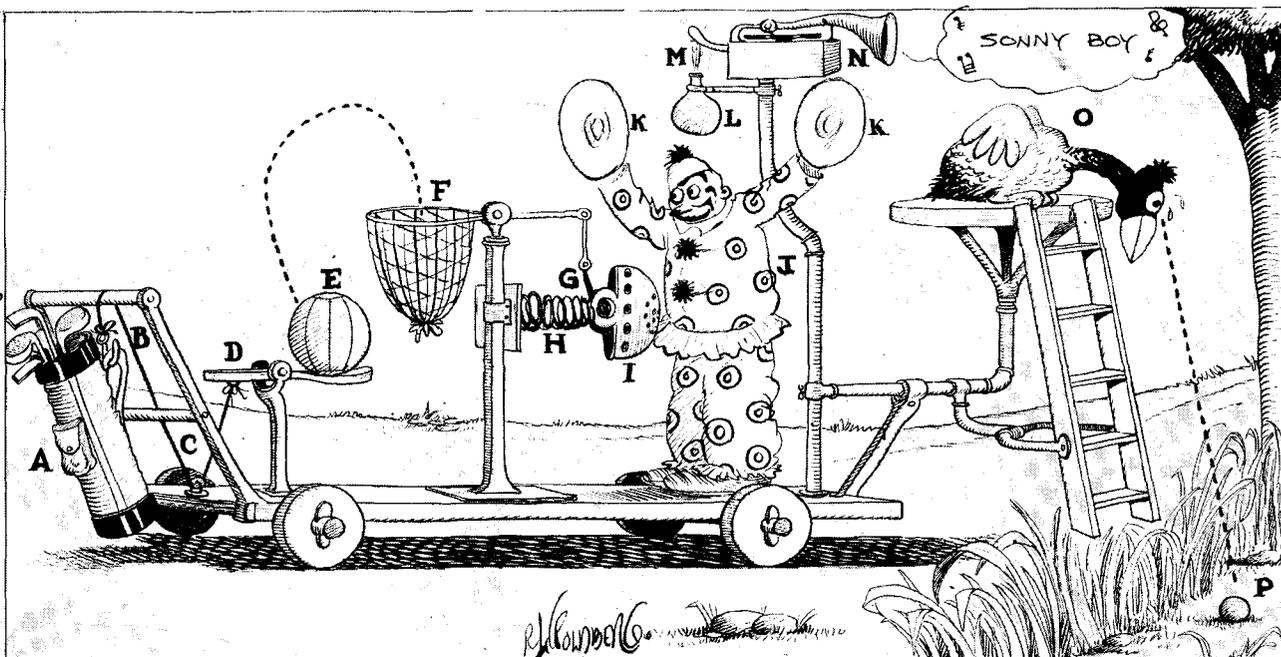


The Inventions of Professor Lucifer G. Butts, A.K.

By RUBE GOLDBERG

PROFESSOR BUTTS PUTS HIS HEAD IN A NUTCRACKER AND SQUEEZES OUT AN IDEA TO LOCATE LOST GOLF BALLS. HANG GOLF BAG (A) ON HOOK (B) WHICH PULLS CORD (C) AND TILTS PADDLE (D), TOSSING BASKET BALL (E) INTO BASKET (F). WEIGHT OF BALL RELEASES HOOK (G) AND ALLOWS SPRING (H) TO PUSH HEAD-GUARD (I) INTO STOMACH OF TOY CLOWN (J) WHO CLAPS CYMBALS (K) ON RUBBER BULB (L), SQUIRTING STREAM OF WATER (M), WHICH STARTS PHONOGRAPH (N) PLAYING "SONNY BOY". SONG AWAKENS MOTHER LOVE IN SNOZZLE-BIRD (O). SHE LONGS FOR A SON AND LOOKS AROUND FOR AN EGG TO HATCH UNTIL SHE FINDS GOLF BALL (P) WHICH SHE NATURALLY MISTAKES FOR THE COVETED EGG. IF THE SNOZZLE-BIRD WANTS A DAUGHTER HAVE THE PHONOGRAPH PLAY "RAMONA".



Chinese woman. He believed she could give new variety to an emotion he had almost staled. She was more than beautiful, she had some magic. . . .

When a flying post brought news from Vesprim of a revolt among the heretics, Karl August was an angry man. He declared that the Emperor's business could wait until he had finished his own and sent orders to his lieutenant to burn and slay without pause or mercy.

TO PUNISH himself for his cowardice he kept away from the pavilion; but he sent a message to the nun that the Chinese woman must be sent up to the chateau that evening to sit beside him at his supper-table; the nun's reply was submissive, "But if she is not returned by eight o'clock I shall come to fetch her."

Karl August raged because he did not have the insolent woman removed; sulky and violent he meditated a revenge that would be the sterner for being deferred; he knew himself capable of complete cruelty; his uneasiness increased.

There were six gentlemen at the supper, companions in arms and pleasures; the windows were open on the monstrous moon, on the melody of caged nightingales, on the voices of Sieneese boys singing to zithers, and on the steady recurrent splash of a fountain that was as monotonous as a heart-beat.

The decoration of the room was Chinese. The air was perfumed with cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon and attar of roses. In contrast to this exotic background the six guests showed robust and hearty, with their fair red faces, their curled powdered hair, their brightly-colored velvet and satin coats, their Paris paste and steel appointments cut to a diamond glitter.

The Chinese woman entered, carried in her palanquin; she could not stand for more than a moment on her tiny feet in the slippers stitched with sequins. She was placed carefully, as if she had been a doll, beside Aspremont-Reckheim.

The gentlemen all gazed eagerly at this curiosity—they were really not sure that she was alive. Her quilted outer robe of sea-green silk being removed by Karl August showed her dress of festival gold, a massed design of webs and blossoms in bullion threads, her sash of azure satin, stiffened with silver wires, her necklets of white jade, of smoked crystal, of scarlet cords with beads of rose quartz, tourmaline and chrysolite; above the smooth black bil-

lows of her hair quivered metallic flowers of silver, copper and gold that appeared finer than nature in filaments, pistils and petals that stirred with the least movement. All of the guests had traveled and each possessed a closet of curiosities, but none of them had ever seen any rarity like this wonder.

She bowed, and then spoke.

A little cascade of meaningless sound, soft, mellow as drowsy notes from the soft-plumed throat of a bird, fell from her vermilion lips. She bowed again, folded her hands into her sleeves, was silent.

They murmured surprise, admiration, envy. Culembach had his rix dollars bond ready; he slipped it along the table. Karl August pocketed it without satisfaction. He was tormented by the desire to know what the Chinese woman thought and felt, to possess her mind and soul as well as her person. Never had he heard anything so tantalizing as that soft incomprehensible speech. He had never failed, one way or another, with a woman before, but now he was baffled; he lowered where he should have been triumphant; and before the Lang-Yao clock struck eight he sent her away because of the intolerable nun who would, he was sure, keep her word.

CULEMBACH lingered after the others had gone. He began to praise the Chinese lady . . . he offered to buy her. . . .

"As a dilettante?" asked Karl August.

"As a man," said Culembach.

Karl August refused to consider any offer. Culembach said that he would give more than money; his Arab-Polish horse called *La Folie*, who was the most perfectly trained animal in the Empire, his pair of *bleu de roi* Sevres vases, which had taken three years to paint. As Karl August remained contemptuous Culembach offered his summer palace in the mountains that the other had often envied. On receiving an abrupt refusal the Margraf, a short-tempered man, purpled in the face. The two parted in dislike of each other. This was the first time that Karl August had quarreled with the brother of Hedwig Sophia.

The Margraf's offer had put the final value on the Chinese woman; she was

indeed priceless; her owner could think of nothing for which he would surrender her. Yet he allowed the days to pass without disturbing her—because of the nun, because of some sacred magic which enclosed her, because of something in himself? He was being drawn into a new unimagined world. He did not know; he became melancholy, moody, yet excited and violent; if he could discover what the Chinese woman was thinking, if she was happy, if he could make her happy, what she was saying when she bowed and spoke sweetly, rapidly. . . .

CULEMBACH rode over frequently and tried to bargain for what he called this *bibelot de prix*. He also seemed fascinated by the Chinese woman whom, however, he had only seen once. The two men began to detest each other; the Margraf pointed out that General Aspremont-Reckheim's post was in Hungary—what leave had he to linger in Salzburg, while there was a revolt in his command?

Hedwig Sophia came too frequently to Halstadt; Karl August suspected her brother of making trouble; the lady longed too often to be taken to the pavilion, the pagoda, and on excuse or refusal became too sweetly submissive. She knew, of course, from her brother, about the Chinese woman, and she was sick with terror lest she should lose her lover. She was afraid of his abstracted air, his gloomy indifference to her caresses, his dark sullen face; she wished to marry him and go to Hungary to quell the rebellion—to please him she would have witnessed the slaughter of hundreds of heretics, but Karl August suspended all his affairs.

He gradually made a confidante of the nun; she was of his own world and intelligent; she appeared to like him, she was at least very tolerant; he endeavored to discover from her every scrap of information about the Chinese woman . . . her mind, her nature, her habits, what she believed, or wished, or feared. . . .

The nun knew very little; she could not, save for a word or two, understand her companion's speech, but she always declared that she was very homesick; at night she would weep and pray to a little crystal image that, to Aspremont-

Reckheim, was a toy, but to her a god.

Always the nun ended:

"You must assuredly send her home, Monseigneur. It is your only chance to palliate a great wrong. No doubt you acted more in wantonness than malice, but now you understand that you have not bought a carving or a jewel, but a human creature."

"Give me some credit," Karl August would reply, bitterly, "that I have not molested her."

The nun had a smile for that.

"You cannot. You do not dare."

The haughty, violent man raged; he stared at himself in many mirrors; he had always disliked his person, inherited from a defeated people he had betrayed. No powder could efface that black hair, no art alter those straight fine features, no imperial uniform make him appear of the conquering race; a Magyar, one with those he crushed and slew . . . he had burnt a church once with a hundred worshippers within, and watched while his troopers thrust the wretches back into the flames . . . every face shrieking to death had been like his face . . . detestable, and giving him the air of a renegade; he passionately wished he were like Culembach, the dominant Northern stock . . . how did he appear to the Chinese woman?

SHE remained unchanged. Patiently she waited through the luscious autumn days. The lilies on the pond withered, the bamboos and maples shed their leaves, the sunshine took a mellow tinge; in meek resignation the Chinese woman waited; only her songs became more plaintive, her music the melody of an exile, and her slanting eyes glittered with tears as she prayed to her crystal god.

"Send her home before the winter," said the nun.

"Sell her to me," insisted Culembach.

"Marry me," implored Hedwig Sophia.

While the Emperor's commands came stern from Vienna:

"Go immediately to Hungary."

Aspremont-Reckheim did none of these things. He was entirely, and for the first time in his life, occupied with his own soul. He ascended to stormy heights and grovelled in murky depths. All his possessions became earthly baubles. The wind in the bare trees at night was of peculiar importance; the sight of the moon touched him to nothingness, and the vaporous sunshine was bitter-sweet to agony; he was in full pursuit of something flying beyond his

(Continued on page 36)

Bagatelle

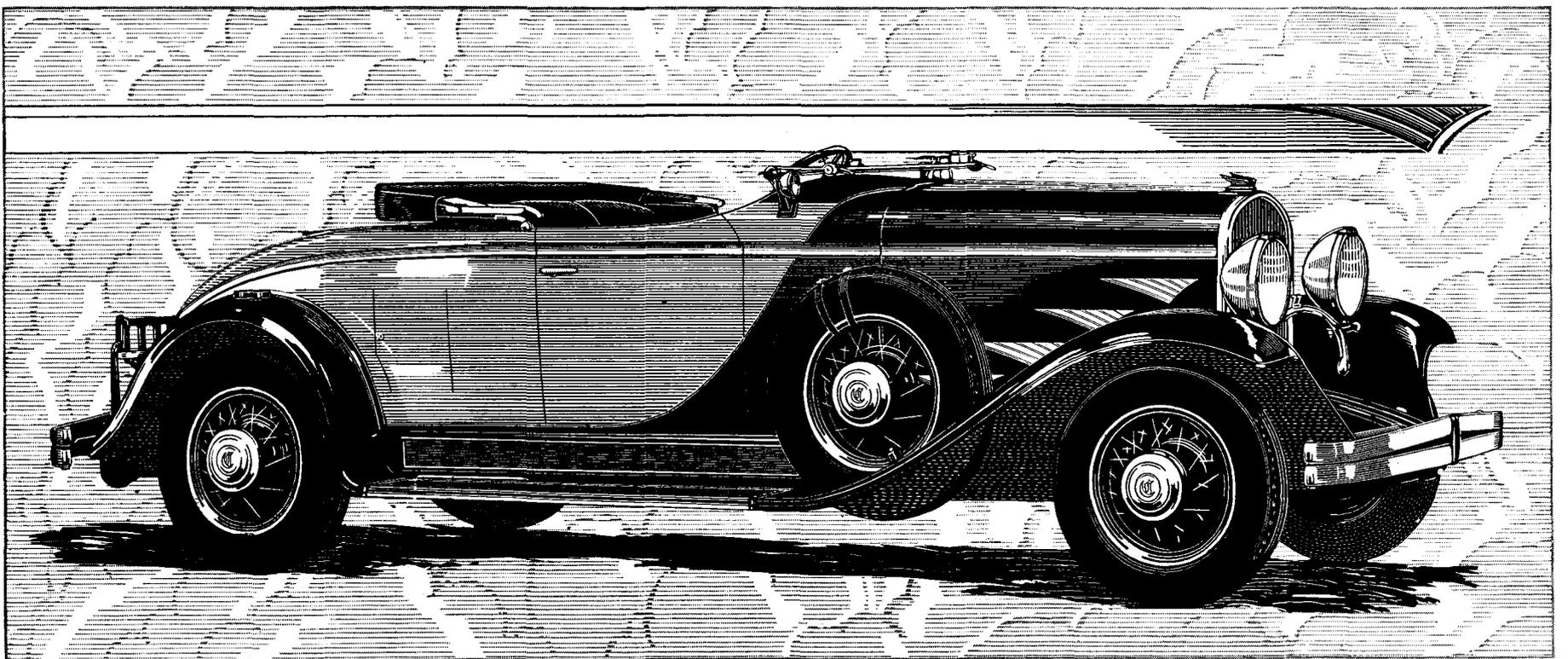
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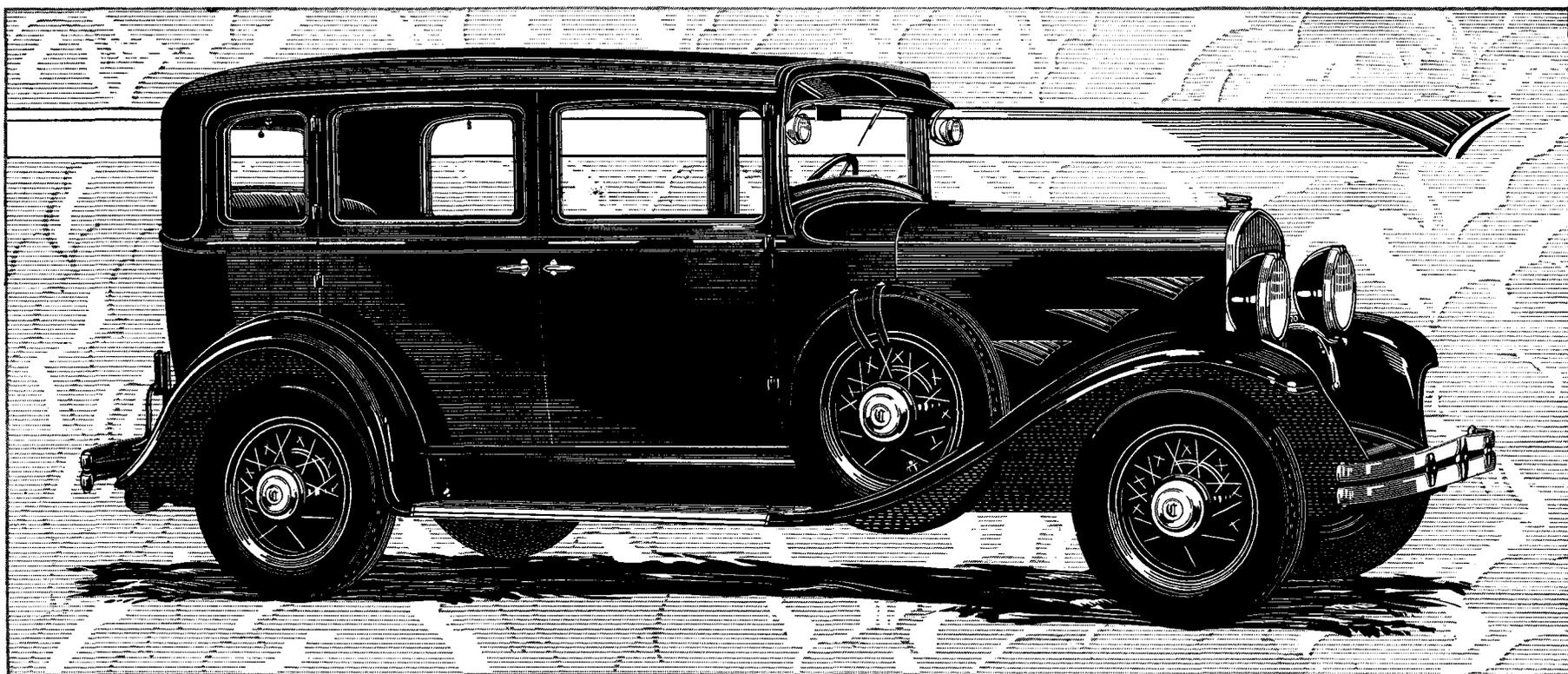
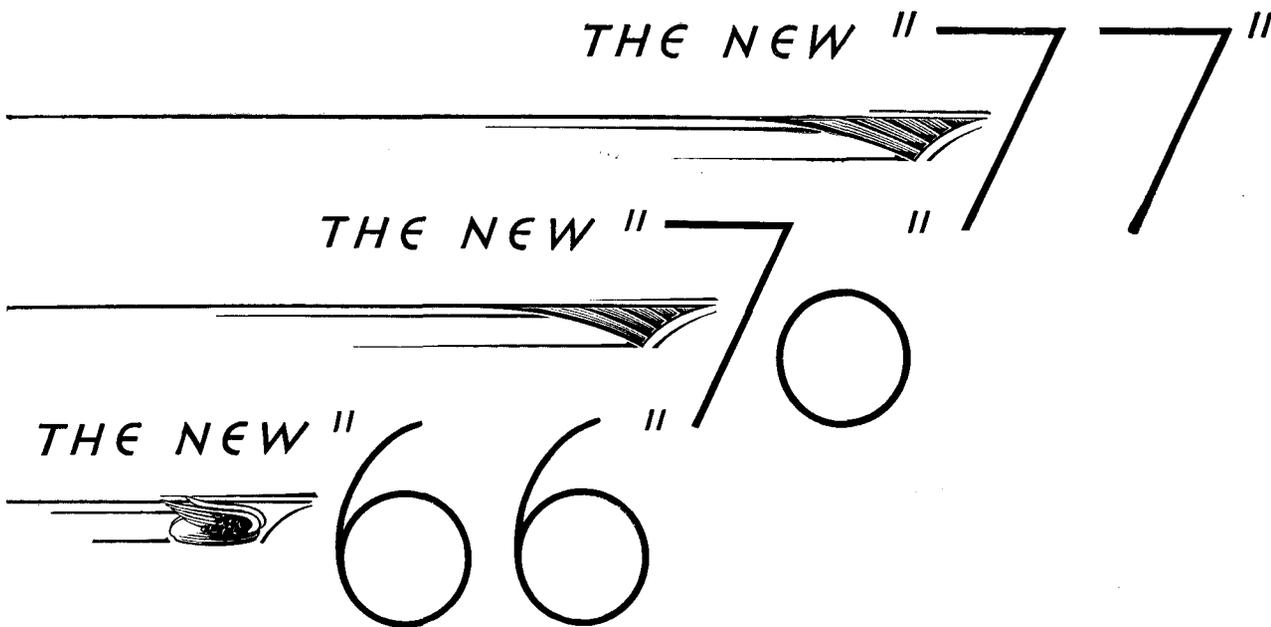
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S L E E R

M O T O R S P R O D U C T

Bagatelle

Continued from page 33

reach, a chase that would snatch him off the globe into darkness, for what he sought was hidden surely beyond the farthest star.

Culembach one evening penetrated the Chinese garden; he only saw all the lattices of the pavilion flicked down and heard the mournful note of a zither; but Karl August set a guard of his own regiment round the oriental pleasure.

With the waning of October came the news of the sacking of his château at Vesprim. The rebels had broken into his costly grounds, smashed the pyramid, lit bonfires in the grottoes, kicked to pieces the ice caves, set free the dwarfs in the village; these tiny monsters had frolicked up to the mansion and, mad with liberty, destroyed all they could discover, then drunk themselves to death amid shards of porcelain, tatters of silk and fragments of gilt wood. The rabble had cracked the cedar-wood chapel as if it had been a nut; angels, saints and crucifixes were tumbled out to be trampled into the *parterres* of the coronary garden. At night the flames of Vesprim appeared to smite the moon; blood, bones, and the value of a million rix dollars were consumed.

CLOSE on this news Hedwig Sophia rode to Halstadt, her mood beyond subterfuge or prudence.

"Why do you linger? See what has befallen. There was no such palace save at Cassel."

"I can build another," he replied, sternly, "if I am not too old for playthings."

Golden, rosy, flushed, distracted with emotion, Hedwig Sophia passionately replied:

"Playthings? You think of nothing else. You are a fool for this Chinese woman."

"You know of her then?"

"Oh, am I imbecile? Theodor, also, is obsessed by her—what is it? I have suffered it long enough. . . . Do you not think of me at all? Do you not think of your duty? You will be ruined, disgraced, if you do not go to Hungary."

Striking her hand with her riding whip Hedwig Sophia trembled in the rich firelight.

"For a Chinese woman!" she cried.

"She is not my mistress," he said, dryly. "I cannot even speak to her. I have never touched her."

Amazed and frightened, Hedwig Sophia asked:

"Why?"

"I do not know."

"But you keep her there, hidden at Bagatelle? Theodor heard her sing."

"He'll not again. Yes, I keep her there, immaculate. She is like nothing you could imagine, Hedwig. I cannot speak of it."

"But you love me." Hedwig Sophia was hurried into open avowal of her pain. "This is a whim—it can, it must be dispelled. We will go together to Hungary and regain what you have lost."

"I have lost nothing," mused Karl August.

"You have lost me," retorted the passionate woman, "and I was something to you once."

SHE flung away. He thought he could hear her angry sobbing long after she had gone. He was indifferent to her suffering. She was pampered, selfish, cruel, as he had been.

The posts from Buda and an express from Vesprim waited in his antechambers while he was closeted with the nun; he had sent for her from the pavilion which he had not visited for several days; a faint blue haze lay over the park; the nun warmed cold hands at the frost-clear fire.

General Aspremont-Reckheim stood

with his hands clasped behind him; he wore a careless civilian dress and had neglected to pomade the black locks that he detested.

The nun smiled at him pleasantly; her face was peaked and thin between the folds of linen; she stooped slightly, some small dead leaves clung to the hem of her gray robe.

"You have held out against me a long time," he said.

The nun continued to smile.

"I love the Chinese woman," said Karl August.

"Then you will send her home, of course?"

"No."

"You do not love her, Monseigneur."

"It is terrible how I love her—I cannot endure to see her because my thoughts of her torment me so. I meant the affair for a jest, for a caprice, to win a bet and a little mistress for a while. I have been horribly ensnared."

The nun considered him with pity.

"Yes, that is how it happens. One does, lightly, a wicked deed—and it closes on one's soul like a vise."

"I have done worse things," he replied, "and never heeded them."

"Perhaps this is the punishment for them all, Monseigneur."

"You have laid a spell round her." He tried to smile. "You have conquered. I will marry her."

The nun shook her head.

"She is not a Christian."

"I will have her baptized; I will give her my mother's name."

"She would not understand. She does not care for you. She only longs for her home. If you keep her she will die."

"I would not let her die. I can make women happy—and I love her so much."

"Then, certainly you will return her to Chuchow. Love has only one way, Monseigneur. It serves, it does not think of self; either," added the nun, "you used a word you do not understand or you know what I mean."

Karl August looked away.

"What should I do when she was gone?"

"Take up your duty. Return to Hungary and endeavor to obtain justice and mercy for the rebels and heretics—your kinspeople."

"It is too difficult. I cannot part with her—I'll not tolerate them—you are defeated."

"Not I, but you, General Reckheim." He dismissed her.

FOR three days he was shut in his rooms; at night the frosts fell and the dawns were slow and heavy; a dispatch from the Emperor awaited his pleasure; another week's delay and he would be superseded in his command; Culembach wrote, violently demanding explanation, satisfaction for an insulted sister; all this was chaff in the wind to Aspremont-Reckheim. He went down through the cold park to the withered winter-bitten Chinese garden where the pavilion showed stark amid the desolation of the trees. The brilliant tiles were rimmed with frost which had melted in drops of moisture on the bells above the horned gate. There was no sound of zither or voice.

"How has this come on me who was so sure of myself? I, who did not know of the unattainable, to be overcome by

desire! I, who was always resolute, to be thus baffled! I shall never know her heart or her mind, or what she said in her lovely language; she will never lead me into the world where she moves."

He did not cross the confines of her domain, but, returning to the château, sent a letter to the nun:

"Take the Chinese woman back. Command my means. I leave for Buda."

And he thought: "When they are gone I will have the Chinese gardens, the pavilion and the pagoda demolished—and never again will I trade with van Dollart."

General Aspremont-Reckheim appeared in his full accoutrements that he had so long put aside and rode at the head of the troop of horses he was leading to the Imperial headquarters near the ruins of Vesprim. The wan day had wasted to the bleached gray of twilight. The dark soldier saw nothing but a fog-bound horizon. His companions rode apart, awed by his grim air of gloom.

He had not reached the limits of the estate before he was overtaken by a Heyduck with a bruised face, urging an exhausted horse. His panted news, gasped out as his master drew rein, was brief:

"The Margraf has carried off the Chinese woman."

This was to Karl August as if the scornful hand of God had, out of the menacing sky, struck him—one blow . . . and sufficient.

"They surprised us—five hundred men—the Princess Hedwig Sophia was there—the instant, sir, you had departed."

Karl August turned back at the gallop; by using up three relays he arrived at Culembach's château by nightfall.

No one thwarted his entrance; he believed that some catastrophe beyond violence had occurred; he had out-riden his company and entered the house alone; room after room was empty and quiet; he would not call her because he did not know her name; in a high ornate chamber he found the nun, very weary, and praying; she saw his face and said:

"You must not kill them. They have been very gentle. Besides, it was too late. She would never have reached home—she was dying."

WITH her old, tired gait she preceded him to the next room.

The Chinese woman was on a sofa. Culembach and Hedwig gazed at her in silence, holding hands for company in their guilt.

Karl August did not see them or their misery. He knelt beside the sofa and said words he had never said before, save lightly:

"Forgive me, for God's sake, forgive me!"

The Chinese woman sat up and looked at him; she bowed, she spoke directly to him, a low murmur of delicate sound; he was sure that she spoke only to him—not to the nun; never would he know what she said; she could not speak for long for she was occupied with the matter of dying; she bowed again and turned to her repose; she seemed to fold herself together, like a flower, furred petal by petal round a dead heart.

Never would his pursuit overtake her, never would she teach him her speech, nor admit him to that world which he now knew of and must ever weary after; never could she relieve his desolation.

Dead, she appeared no more than a toy—Bagatelle—an Eastern puppet on the coquettish sofa. Karl August looked inwards and found detestable company—himself, grinning in loneliness.

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