

From Pagoda Land

V

A Funny Grace. The "Second Position." Man's Indifference Explained.
Apology for Human Life. Drunkenness and Its After-Effects. No matter
how kind you are to other people, they will hate you for being yourself.
A wish formulated for future periods of temperance and relaxation.
The British Tea Industry and Its Development. A History of Tea.
From Pagoda Land. Gipsy Tea-Leaves. Past Masters of Eloquence. Rapid
View of the Houses of Parliament. Brief discussion of the parliamentary
System. A "Bird Brain." Pencils and Pens. The Colors of the Spectrum.
A Dusty Road. All Oysteria Venti. A Sound of Peeing. The Avalanche.
Wednesday Morning. Appendix. The Constellations.

The wind thrashes the maple seed-pods,
The whole brilliant mass comes spattering down.

This is my fourteenth year as governor of C___ province.
I was little more than a lad when I first came here.
Now I am older, but scarcely any wiser.
So little are white hairs and a wrinkled forehead a sign of wisdom!

We were waiting for you under the broom-tree.
We called but you did not come.

I keep a pocket diary
In which I note down random jottings and impressions.
Today I wrote, "The spring is late this year.
In the ^{early} mornings there is hoar-frost on the water-meadows
And ~~delicate~~ ice shields the frozen mud on the highway."
If you go out to the western gate, will anybody be likely to meet you?

The wind continues its tiresome threnody
In the baggy branches of the eucalyptus?

There are only a few travelers on the Z high road.
~~XXXX~~ From behind slatted shutters a pair of black eyes are watching them.
They ~~XXX~~ belong to the wife of P, the high-school principal.

It was forty-odd years ago I first saw you
Coming over the self-same track.

And I still go out to meet you.
The screen door bangs in the rising wind, one of the hinges is loose.
And together we look back at the house.

It could use a coat ~~X~~ of paint.
Except that I am too poor to hire a workman.
I have all I can do to keep body and soul together
And soon, even that relatively simple task may prove to be beyond my powers.