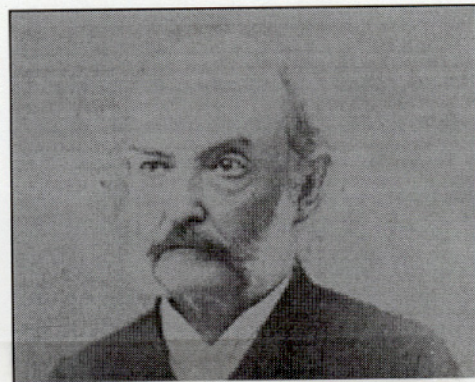


Then there is little Mr. Chang; no reason to recall him except that he was so engagingly unique, a quaint little Korean gentleman who looked briefly at the Occident from a hotel window and then hurried home. Also he reminds me of the strange career of a San Francisco gentleman, who became Prime Minister of Korea. It sounds like stage extravaganza, but this quiet, conservative gentleman, Clarence Greathouse, one of the perennial bachelors of the South Park set, actually did find himself Prime Minister of the Hermit Kingdom, living in a palace in Seoul where he ended his days. It had come about simply enough. Mr. Greathouse, who read law and wrote



editorials for San Francisco newspapers, was appointed American Consul-General in Yokohama, where his knowledge of international law impressed statesmen of the East. At the end of his consular service, the King of Korea sent for him to be the royal advisor on certain matters. His counsel, it appears, was invaluable, for the King made him Prime Minister for life, and Mr. Greathouse never came back to South Park. When, after his death, his mother, who had lived in his palace in Seoul, desired to return to her old home in Kentucky, Mr. Chang was appointed by the King to serve as honorary escort across the Pacific. He cut off his queue for this ordeal of travel, and discarded robes of silk for English tweeds fashioned by a Japanese tailor.

We asked him to dine with Mrs. Greathouse, and it happened that for a few moments before dinner Mr. Chang was left alone in the living-room. When we descended again from regions above, he had vanished. Not a trace of him. It was disconcerting and alarming. It might even be international if we had permanently lost Mr. Chang.

A messenger was sent to the Occidental Hotel in the wild hope that he might find his way back there. They arrived almost together, Mr. Chang and the messenger. Some homing instinct had led him safely through perilous streets in the right direction. It was made clear to him that we desired his return and awaited his presence at dinner, although he spoke no English and the messenger knew no Korean. Mr. Chang in turn made it clear that he would remain at the hotel. The incident was closed. He had escorted Mrs. Greathouse to our home, but dining with foreigners was not part of his duty as honorary escort. A few days later, Mrs. Greathouse saw him safely off on the steamer for Korea and herself departed for the sequestered quiet of Versailles, Kentucky, which must have seemed drab after all the exotic color and strange ceremony she had known.

She told us many details of the life in Seoul. The little Queen of Korea, assassinated by rioters who broke into the royal palace, had been her friend. Mrs. Greathouse had dined at the palace a few evenings before the tragedy. "The Queen was a gentle, pretty creature, she said, highly intelligent; and her dreadful death plunged the King into deep grief. He had found refuge from the mob in the Russian Legation, believing her safe. It had been an uprising of a party favoring Japanese influence in Korea above that of Russia, favored by the rulers. Mrs. Greathouse told how assassins pursued the little Queen who ran before them from room to room of the long, low palace until in the last refuge they overtook her and killed her with swords.