

JAVA HEAD

... with Sidsall. Endless doubt and hope fluctuated within him. Voices rose from the Napier garden, and from a tree sounded the whirring of the first locust he had noticed that summer.

On a noon following he saw the passage of the three or four carriages that constituted the funeral cortège of Taou Yuen's entirely private interment. She would be buried of course by Christian service: here were none of the elaborate Confucian rites and ceremonial; yet — from what Taou Yuen had occasionally indicated — Confucius, Lao-tze, the Buddha, were all more alike than different; they all vainly preached humility, purity, the subjugation of the flesh. He stopped later in the Charter Street cemetery and found her grave, the headstone marked:

TAOU YUEN
A MANCHURIAN LADY
THE WIFE
OF
GERRIT AMMIDON, ESQ.

and the dates.

He saw, naturally, but little of the Ammidons — a glimpse of Rhoda in the carriage and William on Charter Street; the *Nautilus*, ready for sea, continued in her berth at Phillips' Wharf. Fragments of news came to him quoted and re-quoted, grotesquely exaggerated and even malicious reports of the tragedy at the Dunsacks. Standing at his high desk in the countingroom of the Mongolian Marine Insurance Company, Taou Yuen's glittering passage through Salem already seemed to him a fable