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REGRUDESCENCE OF POT YUEN

Pot Yuen is a financier.

Pot Yuen is a sawed-off runt of a Chink, with a frank open countenance and a perennial merry smile, who came to this country from the environs of Hong Kong some thirty-three years ago, and who since that time has laid up so much Meilan' money that he is enabled to do nothing but saw wood.

Pot Yuen resides with his cousin, who keeps the wash house on the Powder river bridge in Sumpter.

Pot Yuen's hands resemble those of the "Man Who Would Be King," in Master Kipling's story of that title. They are twisted and gnarled, clawlike, horrible.

Written in Pot Yuen's hands is a chapter on the "Building of the West." There is poetry in them likewise tragedy. They hold the paths of poverty in their palms. They speak of a terrible toil. They are grimly human documents telling anew the truth of the suspicion that the lust for gold, in Caucasian or Mongolian, in Christian or Buddhist, is set as a human motive above everything—above abstract religious dogma or idols of carven wood; above hope of heaven or fear of hell.

Pot Yuen does not know this. In his mysteriously-moving eastern mind he has never revolved the phenomenon of the life as lived during his 33 years in America. It has been sufficient for him to know that the mainspring of his action was made of the usual stuff—what he did was no more than others about him did; and one of the cardinal tenets of the Confucian philosophy—which is bred in the bone of every Chinaman since 550 years before Christ—is that the mass cannot err; a thory (the modern version of which is that the majority should and shall rule) which has held good during nearly twenty-six centuries of human life.

Pot Yuen told his life story to The Miner man the other day. The Miner man does not speak Chinese, but out of the wonderful tangle of pigeon English, the rapid fire jabber of a man who has much to say with a poor vehicle of expression, he deduced the ground work of a tale of no mean merit.

Pot Yuen was attracted to The Miner office by the sight of a pile of unsawed wood in the back yard. Did it require sawing? Was the

help of Pot Yuen in demand? Was the job worth a dollar? Thus were negotiations begun. The wood required sawing, Pot Yuen was the man for the job, but the maximum compensation should and would not be more than four bits.

"Foh bittee! Washa mallo' you? Dollah hap! Maybe one dollah. I see."

Pot Yuen surveyed the woodpile from four sides with a practiced eye. "One dollah," he announced, with an air of complete finality.

Nothing doing.

Pot Yuen went away, muttering. This was at high noon. A gentle snow began to fall and soon the woodpile was buried. At two o'clock Pot Yuen reappeared.

"Sisshe bit. Too muchee snow." Fifty cents was the scale, and again Pot Yuen went away, cursing in an alien tongue.

At three o'clock he presented another ultimatum. "Sixty s' cents."

The bargain was closed. The wood was sawed. The gentleman in the front office who handles the Miner's finances (when there are any to handle) passed over to Pot Yuen seventy-five cents, there being a lack of small change. Pot Yuen pocketed the coin, smiled a mysterious Oriental smile and went out into the storm.

"Here!" bawled the front office man, "Gimme my change."

Pot Yuen was deaf. Shouldering his sawbuck he plodded away, looking for other front office men to conquer.

The Miner reporter stood in the snow, watching Pot Yuen saw the wood. The sight of work appeals to the reporter. There is something about work which attracts him. There is a novelty about it. The reporter once faced a woodpile, armed with a bucksaw. The woodpile looked good to him. The prospects of work made him joyful. The anticipation was almost painful, it was so pleasing. The reporter stood and enjoyed the sight of that woodpile from breakfast to lunch, from lunch to dinner—unable to break the spell of alluring prospect. Next day he hired the wood sawed. He had gotten all the happiness out of it he could.

Pot Yuen sawed wood like a house afire. The pile melted. To an accompaniment of rasping saw-thrusts, Pot Yuen told his tale.

He landed in Victoria in 1871. He knew not why he came, nor whither. He was herded with a gang of other Hong Kong coolies, shipped by the Six Companies to work on Oregon placer mines. The gang came to Baker City, where they separated. Some went to Idaho, some to Mormon Basin, some to Lower Powder, some to Sumpter. Pot Yuen was herded with the Idaho contingent, landing on Salmon river. For five years he worked, knowing not why nor for whom. His wage was a pittance; his toil unceasing. The cleanups were secret. He knew nothing of the profits made from his labor. Born a coolie slave, he was content to continue his slavery.

On the Continental Divide he saw his first snow—on Salmon river felt the first pinch of bitter cold in all his life.

He grew to hate it. In the dead of winter, insufficiently clothed, he bucked boulders, coated with ice from the spray of roaring giants. His hands were frozen daily, until they became as they are today—gnarled, clawlike, horrible. All this because he was a slave—herded to frigid gulches at dawn, driven to cold cabins and when the day's toil was ended ice-covered picks and stiffly-frozen gum boots were thrown on the bare floor in front of a hideous painted image of Buddha, with distorted countenance, still further distorted by drifting clouds of incense from punk sticks and burning paper prayers.

Gentlemen mining men of the snug office and fragrant cigar, do you reckon of this sort of mining when you dictate typewritten orders to your superintendent to reduce expenses at your placer mines?

An awakening came in Pot Yuen's life. One day he was promoted from bucking bowlders to assisting the foreman at a big cleanup. When he saw two gold pans full of yellow dust and nuggets he began to understand. All night long he counted on his gnarled and crooked fingers the worth of that cleanup. He computed that by working a thousand years as a coolie he might earn that much gold. Next morning he burned a paper prayer. lit a punk stick before his painted idol, and entered the world of men.

The year 1876 found Pot Yuen in Sumpter. Chicken Creek, Three Cent Gulch, Bull Run river, the North Fork of the John Day saw him working as master placer miner—no longer as a coolie. He and others leased the old Ellis diggings here in Sumpter. In 1880 he made a trip to Hong Kong, carrying \$8,000 in American gold. Eight years later he returned, but found conditions changed. The elbow of Fate had hit the Chinese placer miners in Oregon a jolt in the ribs during his absence. Big companies had secured control of all the diggings. There was no niche in the scheme of things for

runt little Pot Yuen, with his clawlike hands.

Wherefore Pot Yuen saws some wood and lives in peace and quietude with his cousin at the wash house.

After five years in America Pot Yuen awakened from centuries upon centuries of Oriental sleep. For five other years he lived—a man. And then eight years' life among his countrymen at home, among the coolies in Hong Kong, lulled him to slumber again. The juice of the poppy is not more potent than racial environment. Pot Yuen sleeps—and saws wood. Only his clawlike hands speak of his historical regrudescence.

INTEREST IN THE CORNUCOPIA CASE

Mining men, especially, and business men generally in Baker City are anxious to know the outcome of the litigation over the celebrated Cornucopia mines, 60 miles east of Baker City, some twenty-seven claims in number, the property of Searles, of New York, now in bankruptcy, closed down this last summer for debt to local dealers and workmen and being one of the acknowledged rich mines of the Eastern Oregon country.

It can be stated that the local claims against the property amount to about \$50,000; that judgment for these has been obtained; that the personal property of the mine has been sold and the time for redemption expired; that the real property has been sold and the time for redemption unknown; that H. C. Rogers, of the Standard Oil Co., has sued to foreclose what is claimed to be a first mortgage on the property for \$100,000; the records of the county show that he has on record a conditional deed to the property executed in 1901; the legal matters here stand awaiting result of the Roger's last move, he having been through the federal courts with his claim.

The attorneys for the local claimants against the property say that it will never again be operated until the claims are paid one hundred cents on the dollar. Roger's suit is now in the Baker county circuit court.—Democrat.

St. Joe Opens Monday.

Work on the St. Joe Gold Mining company's property on McCully fork, will begin Monday. Vice President and General Manager Anthony Mohr has recruited a crew of miners and is preparing a shipment of winter supplies. The St. Joe company is composed principally of Cincinnati men. Over 1000 feet of development in the property has opened a sixty foot ledge carrying good values.