

The Chinese Professor at Harvard University.

We had been told that where callers had found the Mandarin at home, he had appointed a day on which to return the call probably according to the national forms of etiquette; so we were in daily expectation of their appearance at our door; and anxious to be at home that we might not miss the pleasure.

Meanwhile, the family were to be seen going in a coach to pay visits which came in order before ours. Sometimes the interpreter was to be met in the market buying chickens, if on a rainy day, with a dark blue Chinese umbrella over his head; and at other times the Mandarin was observed out walking in a black silk gown with blue sleeves, green silk trousers, black skull cap and white shoes trimmed with light blue, moving along in a dignified and measured way, while the interpreter followed, keeping the distance of about four feet always between them.

On the fifth day, while we were at dinner, the door-bell rang, and the girl who answered it came into the room with two cards in her hand, announcing to us with looks of mingled amazement and dismay that "there's a whole load of 'colored-folks'!"

But we all with one accord, cried, "Why, they are the Chinese!" and with one accord likewise, we sprang up from the table, and rushed to the parlor, the venerable head of the house lagging behind, however, to put on his bettermost coat, in which to do honor to the Mandarin. The cards, let me say, were simply visiting cards, on one of which was engraved, "Mr. Ko Kun-Hau."

The coachman, having seen them all out, had returned to his seat, and they were coming along the piazza which they almost seemed to cover with their ample robes, being so many the professor and his wife, the two girls and the interpreter. The lady came in first, with a sort of grace in spite of her feet; then her husband and the children, each shaking hands all around before taking their seats.

And now a tremendous mistake was made—the interpreter was offered a chair. And he is never allowed to sit—he would never presume to do such a thing in the presence of a Mandarin! Consequently he remained standing, though one after another of the family said, "Take a seat." Then arrived on the scene the lagging gentleman of the house, who had been all this time getting on his coat; and he, after the hand-shaking was over, said to the interpreter, who still stood firm as a post, "Take a SEAT!" No movement. "Take a SEAT!" repeated the host; and then a seat he took, which, unfortunately, was a larger and more imposing chair than that occupied by his superior. The latter personage looked astonished, shocked, grieved, for the act was no doubt equivalent to a personal insult, and some animated conversation passed between the three elder members of the Chinese party. However, Mr. Ko Kun-Hau had the good sense to see that it was proper to forego the usual punctilio under the circumstances; though we all suspect that the offending interpreter, Chin Tin Sing—for that is understood to be his name—received a reprimand after they reached home, and perhaps rightfully, from their point of view.

No one of them wore gloves, and with the exception of the interpreter, each had a long, black folded fan, which during the entire visit was held closed in the right hand across the knee, doubtless in conformity to some code of ceremony. Even the little girls did not open or play with theirs, but sat perfectly quiet and upright on the sofa where they were placed, models of good behavior, for American children whose mothers under similar circumstances would very likely have been under the necessity

of saying, "Don't touch that!" "Don't swing your hand so." "You must not put your feet upon the sofa?" "You must not meddle with the lady's things!" "Take care! you'll break your fan!" "Now if you don't sit still, I shan't let you go with me again!" and many more such remarks and injunctions, which these well-bred Chinese children did not need. They were bare-headed, and had queer pantalettes tied once round their ankles and again a little higher up, and their garments were similar to those we saw at their house, only much nicer ones.

The interpreter wore a blue cotton skirt, and upper garments of dark blue woven cloth, a skull cap, and common Chinese shoes. He was taller and larger than the Mandarin; but the latter looked the superior that he is, and had the face of a gentleman and a scholar, refined and thoughtful, and his bearing was as lofty as that of a Spanish grandee. His attire was elegant.

About a week later it was my unexpected good fortune to make the family a second call, in company with the Superintendent of the Chinese Mission school in Boston, and one of the lady-teachers and her daughter; and this time—the hour being late in the afternoon—they were all at home. The same lad, as courteous as a page-in-waiting in some royal household, admitted us, received our cards, and showing us into the same room as on my first visit, said, "Sit down!" then sped away to make known our coming.

We, however, thought it more respectful to wait standing, and such was our attitude when without a moment's delay, the mandarin came in, having hastened at once, as did his wife on the former occasion, to welcome his guests, quite unlike our inhospitable and uncourteous custom of keeping a visitor waiting. He advanced with gracious and cordial manner, and as the strangers of the party were presented to him by name he fixed the identity of each one by the cards he held in his hand, and then begged us to "Take seats."

He was in home dress, like any gentleman who might have come out of his study in his dressing gown, but how unlike in the fabric and color and fashion thereof! Prof. Ko Kun-Hau was like an Oriental picture, a personage out of Lalla Rookh, or something quite apart from our common place world, in a robe of pale blue flowered crape, lovely, delicate and lustrous, a silvery azure, falling in a soft, graceful way over a brocade silk skirt of the peculiar yellow green which is known in the fashion plates as "faded leaf" color; in this attire the refinement of his features and slightness of his form were more apparent than when in visiting costume.

The interpreter, who is also a servant, came immediately and took his position, standing several feet from his superior; and soon Mrs. Ko Kun-Hau entered, dressed as when I first saw her, followed by the two little girls. And on my remarking that I had not seen the baby, the professor, understanding my words, smiled and said something to his wife, which seemed to be asking if the baby could be seen, to which she, half laughing and giving her head a slight toss, seemed to answer, "I don't care." So the interpreter disappeared for a moment and returned leading a tiny girl, two years old, a diminutive specimen of a Chinese woman, a wee thing with a round, grave face, and clad in indigo-blue clothes figured with white, like some of those India silks which were so much worn a few years ago. The little thing stood quietly holding fast to his hand, and solemnly contemplated us—fantastically attired creatures that we were to her eyes.

And now with considerable help from the interpreter we had some interesting conversation about the edu-

cation of children. The father said they were to be taught English at once, and sent them for their new books, which were copies of Hilliard's First Reader, in which the Superintendent now gave them a little instruction, to the great delight of the family. Then he went to his study and brought out a pile of English and Chinese school books which had been given to him, and was very eager to get information about our language. He produced our cards, and asked us one by one to pronounce our names, and then each card he labelled with the name in Chinese. Mine required three characters, which were made in a perpendicular row at the upper right-hand corner. These were done with a few skillful strokes of a dainty black brush or pencil which he took from some receptacle attached to a girdle beneath his robes.

The interpreter—who appears to be man-of-all work, and always full of business, smart, capable and bright wherever one meets him, whether indoors or on the street—came in with a waiter on which were six cups of tea, each in its "salver," which he set on the table before us.

The etiquette is for the guests to take up their cups, when the heads of the house immediately imitate them, and then all silently partake together; but though we understood that such was the custom, and saw that Mr. and Mrs. Ko Kun-Hau waited our movements, not one of us ventured to do this, not even when the Mandarin said "Take tea!" for how should we manage?—that was the question. Each cup was a long narrow "salver" or waiter of metal which had a sunken circle into which it fitted, and each cup had a cover on it like a small saucer turned bottom upwards. We waited, as with one consent, till Mrs. Ko Kun-Hau, seeing our dilemma, raised hers, with her right hand and daintily carried it to her lips, holding her arm high sipped with the cover on. We all tried, and made a universal, ignominious failure. In fact, as for myself, I could hardly convey mine safely to my mouth without using both hands, such concern was I in lest the cover should topple off. We tried again; and then we laughed, the whole company of us; and then the host and hostess, with considerable kindness and courtesy characteristic of that people towards their guests, removed the covers from their own cups and laid them on the table, and we at once followed their example; and then we all took tea, decorously and in state. No spoons, no sugar, no milk; they never use them. A few tea-leaves are put in the bottom of each cup, boiling water poured on, the covers put in place, and thus with all the flavor kept in, it is served.—AMANDA B. HARTIS, in December Wide Awake.

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