

PAWS AROUND THE WORLD

By PAT JOHNSTON — Part II

We had an uneventful flight to Hong Kong, however, upon arriving at the airport my luggage had been incorrectly tagged and even though I had the keys to it I had quite a time convincing the agent that it was mine. It did take a little doing but I managed and then set about looking for Gwen Webb who by this time had given me up.



MRS. JOHNSTON

Here we stayed at the Ambassador. This hotel seemed ideal, centrally located, restful Oriental furnishings and many objets d'art to delight your eye. We would not hesitate to recommend this hotel to anyone.

Hong Kong's name is derived from "Heung Kong," meaning "Fragrant Harbor," which was the Chinese name for an Anchorage at Aberdeen. Kowloon's name meaning "Nine Dragons" is derived from an incident 800 years ago when the boy Emperor Ping counted eight hills, remarking that there must be eight dragons because of an ancient belief that a dragon inhabits every hill. However, his

prime minister told him there were nine because of an ancient belief that an Emperor is a dragon and the name has remained through the centuries.

Actually we were in Kowloon Peninsula, Hong Kong Island is a short ferry ride. For shopping this is a mecca; shops galore of all kinds, arcades, wherever you look there is something to buy. Very bad for Mrs. Webb and me for we are not only window shoppers, but avid shoppers when the pocketbook permits.

You must not shop here without the services of an experienced guide. Ours was a native born Chinese, Mr. Chang, speaking excellent English and he guided us to all the shops we inquired about. Another piece of advice, never take the services of a guide who approaches you on the street. You may shop to your heart's content, hours in Kowloon are from 10 A.M. until 9 P.M. Some Hong Kong merchandise is considered "Presumptive" meaning it is presumed to have been made in Red China. To prove it, it is necessary to obtain a (CCO) Comprehensive Certificate of Origin. Among some of these items are jade, some jewelry, brassware and many others. The lists change from time to time so when in doubt it is best to check with the Foreign Assets Control division in the American Consulate.

We took the tour of Victoria Island, to the Haw Par Mansion and the Tiger Balm Gardens. This was constructed in 1935 by Mr. Aw Boon Haw in his eight acre backyard. It consists of grottoes and pavilions

displaying effigies from Chinese Mythology and one very garish section depicts Hell. It is a paradise for photographers with its flamboyant coloring. We visited the old pirate's hideout, the beach resort of Repulse Bay. It's name was taken from a British man-of-war. The harbor was full of sampans, many or most tied together. As you know people are born, live and die here, never leaving; a most depressing sight. Ragged, dirty little urchins, begging, and if nothing was given we were called what sounded not at all complimentary. In Aberdeen Bay or Harbor there is a floating population, junks and sampans are the only home of a total population in the colony water of well over 21,000. Junks are colorful but not at all seaworthy. Their main use is for loading freight within the harbor.

We returned to the hotel for the usual quick shower. In Hong Kong if you are lucky and there is water at that particular time of day, it is quick, believe me. We dined at Gaddi's where service and food were excellent. Thursday there was more shopping. Gwen was on a sweater binge and I was having fun too. I had two pairs of shoes made from a favorite pair and they are beautifully made. When I tried on the canvas model they fit perfectly but on arrival here either my feet have grown or the shoes have shrunk. Wear them I shall, if I have to limp every step.

Being very, very fond of jade I was in seventh heaven and the jewelry, both modern and antique, sent us into a state of ecstasy. Hong Kong has a well earned reputation for being the shopping center of the Orient, we found this to be true.

Again it was time to leave, this time our destination was Rome; our stay in Hong Kong had been a very brief two days but we used every moment of it to the fullest. Now for the last time we were leaving the Orient which has a fascination all its own. Nothing can match it. The flight to Rome seemed endless, perhaps because this was a night flight. I prefer night flying, but on this occasion I wished for daylight so that we might see some of the sights. From Hong Kong we passed Bangkok, Bombay, Calcutta and Karachi. I noticed we were losing altitude and thought here at last was Rome, but guess what? Cairo. It was disappointing not to even get a glimpse of these places. We did not leave the plane at any of these stops. At each stop officials board with spray guns in hand and disinfect the plane. In one instance he looked at me aiming the gun and said "Calcutta" — quickly I replied NO! I still do not know whether or not if one is from Calcutta he gets an extra spray of this odious stuff.

At the Bombay stop, being weary — having lost track of time — I decided I would step out on the platform for a breath of fresh air. Was I surprised — what fresh air! A blast of the hottest, humid air I have ever experienced hit me and I beat a hasty retreat. Inside the plane it was at least comfortable and I soon forgot about being restless when I thought of the heat.

We finally got to Rome at 7 A.M. There was the usual routine — first immigration desk, present credentials, they see if you are healthy, (—wealthy or wise of no consequence but health is a must.) Then pick



Coliseum

up luggage and so through customs. At times when going through customs and being questioned as to what you might be transporting, I have had a wild desire to use just one simple word — GUESS! But with these you do not joke. However, they are all very nice, no difficulties — perhaps our honest American faces or was it?

While in Rome the Hotel Flora was our home and from many snatches of conversation I overheard this must be a favored stop for seasoned travelers. This was their home away from home. One thing I did not care for in this hotel was the elevator or "Lifts" as they are referred to on the continent. This was sort of a wire cage and one could see either up or down. My fear of heights is bad, but

not bad enough to make me walk down four stories.

Speaking of disappearing acts — I stepped into hall looking for a porter — I could not have been gone more than a minute. Fact is my hand never left the door knob. When I re-entered the room Gwen was nowhere but nowhere in sight. I called to her and from the bathroom the faint reply — "Pat, get me out of here, I am locked in." I soon found she was correct. "Well, Mrs. Webb just be calm, you know I forgot my housebreaking kit, but somehow I'll get you out." Finally, after many instructions she managed to get the door open, even the maid was at a loss as what to do. She shrugged her shoulders and left.

Again in Rome more rain — quoting Gwen "We flew through the raindrops," over and below them and the cloud formations were beautiful. This was a warm rain and we took our tours in spite of the inclement weather. This was a must—we might never pass this way again. The pavements in Rome are the roughest I have ever experienced but then when you think of the age of this city it is to be understood. However, there is so much of interest in this, the "Eternal City," that you soon forget how you are being "shook about" in the tour buses.

We did window shop in Rome and did pick up some little remembrances. Beautiful knits, gorgeous gloves and art objects beyond description. Many, many cats did we see here, not show variety, but just nice little cats. Well fed, fat little characters. Mostly they would be in the grocery or meat markets licking their chops, washing their faces and some attending to their daily manicures. There seemed to be an abundance of grocery stores and meat markets, all very aromatic.

On our tour we did get to St. Peter's Basilica. The interior is astonishing for its grandeur. On both sides many sepulchral monuments, the most part of which are Popes. The Pantheon is a masterpiece of the architecture of ancient Rome. It was dedicated to all Gods and erected in the year 27 by Agrippa. It is a large round building, has no windows and light comes through an opening made in the center of

the cupola. Here in tombs are the remains of King Victor Emanuel, King Humbert I and several others.

Certainly Rome has more fountains and statuary than any other place in the world. Practically everything is of marble. Among these is the "Fountain of Trevi" said to be the most beautiful fountain in the world. The statue of "Neptune" in the middle is supported by a large shell drawn by sea horses. Aside are two statues representing Salubrity and Abundance.

All that now remains of the Coliseum are the ruins. It was begun by Emperor Vespasian in the year 79. It became famous for the wrestling of gladiators and the persecution of the Christians. It is remarkable that most of these ruins have now stood for centuries and in all probability will remain for many more to come. The pits, iron gates that held prisoners and wild animals are still intact. It was a weird sight to see them still in the ruins. Here we saw many, many cats, all ages, families so to speak. They were having a gay time leaping over walls and ruins, playing their little games of hide and seek and tag. All were very fat and happy. I inquired of the guide where they lived. "In the caves mostly, with so many visitors they are well fed and not the least bit timid." All varieties were seen; Calicoes, Tabbys, Particolors, etc. What a household Pet Show this would make, I couldn't resist thinking.

The Catacombs were weird, down, down and down into the bowels of the earth, through narrow winding damp passage ways, filled with niches and some skeletons still visible. The young priest who guided us informed us that this particular catacomb had just recently been discovered after having been buried by an earthquake and lost some 800 years ago. A sudden thought struck me — if we should have an earthquake at this particular moment, two Cat Fanciers and Board members would have to be replaced!

We tried one of the sidewalk cafes for coffee and that was a big mistake. We asked for Northern or American Coffee but that is not what we were served. I knew the moment I saw the cups this was not what we had ordered. Being brave characters and following the adage "When in Rome," we tried it anyway. It was a concoction stronger than Espresso, as strong if not stronger than Turkish coffee; if you have ever tried Turkish coffee you know what I mean.

Though Sunday had been a constant downpour, Monday we did take the tour to Hadrian's Villa and the Villa d'Este, the richest imperial residence in the Roman world, with its marvelous parks and fountains, although it was after four, beginning to get dark and very, very damp, both from the rains of the previous days and the fountains, its was one the most beautiful sights I have ever seen; hundreds of fountains on the various levels and when you finally reach the bottom and look upward it is nothing but cascades of water mingling with statues. If ever in Rome, this too is a must.

Traffic in Rome is very fast and much like Tokyo — one difference however — in Tokyo they keep on going, in Rome everything stops while they argue with many gestures. On one occasion the police officer shrugged his shoulders and walked away and soon they were on their way again.

Tuesday, November 3, we left for Paris. Of course it was raining and we wondered if the sun would shine at all for us while we were on the continent. Here our hotel was the California, two short blocks off the "Champs Elysees." What a blow I received on checking in. The porter asked for our luggage and I said — "Over there," but horrors, over there was one main piece of luggage, and every stitch I had with me was nowhere in sight. All along I kept a very close watch on our luggage, continually counting it, but now where was it? To say I was frantic was putting it mildly, here in a strange country with not a stitch except what I was wearing left me devoid of my sense of humor. Gwen tried to console me—"it would be found—we would go shopping, etc." "With What?" I replied, for I had lost enough to last me the rest of the time we were to be there. I was ready to return home right then and there. Somehow the luggage had never been taken off the bus and finally after a horrible two hours it arrived. By that time I had more than jitters, but I was never so glad to see a suitcase in all my life.

Paris is a great and gay city as you all know, with artistic and historic monuments. I will forever regret not having my camera with me on this one particular day. The most MAGNIFICENT statue I have ever seen is the one of Marshal Foch mounted on his great stallion. The expression on the Marshal's face, the pride of the stallion, defies description. I kept hoping sometime before we left we might return to that spot but we never did.

Paris is delightful, fast moving, and above all, happy, or so it seemed to us. We strolled up and down the Champs Elysees WINDOW SHOPPING and then to the one and only Louvre, the incomparable Notre Dame Cathedral, Napoleon's Tomb. His tomb consists of six caskets placed within each other. The guide informed us that one American tourist, when told this, remarked "You mean they cut him in six pieces?" How they love to joke about the American tourists, all in fun, however. We must return in the spring we were told, then the chestnuts along the Boulevard are in bloom and young lovers (possibly old, too) stroll hand in hand along the street.

The Latin Quarter was much fun, here we attended a night club featuring the Apache dance. This is one of my favorites and now at long last here was the real thing. It is fast, fascinating and rough, and you cannot be a weakling to participate in this dance. We finished the evening at the one and only "LIDO." Here there were beautiful, beautiful girls, and the most handsome of men, all extremely talented. Gwen was delighted, for one act used a WESTERN theme and all who know her know what an avid westerner she is. The following day we were off to the Montmarte and the "Church of the Sacred Heart," at the tallest point in Paris. It had finally stopped raining, but such bitter cold I have never experienced, nor do I hope to again. I kept intending to purchase boots, knee length (To my neck would have been better) everyone seemed to wear them and I don't wonder why. I never did get to it, though.

Later we took a delightful trip along the Seine River through the wooded suburbs of Paris. We were pleased in Paris to see streets named after some of our Presidents; Roosevelt, Kennedy, etc. We

were on our way to the Palace of Versailles. The countryside reminded us of our own. Being in the fall, the landscape offered the same rich colored foliage, immaculate little farms, dairies and more horses.

Majestic is about the only way you can describe the Palace. Here we visited all the famous galleries, apartments and beautiful gardens. Of special interest was the "Hall of Mirrors." Here a short year before our late President Kennedy had been a guest. On these occasions furniture is brought from Paris to the Palace. In the small room to one side stood the original table which had been used to sign the Treaty of Versailles. Among the magnificent paintings by famous artists, the unfinished one of Marie Antoninette was of special interest.

Shopping in Paris was fun — so much to choose from, delightful little shops, perfumeries and just about anything you would want. I purchased several handkerchiefs and one gorgeous black chiffon scarf, jewelry which was mostly cat pins, and on leaving at the airport got more perfume.

We left Paris for Brussels Friday and I was keeping more than a watchful eye on my luggage. I should say "ours" because it was all together and I saw to it that it continued to stay that way. We were more than surprised arriving in Brussels to find that here it was not raining. It is a bustling city with splendid streets and public buildings. Here the Palace Hotel was our home and it was lovely. Here we met our fellow Board member and Judge, Richard Gebhardt, and his business associate, John Bannon. How nice to see two of our favorite people. Dick and I were to be guest judges at the Brussels show. This was my first experience judging on the Continent, very new to me but routine for Dick who has officiated in the capacity of judge several times. He was the first CFA judge to have this honor and distinction.

I prefer our method to theirs, their ratings are much the same, i.e., you grade Excellent, Very Good, Good and Fair. This is as far as you go. No Best in Division or Best in Show, no competition, so to speak. Each exhibitor wins something, so everyone is very happy. I judged some fifty cats, whites, Abys, Blue-Creams and Brown Tabby's. My first exhibit I marked Fair. Needless to say my interpreter was astonished that I graded so severely. I tried to convince him the exhibit did not warrant more than that and besides was alone in its class.

Our judging room was a long narrow one and the four tables were side by side. First Mr. Rossi, myself, Mr. Gebhardt and Mme. Davis from France. The cats are brought to the judging table by stewards. Exhibitors and spectators are not permitted to watch the judging. Personally I feel they are missing a great deal, that is part of the fun of exhibiting, waiting and watching the judge make his or her decisions. Sweating it out so to speak, especially when the choice is a close one.

The cats were beautiful, presented in immaculate condition and I noticed here there was no stripping or plucking, they were "aunaturelle," and all carried long thick flowing coats.

After the show a dinner was held for the judges, exhibitors and

show personnel. After dinner the Rossi's took us for a long drive to the points of interest. It was unfortunate that we could not see more, for night had overtaken us.

We had boarded our plane, having said goodbye to Dick and John. They were going on to Munich and unfortunately I could not squeeze in the time, much to my regret. I was busy looking out the window when I heard a loud, resounding WHACK and WHOOPS. Startled, I turned and there sat Mrs. Webb clutching her head and a very nice gentleman, face red as a beet apologizing all over the place. In placing some of his gear in the overhead rack his umbrella had slipped and the bone handle landed in the center of Gwen's head. To add insult to injury I laughed — told her it could have been worse — it could have happened to me; or if she had been looking upward her nose or glasses might have received the blow. However, other than a slight headache she weathered the blow splendidly.

Certainly it was raining when we arrived in London. We did not expect anything but. The cabs are quaint and very different from ours. Here home was the "London Hilton," and certainly it is the epitome of hotels. Room service twenty-four hours daily. Our rooms overlooked Buckingham Palace. As it was such a wet, nasty day we amused ourselves by visiting the shopping arcades — that was a mistake, but we did have fun and made some new friends.

The first day of our tour was one of the coldest, foggiest days they had had in years, but we went on. Our guide was charming, handsome, the most delightful British accent and a wonderful sense of humor. We had little time, but we crowded every minute to the fullest extent. The British Museum, Trafalgar Square, Scotland Yard, Westminster Abbey and the great St. Paul's Cathedral. This Cathedral is truly magnificent. It was rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren between 1675 and 1710, after the great fire that had destroyed it. The new altar was erected as a memorial to the men and women who died in the two world wars.

The Tower of London on this dreary day was an eerie sight. It was first built by William the Conqueror for the purpose of protecting and controlling the city. Through the Traitor's Gate passed Edward, Duke of Buckingham, Queen Anne Boleyn, Cromwell Earl of Essex and many others on their way to prison or the scaffold. This bloody tower is called by this name because it is believed to be the murder scene of Edward V and his brother, the Duke of York; here Sir Walter Raleigh was allowed to walk at times during his twelve years' imprisonment.

In this fortress are kept the Crown Jewels dating from the seventeenth century. Never have I seen such a collection of magnificence and in all probability I never will again. Here is the famous Indian Diamond, the "Koh-i-noor." Before entering the Tower the guide warned us we must not take pictures, etc. I did ask if this was the day they gave samples? To the guard he said "Better watch this one — we may have a bit of trouble here." The Royal Sceptre surmounted by a cross contains the Star of Africa, cut from Cullinan Diamond. This is the largest cut diamond in the world, weighing 530 carats. On the top floor you find armor, weapons and the sword room,

containing those that date from the early middle ages to the middle of the nineteenth century. There is a small square plot paved with granite by order of Queen Victoria on which at one time stood a scaffold for private executions. The following are known to have met their deaths here: Queen Anne Boleyn, second wife of Henry VIII, Lady Jane Grey, and many others. They were beheaded with an ax with the exception of Anne Bolyen, whose head was cut off with a sword by an executioner brought over from St. Omer. They are buried in the chapel of St. Peter. This was a most instructive if somewhat depressing tour. However, we enjoyed every minute of it.

For sheer unequalled pageantry nothing can equal the CHANGING OF THE GUARD. We were very fortunate to be able to witness this spectacle on two occasions.

On Thursday afternoon we had the most delightful visit with Mollie Turney of the "Bonavia" Cattery. She came to visit us, and she and Gwen are friends of many, many years. She is a very lovely lady. We discussed the pros and cons of the Cat Fancy, their problems and ours. I did bring back with me a magnificent Blue male that I subsequently sold to Mrs. Head of San Diego.

As always too soon, Mollie had to leave, and we were forced to think of our departure the following day. Gwen tried to coax me to stay another day for the "Lord Mayor's festival," but time had run out. "Queen for a month" was at an end. Lovely while it lasted, truly wonderful.

Yes, it was raining as we left London on Pan Am for the Polar Route flight to Los Angeles. IT was a good feeling to see the familiar Los Angeles airport and Mr. Webb waiting to bail us out if necessary.

During the writing of this, and especially now, I have a feeling of deep nostalgia for all these wonderful countries we visited, the lovely people we met, but perhaps — who can tell, someday we may return and again enjoy such pleasant experiences. It is impossible to say which we enjoyed or fell in love with most. Each had its own particular appeal and charm and it would be a matter of personal preference. To repeat, perhaps some day we will return. I hope so.

