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Our Serial Story

The Road of Living Men.

BY WILL LEVINGTON COMFORT. Author of "Down Among Men," "Fate Knocks at the Door," "Red Fleece," "Routledge Rides Alone," "Midstream," "Child and Country," etc. Serial Rights Reserved.

Yuan Kang Su and I were dining at the Ambassadors' Club in Washington. On the evening before I had supped with Mary Romany in Covent.

"You have kept your word, my friend", he said. "You have come back to me reeking with power.

I had been regarding the Oriental face. He was so fit physically that he would wear about as readily as a platinumtip, yet he was feverish from fighting and close to exhaustion.

'I'm glad you didn't try to say anything good-natured about me," he laughed. "For the first time in my life, I feel as if I were burning off the bloom. . . . You will meet Shan Wo Kai to-night, and I shall listen—"

This was a most unusual idea to me—that I should take up the man's cause for him against his master. An American would never have thought of it, nor remotely approached the manner of at-last-I-can-wash-my-hands-of-the-whole business, with which he uttered the final sentence.

"And my friend, Jane Forbes?" I inquired after a while.
"She is still in Philadelphia. I have

not seen her. I am afraid of her-afraid of every letter and messenger-boy.' There was desolation to me in the

rnere was desolation to me in the courage of this pair. Yuan's calmness was like a cold wind in the room.

"You mean that she may determine what is best before you do?" I asked.

"Exactly. . . And whom do you suppose I heard from to-day?"

"Not Huntoon?"

Not Huntoon?' "The man, and none other. He will be on from St. Louis to-morrow.

On the way to the Legation, I told him that I was leaving shortly for South America

Shan Wo Kai, Yuan's Chief, was a passionate servant of China. America knew him only as a remarkable diplomat. Because he was Chinese, the American press called "wily" what would have been denoted wise in another. It had been seven years since he first reached our world, and journeyed eastward from San Francisco, restless and bewildered by the great animation which left its frenzy-marks in pile granite, singing wires and trans-continental stretches of steel. A natural ascetic, he was dismayed and humiliated at first. These days were filled with loneliness and rebellion, but no one could have discerned this, through the calm interest, almost ennui, apparent in his slant eyes. In a little while he was adjusted, and found the lessons of the younger civili-zation laughably easy, after the towering abstractions which his mind had gripped and assimilated, back in the silent years of preparation.

To him, America was a metal—the

people magnetized to attract metal, and to be maddened by it. The racesoul of the nation, to his eyes, pent, sheathed, and poisoned by and silver and gold. From the thousands who passed him on the streets of New York, and later in Washington, he felt the looks of curiosity and contempt. They could not distinguish from his clothing, his hands, nor his brow, that he was not a laundryman—an extra tall one.

The career of Shan Wo Kai was much that Yuan Kang Su's was meant to be. He appeared young for Minister Plenipotentiary, wore a queue, and the clothing of his country. His English was admirable, his manner fascinating, oblique eyes weary unto mystery. His mind was hot with work. He loved Yuan Kang Su for himself, but more for the promise of service to China. He saw that Yuan was breaking under an alien martyrdom

We talked for an hour. I felt the great force of the man. If the vitality of his intelligence was at all aroused, t was because though an American, I did not raise my voice, aired no studies, and seemed to have no interest in making an impression. It is true that I recalled often and with gusts of fervor, that

this time last night I was walking the cliffs of Covent with Mary Romany

and a hunting moon.

Finally the Minister mentioned Yuan.

After that, until the telegrams came,
Yuan spoke no word. The elder man told me much, as Yuan had, of a Chinese student's life of preparation. Memories mellowed where America had made him hard. He spoke of the old teachers and their shell-rimmed glasses and how they love their boys—the first fruits of the Empire; and how they are taught from babes that men may fail, and rulers may sin, but that China herself—the

spirit—can do no wrong.
Shan Wo Kai paused, tapped the table nervously with the polished claw of his little finger, and remarked, how sadly

the mighty were fallen.

Amiably I questioned the "fallen."

"Yuan, thirty years old, had not looked upon a woman before," the Minister said. "He was pure, as white men at thirty are seldom if ever pure. He looked into a woman's eyes and has forgotten his country-

"Would a woman of his own people—make him forget his country?" I

asked.
"It would not amount to the same thing. We do not listen to women in China."
"The woman he has met then, is

more formidable than a Chinese woman?" Since he did not hasten to speak, I added: "I quite agree with you that this woman may rival the abstraction, Motherland, in a man's heart-but not to the detriment of his service to either.

He spoke of what Gautama, Confucius, Jesus, and the latter's inspiring armorbearer, Saint Paul, had said upon this matter. He mentioned the northern purity of the Fore-runner.

"If China is looking upon Yuan Kang Su as a coming prophet," said I, "she is perhaps unfortunate in her choice, since he loves a woman-

Instantly he saw my point—that the larger dimension of manhood which seems to contain in itself the feminine quality of divination, has celibacy for one of its first laws. He refused to concede, however, that Yuan might not

"My career is but burnished brass.
His may prove fine gold," he said.
"But those who are called to prophesy," said I, "have a feminine consciousness and a man's fighting quality blended into a sort of completion. One called to prophesy could not see completion in the eyes of a woman—and I happened to witness

that miracle in Yuan's case.

I liked his answer:
"I wonder if many of those called to prophecy, as you say, have not looked into the eyes of a woman—and turned away. I think of your Dante—whose Lady turned away-how he used the power of her absence, to make his race distinguished. Our young friend might take his love into the world's work for China, but not his mate. . . What is the meaning of life on earth for a good man? Which is the greater incident in a good man's life—winning a woman or refining the ties of brotherhood in his native land? Through which does a good man leave a perennial warmth of gratitude in the hearts of his people?'

Looking straight that moment into the eyes of the ranking Chinese in America, I thought of Mary Romany in the Other Room alone; then, of Jane Forbes in Philadelphia alone—of women everywhere alone—whole races of women

alone.
"The trouble is," I said, "that you way. want to use Yuan Kang Su in your way. . . . A country which produces such men as Yuan should give them the first gifts of enlightenment—the privilege of living their own lives. The love of man and woman is older than America, older than China. It is the love of man and woman that gave the first State-builders their ideals. Vile debasements of the love of man and woman have brought nations to impotence and ruin. A race can be lifted only by great men. Great men are the sons of much loved women. There have always been vain young men, hasty to accept the teaching of the defilement of women, swift to fill the monasteries, who have fallen far short of ideal citizenship, and farther from prophecy. I hold that no nation is great enough to say to a man and a woman who greatly love each other—'Thou shalt not mate together.'"
"China is very miserable," Shan Wo Kai said benignly. "It is her lowest

hour. Her sons true man would it would open a

JUNE 22, 1916

heart. That is The Minister uttered with th

in the soul of Y
"It is a ver
I said, "but I s Mother. I do motherhood of C said it: 'We of in China.' You before you can

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America."
Both Chinese a peculiar sens harmless agains "Perhaps nov case of Yuan in

said the Ministe

I bowed. "I speak wit your conception a servant of Ch