.

What would my Prince think if I were to send him the thrilling news that Yang Ping Yu, his fiancée, had learned to eat jam for her breakfast! I daresay it is the annotations that count for most.

Sometimes Isadore reads me snatches from Jim's letters, for she insists that I need

a course in higher love! Once it was only a line, "Dear Glory of my Manhood," once a confession of jealousy concerning Dr. Hart, ending with, "How can a sensible fellow like Hart fail to be captivated by your darling red head and saucy lips? With this acute heart trouble I find it dull business to study the mending of feet!" The quick tears filled her eyes when she read me that, and she said, "I love him for it, but I shall assure him that Leonard Hart doesn't know there's a red-headed girl within forty miles of Kenwood. If I wanted him to notice me I should dye it black." However, it was to-night's message that interested me most of all, and I shall tell you just what he said. "What a poor stick I am without you! When you are near I feel a Hercules, whose twelve labours are none too heavy; but with you away, I feel more like poor Samson shorn of his strength." Then he asked her to advise him concerning a course in optics. "For," he continued, "in small things and large I would be as

you would have me, and already I find myself dependent on your good judgment." Fancy!

Bei Li, even I can see that Isadore Rush is not a big woman like Miss Dixon or Miss Duval or you, but with all her soul she loves that man, and, if I mistake not, she has halfway made him. It is the most wonderful vision in the world. You and I have read hundreds of pages of fiction together, and in high-minded disgust have skipped the "slush" as unworthy our attention; perhaps we missed something by that, for when two honest, living, loving souls thus bare their hearts on paper, the record, if true, becomes sacred literature!

That truism of the Master sticks in my mind. "Men's natures are alike; it is their habits that carry them apart." Is it possible that the customs we inherit from our ancestors have robbed Chinese womanhood of its birthright?

Your perplexed,  
YANG PING YU.

KENWOOD, HONGKONG, March 1.

Between small Kenwood and the great burly College the authorities have run a privet hedge, which kindly includes Common Ground in its protective capacity. Like everything else here it has done its best, and after five years it presents a solid front which even a bird may pass through only with close-folded wings. However, my eyes and ears can pierce it, and many a letter to you has been interrupted in its free flow by the voices on the tennis courts just across. I've never grown bold enough to walk deliberately over and watch the College teachers at this sport, but from my cosy seat on this side of the hedge I am often an unobserved observer.

Isadore has just gone over in white tennis toggery, boasting to me as she passed that she and Leonard Hart could "wipe out" any two that dared to face them. Well may she boast, if he is to be her partner. What a man he is! I sit here and try to realize that he who plays there, bare-headed and



bare-armed like a lusty schoolboy, is the same that, clad in clericals, talks into our hearts on the Sabbath. Isadore says he is best when he laughs aloud and shows all his white teeth. Miss Duval says he was born for the teacher's desk. But I like him best when he prays for the poor.

It wasn't of him, however, I meant to write you this afternoon, but of an incident that occurred just where I am sitting a fortnight ago.

School was out and I was sitting here, as I often do, alone, enjoying the last rays of the sleepy sun in my quiet corner, when suddenly I was interrupted by Isadore Rush. She came like a whirlwind, scattering my papers in the onrush of her down-sitting beside me. She always strikes straight from the shoulder, and this time the blow was for me. Looking me straight in the eye she cried: "Yang Ping Yu, you have been a traitor to my friendship!"

Be assured I was amazed. For to me is not her friendship the golden apple of this

Hesperidean garden? I begged her to tell me what she meant; and this is what she said:—

“You are a disappointment; but I am going to tell you all about it,—you deserve that much, I suppose.

“You know Mrs. Gossip usually drives past the gates of Common Ground; but this afternoon she stopped and trailed her skirts up our gravel walk and found me on the veranda and——”

“Rolled me as a sweet morsel under her tongue?” I interposed, for she hesitated to proceed.

“No, not that,” she said finally, “but she did tell me some very astonishing facts about you, which it seems to me I should have known before, if you had been fair with me.”

Still uncomprehending, I would hear more, so she cried:—

“Oh, Bunnie child, don't you know that in common decency, one must reward the confidences of a friend? Here for months

I have poured into your eager ears the tale of my 'affair'; I have shown you Jim's own dear letters and his picture, because it all seemed so new and pleasing to you, whom I thought so unknowing in such things, and lo! I find that you are engaged,—you—and have been for ages, that your wedding day is perhaps nearer than my own, and you have never said a word! You've sold me, and I am so ashamed and humiliated and disappointed that I shall just cry," whereupon she did.

Bei Li, it was the hardest moment of my life—a time so full of momentous consequences for me and my soul, that it seemed as if all the world about us hung still and expectant. I loosed her hold on me and walked the length of the privet hedge; God knows I knew why I had not told her! And then I walked straight back to her; I took her head between my hands and said to her.

"Isadore, Isadore, little red-rose love of a girl, you shall know all of it, for the whole is so very small. I am engaged, but I have

never seen his face, nor heard his voice. As for him, he neither knows nor cares to know—would God he did! That is all there is to the romance of Ping Yu.”

#### KENWOOD CONFSSIONAL.

BEI LI, MY DEAR FRIEND:

We read some confessions once and I remember saying, “The fellow doesn’t seem to want to confess and the confessions do not seem very important, so just why did he do it?” To which you replied, “Don’t take it too seriously, dream child, the man is making a book.” Well, I am not making a book, yet I know as though it were before me, graven on tablets of stone by an invisible hand, that in the future when I write you, I shall stand as a poor, frail creature before a confessor, telling those things which by preference she would hide in her own bosom, but cannot.

The weeks following the events recorded in my last letter to you were such as I had

supposed no well-poised, loving daughter in China could ever pass through. When Saturdays came, with all my being I dreaded the rest-day, which would bring me so many hours with only my problems for companions—problems for which I had no solution.

On one such day, in order to slip my soul's presence, I went down to house prayers. Miss Duval sat in the chair and read from her little Testament the story of the disobedient and prodigal son. You know the whole of the story, but eight words of it were written for me, namely: "I will arise, and go to my father." There was the solution of my problem. Oh, God! it seemed so simple! I resolved then and there that on the next morning when all of Kenwood sat in the pretty little church at service, I would arise and go to my father and say—but, further than that I dared not venture thought.

I had decided to tell you the whole of it,

circumstantially, but I cannot. I did go to him, to my aged, venerable father; I told him that an evil in my own heart made it impossible for me to marry the pearl merchant's son; I besought him, for love of me, to stop the betrothal arrangements already in hand—to intervene in my behalf and break the engagement.

His rage, his disappointment were terrible. With purple face and clenched fists, he towered over me, and I thought he would strike me down. I wish he had, that bodily aches and pains might in a way draw my mind from my soul's torture. But no! He turned from me, and with an oath that I durst not repeat for its very blackness, he drove me from his presence.

Since then only twelve hours have passed, the night of that awful day is upon me, and I feel pinched and grey and old. Bei Li, darling, listen to me, understand me. Once there lived a maiden so soft and self-approved, so like a queen butterfly, that she

lived above the earth and contemned those sordid creatures who put their hands to plows and soiled their garments in the mire. The realm in which she lived was full of skulls and dead men's bones, but since she was the butterfly, and fed upon the blossoms of the peach and wild apple, how should she care for the nature of the soil from which they sprung? Oh; friend, believe me she did not know. Then she caught a vision of a land so different—yet flower-filled—a blessed, restful land, where even butterflies come down to earth nor soil the soft-toned splendour of their wings!

If you have beside you in your desk a package of letters in this hand, I beseech you, take it out and toss it into your blazing fire, for she who wrote them died to-day, and every sweet ambition of her life was yet unfilled!

KENWOOD, during the April days.

Since that day of darkness, no word has passed between my home and me. On the

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Monday following, a coolie delivered to Common Ground an old, red pigskin trunk, addressed to me. It contained two and a half pairs of worn and useless satin shoes; some soiled and outgrown garments; a book or two; and a string of tarnished buttons, much fancied by me in my childhood days. There were other baubles, I believe; I scarce could see them through my tears.

And thus the old house shook the very dust of me from off its feet. I was desperate! I deserted my classes, called a brougham and hurried to my home, my people. I think at that moment I would have welcomed the merchant prince, but at your great gate and mine I was refused an entrance. I have committed the unpardonable sin in a Chinese daughter.

I can imagine how word has gone to him in Canton that "our lovely daughter has died of a loathsome disease," and that the middleman fingers a fuller purse the while.

Well, and have I not? Your guilt is white



beside the blackness of my own. Do they not relate how you, with your puny fingers, seized your father's beard the first time he took you in his arms? He was forewarned, and armed himself against your leaving him. But I, oh wretched memory! These nineteen years have I lain in my father's bosom, caressing his cheek, yea, boasting for him of a daughter so beyond compare!

My nights, all filled with precious, idle, futile dreams, fly past like homing pigeons. My days—well, if I wished to smile, I would remember you, and say they crawl by on one leg and a stick. The end of this small toil of mine, how different from the beginning! I only long for my last day of service here, so that I can sit down quietly and look my future in the face. I am unafraid; there is bed and rice and good clothes for the educated young woman of China, of that I am sure, but what shall feed my soul's hunger? I am lonely—lonely! This dull paper only has heard the cry of my desolate heart!

When the last music lesson is over, the last halting "conversation" closed, the last inspection granted, I shall say a few hurried good-byes, and turn my face from this place forever. Some day, some one will guess, and tell them here a pitiful, poor half-tale of my soul's experience at Kenwood.

Do you wonder, do you know, what has become of Isadore and many other new-old friends here, to whom you would have long since given your confidence and gone on your way rejoicing? Do you know why I have not gone to Dr. Hart, and offered myself for further service here? Under the privet hedge, this very afternoon, when the sleepy sun can search me out I think I mean to tell you all.

#### Under the Privet Hedge.

Just across the way they are playing at tennis; their annual tournament is on. They play as if life itself were the issue of the game and I hear the umpire call-fifteen-thirty-forty-game! Of course Dr. Hart

will win. What set has he not won? Who stands before a god? Not they—mere men—so how should I, a poor, frail woman? I, yes, I, Bei Li, have lost to him a love-set, and for me, it was the game of life. So I do not sue for further work at Kenwood.

As for Isadore, I could not trust her with a half-story. Do you remember the tale the foreign lady used to tell her children in the evening on the porch? (She did not mind the presence of Chinese girls in her audience.) It was about "Little Redcoat." There comes a line of it to mind: "Grandma, what makes your eyes so big?" "To see with, my child!" Well, those red-brown eyes of Isadore were made to "see with," my child.

KENWOOD, May 12.

Our merry Miss Bondfield used to say when we lagged at the first one-and-two-and-three-and, in the tiresome calisthenics, "My dear girls, don't you know that well-begun

is half-done?" Let that suggest to you, my patient friend, how much easier it is for me to write to you to-day than oh, for many a week. With all my heart I thank you for just letting me tell you. It is as though, having been bowed down with some heavy burden, a kind hand had lightened the load. I look up so eased, so free, so unashamed. I do not understand myself, but I do not blush or blanch to confess to you an unrequited love for Leonard Hart. Who would blush at having plucked for herself the first red rose her eyes had ever beheld? And if, perchance, there were a thorn, what a poor soul if she note the prick of it while she breathes the matchless perfume of her perfect blossom?

To quote the words of the master: "Having heard the True Way in the morning, what matters it if one should come to die at night?"

He was given me to love, and from now until the end of my poor small life, this soul-possession shall make me richer than all

the gold and pearls of the Canton merchant-prince.

As for Dr. Hart, it is as though a crippled butterfly had fallen in his path, and he, unwittingly, had further maimed it with his foot. And he shall never know, nor any else in all the world, but you.

If you were here beside me, I know what you would say: "Now, Ping Yu, hold! Go back and tell me where all of this began." You would bid the river seek its spring. Dismiss the thought that it could be any fault or folly on his part. With kindly wisdom he has made us feel that each one had her share and lot in the development of Kenwood. It so happens that I alone, among the Chinese teachers here, am from the class from which we draw our pupils, and so, in his desire for knowledge of our people he has used even me. Yes, Bei Li, it was all right and good. How could he know what his discussions meant to me?—that my soul stood still on the threshold of its morning until he came and

bade it enter upon its day. For weeks I've slipped away from every chance meeting with him, and feigned excuse, not daring one more time to face the kindness in his eyes.

Isadore's Jim has come; he really has another name, and is known in polite society as Dr. Hyde. I hardly see how we shall manage the name out here, where he has so long been Jim to us. Isadore had great plans in her red head for her wedding. It should come off in the church, with me doing bridesmaid to Dr. Hart's bestman. Fancy! I refused, and flatly. She was as angry as she is able to be in her present exalted state. She flung out: "Yang Ping Yu, it's not a bit nice of you to treat Leonard Hart like a viper just because he is a foreigner. After all is said and done, you are a Chinaman to the heart's core." She instinctively knew that the real reason for my refusal lay in him. Oh, Bei Li, pray that my feet carry

me hence, before her great eyes search me,  
and find my ugly darling secret.

They finally had the wedding over at the Bishop's manse, with no one there but Dr. Hart and Miss Duval. To-day there is the big bridal dinner over at the President's home, followed by a reception at Common Ground. I have plead a sick headache, which Isadore calls a sick excuse.

There are yet ten more days of fight, with the crowd looking on. I am sure I shall do better battle when the sweet attractions of this place are left behind.

From a New Heaven and a New Earth.

June 30.

Those dread ten days are over and gone,  
and quite ten more of oh, such different  
days! Oh Bei Li dear, I have been up and  
out, and heard the music of the spheres, and  
of that symphony of ringing worlds I bring  
you word.

I hear you say: "Hold, hold, Ping Yu—  
remember I'm not musical." Let me draw

myself out of the clouds, my present dwelling-place, and do my best to tell you of the flight I have taken.

It was the twentieth of June, when Kenwood gave her annual music festival. Common Ground was a bower of blossoms with a thousand birds doing honour to the day—this does not sound like me, so I'll begin again.

“On the twentieth of June the School of Kenwood gave its annual musical festival. The pupils acquitted themselves with credit to their teachers” (so much I quote from the “Daily News”) but what follows was never before writ by pen.

The guests were all gone, and I, Ping Yu, had slipped away to my study to say my last good-bye to the spot in a Serenade—Schubert's. The morrow would find me busily getting my boxes off for M—, where I should spend the week with Miss Dixon. Into her capable hands I had decided to commit my immediate future.

My sorrows and myself were lost in my



sad soundworld; I know not how long I sat there, when suddenly the door opened and in stepped Dr. Hart. I saw that his face was pale and drawn as he walked across the room, and then my tear-stained eyes fell to my idle hands and scattered sheets of music. He leaned his arm on the piano above me, and bending over, said in tones I have never heard before: "Oh, Child, wherein have I offended?"

I looked, Bei Li, and oh, who was it spoke of the light that never was on sea or land? 'Twas in my Prince's eyes!—and he had stooped to me. I did not withhold myself when his dear arms invited me. That haven was, and is, my Heaven. God help us, friend. We may have sinned, but I defy the world to match that perfect hour of bliss! My Leonard says he walked alone, fully a mile away, and that he heard the sad strains of that Serenade, and could not endure the good-bye therein.

Isadore, that chattering bird of paradise, says that she has known for months that

she and I were walking up the same mountain path, but she maintains that the prospect on her side was ever more alluring. "It 'takes a thief to catch a thief,'" she whispered, "and you and I have been at the old trick of stealing hearts!" What a whimsical dear lass she is.

We face a future all unknown to us, but we know each other and every day the Goodman repeats:—

“God’s in His Heaven

All’s right with the world.”

I am already a social outcast, so we have only his outcasting to consider. The dear old Bishop says all that he requires to know of us before he makes us man and wife, is that we love each other,—of that we are certain. However, in our little church here to-night, his withered hands shall confirm me. Do I believe? I hardly know, but I shall like to worship the God whom Leonard serves. Moreover, it shall never be said of him that he married a heathen Chinese.

FROM THE PROW OF  
PARADISE HOUSE-BOAT.

BEI LI:

And this is the end of the matter for you, the beginning of all things for me. Following my confirmation the Bishop told a few of our friends out at the College, and next day, in the early morning, he, with Isadore and Jim, drove with us to the Cathedral in the City, the Church in which you said you could always "rest your heart." There, finally and forever, my Bei Li, I rested my heart.

We came away towards Canton in a house-boat. We do not know where we go to-morrow; we certainly have no plans for next week, but the very joy of Heaven fills this tiny boat, and wherever we go we take that blessing along.

Your old friend, with a new love,

YANG PING YU.

A POSTSCRIPT BY SHÊNG BEI LI,  
M.D.

In spite of her many requests to the contrary I kept the bundle of letters marked "Ping Yu." But finally I felt they were scarcely my own, and in a merry mood I had them bound, and presented them to Leonard Hart on his paper wedding-day. He did not arise from his desk until he had read them all and then he called to me and said: "Doctor, the tale is not finished. You must write a postscript"; so here it is:

He who runs our way needs no poor word of mine; she sits as queen on the college green, the most beloved of all its lovely women.

They had their time of trial. Returning from their short nuptial flight, they found that death had claimed her father, while sitting at his table. They say he never knew, but Ping Yu was not sure and suffered all a loving daughter's grief in her uncertainty.

It was many months before she found her place in the affections of his friends right here in Hongkong, but the attitude of his own immediate family was remarkable. "If," said his grey-haired mother, "my son has chosen a Chinese girl for his wife, I know she is a lady and that I shall like her." Hearing that I, a cousin, was there in Edinburgh, she came to see me, and there soon sprang up between us a friendship which shall last, God willing, yet many a day. You can imagine what an effort I made in those first days to be a worthy representative of the dearest girl I have ever known!

When, her health failing, Leonard Hart brought his queen-wife home, she found eager hearts awaiting her. If you have learned to know her through these pages, you know what followed—to know her is to love her.

With my own hands, I laid their precious firstborn in his grandmother's arms, and in her great joy, she cried out in the midst of us all, "We will call his name Nathaniel, for he is our gift from God!"











