Chapter Four:
The Bath, the Barber and the Tailor.

BVIOUSLY enough, the assumption of the pleasant task of providing a sort of animated index to the quaint subject of Peking's shop emblems, involved the selection of the most suitable means of introducing them to the reader, and of enlisting his interest in the folk to whom they are a commonplace. A careful preliminary survey of the field covered by our collection of symbols had disclosed it to be both broad and diverse; and the idea suggested itself of arbitrarily mapping it off into sections, whose boundaries the reader readily would understand to be imaginary, and indicated solely for the purpose of eliminating any avoidable confusion of mind. With this end in view, the aspect that appeared most likely to engage sympathetic attention at the outset, is the one that has just been presented.

It must be confessed, however, that, in thus deciding, considerable reliance has been placed on that human impulse which instinctively recognizes the legitimacy of the inner urge, and for the time being,

at least, establishes the universal brotherhood of man among the thinkable possibilities of the future.

Should then, the fortuitous fact be, that these calculations have not altogether miscarried, it gives rise to the hope that the suggestions indicated in the new chapter heading, of a visit to the bathhouse and the barber's, will equally commend themselves as a not inappropriate preliminary to the approaching tour of the field in which the Chinese in search of exterior furnishings will be found moving from point to point. Perhaps during our progress from one shop to another, the reader will imagine himself passing by many a symbol which will now be comprehensible.

THE PUBLIC BATH.

Before proceeding, however, beyond the doorway of the bathhouse, where a diminutive lantern sheds a faint light as it swings from the short arm of a tall and slender pole, it would be as well to point out, in the interests of truth, that such signs as No. 23—one of the few devices common to all parts of China—are far more numerous than is perhaps imagined by those who, without having visited the country, may nevertheless have formed impressions from the hasty judgment of hurried travellers who have estimated the amount of care which the Chinese bestow upon the person, by that which is manifestly not expended upon the streets, nor upon those questions of sanitation, by which the West determines the standards of civilization.

The facts of the matter, however, are made rather easily discernible by the popularity of public bathing in China; and by all these indications the bath would seem to play fully as large, if not a greater part in the scheme of things Chinese, as is the case, broadly speaking, among many of the nations of the West. As an institution, the public bath of China is not to be accounted for on the ground tentatively suggested as one of the *raisons d'êtres* of the public feeding places of the country, viz., inadequate facilities in the homes of the poor, as this would relegate its functions as applying to but one class of the Chinese people, which would be far from the truth. For the status of the public bath is in no wise affected by the inclusion of a "wash-room," with shallow, portable tub, round or oval, in the

equipment of the middle-class homes, and in those of the wealthy, of relatively better facilities.

It is to be assumed, however, though the suggestion is never made directly, that, since there are no public baths for women these provisions are largely monopolized by the women and children of the family. (The mere intimation of such an operation being performed by a woman, anywhere but in private, would be received with pained and reproachful consternation). They undoubtedly serve their purpose abundantly well, however little they may conform to the Westerner's ideas of adequacy, the point involved being mainly that of the latter's highly sensitized instinct for "creature comforts."

This attitude the true Chinese regards, of course, as a mere example of over-emphasis; while the latter's unheated house, with its formal arrangement of hard, marble-topped divans, and stiff-backed chairs set along the walls, produces on the foreigner, the impression which is among those that lend support to the oft-quoted conclusions of the foreign analyst of Chinese psychology, who has declared that, as a race, the Chinese are indifferent to physical comfort. The difference in viewpoints is undebatable, being obviously based on a divergence in racial philosophy; but that the forces of change are at work on this rock-bottom foundation of an ancient civilization is evidenced in the presence of the English easy chair among the furnishings of the modern Chinese home.

However, be this as it may, it is indubitably a fact that, on many points, East and West continue to meet as little as may be, in their respective conceptions of that which bespeaks bodily ease, in spite, one may say, of a marked diminution in the amused wonder with which the old school of Chinese was used to regard many of the Westerner's notions—notably those governing the question of recreation—until his own sons and daughters began to respond to their influence. The instances are also numerous, however, of the failure of the foreigner to grasp the fundamentals in this difference of viewpoint, and many are the humorous incidents arising from gratuitous efforts at interference therewith—efforts, be it said, usually better intentioned than advised, as is shown in the following anecdote which comes somewhat aptly to mind, at the moment:

The story is that of a humanely-disposed old lady, travelling for the first time in the interior of China. Keenly distressed as the

stranger invariably is, at the evidences everywhere patent of an appalling poverty, her sympathies were particularly aroused on observing groups of idly chatting villagers, squatting on the ground in the characteristic "off-duty" attitude of the Chinese. The position is the familiar one, in which the arms rest on bent knees, with the weight of the body sustained by the heels.

Everywhere along the route of the kindly traveller, these rows of idlers met her troubled gaze; and at last, in self defence, as it were, she gave orders, and provided funds for the construction of benches on the railway platforms, at least. And explaining to the astonished recipients of her bounty that she would shortly be returning by the same route, she went on her way. In due course, the Good Samaritan, retracing the steps of her journey to the point from which it had begun, prepared herself for the inward gratification which would be hers on witnessing the joy resulting from her act of Christian thoughtfulness.

What, then, were her feelings, on alighting at the first of the little stations along the way, at finding the benches duly set in place, it is true, and very much in use, though not quite in the way intended. Her protégés, in short, were resting and gossiping on the benches now, and not upon the ground; but, instead of being seated, they were squatting, as before, and employing the benches for the purpose, as though in duty bound!

Thus, alas! does the unseasoned traveller beset his own path with pitfalls more amusing to the spectator than to himself, when he attempts to make his way through China, either with condescension, or with preconceived notions that are constantly and surreptitiously clamouring to justify themselves. The veteran, of course, makes neither of these mistakes, and therefore, with the success of our expedition in view, it would seem to be wiser to adopt an open-minded attitude in observing the conditions under which the ceremony of the bath takes place in China—the degree of its frequency being governed largely by the character of the individual and the nature of his occupation, whether he be countryman, villager, or denizen of any of the large cities.

THE INTERIOR OF THE BATH.

The first impression which the interior arrangement of the bathhouse produces is that the order of its construction is precisely that

of the swimming pool of the West; whereupon swiftly follows the realization of the grave violation of Western standards of sanitation, —the pool of running water being not yet a feature of the bathhouse in China. In the modern structures with which Peking abounds—which, by the way, would display a signboard with written characters —this will doubtless be a consideration in the future. In the capital, these institutions are almost exclusively conducted by Mohammedan Chinese, and it is interesting to speculate on the relationship thus suggested, between the teachings of the Moslem faith, and the universal demand for public baths, in view of the fact already touched upon, that 55,000,000 of China's 400,000,000, roughly speaking, are followers of the Prophet. In the largest of these institutions a hundred bathers may be accommodated at a time. Yet the system of emptying the pools not oftener than once a day is said to prevail here, as in the smaller and much more primitive baths.

It should be pointed out, at the outset of our remarks, that since we are dealing with the baths displaying such a sign as No. 23, we are constrained to pass over with a mere mention those provided for the wealthy and official classes, in which are found separate rooms, with porcelain tubs, and every equipment for comfort and service. In some of the newest of these structures—notably those of Shanghai —the luxury of appointments is described in superlative terms. The rooms may be hired for a day, or for as long as may be desired, and it is known that many a bit of official business has been consummated in this environment. Our range of vision, however, need not be too strictly limited by that phase of the situation indicated by our bathhouse symbol, for the reason that the modern baths, outside of this particular class, cater to the general public by the provision of a common pool.

In the bathhouses we are discussing, then, the general plan is the same—the square pool of varying depths, with first-, second- and third-class dressing rooms built in around, and with a bordering ledge. The bathers sit upon this, and upon another ledge that runs straight across the centre and divides the pool into two parts, with the water on one side very much hotter than on the other. Fortunately enough, from the standpoint of health considerations, the Chinese demands extremely hot water in his bath, which presupposes a greater amount of fresh supply than the appearance of the water would seem to

indicate. It is worth while mentioning, also, that the greater the contact with foreign teachings, the stronger the native distaste for some of the conditions characteristic of the public bath, with the result that house servants in the port cities, are among its keenest critics; and nothing could exceed their lively satisfaction with the bathing facilities for servants, which are being included in the modern foreign residence.

The bathhouse pool, being common to all in the prevailing democracy for which China is remarkable, class differences manifest themselves in the choice of dressing-rooms, and extra services demanded—the cost of the bath being determined in this wise, and ranging from six coppers to twenty cents.[14] For the minimum charge a man may perform his ablutions personally, if he choose; but few Chinese do so elect. Hence every bathhouse has its army of coolies, who, for a few coppers take over the task of scrubbing, while the bather yields to the warmth and the sensation of luxury, and stretches himself out on the ledge in delicious sleep. The surface of the water is considerably below the feet, as the legs dangle from the ledge; and no bather stands in the water.

The question of the possible conveyance of disease the Chinese disposes of by his faith in the germ-destroying heat of the water, which he relies upon as a curative agent for any ailment of his own. And one even discerns, in the replies to questions on this point, a tendency to believe that water that has been bathed in by others is rather more efficacious than the fresh water. Hence, in the country districts, the early morning hours are not popular among those afflicted with aches and pains.

There is, however, another kind of bathhouse that should also be taken account of, in which there is no pool at all. It is found in the remoter towns and villages, especially in the north, where the water supply, in droughty seasons, is exceedingly limited. Its plan is the same as that of the other baths, except that the central space here is without a pool, and becomes a general lounge for the bathers, while the rooms running round the square are furnished with portable tubs, circular, or oval, and very shallow. A board is laid across the tub, and on this the bather sits; and after he has been scrubbed, rinsed and rubbed down by the bath coolie, he joins the assembled company

in the large room, takes his ease on one of the couches, and gives himself over to the ministrations of the chiropodist and the barber.

These latter artisans are in great demand in China, and are an invariable adjunct to the staff of any bathhouse; and when the Peking houseboy returns from his sufficiently frequent absences on a thoroughgoing mission of this sort, his general appearance is of the most immaculate, and his shaven head—which is the mark of the Number One in Peking—is as polished as a billiard ball.

THE BARBER'S SHOP.

Meantime, however, the services of the barber, who maintains a shop under the sign indicated by No. 25, must be depended upon as well, as the Chinese is not naturally a self-shaver. But, catering as he does to a practically beardless race, the barber's functions are rather those of shampooer and ear cleaner—that strange demand, whose evidences are insistent and universal. The major portion of his attention is devoted to the scalp; for while the faces of his patrons require but a negligible amount of shaving, some portion of the scalp invariably does. But while the completely shaven head is more or less *à la mode,* in some parts of the country, the shaving of temples and forehead suffices for the generality of Chinese, while the head that carries a queue must have a shaven patch all around the appendage.

Taking it by and large, the bit of iron, about two inches long by one inch in width, which the Chinese call a razor, is an altogether remarkable implement, doing its work without the aid of lather, and riding successfully over face or scalp, after they have been buried under hot towels for a period of about ten minutes. Its aspect is not such as would tend to inspire confidence in the foreign mind, and yet actual experience with it is said to hold none of the terrors that seemed to promise.

The queue is, of course, still common enough in the country districts, and among the labouring coolie class, generally. And it is they who employ the itinerant barber, who, with his brass basin is usually to be found near the hot-water shop. The while he is busily occupied in shaving the poll, or combing and plaiting the long tresses, his client's team of oxen may be seen philosophically munching its meal of *kan tsao* (chopped straw) close by.

That the most hard-working class of Chinaman should be the one, of all others, to cling fondly to the burden of long hair is precisely one of those characteristic touches that whets the appetite for travel in the interior. The thought calls to mind the amusing lines of the poet Po Chu-I, written about eleven centuries ago (A.D. 832). Poet, scholar and politician—having been, in the latter capacity, Governor of Hangchow, Soochow and the province of Honan, at various stages of his career—Po Chu-I reflected resignedly "On His Baldness"[15] in the following wise:

"At dawn I sighed to see my hairs fall;
At dusk I sighed to see my hairs fall.
For I dreaded the time when the last lock should go . . .
They are all gone and I do not mind at all!
I have done with that cumbrous washing and getting dry;
My tiresome comb forever is laid aside.
Best of all, when the weather is hot and wet,
To have no top-knot weighing down on one's head!
I put aside my dusty conical cap;
And loose my collar-fringe.
In a silver jar I have stored a cold stream;
On my bald pate I trickle a ladle-full.
Like one baptized with the Water of Buddha's Law,
I sit and receive this cool, cleansing joy.
Now I know why the priest who seeks Repose
Frees his heart by first shaving his head."

But returning to the subject of our "modern" barber's sign, we find that its background is an oblong bit of white cloth. This, we are told is intended to inspire the desire for cleanliness. In fact, the two characters inscribed in its centre, seek to remind him who may be able to read them, of the paramount duty of the Superior Man at all times to be mindful of his personal appearance. The designs traced in black appear to have no special meaning, and except for the suggestion of waves in the lower section, seem to be little enough Chinese in character. Nevertheless, the sign is easily identified by its patrons, even without the characters.

THE TAILOR'S SHOP.

Sign No. 24, adjoining the bathhouse emblem, is that of the tailor—black, with golden characters—calm in the assumption that by those that matter it will be understood, in the same spirit as is shown by the tea merchant, who writes the single character for tea somewhere outside of his shop, and relies on the intuitive faculties as a guide in matters of universal need.

The tailor's sign is much smaller than the usual run of inscribed signboards, and is probably identified at a distance for this reason. But failing this, the perfectly visible shop interior tells its own story. In fact, human occupations are surrounded with little mystery in China, where almost all work and, indeed, nearly every other conceivable act is naïvely performed in public.

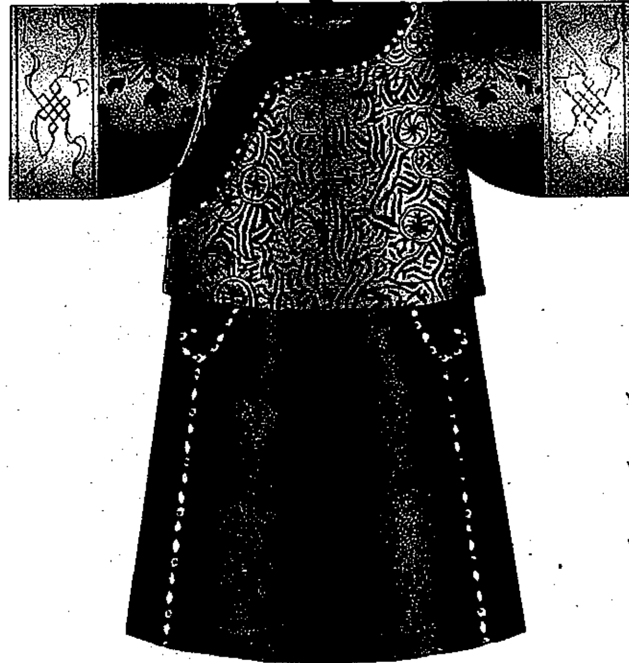
Tailor shop interiors are none too inviting, be it said. Fitted only with long tables and stools, densely packed with busy workers, men and boys of all ages but never women, they are populated as well by the tailor's "babies" and family—not to mention the inevitable group of friends playing at mah-jong, and doubtless yielding him a revenue thereby. They are, however, workrooms, pure and simple, since it is the custom in China to purchase one's own material, send for the tailor, and be fitted in one's own home. (Port city tailors catering to foreigners alone are, of course, understood to be an exception to this rule, which nevertheless, still applies to the ladies' tailor).

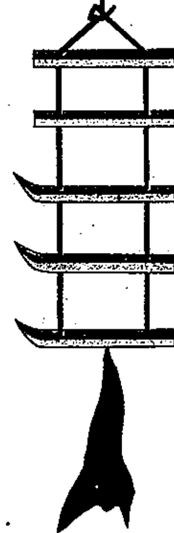
The steady increase in the number of foreigners in China apparently has divided the tailoring trade along the line of exclusive dealing either with the native, or the foreigner; the latter section of the craft having developed an extraordinary amount of "side," when one recalls that in the old days the Chinese tailor enjoyed little respect in the community, received a wage lower than that of almost any other craftsman, and was universally believed to be on the watch for ways and means of defrauding his patrons. Indeed in the amount of material submitted, allowance had to be made for the percentage that would be filched, and even this did not always suffice him.

Nevertheless, it is an industry that never flags, owing to the high regard in which dress is held by the Chinese, and the frequency with which changes are made to conform to the weather—these running

the gamut from the sheerest of grass cloth and silk gauzes, to heavily padded silks and satins, heavy broadcloths, and fur-lined garments, long and short, worn one on top of the other, in as many layers as are required by the unheated houses everywhere, and by the intense cold of the climate, in the north.

The Chinese system of cutting out garments is, of course, radically different to the foreign method. Native dress, when not cut out by eye measurement, is subjected to the foot-rule, a rough drawing being made of the outline of the entire garment, as if back, front and sides as well as sleeves, were to be of one piece. Seams are pasted, instead of basted, and sewn with silk. Women's dresses are made by men, and embroidery is done by little boys—Chinese women, as a rule, being singularly inapt as sempstresses, even though great ladies did embroider the shoes for their lily feet. Despite this fact, however, an army of women embroiderers has sprung up under the hands of missionaries, and a multitude of "sew-sew" amahs, under those of the foreign "missy."





No. 28.
Shoe Soles.

底子作房幌子

No. 27.
Second-hand Clothes.

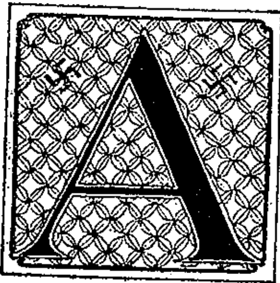
估衣舖幌子

No. 26.
The Hat Shop.

毡帽幌子

Chapter Five:
Clothing and its Accessories.

SECOND-HAND CLOTHES.



A little further along in our series of tours the reader will be conducted over the ground covered by the title "Industries," which might have included the tailor's shop, except that it seemed desirable to present first of all the general method observed by the Chinese, in the acquisition of raiment. This having been done, mention must also be made of the increasing popularity of the ready-made clothing shop, once resorted to only by the unfastidious. To such a shop, signs are superfluous, for a wilderness of garments, hanging from long strips of bamboo inserted into the sleeves, covers the walls and stretches half-way over the pavement outside, quite obliterating the *chiao pai,* but providing in themselves, a sufficient guide to possible clients. From these busy marts arises a tremendous din, created by the chants of the various salesmen, who, with an astonishing gusto that seems never to flag, announce the matchless perfections of their offerings to an impassive world of shoppers.

Sign No. 27, however, automatically identifies itself to the initiated as that of the dealer in second-hand apparel—not by any means, be it said, of the description shown in the picture.

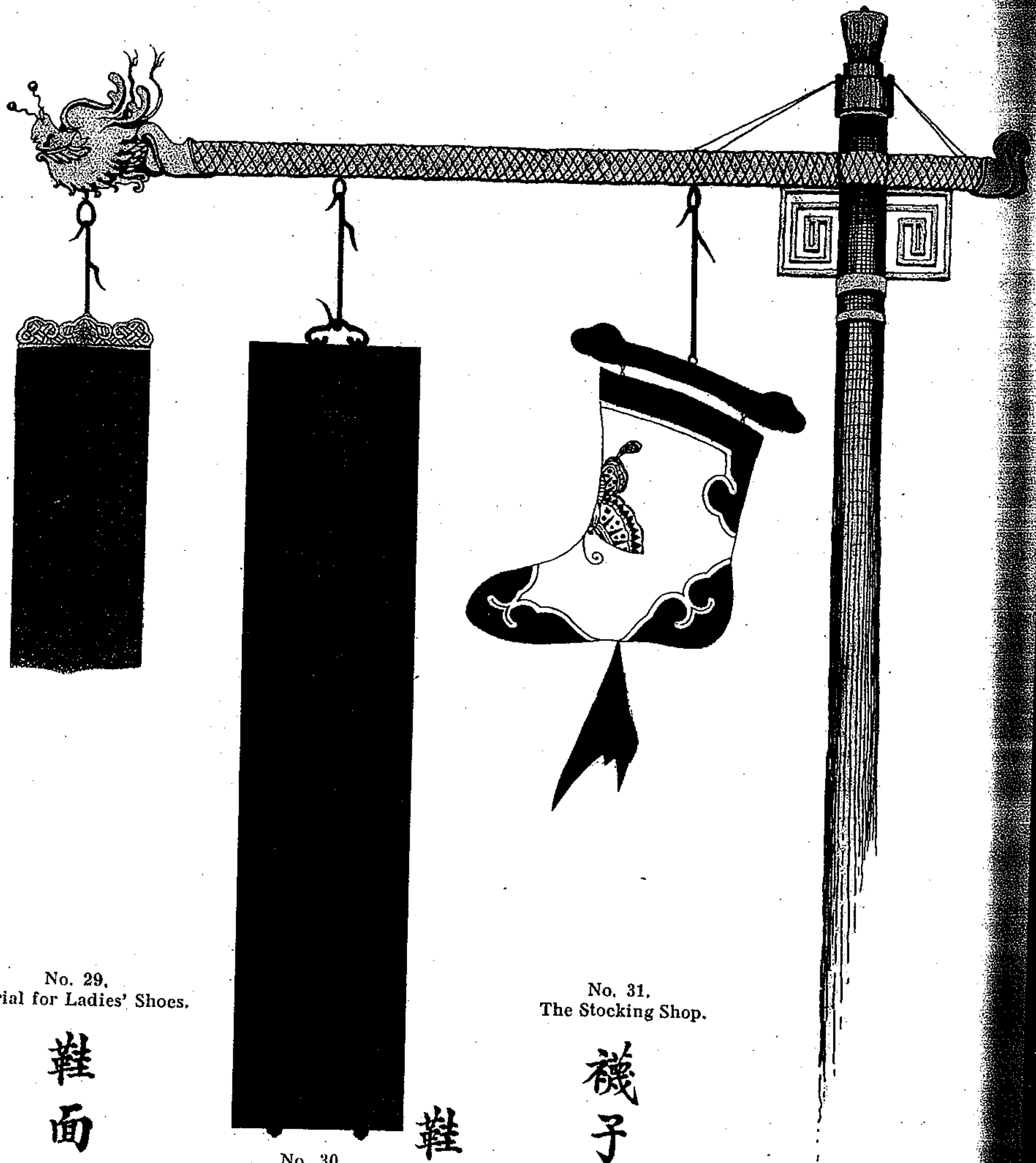
It is quite characteristic of the Peking shopkeeper generally, and of the clothing dealer in particular, to make no concessions whatever in his shop sign, to changes in social customs and their influence on popular fashions. Political upheavals, he probably reflects, have nothing to do with him, provided always, they leave him in possession of his own—which, alas! they have seldom enough done. At all events, whenever such changes have removed outright the demand for such and such articles of dress, or the accessories thereto, he has simply taken down their indices altogether. But when his shop sign announces that he deals in coats, hats, boots and shoes, or whatever may be his stock, of what matter if these symbols of his be somewhat anachronistic? If a man be in search of an outfit of outer habiliments, he may be assumed to know that he will find in the shop not such as the dealer hangs up without, but those of the prevailing mode. And in this the dealer proves himself to be quite in the right.

THE HAT SHOP.

The man in search of a new head covering, it goes without saying, will not expect to find in the shop such a hat as is shown below the skull cap in Sign No. 26. Who knows better than he that it illustrates a page in history—a phase of life that has passed? Therefore, he enters the shop for the purpose of purchasing the article, which, obviously, is to be found there, *i.e.*, the skull cap. As for the removal of the redundant item, such, from the shopkeepers' point of view, plainly would be an unreasonable act, since this would materially affect the artistic "look-see" of the sign—always an important consideration with the Chinese—and to what purpose, he would quite properly ask? Hence, it remains.

SHOE SOLES.

And similarly, in the case of Sign No. 28. Here is the dealer in shoe soles, to which are attached cloth, silk, or felt uppers in the fashioning of that variety of footgear, sometimes referred to as the



No. 29.
Material for Ladies' Shoes.

鞋面布幌子

No. 30.
The Shoemaker.

鞋舖幌子

No. 31.
The Stocking Shop.

襪子舖幌子

"bedroom slipper," which has become characteristic of the Chinese, and is worn even on the battlefield. The model shown in the sign is very rarely seen in these republican days, but the fact apparently does not signify sufficiently to the Pekingese public to warrant such an offence against artistic effect as would be the substitution of the current pattern of shoes.

When the soles have outlived their usefulness they are replaced under the ministrations of the travelling shoe-mender, who uses them as an aid to the cutting out of the new pair from the slab of leather, or felt, which forms part of his equipment.

MATERIAL FOR LADIES' SHOES.

Footgear is also indicated in the three signs on the opposite page, Nos. 29, 30 and 31. The first, No. 29, consists of an oblong section of red cloth swinging from an ornamental wooden frame painted yellow. It signifies, "Material for Ladies' Shoes." But in the wide colour range covered by prevailing fashions in this item of the Chinese woman's apparel, red is a notable exception, and is seldom seen except on the foot of the bride. Perhaps the suggestion of happiness so sedulously emphasized by the Chinese in connection with the marriage ceremony has influenced the dealer in the selection of this colour.

Figured satins and silks, multi- and plain-coloured velvets and cloth are the materials, and the lines are the same as those for men's shoes, though they are more generally soled, thinly, in leather. It must be understood, of course, that all this refers to Chinese fashions, and does not apply to that growing number of women, who combine the French-heeled foreign shoe, made of leather or satin with native dress, nor to the men who have adopted foreign dress. And outside of these considerations are, also, the lily-footed woman, who wears a pointed shoe of velvet, or cloth, according to her station, or adopts a more modern compromise, made of black leather, which more or less aims at the model which it is beyond her to wear.

THE SHOE SHOP.

The large sign, No. 30, is that of the dealer in "all kinds of boots and shoes," except, might have been added, those of the pattern painted

in gold on the placard. As to this point, says the dealer, why trouble to make unnecessary changes? Much simpler, in renovating the sign, from time to time, to regild the old device, since the Peking public knows quite well that it will find in the shop ready-made footwear of the popular pattern. In this article of dress, the made-to-order rule apparently is not applied so much as in the matter of clothing; hence, the ladies' shoe shop, for example, is a very gay spectacle indeed.

THE STOCKING SHOP.

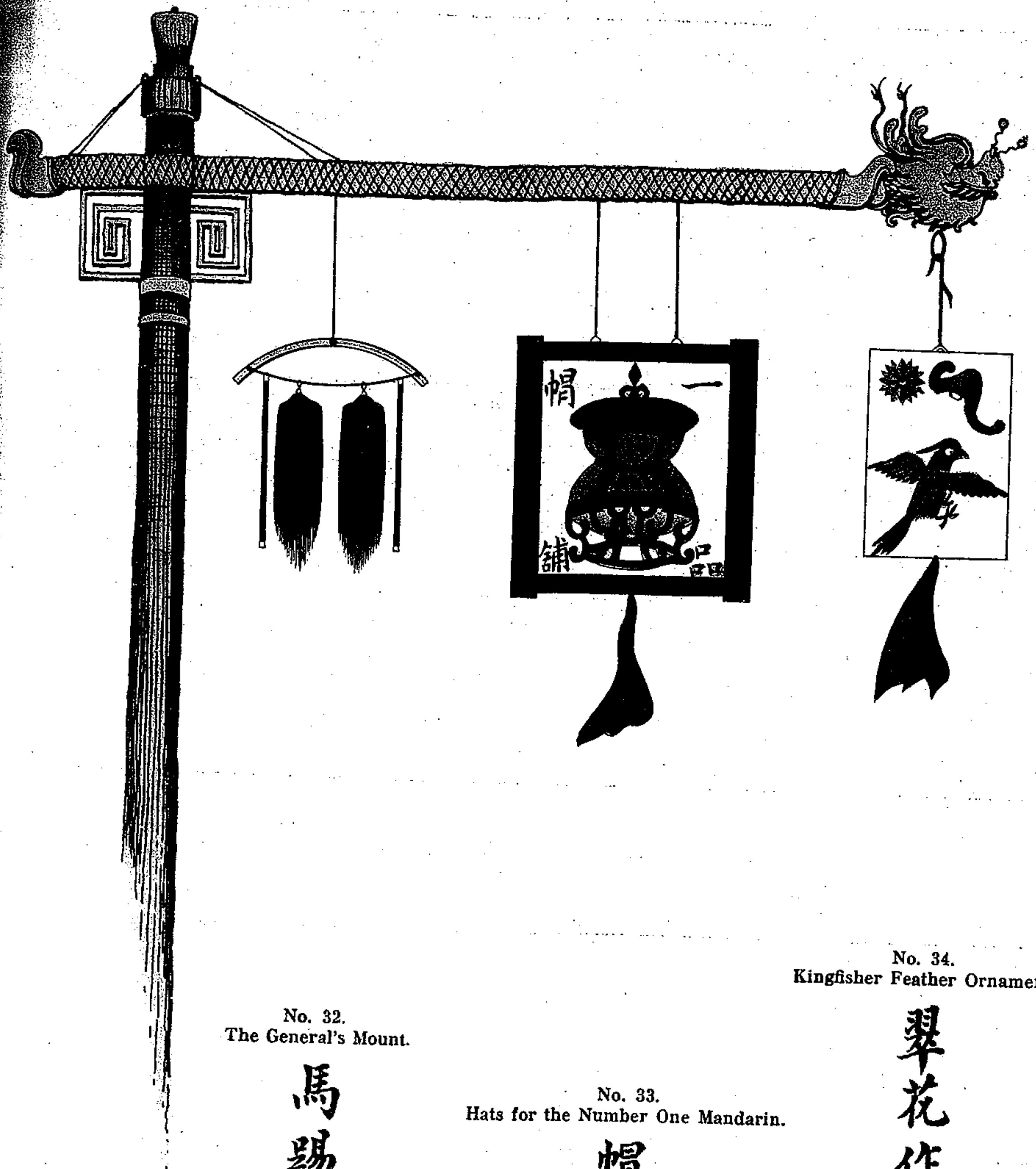
No. 31 represents the Chinese "stocking," made of thick white cotton goods, and tailored, as one might express it. It is worn over the knitted sock, and is most familiar to the foreigner as an attractive item in the costume of the "amah." It is, of course, *not* enlivened by an ornamental design in black along the top, and at the heel and toe; nor does it carry a descending butterfly across the front. It is worn very generally by both natural- and bound-footed women in the north, and by both men and women of the country districts everywhere. But these white-encased ankles, with trousers bound down over the "stocking" appear to be losing favour in the south.

INSIGNIA OF RANK (EXTINCT).

In Nos. 32 and 33 on the opposite page, and No. 35 on the one following, we have three relics of the Manchu dynasty no longer seen to-day. They are among those that passed from view under the wave of so-called popular feeling, in which monarchy and all its trappings became submerged; and they are inserted here for the interest of the reader who may have a fancy for adding to his mental picture of the street signs of modern Peking, the bewildering effect they must have created during the reign of the old Buddha, not so many years ago.

The General's Mount.

No. 32 announced that the dealer's stock consisted of the distinguishing insignia carried by the horses of government and military officials. The red brush shown in the picture descended from the



No. 32.
The General's Mount.

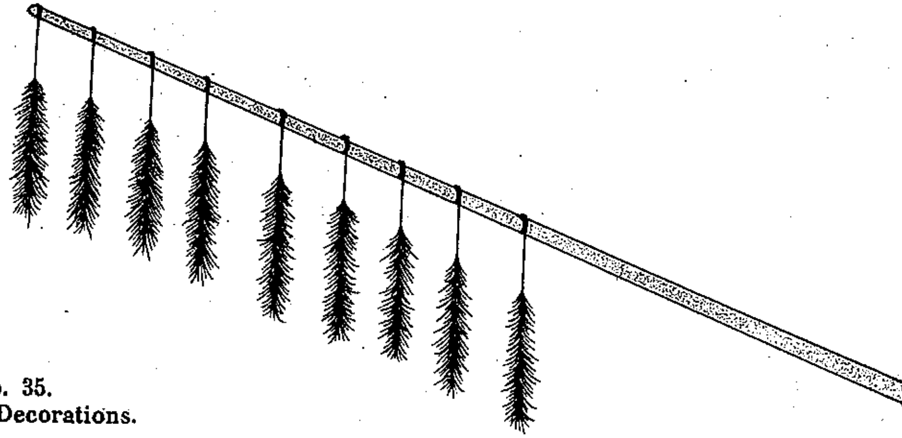
馬踢胸幌子

No. 33.
Hats for the Number One Mandarin.

帽鋪幌子

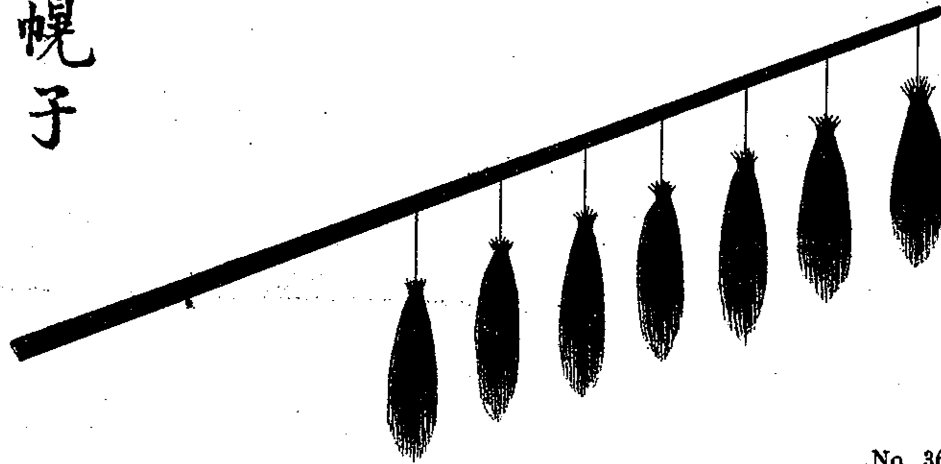
No. 34.
Kingfisher Feather Ornaments.

翠花作房幌子



No. 35.
Officers' Decorations.

品級翎幌子



No. 36.
False Hair.

頭髮舖幌子

neck of the mount of the Ching dynasty general, swinging from the narrow strap that hangs beside it.

The Mandarin's Hat.

The characters written below No. 33 describe it as "The Sign of the Hat Shop," but those inscribed on the placard itself proclaim it to be that of the dealer in hats for the mandarin of the first order. The ornament surmounting its top is that which indicated this rank, both in design and colour, but the inference is that mandarins of whatever order might be fitted out here.

Decorations.

No. 35 was the sign of another dealer in the accessories by which differences in rank were indicated. In this case they consisted of the "decorations" which were made of horsehair, feathers or silk, and so on, among which would be the familiar stiff, brush-like plume that descended from the official's hat at the back. All officers' decorations were made in duplicate sets, the one of silk for ordinary wear, and the other of feathers, for use in wedding or funeral processions.

The peacock feather, sign of the Order of *Baturu* (Manchu word for "brave") which was at one time in the early days of the Ching dynasty, a greatly coveted mark of distinction among the Chinese as well as the Manchus, lost much of its glamour in the course of time, when the decoration was conferred upon mere political candidates who had done nothing to deserve it. Originally, this highest of all honours was to be won only by active, and specially brilliant service on the field of battle; but toward the close of the reign of the Chings, the payment of a very nominal sum was sufficient to ensure the privilege of wearing the peacock feather.

FALSE HAIR FOR THE QUEUE.

No. 36 stands for the trade in false hair, which received a great impetus under the Manchu mandate commanding the wearing of the queue. To this shop repaired those whose deficient locks required supplementing for this appendage; while previously, it had been

chiefly women who were its patrons, as they have since been, almost exclusively.

KINGFISHER FEATHER JEWELRY.

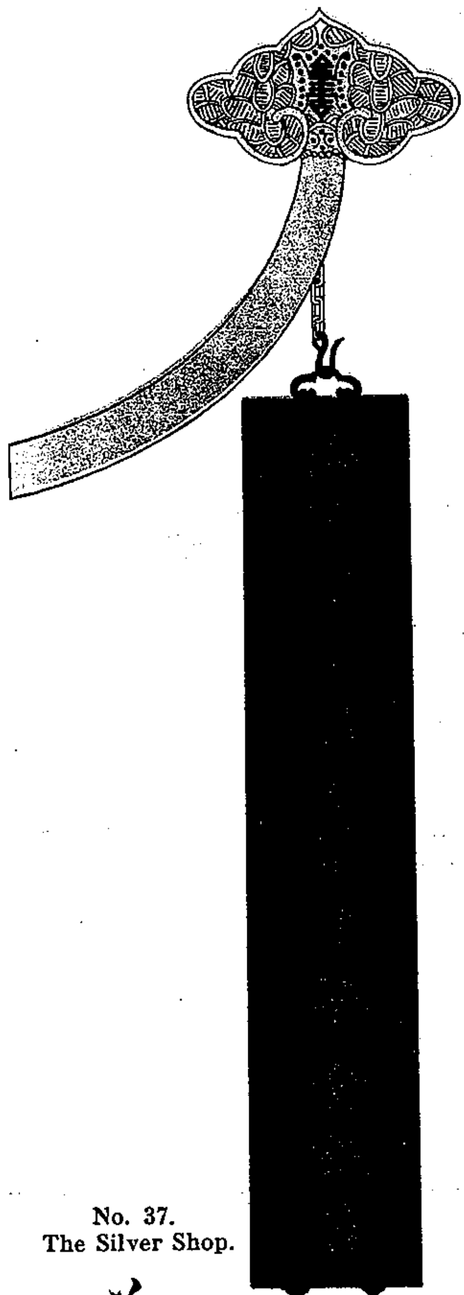
If the reader will turn again to the illustrations facing page 70, he will find, in No. 34, the sign of the dealer in those peculiarly Chinese ornaments, familiar all over the world to-day, in which the natural feathers of the kingfisher are mounted on silver, in the form of head-bands, brooches, and necklaces. Perishable they undoubtedly are, yet highly prized for the beautiful blue of their colouring, and the ingenuity and originality of their workmanship.

THE SILVER SHOP.

Passing, now, beyond the signs for officers' decorations and for false hair, we come to No. 37, which, being typical of a certain grade of shop, will instantly recall to the reader who has visited Peking, the characteristic scenes of Silver Street, Silk Street and others included in the tourist's experiences of the capital.

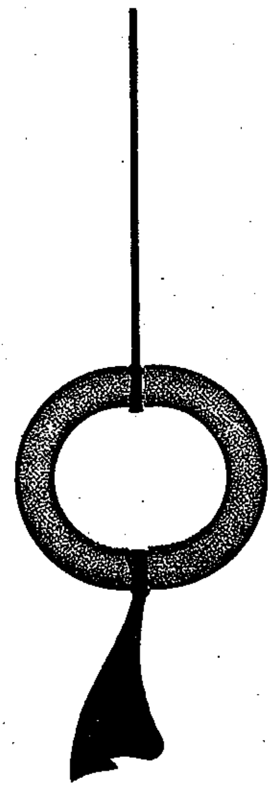
In this case, the characters alone serve to identify it as the sign of the Silver Shop, where, it is announced, all kinds of silver, gold and enamel articles, whether for personal adornment, table use, or purely for ornamental and decorative purposes, are to be found ready made; and where, besides, any other desired object may be made to order. These shops, whose front windows, either side of the entrance, gleam with a multitude of silver articles, are a familiar sight in all the cities of China, north, south and west, though this particular arrangement of the signboard is perhaps more peculiar to Peking—those of Shanghai being more generally affixed to the façade of the shop.

Outnumbering all the other objects in this display will invariably be observed the silver presentation flower vase, of unvarying design, with frosted surface and a device of prunus blossoms, signifying happiness and good wishes. It would be interesting to ascertain the number of tons of these pleasant remembrances produced for formal exchange between friends during the China New Year season, especially, in view of the fact, that the Chinese does not confine the



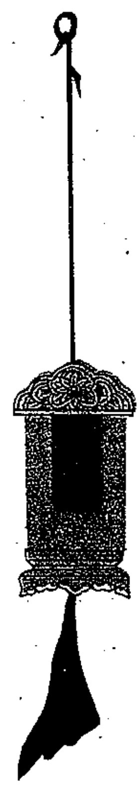
No. 37.
The Silver Shop.

首飾樓幌子



No. 38.
Cheap Jewelry.

假首飾幌子



No. 39.
Scented Oil.

香油舖幌子

observance of this custom to acquaintances of his own race, but most liberally includes business "friends" from the West. As a result of this agreeable custom, remarkable displays of this variety of silver articles are an established feature of foreign homes during the Christmas season.

Other objects, which the Chinese are fond of reproducing in silver are found among the flower vases and articles of tableware. There one sees the "Laughing Buddha" and other divinites, the many-storied pagodas, and tiny human figures representing the humblest phase of life—the ricksha coolie and his chariot, the cook with his travelling kitchen, and so on, *ad infinitum*.

CHEAP JEWELRY.

With something of this spirit of striking contrast, we have placed beside the sign of the resplendent Silver Shop, No. 38, the haven of those in search of the bits of jewelry which the hair, the throat, the ear-lobe, and the finger of the Chinese woman must exhibit at some time or other. The simple ring, painted to imitate silver, proclaims the tradesman's modest mission, eloquently enough, as being the purveyance of imitation finery.

SCENTED HAIR OIL.

At No. 39 is dispensed the scented oil with which ebon tresses are made to outshine the raven's wing, and to yield willingly to the deft fingers that weave them into a double knot at the nape of the neck. Sometimes a circle, or again a semi-circle of jasmine flowers is seen to follow the line of the knot. At other times, a bright-coloured flower carefully placed at the right, just back of the ear, adds its own touch to this most becoming coiffure, so admirably suited to the oval face, and the almond-shaped eyes, whose gleam the polished hair seeks, but fails ignominously, to match.

COIFFURE FRAMES.

For the coiffure of the Manchu woman, all sorts of horse hair frames are used as a foundation for the butterfly effects similar to

those worn by the Japanese woman. The Manchu woman, however, parts the hair in front, and wears a knot on top of the head, where it is surmounted by a broad and stiff band of black silk, set upright across the front, with the ends folded in, bow-fashion, and with bright flowers nestling against the hair at one side. The underpinnings comprise Sign No. 40.

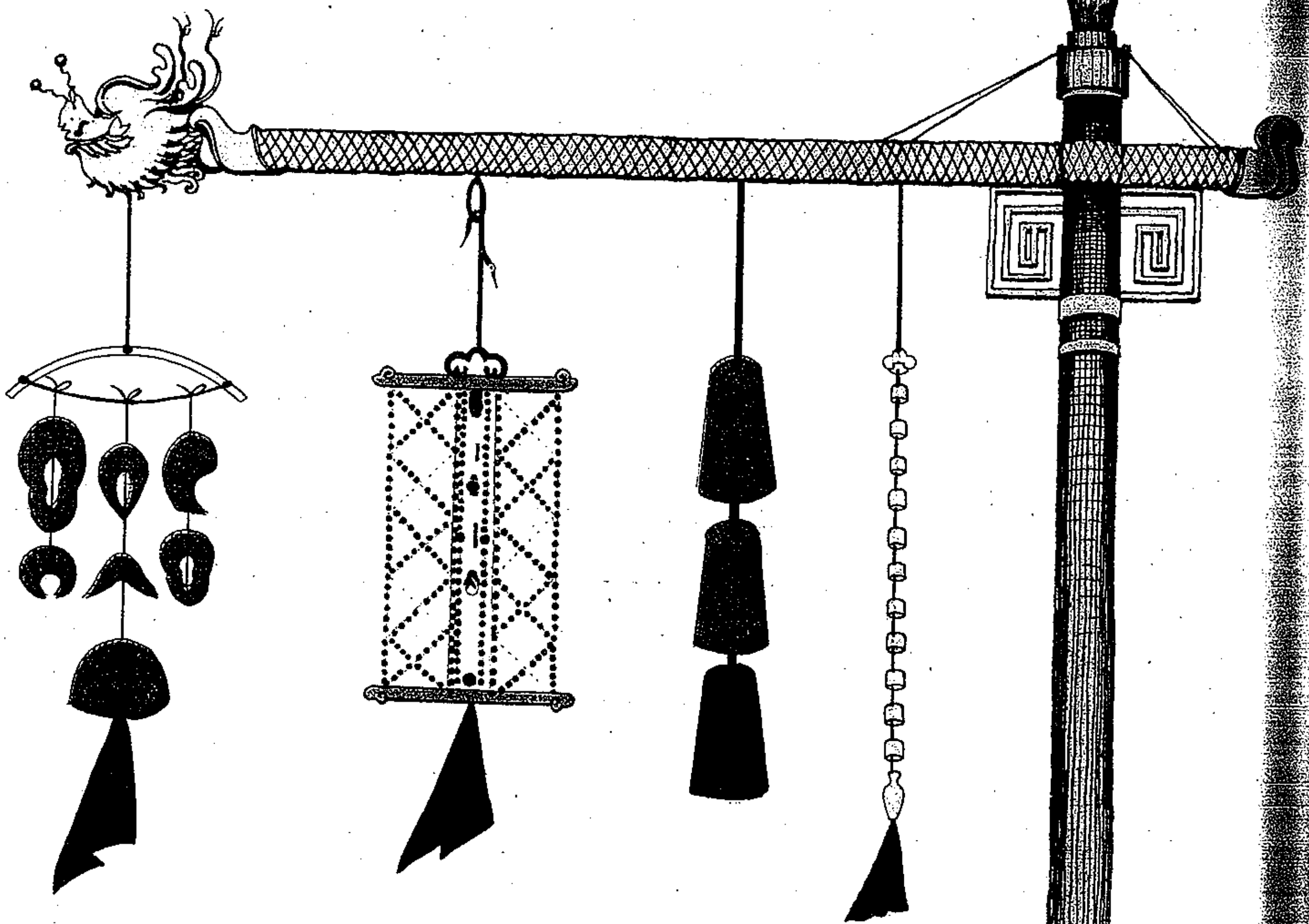
It is interesting to reflect that, however much the changes wrought by the Manchu accession to the throne of China tended to render the male Chinese indistinguishable from the Manchu, the personal appearance of the Chinese woman remained the same as ever it had been. With her hair brushed straight back, and coiled at the nape of the neck, her natty short jacket and trousers, covered or not with a skirt, according to her station, she was instantly to be differentiated from the Manchu woman, in her long, straight robe, towering headpiece and unbound feet. With particular zeal, too, the Chinese woman enwrapped her new-born babe in a Ming costume; and the dead were similarly robed, unless an official position demanded otherwise.

On the other hand, while the status of the Manchu woman in her own country enjoined none of the seclusion imposed upon the Chinese, her freedom became more circumscribed in China by a mandate issued by the first Manchu Emperor, Chun Chih. Among the Manchus, it will be remembered, a daughter takes precedence over her mother, and, in the disposition of property the consent of the eldest daughter must be secured by the father. But, most striking contrast of all, the Manchus erected triumphal arches in honour of women who remained unmarried; whereas, in Chinese belief, the unmarried girl, upon death, becomes one of the evil spirits who threaten the fate of the newborn baby during the first "Hundred Days."

"They are considered as not really belonging to the human race and cannot be reborn as men, in the world beyond the grave. It is for this reason that they wander here below, in quest of the soul of a male child, which they fain would ravish, in order that through this means they may be reborn as men in the womb of a mother."[16]

SILK FOR THE PLAIT.

At the shop where No. 42 is displayed, the unmarried girl—or, more properly speaking, the girl under twenty—whose long tresses are



No. 40.
Coiffure Frames.

馬尾纂鋪幌子

No. 41.
The Bead Shop.

琉璃珠子幌子

No. 42.
Silk for the Hair.

辮繩兒幌子

No. 43.
Headbands.

色頭鋪幌子

worn in a glistening plait down her back, purchases the gaily-coloured silk thread which is wound round and round the plait at the top, to a breadth of about four inches, and adds a distinct note in her personal appearance. Formerly, the plait was abandoned on marriage; but in this transition period, when flesh, fish, and fowl are equally indistinguishable, the only mark that identifies the young unmarried girl from the married, is the short lock of hair worn by the former, just in front of the ear. Otherwise fashions in hair dressing are determined by age, the plait being taboo after the age of twenty, and the plucking of the hairs above the forehead being required of the woman after she has passed the age of thirty. The latter operation, performed with the aid of a piece of white cotton thread, is a familiar sight on the streets, at the doorway of the woman's home. It should be noted, also, however, that since the dawn of "this freedom" on the feminine horizon of China, the "new woman"—that is to say, the girl college student—shows a decided predilection for the universal "bob."

HEADBANDS.

In No. 43 we have thirteen bits of bamboo, strung one above the other, with one shaped like a flower-vase at the bottom, and topped by one that is cut with a view to finishing off the design. Would anyone, but a Chinese, be able to guess that this sign represents a stiff headband, made of cloth or velvet, cut to the width of an inch or so over the middle of the forehead, and flanging out and backward as it descends over the ears, to be tied at the back of the head under the knot of hair? The claim is that it is worn for warmth, but as it is most often seen on the heads of elderly women it is resorted to, more probably to cover the baldness resulting from the drawing back of the hair to the required tautness imposed by the Chinese coiffure.

THE BEAD SHOP.

Though somewhat out of rotation No. 41 is mentioned last. It is the sign of the bead shop, in the concept of which it is impossible, to-day, to prevent the persistent intrusion of the foreigner, who thus attests the fact that the market for the mandarin chain, which is sus-

pended in the center of the sign, has been removed from China to the West. For thither it travels in its original form, or broken up into many, for the pleasure of milady of London, Paris, New York, or San Francisco—and otherwhere.

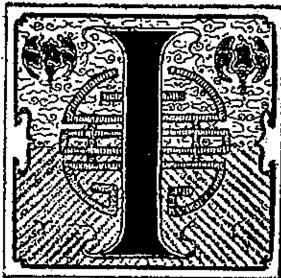
In the old days, however, the neck chain of the official was long or short, according to his rank; and in it not only he, himself, but his ancestors and descendants were represented in the pendants at the ends of the silken cords descending therefrom. Down the middle of his back hung the tribute to his forbears, on his left breast, the single one to his eldest son; and on the other side two, one to his wife and one to himself. When he stood, in reverent attitude, before his Emperor, after the kow-tow repeated as often as his station demanded, his body was bent forward until the chain touched the ground. And in this position he stood, for the duration of the audience. Now the significance of this vital point is lost, and the length of a chain of beads is a matter of no more serious moment than the satisfaction of the changing whims of fashion—which take no account, whatever, of dead and gone rulers of the Celestial Empire.

HIS OCCUPATION

THE FAUNA AND FLORA OF CHINA ASSEMBLED FOR THE FEAST OF LANTERNS.

The cicada and the crab, the snail and the sacred carp, with huge globular eyes of red glass, are easily made out in the foreground. Their mighty overlord, the dragon, whom it requires from three to five boys to bear aloft through the streets, is greater in length than a half dozen of these shops. The costume of the shopkeeper alone suggests that the season is the dead of winter.

Chapter Six: *Workshop Signs.*



T was once remarked by a foreign traveller in China, whose observation tour conducted over the length and breadth of the country, that, from the industrial point of view, the ex-Celestial Empire appeared to him to be best described as a land in which it took three men to drill one small hole. The comment adroitly expresses the sensation of a sudden leap backward into the Middle Ages that assails the mind attuned to the scale of a machine-made civilization, when confronted with the primitive methods and implements used by the Chinese workman. The statement, and its inferences, might, or might not, be resented by that number of modern industrial magnates—of whom there are some good examples in Shanghai—who are conducting enterprises in which most of the approved Western standards governing hours and conditions of labor, profit-sharing, insurance and pensions, free medical attention, and recreation provisions, are in full swing.[17] The subject is, admittedly, not an easy one to treat of,

even with greater space facilities than present boundaries permit. But one outstanding fact that may be pointed out, in all fairness, is, that these so-called modern features of great industries in China may be said to be merely a twentieth-century expression of the time-old benevolent system that included bonuses and similar provisions in the *noblesse oblige* attitude assumed by the heads of business institutions. The provision of food to their employees—which adds such a quaint note of interest to shopping expeditions in China, when the shopper happens to find himself in a big department store as the gong is being sounded—is often cited as an instance of this regard on the part of the employer. It was, in fact, such an atmosphere of protectiveness that was dimly suggested in our reference to the guilds, in which both sides of this phase of the human equation were shown to be represented.

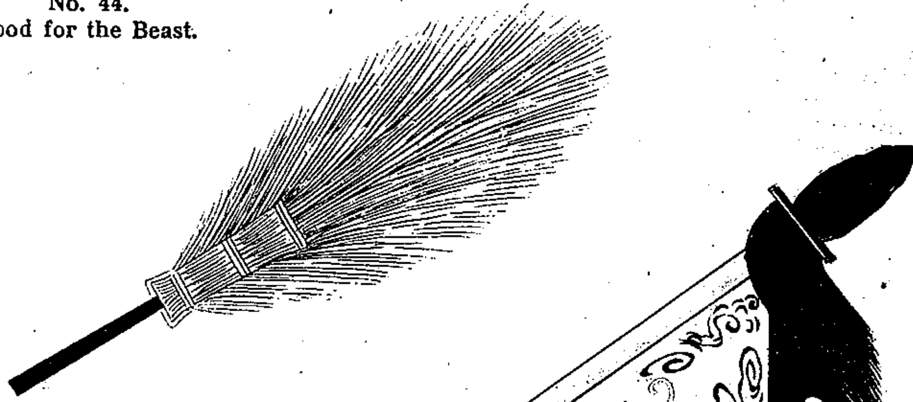
On the other hand, the comment quoted above has the merit of presenting a broad perspective of general conditions prevailing outside of the mercantile world—and this is another of the conspicuous facts in the immensity and complexity of that which is China. It is, indeed, when one's memory becomes suddenly charged with a multitude of the characteristic scenes being enacted every day on the streets of Chinese villages and cities, including Peking, that one realizes the limitations imposed by our subject.

Therefore, before setting out on the tour of inspection arbitrarily laid down by the illustrations comprised in the present section, we would remind the reader only imperfectly acquainted with China, that a whole hard-working world exists, beyond that indicated only in part by our symbols, where that class of toil characterized by our quotation is proceeding merrily, interminably, exactly as it has done for ages past. Fascinating to watch, and fraught with mystery to the disturbed focus of the alien eye, to which all this industry appears vastly inconsequent, such pictures as are enacted in workshops of this class, are neither given, nor do they require captions, since they are perfectly intelligible to the initiated. For this reason, they do not come within our scope. Then, again, beyond all of this, is the army of travelling artisans, which subject was lightly touched upon in an earlier chapter.

We are enabled, however, in our tour of the workshops of Peking, at length to take note of the fourfooted instruments of toil, without

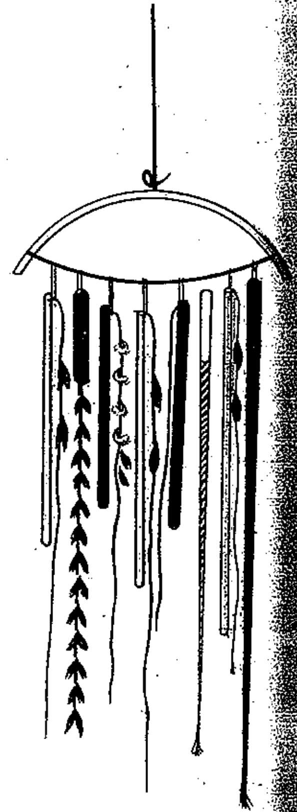
草料鋪幌子

No. 44.
Food for the Beast.

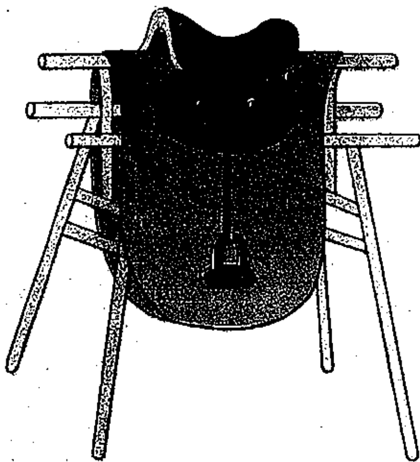


官車鋪幌子

No. 46.
Government "Peking Carts."



No. 45.
The Saddlemaker.



鞍韂鋪幌子

No. 47.
Crops and Whips.

皮鞭子鋪幌子

whom the labourer's task would be as much hampered as one's own progress through China would be rendered impossible. Hence it may not be amiss if the opening note of our campaign of inquiry be composed of the voices of the ubiquitous donkey, the sleek-coated mule—which in China attains to real distinction and size—the ever-present and much-discussed China pony, the imperturbable ox, and the familiar, and better advertised "Ship of the Desert."

Aggressively aloof is His Majesty the Dromedary, with the haughty and disdainful carriage of his head unrelaxed, whether he be lying on the ground across a shop entrance, taking on or discharging cargo, or moving in a single file of his brethren across a lonely landscape in the outermost reaches of the country. But he enters dominantly into any picture of North China, nevertheless; and the reader may fit him in at any point of the tour of Peking, calling to mind the plaintive note of the little bell round his neck, that is so out of keeping with the impressive dignity of the movements which give it tongue, that one's sense of balance is considerably restored by the weird, hysterical screams wherewith, periodically, he rends the air.

THE INNER AND OUTER URGE.

Food for the Beasts.

In Sign No. 44 appears the device displayed by the shop where the camel, along with the other and humbler members of this brotherhood of workers, would be fed.

Whips and Crops.

Of the assortment of crops composing Sign No. 47, the one at the extreme right would be plied by the camel's driver; while next but one, and closely resembling it, is the stimulant administered by the ox-cart driver. Next to this, on the left (fourth from the right) is the whip used on the horse, or mule, in harness.

The second from the left is the equestrian's crop, only to be used, however, when he is mounted on ponyback. These long tails, ornamented with tufts of colour, signify that the crop is plied from the saddle, the long-handled ones with fewer bits of colour, belonging properly in the hands of the muleback rider.

THE SADDLE MAKER.

To the person in search of a saddle, Sign No. 45 speaks directly and to the point. On a wooden frame set outside of his shop, the saddle maker places a sample of his workmanship, and on this basis, one opens negotiations, after examination, or passes on to the shop of a competitor. The Chinese saddle is an article of native handiwork indispensable to the missionary, and by this large and indefatigable class of traveller, it is even recommended for comfort. But to the average foreigner *en route* for the interior, the prospect of covering long distances on this wooden seat is none too attractive; though its asperities are rendered somewhat less insistent by the saddle rug, woven in gay colours, like any other Chinese carpet. Such saddles are no longer used in the Chinese army, that of the soldier being made of leather and built, more or less, on the lines of the English saddle.

THE CARRIAGE MAKER.

At sight of the most conspicuous emblem, No. 46, the reader will doubtless immediately conjure up visions of ancient battlefields, with hordes of savage-looking Bannermen contending one against the other, as they are depicted in the *k'u ssu,* or embroidered panels, and in the old paintings, which have made them familiar to Western eyes.

Sign No. 46 is a reproduction of one of these old pennants, which connote the whole visible Manchu system, military and political. The famous "Eight Banners," it will be remembered, consisted originally of four—yellow, red, blue and white—under the system established by Nurhachu, the great founder of the Manchu nation, who has been likened to the Mongol Khan, Jenghis. The unit of this first consolidated Manchu army consisted of a captain's command of 300 men, called a *niulu-yachen.* Five of these units formed a Chala, and five Chalas made up a "Banner." No soldier was permitted to leave his captain's standard, and if wounded while absent from his post he was neither rewarded nor pensioned.

With the rapid growth of the army four additional banners were devised, and called the "Bordered Banners." The yellow, white and

blue were edged with red, and the red, with white; and the Emperor took command of the "Three Upper Banners," yellow, white and bordered yellow. The *Beres* (Manchu word for chieftain) took the rest. This "Eight-Banner" ground plan of the military organization was later extended over the political system, resulting in the nation's status being that of an army, with the Emperor as Commander-in-Chief. Every individual subject, however, was a slave (*nu-tsai*), and after the Manchus took the throne of China, the Chinese military officers were required to so refer to themselves in communications addressed to the throne. Whatever an official's position might be, *vis-à-vis* the throne he remained a *nu-tsai*, and the property of his *Bere*.[18]

On the battlefield the "Eight Banners" marched abreast of each other. The heavy infantry, bearing long knives and spears, formed the vanguard, and was followed by light-armed archers. Each foot unit also carried two "cloudy ladders," manned by twenty soldiers, whose duty it was to scale walls and ramparts. We shall come upon the intrepid leader of the Manchus in a subsequent chapter (Section VI) but for the present, suffice it to say that it was one of these "Three Upper Banners," white bordered with red, that one saw fluttering outside the shop of the maker of "Peking Carts" for government use; and in the days when the artisan was so distinguished from his fellow-craftsmen, his product was one of the gorgeous spectacles that enlivened the city streets and country roads. Its wheels were studded with gold, silver and bits of jade, and its upholstery, of rich silk, satin or brocade, befitted and indicated the rank of the occupant. It will be remembered that it was in one of these "springless carriages" that the Empress Dowager made her escape from Peking, on the collapse of the Boxer Rebellion, in 1900.

To-day the builder's work goes on as of yore, and his model remains the same. But its splendours have departed, like the glory of his imperial patrons; and having furled his banner, probably not without a sigh, he has laid it away. Sooner than substitute another, or perhaps dispirited by reflections on a dull and prosaic present, he allows the evidence of the shop's activities to proclaim the nature of his business, like so many of the humbler centres of industry, where some rude semblance of the inscribed signboard may, or may not, hang without.

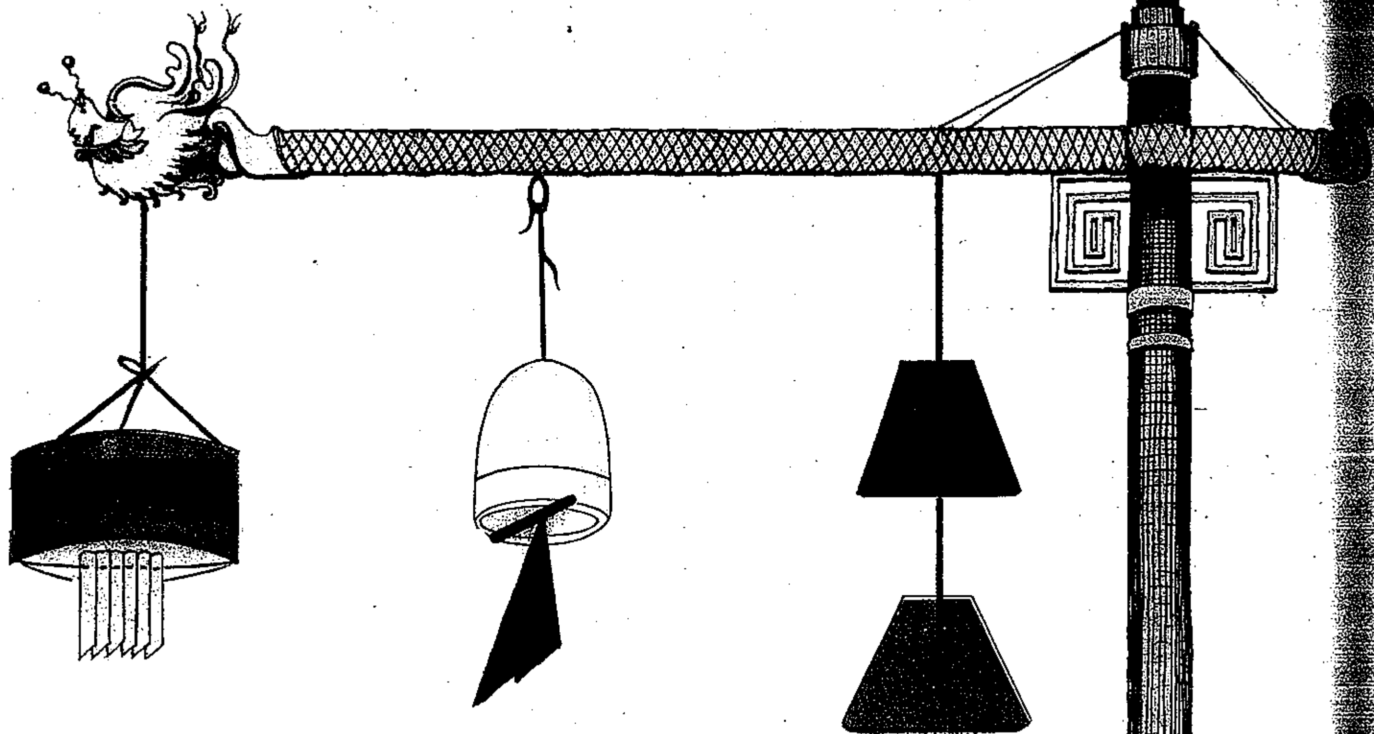
Considering that they are, after all, designed to carry but one passenger—and his luggage outside, in the rear—an extraordinary overplus of wood appears to be employed in the make-up of these springless carts, whose two massive wheels, supplemented by those of the ox-cart and wheelbarrow, have cut deep ridges in the old roads. All of these vehicles are now barred from the new highways with the construction of which, here and there, China is seeking to improve her means of communication, inspired thereto, in certain parts of the provinces of Shansi and Shantung by the engineering enterprise supported by funds of the American Red Cross, after the close of the Great War.

In the blue-hooded interior of the cart, one squats Buddha-wise, upon cushions, while the driver sits casually, with legs dangling, on the apron. One's rate of speed is governed by the amount of consideration which the latter shows for his beast, by walking beside the cart, now and then. When the traveller chances to be new to ways Chinese, these tender feelings manifest themselves with more than ordinary frequency, especially when an hourly rate of payment has been agreed upon. And, though from different motives, one soon learns to follow his example, after a taste or two of the rigours of a long journey by Peking cart, on which equipage one has, nevertheless, to depend directly one departs from the beaten path of China's inadequate railway system.

Picturesqueness, however, is by no means lacking in the present day aspect of these quaint vehicles, especially when a blue cotton awning extends forward almost to the head of the mule in the shafts; and the effect is considerably heightened when demure figures, with brightly gleaming eyes, flower-decked and polished black tresses, and gaily-coloured robes, are glimpsed within.

THE BAMBOO-SIEVE MAKER.

In No. 48 we have the sign of the workshop where the apparatus is made in which are cooked those steamed cakes which are stamped with the characters for happiness, and serve in the exchange of good wishes at holiday times. This contrivance is made of bamboo, of the size of the cauldron over which it is set; and when in action, the small strips of bamboo, which here are strung together underneath, are



No. 48.
The Bamboo Sieve-maker.

籠屜鋪幌子

No. 49.
The Miller.

粉房幌子

No. 50.
The Tanner.

皮板鋪幌子

criss-crossed along the bottom. On this network, the cakes are laid for steaming. Perhaps the reader will agree that this is one of the most charming of the emblems, exhibiting as it does, two prominent traits of the Chinese character—the practical, and the instinct for picturesque effect. Surely none but a Chinese would perceive the decorative possibilities inherent in so homely an object as a bamboo sieve.

THE MILLER.

No. 49 is the miller's sign, for which he has chosen the upper and nether stones between which rice and beans are ground into flour. We have already encountered this commodity in our tour of the cake shops. The device is coloured white in imitation of the variety of stone used in the production of this flour, which the Chinese call "powder." Many of these "shops" appear to have been built round the bullock and his treadmill, being just large enough for the huge stones and the path trod by the blindfolded animal. Here also are ground up a variety of green bean, to be made up into stalks. The substance is starchy, and is used for food. Corn meal also emanates from this mill.

THE TANNERY.

Sign No. 50 carries a message to the leather boot- and shoe-maker, and to the tailor, or whoever may be in search of skins to be used as coat linings, or for the broad collars of overcoats, and the fur hats so much affected by the northern Chinese. In short, these black and green objects constitute the device of the tanner of leather and curer of pelts. Their form more or less faithfully suggests that of the knife used in cutting leather—an implement which will present itself in one of our subsequent tours.

THE TINSMITH.

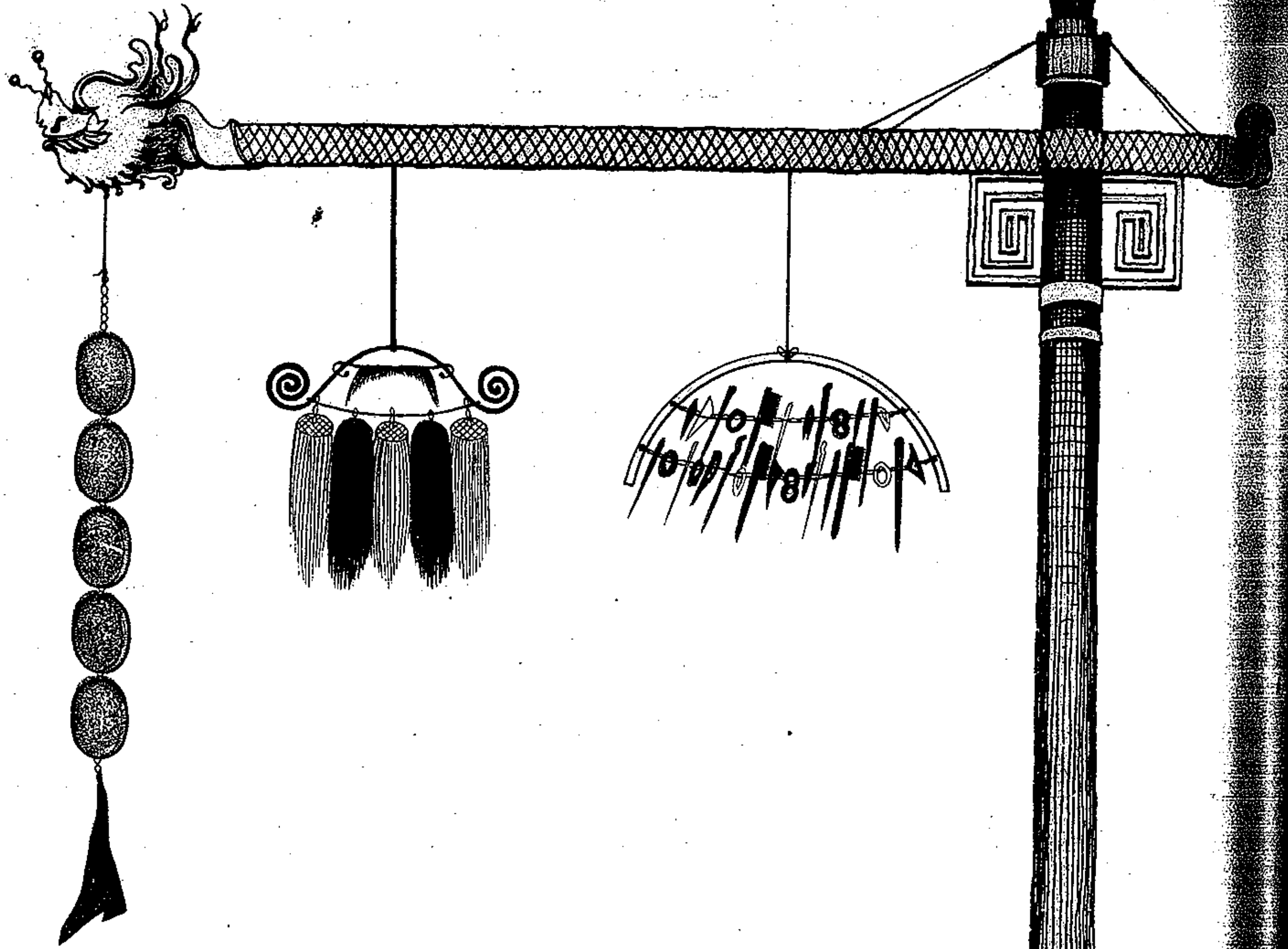
No. 51 is the sign of the worker in tin and pewter. Five metal discs in an up-and-down row is the device; and it is almost lost to sight in the multitude of pewter teapots, canisters, candlesticks, and

the receptacles often mistaken for teapots, but from which warm wine is poured. All of these, besides a bewildering variety of et ceteras, he hangs up against the shop front. Such exhibitions never fail to interest the traveller from countries where this combination of tin and lead is no longer in favour. In China, however, its position is an important one, established by ancient usage, which decrees that the candle-sticks, braziers and wine vessels used at funeral rites must be made of this metal—or tin, in cases of extreme poverty. Antique pieces of Chinese pewter have long since been absorbed by collectors, but the new ones are not without interest, especially when a liberal proportion of antimony imparts a smoother and more silvery finish. Ningpo pewter has long been famous, as well as that of Wenchow and Chaoyang, near Swatow.

THE WORKER IN HORSEHAIR.

In Sign No. 52, five tufts of horsehair, black and white, are suspended from the lower bar, and signify that the worker is engaged in the production of articles made from that material. Among these are the foundations for the coiffure which were shown in No. 40, the strings for the violin bow—the instrument itself carrying strings of silk cord—and a variety of very fine sieve, an article that, besides its many practical uses, has an important place among the superstitious observances of the people. According to one of the customs pertaining to birth, a fish-net is draped about the bed of the new-born baby, to protect it against evil spirits that threaten its safety during the first "hundred days" of its life. When a fish-net is not available, however, a sieve acts as its substitute, the idea being that the meshes of either represent so many watchful eyes that rivet themselves on the demons. A sieve is also hung at the rear of the bride's chair, where it supplements the similar functions performed by a metal mirror. Either operate likewise, when suspended over the doorway of the room in which a person has recently died.[19]

Also displayed in the sign of the artisan, is an example of his workmanship—the theatrical beard fastened to the curved frame-work of the sign at the top. The peculiarity of Chinese beards as worn on the stage, is that their upper line seems to be that of an elongated and drooping moustache, while the long hair descends over the chest



No. 51.
The Tinsmith.

錫器舖幌子

No. 52.
Horsehair.

馬尾舖幌子

No. 53.
Articles made of Bone.

牛角作房幌子

in one line, thus covering the mouth. The beard shown in the picture is not so often seen as the long beard; and, as it leaves the mouth uncovered, it is probably used in plays depicting events of the Sung dynasty, when Emperors wore moustaches, a small tuft below the mouth, and whiskers sometimes trimmed to a point in front, or, again divided into four pointed parts, one on either side of the chin, and one in front of either ear.

THE BONE WORKER.

Sign No. 53 is that of the worker in bone—maker of hair ornaments, rings, brushes, etc. Prominently displayed among these articles strung from a bit of curved bamboo, is that popular adjunct to the toilet—the toothbrush—whose function is far better understood in China than is that of the handkerchief. The excellent teeth of the Chinese would abundantly testify to this fact, even if this were not one of the rites very generally performed in public. It is a most arresting sight, this latter, especially during the hot weather, when there is an incongruity about the operation as performed in a shop interior, where the line of the counter on which a brass basin is set for the occasion, marks off the naked and glistening body of the person plying the toothbrush! Meanwhile, however, at any time, and in all seasons, the ceremony is also to be witnessed as it is observed by the long-gowned citizen, who steps forth from his domicile and blithely proceeds with the business in the public street.

THE PAPER MAKER.

The maker of mounting paper pursues his daily task beyond Sign No. 54, as the familiar Chinese scroll plainly indicates. His product comes to mind most readily as the background of a priceless Sung or Ming landscape, or of the mellow old portrait of a great dignitary. But in this guise it would not be functioning in the highest expression of art, according to native opinion. It is only when inscribed with beautifully executed characters that it would be so regarded in China, where caligraphy, and not painting or sculpture, ranks as high art.

ORDINARY PAPER.

The adjoining sign, No. 55, is that of the maker of ordinary paper of all sorts, for common use; the four metal pans simulated in the device representing the vessels in which the pulp is prepared.

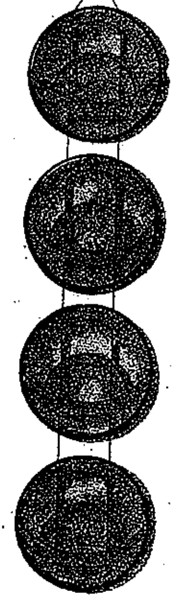
The process of paper-making in China is an extremely primitive one, notwithstanding the fact that the Chinese are credited with being the first people to produce paper from vegetable and other fibres. The first substitute for the bamboo tablet and stylus of ancient times was the silk and ink introduced in A.D. 75, at the court of the Emperor Ho Ti, of the Later Han dynasty. The innovation was shortly followed by the invention of paper, made from bark, tow, old linen, fish nets, etc., etc. Both were discoveries of the chief eunuch of the palace, the celebrated Ts'ai Lun, who later received the title of Marquis, in recognition of these services. Of him it is quaintly related that one day, having realized himself to be the object of dislike and intrigue on the part of the Empress, "he formally bathed, solemnly adjusted his hat and robes of state, and swallowed a dose of poison."[20]

The materials employed in the manufacture of paper at the present time are (1) rice straw, and a variety of reed known as *mao tzu;* (2) bamboo; and (3) the bark of various papyfera, notably that known as the "paper mulberry." From the rice straw is produced the coarsest and cheapest paper such as is used for packing, and in the manufacture of fireworks, paper money to be burnt at funerals, etc., etc., all of which are indicated in Sign No. 55. The better classes of paper, shown in Sign No. 54, are made from bamboo, which is treated with lime and soda, and reduced to pulp by a process that requires six months' time, and yields several grades. The poorest quality is used for window covering, taking the place of glass, and the best grades for writing and printing.

The product of the "paper mulberry" is that which is erroneously called "rice paper." It also is made in many varieties, from the thinner sorts that clothe the paper effigies of human beings and animals that appear in funeral processions, and likewise cover the trunks of paper money, to the very tough fabric with which umbrellas are covered. Artificial flowers are also made from the finer grade. In

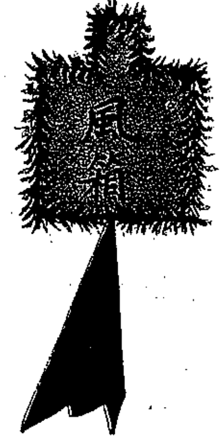
No. 54.
Mounting Paper.

裱畫舖幌子



No. 55.
Ordinary Paper.

粗紙作房幌子



No. 56.
The Bellows-maker.

風箱舖幌子

the Customs reports paper is classified as: first quality, second quality, "joss" paper, mill paper, and paper, other kinds. Thus the "joss" paper, or that of the burnt offerings, is seen to be of the third class, though in point of quantities produced it far outranks any of the others.

The re-manufacture of old paper into new, it should be mentioned, was expressly forbidden under the time-honoured inhibitions against the improper use of the written character, one phase of which we found in our first chapter to have prevented the keeping of guild records. The universal lack of statistics of old China is explained on the same grounds. But this reverence for the marks of scholarship finds expression in many a custom that adds zest to the life of the foreign resident. It is demonstrated, for example, in the method of collecting waste paper at the door of the home. This other-where negligible incident of daily life becomes a ceremony in China, as may be deduced from the fact that it is a part of the restrictions that shopkeepers shall be enjoined from "wrapping meat, or perishable articles" in printed paper; and that, as we have said, it may not be used "in the manufacture of machine-made paper." The "desecration of manuscript in the making of *papier mâché*" is also prohibited. Affixed to street posts everywhere, are little baskets, bearing the legend: "For the respectful saving of inscribed paper." All of these provisions are enforced by means of a system conducted and supported by the guilds.

The paper waste of the household is carefully garnered by a servant especially assigned to the task, and kept in a receptacle held sacred to the purpose. Each morning, on the tinkling of the bell, and the peculiar call of the collector, at the outer entrance, the guardian of the waste-paper basket proceeds across the intervening courtyards, and proferring his more or less light burden, he stands by while it is solemnly transferred from his own, to the care of the public custodian by means of a sort of huge wooden tweezers. It is to be assumed that among these wardens of the waste paper is distributed the average percentage of human frailty, and that the cart of the paper collector will be found to contain may a bit of inscribed paper which has been allowed to become wrinkled, or damp. For one observes the latter prodding about among his precious cargo and extracting a bit here and there, to straighten and smoothe it out

with reverent touches of his rough fingers, or to lay it upon the ground to dry, in some open space. Meanwhile, the demeanour of the group of spectators which inevitably attends any public act in China is such as would be suitable to a religious service; and an opportunity to assist the paper collector in these ministrations of respect is considered a valued privilege by the humble folk of his own order.

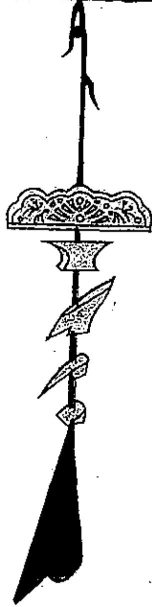
Once delivered, the contents of the cart are solemnly burned, either under the auspices of the guild, or in small crematories "built for this purpose by philanthropic persons in the streets of towns and elsewhere." It is also to be noted, however, that in some of the more progressive communities a reaction has evidently set in against the wastefulness resulting from this ancient custom; for one learns, on inquiry, that a method has been devised by which inscribed paper may safely be utilized in the manufacture of more paper, by adopting the simple expedient of erasing the characters with sulphuric acid!

THE BELLOWS MAKER.

Sign No. 56—that of the bellows maker—pictures an object, which, it is safe to say, a very small percentage of readers will be able to identify. To the Chinese, it is the pivot around which the whole system of public feeding revolves—the hub of the wheel of life, so to speak. It is, in short, the diaphragm of the wooden air box, which is set beside the fireplace over which his food is cooked in the shops comprised in our first tour. The fuzziness of its outline is contributed by an edging of feathers, which prevent the escape of the air it forces into a pipe conducting to the firebed. The pumping falls to the lot of a small boy, who crouches on the ground to perform his task.

THE MATTING SHOP.

Sign No. 57 shows a roll of Chinese matting, made of flat strips of bamboo, plaited diagonally. In such shops one orders a matting cover for the stone floor of one's Chinese house. It is made in one piece, to fit all the nooks and crannies of each room in the neatest manner imaginable; and when laid down, after the floor has

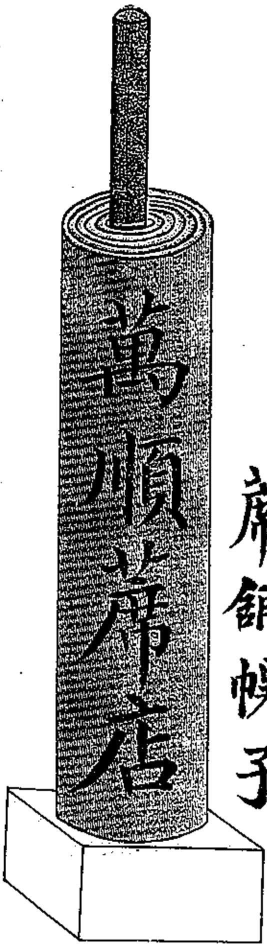


No. 58.
Shoe Supports.

木頭底兒鋪幌子

No. 59.
Candle Wicks.

燈草鋪幌子



蓆鋪幌子

No. 57
Matting.

been sprinkled with lime, it forms a most satisfactory and sanitary covering, as well as an effective background for the Chinese rugs.

Another of its uses is as a covering for the temporary sheds erected along the route of funeral processions, or in the courtyards of homes, during the funeral rites, and for weddings and other celebrations. Huge horticultural exhibitions in Shanghai have been held in such a shed, when interest in the blooms displayed vied with that aroused by the forest of bamboo poles composing the framework, constructed, as is customary, entirely without the use of nails.

SHOE SUPPORTS.

In No. 58, that hangs at the shop where the maker of wooden parts for women's shoes plies his trade, are the indications that this sign has survived the Ching Dynasty, since the uppermost of the four objects comprising it, is the large "heel" attached at the centre of the shoe, on which Manchu women formerly walked. Below it are the various props for the women with bound feet. Despite the numerical prominence of the ladies' shoe-shops of the port cities, it is largely the custom of the Chinese woman to construct her own shoes from these parts and material purchased at the shop encountered in the previous chapter, displaying Sign No. 29. Having achieved so much, she would either purchase the soles of the dealer, at No. 28, or await the call of the travelling shoemender already referred to, and entrust the completion of her task to him.

CANDLE WICKS.

Sign No. 59 is another relic of bygone, and less advanced, days. It resembles a graceful tassel, but the fringe is not of silk. It is, in fact made of candle wicks, which are now turned out by means of small hand machines.

THE BRASS WORKER.

The Brassworker's sign is No. 60. Obviously, he is possessed of a considerable trade, since he employs two signs to cover its extent.

On the first he displays the locks and ornamental bits of the metal applied to articles of furniture and to chests. In the second appear the gongs, which in conjunction with other instruments are employed alike at China New Year, weddings and funerals, their function being the intimidation of evil spirits constantly on the watch to obstruct the path of the souls of the departed on their way to the Western Heaven, or to lay obstacles in that of the newly wed about to cross the "Silver Stream," as matrimony is poetically referred to in the scrolls that decorate the walls wherever a wedding ceremony is to take place.

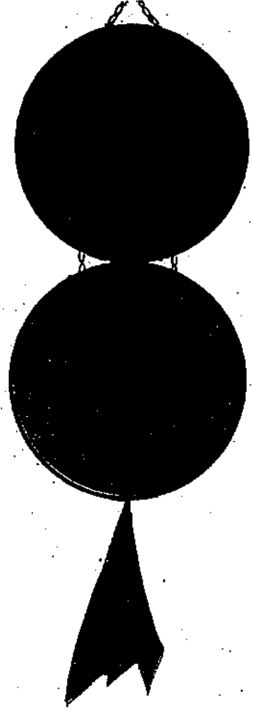
The gong figures eloquently, also, along with other earsplitting contrivances, during an eclipse, which the Chinese interpret as the attempt of some fell monster of the air to devour sun or moon, whichever happens to be in obscurity. The greater the din the better the chances of frustrating the demon, is the philosophy.

This use of the gong for sounding a note of warning is probably a development from its original function established by the illustrious ruler, Yu, the Great, who, in the desire to render himself approachable by the people, caused five instruments to be hung at the entrance of his court—a drum, a gong, a stone instrument, a bell, and a rattle. They were to be used in the following wise: Whenever one of his subjects wished "to discourse with him upon any of the virtues which should adorn a monarch," he was to come to the palace and beat upon the drum. The sound of the gong announced to the king that audience was desired by someone who disapproved of his conduct. The stone instrument proclaimed the bearer of important news; the bell announced one who had personal grievances to communicate; and the rattle, one who wished to make appeal from judicial decisions.

The system had its disadvantages, evidently, for Chinese history naïvely records the fact that such was its popularity that the poor King was ever afterward "late at his midday meal." [21]

THE SILVERSMITH.

No. 61 is the Silversmith's sign. Ten of the little bowls for soya and other sauces are strung one above the other, but it goes without saying that any article composed of silver, except, perhaps delicate pieces of jewelry, are made in the shop.

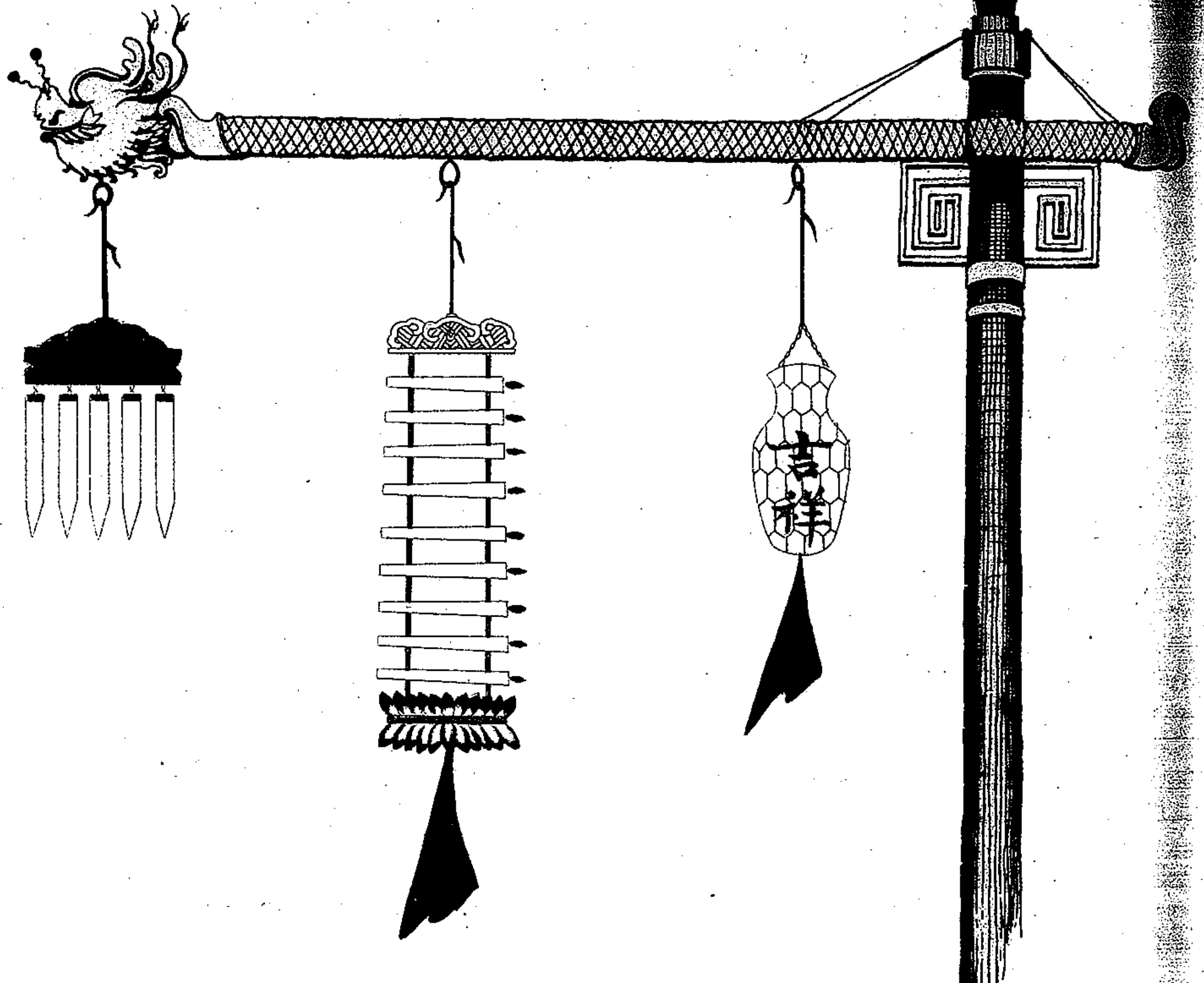


No. 60.
The Brassworker.

響器鋪幌子

No. 61.
The Silversmith.

銀碗鋪幌子



No. 62.
The Needlemaker.

針舖幌子

No. 63.
The Candlemaker.

燭舖幌子

No. 64.
The Lanternmaker.

燈籠舖幌子

THE NEEDLE MAKER.

It is probable that the five elongated cones hanging from a framework of redwood, in Sign No. 62, would not immediately suggest to the reader that very common implement, the needle. Such, however, is the import of the sign. The needle maker's product did, formerly, resemble these objects, the Chinese preferring their needles much shorter than they are made in the West; and in the days when this sign was conceived, the head of the needle was not flattened, as it now is, in imitation of the foreign one. Needles purchased in native shops to-day are scarcely to be distinguished from the foreign article, even as to length. The thimble of the Chinese is a narrow metal band worn between the first and second joints of the middle finger, and the movement of the needle is away from, instead of toward, the body.

THE CANDLE MAKER.

The white objects arranged in nine tiers over a lotus blossom motif, in No. 63, represent candles. The red projection is the reed—the spinal column, as it were, of the candle which, being hollow, permits of its being slipped over the metal pin in the top of the candlestick. The wick of the candle is wrapped around the bit of reed, and the two burn steadily together. The "grease" is made from the seed of the tallow tree, which also yields the oil that one sees in the little bowls whose floating wicks faintly illuminate the Buddhist shrine, and play a peculiar part in funeral ceremonies, as we shall see later on in our tours.

THE LANTERN MAKER.

No. 64 is the sign of the lantern maker; and at the word "lantern" the reader will immediately conjure up visions of the famous street in Peking, where, however, No. 78 would be lost to sight, and sought for in vain. This is the artisan catering to the humble citizen, who needs this small aid to find his way along the country road. Split bamboo forms the frame, which is encased in paper, but they would not be made in the form of a flower vase, as is the case with the sign.

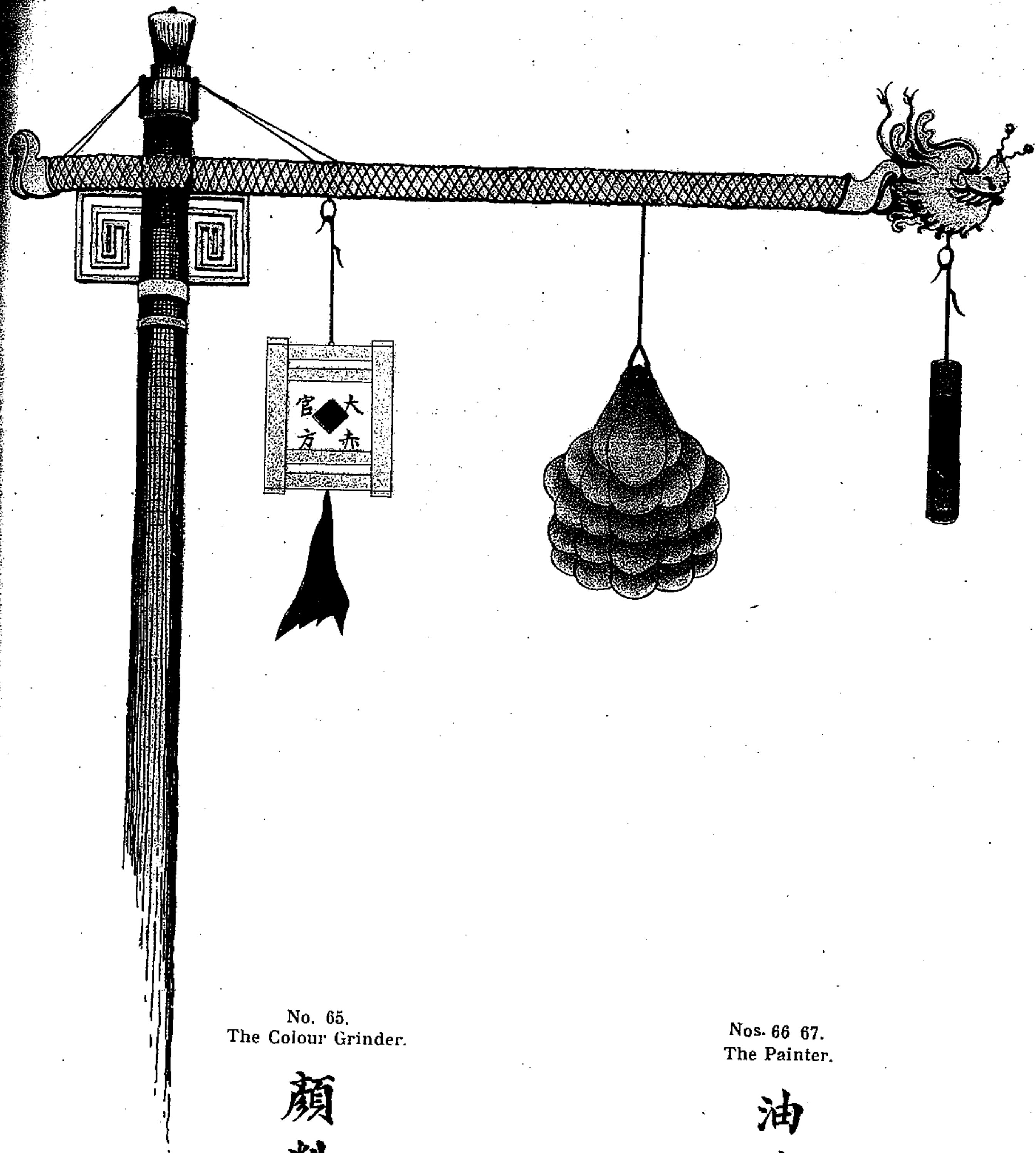
For some reason the bright red characters, *teng lung,* (*teng,* light, and *lung,* lantern; hence, literally, "lantern light") are seen painted on even the cheapest of lanterns, the custom having been formerly for the lantern to bear its owner's name, and sometimes that of its maker. In the case of a high official many other characters and devices appeared; and it is said that in the old days, during the Feast of Lanterns, when every pair of hands in the kingdom had to bear this votive offering, that of the Viceroy of a province often represented a value of £100 to £150. One of the most interesting of Chinese lanterns—and the only comparatively costly one—is that made of ox- or goat-horn, almost as transparent as glass. It is of a golden colour, and simply inscribed, with red characters only. It plays a prominent part at elaborate family festivals, and is not, of course, carried in the streets.

THE COLOUR GRINDER.

Nos. 65, 66 and 67 are signs that have to do with the painter's and the dyer's trades. No. 65 is a replica, though smaller in size, of a sign which we shall encounter in our next tour, when we shall find it serving the dealer in raw gold, with, however, one note of difference. As was to be expected, no explanation of this coincidence in design has been forthcoming. In this case, No. 65, the characters announce that ground colour, whether for the painter or the dyer are procured here. No. 67 is used in conjunction with it, to signify a more diversified stock; but however much this may seem to promise, it does nothing to counteract one's memories of unfortunate experiences at the hands of the Chinese dyer maintaining the usual "Clean and Dye-shop." One is, indeed, led to the conclusion that the only survivors of the lost art of dyeing in China are probably in the employ of the great exporters of silks and satins.

THE PAINTER.

No. 66 is the sign of the painter, who employs for his purposes the sheep's bladder in which lacquer is kept. It bears some resemblance to the bunch of coarse cloth, or cotton wool, with which



No. 65.
The Colour Grinder.

顏料舖幌子

Nos. 66 67.
The Painter.

油漆舖幌子

paint is applied in this country, where the use of the paint brush is not yet understood. This is one of the numerous instances of waste, in China, for whether it be the framework of a house, or the finest pieces of furniture, stain or paint is smeared on in this manner; and on observing an army of small boys so engaged, with hands and arms covered half way to the elbow in the liquid colour, one is led to calculate as to how much of it is lost daily by this method.

HIS FUNDS

No. 68.
The Pawnshop.

當舖幌子

No. 69.
The Exchange Shop.

錢舖幌子

Chapter Seven:
Two Phases of Exchange.

ONE of the most interesting of our glimpses into *les mœurs* of the Chinese people is that afforded by the group of symbols bearing on the money question—that most vexatious of all problems confronting the foreigner in China, whether or not he belong to the world of foreign commerce. It elucidates itself but little to the old resident, though the tourist fancies that his perplexities over "big" and "small" money, and the variations in its value as he moves from province to province, are due to his short acquaintance with the country. As will be observed, five symbols comprise this group, and it will be remarked immediately that the first three bear a triangle of red cloth of exceptional length and prominence. The first and third of the emblems so distinguished, Nos. 68 and 70, are pawnbroker's devices, while the second, No. 69, is that of the moneychanger; and the reader is given his choice as to what may be the best of the several theories advanced in one of our early tours, as accounting for the addition of this bit of colour to the

shop symbol. Is it to be taken as signifying happiness, fulfilment, plenty, the desire to attract notice, or as a mere adjunct to the effectiveness of the design?

In No. 71, on the other hand, the red colour note is found to be of normal proportions. This is the shop in which silver is converted into "shoes"—taels, or sycee, as they are variously called, with what degree of accuracy we shall have occasion to observe later.

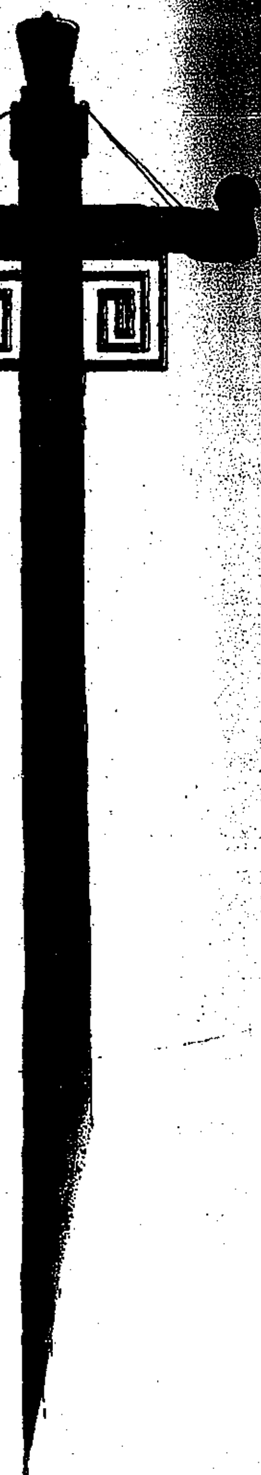
No. 72, again, is without this decorative touch altogether, but the belief that the red cloth belongs to the pattern is refuted by the fact that the grinder of colours uses exactly the same device as this, plus the bit of cloth.

This symbol, No. 72, is the sign of the dealer in raw gold, a metal that occupies a negligible relation to the subject of money in China, since years of persistent effort have thus far failed to place her among the gold-standard countries of the world; wherefore she stands today as the only nation maintaining a currency based on silver. Thus we may postpone consideration of the gold-dealer's emblem and proceed to examine the other four symbols in our section.

THE PAWNSHOP.

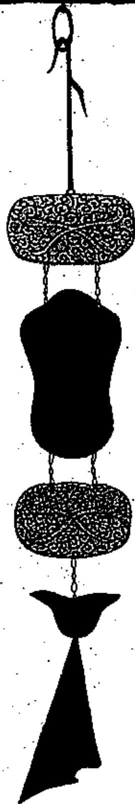
If the resplendent and important-looking sign of the pawnbroker, No. 68, appear almost to eclipse its neighbour, the moneychanger's sign, No. 69, the fact is exactly in line with that which happens in real life; for while the exchange shop easily eludes notice, the pawnshop never fails to obtrude itself upon the attention.

This is especially true of Shanghai, where the pawnbroker's blatant call is achieved by means of six-foot characters painted in black against an outer wall of brick, that rises stark and white from the pavement. The entrance is a mere opening cut into the wall, sometimes surmounted by a frieze of carved figures, but more frequently quite devoid of ornament. Within, and directly opposite this opening stands another short section of wall, which in Peking would be called a dragon screen—an obstruction set in the path of evil spirits, which shuts off the direct view from the outside, of whatever may lie beyond. Such is the exterior aspect of the "House of Sinister Meaning"—if it would be so regarded by its patrons, which may be doubted—in Shanghai.



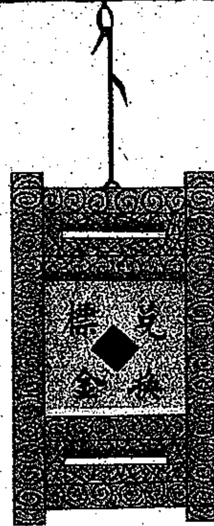
No. 70.
The Pawnshop.

當舖幌子



No. 71
The "Loofang."

炉房幌子



No. 72.
The Raw Gold Dealer.

金店幌子

In Peking, however, its outward appearance is like that of other shops. It is ornate with carvings, and, if the business be extensive, a stone pedestal is set up at the entrance, and thereon is mounted the splendid black and gold pole, topped with a silvery knob, and with a gilded and scaly dragon crossing it, from whose head is suspended the pawnbroker's symbol, seen again in No. 70. The smaller pawnshops would use the latter device without the decorative superstructure, which, with its cords and ornamental gilt, somewhat suggests the hilt of a sword.

Within, in an atmosphere of an inward- instead of outward-flowing tide of trade, one may imagine a figure seated enthroned, in calm and half-amused contemplation of a world strangely and blindly bent on acquisition by hard work, instead of by the application of such a philosophy as his, which concerns itself with nothing, in the knowledge that as much as he needs, and immeasurably more, will be brought to him with the minimum of exertion on his part. As to his estimate of the value of such energy as he is called upon to expend, sixteen per cent. represents the minimum, and sixty per cent. the maximum rate;[22] and while the faces of those who lay their offerings upon his altar may be drawn and haggard with care, and the bodies stooped and misshapen with toil, his own visage grows ever rounder and fuller—and doubtless his abdomen as well—while his "maskee" smile expands to the dimensions of that of the Laughing Buddha.

THE DEALER IN RAW GOLD.

One can fancy his mirth particularly stirred at thought of some of the activities suggested by Symbol No. 72, which hangs outside the shop where the gold digger brings his harvest of little grains, more or less laboriously garnered; and where, besides, bits of old jewelry may be sold, or exchanged for others, in accordance with Chinese custom. The contrast between the two emblems 69 and 72, and all that is thus implied, presents the temptation of interrupting for a moment the continuity of our series, for the purpose of considering some of the features of the latter.

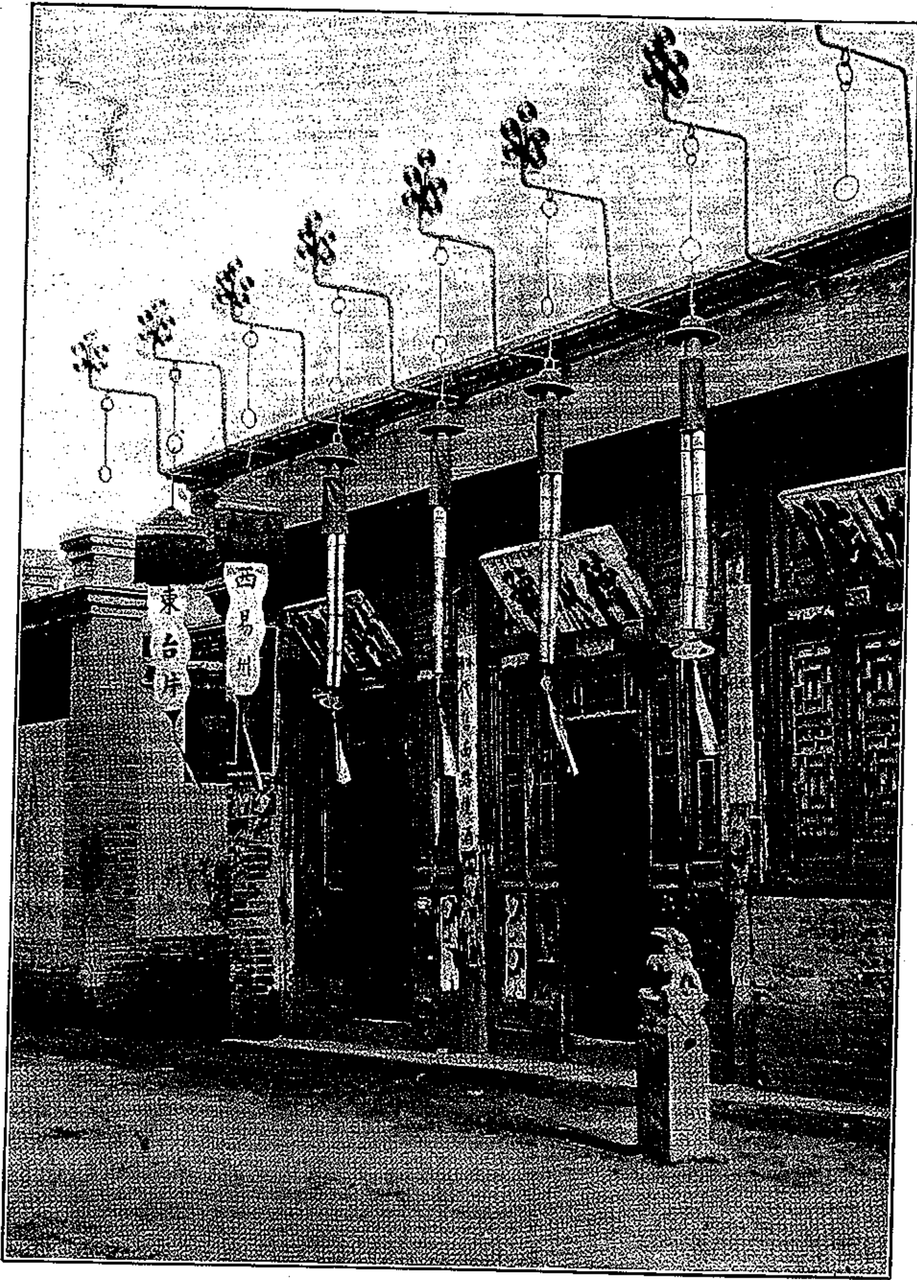
Roughly made of wood, painted in yellow, and with a scroll design in black, primitive in effect—like the methods of those to whom it speaks—the raw gold dealer's device is as crude as the pawnbroker's

is artistically impressive. This is, doubtless, much as it should be—especially from the latter's point of view. Humanity he would observe, is his field; and not those distant and lonely areas where Mother Nature reigns supreme. True, there are districts, one learns, in which she carries those interesting little pellets tucked so lightly into her bosom that her children have but to prostrate themselves, and brush about in the loose sand with a feather—supplemented from time to time with a vigorous breath—in order to retrieve and transfer them to the little bag worn under the chin, by a string tied round the neck. But simple as it sounds, there would be little to appeal to a man of talents in the dust-laden, bleak, and wind-swept atmosphere of life on the Mongolian plains. And "man must appoint himself to the task best suited to him," doubtless would be the comfortable reflection of our gifted philosopher.

THE EXCHANGE SHOP.

Meanwhile, however, on turning back again to the path from which, momentarily, we had stepped aside, we come once more upon the moneychanger's emblem No. 69, which, at first glance, appears to bear so close a resemblance to that of the pawnbroker, as to be almost indistinguishable from the latter. Careful examination, however, reveals the point of difference. While the pawnbroker's device simulates a skein of black silk cord, symmetrically bound round, at intervals, with a single thread of the silk, the emblem of the exchange shop proves to have a straight body, gilded, and either made of wood, or of bamboo, with fine markings intended to suggest two strings of the coins having a square hole in the centre, and called *cash*. Until the birth of the Modern China, these ancient relics of the early minting methods of the Chinese had been the universal currency of the lower classes, whose business was done, and computations made on the basis of these "strings of cash." They are known as *tiao,* and consist of anywhere from 600 to 1,000 coins of brass, copper or bronze, with a value originally intended to correspond to a tael, but which, with the characteristic tendencies of exchange, may, at times, more nearly be equivalent to fifty cents.

The doom of the *cash,* however, was sounded early in the present century—what with the advance in the price of copper, especially



The Shop of the Moneychanger.

during the Great War, when the coins were industriously melted up for export; and with the increased cost of living, which has reduced their purchasing power to the vanishing point, and caused the degradation of the *cash* from its former status to that of a coin fit only to be flung to the beggar. In other words, the minting of *cash* coins having ceased, they are replaced by the one-copper pieces, with every prospect that even these are due shortly to meet with the scorn now inspired by the *cash*.

To establish himself as the guardian of an exchange shop, the moneychanger needs but the licensing of a native bank; and whatever may be his actual capital stock, his ultimate good fortune is to be assumed, as a foregone conclusion, from his point of view, from the fact that his first act is to affix to his "money-box" a large board—the gift of his well-wishers—bearing a single character, compounded of four or five. Their message, translated, reads: "May you have ten thousand ounces of yellow gold!"

As part and parcel of the currency system, which produces him in countless numbers, the moneychanger must be accorded a considerable place in the scheme of life in China. His progenitors, the native banks, would not, of course, display such emblems as ours. These power stations of domestic finance, whence issues the current that sets the wheels of exchange in motion, would employ the inscribed order of signboard, horizontally placed above the door, with vertical plates of polished brass at either side of the entrance—all planned with due regard for their status as arbiters of a nation's commercial destinies.

In the course of their development, these institutions have encountered, and are gradually overcoming the prejudice of the large majority of the Chinese people in favour of the old-time custom of cacheing their worldly wealth within the radius of their own supervision—frequently with dire results to them, but with great advantage to the looter. This tendency, however, being merely a part of the constitutional conservativeness of the people, does not reflect on the banking system, which foreign opinion has pronounced always to have been an excellent one. As a matter of fact, banking itself, together with the system of bank notes and cheques, is one of the numerous inventions of the Chinese.

But however efficient—and of recent years, rapidly developing—the Chinese system of banking may be, there seems as little prospect

as ever there has been, for the stabilization of the national currency; and the native banks continue to play about with the power that has retarded the growth of China's world trade. It is obvious, of course, that official support has supplied the motive power for the machinery of exchange; but the fundamentals of the system undoubtedly lie in that love of speculation that is so engrained in the Chinese character that one sees little children stopping at the stall of the travelling sweet-seller, and venturing their coins on a spin of the wheel, which is a part of his equipment. On the chance of doubling its value, a coin is staked; and no stoic ever faced the inevitable with greater impassivity than that with which the loss of the *cash* is accepted here. Hence, by the time the urchin is become a merchant, he is more than half composed of speculator, and would not willingly forego the stimulation which the fluctuations of exchange offer to his preternaturally sharpened wits.

But whatever the degree of his satisfaction with the "game," it is certain that the endless variations in the value of Chinese money are less amusing to the foreigner, whether he be resident, or traveller —unless, of course, he belong to that section of the business community, which, from necessity or choice, has managed to master, and extract both interest and profit from, the situation. In fact, a popular saying has it, that the exchange broker is the only person who achieves riches in China; and, as is usual with broad statements, no note is made as to what may be the total sum that has been "dropped," in the efforts of both amateurs and professionals to assimilate the intricacies of "exchange."

At any rate, at the moneychanger's, which one of our inscribed signboards designated as "The Prosperous Fountain," the merry whirl goes on, and the average mind surrenders without a fight; and ceases to conjecture as to why the dollar sometimes changes into six 20-cent pieces, plus 12 coppers, as it does at one moment, while perhaps in a month's time, it will yield a 20-cent piece less; or why, indeed, it buys more coins in one exchange shop than in the next, on the same day. As to this, there is no appeal. For, as to the conversion of dollars into "small money," the average shop may pay as little, or as much, as it likes, apparently. In the International Settlement of Shanghai, a municipal regulation requires that the exchange shop shall declare its intentions in this regard, in a sign printed

in English. This, however, is not a Chinese law or custom, and does not apply outside the Settlement, nor elsewhere in China. Hence, all that it behoves, or avails one to do, is to "take it, or leave it"—not forgetting on deciding in favour of the former, carefully to observe the formality of testing every coin by its "ring" as it strikes the counter.

In view of the irregularities that characterize the monies of China, it becomes one of the functions of the moneychanger to guarantee the coins which he passes out to the public and to the multitude of small "change-money" shops where no such formality is observed. The process consists in the stamping of the coin with an identifying mark, or "chop" in ink, and/or by means of a tiny impression produced with hammer and chisel. The latter method defaces the coin by the extraction of a minute particle of silver; and after the dollar has passed through a sufficient number of operations of this sort its value is materially affected. Thereafter it is no longer accepted by count, but only by weight—supposing that it circulates at all, which is the case only in certain parts of the south.

In the persistent, consistent, and chaos-inviting inconsistencies of her currency, China stands alone among the countries of the world; and in no other quarter of the globe are conditions to be found in the remotest degree comparable to those prevailing in the land of the Chinese to-day. The story of China's media of exchange presents itself as one of the most interesting phases of her history, indissolubly bound up with other characteristic aspects of her civilization, and richly imbued with the elements of romance. It is, however, a tale that, obviously, it is not within our province to relate; but the reader may not consider it too great a digression, perhaps, if we lightly touch upon such questions as the traveller is likely to have asked himself while passing through the country too hurriedly to seek their answers.

One of these would be, doubtless, as to: Why the Mexican dollar, at all—especially in view of the fact that he may have met in the not so distant past, many another, on his way from Hongkong, Amoy, or Canton, where the British Trade, or Hongkong dollar, from the Imperial Mints in Bombay and Calcutta, continues to circulate, while the Carolus, the other Spanish dollar, besides the Mexican, has passed from view. In addition to these, there are the dollars of the Chinese mints, *i.e.*, the Dragon, and, predominantly, the one bearing the head of Yuan Shih Kai, which latter one encounters more frequently

nowadays than any of the others.

On inquiring into the history of the Mexican dollar in China, we find that notwithstanding its established position as the medium of exchange in China's foreign trade, it was not the first of the Spanish dollars to reach the country.

"During the period of the Spanish domination," says Mr. Benjamin White, in his book entitled *Silver,* "an enormous quantity of coins, styled pieces of eight (pesos), or 'pillar' dollars (from the pillars of Hercules which adorn the reverse) were shipped abroad. In the sixteenth and following centuries, these coins were to be seen in every market of the world, not excepting the ports of the little-known Celestial Empire, from which Mexico is separated by wide tracts of ocean, the crossing of which presented in those days no little difficulty."

It was, however, from Manila, on the opening of trade between China and Spain, in 1575, that these pillar dollars trickled into the ports.

"Dollars, we know," says William F. Spalding, in his volume entitled *Eastern Exchange Currency and Finance,* "were introduced into China by the Spaniards from the Philippines. These were the old pillar dollars issued in the reigns of Charles III and Charles IV of Spain . . . . When trade was opened between India and China, (in 1757) the old East India Company found itself under the necessity of sending these dollars to China in payment for purchases of silk, tea, etc., so great had the popularity of the coin become. The fact that Canton was the only port open to foreign commerce for upward of a century from 1757, also favoured the introduction of the coin . . . . Then, during the Napoleonic Wars, about 75 per cent. of the foreign trade of China was paid for in dollars of the Carolus type."

Their reign lasted until 1854, when they were superseded by the Mexican dollar, in general favour. An American commission appointed in the Philippines established as the ratio of value, two dollars Mexican to one American gold; but following the Boxer uprising of 1900, the available supply of Mexican dollars, with which to pay the claims of the foreign nations soon became exhausted, with the result that their value rose considerably higher, and the outflux from Manila of these coins had its own effect on currency problems there. Later, of course, they depreciated again, in the inevitable fluctuations of exchange; but at one time, in 1919, owing to the high

price of silver an American gold dollar brought as little as 73 cents Mex. At the present time (1926), the Mexican dollars are rapidly disappearing, the coins being melted up and re-cast as Republican *yuan* (Chinese word for *dollar,* though it actually signifies *round*). When the latter have altogether replaced both the Dragon and the foreign-minted dollars, we shall probably find the word *silver* used instead of the time-honoured three-letter suffix, *Mex.*

And thus does the long-standing desire on the part of the Chinese—*i.e.,* that the native coin should supersede the foreign—find fulfilment; and the Mexican dollar (in China) dies at last, at the hands of the Chinese, after the persistent efforts of the British, American and Japanese governments, to eliminate and substitute for it, dollars of their own coinage. It is a *dénouement* brought about, after all, by what might be called *external* pressure, since it was by the terms of the Mackay Treaty with Great Britain (1902) that China agreed (Article II) "to take the necessary steps to provide for a uniform universal coinage, which shall be legal tender in payment of all duties, taxes, and other obligations throughout the Empire, by British, as well as Chinese subjects."

The defeat of the earlier attempts of the Chinese to realize this ambition has been attributed in part to the fact that little silver has been mined in China; but the real reason is undoubtedly to be found in the following significant paragraph from *The Currencies of China,* a recent book by E. Kann, a Shanghai financier, whose study of the subject of Chinese currency covers a period of twenty-five years of personal contact with its vagaries in various parts of China.

"The Chinese government," says Mr. Kann, "does not deem it to be its duty to define and control the weights used within this country, and neither does it interfere as regards the fineness of bullion. All this is left to the local governing bodies, to Chambers of Commerce, and the like corporations."

These remarks are made with particular reference to the subject of taels, over which the public assaying office exercises a control; but they are equally applicable to the coinage of silver dollars, the earlier varieties of which failed to pass muster with the Chinese themselves, not necessarily because of a universal inferiority in the products of the native mints, but for reasons that will appear.

The first of the Chinese dollars was that called the Dragon Dollar,

from the design of the coiled dragon upon its face. It issued from the first mint, sanctioned by the Empress Dowager in 1888, and opened at Canton, though it was not until two years later that the dragons were brought forth. The first of these coins, both in weight and fineness, were not inferior to the Spanish dollars; but though they were intended to replace the latter as legal tender for the payment of official salaries, taxes, internal revenues and customs, their general purchasing power was below that of the foreign dollars for the reason that, directly they crossed the border of the province in which they were coined, they were subjected to a discount. Despite this fact, however, the provincial mints increased, one by one, as province after province claimed and exercised the privilege, until by 1905, twenty government mints were in operation in seventeen provinces.

But meanwhile, official sanction appeared to expend itself in the establishment of the mints, and the want of standardization of the coins persistently defeated their essential object. The inferiority of some varieties of the provincial dollars tended to affect the value of all, and, far from driving the Mexican dollar out of existence, caused it to be held at a premium.

In 1906, an Imperial Edict having commanded a reduction in the number of mints, the Board of Revenue instituted the merging of those of several of the provinces, reducing the total number to nine, and appointing that of Tientsin as the Central Mint of the Government. This, however, was looted and destroyed during the Revolution of 1911–1912; but, reorganized in 1914, and with a new plant built upon the same site, it is known to-day as Tientsin Central Mint. Notwithstanding the fact, however, that Article I of the Currency Laws enacted January 1, 1914, provides that "The right of minting and issuance of national currency shall belong solely to the Government," the presently existing provincial mints are controlled by the provincial governments, having long since become independent both of the Government, and of the Tientsin Central Mint. Several that had been merged with those of other provinces have been re-opened, their total present number being about thirty inclusive of a new mint for Kalgan, and another for Shanghai. A classification, however, has recently graded those of Tientsin and Shanghai as first, and the remainder as second class mints.

The following paragraph from the *Chinese Economic Bulletin*

(January, 1924) is in point:

"Provincial chiefs now look upon the mints in the provinces as sources of revenue. Handsome profits have been made by issuing debased subsidiary coins. Some of the provincial mints, finding it more profitable to issue subsidiary coins, have stopped casting dollar coins, and have devoted themselves entirely to the turning out of twenty-cent pieces and copper coins. The market being flooded with such debased coins, the public has to accept them at a discount."

Small wonder, then, at the sort of situation which arose in Shanghai, recently, when the market was flooded with spurious twenty-cent pieces, which proved to have been coined by one of the mints controlled by the military authority of Fukien province. His troops having been deprived of their rightful pay by the chronic attitude of the Chinese toward their educators and soldiers, he had sought to meet their needs in the only way apparently open to him.

Among the coins which the traveller was wont to encounter on his way through China, besides those already mentioned, are the Peruvian, Bolivian, Chilean, and American Trade dollars, the French piastre, the Japanese silver yen, and the Indian rupee; but the fact that these are rapidly giving way before the Republican dollar will be evident from the following brief summary of the comprehensive data on this subject comprised in *The Currencies of China,* which will aid the reader in identifying such of these fast-disappearing coins as may come under his notice.

The Mexican dollar, which replaced the Carolus, or pillar dollar in China, and which enjoys the distinction of having been at one time the most widely circulated coin known to history, bears on its reverse side the Mexican national emblem—an eagle, with spreading wings, and holding a snake in its beak; above it is the legend, "REPUBLICA MEXICANA." On its face is inscribed the word "LIBERTAD," with the cap of Liberty, from which radiate the rays of the sun.

Though known to fame as the Mexican *dollar,* neither this nor the other Spanish dollars were called other than "peso" in their own country. It was first minted in Mexico in 1824, three years after the establishment of the Republic, superseding the coins that had been issuing from the Spanish government mints there, since A.D. 1537. It circulated "not only in the two American continents, in the West Indies, in the islands of the Pacific and in Japan, but throughout the

greater portion of Asia from the arctic Siberian shores down to the tropics," says Mr. Kann. And the explanation of its popularity in China was the simple one of fineness and uniformity throughout the six decades of its greatest fame there. First introduced in 1854, it gradually displaced its predecessors, but its cycle has evidently been completed; and it is only a question of time before it will have disappeared completely—to reappear with the head of Yuan Shih Kai, and the imprint of the Republic of China.

The name *yuan* was given to a dollar coined in the last days of the Ching dynasty, in 1910, when under the prevailing dissatisfaction with the irregularities of the dragon dollar, the Ministry of Finance issued new regulations governing the production of a Chinese standard dollar. These efforts were naturally submerged under those of the Republic, and the Yuan Shih Kai dollar, produced by the government mints in Tientsin, Nanking, Wuchang and Canton, having overcome the interprovincial difficulties that beset the path of the older coinages, circulates throughout China without any diminution in its value.

The Bolivian, Chilean, and Peruvian Dollars, made from the silver mined in those countries during the Middle Ages, and brought into China by Spanish traders, along with the Carolus dollars, lost favour with the public by reason of the alloy in excess of legally fixed quantities entering into their manufacture in the seventeenth century; and when found in China nowadays, they are, according to Mr. Kann, "to be regarded as a curiosity, and not as a medium of circulation."

The British Dollar bears upon its face the figure of Britannia, standing upon a rock rising out of the sea. In her right hand she carries a trident, and her left rests upon a shield. On the reverse side the value of the coin is inscribed in Chinese and Malayan characters, the coin having been intended for circulation in the Straits Settlements, as well as Hongkong.

The effort of the Colonial Government to replace the Mexican dollar with a currency of its own lasted about two years (1866–1868), when the machinery was sold to the Japanese Government. Later it was decided to employ the Imperial Mints at Bombay and Calcutta for the same purpose, and since 1895 these dollars have issued thence. In 1906 the adoption of the gold exchange standard system in the Straits Settlements, dislodged the British dollar in the Crown colony and Malay. But meantime, the product of the Indian mints gained

steadily in popularity in China, and became a serious rival to the Mexican dollar. Though it never gained circulation in Shanghai, it was, from 1909–1912, the favourite currency of North China.

The American Trade Dollar, obversely inscribed with the words "TRADE DOLLAR" and "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA," was coined between the years 1873 and 1887, especially for circulation in the Far East. At this time the Mexican Government's dollar ruled supreme and commanded a premium in foreign markets, in spite of an eight per cent. tax on its export. But though the American trade dollar enjoyed a considerable prestige in China, the experiment proved an undesirable one. Prevailing exchange rates had brought the first issue up to a value of $1.04, but the trade dollars found their way back to America, where they had been expressly intended not to be legal tender; and when, four years after their issue, a serious decline in the price of white metal caused a depreciation in their value, they were worth less than the gold dollar, and less than the depreciated bank notes. Thus they were withdrawn, and such as did not find their way back to America "ended in the melting pot of the Orient."

The French Piastre, or *Saigon Dollar,* emanating from Indo-China, which became a French colony in 1862, was first issued in 1885. It was the equivalent of the American Trade dollar in weight, fineness and uniformity, but superior to the Mexican, for which reason the piastres were either hoarded or melted up. Wherefore, to remove this temptation, a new piastre was struck in 1895, which is now circulating in Indo-China—whence the Mexican dollar has vanished—and in the Chinese province of Yunnan.

The Japanese Silver Yen is the coin produced with the minting equipment purchased from the Colonial Government at Hongkong, in 1868. Its function was to be the elimination of the Mexican dollar in Japan; but the first issue was inferior to the Mexican, and it was decided to raise the quality to correspond to that of the American Trade dollar. Little success attended the efforts; but later, as a result of the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) the silver yen gained a foothold in Manchuria; and while it has disappeared from China, it is now the basis of the currency of South Manchuria, though circulating there in the shape of bank notes only.

The Yuan Shih Kai dollar has not, of course, reached its present position of pre-eminence over all of these coins without having en-

countered the inevitable attempts at adulteration incidental to coinage in China. These are, however, much more promptly and effectively dealt with to-day than was the case with the first Chinese dollars. The Yuan Shih Kai dollar made its first appearance towards the end of 1914, as a result of the new National Currency Regulations which went into effect in February of that year. It issued first of all from the Tientsin and Nanking Mints, but is now being turned out also by the mints at Wuchang and Canton.

It was found necessary to reduce slightly the degree of fineness promulgated in the Regulations, to meet the lower standards of the dollars that were being melted up and reissued as the Yuan Shih Kai. As time goes on, this melting and re-coinage feature of dollar coinage gradually will be eliminated; and the coins, in greater and greater numbers will be produced direct from bar silver, or, in the absence of sufficient quantities of this, from sycee. As the cost of production, in the latter case, is greater than in the former, it is resorted to only under necessity.

The first design for the new dollar was that of a foreign engraver connected with the Tientsin Mint. It was not adopted, however, and the "Number One" Republican dollar, as it stands, is that which bears on its face the head of Yuan Shi Kai, and the Chinese characters indicating the "Year of the Republic" in which it has been coined. On its reverse a garland of grain surrounds the characters signifying "One Dollar."

Other varieties of Republican dollars that are slowly being superseded by the Yuan Shih Kai include several bearing the head of Sun Yat Sen; two with the head of Li Yuan Hung; a dollar inscribed as issued by the "MILITARY GOVERNMENT OF SZECHUAN"; and a limited issue (1925) of a special dollar commemorating the "Fourteenth Anniversary of the Foundation of the Chinese Republic."

However, insofar as these matters affect the traveller in China, he has only to set forth on his journeys with his moneys in the form of Republican dollars, which are of uniform value all over China and Mongolia; and he may always insist upon being given these in exchange for bank notes, which lose in value directly they leave the port of issue. The inconvenience of transport is entirely negligible, as it adds little to the already considerable impedimenta with which one travels in China—to the great joy of the ubiquitous coolie.

TOP VIEW OF A SHOE OF SHANGHAI SYCEE.
Value about 50 taels. Showing the Kung Ku's ink inscriptions.
Nearly actual Size.