

# The Only Chinese Woman Dentist



### HOW A MAID FROM CATHAY HAS WON SUCCESS IN A PROFESSION WHICH SEEMED ABSOLUTELY BEYOND HER AMBITION



DR. SAI SO IN HER LABORATORY

Americans, and so, during her first student days, her English was very wobbly and queer. But her quick comprehension of occidental methods and her natural ability soon tided her over grammatical obstacles, and now her classmates insist that there are few words in the dictionary of college slang that are not numbered in her vocabulary.

#### Popular and Clever

During the three years at college her fellow students were her loyal friends and the extent of her popularity was attested by the rousing applause which greeted her on commencement night. The exercises were held in the Alhambra theater and the graduating class was given its diplomas from the theater stage. Out of a class of 40 graduates Sai So Leong ranked among the highest and her student friends made the old theater ring when the president of the college conferred the degree which gave her the distinctive place she now holds.

From the time of her graduation until the fire, Dr. Leong had her dental room in San Francisco, but when the Chinese quarter was destroyed her office and laboratory were part of the great holocaust, so with the settlement of the new district across the bay she established herself in Oakland, where she has a flourishing practice. She considers that her most valuable possession, her college diploma, was her greatest loss; and though the college authorities intend to replace it with a duplicate, it will never seem quite the same to her. The Chinese consul general, who now has his headquarters in Oakland, knowing of her loss, has written a testimonial for her. The lengthy document states for the benefit of the questioning Chinese that she is qualified both by experience and law to practice dentistry and that she has given ample proof of such qualifications. The Chinese consul, in speaking of Dr. Faith Sai So Leong said that according to his knowledge she was the only woman of her nation who had ever studied dentistry. He believed that should she ever go back to China to practice she would be accorded the same position which she enjoys in this country. In China she would necessarily be compelled to practice in some one of the large cities, as in the provinces her work would be too foreign to be tolerated.

There is a steady stream of patients to and from Dr. Leong's rooms during her office hours—men, women and children, the wealthy tong leaders and the poorer cooly can be seen there any day. It is an odd sight, the slender girl enveloped in a long, white apron deftly manipulating the bright instruments or tinkering among her laboratory paraphernalia while some one of her countrymen occupies her big dentist chair. There are usually a number of patients awaiting their turn and often the women of the community take this opportunity to discuss the latest news and gossip. At these afternoon gatherings the wealthier women of the district wear many thousand dollars' worth of rare jewelry, the now fashionable sacred jade stones holding prominent places among the pearls and opals and diamonds. Dr. Leong herself has a large collection of fine pieces of jewelry, many of them gifts from her appreciative people. Her Chinese friends have unbounded respect for her knowledge and the skill that she has displayed in the able handling of some very difficult cases. Although a Chinese bachelor girl with a profession is a decided novelty, Dr. Leong's work is law so far as things dental are concerned.

When speaking about Dr. Leong her adopted mother said: "Sai So's parents live in Canton and we are direct communists with them. Faith is her baptismal name—the name my adopted daughter took when she joined Grace church—but at home she is always called Sai So, for I do not wish in any way to separate her from her people."



DR. FAITH SAI SO LEONG AS A SWEET GIRL GRADUATE IN DENTISTRY

ing, embroidery and the needle work, have been given a great deal of attention; but a woman with a profession is an almost unheard of being. During the past 10 years there have been a few women who have taken up the study of medicine; but most of these have been in the missionary field and their course of training has been more in the line of nursing than in actual medical work. So it can readily be understood with what surprise the friends of the little Chinese girl viewed her desire for a professional life—a life that would require constant and close application as well as the brains and mechanical skill of a man.

#### The Little Mechanic

Nine years ago Mrs. E. J. Nickerson of San Francisco adopted little Sai So Leong, at that time a tiny girl of 13. Mrs. Nickerson had been a teacher of English in the old Chinese quarter and her knowledge was such as peculiarly fitted her to appreciate the needs of the

child. From the first, Sai So was very dextrous and she evinced decided mechanical talent. All the odd bits of tinkering necessary in a household which usually fall to the lot of a man were a source of joy to the girl, and no carpentering or mending problem seemed too difficult or beyond her easy solution. All her knowledge in book learning was imparted to her adopted mother and sister, who soon recognized the trend of her mind and realized that her ability was of an unusual order. Many of little Sai So's leisure hours were spent in the laboratory of a cousin, a dentist of San Francisco; and there it was that her interest in dental science was aroused. Her cousin, Dr. Leong, encouraged her and when one day his wife suggested that Sai So be-

come a "truly" dentist he seconded the idea heartily. Appreciating Sai So's fitness for the profession which she desired to follow, her adopted mother readily agreed to her pursuing a course of work which would help her to fulfill her ambition. Thus it was that when the fall term of the College of Physicians and Surgeons opened, the class of 1900 numbered among its members one who had never before seen the interior of an American schoolroom. There were two other girls in the freshman class, but these soon dropped out and the slender Chinese girl had the distinction of being the person of importance among half a hundred men. With the exception of the people in her own home she had never associated to any extent with



DR. SAI SO FILLING THE TEETH OF A CHINESE MERCHANT PRINCE

By Ruth Berg

THE past 25 years have been so filled with the achievements of American women that we have grown accustomed to the position that the feminine portion of our population holds in the world's estimation. We take it for granted that each city and town and village possesses its due proportion of brilliancy; no metropolis too crowded or no hamlet too obscure to furnish women whose accomplishments create a place for them in the realms of art or science. So absorbed and so satisfied have we been with our own bright progress that it was with something of a shock that we awoke to a realization of the recent advancement of the women of Russia. That they possess the same peculiar versatility which characterizes our women and that the Slav people are even more of a cosmopolitan race than the American explains to a large extent the marvelous attainments of the Russian woman. But even more amazing than the career of the Slav is the ambitious undertaking of one of China's daughters. Coming as she does from a nation whose women have dwelt in dense ignorance of all that pertains to modern thought and living, she has chosen a work which few of her western sisters have dared to attempt. Out of the whole country numbering over 400,000,000 inhabitants Dr. Faith Sai So Leong is the only woman who has ever studied and practiced dentistry. In fact, she is the only Chinese woman in the world who has chosen this line as a profession. That her ambitions were justified has been amply proved, not only by her record while a student, but also by her success as a regular licensed doctor of dentistry.

Education in China is almost entirely a matter of memory and the skillful use of the brush pen; the mass of the people, including many so called educated men, have little idea of science, while not more than 2 per cent of the women can read an ordinary book. The domestic arts, such as china paint-

waves for an instant and then rested full on the steamer. This may seem matters worse, for the man at the wheel, blinded by the glare, was unable to meet the heavy seas which pounded broadside on, shaking the rickety old boat from stem to stern. For an instant the beams of light lay on the boat, and then as with common consent they shot up perpendicularly to the black heavens, hesitated and bobbed as if saying good night and silently glimmered out. There seemed to be something abnormal in this silent conversation, this instantaneous flashing of lights which told of our approach. At the three o'clock mark all about us. With night glasses they had seen the lone artilleryman in the bows shielding himself from the wind behind a six pounder, had seen me shivering by the German captain, and while we pursued our way toward the wharf the word had gone the lines that the transport was coming in. To the officer of the day it meant riding his mule down the steep incline to meet the boat, to the captain of the mortar battery it meant the arrival of some goods he had ordered from Seattle, and to the wireless operator in the hut on the hill it meant the presence of his bunkie, who was tight on the boat and to whom he was now clicking off unofficial and totally irrelevant conversation.

Fort Worden rises sheer from the water's edge. In the daytime you can see the long 10 inch guns peeping over an eternal watch, and in order to reach the heights you must climb a series of stairs which are planted in the hillside and which are harder to ascend than those of gold leading to the pearly gates. They zigzag in and out through dense clumps of foliage, and had it not been for the puffing officer of the day who preceded me, the probabilities are that I would have broken my neck in half a dozen different places before I reached the top. Also, had it not been for this same officer I would have been shot more than once, for sentries had a habit of suddenly looming up at every twist and turn of the road, and it would have been extremely difficult for a stranger to have explained his presence within the lines of Fort Worden. As it was, the officer of the day turned the pugnacious demeanor of the sentry into a respectful salute and I was finally deposited before the tent of the artillery district commander, Colonel S. A. Cummins, without harm.

The letter is a late arrival from Washington, D. C., and is recognized as one of the shining lights of the artillery service in the United States. The fact of a man of his undoubted ability being given command of the three lonely fortresses situated on the bleak shores of Juan de Fuca has led to a great deal of gossip and speculation, but the general impression is that the appointment is part of the general scheme of the war board to strengthen the defenses of the Pacific coast in case of any trouble from a certain oriental power. This, however, is hearsay—as are nearly all matters connected with the secret fortifications of the Pacific coast.

The people of the northwest know that somewhere or other where the tides meet the ocean are three forts containing the most powerful and accurate guns in the coast defense service. In case of trouble the soldiers will shoot the guns and shoo away the approaching enemy. Further than this the average tax payer remains in contented ignorance and goes his way, secure in the wonderful faith which the citizen has for the soldiery. Which is just as it ought to be; and in the meantime the lonely watchers of the northwest work and plan and study and experiment, seldom leaving the confines of the forts, becoming prematurely bald and losing touch of the vast world which lies around. To the man on the street it is a heaven forsaken existence, but the officer in the coast defense service has a different way of looking at life and is most emphatically not like other men. He is in nowise like the officer of an infantry or cavalry regiment and, in fact, he is more of a scientist than a soldier. Social life, except that of the fort, he knows not. He has not the opportunity and, then again, he is not the type of man who will find much pleasure in the hilarious happenings of tea—with lemon—at 3 in the afternoon or in the gaudy giddiness of full dress receptions. He leaves these to his women folk while he pores over plans and maps and explosives till his mind becomes a vast storehouse of approximate azimuths, elevations and depressions, of degrees, minutes and seconds, of angles obtuse and otherwise, the whole of which boiled down dwindle to the pushing of an electric button which will cause a shell to drop on the deck of a ship attempting to rush through the narrow straits.

During the last year the fortifications of the northwest have been greatly strengthened. No one knows to just what extent, but it is considerable. Building has been going on steadily, new range towers suddenly poke their heads above the trees and additional guns peep over the parapets. It is all done in silence and secrecy. There is no display, no blazoning forth of the fact. Every inch of water within range is, of course, platted and marked out. Guess work and supposition in the coast defense service is eliminated to a minimum and the ranges are known to a nicety. The work of firing a big gun is conducted almost solely by a system of numbers—something like a football game. In the range tower is an officer before an instrument which tells him when the target is within range. Another instrument tells him the rate it is traveling per minute and the direction. His command is given in a series of numbers, which is shouted into a telephone which connects with a telephone station of a mortar battery hidden some distance away.

Those who do the actual firing of the gun do not see any enemy or any target. They see nothing but the walls of a pit and hear nothing but a repetition of numbers from the telephone station. Each man has one particular thing to do and he does that accurately. His mind must not wander, for little mistakes mean a miss and misses mean explosive wrath from the officer in the range tower. The whole is like a vast machine governed by numbers and, as in a football game, team and head work count. For this is a game where gray matter rules. The glory, excitement and glamour of heroic rushes, of advance in skirmishing order, of bayonet thrust, of strenuous physical exertion, is unknown in coast defense work. There is nothing but a certain number and the moving of a lever. The man behind the gun does not see, he does not know what is going on in front. He may have hit or he may have missed; but he must not let this phase of the question worry him. His work is to keep cool and listen for the numbers that come from the telephone booth. Otherwise he is useless. Now, the thirteen dollar brain does not favor this work; but it is the duty of the battery commander so to instill the essence of soldiering into his system, so to dress him down and train him that he will do the work of the hundred dollar brain for thirteen and "keep"—and take a pride in his work. Making riflemen from mud is an easy job to making artillerymen out of the odds and ends which float into the service. The social life of these lonely forts consists in what they can do for themselves. Though Seattle is only a day's journey from Fort Worden, so busy are the officers there that six and nine months and even a year elapse before they can take off a couple of days to run to town. Then they come back whistling the latest popular tunes, full of tales theatrical, and they keep whistling the old tunes and laughing over the dramatic jokes until the next opportunity presents itself. Every evening there is a band concert. Then the colonel's lady and the officers' wives and relatives are to be seen walking across the dusty parade ground, to discuss the happenings of the day, and as the darkness comes on to gaze wistfully across the waters of the sound where "God's country" with its people and lights and life is to be found. Perhaps it is in such moments, when the bandmen are making for their quarters with their instruments under their arms, and the evening star is hanging in a pink sky over the clump of mournful pines on the heights, and the first breath of the night wind is blowing chill from the sea, that they feel the loneliness of their position. Perhaps some tune, some air which the post band has played that evening, has sent their thoughts flying back over the years when life meant something more than stunted pines on a wind swept hillcock, something more than the same everlasting row of houses or the murmuring on the beaches. But if there is loneliness there is also the pride of an honorable profession. When at retreat the evening gun booms out, and the old flag dips and descends, and the strains of the national anthem momentarily drown the eternal wash of the waves on the beaches, you may notice the quick uplift of the head as the band plays smartly to the salute. And then it is easy to understand why these men live in the lonely fastnesses, away from the rest of humankind. The reason is palpable.

# The Lonely Forts Guarding Puget Sound

By Harry Davids

THE United States transport bucked, heaved, wallowed and rolled as she met the heavy tides which raced through the narrow strip of water into the straits of Juan de Fuca, and the detail of artillerymen guarding the supplies in the hold howled in unison with dolorous effect. It was most unpleasant. Peering through the dripping sea mist I could see a single electric light, weak and pale, that the skipper told me belonged to Fort Worden, Wash., the largest of the three forts which guard the entrances of Puget sound and the cities along its shores. "Sun day," said the skipper solemnly as he spun the spokes of the wheel around to meet the onrush of a wave crashing toward the bow: "Sun day this tann tub will bust. Bot's wot. Den mebbe Uncle Sam he vill buy someedings else besides boats which no sun vill use, for dis transport service." He dropped into Teutonic growlings as we plunged on through the inky darkness, heralding our advance with vociferous whistlings. From Worden's heights a heliograph flashed and twinkled, was taken up by Fort Casey, across the channel, and answered by Fort Flagler to the right. Simultaneously the wireless instrument in the cabin of the transport steamer whirled and clicked, and from each of three forts there shot a beam of light, which hovered over the white crested, leaping