

water, pulled, shoved, pushed, nearly collapsed under the load of the big craft. I kept on shouting to them, and in between I looked out on the river.

"The raft came past quite close, alas! scarcely fifty yards away from the bank. I stretched out my arms, as if I could grasp it, like that, with my hands —"

"What do you say? Swimming? Quite so—on the Rhine or the Elbe! But on the Clear Stream? And it was June, I tell you, June! The river was swarming with crocodiles, particularly as the sun was just setting. The loathsome brutes swam closely round the small raft; I saw one of them lifting itself up on its forelegs, and knocking its long, black snout against the crucified bodies. They could scent their quarry, and went along with it impatiently, down river —"

"And again the naval cadet shook his head desperately. I shouted to him we were coming, coming—"

"But it was as if the cursed river was in league with Hong-Dok; it grasped the boat firmly in tough fingers of mud and would not let go. I also jumped into the water and pulled with the boys. We tore and pushed, we were scarcely able to lift it, inch by inch. And the sun was sinking and the raft was drifting away, further and further.

"Then the overseer brought along the horses. We put ropes round the boat and whipped up the animals. Now things moved. One other effort, and yet another, shouting and whipping! The boat was on the bank. The water ran from it; the boys nailed new planks on the bottom. But dark night had fallen long ago when we started.

"I took the helm, six men bent heavily over the oars. Three were kneeling on the bottom, bailing out the water which kept on coming in. In spite of it all, it rose, until we sat up to the calves in water. I had to tell off two, and yet another two, from the oars for bailing. We advanced with painful slowness—"

"I had big pitch torches for searching. But we did not find anything. Several times we thought we could see the raft far away; when we got near, it was a drifting tree trunk or an alligator. We found nothing. We searched for hours and found nothing. I went ashore in Edgardshafen and gave the alarm. The

commander sent out five boats and two great junks. They searched the river for three days. But they had no better luck than we. We despatched wires to all stations down river. Nothing—nobody saw him again, poor naval cadet!

"—— What do I think? Well, the raft got stuck somewhere on the bank. Or it drifted against a tree trunk and got smashed. One way or the other, the black reptiles got their prey."

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The old man emptied his glass and held it out to the boy. And emptied it once more, quickly, in one draught. Then he stroked his dirty grey beard with his long claws.

"Yes," he went on, "that's the story. When we returned to the bungalow Hong-Dok had disappeared, and with him his servants. Then came the investigation—I told you about it already. Naturally nothing new was brought to light.

"Hong-Dok had fled. And never again did I hear anything from him, until one day this box with the counters arrived; somebody brought it in my absence. The boys told me it came from a Chinese merchant. I had investigations made, but in vain. There you are, take your box; look at the pictures which you do not know yet."

He pushed the mother o' pearl counters towards me. "This one shows Hong-Dok being carried to me by his servants in the palanquin. Here you see me and myself on our verandah; here you see him, how I grasp him by the throat. These are several counters showing how we try to get the boat clear, and here are others recording our search through the night on the river. One counter shows Ot-Chen and the naval cadet being crucified, and the other one how they have their lips sewn up. This is Hong-Dok's flight; here you see my clawing hand, and on the reverse his neck with the scars."

Edgard Widerhold relit his pipe. "Now take away your box!" he said. "May the counters bring you good luck on the poker table! There is blood enough sticking to them." —— —— ——

And this is a true tale.

A SEPTENNIAL

By ALEISTER CROWLEY

I.

Seven times has Saturn swung his scythe;
Seven sheaves stand in the field of Time,
And every sheaf's as bright and blithe
As the sharp shifts of our sublime
Father the Sun. I leap so lithe
For love to-day,
My love, I may
Not tell the tithe.

II.

"But these were seven stormy years!"
"Lean years were these, as Pharaoh's kine!"
All shapes of Life that mortal fears

Passed shrieking. We distilled to wine
The vintages of blood and tears.

We tore away
The cloak of gray—
The sun uprears!

III.

We know to-day what once we guessed,
Our love no dream of idle youth;
A world-egg, with the stars for nest,
Is this arch-testament of truth.
Laylah, beloved, to my breast!
Our period
Is fixed in God—
Eternal rest!