

THE STAR OF THE NORTH.

W. H. JACOBY, Proprietor.

Truth and Right—God and our Country.

[Two Dollars per Annum.]

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STAR OF THE NORTH

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Choice Poetry.

[From the *Millionaire*.]
HOPE IN THE HOUR OF NEED.

BY MYRA.

The rain comes down as sadly
As sorrow's tear drops fall,
And nature and my heart alike,
Wear each a funeral pall.

Although so much of sorrow
Has mingled with my life,
Help comes not with the morrow,
'Tis dark with angry strife.

Up! weary soul, and gird thee!
Bind thy strong armor on,
For dangers dire assail thee,
And honor must be won.

I hear the tempest raging—
The elements of woe,
It waits but for thy presence
As warrior for a foe.

The night of gloom grows darker,
Deeper the shadows lie,
But, through the solemn silence,
My soul sends forth no cry.

Strong in thy faith, thy purity,
Go firmly on, oh soul!
Thy God will be thy savior
That thou shalt reach the goal.

THE BLACK SPOT.

A STORY FROM CHINA.

There was much mirth at Hong Kong.—That little rock of an island—a perfect terrestrial paradox, so rich in it, and at the same time, so unproductive, had lately received a substantial addition to its stock of European inhabitants. A battalion of her Majesty's Infantry, two batteries of artillery, a detachment of sappers, and a body of marines, had been landed; while eleven new sail, what with steam frigates, were at anchor in the Roads. There was a new attorney general, too, and several new clerks, secretaries and aids-de-camp to the governor, for the climate is a trying one, a vapor bath in one wind, a kila in another, and there is a great consumption of young gentlemen holding official situations at Hong Kong. The governor gave four dinners and a ball, for British hospitality does not grow mildewed in the far east, and the Rifles gave a ball, and so did the 117th Foot, and so did the admiral, and the chief justice followed suit. Then the civilians had their turn. By civilians, in this case, I do not mean civilians in the Anglo-Indians sense of the world, but merely the merchant princes of Hong Kong,—men who have appointed themselves irresponsible offices, in a murderous climate, at salaries absolutely fabulous. Trade is more profitable there, in that small golden key-hole that unlocks the boundless Chinese Empire, than perhaps in any other cranny of Earth, but the Nemesis that awaits on profit is not absent. No one's liver is in its normal condition, and the old "residents" might be gorged with their own gold, so yellow is the Permanent complexion. But they are hospitable folks, these mighty merchants, and the ball at the club-rooms in Victoria Town promised to eclipse those which the governor and the chief justice, and the 118th, in their white washed mess room, and the admiral on board his gaily lighted flag-ship, had given during the past fortnight.

The ball was a splendid affair. The bands of three regiments had been culled for the choicest musicians; Cantonese gardeners had furnished, despite hostilities between our Queen and the brother of the sun and Moon, a perfect bower of tulips and roses for the occasion. Every green thing on the island must have been cut down to furnish the verdant covering of the portico, and about a ship load of the Wenham Lake Company's ice had been bespoken for the refreshment and refrigeration of the guests. As for the supper, Europe, Asia, and China had united their efforts and done their best. Gold and silver plate, wondrous porcelain, glass of England, and Bohemian, crystal lamps, delicate viands, costly wines, obsequious waiters, all that dollars and trouble could produce,—and dollars and trouble can effect a good deal—were forthcoming, and all that was wanted to promote the happiness of the company was one pure breath of the cool healthy breeze from home.

But this the Hong Kong merchants could not give them, nor Formosa the Mason supply. The ball went off very well.—There were crowded rooms—crowded for colonial rooms at least, and that is a great source of enjoyment, for people cannot take their pleasure thoroughly unless they are devoid of elbow room. There were not many ladies, to judge of matters by European standards. This Hong Kong ball was a very different affair from those country assemblies, where the daughters of clergy men and half-pay officers sit around the table—some of neglected book-mustelions, and where young French, English, or

with the air of a sultan, and tantalises the expectant misses before he makes one of them proud and happy by an invitation to dance. No, in India or in China ladies are at a premium, and learn their own real value. Where there is but one pair of fair shoulders and one pair of bright eyes to every dozen of red coats or blue ones, the disparity of the sexes tells entirely in the ladies' favor. Such was the case at Hong Kong, but there were handsome women present, and however few, they attracted none the less admiration.

Among them, beyond comparison,—the belle of the ball room,—was the beautiful Mrs. G.—a fair young wife, almost a bride, who had just come out from England with her husband, Captain G.—the junior captain of the Rifles. Captain G.—"Geordie," as we used to call him, had just got his promotion before sailing, and had been married less than a year. He was a fine, manly fellow,—the best cricketer and oldsmen in the Rifles, and a favorite with old and young, high and low. He deserved the Victoria Cross in the Crimea, everybody said, I don't know how he missed getting it; and the men swore by him, and would have followed him through fire and water. It was a great proof of poor Geordie's popularity that I don't think anybody grudged him his good luck in getting such a peerless wife as Mrs. G.—the beautiful newcomer, was considered. All the escargons and middles, and half the lieutenants navy and military, to say nothing of the parboiled young gentlemen in mercantile houses, were fairly raving after the angelic stranger. The foolish boys devoured her with their eyes, and wrote sonnets to their eyebrows, for aught I know, and she never moved along the little parade at band-time without an overwhelming escort; but so no one ever said that Geordie was not worthy of the good luck he had found, and the great prize he had drawn in the lottery matrimonial—he, the "best fellow," in the service. I do not remember a more attached couple, and yet so free were they from the regular Edwin and Angelina pathos, the *an am populo* demonstrations, that a superficial observer would have set Mrs. G.—down for a flirt, and Geordie for a careless fellow. Yet everybody knew how they loved each other, everybody, down to that stupid garrison Adonis, young Crumpton of the Horse Artillery, who has since owned to me that he had panned nine copies of heart-breaking verses on pink paper, nie "perumed billets," as the young booby called them and never dared, somehow, to deliver to their destined recipient any of these inestimable productions.—however, on this night at least, Mrs. G.—was in the highest spirits, and waltzed and flirted, well, to all appearance, and was the very centre of attraction—the target of all eyes. Geordie, who knew her too well to be easily made jealous, was in very good spirits too, so were most people. It was a very gay night, all the gayer because active hostilities were expected between John Chinaman and his namesake and best customer Mr. John Bull. Nothing gives so high a zest to life as a specie of danger, especially in that enervating tropical climate, and many who are destined to perish gloriously by sun and malaria were laughing and chatting gaily, with hearts beating high over the expected campaign. At the buffet, where refreshments were in great demand, Captain G.—was the centre of a merry group who were drinking in libations of champagne to the future education of the flowery land—an education only to be prefaced and grounded by the exertions of those manly figures in red and blue with the V. K. on their buttons, whom her Majesty had sent as school masters to teach the celestial gentry respect for the law of nations. Mrs. G.—went through dance after dance, as the band played on with admirable taste and spirit, and still partners buzzed around her, and her little ivory memorandum book was filled with writing as a bank ledger. It was wonderful how actively the dancing went on, and on such a night. Even for Hong Kong it was pronounced hot. The day had been broiling, and the night was sultry to a degree hardly to be realized by mere imagination.

It was not the heat alone, though that was bad enough, for every rock was radiating the terrific amount of calorific it had sucked in through the long basking hours of the sunlight. Not the heat alone, but the peculiar heavy atmosphere, the suffocating steam, the moist vapor so peculiar to China in which the strong perfume of the great tropical flowers is so sickly and rich as to load the dull air. Not a breath of wind swept over the island, or if it did, Victoria Mountain kept off every puff of the faint sea breeze from Victoria Town. The city sweltered in the heat. In the ball room, the weight and warmth of the atmosphere—an atmosphere almost suffocating oppressive as a steaming blanket wrapped around each miserable individual—began to tell. The company gasped, and ate, and drank frothing champagne, and fragrant lemonades, and sherbets, and cup, and sangaree, and bass, all iced to the limits of refrigerators, and then gasped and danced again. Mrs. G.—, gayest and prettiest of all the women present, was still the life of the room. There were plenty of waiters of course, in the tea room, the supper room, and the corridors, bustling about with trays of ices, cooling drinks wine, and all the creakum crankum of a rout. Some of them were European, and

Lung, the old *comprador* or steward of the club, as honest a manager as China could produce, and as shrewd also. He was a native of Chusan, and had followed our people's fortunes when we abandoned that large island after making peace with the Dragon Emperor. No man knew so much of Chinese and British peculiarities as Ching Lung. He could manage both nations to his and her entire satisfaction.—The club highly valued their excellent *comprador* the natives obeyed and liked him, and his sayings were reputed considerable. None but a clever man could have done these things, and pleased such opposite interests, and Ching Lung was a clever man. In matters celestial he was a dictionary.—If you wanted real "pigeon" information, the old *comprador* could tell you more about China than you could learn from all the Blue Books ever printed at the national expense. In person, Ching Lung was stout and jovial, a burly old China man in flowered slippers, a silk robe, and a tremendous pigtail of carefully tied hair, with the polished claw like fingernails that denote a native gentleman. There he was, presiding over the ices, and scolding the Chinese waiters. When Mrs. G.—entered the tea-room on one occasion, early in the evening, the old *comprador* started as he looked keenly at the beautiful "Faukw" lady. She passed by him, repressing good-naturedly, a smile at his outlandish dress and figure. He started after her with seeming rudeness, or curiosity, and then gave a grunt, and wheeled off to his vocations.—Several officers noticed this, but Ching was a character, and no one asked what he meant, or if he meant anything. It was an hour or more before Mrs. G.—left the ball-room again. This time she entered the supper room, leaning on her partner's arm. While the latter procured her some refreshment, the old Chinaman hovered near, looked sharply at the fair "barbarian," and then drew back with a muttered remark in his native tongue. Mrs. G.—never noticed him. Two minutes after, Ching Lung was seen in close confabulation with the doctor of the Rifles, a sensible experienced surgeon, who had been three years in Hong Kong, who had served on the medical staff in the old war, and who was regarded as the chief professional authority on the island—aye, though there were staff surgeons in plenty, and titled physician to the forces. Dr. Rogers was a man who knew China well. He seemed much disturbed as Ching took him by the lappel of his coat, and whispered some communication. The two men's eyes ranged across the ball room, in the door-way of which they stood a little apart, and fixed on Mrs. G.—

"The eyes of several loungers followed theirs by a common impulse. What did they see? Surely, no terrible sight, but a young, happy, high bred Englishwoman, radiant with beauty, health and gaiety, crowned with flowers, and sweeping through the ball room like its queen.—What was there in all this to make old Ching purse up his expressive Chinese mouth, and Dr. Rogers lift his eyebrows, and bite his lips, with a brow that knit with a spasm of involuntary anxiety. Smoothing his ruffled brow, the doctor stepped from his place, passed Mrs. G.—, and looked full and steadily on her face. She looked surprised, and a little annoyed, but presently turned away smiling. She thought the doctor, no doubt, and odd, rude old gentleman. Very much compressed were the doctor's lips, and very often did the frown of care return to the doctor's brow, as he threaded his way through the crowd, most of whom had some slight or merry remark to bestow on so popular a character until he reached the place where Captain G.—was talking to the Colonel's wife and two other ladies seated on an ottoman. The doctor drew Geordie aside—they were old friends—and begged as a particular favor that he would take his wife home, away from the ball, but without alarming her.

"Alarming her!" said Geordie, quite in the dark as to the other's meaning. "Why, what a Blue Beard you would make me turn out doctor. She's engaged twelve deep I'll be bound, and it wants an hour of supper-time, and I can't get her away. Besides, she's not tired. Why should she go, you know?"

"None—none at all!"

To this Dr. Rogers merely answered that he begged, as a favor, that Captain G.—would take Mrs. G.—home. It must be done, and would be for the best. And being hard pressed for his reason, the doctor said Mrs. G.—was about to be ill. It was his duty to ask her husband to take her away from the crowded room.

Captain G.—laughed incredulously at first, but it was a hollow forced laugh.—It was plain that he did not believe in his own disbelief, he knew the good old *Medico* too well to suspect him of jesting on such a point. His voice quivered as he asked for an explanation.

"Well, if you will have it," said Dr. Rogers, laying his hand on Geordie's arm, "there is something wrong with your wife. Old Ching noticed it first, and told me of it, and I noticed it myself, and I have seen such a thing but twice before, and both times in China. Pray heaven that this may not end as it did in both those instances!"

"Speak out, man, you torture me!" said Captain G.—, gasping for breath and very pale.

"It is a trifling matter, in appearance at least," said Dr. Rogers gravely and kindly: "it is a small black spot on your wife's

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