

# *The Song of Loo Foy*

By

**Leslie Gordon Barnard**

Illustrated by

**C.J. McCarthy**

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# The Song of Loo Foy

By LESLIE GORDON BARNARD

*Illustrated by C. J. McCarthy*

The steam from Loo Foy's Laundry found vent into the street through the half-open window beside which Loo Foy himself ironed quite happily.

Everything he did was cheerfully executed, even when he was charged with mishandling clothes, to their detriment; when his quick, smiling nod found agreement with the owner's warning, and his lips repeated like a glad refrain: "must be cahful!" housewives who firmly announced to their husbands their intention of making "that Chinaman pay for that hole in the tablecloth . . . why it's perfectly ridiculous, my dear, I'm sure he skewers them together to wash them"—even they, in the face of such smiling submission, were content to threaten what would happen financially "next time." As the next time was a changeable feast, Loo Foy continued in the gladness of his heart and in the security of his purse being fattened.

Invariably Loo sang at his work. He enjoyed the distinction of being the one Celestial in the town, and the loneliness of it mattered not at all to him. His laundry was a wooden shack of bilious yellow, wherein he lived and moved and kept, for companionship, canaries, bright-plumaged tropical birds, usually a stray dog or two, and a cageful of white mice, which popular tradition said had significance not in line with Occidental ideas of diet. He sang sometimes in his own language, in a weird monotone, occasionally relieved by a rising or falling cadence; but more often he improved the occasion and his knowledge of English by chanting some popular ditty he had picked up, or—more likely—snatches of hymns he learned at the Baptist Sunday School, where he was the most attentive scholar in a young men's class. For one who understood so little of what went on, his attention might be thought queer if one forgot his desire to learn more English, and failed to notice how, though his head never turned, his slant eyes seemed able to take in the whole class of twenty-odd young men and speculate pleasingly on the laundering possibilities of twenty-odd shirts, twenty-odd collars, and . . . anyway, to-day Loo Foy sang:

“They is sunsline in mysol tl-day  
Moh glolious an’ blight—”

That was all he knew of the words, but by repetition and adjustment much could be done with it, and the sentiment was pleasing.

**L**oo Foy paused in the midst of a line to consider a thing he had left undone. He set aside the shirt he was working on, parked his iron carefully, suspended his song, and taking from under his counter a parcel marked with the hieroglyphics of his trade and language, carried it into the gloom of the back shop. Huge tubs stood here. Loo Foy did not trouble to open the skylight above that lent light for washing periods. He undid the parcel deliberately, his long-nailed fingers working with the string in a kind of deft clumsiness. It was a large bundle, and in it there were many shirts, many collars, suits of underwear, all immaculately clean and precisely folded. With immense placidity Loo Foy shook out the precise folds, gathered the clothes into a mass, and committed the whole to the turbid waters of a tub. This accomplished his face beamed, as if he had thus sacrificed hours of labor to a friendly deity; and he caught up his song . . . “sunsline in mysol tl-day, moh glolious an’ blight.”

He returned to his ironing.

The steam found vent through the half-open window beside him, and snatches of song floated out with it into the street . . .

**T**he door opened.

“Hello, Chink!”

“Hello! You wantee laundly?”

“Sure! Two weeks now, isn’t there? Got it ready?”

Loo Foy’s face was impassive. His bare, sandaled feet protruding from beneath blue-and-white cotton trousers, paddled across the floor to where, on the topmost shelf of a rickety arrangement in wood containing many bundles, he fetched away a parcel. This he put tentatively on the counter before his customer, but his hand was protectively hovering.

“Two dollahs, flifty-flee cents!”

“All right, Charlie. Next week—see? Next Saturday sure!”

The protective hand hovering over the bundle descended swiftly, and the customer's hand found itself reaching out for air.

"No cash, no laundly!" said Loo Foy decisively.

"Next week, I tell you, sure, sure! Come on, Charlie, be a sport!" The young man leaned over the counter ingratiatingly. Loo Foy regarded him with slant eyes, taking in the newly-creased clothes, the spats, the cane. A shadow passed across his impassivity, and was gone. He took the bundle, and carefully restored it to its high shelf. He returned to his ironing.

"You plomise," he said. "All plomise, no cash. Plomise no good eat. Nice day. G'bye!"

Loo Foy finished a shirt and commenced another garment. The young man lingered. He might not have existed. Loo Foy worked lovingly on turning a cuff. He lifted up his voice:

"They is sunsline in mysol tl-day,  
Moh glolious an' blight—"

A hand banged down on the counter.

"Look here, Chink, you come across with my laundry, see! Do you think I want to wait until you get out of jail—if they let you out—to get my stuff? Yeh, you can look at me if you like! Maybe you think we don't know who beat up Laddie McCoy last night, but we're onto you!"

A gleam flickered in Loo Foy's eyes, and died again. He continued to work and to sing. His understanding of English was greater than his own usage. The youth by the counter was one of three young bloods who had temporary rooms in a nearby lodging. They were science students on a summer job at the local Power Development scheme, and they were more reckless with the little money they earned than Loo Foy was with the water for which he paid by meter. Presently the demands of education would call them hence, and their debts to mere Chinamen would doubtless be forgotten.

"Mistee McCloy hurt bad?" inquired Loo Foy, pleasantly.

"So bad he's getting a warrant out for you, you damned Chink!"

"Wallant?" Loo Foy's forehead was creased in an effort to understand.

"Yes, warrant. To arrest you!"

"Allest? You mean p'lice. Me? Him clazy!"

*"You give me my  
stuff and I'll see if I  
can smooth things over  
for you." "Two doll-  
lahs, flifty-flee cents!"  
said Loo Foy.*



“Well, you’ll see, Charlie! Serves you darned well right, too! They’re sending up a plainclothes man from the county to put you where you belong. Say, look here, you give me my stuff and I’ll see if I can smooth things over for you. Get me?”

“Two dollahs, flifty-flee cents!” said Loo Foy.

**T**he youth shrugged his shoulders, and stumped out. Loo Foy, left alone, paused in his work, and gave consideration to this thing. He went into a shed at the back, and saw that his live stock were watered and provisioned to withstand a siege. On the way through the rear of the shop, he paused in the semi-gloom to regard a turbid tubful of clothes. A furtive smile lingered on his lips. He returned to his ironing, and his lips took up his repetitious refrain:

“They is sunsline in mysol tl-day,  
Moh glolious an’ blight—”

The door opened again. A big shadow fell across the counter. Loo Foy knew, even before any words were spoken, that his time had come. He turned smilingly to meet his fate. He listened impassively to the charge against him. At the end he said:

“Him crazy! How me take laundly home? Not washee. Look!” He plucked the big man by the sleeve, and led him into the semi-gloom of the back shop.

He pointed to a turbid tubful of clothes.

“Mistee McCloy’s laundly,” said Loo Foy. He pulled up some dripping articles. “See! Mistee McCloy’s sirts! Mistee McCloy’s dlaws!”

The plainclothes man scratched his head.

“I guess you’ve got to come with me just the same, Charlie,” he said.

Loo Foy looked injured. Then he smiled.

“All light. I come. People go di’ty—you flault!”

He set his iron and the half finished clothes aside, locked up the place carefully, attired himself more fittingly for the street, and followed his escort out into the sunshine.

Once before Loo Foy had been in the County Police Court, but his approach had been different to this. Then he had made his way through a motley enough gathering in a marble corridor and ante-room and found his way almost furtively past a big policeman before that individual had realized that an Eastern shadow had flitted by or perhaps challenged his right to sit among the common people of the West. Loo Foy had found a front seat and watched six of his compatriots explain, through an interpreter, why Fan-Tan was a harmless pastime to take one’s mind from laundering over the week-end, and not even remotely connected with financial exchange.

Now the approach was more devious, and less to be desired. Beneath the court were cells; in the cells were prisoners of caste and of no caste, most of them much in need of the tubs that stood idle in the rear of Loo Foy’s shop. Loo Foy, herded indiscriminately among them, maintained a stolidity uncommon to one so cheerful. Occidental justice was a deity to be propitiated by penitence until the danger of its Jovian stroke had passed.

A movement caught Loo Foy in its cogs and whirled him along. He found his feet on a staircase, his head emerging into the upper air through a heavy affair like a trap-door, and his body presently at rest on a long bench in a cage equally long. There were perhaps a dozen men in all on this bench, like white mice in a cage . . . He himself was last but one. A buzz of voices filled the place; from the seats behind, where once he had sat and watched

the doom of compatriots, from the men who stood in the centre and quarrelled with each other, and, less violently, with the big man who sat on a dais and who was the mouthpiece of the God of Justice. Then—"Silence!" The cogs had started again. The line of seated men shifted one place left! The door of the cage had opened to allow the head of the line out. There were rumblings from the big man on the dais, mumblings from accusing witnesses, half-defiant words from the accused. Quarrelings broke out among the men who lounged in the middle of the court, into which the mouthpiece of the God of Justice thrust his quick and silencing word:

"Fifty dollars and costs or thirty days!"

The head of the line of white mice looked up in quick appeal. Loo Foy could have told anyone that a man so clothed would not possess fifty dollars.

"Next!" bellowed the mouthpiece of the dais.

Somebody in uniform shouted "Dennis Logan! Dennis Logan! Charged, your honor, with breaking into the store of Asa Smith, at Jonesville, with the intent to steal—"

The line had shifted again, and Loo Foy with it. Its head had been decapitated once more. As he moved up, Loo Foy saw a despairing, defiant figure stumble past him, the trap-door opened and closed above him with a clang. Loo Foy shivered. His head began to reel at the swiftness with which doom came. Quarrelling had again broken out among the men who lounged in the middle of the room.

The morning wore on. The line grew less: some went out not to return again, others followed the first swiftly to the doom that awaited below. The droning of voices was a soporific to Loo Foy; he had not slept well last night . . .

"Loo Foy! Loo Foy!" He started, jerking his head up. "Come along there, Chink! . . . Charged, your Honor, with committing an assault on the person of James McCoy, a student, on the evening of—" the voice droned on, and, dying away, was taken up by the mouthpiece on the dais, of whose words Loo Foy caught a few now and then ". . . to be tried by me . . . under terms Statute . . ."—an invocation to the God of Justice from which the big man looked up to ask, like the crack of a whip: "How does he plead—Guilty or Not Guilty?"

Eyes turned to Loo Foy. A Chinese interpreter moved forward. But Loo Foy spoke up of his own accord, injury in his voice: "No gilty!"



A clock drummed out the hour of twelve. The big man looked at the clock, compared it with his watch, frowned a little, and spoke:

“Remanded until Friday the twentieth. Bail set at one hundred and fifty dollars!”

Loo Foy drew himself up proudly. Others had paid money to a man who sat at a table with a book, and received offerings for the insatiable God of Justice. The interpreter moved forward, but Loo Foy waved him away. Already he was producing from some interior store, hidden inside his shirt, the saving of years. Without flinching, he paid from his roll one hundred and fifty dollars. He would have paid two hundred to escape the sound of that door clanging above him. Freedom was worth a hundred and fifty. He wished to put this marble palace behind him for ever. He pushed towards the door.

“Remember, Charlie, Friday morning sure!” said a uniformed figure not unkindly.

“Fliday!” said Loo Foy. “Fliday what?”

“Come again. You—here—see? You’ll be tried then.”

“You clazy!” said Loo Foy quickly “Me pay monee. All done. Me go!”

“Silence!” thundered the Court.

One of the men who quarrelled in the middle of the room came forward and took Loo Foy by the arm. Under protest he was led from the place. As the hubbub in the rear died away, it came to Loo Foy that he was in friendly hands. He recognized in this man the husband of Mrs. Wilson, and on him a shirt done by Loo Foy’s own deft hands. Mr. Wilson was a lawyer; he explained to Loo Foy the meaning of bail. He promised, moreover, to quarrel on his behalf come Friday. Loo Foy felt a burden roll from him. Only the awesome precincts of the marble palace of justice made him refrain from breaking into song.

**T**here were but three days until Friday had its turn again, and they flew with exceeding swiftness. By Thursday noon no song came from the laundry of Loo Foy. His interviews with Lawyer Wilson were disturbingly serious, and heart-searching. Impassivity was maintained at a cost. To one straw he clung with terrific tenacity.

“How me take Mr. McCloy’s laundly home?” he reiterated. “Not washee then!”

“That’s something,” said Lawyer Wilson, “but it’s not final. You might have dropped in on him just to collect the money.”

“Mr. McCloy no pay ’lout washee. Take laundry—maybe pay. Not take laundry—clazy. How he pay—no laundry?”

“That’s all right, but—look here, Loo, you tell me straight, see—did you beat him up or not? Don’t mind me, I’m your lawyer, and I think he got what was coming to him. Tell me the whole truth.”

Loo Foy’s slant eyes roved the room for a minute. When they focussed on Lawyer Wilson they were two liquid pools of utmost innocence upon which the breath of accusation stirred ripples of pained injury.

“You sink Loo glilty! Me go. Nice day. G’bye.”

“Not so fast there! I’m only trying to help you out of this scrape. Now, how about somebody to tell the magistrate you’re a decent kind of Chink?”

**T**he idea, once it percolated, pleased Loo Foy. He halted in his determination to go, and roved the room again with his eyes. His eyes lighted.

“Mistee Smiss, nice man! Baplist Class, Loo Foy velly good scholla! He tell Loo Foy good Christian.”

Lawyer Wilson undertook to speak to Mr. Smith. Loo Foy departed somewhat comforted. But as Thursday afternoon slid towards evening, and the coming of the fateful Friday was a matter of hours only, Loo’s gloom lengthened in direct ratio to the shadow cast by his awning. When a customer entered, banging the door to, it startled him as if the great trap door above the police cells had closed above his luckless head. Loo Foy regarded with a puzzled air the young fellow who stood outside the counter. His eyes ranged the shelves of bundles.

“You bling laundry?”

“No, sure I didn’t. Just came in to see about this scrape you’re in. Mr. Smith was speaking to me, see? Say, you should worry! There were three of us playing pool next door just the time they claim you knocked this fellow up, and we heard you singing in here the whole blame time!”

Loo Foy sorted the words out, and picked the meaning from them. His brow puckered. Then a smile began to overspread his face. He pointed a long-nailed finger at the youth.

“Mistee McCloy say: ‘Loo bling laundly eigh’ clock, tly kill me. You say: ‘Loo sing in slop qualeh eigh’ to qualeh past eigh’—eh?”

“That’s right.”

Loo Foy moved toward the back of the shop. “Wait,” he admonished, and vanished into the shadows. Hastily he threw off his cotton working clothes, and reappeared quickly, clothed for the street.

“You come talk my liah!” he said.

**U**nder Lawyer Wilson’s instructions Friday morning found Loo Foy in the marble halls of Justice promptly at the opening of the police court session. This time his approach was more conducive of self-respect. He was yet a free man. He could mingle with the varied life of the hall and ante-room. His slant eyes took in the scene. There were old and young, male and female, some bedraggled and some dressed even better than Mrs. Van Stutz, with whose laundry he had to exercise extra care. Many appeared worried, some resigned, most of them restless, waiting, talking to lawyers who came and went among them; none of them were as impassive as Loo Foy.

Every now and again a big policeman would catch up a call from the inner chamber of doom, and echo it down the corridor, and the number of waiting would be lessened by one, perhaps more. Loo Foy, regarding this continual feeding of the hungry maw of Justice, was inwardly perturbed. He looked about in a shade of anxiety. Suddenly his head bobbed like a mandarin’s.

“Mistee Smiss! Nice day! You come tell Loo Foy good Chlistian?”

Behind Mr. Smith came three young men. In them Loo Foy recognized his other allies. His face lit up with delight. He rubbed his hands.

“Nice day,” he reiterated. “Velly nice day Fliday!”

**T**hey found an unoccupied bench and sat upon it. Loo Foy sat also and beamed upon them. Time passed on. Loo Foy discovered a constraint upon his allies, as if they, too, were restless, worried, unsure . . . His smile was re-placed by puckers. The marble hall grew cold. He tucked his hands into his sleeves, and waited for the stroke of doom . . .

“Loo Foy! Loo Foy! Loo Foy!”

The echoes carried through the ante-room, and went skipping down the corridor. It sounded to Loo like the death angel calling him. It cheered him a little to see Lawyer Wilson beckoning from the doorway. His four allies, a subdued group, filed after him into the courtroom.

Of the exact proceedings of the court Loo Foy had, if anything, less vivid impressions than before. Then he had been alone, his back to the wall, and the cogs caught him and moved him along inexorably enough. But when his turn came, for the moment he had dominated the scene. His lips had eagerly followed the lead of those who had escaped the wrath to come by mouthing the words, "No glilty!" Now others stood between him and the God of Justice, and spoke for him and against him to the mouthpiece on the dais. There was a slight resentment in him that he should become but a background.

**H**e saw his accuser, Mr. McCoy, step up and, holding a greasy book, kiss his thumb, a ceremonial that impressed Loo Foy not a little. A man, to whom Loo took an instant dislike, drew from Mr. McCoy the story of the assault. Laddie McCoy swore that, not being very well, he had lain down on his bed, to wake from sleep with the sense of someone in his apartment. This had turned out to be a Chinaman, the accused, who, after a few words, assaulted him and left him half conscious upon the floor.

Loo Foy, listening, was bursting with eagerness; fear also was upon him. Lawyer Wilson spoke then, questioning Mr. McCoy:

"I understand, Mr. McCoy, that you owed Loo Foy certain money for laundry delivered and undelivered; that you refused payment, and had instructed your landlady not to admit the Chinaman if he came?"

"It was just a joke. I intended to pay him in time."

"Oh—it was just a joke. Now, Mr. McCoy, I understand, too, that you were rather, shall I say befuddled, on the evening in question—so much so that you were not very clear what had happened?"

"I had taken a powder and gone to sleep. The door was not locked and I jumped up quickly when the Chinaman entered. Maybe I was still a bit sleepy—"

**L**oo Foy's voice rose contemptuously: "Mistee McCloy not sleepy. Mistee McCloy dlunk!"

“Silence!” thundered the Court.

Loo Foy, catching also a terrible glance from his patron, subsided. Apparently the powder had not ignited . . .

“Then, perhaps you were too drowsy to be sure who had entered?”

“No—it was Loo Foy!”

“You are sure?”

“Positive?”

“What did he say?”

“Said he had brought home my laundry, and wanted payment.”



*Loo Foy cast a quick glance at the magistrate. He did not like what he saw. "Him crazy!" he charged in a high pitched voice.*

Loo Foy cast a quick glance at the magistrate. He did not like what he saw. Lawyer Wilson was doing poorly with the case. Loo's brown forefinger, with its long tail, stretched out accusingly at the witness.

“Him crazy!” he charged in a high-pitched voice. “How me take Mistee McCloy's laundly home? Not washee! Mistee Pliceman see Mistee McCloy's sirts an' dlaws my slop—not washee!”

Laughter shook the court. Loo Foy beamed himself. The mouthpiece shouted and all was silence again. Mr. McCoy stepped down. The young man who had first brought the news of arrest to the shop, took his place. He told of finding Laddie McCoy on the floor, and hearing his story. He

corroborated much that had been said. Loo Foy had threatened things before. Undoubtedly, he had done it.

**L**awyer Wilson stepped back. Loo Foy found himself suddenly elevated to a place of importance. A man was mumbling things to him, to which Loo nodded ready assent, taking the book from the desk and kissing his thumb with a sense of immense sophistication. Before Lawyer Wilson could speak, the mouthpiece of Justice looked down upon Loo with great horned glasses, and said: "Now you just tell us, Charlie, all about this."

"Mistee McCloy bad man," said Loo glibly. "Tell lie. Him say: 'Me pay you nex' week.' Alle samee plomise—nevah pay. Him say las' time: 'Charlie, you give laundly. Me no got sirt 'less you give.' See—him got sirt now. Him lie? Alle same he say: 'Loo tly kill!' How can? Me in slop qualeh eigh' to qualeh pas' eigh'. Me iron laundly, an' sing, like so—"

Loo Foy, conscious of making a good impression, lifted up his voice and sang:

"They is sunsline in mysol tl-day.  
Moh glolious an' blight—"

"Hold on," said the Court. "This isn't choir practice!"

"Nice Baplis' song." said Loo. "Me in Mistee Smiss' class. Mistee Smiss tell you Loo Foy good Chlistian not lie like Mistee McCloy."

More laughter. Loo Foy found himself ordered from the centre of the stage. Mr. Smith corroborated the fact. He had found Loo Foy a most regular and attentive member of his class. His attention was remarkable. He felt certain the charge was unfounded. Loo Foy would not hurt a soul.

**Y**our honour," said Lawyer Wilson, "I think the matter is sufficiently clear to warrant dismissal, but the chief proof remains. I have three young men here, who can substantiate the alibi plea. Perhaps the word of one will suffice, unless the court wishes further confirmation. Mr. Arthurs, please take the stand. I understand you were in Kelly's Pool Room, which immediately adjoins the shop of Loo Foy, on the evening of which we are speaking?"

"Yes, sir!"

"You were there an hour?"

“Yes, from seven-thirty until eight-thirty. The record is in the book.”

“And during that time you knew that Loo Foy was in his shop. Why?”

“He was singing, continually—at least with no intervals of more than a minute or two at a time. We wished he’d shut up.”

“Then there was no possible chance for Loo Foy to be elsewhere.”

“No.”

“Exactly. Your honor, I trust—”

Loo Foy saw the big man to whom he had taken a dislike rise quickly and thrust in a question: “How can you be sure it was the accused who was singing?”

“I recognized his voice. We all did. It was the Chinaman.”

“Might it not be some compatriot who had dropped in to keep shop while he went out, and to cover this thing up?”

“He’s the only Chink round our parts. And it was Loo’s voice.”

“You’re sure!”

“Positive. We’ve often heard him sing in there when we were next door, and there are little tricks he has. Sure, it was Loo, himself!”

“Did he sing the same song all the time?”

“Yes—that’s what got our goat! That’s one of the tricks he has.”

“The same song as he started just now?”

“N-no!”

“Oh—not that song! Then he lied when he said a little while ago that he was singing this sunshine stuff?”

**L**oo Foy saw the young fellow’s face drop. Lawyer Wilson, too, rustled some papers nervously, and, when apparently about to speak, coughed and had recourse to a handkerchief. A tenseness fell upon the place. Everywhere he looked Loo Foy saw eyes upon him, accusingly. His heart was as water within him.

“What was this song he sang?” asked the prosecutor.

“Oh, a popular song of a few years ago.”

Loo Foy grabbed his courage with both hands, and forced his wits to work. His hand shot up, like it did in class at night school, when he had an answer ready.

“Me tell you. Not nice song sing Mistee Smiss here. Glamophone teach Loo Foy. Me sing fo’ Mistee Maglistlate! You hear!

“Me knowee pleaches’ dlawteh  
Never askee wateh.  
They lil’ bittee bad ev’ly goo’ lil’ gihl-ee  
Allee same.”

“That’s the one!” said the witness. “It was Loo singing all right. I remember we started up Kelly’s gramophone, and that set him off.”

Loo Foy beamed upon the court. Laughter still lurked in the room. It touched his vanity. He attempted an encore:

“Me knowee pleaches’ dlawteh—”

“Silence in the Court!”

Loo Foy choked off his song in the middle of a word, and looked injured. The mouthpiece of the God of Justice had bowed his head as if invoking this deity to grant wisdom. He raised his head. The glasses were missing from his eyes. He polished them vigorously with a silk handkerchief.

“Case dismissed!” he said, brusquely. “Plaintiff to pay costs. Next!”

Loo Foy found himself shaking the hands of Lawyer Wilson, of Mr. Arthurs, of Mr. Smith, who led him—a free man, secure in his savings of years—into the marble corridor.

He beamed upon his friends.

“You nice liah, Mistee Wilson! You good Chlistian, Mistee Smiss!” Lawyer Wilson disappeared back into the chamber of doom and justice. Loo regarded his teacher benevolently. “Baplis’ pleachee tell Loo you go away. So? Loo solly. Maybe me bling Mistee Smiss nice present!”

**M**r. Smith was to leave a week from Thursday, so Loo Foy learned by discreet inquiry. On the evening of Wednesday, Loo presented himself at his teacher’s house. In his hand he carried a large bundle, curiously punctured on top. Mr. Smith greeted his scholar cordially.

“You go tl-mollow?” Loo asked.



“To-morrow morning, Loo. It was nice of you to come.”

“You go long piecee way?”

“A long way, Loo. Hundreds of miles. You must write to me and let me know how you get on.”

“Sure. Me light you. You not come back?”

“No, Loo!”

“Then me give you plesent. Nice pallet!” He produced the bundle from behind his back, and began unwrapping it. A sudden thought struck him. He paused to ask: “You got glamophone here? No?” He nodded smilingly, and continued to unwrap the package, revealing a hooded cage containing a vivid parrot. “Velly good pallet,” said Loo, beaming upon his teacher. “You take, lememble Loo Foy!” Mr. Smith seemed hesitant, but he was a benevolent old man and he could not bear to hurt his scholar. He expressed his thanks. Loo’s beaming face became wistful.

“You take good ca’ nice pallet—eh? Velly fond pallet. Pallet flighten people way Loo not in shop.”

“Oh, then I couldn’t take your bird, Loo—I—”

Loo Foy shook his head decisively.

“No. Pallet my plesent Mistee Smiss. You and Loo good Chlistians—see. G’bye!”

**I**n a far western city Loo Foy’s parrot, somewhat subdued by its long journey, hung in temporary quarters in a boarding house. The hood was off its cage now, and it preened itself in the bright sunlight. Mr. Smith coming in, was startled at a familiar voice, declaring indignantly:

“Slop no open. Go way!”

He stared around as if looking for the bodily presence of Loo Foy. Then he saw the parrot, and laughed. He had left the door of the room open. Across the hall there was a grinding noise, and a cheap gramophone began a medley of popular airs. The parrot stirred and squawked uneasily.

Mr. Smith commenced some correspondence that awaited him, and forgot the parrot. But the memory of Loo Foy was vivid. The courtroom scene and Loo’s gratitude came before him. Suddenly he started. A high-pitched voice bellowed in his ear:

“Me knowee pleaches’ dlawteh  
Never askee wateh.  
They lil’ bittee bad ev’ly goo’ lil’ gilh-ee  
Allee same.”

Mr. Smith turned and stared blankly at the parrot. The imitation was perfect. Even in the room he could have sworn that Loo Foy—

The parrot began again:

“Me knowee pleaches’ dlawteh—”

Mr. Smith got up and resolutely put a hood over the cage. The singing stopped. Mr. Smith bowed his head over the papers on the table, as if he, too, were invoking some deity. But, like the magistrate, when he raised his head his glasses were missing, and the nature of his tears might have been misunderstood had any beheld them and failed to see the benevolent shaking of Mr. Smith’s shoulders.

THE END

## TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

Illustrations have been relocated due to using a non-page layout.

A cover was created for this ebook which is placed in the public domain.

[The end of *The Song of Loo Foy* by Leslie Gordon Barnard]