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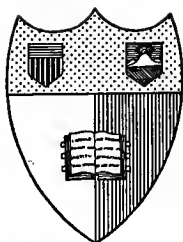
ASIA

THE
CHINESE
DRAMA.

中國
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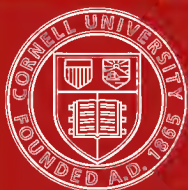
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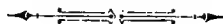
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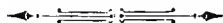
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THE CHINESE DRAMA.

THE CHINESE DRAMA.



By
WILLIAM STANTON.



PRINTED BY KELLY & WALSH, LTD.,
QUEEN'S ROAD and DUDDELL STREET, HONGKONG,
AND AT
SHANGHAI, YOKOHAMA AND SINGAPORE.

—
1899.

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REGISTERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF
ORDINANCE No. 10 OF 1888, AT THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR
GENERAL, HONGKONG.

PREFACE.

THE three plays and two poems in this little volume are reprinted, with slight alterations, from the China Review.

The introductory account of Chinese theatrical affairs has never before appeared in print. But, since it contains a fairly full description of the Chinese stage and everything connected with it, the author hopes that besides assisting the reader in thoroughly understanding the plays, it will prove instructive and entertaining.

W. STANTON.

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THE CHINESE DRAMA.

ABOUT the time, more than five centuries before Christ, when Thespis from his waggon entertained Grecian audiences with his tragedies ; and when a few years' later, *Æschylus*, *Sophocles*, and *Enripides* were writing their immortal, awe-inspiring tragedies and improving on the Thespian manner of dramatic representation, and *Aristophanes* was satirizing Grecian follies in his amusing comedies, which have not yet lost all the savour of their Attic wit, *Confucius* was travelling through the various principalities of China, collecting and compiling for future ages the songs and odes of the country. Those songs of war and friendship, love and marriage, domestic happiness and public rejoicing, sacrificial offerings and praises to the Supreme Deity, were many of them old ere blind *Homer*, in strains more lofty than any Chinese poet ever employed, sang the fall of *Troy*. But in China, the Muses were not all known in those early days, for, although lively *Terpsichore* found a welcome amongst her sisters, no places were found for laughing *Thalia* or sad *Melpomene*. For the drama remained unknown twelve centuries longer, until the reign of the Tang Emperor *Huan Tsung*.

The long reign of *Huan Tsung*, styled the Illustrious Emperor, owing to its splendid beginning and disastrous close, is one of the most remarkable in Chinese history.

On ascending the throne, the young emperor zealously strove to purge the empire of the extravagance and debauchery that was ruining it ; and in his austerity went so far as to prohibit the wearing of the then fashionable costly apparel, and, as an example to his subjects, he made a huge bonfire in his palace of an immense quantity of embroidered garments and jewellery. Under the wise administration of this stern ruler and his able

ministers the state attained a great height of prosperity. But unexpectedly the emperor's character underwent a change; he developed a love of sensuality and himself indulged in the luxuries he had formerly so strongly condemned.

In A.D. 734 he obtained a sight of his daughter-in-law, the beautiful Yang Kuei-fei, and became so violently enamoured with her that he took her into his own seraglio. She speedily obtained a complete ascendancy over him and succeeded in getting raised to the highest position next the throne.

According to legendary stories the Herdsman and Spinning Damsel are two lovers who each inhabit a star separated by the Silver River (the Milky Way) and are unable to meet except on the seventh night of the seventh moon, when magpies from all parts of the world assemble, and with their linked bodies form a bridge to enable the damsel to cross to her lover. Consequently this is one of the great festive occasions of China. On the said evening of A.D. 735, Huan Tsung and his celebrated consort stood gazing into the starlit sky. Remembering the occasion Yang Kuei-fei burst into protestations of affection and assured the monarch that she was more faithful than the Spinning Damsel, for that she would never leave him, but, inseparably with him, tread the spiritual walks of eternity. In order to reward such love the emperor sought to discover a novel amusement for her. After consideration he summoned his prime minister and commanded him to select a number of young children, and, after carefully instructing and handsomely dressing them, bring them before the beautiful Yang Kuei-fei, to recite for her delectation the heroic achievements of his ancestors. That was the origin of the drama in China. The first performances were generally held in a pavilion in the open air, among fruit trees, and Huan Tsung subsequently established an Imperial Dramatic College in a pear garden, where hundreds of male and female performers were trained to afford him pleasure. From the site of the college the actors become known as the "Young Folks of the Pear Garden," a title they claim to the present day.

Notwithstanding the fairly good positions of the first youthful actors, and the auspicious inauguration of the drama, amidst the pomp of what had already degenerated into a gay and dissolute court, the social standing of actors gradually deteriorated until it sank to the lowest level.

In ancient Greece an actor was regarded as one who gratified the imagination and elevated the moral conduct of the people, and the profession was, therefore, considered honourable. Not so in China, however, where it is looked on in a somewhat similar way to what it was in ancient Rome, where a player incurred the penalty of legal and social infamy, which was, however, in some cases surmounted by the known virtues of the actors. But no Roscius has yet arisen in China to elevate the character of his class, and therefore actors are there regarded as amongst the lowest of the people. At the present day, in the South of China at all events, the youths who are taught acting, with a few exceptions, serve an apprenticeship of six years, and the majority of them are purchased from their parents or from foundling hospitals, and are simply slaves to their owners, who are usually likewise their instructors, until they eventually, by their own efforts, or through the aid of their patrons, purchase their freedom. During their apprenticeship their owners and instructors receive all their earnings and support them in clothing and food. The few exceptions are in the cases of certain young men with good voices and ability for acting who are taken on and styled *Chan wu* or *Chan tan*, according to whether they impersonate male or female characters. Actors are not allowed to compete in the examinations nor to purchase literary or official rank, and consequently they are debarred from the only paths that lead to honor in the eyes of the people. There have been instances in which actors under false descriptions have successfully competed at examinations, but when discovered it has led to their being stripped of their wealth and deprived of their honors.

It is difficult to ascertain whether this barrier was raised in consequence of their degradation or whether the degradation is the effect of the official and social ban; but there can be no doubt that as a class, actors are very debased. Without practising in private any of the virtues they exhibit in public, they appear to practice all the vices they so ably hold up to public reprobation.

In Hongkong, Macao, Canton, and one or two other places, there are large substantially built theatres. In these the backs of the stages, which are fixtures, are handsomely painted, but the subjects painted have no relation to the plays performed, and in the south of China there is no stage scenery known, except something of a scanty kind sometimes employed by northern

companies visiting there. As in temporary matshed structures, the green-rooms are at the back of the stage and there are two doors, one on each side, leading from it to the stage, the one on the right being generally used as the entrance, and that on the left for exit. Mountains, mountain passes, rivers, bridges, city-walls, temples, graves, thrones, beds and other objects are represented by an arrangement of chairs and benches, while the passage of rivers, horse-riding, unlocking doors and entering houses where not even a screen exists between the visitor and those he visits, the climbing of mountains and numerous other actions are depicted by pantomimic motions that are perfectly understood by the audience. Thus a leper drinks wine, in which, unknown to himself, a venomous serpent has been soaked, feels an itching sensation, and throws himself into an imaginary fish-pond, where to the beating of gongs, he washes and finds himself cured of his loathsome disease, to become a future chief graduate. Or a general sent on a distant expedition, brandishes his whip, capers around the stage a few times amidst the clashing of cymbals, and then stops and informs the audience he has arrived. It will therefore be understood that their scenery is inferior to what ours was at the Blackfriars and Globe theatres in Shakespeare's time, and about on a par with Peter Quince's in his "Most Lamentable Comedy and Most Cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisby," as shown in the "Midsummer Night's Dream," in which a man with loam over him represents a wall, and his spread open fingers a cranny for lovers to whisper through.

The green-room occupies a space the whole width of the theatre, with which there is communication by the entrance and exit doors, at which curtains serve as screens. In this room, on tables, are various coloured pigments and pencils which the actors, while standing in front of small mirrors, use to make up such beautiful or horrid faces as their parts require. Around the walls or suspended from hooks are masks, false beards of various colours, false wigs and false ladies' coiffures; strange caps and helmets, such as have been worn at various periods during the last three thousand years; high, thick soled boots and shoes, to increase the stature of their wearers; swords, spears, tridents, maces, bows and arrows, and other old-fashioned implements of war; fly-flap like magic wands for the use of fairies and other supernatural beings; patched and ragged clothes for the poor and mean, and, in large

boxes, sumptuous and beautifully embroidered robes of state for the rich and honoured, such as real princes might well be proud to wear.

Under shelves, or behind or on top of boxes, stretched on mats, may be seen actors, some of them smoking opium preparatory to dressing for their parts. They are not over cleanly looking and the little clothing they wear is shabby. Their appearance is listless, and through dissipation and the use of opium their faces have the pallid line of death. Just before their call comes they will dress for their parts. Some will put on coiffures and paint until, by the proper application of white and red to their faces and lips, and black to their eyebrows they resemble passably good looking females. And, after putting on wooden imitation small shoes, or just sticking their toes into real small shoes, they dress themselves in ladies apparel and enter tottering on their golden lilies with a natural swaying gait, which, with the falsetto voices in which they speak and sing, enable them to fill their feminine roles to perfection. Others paint their faces to give them a savage or horrid appearance, put on thick soled boots, glittering plumed helmets and long military robes, and with spears or other weapons in their hands stride the stage as fierce warriors. Others impart to their cheeks a slight tinge of red, put on long flowing beards, splendid court robes and plumed hats, and with sceptres or fans in their hands, enter as emperors or ministers, stroking their beards as if pleased to wear such manly, hirsute appendages, if only temporarily. And so with others; the masks, the paint-pot, and the clothing, work a wonderful transformation in the actors' appearance.

In the permanent theatres in Hongkong, performances take place twice daily. They commence at 11 a.m. and continue, with a short intermission in the evening, to 11 p.m. The performances in large bamboo and mat structures in China and in the villages of Hongkong are usually held in front of or near temples in connection with the anniversaries of the birthdays of the deities to which they are dedicated. The village elders or committees of the temples collect subscriptions towards the erection of the matsheds, and the hiring of troupes of actors for three or four days. After a company, or, as through lack of funds is sometimes the case, a part of a company, is hired, the theatre and company are let to the highest bidder, who for a lump sum obtains the

privilege of collecting and retaining all entrance money. These huge, lofty matsheds are erected with astonishing rapidity, and when completed they are fairly comfortable. The common style is a building with a lofty pyramid shaped centre, the stage and green-room at one end, a gallery with raised seats on each side, and the space opposite the stage open. There are no seats in the centre between the galleries, and the standing is free.

As may be supposed there is a great danger from fire in such inflammable structures, especially as crackers are frequently let off, and, at night, large oil lamps are kept blazing in them. There have been a few fires with appalling loss of lives in connection therewith, but such fires are fewer than might be expected, and some of the most disastrous have been the work of robbers or other incendiaries. One of the most appalling occurred on the 25th of May, 1845, at the Literary Examination Hall, in Canton, at a performance to commemorate the birthday of Hua To, the *Æsculapius* of China. On that occasion the fire broke out during a performance in a closely packed matshed. When the alarm was raised one of the exits happened to be locked. The fire burnt itself out in a very short time, and then it was found that over two thousand lives had been lost. The scene was a horrible one. The whole of the enclosed area was covered with the dead. In some places the bodies were piled high on each other, in others, little but heaps of ashes remained to represent what so shortly before had been human beings full of animation and joyousness. In one place the people had been packed in such a dense mass that their bodies were subsequently found burnt to death, but still standing shoulder to shoulder. At an incendiary fire, in a matshed theatre, at Kam-li, in the Ko-iu district, a few years ago, several hundreds of spectators and most of the actors were burnt to death.

The officials allow suitable, temporary theatres to be erected, and countenance, encourage, and support the drama. Wealthy families and officials frequently hire a company of actors. At such times the performances are carried out on temporary stages near where the feast is spread.

There are about thirty companies in the Canton district, which embraces Hongkong and Macao. Every year, on the first day of the sixth month they are disbanded, and new combinations

are organized in time for the companies to fulfil engagements by the twentieth of the same month. For the year, each company is designated by a name, and is also spoken of as the number such company, according to the rank it holds in the estimation of the organizers and the public.

There is a great difference in the companies and in the pay they receive. The best earns about thirty-six thousand dollars a year, out of which it has to defray expenses. There are no females included in any of the properly constituted companies; but there are girls trained with boys in the *Tang-tzu pan* strolling, or *Nan-nü-pan*, male and female, troupes.

A proper company consists of about one hundred persons, and the actors' salaries range from thirty dollars to twelve thousand dollars each per annum. Generally speaking, those who personate female characters are the highest paid. As a rule each actor always takes the same kind of *chiao-se*, or role, as regards age and comparative rank, but as the plays may differ in being of an historical or a domestic nature, so the rank of the actor correspondingly differs to suit it. In the programmes of the plays acted, although some of the actors may be named as taking such and such roles, there is seldom any mention made as to what persons of the play they represent. The programmes state what *chiao-se* the various actors take, and all theatre goers, although they may not know anything of the play, understand whether one of them fills the role of a male or female, of a great or humble or old or young person, or of a hero or villain. Probably the nearest approach to this in England is the use of the terms harlequin, clown, and pantaloon, in pantomimes.

Sometimes a part of the name or designation of the person entering, speaking, or leaving is given in the printed stage directions of a play, but generally, instead of giving the name of the person represented, the word denoting the kind of character personified is used. A properly constituted company is made up somewhat as follows:—

One 正生 *Cheng Sheng*, who personates emperors or distinguished persons and wears a flowing beard.

Three 小生 *Hsiao Shengs*, who represent youthful civilian characters, and one of whom is usually the hero.

Three **武生** *Wu Shengs*, who represent elderly military commanders and wear long beards.

Three **總生** *Tsung Shengs*, who represent ministers of state, and corresponding characters, and wear beards.

Six **不帖式** *Pu Tieh Shihs* or **小武** *Hsiao Wus*, who personate martial youths and perform feats of strength, and the principal of whom is often the military hero.

One **頭** *Tou* or **二花面** *Erh Hua Mien*, who has a painted face and performs feats of great daring and is occasionally the hero of a play.

One **外** *Wai* or **大花面** *Ta Hua Mien*, who has a painted face and is usually the plotting villain of a piece.

Five **六分** *Liu Fens* or **帮花面** *Pang Hua Mien*, who have painted faces and usually represent villainous characters.

One **公脚** *Kung Chiao* or **末** *Mo*, who represents a father or important elderly person and wears a long white or grey beard.

One **淨** *Ching*, or **大淨** *Ta Ching* who takes various subordinate parts and wears a mask or paints his face.

One **邊** *Pien* or **男丑** *Nan Chou*, who paints his face and represents characters disagreeable from deformity or other cause. He is often the buffoon or clown of a play.

Two **拉扯** *La Ches* or **帮男丑** *Pang Nan Chous*, who take characters in which vileness or wretchedness is depicted.

Eight **五軍虎** *Wu Chiün Hus*, who represent painted faced warriors, and perform feats of fighting with swords and spears, and tumbling.

Four **軍手下** *Chiün Shou Hsias*, or male soldiers.

One **正旦** *Cheng Tan*, who personate leading female characters, such as empresses and principal wives.

One **鐵** *Tieh* or **帮正旦** *Pang Cheng Tan*, who takes characters similar to the last.

Eight **花旦** *Hua Tans*, including **帮花旦** *Pang Hua Tans* and **小旦** *Hsiao Tans*, who take youthful female characters and the principal of whom is generally the heroine of the play.

When the character depicted is a sorrowful one, the *Hua Tan* impersonating it is styled a **苦旦** *Ku Tan*. The *Hsiao Tans* represent maid-servants or slave girls and are usually lively intriguing characters, and the intermediaries in love making.

Two **武旦** *Wu Tans*, who impersonate female warriors, and when, as sometimes occur, they are styled **文武旦** *Wen Wu Tan*, they assume a civilian character in one part of a play and a military in another, and may be the heroines of the piece.

One **占旦** *Chan Tan*. This is one who has not served an apprenticeship, but has been specially engaged on account of extraordinary ability as a singer and actor of female parts. The characters a *Chan Tan* personates are usually those of young married women, or such as *Hua Tans* take.

One **夫** *Fu* or **婆脚** *Po Chiao* or **老旦** *Lao Tan*, who impersonates elderly ladies.

One **女丑** *Nü Chou*, who impersonates wicked or detestable females.

Four **馬旦** *Ma Tans*, who represent serving women or girls, and sometimes act as female cavalry or infantry soldiers, as required.

Four **堂旦** *Tang Tans*, who are a kind of supernumeraries, and impersonate various kinds of female characters as required.

Eight **棚面** *Pang Mien*. These form the orchestra, which is comprised of the **鼓手** *Ku Shou*, who plays the small stone-like sounding drum and acts as the conductor; the **上手** *Shang Shou*, who plays the moon-guitar, reed-pipes, and flute, as required; the **二手** *Erh Shou*, who plays the three-stringed guitar, reed-pipes, and flute, as required; the **三手** *San Shou* who plays the two-stringed fiddle and cymbals; the performer on the big drum; the performer on the big gong; the performer on the small gong; and a supernumerary kept in reserve to relieve either of the others. These all have to serve a seven years' apprenticeship to the study of music; and yet a foreigner listening to the orchestra might consider the time wasted.

Ten 衣箱 *I Hsiang*, to look after the wardrobes, and ten 雜箱 *Tsih Hsiang*, or stage attendants.

The actors' wardrobes are owned by companies in Canton, who let them out for so much a year and send their own servants, to hand out the various articles of clothing to the respective actors requiring them, and to receive them back and carefully put them away in boxes provided for the purpose. Some of the wardrobes contain a great number of elaborately embroidered robes, and are worth six or eight thousand dollars. The most valuable are let to the superior, and the old and shabby to the inferior, companies. The best company pays sixteen dollars a day for the hire of its wardrobes. A few of the highest paid actors carry their own dresses, and some of the actors of ladies' parts own wardrobes, each worth upwards of one thousand dollars.

Since the acting of historical dramas relating to events that have occurred during the Manchu rule is forbidden in China, the magnificent court dresses are in the style of previous dynasties. And, notwithstanding all lack of scenery and the plain inornateness of the stage, a really dazzling spectacular effect is produced by a score or two of actors dressed in gorgeous silk dresses of all hues, glittering with the rich sheen of gold and silver embroidery and mock jewels, and glittering, strange-looking, head-dresses, from which shoot long, waving feathers, and all heightened by the glittering arms of the quaint but gaudily dressed soldiers, as they march and countermarch across the stage, or engage in the ever-shifting motion of mimic warfare. But as the crowd gradually disperses, and the poverty of the bare, or dirty carpeted, stage becomes visible and is brought into comparison with the few splendidly dressed actors left, the incongruity of it all becomes vividly conspicuous.

The orchestra occupies a space at the back of the stage, near the entrance door, and in full view of the audience. The man who beats the small semi-metallic sounding side drum is always the conductor. The other musicians change their instruments from stringed, wind, or gongs, cymbals, or drums to suit the kind of music most fitting to accompany the varied actions of the drama. Each style of music is known by a designation. The two principal divisions are 二王 *Erh Wang*, which is used

for solemn scenes, and **邦子** *Pang Tzu*, which is employed for martial or exciting actions. Both are played in **慢板** *Man-pan*, or slow time, with only stringed instruments accompanying singing. They are also played in medium and in fast time. In every case drums, gongs, and cymbals may clash in at the end. The first is chiefly employed in *Chu-tou*, or domestic pieces, and is played with flutes and stringed instruments, with drums and gongs at intervals. The *Pang Tzu* is chiefly employed in historical dramas, and as the accompaniment to battles, or hand-to-hand encounters. Stringed instruments, drums, gongs, and cymbals are employed in it, but no wind instruments.

Under each there are several sub-divisions with appropriate designations, denoting the style of music. Consequently when a change of music takes place a theatre-goer knows at once what to expect, whether a battle with victory or with defeat, a marriage, a funeral, a lament, or a mass, and so on.

For the transport of the actors and their theatrical properties to the numerous cities and villages in which they are hired to perform, each company has a large junk attached to it, which is hired at from five to six hundred dollars a year. Although these junks are necessarily as crowded as troop-ships, they are still made fairly comfortable, and the berths of the higher paid actors, from a Chinese point of view, are luxuriously fitted up. At the commencement of each theatrical year the members of a company draw lots for the berths, and when one who is poorly paid draws a good one, he is glad to part with his right to it for a remuneration to one of the better paid members. Besides travelling on the various waterways in these junks, some of the actors use them as residences at places where they perform, in which there is no other good accommodation.

The drama is divided into the *Cheng-pan*, or historical plays, the *Chu-tou*, which embraces domestic pieces of all kinds from tragedy to comedy, and the *Ku-wei*, or farces. The *Cheng-pan* in their alternation of the comic and tragic, in the appearance of great princes and grave ministers with humble and clownish persons, and in the marching of armies and battle scenes, strongly resemble some of Shakspear's historical dramas. These are generally day pieces and the battle scenes, although at the expense of realistic warfare, are made the medium of clever acrobatic

feats. In the *Chu-tous*, too, there is frequently a mingling of the grave with the gay, in true serio-comic style. Except the farcial pieces, few plays are without tragic incidents. Some of the Tragedies, or Sorrowful Plays, as they are sometimes called, bring tears to the eyes of an audience, but as in our melo-dramas, the tears are speedily dried by a spell of fun ; for mirth and drollery alternate with grief and solemnity. In the farces the actors are allowed a great latitude in introducing old gags and new hits at passing events. There are occasionally pieces somewhat resembling our pantomimes (but without their splendid scenery) in which gods and genii, grotesque persons, such as giants and dwarfs, and various animals, are represented, amidst a brilliant display of quaint and variegated lamps. These are usually on the birthday of a deity, and they seem to afford especial pleasure to the juvenile part of an audience. These are sometimes followed by rough play, in which females of a notorious type are capsized out of their jinrickshas, and big Sikh policemen rush to the rescue, to be fooled and made butts for the jests of the other actors and the amusement of the audience, whose sympathies are seldom with the Indian police.

Actors in leading characters, on their first entry in a piece, usually sing or recite about a score of words and then start off to introduce themselves, by giving a condensed history of the character they are about to personate. Throughout a play, too, the audience are taken into the actors' confidence, and sometimes addressed direct, in a way unknown with us.

In their gestures and motions, and in the manner in which these agree with their utterances, whether in speaking or in singing, the actors are nearly perfect. But they are all so much alike in this respect as if they had taken the same model for their standard and were afraid to differ from it.

To the foreigner desirous of obtaining an insight into the family life of the Chinese people, the domestic drama is capable of imparting much valuable information. For in them one is introduced, as it were, into the homes of the people, where their ordinary lives and customs are vividly depicted. And, although less striking from a spectacular point of view than the historical drama, it has less of the horrid din of drum, gong, and cymbal that supply the martial, soul-stirring, ear-splitting strains, to the accompaniment of heroic deeds. The people learn history,

mythology, manners, and ceremony from the stage. And none are more prompt to criticise and hoot an actor, although he may be personating a prince, for breach of a ceremonial form, or for shortening the tiresome formality of parting with another magnate, than those coolie gods who occupy their two cents seats in the gallery of a permanent theatre, or free standing in the pit, or beyond it, of a temporary one.

Each troupe has its own repertoire of old plays, and besides has a playwright attached to it, who furnishes new dramas, which are generally taken from historical novels, like the *San Kuo Chi*, novels, like the *Tsai Sheng Yuan*, or tales of the supernatural, like the *Liao Chai Chi I*. The tunes are sometimes supplied by the playwright, but oftener by the actors who have to sing them. When a company is hired, a list of the plays it performs is handed to the person engaging it, or to the principal guest, and he selects the pieces he wishes to see performed.

Plays are not divided into acts, as with us, but have something partly corresponding with it in their divisions. They contain a great deal of repetition, and what has been uttered in recitative is often repeated, in nearly the same words, in song. They also contain plots, in which virtue usually triumphs over vice, but any mystery about them is less secretly guarded till the denouement than in ours.

The actors worship certain patron saints, of whose history, and the origin and reason for homage, they are, however, in some cases ignorant. Thus they sacrifice to *Tien* and *Tou*, whom they designate their ancient instructors, and that is about all they know of them. On the 28th day of the 3rd month, they worship another old master surnamed Chang. And Hua Kuang, the one-eyed God of Fire, is a particular object of their adoration.

On the 8th day of the 4th month, they worship *Tan Kung Hsien Sheng*, the holy immortal Duke Tan, whom they describe as a native of Nienshan, in Hui-chon, who ascended to join the immortals when a youth. He is said to have been born in the early days of the present dynasty. As a lad he was very fond of theatrical performances. By some means he early obtained the elixir of immortality, which also confers magic powers on its recipient. One day, when employed on the hills with several other lads in minding cattle, at a time when there was a theatrical

performance at Fatshan, about two hundred miles distant, he asked the others if they would like to see a play. They expressed a desire to do so, but naturally wanted to know how they were to get to it. He then surrounded the cattle with a magic rope, that they were unable to cross, and bade his companions to close their eyes and on no account open them until ordered. They obeyed, and in the twinkling of an eye found themselves with him spectators of the Fatshan play. At the conclusion of the performance he again told the lads to close their eyes, and all except one immediately found themselves amongst their cattle at Nien-shan. One, however, had opened his eyes too quickly, and he found himself near a *yamen* in the Shuntak district, and greatly surprised the officials when he informed them how he came to be there.

At the age of sixteen this wonderful youth informed his friends that he had had enough of this world and that he was going to take up his abode with the Immortals. There was no attempt made to hinder him from going, and, that he might walk as much of the journey as he could, he ascended a high mountain, where, at least, he appears to have cast aside his mortality. Unlike the proverbial prophet, he soon became an honoured object of veneration in his own country, or district of it, and in consequence of what were considered remarkable cures of sick persons by his oracular prescriptions, uttered through those who constituted themselves his priests, temples were soon erected in which to worship him, and he is fast becoming a rival in the art of healing of the great physician god, Hua To. The only reason for actors honouring him is that he delighted in witnessing their performances.

In China, and in the matsheds in Hongkong, the opening performance of a company begins with the *Pa Hsien Ho Shou*, the congratulations of the Eight Immortals. In this actors representing the Eight Immortals, or Genii as they are sometimes called, chant their congratulations and invoke blessings on the audience. After their exit a man representing Kuo Tzu-i enters and performs what is called *Tiao Chia Kuan*, or the dance for official promotion. In this the actor goes through a saltatory performance with a mask on, to express his wish that the officials may have such good fortune as to enjoy such wealth, long life,

and honors, as did the great minister he is supposed to personify. This Kuo Tzu-i was one of the most renowned generals China has ever known, and he served with distinction four successive emperors of the Tang dynasty. At the time of his death he was surrounded by a numerous progeny, of which most of the adult males held important posts in the government. Legends attribute the blessings he enjoyed to the good-will of the Celestial Spinning Damsel.

If a high official enters in the midst of a performance, the play is suspended while the *Tiao Chia Kuan*, salutation is danced.

On the exit of the last named an actor representing Tung Yung enters, and to him another representing the Immortal Lady, or as she is also styled, Celestial Lady, and presents him with their son. This is founded on the legend that a fairy lady inhabiting one of the stars in the Pleiades, in order to show her appreciation of Tung Yung's filial conduct, at the time of his father's death, visited him nightly under a large tree, and her visits resulting in the birth of a son she brought him down and left him with her mortal lover. Tung Yung subsequently attained a high rank in the empire. This scene is to stimulate youths to filial conduct, and, although they may not hope for sons to be brought to them from the sky, they may aspire after the high official rank that every Chinaman so greatly desires.

When the stage is again clear, eight *Tiao Tien Chiang*, or Dancing Celestial Generals, enter, and caper around setting fire to crackers and burning an incense that causes a dense yellow smoke. The idea is that the smoke forms clouds to obscure the stage from the eyes of the gods, so that they may not see and be offended at the presumption of mortals in personating them and imitating their acts, and even performing deeds they themselves might not think of.

After the Dancing Generals have formed their cloudy screen and left the stage, the more serious business commences with the *Liu Kuo feng Hsiang*, the Six States appointing a Prime Minister. The play represents occurrences of three centuries before Christ. in the time of the Chou dynasty. In those days, although the supreme rule was nominally in the hands of the Chou King, it was really usurped by princes of feudal states, who contended

amongst themselves for supremacy. Amongst the various states the Tsin was most active in grasping after that universal dominion which a century later it acquired, under the powerful, but execrated, Prince Cheng, the First Emperor.

At the period the drama treats of, the renowned statesman Sn Tsin displayed great activity in going from one principality to another, with the object of forming an alliance against Tsin, the state to which he had first offered his services. He finally succeeded in his aims, and the princes and great ministers of the six confederated states met and appointed him their Prime Minister. The alliance did not prove a lasting one, however, and the great minister eventually fell by the hands of assassins. After his death each of the six states claimed his body and, as they could not all obtain possession of it in its entirety, it was divided amongst them.

Most of this piece is chanted by several voices in unison, like a glee or chorus. It affords scope for a splendid display of dresses, and, therefore, from a spectacular point ranks first among their plays.

At its conclusion the proper order of procedure is to sing three selected short Pekingese operatic pieces, which are followed by tumbling. Then the less routine business proceeds with a selected historical drama, followed by a farce, which ends the day performance. The night commences with a domestic drama, or a continuation of the day piece, and is concluded with a farce. This carries them on to six or seven o'clock the next morning.

In the Hongkong permanent theatres, where the actors have less acting time at their disposal, the first day performance of a company usually commences with an historical drama, or part of one, followed by the Fairy Lady presenting her son. *Yü Huang*, the Supreme God of Heaven, next enters and ascends his throne, amidst what is meant for thunder and lightning, and surrounded by the Gods of Heaven, Earth, the Kitchen, Thunder, Lightning, Rain, Wind, Water, and others, all of whom are well known, by their distinguishing features, to the audience. Notwithstanding a meeting of all those elements of a storm there is really nothing like one brewed, and it is so little realistic that it would require a vivid imagination to conceive one. Indeed, their object is not so much to raise a hurricane as to invoke beneficial and dispel malign influences.

After the gods have departed, Kwan Yü, who occupies a shrine in the Chinese pantheon as Kwan Ti, the God of War, enters and escorts his sisters-in-law. This is founded on an incident that occurred to Kwan Yü, one of the heroes of the three contending States, when Tsao Tsao, having the Ladies, Kan and Mei, the wives of his great antagonist, Liu Pei, in his hands, and wishing to detach Kwan Yü from his allegiance to their husband, shut him up in the same apartment with them, intending thereby to raise jealousy and enmity between the sworn brothers. But Kwan Yü remained pacing on guard all the night long with a lighted lantern in his hand, so that every basis was removed on which rumour might seek to raise scandal. This is intended to inculcate a lesson in loyalty between friends, that there is plenty of scope for the practice of in China.

On other than the first days, the day performance consists of an historical drama, or part of one, with tumbling in the battle scenes, and the night performance of a domestic drama, or part of one, and a farce.

At the first performance of the new year there is a short congratulatory piece enacted, called *Tien Kuan Ho Shou*, the Celestial officer offering his congratulations.

On the birthday of Kwan-yin, the Goddess of Mercy, and on the anniversary of the day of her deification, especially if a performance takes place at a temple in celebration of it, they perform what is called *Hsiang Shan Ta Ho Shou*, the Great Congratulation of Hsiang Shan. In this, *Hsiang Shan*, the Incense Mountain, is the region in the west where the popular goddess attained her apotheosis, and it is used metonymically for Kwan-yin. This goddess was the daughter of a King and because she refused to marry was immured in a convent, and afterwards by her father's command put to death. It was intended to behead her, but the executioner's sword having broken without hurting her, she was stifled. The appearance of her spirit in Hell, however, converted that place into Paradise. It seems that that was not agreeable to the King of the infernal regions, consequently, in order to restore the reputation of his dominion, he returned her to life, and set her on a lotus flower, on which she floated to the island of Pootoo, where she lived nine years. Her father subsequently falling ill, she cut flesh from her own

arms to cure him. The next time she died it was only to be revived and glorified as a goddess. She is sometimes depicted with a great many more than the ordinary number of arms and eyes, for which she is indebted to one of those misunderstandings that sometimes occur in Chinese, for her father having ordered her statue to be made, directed that it should have, what was probably unusual in images at that early period, complete arms and complete eyes, and the word complete having the same sound as the word for thousand, the stupid sculptor gave her a thousand arms and a thousand eyes. It was only Chinese-like for future sculptors and painters, in their work, to imitate so far as possible the original statue.

In the performance a number of deities and supernatural beings, as well as monkeys and the monkey king, visit Kwan-yin and offer her their congratulations.

There is also a performance called *Chai Tien Ta Sheng Ho Sheng Mu Tan*. All the saints in heaven offering birthday congratulations to the Holy Mother. The Holy Mother in this instance is *Si Wang Mu*, the Western Royal Mother, the Queen of the Genii, who resides in Fairyland, amidst the Kwenlun mountains. There, by the borders of the Lake of Gems she holds her magnificent court, surrounded by troops of fairy attendants, who disport themselves amidst trees of pearls, jade, and all other kinds of precious stones, of which there are large forests, and eat of the fruit of the gigantic tree of immortality, and drink of the yellow death-staying waters of that river which encircles the Fairy city three times, and then returns to its source.

Numerous deities and immortals come to congratulate the Queen of the Genii on this occasion, but the Monkey King, who steals fruit from the tree of immortality, is, because of his amusing antics, the most popular visitor in the estimation of the youthful part of the audience. At the conclusion of the piece, bright cash, strung together in various numbers, are scattered amongst the spectators, and these are subsequently worn by children, suspended from their jackets for luck.

琴 絲 柳

THE WILLOW LUTE.

(A Chinese Drama in Five Acts.)

In the original, the play, which is printed in three small books, runs on from beginning to end without any other divisions than scenes. To give it some resemblance to a play in the language into which it is translated, it is divided into acts and these into scenes.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

LEE KEE, *Merchant.*
LIU SIAO-HIANG, *a retired officer.*
SHIH KAI-CHEN, *prefect in Sz-chuan.*
LEE PAO-TUNG, *son of Lee Kee.*
CHAO CHUNG, *betrothed to Lee Kwei-chee.*
TIEN WANG, *a rich profligate.*
HO LAO-TSIH, *Chief Gaoler.*
WU TEH-TSING, *a Magistrate.*
ABBOT.
RIVER GOD.
THE GOD, TAI PEH.
ROBBERS.
LADY WANG, *wife of Liu Siao-hiang.*
LEE KWEI-CHEE, *daughter of Lee Kee.*
YANG SAN-CHUN, *wife of Lee Kee.*
CHUN HWAU, *servant.*
NURSE.
ATTENDANTS.
GHOSTS.

ACT I.—SCENE 1.

Hall in LEE KEE'S house.

Enter LEE KEE.—These times the toils of business must be borne ;
I have a thousand taels, unless eked out
By trade, these will not last me many years,

Hence to Sze-chuan I go to trade in horses.

Chun Hwah! [*Enter C. H.*] Go call my wife and children here.

Enter YANG SAN-CHUN, LEE KWEI-CHEE and LEE PO-TUNG.

Y.S.C., L.K.C. and L.P.—I hasten to obey your call and wish
 you every blessing { husband
 } father.

L.K.—Thanks ; be seated.

Y.S.C.—Husband, what now are your instructions, pray ?

L.K.—Ere leaving for Sze-chuan I wish to give
 You all advice. 'Tis often said, preserve
 The heart unstained and all things will be well ;
 'Tis also said, ' All flourishes whene'er
 A family lives and acts in harmony.'

To L.P.—From home receive instructions from your teacher
 And his commands obey.

To L.K.C.— At home respect
 Your mother's manners, daughter, promise this.

Y.S.—When, husband, you have left your village home,
 All household duties I will well perform,
 Your children shall receive my constant care ;
 Feel no anxiety on their account.

L.K.—Ah, very good !

L.K.C.— Father, I hope your trade
 Will be successful, and that you will soon
 Return in splendour and with riches laden.

L.K.—Quite right.

L.P.— Father leaves home in search of wealth ;
 High Heaven protect him and vouchsafe that all
 His expectations may be realized.
 Oh ! may the Star of Happiness shine bright
 And be his guiding star his journey through ;
 His son will study hard, and fame obtain.

L.K.—[*Laughing*]. Yes, yes, Po-tung speaks with due deference,
 Which gives Lee Kee much pleasure—I now leave.
 Again I beg you, ere I bid good bye,
 Remember my injunctions. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 2.

LEE KEE's house with door opening into village street. YANG
 SAN-CHUN, (*his wife*), comes to the door with sewing.

Y. S. Within my room secluded long I've been,
 In gloomy silence, moping and reflecting
 On the long time my husband has been gone
 Without a word of his return. While here,
 Alone in cheerless solitude I sleep ;
 A weary pillow's all I've got for mate.
 None come to pity me, nor earn I praise
 For having thus kept chaste my nuptial bed.
 I'll work and wait to see what will turn up.
 [*See sits at the doorway.*]

[*Sings.*] My shadow is all I have left,
 How lonely I feel thus bereft,
 How long in suspense must I yearn
 And wait for my husband's return ?

TIEN WANG *enters the street.*

T. W. [*Sings.*] I've rambled about
 Thus far through the street,
 No spinster comes out
 Her herdsman to meet. *

T. W. [*looking at Y. S.—aside.*] Ha ! ha ! ha !
 I see that old cuckold Lee
 Knows how to choose a dainty bit ; there sits
 His wife more beautiful than any painting.
 Ah well ! when such old fellows take young wives,
 They must expect to wear the lotus cap.†
 I must take care no foreign devil steps
 Into his boots. [*He picks up a pebble and throws at Y. S.*]

Y. S. Who's that ? Ah Mr. Tien Wang !
 Excuse, I pray, my want of courtesy.

T. W. Ah, kindly spoken !

Y. S. Pray what's your business, Sir ?

T. W. I'd like a cup of tea to quench my thirst,

Y. S. Indeed ! If that be all, sir, please come in.

T. W. [*Aside*] So easily won !—Honestly I wish
 To have a chat. Hem ! is your man at home ?

Y. S. He left home many years ago and likely
 Is dead ere this.

* An allusion to Chih Nue, the spinning damsel, and Kien Niu, the cowherd, two stars separated by the Milky Way all the year, except on the seventh night of the seventh month, when magpies build a bridge for the damsel to cross to the cowherd.

† Be made cuckolds.

T. W. Indeed ! then I'll go in.

[T. W. *enters and takes a seat.* Y. S. *gives him tea.*]

T. W. Ah, lady, I have no good thing with which

I can requite your kindness ; I have here

A bracelet, 'tis a paltry thing of gold.

Y. S. No need of this.

T. W. [*Giving her the bracelet*] I give it from my heart.

Put it away.

Y. S. Many thanks.

T. W. Ah, pray Madam,

Will you oblige me now ? I've travelled far

To-day, and would fain rest my weary legs

By lying on your bed awhile—May I ?

Y. S. Indeed ! Well, yes, you may.

T. W. [*Laughing.*] Ha, excellent !

[*Sings.*] I'll never forget

Thy kindness so vast.

Y. S. [*Sings.*] The spinster has met

Her herdsman at last.

[*They retire together to another room, when LEE PAO-TUNG enters and they return.*]

L. P. Ha ! You are bold to enter mother's room

In broad daylight. I think you'd better clear !

Y. S. He's your adopted uncle, go and get

A present from him, just for luck,

L. P. Umph, see

Who'll get the luck.

T. W. More than you think, perhaps.

L. P. Here's luck for you, luck ! luck ! luck !

[*At each word he strikes T. W., who runs off.*]

Y. S. Young imp !

Whence comes this random talk ? Were you not sent

To school ? I'll flog you now. [*She beats L. P.*]

L. P.

Mother, I tremble !

Y. S. I would that boy were fated now to see

King Yama.

L. P. Oh, oh, murder !

[*Enter LEE KWEI-CHEE, NURSE and CHUN HWA, who stop the beating.*]

Nurse. Pray, madam, don't excite yourself so much ;

Teach him what's right.

- L. K. C. Yes, when my brother's talk
Provokes you, you should teach him to do right.
- Y. S. Ah, truly 'tis against my inclination.
He says he saw a man come from my room
In broad daylight, while yet the sky is blue :
Say, should I not feel angry ?
- L. K. C. Ah, so odious ?
I'll speak to him. [*To L. P.*] How could you say so,
brother ?
- L. P. When I returned from school, I saw Tien Wang
Come from her room ; it is not I who lie.
- L. K. C. to Y. S. Mother, he is a youth and inexperienced ;
Forgive him.
- Y. S. Never ! I will kill the bastard.
[*Nurse drags him from her.*]
- L. K. C. Oh mother, pray, desist ; [*Kneeling*] in sorrow I
Implore you ; do forgive his youthful fault.
If some one must be flogged, then come flog me :
It pains my heart to see you beat my brother.
- Y. S. I'll not beat you, go you and grind that rice,
One hour you've got. If not done, I'll fix you !
- L. K. C. Oh ! mother, say how can I do 't so soon.
- Y. S. Say, will you go ?
- L. K. C. I will.
- Nurse. Stay, I'll help you.
- Y. S. Will you, indeed ? [*She beats Nurse.*]
- Nurse. Ah, she's like a mad dog ! [*Exit L. K. C.*]
- Y. S. to L. P. Pao-tung, go up the hill and gather fuel.
[*Exeunt L. P. and Nurse.*]
- Y. S. They're gone at last. I feel inclined to make
Them eat that ratsbane up when they return ;
Don't let them say the stepdame has no conscience ;
She'll give them arsenic when they return.

SCENE 3.

*A Room with Millstones, Basket of Rice, etc.*LEE KWEI-CHEE *discovered.*

- L.K.C.—I'm grieved to find our mother's kindness gone.
Ah ! well may my affections be destroyed
By such harsh treatment. Brother, with one word

Offended her, and now she beats and treats
 Us most inhumanly; an early death
 Will be my doom. She will get rid of brother
 And me. It is for that I'm driven here.
 Ah! I think of our dear, dead mother, Liú,
 For her these pearly tears run down my cheeks;
 When father took San-chun to fill her place,
 Who could suppose that he would leave his home,
 Or that step-mother had a cruel heart,
 And that her love of wine and pleasure would
 Lead to debauchery. My brother saw
 It all. She has defiled the nuptial room,
 Beaten my brother brutally, and used
 Me ill. She's false and barbarous. Ah, father!
 Alas, my own true mother Liú. [*Weeping*]

Sings:

All those who live must surely die,
 And if in youth, 'tis Heaven's decree—
 My silken girdle I'll untie,
 Cast life aside and Yama see.

Prepares to hang herself.

Oh, father! mother! ah, I cannot die;
 The mother that my brother bore, bore me;
 If I should die, on whom will he rely?
 I'll send him off to search for father, that's
 The way to live—there's always time to die.

Exit.

SCENE 4.

A mountain with river below. LEE PAO-TUNG, discovered cutting fuel on the mountain. Enter NURSE.

Nurse. I've brought an axe, Sir, to the mountain top
 To help you. This is wretchedness indeed!

L. P. Nurse, I'd advise you not to come with me,
 For see the mountains all around are steep.
 Look too, at yon dense forest, surely that's
 A lurking place for savage wolves and tigers;
 I fear that these will do some cruel harm.

Nurse. The ancients said: 'If Heaven helps, what then
 Need mortal fear?' More fierce than hungry wolf
 Or angry tiger is your step-mother.

L. P. E'en so. I know my fate is fixed above.
 My fate fixed there should I presume to fear ?
 But I'm grieved, beyond all measure, nurse,
 To see that my distress affects yon so.

Nurse. Think on your dying mother's last injunction.
 She said : 'Take, nourish and look after him,
 When he attains to manhood, see that he
 Does diligently study ; let him seek
 Official honors ; help him to success
 And thy renown throughout the Empire will be spread.'

L. P. Who knew our stepdame's love would wane ?

[*Enter LEE KWEI-CHEE abruptly, meeting L. P. and NURSE.*]

L. P. and Nurse. Ah ! what's the reason of this great surprise ?

L. K. C. Ah, nurse, reflect, since mother passed from life,
 How we've been treated by this pitiless
 Stepmother. I intend to hang myself !

Nurse. Don't die ! What wretched fate !

L. K. C. Alas ! except
 My brother, who have I to care for now ?
 I look again in his dear face and beg
 He'll go to seek for father, then I'll die
 Contentedly.

L. P. I go to seek for father !
 Don't talk of it ; think sister of my youth
 And ignorance of travelling ; besides
 I've nought wherewith to pay expenses, how
 Am I to go ?

Nurse. Oh, miss, this needn't stay him,
 I'll help him ; here take these head ornaments
 And earrings ; to what they'll bring, he's welcome.

L. P. This seems all right. I go. Ah ! sister, nurse,
 I cannot speak ; approach and bid farewell.
 [*L. P. embraces them. Exit L. P.*]

Nurse. Master is gone, now let us home return.

L. K. C. I'll not return ; my spiteful step-mother
 Will ne'er forgive my fault, I'd better die
 In this deep river.

Nurse. Come, let's hurry home.

L. K. C. [*Kneeling on the bank of the river*]

I kneel here in the dust [*Water God rises in river*] and pray
to thee,

Thou ancient Dragon King of th' eastern sea,

To-day I drown myself here in this river.

Oh! Grant, I pray, my corpse be not cast up

Exposed to view, upon the river's bank.

[*Nurse seizes L. K. C., who pushes her away and jumps into the river, where she is caught and taken away by the Water God.*]

Nurse. Ah, misery! she's in the river gone!

Ah! well, I will return and bite San Chun,

If I die for it. [*Exit.*]

*Enter on river, a junk, on board of which are LIU SIAO-HIANG,
LADY WANG, attendants and boatmen.*

L. S. H. [Sings.] We left at morn, while Venus lay

Above the clouds she glorious made,

We've come a thousand lees a day,

By rivers' banks where monkeys played—

Monkeys, whose ceaseless chattering thrills

The traveller o'er those countless hills.

[*The Water God reappears on the surface of the water with LEE
KWEI-CHEE, who is rescued and taken on board.*]

Lady Wang. The lady's still alive!

L. K. C. A while ago,

My soul was wafted wandering away.

[*Looking around bewildered.*] An officer! a vessel! Sir, 'twere
better

You'd let me die. Why did you rescue me?

L. S. H. What, see thee dying and make no attempt
To succour!

Lady Wang. Miss, pray tell his Honour what
Sad cause made you commit this act, that he
May pity you.

L. K. C. My name's Kwei-chee.

[*Sings.*] My kind father Lee Kee
To Sze-chwan went away,
And left brother and me
With our stepdame to stay.
Wicked-hearted and vile.
She intrigued with Tien Wang,

Drove us out by her guile,
 From the home we loved long.
 I abandoned all life,
 In this river, to-day.
 Ah ! your kindness so rife
 I can never repay.

Lady W. [*to L. S. H.*] You heard ; she truly has been greatly wronged,
 Sure, she shall not be more distressed by us ;
 We are a white-haired pair without a child ;
 Better adopt and rear her as our own ;
 Husband decide if this is right.

L. S. H. Yes, quite right.

L. S. H. [*sings to L. K. C.*]
 Come listen to me Kwei-chee,
 We'll nourish you as our own.
 Go change your attire, and see
 You ponder this well alone.

L. K. C. Ah ! you are very good indeed.

Lady W. [*Sings.*] Daughter, now no more distress !
 Grief is changed to happiness.
 Hence our daughter good and true.
 Now you've joined the house of Lin ;
 Change those clothes for gay attire ;
 Childlike love's all we require.

L. S. H. We'll take you home, don't talk about your parents,
 Nor suffer more suspense on their account ;
 Although you're not by birth our daughter, we
 Desire to have you such, both in attachment
 And in love, daughter !

L. K. C. Father !

Lady W. My dear child !

L. K. C. Mother ! [*They all laugh.*]

L. S. H., Lady W. and L. K. C. [*Sing.*]

Haste we now our homeward way,
 Happy and contented aye.

L. S. H. Boatmen, haste onward with the tide.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.—SCENE 1.

Hall in LEE KEE'S house. YANG SAN-CHUN seated ; enter TIEN WANG.

T. W. Ah ! I reckon I'm a lucky fellow [*He takes a seat.*]

Y. S. Were I not fond of wine and pleasure, I
Should ne'er have married twice.

Enter NURSE.

Nurse. Most shameful sight !

Y. S. Oh ! Oh ! Don't I give you to eat and drink ?

You have your choice to look or turn away.

Pray, wretch, what is there to provoke your wrath ?

Nurse. To the deuce with you ! Young master's forced from
home,

To cruel death my lady has been driven ;

And still you flirt with that loose wicked fellow.

Y. S. [*Laughing.*] Ha, ha, ha !

Nurse. Fie, fie ! I'll bite you.

[*A scuffle ensues amongst the three, in which TIEN WANG kicks
the nurse to death.*]

Y. S. [*Shouts.*] Chun Hwa ! [*Enter Chun Hwa.*] Here's
money, buy grass mats ; remove

This body to the garden and bury it.

C. H. Your slave obeys. [*Exit.*]

T. W. Ah, lady, this is fine !

We can enjoy ourselves in peace and fear

No interruption now.

Y. S. That's what I wish.

T. W. [*Laughing.*] Ho, ho, ho !

[*Sings.*] Since we've wine here

Don't repine, dear,

For this morning we'll sing and share it.

Y. S. [*Sings.*] If to-morrow

We have sorrow,

Then to-morrow we'll grin and bear it.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 2.

Keelau Monastery. ABBOT seated within.

Abbot. In silence here I read, or incense burn.

[*Rising and coming forward.*] Here, in the peaceful purity
of Buddhism,

I ponder o'er those past events, which now
 All seem so like a dream. With none to love,
 I left the world and to a monk's cell went.
 I've prayed in Buddha's hall, and incense burnt
 To him and all his saints ; now I'll retire,
 Pore o'er some sacred book, or meditate
 In silence in my cell.

[*Enter LEE PAO-TUNG at door of Monastery.*]

L. P. Here in Sze-chwan I have for father searched
 With weary steps a month, but all in vain.
 I'm destitute. Here's Buddha's shrine, to him
 I'll pray and he may show me how to act.

[*Bowing to the large idols at entrance.*] I bow in adoration to
 the four

Great kings of Heaven. In yonder hall I see
 An Abbot, I'll advance and speak to him.

[*He enters.*]

L. P. [*to Abbot.*] Your reverence, my respects.

Abbot. [*With hands clasped in attitude of prayer.*] Oh-mc-toh !

L. P. Pao-tung comes from a distant region, he
 Presumes to beg your Reverence to employ
 Him in this temple as an acolyte ;
 Oh, save me from my wretchedness, I pray !

Abbot. Pray tell me who and whence you are.

L. P. Long since
 My father left our homestead near Pao Ching,
 And to Sze-chwan to purchase horses went.
 I came in search of him : all vain my search.
 I'm truly destitute and wretched now.
 I hope your Reverence will compassion show
 And take me for your servant.

Abbot. Follow me.

[*Enter SHIH KAI-CHEN and attendants.*]

S. K. Ere I assume my duties, I must worship
 The city's guardian-deity, but, as
 The gentry and officials all have come
 With their congratulations, I've no leisure
 To offer incense t' other gods or spirits.

[*Re-enter Abbot.*]

Abbot. Your poor old priest delayed to meet your Honor.
 He craves your pardon.

K. S. Why should I presume ?

Abbot [*to Lee Pao-tung within.*] Bring tea.

Enter LEE PAO-TUNG with tea, which he hands to S. K., who takes it and looks hard at L. P.]

S. K. Ah ! this is an uncommon boy.

'Tis pity such a youth should be a priest.

Abbot. He came to me entirely destitute,
From distant parts, I can provide for him,
But much prefer that you would take and rear him.
And soon as he attains maturity,
Him to his home would send.

S. K. Mercy is no

Prerogative of man. Let him stand forth
While I examine into his career.

L. P. My honorable father's named Lee Kee.

When young my mother died and left my sister,
Kwei-chee and me, with our kind-hearted father,
Who sought another wife to care for us,
And found one in the family of Yang.
Father to Sze-chwan went to purchase horses ;
Then mistress Yang, who takes delight in wine
And sensual pleasure, formed a lewd intrigue
And violated home and marriage ties.

S. K. I understand !

L. P. 'Tis said the consequences

Of parents' faults are passed on to their children.
Still, who would ever have supposed that she
Would drive my sister to grind rice and me
To the mountain tops to gather fuel ? Alas !

Abbot. Proceed.

L. P. Kwei-chee gave me her jewellery

To sell, and bade me travel to Sze-chwan,
To search for father. Now, my baggage sold
And money spent, I'm destitute and fain
Would to my home return.

S. K. Yes, certainly !

Pao-tung, I've listened to your plaintive tale
In great distress ; I am an officer.
Like you, I'm far from home ; I will adopt
You as my son.

L. P. Your Honor's very kind.

S. K. I hope that you will diligently study
And so transmit my literary fame.

Abbot. Ah, yes, quite right, I've heard with greatest pleasure
Your Honor's generous offer to assist.
Pao-tung, th' extreme of wretchedness is reached,
There's now a prospect of prosperity,
I trust you will obtain great happiness.
Go gain the highest literary prize!

S. K. 'Tis good. [*To L. P.*] To Shih Tai, you will change
your name.

L. P. I promise this.

S. K. My son!

L. P. Father! [*They laugh*] I do obeisance, father,
To you [*He kneels to S. K.*]

S. K. Oh no! oh no! no need of this!
I'll be to you a father, see that you
Are an obedient filial son to me.
See that you study elegance in writing.
'Tis my desire your name shall yet appear
High 'mongst our best and most successful scholars.
Now we'll return and keep our country's laws.

[*Exeunt, ABBOT showing the rest out.*]

SCENE 3.

LEE KEE'S house. YANG SAN-CHUN and CHUN HWA in hall.
CHAO CHUNG approaches the outer door.

C. C. I feel just now like an unfledged young roc,
Which knows the time will come when he will soar
Into the ether far above the clouds,
Even mortified to find that heaven's too low.
Come let me ascertain who is within. (*Knocks.*)

C. H. [*Going to door*] Well, who are you?

C. C. I will trouble you t' inform
The family, their son-in-law, Chao Chung,
Has come to seek an interview with them. (*Is shown in.*)

Y. S. What honourable business has brought hither
My son-in-law?

C. C. To consummate my marriage.

Y. S. Indeed! [*Pausing*] Quite right, wait in the library,
Until my husband comes, when everything
Will be decided,

C. C. Thanks, I will retire. [*Exit.*]

Enter TIEN WANG.

T. W. Softly, softly, I've called to see my sweetheart.

Y. S. Ah, Sir, so you have come! Please take a seat. [*Both sit.*]

Well, Sir, our business is quite ruined now.

T. W. I am inspirited with "spirits' song" tea.

My belly's full of choicest food. What's ruined?

Y. S. Ah, you don't know how sad I am!

T. W. Why sad?

Y. S. Just fancy now, that son-in-law, Chao Chung,

Is come to seek his bride; but where's the maid

To mate him? Say should I feel sad or not?

Wretch that I am!

T. W. This is a trifling matter.

Y. S. Better say so. Trifling! He is a lawyer;

He'll charge you, sirrah, and you'll have to starve!

T. W. Call him a lawyer! I'm a better one.

I'll charge him first with force.

Y. S. What kind of force?

T. W. To-night he will sleep in the library.

At the third watch I will with straw surround it

And fire't; I'll treat him like a grasshopper.

Y. S. Yes, you're right, let it be as you've decided.

T. W. Yama decrees his death at the third watch.

Y. S. No power can keep him till the fourth watch comes.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 4.

Library in LEE KEE'S house with bed. CHAO CHUNG seated.

C. C. My fath'r-in-law I have not seen, and hence

With head in sorrow bent I sit alone.

[*Raising and going to window.*] Heigh-ho! I'll push aside this
silken screen

And try this melancholy to dispel. [*Opens window.*]

I see on yon horizon the full moon,

Completely round, in an unclouded sky.

The bright stars, too! How brilliant is the sky,

With all the light those sparkling orbs display!

How they do blaze with splendour! It is said

That the old man who dwells within the moon

Has e'er been minister of marriages;

His bonds are tied above with a red cord.

[*The second watch is struck.*]

In yonder tower they strike the second watch ;

I'd better go to sleep.

[*He goes to the bed.*]

[*Enter Ghost of Nurse.*]

Ghost. Ah ! death resembles an extinguished lamp.

Or melted snow, and 't is as difficult

To return to life again as 't is to draw

The moon's reflected figure from a pond.

Detestable Tien Wang kicked me to death,

And ere that injury is avenged, he plots

To murder this Chao Chung ; but I'll warn him,

And he'll some future day avenge my death.

[*She goes to bed.*] Pray sir, give careful heed whilst I relate

From first to last all that has happened here.

C. C. [*in a fright.*] A ghost !

Ghost. Alas ! my good, young sir, be still

And fear not ; I'm the nurse of your young lady

And her young brother.

C. C. Eh, my brother's nurse ?

Ghost. Yes Pao-tung's nurse.

C. C. Say, quickly, what's your grievance.

Ghost. Master's second wife, a wicked, wanton

Woman, drove poor Kwei-chee to drown herself—

C. C. Ha !

Ghost. And Pao-tung away to far Sze-chwan,

Where he, so young and tender, will be lost.

'Tis truly sad !

C. C. What's the adulterer's name ?

Ghost. Tien Wang. He's wronged the whole Lee family.

Old and young, young and old, they are all dead,

Or scattered. Ah, is it not heart-rending ?

C. C. What happened next ?

Ghost. He and his paramour

Kicked me to death. I wait in Hades now,

In the city of the wronged, in hopes that you'll

Denounce and bring to doom this guilty pair.

But now, Sir, I advise you quickly flee

And shun them ; they will set this room on fire

At the third watch. Awake ! young sir, awake !

I cannot stay, alas ! [*Exit.*]

C. C. Stay nurse ! stay nurse !

[*Rising from bed.*] Ah ! no, it cannot be. While lying here
 Methought the old nurse entered and implored
 Me so pathetically—'t was a dream,
 No doubt. It makes one laugh, ha ! ha ! to think—
 'But yet I should not laugh. Old people's words
 Should not be disbelieved. I did not see
 Pao-tung, for that there surely is some reason.
 The more I muse, the more it seems like truth.
 She told me they would set this room on fire ;
 No power can keep me here till the fourth watch.
 * The best thing is to slip away and save
 My bacon from their intended roast. I'll take
 My lute and flee [*Exit.*]

Enter TIEN WANG and YANG SAN-CHUN.

Y. S. This is the room.

T. W. Begin.

S. Y. He has cleared out !

T. W. I'll follow.

Y. S. Don't, dolt ! p'rhaps he was forewarned ;

Most likely, he will haste to prosecute.

Don't mind him ; let's retire and rest a while.

T. W. Quite right. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.—SCENE 1.

A terrace in LIU SIAO-HIANG'S mansion overlooking a Garden.

Enter LIU SIAO-HIANG followed by servant.

L. S. H. To-day I have been musing on the ancients—

On the Prince Chao of Yen ; where now is he ?

He virtue loved and yet of all his works

The golden tower alone remains ;—likewise

On King of Cho, the bravest of his age,

Who mountains moved, to fill and dam the sea,

Yet looked he on the royal throne as dirt

Compared with his loved consort Lady Yue—

And on the days of the Contending States,

And the great statesman Su, whose sister-'n-law

Approached him like a snake, and like an ant

Regarded him for his great wealth alone.

* In the original there is a play on the words *tseu*, wine, and *tseu*, run, which have the same sound. At a feast the best thing is wine, but at the treat intended for him, a run.

Another cup to drive away dull care. [*Drinks.*]
 We've reached old age a hoary-headed pair,
 Without a son or daughter, yet we both,
 Husband and wife, have aye done what was right.

Enter CHAO CHUNG below centre.

C. C. Alas, I starve!

L. S. H. Ha! who cries out he starves?

Let me inspect him [*Looking down at C. C.*] Eh, he's a mere youth!

What beautiful intelligent bright eyes!

Boy, call him hither, let me question him.

[*Boy calls C. C., who follows and bows to L. S. H.*]

L. S. H. Why isn't that you a youth cry out you're starving?

C. C. Sir, pity me! My father Chao Tsz-chwang
 Died and left me to suffer poverty.

I've lived by writing since, but have been robbed.

L. S. H. Ah, is this so? Chao Chung may know my name.

C. C. I beg to be informed.

L. S. H. I'm Liu Siao-hiang,

Long years ago your father's firmest friend.

Now, nephew, since you're here and are a scholar,

Pray stay and study in my library

And seek advancement. Study poetry

And elegance in composition. Gain

The first place on the list of graduates.

Come let me introduce you to my household.

C. C. I thank you, Sir, for your benevolence,

And pray that Heaven will on you blessings shower.

L. S. H. We will retire, drink, and converse together.

C. C. Again I thank you. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 2.

Country with a road running across it. Enter two ROBBERS.

First R. [*Sings.*] I've gambled all, I'm cleaned out quite.

E'en my good sword is gone.

Second R. [*Sings.*] Such luck! I lost my breastplate bright.

And pawned my shoes, anon.

F. R. Ho! brother, it will never do to lose all in this way.

S. R. Let us both scheme what to do.

F. R. I have it! We'll steal a cat!

S. R. Pshaw! Are we not unlucky enough already?

F. R. Let us think again.

S. R. I have it ! Let us steal a sow !

F. R. That's still more unlucky than cat-stealing.

S. R. You tthink again.

F. R. Let us pirate a foreign ship !

S. R. [*Laughing.*] He, he ! hah, hah, hah !

F. R. D' ye laugh ?

S. R. Ay. We've only our bare feet, we've not even got so much
as a pair of clogs for boats.

F. R. Oh ! well, think again.

S. R. We'll commit a highway robbery.

F. R. That's it !

F. R. [*Sings.*]

The tide has reached its lowest wane,
At last to flood it flows.

S. R. [*Sings.*]

I'll buy my breastplate back again,
Also redeem my shoes.

[*They conceal themselves.*]

Enter LEE KEE carrying bags.

L. K. Travellers enjoy their homeward journey best ;
When yesterday the sun sank in the west,
As with unceasing wails the cuckoo wept,
My home-sick heart called out ' no place like home ! '
And yet again it called ' no place like home ! '
Through life we are like floating drift weed, driven
By every breeze across the river's bosom ;
Now blown together and anon apart ;
Specks, leaves, resembling transient spring-time dreams.
And now I stand and gaze on those high mountains,
Yon lofty peaks, those elegant bamboos,
And dense luxuriant forests ; on the herds
Of deer, exuberancy of sweet flowers,
And numerous birds. Sweet flowers and joyous birds !
Ye fill the earth with splendour and enjoyment.
I'll haste, o'ertake the merchants' caravan
And with it homeward travel.

[*The Two Robbers stealthily approach Lee Kee, who accidentally
knocks against the First Robber.*]

F. R. Pshaw ! old blind fish ! [*He pushes L. K.*]

S. R. Old booby ! [*He pushes L. K.*]

L. K. Youths should not push old folks about. You look
As if you'd like to rob me.

F. R. You're right! How could you guess it so correctly?
Come on. [*They attack him, throw him down and steal his money bag.*]

[*Exeunt Robbers.*]

L. K. [*Rising.*] Alas! I am undone!

[*Exit.*]

SCENE 3.

Room in LEE KEE'S house. TIEN WANG and YANG SAN-CHUN
seated.

T. W. 'Tis jolly this, we don't perceive time's flight.

Y. S. Cooked capons at morn and roast goose at night.

T. W. Ah! lady, that old father wrote last month

To say he'll soon be home, I fear that we

Will have to part awhile. [*Rising*] Good bye.

Y. S. Good bye.

[*Exit T. W.*]

Enter CHUN HWA, followed by LEE KEE.

L. K. So step by step I've reached my home at last.

Y. S. Your honor has returned, come take a seat

And tell me how your trade turned out.

L. K. Ah bad!

I settled my affairs in far Sze-chwan

And left for home, but midway robbers met,

Who, most luckily, left me my baggage.

Ah wife, where are Kwei-chee and Pao-tung gone?

Y. S. Your children both caught cold, grew sick and died.

L. K. It cannot be! My son and daughter dead?

Thus blighted all the old man fondly loved?

Ah, how restrain my grief or stay my tears?

[*Weeping.*] Alas, Pao-tung! alas, Kwei-chee! My son

Is dead! My wretched self alone is left.

Y. S. We are both wretched. What say you, let me

Bear you some more; perhaps it is predestined.

L. K. Nay it can't be.

Y. S. [*Aside to Chun Hwa.*] Chun Hwa let me but find

That you divulge our love intrigue, and I

Will settle with you.

[*Exit Y. S.*]

C. H. [*Aside.*] Ah, no, it can't be done!

What if I do divulge? the wrong is great;

If I be hanged, I'll spoil their cookery.

[*Exit.*]

L. K. I'm sixty-three, my children are both dead.

There'll be no one to keep alight the lamp

In my ancestral hall. Is it not hard ?

Re-enter CHUN HWA, with tea.

C. H. Sir, rest yourself and drink a cup of tea. [*She hands him tea.*]

I guarantee 't will give you ease ; there's no

Use fretting ; rid your heart

Of all affection—ah ! of all its love.

L. K. [*Sipping tea.*] Ah ! Chun Hwa, you advise me rid my heart

Of all its love ; you've surely cause for this ;

Speak plainly if th' affair is great as heaven

I'll undertake it. [*Yang San-chun enters stealthily and conceals herself.*]

C. H. Ah, sir, e'er since you left,

Mistress has lewdly wantoned with Tien Wang.

Pao-tung saw them, hence they drove him from home,

And 't is not known where he has gone ; they next

Compelled Kwei-chee to go and drown herself ;

And finally they kicked the nurse to death.

I wished to tell you this. [*Y. S. sneaks off.*]

L. K. Alas ! [*He swoons.*]

C. H. Revive, Sir !

L. K. My Kwei-chee drowned ! the old nurse kicked to death !

Ah, wife, I swear, if I am not revenged

I'll not remain alive.

C. H. I've told you this,

With true and honest motive ; pray avenge

All wrongs ; then if I die, I'll close mine eyes

In death most cheerfully.

[*Exit.*]

L. K. My lady Yang,

I'll to the magistracy, seek my friend,

Consult him, and a plan devise to deal

With you. [*Exit.*]

Enter TIEN WANG and YANG SAN-CHUN.

T. W. I just peeped in, my lady love,

And seeing none but you, have ventured in.

Y. S. Ah ! sir, be seated, pray. [*He sits near her.*] Our secret's known.

T. W. Ah ! who divulged ?

Y. S. Chun Hwa.

T. W. Call her.

Z. S. [*Shouts*] Chun Hwa! [*Enter C. H.*]

T. W. [*to C. H.*] Unhappy wretch! I promised you should be
My concubine; but, now that you have told
Our secret, I will thrash you.

[*The three struggle, and Y. S. kicks C. H. to death.*]

Y. S. The more we strive, the greater grows the rent.

T. W. Don't feel afraid; convey her to the study;
I'll tell her father 't is the old man's work;
And done because that she would not consent
To be debauched by him. There's an indictment!
The wind blows favourably still.

Y. S. Help me.

[*They remove the body of C. H. and return.*]

T. W. I'm off t' inform. [*Exit.*]

Y. S. And I'll feign ignorance. [*Exit.*]

SCENE 4.

A Magistrate's office, Lictors and Attendants present. WU TEH-
TSING seated on the bench. Enter Tien Wang.

T. W. This is the magistracy; I'll proceed. [*He advances.*]

W. T. T. Well friend, what honourable business
Has brought you here?

T. W. Your humble servant has
A present brought, to show his great respect.
He hopes you will be pleased and deign t' accept it

W. T. T. Yes, thanks. What case have you? I will obtain,
I promise, a confession.

T. W. Good, your servant
Is cousin to one Liang Tien-luh, whose daughter,
A Chun, has been outraged and murdered, I
Shall feel obliged, your Worship, if you will
Attend to this.

W. T. T. Friend, I accede to your request. [*Exit T. W.*]

W. T. T. [*To lictors.*] Bring the complainant and the prisoner
here.

[*Lictors go out and return with LEE KEE in fetters and LIANG
TIEN LUH. L. K. and L. T. L. both kneel to W. T. T.*]

L. T. L. A Chun, my daughter has been violated.
And murdered; pray decide this case your Honor.

W. T. T. Where's your indictment ? [*L. T. L. hands petition.*]

W. T. T. [*After reading petition*] Daring old Lee Kee.

Yours is a youthful heart, but know our laws

Are like a furnace. Do you still deny

Your guilt ?

L. K. Your honor may perceive full well

This old man never did such deed as that.

W. T. T. Umph ! [*To lictors*] Give him forty blows. [*He is beaten*] Will you confess ?

L. K. Ah ! 'tis hard to confess to a false charge.

W. T. T. [*To lictors*] Remove him to the rack ! [*He is put on the rack*] Will you confess ?

L. K. The charge is false, it is hard to confess.

W. T. T. [*To lictors.*] Increase the pressure. Now will you confess ?

L. K. I will repeat the accusation's false !

Oh ! I've been beaten and squeezed most terribly.

W. T. T. Beat him again.

L. K. Ah, stay ! I will confess.

W. T. T. Write his confession down.

L. K. I can't avoid it ;

This charge of murdering Chnn Hwa is false,

But all this torturing is hard to bear.

Take now my life, I'll go to see King Yama.

W. T. T. [*To lictors*]. Take him away to prison. *L. K. is led off in fetters.*

W. T. T. [*To lictors*]. Go beat the drum and clear the court.

W. T. T. [*Sings.*] By purchase I grade

And dignity got,

And till I'm repaid

I'll scrape every jot.

Venal judges acquire

Both money and land ;

Their families aspire

To offices grand.

Let others go beg,

As through life they dance,

I'll stick to my peg

And mind the main chance.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE 5.

A Pavilion with Seats and Table in LIU SIAO-HIANG'S garden.

Enter CHAO CHUNG.

C. C. I've diligently and with pleasure read
The beauties of the classics ; now I've leisure,
I'll play my lute and drive dull care away.
Ah ! long ago this lute was made the token
Of my bethothal, who could then forsee
Its strings would snap ? Will they again be spliced ?
The more I strive this sorrow to dispel
The more my heart is pained. It can't be helped.
I cannot play the ' Wild goose of Pingsha,'
' Thy flowing rills and lofty hills, Chung Tsz '
I cannot play. I'm sorrowful indeed.
I'll strive again. [*He thrums the lute*] Heigh ho ! I'll imitate
Han Siang-U driving sadness from his brow.

[*Enter servant.*]

Servant. His Honor wants you in his library, Sir.

C. C. Stay ! What's the business ?

Servant. To drink with him.

C. C. Lead on, I'll thank him for his invitation,
Sure it's a brilliant notion !

[*Exeunt C. C. leaving his lute on the table.*]

[*Enter LEE KWEI-CHEE and Maid-servant.*]

L. K. C. I feel so dull, I'll stroll around the garden.

[*Going to pavilion.*] Let us stand here, whence we can take a view
Of the innumerable blooming flowers,
And listen to the music of the birds.

Beautiful flowers ! Let's sit in this pavilion. [*They enter.*]

L. K. C. [*Taking up the lute.*] A willow lute. Ah, this is my
betrothed's !

Given as a marriage pledge. How came it here ?

I'll take it in to mother and ask her

If she knows ought of this. Girl, take the lute. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 6.

[*A room in LIU SIAO-HIANG'S mansion. LIU SIAO-HIANG and
LADY WANG seated.*]

L. K. Yes, wife, 'tis true our daughter's still unmarried.

Yet we don't know how soon the marriage chair

May come and she leave us.

Lady Wang. When Heaven wills.

The ancients said, 'All happy unions are
Decided in another world.' Ere long
The *phœnices will naturally roost
In the dryandra tree.

L. S. H. Ha ! Yes, quite right.

Soon may the †old man in the moon perform
His part of matchmaker.

[*Enter LEE KWEI-CHEE.*]

L. K. C. All blessings rest
On father and mother.

L. S. H. and Lady W. Seat yourself.

L. K. C. Ah, misery !

L. S. H. Why are you miserable ?

You have a fine rare lute ; whence comes it ?

L. K. C. Listen.

L. K. C. [*Sings.*]

You ask about this lute,
And whence arose the sighs.
Closed was my marriage suit ;
The pledge before you lies.
Our parents swore, the Chao
And Lee race should be bound,
Chao Chung with me, and now
The pledge, this lute, I've found.

Lady W. [*to L. K. C.*] Retire. [*Exit L. K. C.*]

L. S. H. Chao Chung is in the library ;

Husband and wife have met before our eyes.

Lady W. 'Tis so indeed !

[*Enter CHAO CHUNG.*]

C. C. Uncle ! aunt ! ill betides me,

Sir, since with you I've lost my willow lute !

I beg you'll have a thorough search made for it.

L. S. H. Where did you get this lute, and why is it
Of such importance ?

C. C. Many years ago,

While sojourning with father in Siang Yang,

We met his old friend from Pao-ching, Lee Kee,

* There will be a wedding.

† The Chinese say the man in the moon decides the matrimonial fate of mortals.

Who, through a liking for me, promised me
His daughter for a wife, and as a pledge
Gave me this willow lute as go-between.

L. S. H. This can't be. If the lute such token were,
Where was it during all your wanderings?

C. C. Where'er I went I took my willow lute ;
At last I learnt San Chun had wronged Kwei-chee.

L. S. H. Where is Kwei-chee?

C. C. She drowned herself!

L. S. H. Ah, this

Is a remarkable coincidence!

Chao Chung, we will bestow on you our daughter
To splice the broken string. What do you say?

C. C. I dare not.

Lady W. I'll call her, you shall see each other.

L. S. H. Quite right.

Lady W. [*Shouts.*] Daughter!

[*Enter LEE KWEI-CHEE.*]

L. K. C. I haste when mother calls.

[*Looking hard at C. C.*] Ah! can it be, are you Chao Chung?

C. C. I am.

And are not you Kwei-chee?

L. K. C. I am indeed.

Both. Ah! [*They embrace.*]

C. C. [*Sings.*] Now we meet as in a dream.

L. K. C. All care's gone and joy's supreme.

C. C. Wife, together let us kneel.

L. K. C. Show the thankfulness we feel. [*Both kneel.*]

L. S. H. Quickly rise, obey me, pray.

Lady W. Live a happy pair till grey.

L. S. H. [*Laughing,*] Ho, ho, ho!

L. S. H. [*Sings.*]

Now to th' inner hall we'll turn;

Bright the marriage lights shall burn;

Soon in literary strife

Wiu will be the great degree,

Then secure the small—a wife,

Who shall dressed in grandeur be.

Lady W. [*Sings.*] Together let us now retire.

Happy beyond our hearts' desire.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV,—SCENE 1.

As last, a room in LIU SIAO-HIANG'S mansion ; LIU SIAO-HIANG, LADY WANG, and LEE KWRI-CHEE seated.

L. S. H. 'Tis rumoured, nephew graduated second ;

I'm gratified indeed at this. We soon

Shall see him here in his embroidered robes

[*Enter CHAO CHUNG dressed in official robes. He kneels to L. S. H. and LADY W.*]

L. S. H. to [C. C.] Well, what appointment has His Majesty
Conferred on our new graduate ?

C. C. I'm made

Magistrate of the district of Pao-ching.

I leave for office now, and take my wife.

L. S. H. Good ! Listen ! you leave us to enter office.

The wife must sing in concert with the husband.

Lady W. Daughter, you go to office with your husband ;

Have you forgot your step-mother's vile deeds ?

C. C. When at Pao-ching, I will destroy San-chun.

L. K. C. Brother and husband both shall be avenged.

C. C. We'll bid farewell and part from our kind parents.

L. S. H. May fortune's star shine on you all your journey

And honorable men assist you where

You go. [*They bid farewell and exeunt in different directions.*]

SCENE 2.

The PAO-CHING prison. Enter HO LAO-TSIEH, Chief Gaoler.

? *L. K.* [*Sings.*]

I've saved not a cash yet this year,

Last year I did save a few cents,

When came a month's sickness severe,

And every cent went in expense.

Enter LEE KEE.

L. K. [*Sings.*]

If Yama called, I should not mind,

You call and I am all despair.

I come where the gaol god's enshrined,

To talk with my great brother there.

Great brother called ; pray what are his commands ?

H. L. T. Nothing ; I still want money, nothing else.

L. K. Alas ! reflect I am advanced in years

And have no relatives nor friends who come
To visit me, so how can I get money
With which to show my brotherly respect
To my old brother ?

H. L. T. Don't be sulky now.

Your property is mine and mine my own.

L. K. Brother, indeed I've not a single cash.

H. L. T. What, not a cash ! I'll try the squeezing bed.

L. K. Alas, it can't be helped !

H. L. T. [*Taking L. K. away.*] You will soon learn
That I expect oil even out of old husks. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 3.

On one side of stage, a bedroom with bed on which LEE KWEI-CHEE is discovered asleep ; on the other side of stage a prison cell, in which LEE KEE is discovered sitting on a torture bed.

L. K. I fear my life will not much longer last.

Ah ! how deplorable it is that man
Is so perverse. Some bridges mend or roads
Repair, and thus secure prosperity.
It must be that this beating and bamboozing
Is Heaven's retribution for misdeeds
Done in a former life. What misery !

[*The second watch is struck.*]

In yonder tower the second watch is sounded.
How terrible that Liang Tien-luh should thus
Accuse me of this crime, and a corrupt
Magistrate torture me till I confessed
A crime that I am guiltless of. Alas !
Who pities me, a childless white-haired man ?
'Tis dreadful thus to suffer injury,
To be oppressed and wretched die in prison.

[*The third watch is struck.*]

[*The god TAI PEN descends.*]

Tai Peh. High Heaven's ruler has commissioned me
To scrutinize into all virtuous
And vicious acts performed throughout the world.
There lies Lee Kee in gaol in great distress.

[*Passing to Lee Kwei-chee.*] What place is this ? [*Passing.*]
Yes, true this is his daughter.

She's filial hearted, so I will convey
His words to where she sleeps, and so perchance
Father and daughter yet again will meet.

[*Tai Peh goes near L. K. C.'s bed.*]

L. K. I heard the third watch struck and a cock crow.

My family is all dispersed or dead.

While I was yet a youth, my parents died ;

In middle age I lost my wife Liu Shi,

[*Lee Kwei-chee opens curtains and listens.*]

Who left me with a daughter and a son.

That they might be well succoured and attended,

I spliced the broken lute-string and took to wife

One from the clan of Yang ; she proved unchaste.

It was unfortunate. I left my home

And gave her opportunities for her

Lewd dalliance and mischief-making deeds.

[*Fourth watch is struck.*]

I hear the rattle of the fourth watch struck.

What misery San Chun bread in my home !

She drove my child Kwei-chee to drown herself.

My son Pao-tung is fled, no one knows where.

If he's alive or dead, preserved or lost,

I know not. To be parentless in youth,

Wifeless in manhood's prime, and childless in

Old age, are called the three great ills of life.

'Tis misery to muse on my misfortunes !

Who'd know San Chun and her vile paramour,

Would kill Chun Hwa and the old nurse ?

[*Fifth watch is struck.*]

Heigh ho ! there's the fifth watch ; the cocks all crow.

I'm grievously distressed, still I'll cease sighing

And moaning. Ah, Pao-tung ! Kwei-chee ! [*Weeping*] Alas !

Alas ! my children, oh ! where are you now ?

Your father's in a woful plight, indeed,

And would meet you, if only in a dream.

[*Enter HO LAU 'TSIH.*]

H. L. T. This rascal has lain on this squeezing bed,

Moaning and feigning he's a fool, all night.

[*To L. K.*] I'll drag you down and scour your old pate bright.

I will increase your tortures. Come away.

[*Exeunt H. L. T. with L. K.*]

Tai Peh. I'll mount this zephyr and return to Heaven,
And let his filial daughter think on this.

[*Exit Tai Peh.*]

[*Lee Kwei-chee rises and comes forward.*]

L. K. C. Ah, shocking ! while here on my bed I heard
A prisoner pronounce my brother's name !

[*Enter Maid-servant.*]

I fear my stepdame and Tien Wang oppress
My father in this gaol. Girl, call the gaoler.

[*Exit maid.*]

I will investigate this to the end.

[*Re-enter maid with HO LAO TSIH.*]

H. L. T. [*Aside.*] My trembling heart beats pit-a-pat through fear.
[*Bowing to L. K. C.*] Madam, your humble servant waits your orders.

L. K. C. I wish to know what prisoner in this gaol
Complains so loudly of injustice.

H. L. T. Oh !

That is Lee Kee's plaint.

L. K. C. Ah ! Lee Kee complains ;
Of what injustice does he then complain ?

H. L. T. Of being charged for murdering a girl.

L. K. C. Conduct him here.

H. L. T. Good. [*Exit H. L. T.*]

L. K. C. Ah, stepdame, stepdame
If this be your inhuman heartless work,
I hope to see you die before my eyes.

[*Re-enter H. L. T. leading LEE KEE.*]

H. L. T. [*aside to L. K.*] Hi, old Lee, when the lady questions you,
Speak only of your wrongs and of the hardships
You suffer ; pray don't mention my annoyance.

L. K. Oh ! no annoyance, too much squeezing bed,
That's all.

H. L. T. Don't mention that, or you'll regret.

L. K. What shall I say ?

H. L. T. Say you are greatly wronged,
And hope she'll pity you, and show compassion ;
Then she may give you something, dolt.

L. K. I'll say it.

[*L. K. approaches and kneels to L. K. C.*]

L. K. Kind lady, an old prisoner kneels to you.

L. K. C. Arise. Of what injustice is it you

Complain so loudly? Sit there and explain.

L. K. Thanks, lady. I first acted wrong, I fear,

In leaving my old home, and thus affording

My wife, San Chun, a way for wantonness

And persecuting my loved son, Pao-tung,

Whom she expelled from home, and my dear daughter,

Kwei-chee, whom she drove forth to drown herself.

She and her paramour, Tien Wang, next killed

My children's nurse; when I returned, the maid,

Chun Hwa, told me of all their wicked deeds.

San Chun o'erhead her, and because of it,

With Tien Wang, murdered her. To ruin me

They placed the corpse within my room; then laid

On me the awful charge of rape and murder,

And bribed a venal judge to torture me

Till I confessed the crime. I've told you all.

I pray you Lady get my case reheard,

And so prevent a good man's reputation

From being blasted by false accusations.

L. K. C. [*Aside.*] So, so, San Chun, this shows your treachery!

Let me address my father. Nay, alas,

That must not be. He has confessed the crime!

Yet he's my father, and I should tell him so;

But then upon my sponse, whom I should first

Consult, a dire disgrace, I fear, may fall.

[*To L. K.*] Ah, prisoner, according to your story,

You've certainly been badly used. [*To H. L. T.*] Come
hither,

Accept this money and see that you treat

This old man well.

H. L. T. [*to L. K.*] Ay, wasn't I right this time?

I'll kill a fowl and duck as a reward

For friendship. [*Exeunt H. L. T. with L. K.*]

L. K. C. [*to Maid.*] This turns out as I expected. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.—SCENE 1.

Room in CHAO CHUNG's official residence. LEE KWEI CHEE seated.

Enter CHAO CHUNG.

C. C. Well, wife, I've just come from the Magistracy;

When the good husband sings, and the wife sings too.

L. K. C. Ah, misery !

C. C. Wife, why when I return
Do you cry misery ?

L. K. C. Husband, your wife
Has family affairs which, she fears, you'll
Not care to hear about.

C. C. If to avenge
Your brother's wrong, know I've resolved to act
At once ; ah ! why do you look so displeased ?

L. K. C. 'T is easy asking one whose father is
In prison, why she weeps. Would that you'd show
One half the kindness that a son should show !

C. C. Ah ! is our father then in gaol ? Tell me
With what he's charged.

L. K. C. The inhumanity
And baseness of our stepdame was the cause.
She murdered Chun Hwa and accused my father
Of the grave crime, then by her lewdness brought
The venal judge to do this injury.

C. C. I'll thoroughly investigate this case,
And, if I find our father has been wronged,
He shall receive full justice and revenge.

[*Exit C. C.*]

L. K. C. [*Sings.*]
He'll investigate the case,
Scatter sorrow from my brow,
Save my father from disgrace,
And avenge my brother, now.

[*Re-enter CHAO CHUNG.*]

C. C. [*excitedly.*] Ah shocking ! father has confessed the crime !
The autumn past, he'll be condemned to die !

L. K. C. Alas ! [*She faints ; then recovers.*] Ah, husband, 't is a
common saying

That when one family has tribulation .
A hundred families haste to its aid ;
Yet you can see him die and not attempt
To save. To see an old man die is painful
In any case, but how much more ought you,
His son-in-law, to feel pained at his death.

C. C. Whether he can be saved or cannot be,
'T is hard to say. Your father has confessed

He did a deed as low as heaven is high.
 Call me whate'er you wish, what can I do
 Under such circumstances?

L. K. C. I've begged you

Repeatedly and still you will not heed me ;
 I'll cast aside the wife and for my father
 Plead as an ordinary suitor would. [*She kneels to C. C.*]

C. C. Don't act like this ; arise and wait until

I've thought the matter over. [*She rises.*] Ah ! yes, good.
 Our Governor, Shek Tai, this year's Chuang Yuen,
 Arrived to-day, he is discriminating
 And clever, I'll report the case to him.
 He'll certainly redress all wrongs ; but then,
 Your brother absent, who'll appear to plead ?

L. K. C. Ah, husband ! Children must not live beneath
 The same sky as their father's enemies ;
 No brother here, your wife will prosecute.

C. C. You must not go ; if you appear to plead,
 It will disgrace me as a Magistrate.

L. K. C. To save my father from his wretchedness,
 I'm heedless of—yea I'll despise all office ;
 Even if I have to climb to heaven or crawl
 Into the depths of earth, I'll save him ;
 And, husband, think you such a daughter fears
 To bring disgrace on your official name ?

C. C. Well, well, you certainly are good and filial ;
 Quickly get ink, I'll write out an indictment.

L. K. C. Ah, let me grind the ink. [*She rubs ink. C. C. brings
 pencil and paper.*]

C. C. My wife wants me

To save her father, I will act regardless.

Of what the public say. Why should I fear ?

[*C. C. writes an indictment and gives it to L. K. C.*]

C. C. Here's the indictment, wife, go to the hall.

And cry aloud at the front door ; don't be
 Afraid. [*L. K. C. takes and reads the petition.*]

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 2.

[*Hall of Justice with large drum at front entrance, at which
 enters LEE KWEI CHEE.*]

L. K. C. This is the Hall of Justice, let me strike

The drum. [*She beats the drum.*] [*Enter an aide-de-camp.*]

A. D. C. Halloo! why do you sound the drum?

L. K. C. Your servant seeks to have her father's wrongs
Redressed.

A. D. C. Wait there until the court is opened.

[*Enter Police and Lictors and then LEE PAO-TUNG, known now as
SHIH TAI, who sits in the Judge's seat.*]

L. P. I have received His Majesty's commands
To govern Siang Yang, I'll not have it said
The poor can with impunity be wronged.
Heaven cannot be deceived. [*To A. D. C.*] Who struck
the drum?

A. D. C. A woman.

L. P. Bring her here [*L. K. C. is brought forward; she kneels
near L. P.*]

Kneel farther off.

What injury do you complain of, woman?

L. K. C. Of wrong done to my father.

L. P. Have you brought
A statement of your suit?

L. K. C. Yes. Here it is.

[*The petition is given to L. P. He reads aloud.*]

L. P. [*Reading.*] 'Your Petitioner, Lee Kwei Chee,' eh!
'complains of injustice done to her father, Lee Kee.' Ha!
'and injury to her brother Pao-tung.' Heigh ho!

[*Excitedly to attendants.*] Haste, beat the drum and clear the
court at once.

[*To A. D. C.*] Conduct the lady into th' inner hall. [*Exit L. P.*]

[*CHAO CHUNG enters and hurries toward the door L. K. C. left
by, pushes the A. D. C. to the ground and passes in
by the door.*]

SCENE 3.

A room. LEE PAO-TUNG and LEE KWEI CHEE sitting opposite
each other.]

L. P. Ah! are you then Kwei Chee? my sister?

L. K. C. I am.

Kwei Chee. Are you indeed Pao-tung my brother?

L. P. Truly I am.

Both. Oh! [*They rise and rush into each other's arms; while
still embracing, CHAO CHUNG enters in great haste.*]

C. C. Do I disturb Your Excellency, pray ?

L. P. Pshaw ! dare you enter thus my private room ?

Down on your knees at once, sir !

C. C. [*Trembling and dropping on his knees.*] I've done wrong.

L. K. C. Ha, brother, know you not who this man is ?

L. P. The Pao-ching Magistrate.

L. C. C. [*Laughing.*] Ha, ha, just so ;

This Pao-ching Magistrate's your brother-in-law.

L. K. C. [*to C. C.*] Fie ! rise and learn how to conduct yourself.

L. P. Yes, brother, rise ; I'm highly pleased to meet you.

C. C. [*Rising.*] Eh, what, are you Pao-tung ?

L. P. Yes.

All [*Laughing.*] Ha, ha, ha ! [*Enter A. D. C.*]

L. K. C. Dear brother, quickly liberate our father.

L. P. to A. D. C. Order police to seize San Chun and Tien Wang,

And bring them here ; you go to Pao-ching prison,

Find Lee Kee and conduct him hither too.

L. P. Ah, sister ! [*Exit A. D. C.*]

L. P. [*Sings.*] Imperial Heaven to-day
Regards us all ;

L. K. C. [*Sings.*] Sister and brother gay
Meet in this hall.

C. C. [*Sings.*] To find for wrongs relief,
Revenge obtain,
To drive away all grief,
Sorrow and pain.

L. P. [*Sings.*] To slay the libertine
And his vile concubine.

[*Re-enter A. D. C. conducting LEE KEE.*]

L. K. C., L. P., and C. C. [*kneeling to L. K.*] Oh ! we feel
sorrow mingled with our joy,
As we kneel to thee thus.

L. P. Father ! I am
Your son Pao-tung.

L. K. What, you Pao-tung ?

L. K. C. Father,
Kwei Chee, your daughter, is here too.

L. K. [*Gazing hard into her face.*] Indeed !
It is Kwei Chee.

C. C. And, father, I'm Chao Chung.

L. K. [*Bewildered.*] Ah daughter ! I fear this is all a dream.

L. P., L. K. C., and C. C. It is broad day, how can it be a dream ?

L. K. Ah ! ah ! Imperial Heaven sees us ; let's bend
Our heads in gratitude. [*All kneel.*] We thank High
Heaven,

For having watched o'er us. [*They rise.*]

L. P. Father and son
Meet in this room.

L. K. C. Redress our wrongs, our hearts
Make glad.

C. C. Now misery is changed to joy.

[*Enter policemen and lictors with TIEN WANG and YANG SAN-CHUN chained together.*]

T. W. [*to Police.*] Don't touch me : I presume King Yama has
Invited me to morning congee with him.

Policeman. Come, bastard. [*Approaching L. P.*] May it please
Your Excellency.

Here the offenders are in custody.

L. P. Bring them forth. [*They fall on their knees to L. P.*]
Ugh ! do you know who I am ?

Y. S. Aha ! I think—yes certainly you are
My son Pao-tung !

L. P. Flog her. [*She is beaten by lictors.*]

L. K. [*to T. W.*] Look, who am I ?

T. W. Ha, uncle ! d'you suppose I have not seen you ?

L. K. Ah ! give him eighty blows.

L. K. C. Ah, now San-chun,

Here where the laws of State are most effective,
Say was it right to treat me as a slave ?

Y. S. Oh pray o'erlook the past and let, 'twixt mother
And child, such bygones be bygones. 'Tis nothing

C. C. You shall be pounded for this insolence !

Away with them to th' execution ground ;
Let them receive a dog's fate.

[*Exeunt.*]

金葉菊

THE GOLDEN LEAFED CHRYSANTHEMUM.

(A Chinese Drama in Five Acts.)

—:0:—

The following play, which is occasionally acted in the Hong-kong theatres, is in the original, in four small books. In the translation numerous repetitions have been avoided and several of the scenes have been changed in their order. For instance, the first three scenes of the play as acted by the Chinese are here placed as scenes 4, 5 and 6 of Act III. This, to some extent, lessens what to English readers would appear the improbability, or anachronism, of an army of invaders waiting in idleness on the frontier for their conqueror to be born and to grow up, to lead an army to defeat them. But this to the Chinese, with whom the rapid growth of the stage child is proverbial, would not seem at all incongruous.

In the military scenes, in addition to the fighting, the acrobats usually treat the audience to a display of their skill in tumbling and throwing somersaults.

As there are three Mrs. Changs in the play, in order to prevent confusion, the oldest retains the style of Mrs. Chang, and the other two, who are the wives of the same husband, and therefore call each other sisters, are described by their maiden names.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Emperor Shen Tsung.

Chü Ta-yüan, *Father of the Empress Chü Lan-ching.*

Chü Ta-hung, *Brother to Chü Ta-yüan.*

Chü Yüan-kuang, *Son of Chü Ta-yüan.*

Duke Ma Ying-lung, *A Chinese General.*

Ch'en Te-kuang, *Commander-in-Chief of Chinese Army.*

Ch'en Shang-chieh, *A Chinese Official.*

Chóu Hwa-pang, *President of Board of War.*

Chang Yen-lin, *A Student.*

Chang Kuei-fang, } *Sons of Chang Yen-lin by different mothers.*
 Chang Kuei-hsien, }

Huang Piao, *A Chinese General.*

Prince Chinyapi, *A Barbarian.*

Choufuchuen, }
 Talungyen, } *Barbarian Generals.*
 Jouleiyüan, }
 Yenshihwan, }

Sung Tien-pao, *A Chinese General in the Barbarian Army.*

Chu Erh, *Servant to Chóu Hwa-pang.*

God of a Department in Hades.

Empress Chü Lan-ching.

Mrs. Chang née Li, *Mother of Chang Yen-lin.*

Mrs. Chang née Lin Meng-hsien, } *Wives of Chang Yen-lin.*
 Mrs. Chang née Chóu Shu-ying, }

Mrs. Chóu née Wang, *Wife of Chóu Hwa-pang.*

Miss Ch'en Tsui-lin, *Daughter of Ch'en Shang-chieh.*

Miss Tang, *A Sorceress.*

Goddess Li Hwa, *Officers, Messengers, Attendants, Lictors, etc.*

ACT I.—SCENE 1.

An apartment in the Mansion of CHOU HWA-PANG. CHOU HWA-PANG, MRS. CHOU, née WANG, CHANG YEN-LIN and CHOU SHU-YING discovered seated.

C. H. P. Ah! worthy son-in-law, you have not won
 Renown, hence still we know not when you will
 Obtain revenge on Chü Yün-kuang.

Mrs. Chóu Oh! yes,
 In order to redress his injuries,
 He must be diligent in all his studies.

C. Y. L. The ancients said one must not live beneath
 The same sky as his father's enemies.
 My family is poor, my mother old;
 What can I do?

C. S. Y. These are no obstacles;
 Send, call my mother-in-law and sister here,
 That they may live in peace and happiness,
 And your suspense on their account remove.

C. H. P. Our daughter's right, send to Kiangnan and call
Your family here, to dwell with us in peace.

C. S. Y. [*In pain*] Oh! oh!

C. H. P. Go with her to her bedroom, wife.

Mrs C. leads off C. S. Y.

C. Y. L. [*Goes to table and writes*] 'I came hither in search of fame, but failed in the examination. I am, however, very grateful to the Chou family, for they showed compassion on me and took me into their home for a son-in-law. They now desire to extend their kindness to you, and therefore request you all—mother, wife and son to come here to reside.'

To H. P. Here is the letter, sir, for your approval.

(*C. H. P. takes the letter and calls a servant*).

C. H. P. (*to servant*) You take this letter to Kiangnan, and tell
The lady not to be afraid, but come
And bring her daughter-in-law and grandson here,
To dwell with us; and you conduct them hither.

[*Exit servant.*]

A noise within of a baby crying. Enter Mrs. Chou carrying a baby.

Mrs. Chou. I have a grand-child born, but whether boy
Or girl I know not yet. Let me look. Good!
It is a handsome boy. I must inform
The new-made father [*To C. Y. L.*] My congratulations
Good son-in-law, my daughter has given birth
To a fine little Chuang Yüan* gentleman!

C. Y. L. [*Taking the baby*] Let me see. No mistake it is a boy!
Thank Heaven! thank Earth!

C. H. P. Now, worthy son, confer
A fitting name upon your little son.

C. Y. L. Yes; it is often said a famous child
Reflects distinction on his parents, so
Call him Kuei-hsien.

Mrs. Chou. Yes, good; prepare some wine,
Let's pledge his health and merry be together.

C. H. P. Come follow me, now I have this descendant,
I have a smiling countenance.

Exeunt.

* First of the Hanlin Graduates.

SCENE 2.

A Guard Station with road running by it. CHU YUN-KUANG seated at door of station and soldiers standing about.

C. Y. K. That time I seized the Gold Chrysanthemum,
 Though it caused trouble I was gratified ;
 But still the work was incomplete, for, when
 Pursued, some of the Changs and Lins escaped
 The slaughter. There's Yen-lin, he must be slain.
 Because of numerous complaints against
 The Mei-hwa valley bandits, I am sent
 To guard this place ; hence I have had no news
 Of the Chang family for o'er a year.

Enter on road Chang Yen-lin's messenger.

Messenger. I've got thus far. I'll stand beneath this tree
 And look about. [*Perceiving C.Y.K.*] There sits an officer—
 His countenance is like that of a tiger—
 Great staring eyes, protruding like a wolf's—
 Let me compose myself and then proceed.
 This officer is doubtless here on duty,
 And has to give heed to his own affairs ;
 Wherefore should I turn back ?
 I will go on.

(He walks on)

C. Y. K. Where are you going, you old daring dog ?

Messenger. I'm only on a journey to convey
 This letter to my master's home : T'is true
 You need not rush to grasp a shadow thus.

C. Y. K. Show it to me and then you may proceed.

Messenger. Look at it ; since you will it can't be helped.

C. Y. K. [*Reading address*] 'Chang Yen-lin to his mother.'
 Ah ! so you

Are taking this from Chang Yen-lin.

Messenger. Quite right.

From Chang Yen-lin.

C. Y. K. Pshaw !

[*He kills the messenger, opens the letter and considers awhile*].

C. Y. K. I have it ! I'll write a decoying letter,
 Informing him his mother is very ill,
 And when he reaches here I'll murder him.
 Ah, this is good ! Bring writing instruments.

[*Servants set out writing material, and C. Y. K. goes to a table and writes*].

C. Y. K. This letter will deceive and fetch him home.
 Messenger, take this letter and deliver 't
 To Chang Yen-lin ; bid him come home at once,
 Without delay.

Exeunt.

SCENE 3.

The same as 1. CHANG YEN-LIN seated.

C. Y. L. If in a lifetime one does no grave wrong,
 Why should he dread a midnight knock ?

Enter CHOU SHU YING carrying a child. She takes a seat.

C. Y. L. Ah ! wife, your husband's mind is much perturbed
 And his flesh twitches ; I don't know the reason.

C. S. Y. There's naught to fear. It ever has been said,
 'The fortunate are blessed with heaven's aid.'
 Then why feel anxious, sir ?

Enter CHU YUN KUANG's messenger with a letter and kneels.

Messenger. A letter, sir.

C. Y. L. Yes, rise and let me read it.

Messenger. Your mother sent me hither to request

You to set out at once for home ; here is

The letter, sir. (C. Y. L. takes the letter and reads it).

C. Y. L. [*Excitedly*] Oh ! its contents are pitiful, indeed,
 And heartrending. Let me consider, yes,
 I'd better go home. Ah ! dear wife just think,
 My mother's very ill ; this letter bids
 Your husband to return immediately.

C. S. Y. Ah ! let me see it. (*She takes the letter and reads it.*)

C. S. Y. Eh ! sir, who wrote this letter ? was it either
 Mother-in-law or sister ?

C. Y. L. Yes, you're right ;
 Let me see it again. Pshaw ! This is not
 My wife's nor mother's writing. Who bade you
 Bring it here ?

Messenger. Ah ! sir, you are not aware,
 Your mother couldn't distinguish day from night,
 She was so ill ; your wife attended her
 So zealously that now she's also ill ;
 Neither could write, they therefore asked another

Person ; you need not be suspicious, sir,
But should at once set out for home.

C. Y. L. Ah ! wife,

'Tis hard to say it, but I must return.

C. S. Y. As you desire ; but wait till I've informed
My parents and obtained some travelling funds.

C. Y. L. Inform them quickly.

C. S. Y. [*Shouting*] Mother ! father ! come.

*Enter CHOU HWA-PANG and MRS. C. who take seats followed by
CHU ERH and a female servant, who stand one on each side.*

C. S. Y. A letter has arrived, informing us
My mother-in-law and sister are both ill,
And calling home your son-in-law, at once.

C. H. P. Ah ! let him have three hundred taels of silver ;
Go fetch it girl and hand it to Chu Erh.
Chu Erh, you must accompany your master
And guard him well in dangerous places.

C. E. Yes, sir.

C. S. Y. Husband, you're going home ; wrap in the stars
And wear the moon,* and take care of yourself.

C. Y. L. Dear wife, do not feel anxious while I'm gone ;
You show attention to our parents here.
The ancients said, 'the good have heaven's support
And lucky stars to guide them on their way.'
I leave you all with faltering steps.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 4.

The same as scene 2. Enter CHU YUN KUANG.

C. Y. K. Father's at court and sister is an empress—
I've naught to do but stroll about the streets,
And take good peoples' virgin daughters for
My concubines. My numerous good actions
'Tis no use talking of ; [*Seating himself*] but still, the few
Who do refuse submission to my will
Die by the sword.

Enter Messenger and kneels.

Messenger. Your servant has returned.

C. Y. K. I sent you with a letter, how've you fared ?

* To travel with despatch.

Messenger. He took three hundred taels, soon as he saw
The letter, and at once set out for home.

You have decided how to act?

C. Y. K. I have ;

You've acted well, the money that he brings
Is your reward.

Messenger. I thank you.

C. Y. K. Followers !

[*Soldiers come forward.*]

Be on your guard [*Enter CHANG YEN-LIN and CHU ERH
on road.*]

See there are persons coming.

Make strict inquiries ere you let them pass.

Messenger. *Shouts to them.* Hullo ! The emperor's brother-in-law calls you.

C. Y. L. I am undone ! [*To C. E.*] Rouse up and form some plan.

He advances and kneels to C. Y. K.

C. Y. L. I kneel before the emperor's brother-in-law.

C. Y. K. Fugh ! Chang Yen-lin you've dared to come a sheep
Into the wolf's mouth.

C. Y. L. I've been indiscreet,

I hope that you will pardon my offence.

C. Y. L. Ah ! Chang Yen-lin, your father was my foe

At court ; do you feign ignorance of this ?

To you I'll deal a dog's fate.

(*He rushes on C. Y. L. with his sword, but Chü Erh wards off
the blow.*)

C. E. Pshaw ! Daring Chü Yün Kuang you have deceived

My master ; mine's no fowl-subduing sword,

Although alone I don't fear you ; I lift

My hand and your fate's sealed.

*He strikes Chü Yün Kuang to the ground, the soldiers rush
forward and slay him, and knock down Chang Yen-lin,
who, while attempting to rise is killed by Chü Yün
Kuang.*

SCENE 5.

*An old lime kiln, used as a dwelling. Mrs. CHANG née LI
apparently in great poverty discovered.*

Mrs. Chang. E'er since my son left for the capital,

I daily lean against our door and gaze,
In expectation of his coming home.

Enter LIN MENG-HSIEN. She bows to Mrs. CHANG and both take seats.

Mrs. C. Ah! daughter-in-law, although your husband left
Long years ago, to seek fame and renown,
We've ne'er received one letter from him since,
This causes trouble and anxiety.

L. M. H. Yes, we are truly kept in sad suspense.

Mrs. C. Ah! daughter, when the traitor Chü Yün Kuang,
Seized the chrysanthemum, my husband's prize
For subjugating the barbarian hordes,
He wrought the wrong which brought us to this plight.

L. M. H. The wretch brought trouble on the families
Of Chang and Lin; my parents perished on
The highway and your husband died in far
Off distant regions; now we day and night,
In this cold hovel, suffer keen distress
And solitariness.

Mrs. C. Alas! my daughter,
It is our fate and murmuring is no use.
Stay till I buy some rice and fuel to cook it. *Exit.*

Enter CHANG KUEI-FANG, who makes obeisance to his mother.

L. M. H. My son!

C. K. F. Mother I have returned from school. [*He leans against his mother's knee.*]

L. M. H. And have you learnt your lessons?

C. K. F. Yes.

L. M. H. That's right.

C. K. F. Ah! mother dear, my classmates sneer and say
That I'm a fatherless born, bastard boy.

L. M. H. [*Pushing him away*] Oh! pray don't talk like this!

C. K. F. Ah! mother, when

I ask about my father, I perceive

Your eyes are aye suffused in tears; Why so?

L. M. H. Ah! my dear boy, there's no need for concealment;
Sit there and I will tell you all.

C. K. F. I'll listen [*He sits.*]

L. M. H. Erstwhile, your grand-father did subjugate
The north barbarians, hence his majesty
Gave him a golden-leaved chrysanthemum

As a betrothal present for your mother.
 It happened that the virtuous lady Chou
 Asked me to a wine drinking entertainment,
 Where, in her garden, I met Chü Yün Kuang,
 Who forcibly took the chrysanthemum,
 And caused such trouble that we left the court
 In order to avoid calamities.
 On the way, while we fled, my father died ;
 Thanks to the mercy of good Sung Tien-pao,
 The rest were saved to hide in this poor hut.
 Your father to the capital returned,
 To seek for fame by literary toil—
 He ne'er returned ; How can I but feel anxious ?
 But cease—to speak of it distresses me.

C. K. F. [Rising] Oh ! you have raised a fire in my young heart,

And a desire to have revenge on this
 Bad Chü Yün Kuang !

L. M. H. Where would you go my son ?

C. K. F. I'd hasten to avenge our injuries !

L. M. H. You're young and can't go yet ; we'll talk of this
 Again when you have won distinction.

Exeunt.

SCENE 6.

The same as last, but night. LIN MENG-HSIEN discovered on bed sleeping. *Enter GHOST of CHANG YEN-LIN.*

Ghost of C. Y. L. Thanks to the God of Dreams, for guiding me

Home to my family, to state my wrongs
 And get my death avenged.

Alas ! my wife,

Your husband was unjustly, foully killed.

[*L. M. H. awakes frightened.*]

Dear wife, pray listen to what I relate,
 I've died most wretchedly ; I left my home
 Hoping to get my name proclaimed throughout
 The land as a successful graduate ;
 I failed and thus was doomed to disappointment.
 Since then, by a false letter, I was lured
 To leave my father-in-law Chou's house for home.

I was waylaid and murdered as I came,
 By Chü Yün Kuang. Dear wife, instruct our son
 To avenge my murder ; teach him well that he,
 A filial and obedient son may be.

Exit.

[*The fourth watch is struck.*]

L. M. H. Oh ! he has finished and gone ; the cock crows,
 And the fourth watch is struck in yonder tower.
 Distinctly I remember every word
 He spoke. O ! how I hate Chü Yün Kuang !

[*Day slowly breaks.*]

While slumbering, half awake, I saw my husband !
 [*Starting up excited*] Stay ! husband, stay ! Awake I don't see him,
 Where has he gone ?

Enter MRS. CHANG and CHANG KUEI-FANG.

Mrs. C. Ah ! daughter, you are weeping ; why is this ?

L. M. H. I've dreamed a frightful dream ; methought my
 husband

Returned and told me that while coming home
 He was waylaid and killed by Chü Yün Kuang.

Mrs. C. Ah ! a dream-ghost desires to overthrow,
 Your and your husband's mutual affection.

C. K. F. Mother, you grieve too much, hence this weird dream.

Mrs. C. Daughter, in yonder village, I am told,
 There dwells a priestess widely famed for skill
 In necromancy, and she has great power
 O'er spirits of the disembodied dead ;
 Let us consult her.

L. M. H. Ah ! it can't be helped.

Exeunt.

ACT II.—SCENE 1.

The abode of MISS TANG, a sorceress, with shrine, on which are placed idols, incense vessels, etc. Enter MISS TANG carrying a basket.

Miss T. I am a fasting celibate, who lives
 On lenten fare and worships oft the gods.
 To serve my parents I refrained from marriage ;
 Now they are dead I live on what I earn
 From others, by invoking Buddha's aid,
 Praying to the gods and using incantations
 And necromantic skill on their behalf.

My teacher taught me to ascend to heaven
And to descend to Hades. Thus I have
A source of wealth and freedom from all cares.

Enter MRS. CHANG, LIN MENG-HSIEN and CHANG KUEI-FANG.

Miss T. Ah ! who are these ? Why it is Mrs. Chang
And Mrs. Lin ! this is a happy meeting !

Mrs. C. Ah ! miss, where are you going with your basket ?

Miss T. Oh ! pray excuse me, I am rude, I'm going
To supplicate the gods to help some persons.

L. M. H. Ah ! miss, are people so devout that they
Pay you to pray for them ? Oh, what devotion !
But since you pray for them and earn their money,
You must yourself be virtuous and devout.

Miss T. Ah ! now you flatter me ; but tell me, ladies,
Where are you going to so early ?

Mrs. C. Miss, we came
To visit you,

Miss T. Then I am fortunate.
Sit down and drink a cup of tea.

L. K. F. Thank you.

Miss T. [*To L. K. F.*] You are a fine lad ; take some fruit to eat.
Ladies, what do you wish to know about ?

L. M. H. We've heard you are a clever necromancer,
And hence request you to lead forth our dead.

Miss T. This is not difficult ; I only ask
Three pints of white rice and three hundred cash.

L. M. H. Miss, ours is a poor family, how can
We raise so much ? Please take a little less.

Miss T. Well, how much rice and money have you brought ?

L. M. H. Two hundred cash and one pint of white rice.
[*Miss T. takes rice and cash from Mrs. C.*]

Miss T. Well, what dead do you wish me to lead forth ?

Mrs. C. My son, my Chang Yen-lin.

Miss T. Then please retire.

Exeunt Mrs. C., L. M. H., & L. K. F.

Miss T. Now they've retired, I will begin to pray.

(*She rests her head on her arms folded on a table in front of the shrine. In a short time she shivers and becomes entranced.*)

SCENE 2.

Hades, in the department of the ghosts of those wrongly deprived of life. The NAI-HO RIVER is crossed by the NAI-HO BRIDGE. Enter the GUARDIAN GOD of the Department.

G. G. All other tutelary gods are happy,
 For on each second and each sixteenth day
 They've sacrificial candles burnt to them ;
 But as a god I've no such happiness ;
 The second and the sixteenth days bring naught
 For me but bustle and turmoil ; ne'er mind,
 I've leisure now, so I will take a stroll
 Around the City of the Injured Ghosts,
 And make inquiries 'mongst all those who have
 Unjustly died.

Exit.

Enter MISS TANG (supposed in spirit only) on NAI-HO BRIDGE, armed with a fairy wand.

Miss T. I've left the upper world of life and brightness
 For this of death and gloom. Ah ! step by step
 And slowly I proceed. In Hades I
 Walk stealthily. I only see a host
 Of injured ghosts with loose dishevelled hair ;
 These while alive all acted wickedly,
 Now they receive retributory justice.
 Alas ! mankind, though rich and honoured, are
 Like drifting clouds. Oh ! who when death arrives
 Can take their wealth or happiness with them
 To their graves ? Sons and daughters oft are sent
 Merely for punishment. The beautiful,
 Loved concubine and fascinating wife
 Are oft like passage boats, and only serve
 To bear their husband's wealth to other merchants.
 One builds a lofty tower, another builds
 A mansion, to, ere long, be occupied
 By other families. But stay ! in Hades
 I walk with faltering steps, to see Yen-lin,
 To lead him to my altar. Where is he ?

Enter Ghost of CHANG YEN-LIN below.

Ghost of C. Y. L. Death is like the extinction of a lamp,
 Or snow by boiling water melted, and,
 Once dead, it is as difficult to return

To life as 'tis to dredge the moon
Up from the bottom of a pond.

Re-enter Guardian God.

G. G. Pshah ! you

Bold ghost, how dare you roam confusedly ?

Ghost of C. Y. L. Worshipful Guardian God, pray hear my tale—

I am the injured ghost of Chang Yen-lin,
Whom Chü Yün Kuang waylaid and foully murdered,
Hence I'm pent in this city of the wronged
Who have unjustly died ; pray show to me
A place from which I may my village see.

G. G. Wait till I tell the tenth judge of your case—
Let Yama judge. Retire !

(Exit Ghost of C. Y. L.)

G. G. Ha ! Chü Yün Kuang,
Chü Yün Kuang ! you are truly to be loathed
By devils and despised by gods ; when you
Arrive in Hades, injured ghosts shall bind
You to the squeezing bed.

Exit G. G.

Miss T. proceeds over Nai-ho Bridge, writing charms on space with her fingers as she goes.

Miss T. I should not feel afraid ; I've passed the wide
Straight bridge, still I can't find the region that
Young Chang Yen-liu is in.

[*Re-enter G. G.*] Ah ! Yonder is
The guardian god ; let me inquire of him.

(She advances and bows to the G. G.)

Miss T. Worshipful god, pray listen ; I am Tang,
The fasting praying-woman ; poverty
Has driven me to practise necromancy,
I have a hundred cash which I desire
To give your honor, hoping you will tell
What part the youthful Chang Yen-lin is in.

G. G. Yes, sorceress, I will accept your cash,
And furthermore will show the dead man's ghost
To you. This Chang was foully done to death,
Hence you should seek him in the City of
The Injured Dead.

Exit G. G.

Miss T. I have advanced thus far ;
 Yonder's the City of the Injured Dead.
 (*She shouts*) Ho ! listen, there within, ye injured ghosts !
 And let the murdered Chang Yen-lin come forth,
 And to my altar follow me at once !

(*Enter Ghost of Chang Yen-lin.*)

Ghost of C. Y. L. I heard a voice call 'Chang Yen-lin, come forth';

This was no mortal sure ; I'll go at once.

(*He goes to Miss T. and bows to her.*)

Ghost of C. Y. L. Good fairy lady, my respects to you.

Miss T. Stay ! are you Chang Yen-lin.

Ghost of C. Y. L. Yes, no mistake

This injured ghost is just poor Chang Yen-lin.

Miss T. Your mother, wife, and son have a long time

Expected you ; come follow me, to meet

Them at my altar.

Ghost of C. Y. L. I obey.

(*Miss T. holds the fairy wand towards him, he seizes it and follows her over Nai-ho Bridge.*)

Exeunt.

SCENE 3.

The same as Scene 1 in Act II. Enter MISS TANG followed by Ghost of CHANG YEN-LIN grasping her wand. The face and the head of ghost are covered. Miss Tang scatters rice in front of the altar.

Miss T. We've reached this shore, come quickly, ghost, with me,

Before my altar.

Ghost of C. Y. L. Oh, wife ! mother ! son !

Enter Mrs. Chang, LIN MENG-HSIEN and CHANG KWEI FANG.

Mrs. C. I heard my son call me to th' altar. Ah !

L. M. H. Suppress your grief and tears and carefully
 Investigate this matter.

Mrs. C. Let me ask

You, Oh ! my son, before this altar, pray

Inform your mother of all that has happened.

L. M. H. Husband, you left to seek for fame ; you've since
 Joined the Chou family ; what caused your death ?

C. K. F. Father, have I a brother born within
 The Chou house ?

Ghost of C. Y. L. List Kwei-fang, my son, to me :
 Study with diligence, that your name may
 Be known throughout the empire. I left home
 Hoping to rise to fame and to bring honor
 On mother, but was doomed to disappointment.
 I was adopted, as a son-in-law,
 In the Chou household, where you have a brother
 Named Kwei-hsien. But, alas ! I was decoyed
 From there by that malicious Chü Yün Kuang,
 Who murdered me while on my journey home.
 I charge you, wife, remember and bring up
 Our boy a filial and obedient son ;
 Forgive your husband's failings ; you my son
 Requite your mother for my worthlessness.

Mrs. C. Ah ! my son, I came to this sorceress
 Simply that mother might meet with her son ;
 Though you're a spirit mayn't we see each other
 And speak face to face ?

Ghost of C. Y. L. Ah ! mother and son,
 Husband and wife would see each other's faces,
 But 'tis not right that ghosts and living meet ;
 I fear to shock you, mother.

Mrs. C. Don't fear this
 I long to see your face.

Ghost of C. Y. L. Your son obeys.

[*He approaches and discovers himself. Mrs. Chang, Lin Meng-hsien and Chang Kwei-fang are frightened, scream and fall down.*]

Ghost of C. Y. L. Mother is shocked to death, this will bring
 trouble
 On my wife.

Miss T. You involve me ; quick, descend !
 [*She urges the ghost off and then goes to the others.*]
 Revive and don't inculcate me, you wretches !

[*Lin Meng-hsien and Chang Kwei-fang rise.*]

L. M. H. Heigh-ho ! this fright has scattered all my senses,
 I don't see my husband here ; why has he gone ?

Miss T. Oh ! the old lady's dead !

L. M. H. Ah ! let me see,
 Alas ! our mother's dead, what shall we do ?
 There's no one to consult except my son ;

We are entirely destitute of funds ;

How can we bury her ?

C. K. F. (after hesitation) I have it, mother,

You must sell me that you may bury her.

L. M. H. Ah ! boy, consider, I have only you,

An orphan child in the third generation ;

How, therefore, can I separate from you ?

Miss T. As matters stand you've no resource but this.

C. K. F. You're right ; come, mother, write a sale placard.

Miss T. Oh ! here are pen and ink, write quickly, wretches !

L. M. H. [*Going to table and writing.*]

It can't be helped ; I must repress my grief.

[*Rising*] I've written it. [*Going to corpse, weeping*] Oh ! mother, this is hard.

C. K. F. (Weeping) Cease, mother dear, don't weep.

L. M. H. Let us go out

Into the street [*Bowing to Miss T.*] I'll thank you to watch here.

Miss T. Yes, yes, leave her with me and go, go quickly !

[*L. M. H. takes C. K. F. by the hand and leads him to the body.*]

L. M. H. Mother, alas ! dear mother.

Exeunt L. M. H. and C. K. F.

Miss T. Ah ! this is truly disappointing now ;

I have their hundred cash and half a pint

Of rice, but to earn this I have converted

My dwelling into a house of mourning ;

Well, never mind, I'll shut up this and go

To my adopted mother's for a game

Of dominoes.

Exit.

SCENE 4.

A street. Enter CH'EN SHANG-CHIEN and attendant.

C. S. C. Grass grows in our foresaken silent gaol,

And flowers bloom within our hushed law-courts,

For forty years I studied and imbibed

Good wine, and, so sure as there's a blue sky

O'er head, will the determined man succeed ;

The meritorious man requires no money.

Here am I, member of the censorate,

On duty in Kiangnan ; now I have leisure,

So I've doffed my official robes, that I

May quietly inquire regarding cases,
And hear the conversation of our streets.
You go ahead and show the way.

Exeunt.

Enter LIN MENG-HSIEN leading CHANG KWEI-FANG.

L. M. H. Ah ! this is hard. [*She shouts*] Who'll buy a son ?
a son

For sale ! a son for sale ! [*Weeping*] Oh ! oh ! 'tis dreadful
To offer thus one's son for sale, I've passed
Through sheets and lanes and, though none have cried fie,
I feel ashamed, I must repress my grief,
And walk on till I find a purchaser.

Re-enter CH'EN SHANG-CHIEH and attendant.

C. S. C. Well, we've reached this wide street

L. M. H. Oh, misery !

C. S. C. Ha ! yonder are a mother and her son
Lamenting, go and ask them why they weep.

Attendant [*Going to L. M. H.*] Lady, come tell his honor why
you grieve,

And he'll, perhaps, relieve your great distress.

L. M. H. Your honor, I'm of the Lin family,
My son's named Chang Kwei-fang, my mother-in-law
Has died, and now, because of poverty,
I'm forced to sell my son to bury her.

C. S. C. This certainly is filial, Mrs. Lin,
Suppose I purchase him to be my servant,
What is his price ?

L. M. H. Ah ! is it thus indeed ?
Well, twenty taels of silver is enough.

C. S. C. [*To attendant*] Give twenty taels to her.

Attendant. Yes, here's the money.

Please take it, lady.

C. S. C. Take pen and ink and write a deed of sale.

L. M. H. It can't be helped, [*She kneels and writes*] ' My family
is poor,

My mother-in law has died, hence as is right,

In order to obtain the funeral

Expenses, I sell to his honor Ch'en

My son, for twenty taels, as proof thereof

Witness the signature of Mrs. Lin' [*She hands the deed.*]

C. S. C. Yes, this is clearly written. Let us return.

L. M. H. My son, while you're in the Ch'en family
Be diligent and good, then you'll do well.

C. K. F. Mother, indeed I will ; now you return,
And at my grandmother's corpse forgiveness beg
For my unfilialness ; when you feel cold
Put on more clothing, and when hungry eat.
And don't you constantly think of and grieve
For me.

[*They embrace and are separated by attendant.*]

Exeunt.

SCENE 5.

*A room in the residence of CH'EN SHANG-CHIEH. Enter CH'EN
TSIN-LIN and servant girl.*

C. T. L. I felt sad sitting in the inner room ;
I'm worried, too, for father, he's been gone
So long; go and inquire about him, girl. *Exit girl.*

Enter CH'EN SHANG-CHIEH and CHANG KUEI-FUNG.

C. T. L. Father, have you decided all your cases ?

C. S. L. Yes, and I've bought a clever servant lad ;
A Kuei, make your obeisance to the lady.

C. K. F. (Bowing) Lady, your humble servant lad's obedience.

C. S. C. That will do.

[*Shouts within*] An imperial mandate !

An imperial mandate !

C. S. C. Open wide the central door. *Exit C. S. L.*

[*C. S. C. goes out and conducts in an Imperial MESSENGER*].

I. M. I have arrived with an imperial mandate.

C. S. C. (Kneeling) Long live his majesty !

I. M. (Reads) 'We hereby thank
Our worthy Kianguan censor Ch'en Shang-chieh,
For his inestimable co-operation.
Now his three years of office have expired,
We have appointed and commissioned him,
For office in the Board of Punishments.
Respectfully receive and act according
To this decree.'

C. S. C. [Rising and taking despatch].

I thank his majesty.

My worthy friend, pray pardon my neglecting.

To go a greater distance to meet you.

I. M. Don't mention this, my friend. His majesty
Commands that at an early date you set
Out for the capital.

C. S. C. Just so, come now
And take some wine.

I. M. No, thanks ; I dare not delay,
Therefore I'll say good-bye and go.

Exit ; bowed out by C. S. C.

Re-enter CH'EN TSUI-LIN and servant girl.

C. T. L. Well, father, what post has his majesty
Promoted you to ?

C. S. C. The Board of Punishments,
And I'm to leave almost immediately.

Exeunt C. S. C. and C. K. F.

C. T. L. A Kuei is bright-eyed and intelligent,
And surely no mean person ; then why is
He introduced into our family
As a domestic menial ? I'll call him,
And ask. Girl, call A Kuei.

Girl [Goes to door and shouts] A Kuei, you're wanted.

Re-enter C. K. F.

C. K. F. What is it ?

Girl. The young lady sent for you.

C. T. L. A Kuei, come tell me who you are, and why
You've come here.

C. K. F. Lady, t'will take long to tell.

C. T. L. Take time and tell me all.

C. K. F. Young lady, listen :

'Twas through a golden-leafed chrysanthemum,
Given to my grand-father for his services
Against the rude barbarians of the north,
Our troubles rose. He was the first to feel
The blow ; my father next by Chü Yün Kuang
Was murdered, he informed us in a dream ;
Grand-mother consulted then a sorceress
And at her altar died. Our family
Was destitute ; to raise the funeral funds
My mother sold me to your honoured father.

C. T. L. 'Tis a sad tale and brings tears to one's eyes ;
I should give something to relieve their wants ;

Go, girl, fetch twenty taels of silver here
To give his mother.

C. K. F. I thank you, young lady.

C. T. L. This money will remove anxiety
From your good mother's mind while you are at
The capital ; 'Tis n't much, but three years hence
You will return.

C. K. F. I will take it to mother ;
This kindness ne'er will be forgotten.

Exeunt.

SCENE 6.

The palace of the GODDESS LI HWA, the HOLY MOTHER of the Pear Blossom. Li Hwa and FAIRY maidens discovered.

Goddess L. H. Fairies prepare my light aerial carriage,
For Lin Meng-hsien, my pupil, is in danger.
I pity and must save her ; virtuous women
Are pillars of the state ; I must instruct
Her in the use of arms and art of war,
That she may slay her foe, fell Chü Yün Kuang.
'Tis requisite that I should send for her,
That she may labour for the state, avenge
Her husband's death and manifest the merits
Of a chaste and pure heart. Come hither, miss.
[*A fairy approaches her*] Go, I command you, save our Lin
Meng-hsien.

Exeunt.

SCENE 7.

A burying place. Enter LIN MENG-HSIEN.

L. M. H. None seek the poor though they dwell on the highway ;
The rich have friends though they dwell midst the mountains.
'Tis the tomb-festival, I've therefore come
To sweep my mother-in-law's grave, and burn
Some sacrificial money here, instead
Of my dear son. Each year has it's third day
Of the third month, when families turn out
To worship tombs ; but others have their sons
To pray and worship ; my son being absent
I come, his substitute to worship here.

[*She sweeps a grave. Enter CHÜ YÜN KUANG at a distance.*]

C. Y. K. I have the golden-leafed chrysanthemum,
And I have slain the husband of Meng-hsien,

But still bereft of her there is for me
 No happiness, hence I must search for her
 And take her for my wife—my wife ; yes, she
 Shall be my wife.

L. M. H. (Kneeling) Mother, alas ! my son
 Is far away ; for coming in his stead
 Pray pardon me. [*Rising*] I've finished and must leave
 This verdant mountain and return at once.

[*CHÜ YÜN KUANG approaches her.*]

C. Y. K. (Laughing) Aha ! Who can this be ? Why sure it is
 The little lady, my Meng-hsien. Come, dear,
 Return with me and make me happy in
 My home—come, darling, make me happy !

L. T. H. Pshah !

What good intention can this wretch have ?

C. Y. K. Guess.

(*He attempts to seize her. She throws a handful of dust in his eyes and runs. He follows. The fairy in the car sent by the Goddess Li Hwa descends and rescues her.*)

C. Y. K. Ha ! I've not learnt to fly. Hey, hey ! you'll fall !

Exit.

ACT III.—SCENE 1.

An apartment in the residence of CHOU HWA-PANG. CHOU HWA-PANG discovered seated.

C. H. P. Since wealth and honor, poverty and meanness,
 Depend on Heaven's will, why should mankind
 All strive so eagerly for gain. Although
 I am not ignorant of worldly ways,
 My name is still unknown to fame. Now that
 I've leisure, I will stroll amongst my flowers
 And thus improve myself ; there days and months
 Pass like a shuttle, or like flowing water,
 While I can poetize and drink my wine ;
 And thus, while worldly matters are to some
 Like lowering clouds, from me cares swiftly glide.
 I was an officer and courtier once :
 But through the malice of the empress mother
 Resigned. The husband of my only child

Left her long, long ago to visit home,
And ne'er returned ; this has caused us suspense.

Enter Servant.

Servant. Master, his honor Ch'en has just arrived.

C. H. P. Throw open wide the central door.

*(C. H. P. goes out and returns with CH'EN SHANG-CHIEH, followed
by CHANG KWEI-FANG.)*

C. H. P. Excuse me for not going farther, friend.

C. S. C. Pray pardon my presuming to come hither
To see your honor.

C. H. P. Thanks. And what has brought
You to the capital ?

C. S. C. Promotion, friend.

C. H. P. Let me congratulate you. Ah ! my friend,
Did you hear of the family of Chang,
Late of the Board of War, while in Kiangnan ?

C. K. F. Oh, misery !

C. S. C. What do you mean by wailing
And crying thus ? Retire.

Exit C. K. F.

C. H. P. Ah ! friend, why were
The youth's eyes so suffused with tears when he
Heard Chang's name mentioned ?

C. S. C. Well, not to waste words,
This youth's a grandson of our late friend Chang.

(C. H. P. looks startled.) (Aside) My wind has suddenly raised
waves of trouble

In this sea which 'twere better I'd kept calm.

C. H. P. 'Tis said when one sees others drunk he should'nt
Alone keep sober. Servant, set out wine
Within ; I want a chat with my good friend.

C. S. C. Thanks.

Exeunt.

SCENE 2.

CHOU HWA-PANG'S garden with a pavilion in it. *Enter* CHANG
KWEI-HSIEN *and* servant.

C. K. H. Let's cease from practising the art of war
Awhile and in this lovely garden stroll ;
Sure mine's a happy lot ; I've naught to do ;
Say shall I take a nap ?

Servant. Yes, certainly.

(C. K. H. lies down in the pavilion. Enter CHANG KWEI-FANG.)

- C. K. F.* The mention of our family has given
 Me pain and caused sad thoughts to rise, which I
 Desire to dissipate by strolling here.
- C. K. H.* (*Rising*) Pshah ! have you come to steal ? seize him !
 seize him !
- C. K. F.* Don't, I'm a follower of his honor Ch'en ;
 I'm no thief, but for amusement came.
- C. K. H.* Oh ! you've come for amusement ?
- C. K. F.* That is so.
- C. K. H.* Well, rustic, whence come you and what's your name ?
- C. K. F.* I'm of Kiangnan, my surname's Chang, my name's
 Kwei-fang.
- C. K. H.* What say you ! I am also surnamed Chang ;
 Is that your surname too !
- C. K. F.* Yes, certainly.
- C. K. H.* Ha ! so we're from the same progenitor.
 What's your profession ?
- C. K. F.* Only a poor student.
- C. K. H.* A scholar ! you should music understand ;
 I have a fine lute here, can you play it ?
 (*C. K. F. takes the lute, plays and sings*).
- Oh ! my troubles and sorrows,
 Since the commencement of time.
 Whose have matched those I suffer ?
 Caused and continued by crime ;
 By decoying and killing—
 Killing and none by to save,
 While these lute strings I'm thrumming,
 Welling warm tears my cheeks lave.
- C. K. H.* Ha ! lad, this lute shows the Chang family
 Have suffered injury ; proceed, my clansman,
 And in your song give vent to all your grief.
- C. K. F.* (*Continuing*),
 Chü Yün-kuang, our opponent,
 Seized our chrysanthemum prize,
 And gave birth to more misery
 Than ere now from crime did rise.
- C. K. H.* Your song unnerves me, I am used to arms
 And cannot thrum the lute, but come with me
 To mother ; let her play a tune to drive
 Away your melancholy.

Exeunt.

SCENE 3.

An apartment in CHOU HWA-PANG'S residence. Enter CHOU SHU-YING.

C. S. Y. While in my room I heard a lute, 'twas played
So plaintively it made me melancholy,
And caused my tears to flow.

(Enter CHANG KWEI-HSIEN leading CHANG KWEI-FANG).

C. K. H. (Kneeling) Dear mother, my obedience.

C. S. Y. Yes, sit down.

C. K. H. Mother, this clansman plays the lute, but plays
Most sorrowfully ; I've therefore brought him
Hither for you to cheer.

C. S. Y. I understand.

Young student, come tell me your parents' names.

C. K. F. My father's Chang Yen-lin, and Lin Meng-hsien
My mother's.

C. S. Y. What ! Lin Meng-hsien's son—Kwei-fang ?

C. K. F. True, I am Chang Kwei-fang.

C. S. Y. Why come you here ?

C. K. F. By mother's orders, with his honor Ch'en,
And to convey a letter to deliver
To her friend Chou Shu-ying.

C. S. Y. Well, where's the letter ?

C. K. F. Stay till I see the lady to deliver 't.

C. S. Y. Ah ! my son, I'm Shu-ying.

C. K. H. This is quite right.

C. K. F. Since this is so, here is the letter.

C. S. Y. (Takes the letter reads.)

'I send this to Meng-hsien, my worthy sister,
To tell her that Yün Kuang has slain our husband
And left the Chang house with an only son,
Kwei-fang ; I truly trust you'll treat him well
On his arrival in the capital,
Your kindness then will never be forgotten.'

C. K. H. Mother, whom does it say this Chü Yün Kuang
Has murdered ?

C. S. Y. Alas ! my child, your father !

C. K. H. Ha ! Chü Yün Kuang's deeds make my blood to boil !
(Rising) 'Tis my desire to slay this rascal Chü.

C. S. Y. 'Tis no use acting thus, my son ; inform
Your grand-father, and be advised by him.

Exit C. S. Y.

Enter CHOU HWA-PANG and CH'EN SHANG-CHIEH.

C. H. P. And so, my friend, this servant really is
My grandson. What sum will redeem the lad?

C. S. C. As he's your grandson, 'tis but right I should
Restore him free of ransom ; pray accept
This deed of sale.

C. H. P. I fear't will incommode
You, friend. Come, grandson, thank your benefactor.

C. K. F. (*Kneeling to C. S. C.*) Your kindness is engraven on
my bones

And written in my heart ; I'll ne'er forget it (*Rises*).

C. S. C. Ha ! friend, there's something I would speak about
If you'll allow me.

C. H. P. I desire to listen.

C. S. C. I have a daughter named Tsui-lin, whom I
Desire to marry to your grandson, what
Say you ?

C. H. P. I can't presume to look so high.

C. S. C. As you decide 'tis settled ; don't object.

C. H. P. Friend Ch'en, I'm pleased and satisfied : Kwei-fang,
Show to your future father-in-law respect.

C. K. F. (*Bowing*) Father-in-law your humble son's respect.

C. S. C. Listen to me, you'll henceforth dwell with Chou ;
See that you study most assiduously.

C. K. F. I hope I shall requite your kindness, sir.

C. K. H. Unless we punish all our enemies
We're only worthless men.

C. H. P. Another day,
I hope together you'll obtain promotion.

All. Let's strive to punish Chü Yün Kuang.

Exeunt.

SCENE 4.

*A tent in the camp of the Northern Barbarians. Generals
CHOUFUCHUEN, TALUNGYEN, JAOLEIYAN and YENSHIH-
WAN seated. Enter PRINCE CHINYAPI. The Generals
rise and bow to him.*

Prince C. I lead a myriad fearless soldiers forth
To subjugate the regions in the south ;

Who dare withstand our fierce attack in battle ?
 In order to extend and centralize
 Their power, the Sung, detested dynasty,
 Sought tribute from your king, my worthy sire.
 The odious emperor Shen Tsung, by such
 Continual demands, insults our state.
 My father has already sent as gift
 To him the golden-leafed chrysanthemum ;
 But I refuse submission to his sway,
 And have raised our full force and strength to sweep
 Away the Sung house, and avenge our wrongs.
 Generals, see all's ready to attack.

Generals. We. obey.

Exeunt.

SCENE 5.

A tent in the Chinese camp. Duke MA YINGLUNG and officers discovered.

Duke M. Y. Because of my rare talents, oft displayed,
 I have attained the highest dignity
 And greatest wealth, and though the tiger now
 Is old, his heart is strong and he has still
 The will to kill and swallow whole an ox.
 Perfect in Sun Wu's strategy, my fame
 Has spread throughout the empire's length and breadth.
 The soldiers of his majesty Shen Tsung
 I've hither led to guard this northern frontier ;
 Lately my heart has palpitated and
 My flesh has twitched ; what can the reason be ?
 (*To officer*) Inquire the latest information.

Exit Officer.

(*Enter HUANG PIAO and Kneels.*)

H. P. May 't please your excellency.

Duke M. Y. Stand erect,

And state what business brings you to my tent.

H. P. Your Excellency, the barbarians have
 Assaulted Chiehjih, and have captured it.

Duke M. Y. So daring ! Go advance the foot and send
 The cavalry as a support ; at once
 Commence the attack.

Exeunt.

SCENE 6.

A battle field. Enter the Barbarian Army and Prince Chinyapi.

Prince C. Soldiers, advance ! fight for your country's princes.

(They march across the stage.)

(Enter the Chinese Army and Duke MA YING-LUNG.)

Duke M. Y. Why, prince, do you lead such a numerous army
Here to invade us ?

Prince C. Oh ! reflect awhile ;

Your ruler has insulted oft the king,

My father, who once gave to him as tribute,

The golden-leafed chrysanthemum ; now he

Desires to lead us into vassalage.

To such demands as these I'll ne'er submit,

Therefore I've raised an army which shall sweep

Away the Sungs. These are the circumstances ;

Tender submission and avoid becoming

A headless ghost.

Duke M. Y. Slay him ! our Emperor

Is a true Son of Heaven, yours is a rude

Barbarian dog, he ought to tribute pay

And honoured feel to be our officer ;

Take my advice, withdraw your soldiers now,

For know, if once my silver spear is raised,

You'll die where there's no place of burial.

Prince C. Cease talking braggart, and let our swords speak.

(They fight across the stage three times, each followed by his soldiers, and then exeunt separately.)

(Re-enter Duke MA YING-LUNG and soldiers.)

Duke M. Y. I've slain one of their generals, I'll go

Again, and drive all the barbarians off.

Exeunt.

(Re-enter Prince CHINYAPI and soldiers.)

Prince C. March onward, soldiers ! Chase them to their doom !

Press onward, cavalry ! Grant me the joy

Of seeing you strike down the chiefs of Sung.

(Re-enter Duke MA YING-LUNG and soldiers.)

Duke M. Y. Rush on to battle ! We have slain their slaves,

Onward ! advance to the barbarian camp !

We've seized the rebel soldiers, seize their prince.

(Duke M. Y. and Prince C. fight, while their soldiers form up on each side of the stage.)

Prince C. Psha ! though I with an army come, you still
 Refuse to tender your submission ; know
 When'er my ruthless spear is raised there is
 No mercy shown.

Duke M. Y. Mean, foreign dog, dare you
 Before my face so loudly boast, nor dread
 The difficulty of preserving life.

Prince C. Come, come ! meet me in deadly combat here.
*(Both fight for a time without either gaining an advantage ;
 Gongs sound within).*

Prince C. 'Tis night-fall now ; can you fight in the dark ?

Duke M. Y. Bring lighted lanterns.

Prince C. Good !

Duke M. Y. Though equal to
 A tyrant, I will teach you that your fate
 Is to in battle die

Prince C. Old dog ! 'tis true
 You are not much inferior to Wu Yüan,*
 Yet you shall die beneath my spear.
*(They fight, Duke M. Y. simulates defeat and is chased off
 by Prince C.)*

Re-enter Duke M. Y.

Duke M. Y. This foreign dog, Chinyapi's dangerous,
 When with the spear he's armed ; I'll simulate
 Defeat and stab him dead.
 Come, foreign dog.

*(Re-enter Prince C. They fight again ; Duke M. Y. stabs at
 Prince C. who grasps his arm, throws him and snatches
 away his weapon.)*

Prince C. Your weapon may wound others, but not me.
 I'll grant a dog's fate, rise and fight again.
(They fight again, and Prince C. yields ground.)

Prince C. This old dog covets victory so much
 He does not know defeat ; look how he comes
 Labouring toiling on. What shall I do ?
 I'll shoot this hundred-paces piercing arrow
 And wound him mortally. So, so, old dog !

* Wu Yüan, a celebrated general, B. C. 520 ; deified as God of Waters.

(*Prince C. shoots three arrows successively, Duke M. Y. wards off two, but the third hits him. The Sung and Barbarian soldiers fight, and the former are defeated and driven off. As the barbarians chase off the Sung, Huang Piao enters and goes to Duke M. Y.*)

Duke M. Y. These foreign dog are dangerous : I'll write
To court and seek assistance.

Exeunt.

ACT IV—SCENE 1.

*An apartment in the Emperor's palace. Enter Emperor
SHEN TSUNG and attendants.*

Emp. Long years of faithful services from brave
And able officers, have to our empire
Secured peace and prosperity, therefore
To reign is pleasant now.
(*He sits.*)

*Enter CH'EN TE-KUANG, CHU TA-YUAN, CHU TA HUNG,
CHU YUN KUANG and other officers.*

All (Bowing). Long live your majesty !

Emp. Cease ceremony

And stand erect.

All. We thank your majesty.

Emp. Call in the President of the Board of Rites.

(*Enter P. B. R.*)

P. B. R. Long live your majesty !

Emp. You were commanded

To hold a literary examination,
That officers of talent be selected.
Bring us their essays, that we mark off
The senior graduates.

P. B. R. The ability

Displayed in this examination's great ;
The state must prosper with such worthy men ;
Here for your sacred majesty's inspection
Is their accomplished work.

Emp. (*After perusing papers*) Yes, certainly
Their essays all extensive learning show.
Call the chief graduates in.

(*Enter new chief graduates.*)

Emp. Approach our throne.

(*New graduates approach and kneel.*)

N. G. We reverently kneel, your majesty.

Emp. This, dignitaries, is your first entrance here ;
Henceforth as pillars to the throne you'll be.
The fourth in merit's surnamed Tsiang ; (1)
Earn praise for loyalty. The third in rank
Is surnamed Hsiang ; (2) approach to what is good
1 Tsiang, Praise
2 Hsiang, Approach
Chang Pi is second, the Pangyen (3). Use your
Eyes to observe all persons who are worthy.
We have marked Chang-kwei-fang first graduate.
A cup of rare wine give to each, let all
Adorn themselves in fit red robes and wear
The golden flowers suiting the rank they've won.

N. G. (*Rising*) We thank your majesty.

Emp. Let those selected
Go to their families, publish their success,
And worship pay at their ancestral shrines.
We have awarded the civilians ; we'll
Now with the military deal ; go call
The President of the Board of War.
(*Enter President of the Board of War, who kneels and bows
his head and then rises*).

Emp. What like were the competitors ? were many
Present on the parade ground ?

P. B. W. Though great skill
Was shown by all at this examination,
Yet there was one whose strength, and skill, and courage
Exceeded all others, so that though alone
Ten thousand ordinary heroes would
In vain oppose him.

Emp. Call these graduates in.
(*The chief new military graduates enter and kneel.*)

Emp. All have a valiant, military mien.
3. Pang-yen, Side, eyes ; name given to second graduate.
(His majesty's puns are difficult to translate.)
Chang Kwei-hsien has unwonted talents shown,
Therefore we mark him first.

C. K. H. I thank you, sire.

Emp. Let those we mark as senior graduates
Adorn themselves according to their rank.

Civil and military : both come, stand

In rows on each side of our throne.

(The civil graduates stand on the left of the throne, and the military graduates rise and stand on the right.)

Emp. Grandees, at these examinations, both

The civil and the military first

Are surnamed Chang, and both are from Kiangnan ;

We think from their resemblance and their names

That they are brothers, probably they're grandsons,

Or sons, of Chang, late chief of the Board of War.

C. K. F. Your majesty, my grandfather was once

The President of the Board of War ; I am

The eldest son of his son, Chang Yen-lin.

C. K. H. And, by a different mother, I'm a brother.

To Chang Kwei-fang.

Emp. Oh, this is loyalty

And probity from sire to son transmitted !

To honour you two brothers, we permit

You for three days, ere you depart for home,

To walk the streets of our imperial city.

C. K. F. & C. K. H. We thank your majesty.

(Exeunt all except the Chü family.)

Chü Ta-yüan. Ah ! this bodes ill to us ; if these Chang brothers

Remain at court, what shall we do ?

Chü Ta-heng. Don't fear ;

When they parade the streets, they're sure to pass

The Western Palace ; send Yün Kwang, my nephew,

To hinder them and see what they will do.

C. T. Y. Good ! but, my son, take care.

C. Y. K. I understand.

Exeunt.

SCENE 2.

Grounds near the Western Palace. Enter CHÜ YÜN KWANG with a band of underlings with whom he remains in waiting.

C. Y. K. Watch the arrival of these brothers Chang,

And, if they come, oppose their passing here.

(Enter CHANG KWEI-FANG and CHANG KWEI-HSIEN.)

C. K. F. We've sauntered through the grounds until we've reached

This stately Western Palace. Who comes here ?

An Underling. Men to obstruct your way.

C. K. F. Ah ! but we brothers

Received his majesty's authority

To walk these grounds, who dare oppose us then ?

Underling. The Emperor's good brother, our good master.

C. K. H. Now's the time to avenge our father's death.

C. K. F. Stay, brother ! don't up lift^e your hand, for he

The Empress's relation is, and this

The entrance to the Empress's palace is ;

To raise your hand will further his vile scheme.

C. K. H. Yes, you're right, come this way and let him crow ;

To yield a little doesn't imply defeat.

(They move off in another direction.)

C. Y. K. They'll to the Eastern Palace and tell tales,

Go, follow them !

Underlings (Stopping them). Master forbids your going.

C. K. F. Ah ! this obstruction is meant to cause trouble.

C. K. H. Don't fear ; I'll speak to him and speak him fair,

If that's no use I'll thrash him and convert

Him to a ghost.

C. K. F. Ha ! brother, don't act so !

I have a plan to try.

C. K. H. Proceed with it.

C. K. F. *Going to (C. Y. K.)* Ha ! who is here who daren't hold
up his head ?

The Empress's good brother ! pardon us

For coming so precipitately here.

C. Y. K. Umph ! why do you bold brothers dare to walk

In this forbidden place ?

C. K. H. We have received

His majesty's permission, hence who dares

Prevent us ?

C. Y. K. Ugh ! you give offence and I'll retaliate.

*(C. Y. K. strikes at C. K. H., who wards off the blow ; both fight
with their fists ; C. Y. K. gets worsted, draws his sword
and attempts to stab C. K. H., who disarms and is about
to stab him when C. K. F. interposes).*

C. K. F. Don't stab him brother, but drag him to court

And show him up.

C. K. H. Good, follow me.

Exeunt.

SCENE 3.

The Emperor's Audience Hall. Ministers assembled.

A Minister. The ministers employed at court must rise
In the fifth watch, and generals who guard
The frontiers must in armour pass their nights.

Enter CH'EN TE KUANG.

C. T. K. Prince Chinyupi with his barbarian horde,
Is in rebellion, and has stormed and captured
The barrier forts ; a messenger has come
Entreating early aid ; his majesty
Is coming to discuss this matter now.

(Enter Emperor Shen Tsung).

Ministers. Long live his majesty !

Emp. 'Tis ever thought

An emperor's life is nought but happiness.
When we have balmy winds, and genial rains,
The country's prosperous, and the people peaceful.
Through the good governing of you my civil
And military officers, there's now
No wave or ripple to disturb our empire.
Grandees, this morning what reports have we ?

C. T. K. Your majesty, a messenger reports
Prince Chinyupi is in rebellion, and
Has taken the barrier forts ; immediate aid
Is sought.

(Enter messenger with a despatch and kneels.)

Messenger. I bring the general's request for troops,
Your majesty.

Emp. Rise and deliver it.

(Messenger rises and delivers despatch.)

Emp. Ha, the detestable vile foreign dog !

(He reads) 'The wicked foreign slave has set to scorn
His sovereign's power, and all his savage clans
Combined : your officer met them in battle,
Suffered defeat, and now he is besieged.
He begs his sovereign will forgive his faults.'

*Enter CHANG KWEI-HSIEN dragging CHÜ YÜN KWANG, followed
by CHANG KWEI-FANG. The Empress and female atten-
dants follow, and enter immediately after.*

Emp. Ugh ! beasts ! dare you rush quarrelling like this
Into our presence ?

- C. Y. K. Ah! sire these Chang brothers
 Were beating gongs within the palace precincts,
 When stopped they drew their swords to murder me.
- C. T. Y. They would your majesty's relation slay ;
 Sire, these are worthless wretches, to enforce
 The laws, they should be taken and beheaded.
- C. T. K. Ha ! stay, state's father-in-law, what you advise
 Is wrong ; see, Chang Kwei-fang is weaponless,
 Whence then the notion of his carrying a sword
 To kill. Kwei-hsien has courage to defy
 A myriad, and, if he desired to slay,
 Need use no sword.
- C. K. H. (*Throwing down sword*) Umph !
- Emp. Yes, where's the proof
 Of what you state.
- Prest. of Board of Rites. Your majesty, all that
 The general says is right ; no doubt the truth
 Is, the state's brother-in-law bravado-like,
 Has boasted of his power, and drawn his sword
 To stop their going on.
- Emp. Pshah ! you bold beast !
 Contrary to command, you've drawn your sword.
 Do you not know that to deceive your prince
 Is an enormous crime ?
- Empress. Your majesty,
 He ne'er offended in this way before ;
 For my sake pardon this his first offence,
 If he offends again then punish him.
- Emp. My empress snes for mercy, otherwise
 We'd certainly have you decapitated.
 Henceforth we will allow no quarrelling
 Between these families.
- Empress. His majesty
 Says well, those who transgress should be beheaded.
- Emp. Well, ministers, who is to lead our troops
 Forth to subdue these northern savages ?
- C. T. Y. Here's Chü Ta-hung, a consummate tactician,
 Your majesty should give him chief command.
- C. T. K. Ha ! the state's father-in-law advises wrongly ;
 We should consider that this savage prince
 Is of unrivalled bravery ; besides

His leader of the van is Sung Tien-pao,
 The best and bravest hero of our age,
 Whose joining these barbarian hordes we all
 Deplore ; now how can we expect to win,
 Except through extraordinary wisdom
 And bravery allied ?

Prsdt. Board of Rites. Sire, General Ch'en
 Is right. I know whose rare abilities
 Can victory command for us.

Emp. Whence these ?

Prsdt. Board of Rites. Your majesty, no other soldiers stand
 So staunch, or fight so well as brothers do ;
 The brothers Chang in talent and in strength
 Excel ; the capture of a heart is more
 Important than the conquest of a city ;
 These must not only subjugate Tien-pao
 But capture, too, the prince ; if you concur
 With my advice.

Emp. Well, list to my decree ;
 You Chang Kwei-fang will take the chief command,
 Your brother we appoint to lead the van.

C. K. F. & C. K. H. We thank your majesty.

Emp. (To Chü Yün Kwang). You, General,
 Are our relation, we therefore appoint
 You to command the rear and to take charge
 Of the commissariat.

C. Y. K. Your officer
 Accepts this high command.

C. T. K. Your majesty.

Emp. What, my loved minister ?

C. T. K. If I may speak.

Emp. Speak out, don't be afraid.

C. T. K. These brothers Chang
 Hold high and most important offices,
 But, in themselves, they are not powerful ;
 Our ruler should therefore confer on them
 A sign of plenary authority.

Emp. Quite right ! Commander-in-Chief, we will confer
 On you a precious sword with plenary power ;
 Henceforth, no matter who neglects his duty.

Or disobeys your orders, though a princee,
Or state's relation, you behead him first,
And afterwards report what you have done.

C. K. F. I thank your majesty.

Emp. Receive this sword,

Wear 't at your girdle and ne'er part with it,
Whoever breaks the law, e'en though a princee,
Or our relation, show no hesitation,
Behead him and fear not. Let all take heed !

[*Ministers all bow to Emperor and exeunt omnes*].

SCENE 4.

An apartment in the Western Palace. Empress, CHU LAN-CHING, CHU TA YUAN, CHU TA-HUNG and CHU YUN KUANG discovered seated.

Empress. These baleful officers ! what can we do ?

C. T. H. Don't be afraid. Can it be so arranged
That all the commissariat stores shall fall
Into our foes' hand ? If we can convey
Them into a frontier city, and then close
The gates on these fine generals and their forces,
What can they do ?

C. Y. K. This will not do ; I am acquainted with brave Sung
Tien-pao, the former
Famous chief bandit of the Chuton mountains ;
Convey all our provisions to his camp,
And with it send to him a friendly letter
Requesting him to march on th' capital,
Where we'll support him, and thereby complete
Our bold emprise.

C. T. Y. Good daughter, write at once,
This is a grand idea.

Empress. I will write. (*She writes*).
Come hither, brother, act according to
Th' instructions in this letter.

C. Y. K. I obey.

Exeunt.

ACT V.—SCENE 1.

A tent in the barbarian camp. SUNG TIEN-PAO discovered.

S. T. P. My father was a loyal minister
Under the Emperor Shen Tsung, but he

Was ruined by the traitorous cabal ;
 Wherefore I fled from court to Mount Chuton
 And set up as a chief. There Chü Yün Kwang
 Bribed all the brotherhood, my followers,
 To slay those of the houses Chang and Lin ;
 I would'nt consent to this, moreover I
 Released Miss Lin Menghsien and fled with her ;
 But we were separated in our flight,
 And I to this barbarian horde surrendered,
 To be by them appointed general.
 But sojourning in their strange towns and camps
 Makes me unhappy feel ; I hear the new
 Civil and military graduates
 Are marching with an army, to suddue
 And totally destroy our savage host.

(Enter a messenger and kneels.)

Messenger. Ah ! general, we are undone !

S. T. P. What's wrong ?

Messenger. An army, led by the chief graduates,
 Has now arrived.

S. T. P. Advance our cavalry.

Exeunt.

SCENE 2.

A battlefield between the Chinese and barbarian camps. Chinese and barbarian soldiers engaged in fight. Enter CHANG KWEI-HSIEN and SUNG TIEN-PAO, fighting.

S. T. P. Come, tell your name and die.

C. K. H. Then recognize

In me, Chang Kwei-hsien, the chief graduate ;

Now foreign slave, tell me your name and die.

S. T. P. In me, see Sung Tien-pao, the general.

C. K. H. You're the Chinese, vile traitor, come fight on !

(They fight several bouts and separate off the stage. Re-enter C. K. H. leading Chinese soldiers).

C. K. H. Press on to battle ! Slay this vile Chinese.

(Re-enter S. T. P. leading barbarian soldiers).

S. T. P. Onward ! Sweep the Sung army clean away !

C. K. H. Tien-pao, you're an unprincipled Chinese ;
 Though you may glory in your strength and power,
 To join our enemies against your country

Is villainous.

S. T. P. We are not chess-board foes,
You have your shield, and I my spear for fight.

(A gong sounded within).

C. K. H. If t'were not night, I certainly would slay
You and no mercy show.

S. T. P. Leave with your head
Upon you shoulders now ; to-morrow, when
We meet, I'll take it off.

Both. Withdraw the troops.

Exeunt.

SCENE 3.

A tent in the Chinese camp. CHANG KWEI-FANG and CHANG KWEI-HSIEN seated, attendants standing.

(Enter an attendant).

Attendant. Marshal, without there's a brave soldier seeking
An interview.

C. K. F. Show him in.

(Enter LIN MENG-HSIEN dressed as a soldier).

C. K. F. Come forward, soldier.

L. M. H. Thank you.

(As she approaches C. K. F. he recognizes her).

C. K. F. Ah ! *(He rises and embraces her).*

C. K. H. Who is this soldier brother ?

C. K. F. 'Tis our mother.

C. K. H. *(Kneeling)* Mother, your son's obedience.

L. M. H. Ah ! Kwei-fang,

Who is this general ? and why does he

Call me his mother ?

C. K. F. Let us all be seated.

L. M. H. Kwei-fang, can it be that this general

Is the Kwei-hsien born of my worthy sister, Shuying ?

C. K. H. Yes, you are right, I'm Chang Kwei-hsien.

(Enter an Officer).

Officer. Sung Tien-pao is demanding battle, marshal.

Exit.

C. K. H. Bold traitor ! Let me go and take his head.

L. M. H. Ah, stay my son ! consider Sung Tien-pao

Is a true benefactor of your house,

And, though he's wrong now, through his kindness, we

May yet obtain revenge on our fell foes :
 Better let me ride forth and try persuasion
 To bring him to submission to our cause,
 And so enable him to make complete
 Those benefits he has conferred on us.

C. K. F. Mother, you talk as if you've but to appear
 In arms to conquer.

L. M. H. This is true, let me
 Change my apparel. (Exit.)

C. K. H. We'll prepare for battle.
 (*Re-enter L. M. H. clad in armour.*)

L. M. H. I go in iron mail with silver spear ;
 Advance our forces and make observation. (Exit.)

C. K. H. Ah ! brother, I must follow with reserves ;
 Ten thousand to one she will be defeated.

C. K. F. You are correct, pray brother go. *Exeunt.*
 SCENE 4.

A battlefield, LIN MENG-HSIEN leading Chinese troops, engages the barbarians and slays several of them with her own hands. She then simulates defeat. Enter SUNG TIEN-PAO and slays a Chinese General. Enter CHANG KWEI-HSIEN with reserves to assist the Chinese. LIN MENG-HSIEN stands in an attitude of thoughtfulness, SUNG TIEN-PAO stabs at her with his spear and she wards off the blow.

L. M. H. Ah ! worthy Sung, don't lift your hand against me,
 I wish to speak.

S. T. P. Well, speak.

L. M. H. I'm Lin Meng-hsien.

S. T. P. Miss Lin ! why, is it you, who formerly
 Could scarcely walk to flee from death, are now
 Engaged in battle ?

L. M. H. To requite your kindness.

S. T. P. And you display your kindness now by drawing
 Your sword on me !

L. M. H. There's something, sir, which you
 May'nt understand. The holy Mother Li Hwa,
 Who rescued me from Chü Yün Kuang and taught
 Me Military arts, commanded me
 To warn you to return to your allegiance
 To our Sung dynasty and manifest
 Your loyalty to future generations.

S. T. P. I've long been so inclined, but feared the two
Chief graduates would ne'er forgive my faults.

L. M. H. Ha, sir ! whose sons are these new graduates ?

S. T. P. They must be your son's lady.

L. M. H. They are, sir,

And, if you will submit, I guarantee

All will be well for you.

S. T. P. Then my submission,

Lady, entirely rests with you.

(C. K. H. comes forward and stabs at S. T. P. with his spear ;

L. M. H. wards off the blow.)

L. M. H. My son, don't lift your hand, but show respect
To this good man.

(C. K. H. and S. T. P. bow to each other).

S. T. P. You've military skill.

C. K. H. I am discourteous.

L. M. H. This is no place

For idle compliments, come to our tent

And let us there converse.

Exeunt.

SCENE 5.

*A tent in the Chinese camp. CHANG KWEI-FANG and Officers
discovered.*

C. K. F. Mother has gone to battle, how can she
Induce Tien-pao to yield himself to us ?

*(Enter LIN MENG-HSIEN, CHANG KWEI-HSIEN and SUNG
TIEN-PAO).*

C. K. H. Good sir, this is our tent, please enter here.

S. T. P. Thank you.

L. M. H. Ah ! my sons, thank your benefactor.

(Chang Kwei-fang and Chang Kwei-hsien kneel to Sung Tien-pao).

C. K. F. The whole Chang family thank you, good sir,
For carrying out your trust so faithfully
Towards our mother on a former time.

(Enter an officer).

Officer. Ah ! marshal, what shall we do ? Chü Yün Kuang
Has just conveyed all our provisions into
The barbarian camp !

C. T. P. Don't fear for this, good nephews,
But follow me.

Exeunt.

SCENE 6.

*A tent in the barbarian camp. Enter CHANG KWEI-HSIEN and
SUNG TIEN-PAO.*

C. K. H. Sir, for what clever plan have you brought me
Into your camp ?

C. T. P. Conceal yourself within
This tent, my worthy nephew, and wait here
Till they've delivered the provisions, then
Seize them.

C. K. H. I'll act as you advise.

(He conceals himself).

(Enter CHÜ TA-HUNG and CHÜ YÜN KWANG).

C. T. P. Generals, you've arrived, pray state what you
Propose.

C. T. H. The empress bade us to convey
All our provisions here, with a request
That you'll receive them and act in compliance
With the instructions of this letter, sir. *(Hands letter to
S. T. P.)*

S. T. P. Indeed ! Attendants, take delivery
Of the provisions, and set out some wine
For the two generals.

C. T. H. Many thanks.

*C. K. H. rushes out of his hiding and seizes CHÜ YÜN-KUANG, and
CHÜ TA-HUNG escapes).*

SCENE 7.

An apartment in the palace. Enter Empress CHÜ LAN-CHING.

Empress. Ha ! one may paint the tiger's skin, but it
Is difficult to paint its bones ; so we
May know one's face and yet not know his heart.

(Enter CHÜ TA-YÜAN and CHÜ TA-HUNG).

C. T. H. Ah, empress, we're unfortunate ! my nephew
Is captured.

Empress. How is this ?

C. T. Y. You must inform
The emperor the Changs are ⁱⁿ rebellion,
That he may send forth troops my son to rescue.

(Enter the Emperor).

Emp. When at court neither flatterers nor traitors
Are found, throughout the empire peace abounds.

Empress. Your majesty, affairs go ill with us ;

The two chief graduates are in rebellion.

Emp. Ho, guard ! seize and imprison Chou Hwa-pang
And all of his connexions.

(*Enter guard with CHOU HWA-PANG, Mrs. CHOU, and CHOU SHU-YING*).

Emp. Ha ! bold Hwa-pang, do you not feel your guilt ?

C. H. P. Your officer has thousands, sire, but he
Knows not which you refer to.

Emp. Umph ! your grandsons
Have joined with the barbarians and defeated
Our troops ; do you feign ignorance of this ?

C. H. P. Your minister knows naught of this, he trusts
You'll pardon him.

All the Chüs. No ! no ! when one rebels,
All his relations are exterminated !
Away with him ! behead them !

Emp. This affair
Isn't quite clear ; hand him to to the Board for trial.

(*C. H. P. Mrs. Chou and C. S. Y. are led off as prisoners*).
(*Enter a Eunuch*).

Eunuch (kneeling) Your majesty, the two chief graduates
Have, with their mother, just returned to court
And wait without.

Emp. (to the Chüs). Ah ! you informed me they'd
Rebelled and now we're told they have returned ;
There's something strange in this.

(*To Eunuch*). Go call them hither

Exit Eunuch.

Enter LIN MENG-HSIEN, CHANG KUEI-FANG and CHANG KUEI-HSIEN with CHÜ YÜN-KUANG in fetters).

All (kneeling). Long live your majesty !

Emp. Arise. We sent
You to subdue the rude barbarian hordes ;
But we've no tidings yet of battles fought
Or victories won ; why have you sneaked back thus ?

L. M. H. We led your troops, and we have conquered and
Exterminated the barbarian host,

And Sung Tien-pao has brought back your relation,
Sire, for deserting to the enemy ;
This meritorious deed should compensate
For all his guilty ones : your Majesty,
They're here for your decision.

Empress. The truth is

This woman and her sons joined the barbarians
To involve my brother is disgrace.

Emp. Indeed !

Affairs have leaked out now, pray say no more.

(*To an officer*) Go and release all the Chou family.

(*Exit officer*).

(*Enter CHOU HWA-PANG, Mrs. CHOU and CHOU SHU-YING*).

C. H. P. I thank your majesty for letting us
Retain our heads.

Emp. Listen to our commands ;

Mother and graduates take Chü Yün-kuang
To court for a fair trial, if guilty found,
Behead him, we'll not pardon him.

(*Exeunt all except Empress, C. T. Y. and C. T. H.*)

Empress. Since this has leaked out, what are we to do ?

C. T. H. Fear not, let me raise troops and seize the empire !

Empress. Act quickly then.

C. T. H. I go.

Exit.

C. T. Y. My son's in danger !

Do try to save him !

Empress. I will go and try.

Exeunt.

SCENE 8.

A law-court. LIN MENG-HSIEN, CHANG KUEI-FANG and CHANG-KUEI-HSIEN sitting as judges. Lictors and executioners in background.

L. M. H. My sons, to-day we're like the God of Fate.

C. K. F. Public revenge upon a secret foe
Is most enjoyable.

C. K. H. Our father's death
Will be avenged.

L. M. H. Go, executioners,
And bring in Chü Yün-kuang.

(*Exit executioners and return with CHÜ YÜN-KUANG*).

L. M. H. Your country's scourge, most treacherous villain, what
Have you to say ?

C. Y. K. When such as I do wrong,
Who dares impose a punishment ?

L. M. H. Lictors,
Beat him severely !

C. Y. K. Who dares lift his hand ?

*(C. K. H. rises and forces C. Y. K. down, while the lictors beat him.
Enter the EMPRESS who assists C. Y. K. to rise).*

Empress. Alas ! my family has sunk to this !
Who dares to lift a hand against my brother ?

(To C. Y. K.) Come to the palace.

C. K. H. Rebel officer
And villain ! no, the laws can't let him off !

Empress. Ha ! you dare n't act.
(Executioners and lictors steal off).

C. K. F. Brother, take this dread sword ;
At the time his majesty gave it to me
He said, no matter who transgressed the laws,
E'en though his own, or though the empress's relations,
It gave authority to take their heads.

C. K. H. And I accept the mandate, brother.
*(He takes the sword and approaches C. Y. K., the empress intercepts
him ; L. M. H. drags her away and C. K. H. rushes on
C. Y. K. and slays him).*

SCENE 9.

*An apartment in the palace. The EMPEROR seated, with atten-
dants standing around.*

Emp. Heaven spares not the unfilial or disloyal.
*(Enter EMPRESS grasping LIN MENG-HSIEN, followed by CHANG
KWEI-FANG and CHANG KWEI-HSIEN).*

Emp. What means this tumult ? why this towering rage ?

Empress. These have presumed to slay my hapless brother,
And have insulted my poor family ;
I pray your majesty to deal with them.

Emp. Your brother was inhuman and most lawless,
Then why of insults speak ?

Empress. Alas ! you do
Not mind my grief or anger ; I'll die too.

Emp. You need not act like this, they shall be punished.

(*To the Changs*) Pshah! you've got bold and arrogant, indeed!

You've slain my brother-in-law and dared to heap

Insults upon my empress, for offences

So grave, what punishment is great enough?

C. K. H. Your brother-in-law rebelled and therefore he

Deserved to die, to manifest the justice

And equity of law—no insult this.

C. K. F. Let me inform your majesty, the empress

Schemed that her brother should communicate

With the barbarians to o'erthrow your rule,

This clearly shows perfidiousness and treason;

Moreover, 'tis undoubtedly quite true.

Emp. Produce the proof of your assertion. Oh!

It cannot be that she would wrong me thus,

And vilely plan with him against the state!

C. K. H. Your majesty, when Sung Tien-pao surrendered,

I went with him to get back our provisions;

While in his tent, I was surprised to hear

Your brother-in-law and uncle had arrived;

I hid myself and learnt they brought a letter

And came as emissaries from the empress,

Seeking the aid of Sung Tien-pao, to seize

The empire, and dethrone your majesty.

This is the letter, written by her own hand;

I supplicate you, sire, to deign to read it.

Emp. (*After examining letter*) There's no mistake; you have got
very bold!

Wherefore rebel 'gainst me?

Empress. Oh, perjured wretches!

Emp. Look you, whose writing 's this?

Empress. I do not know,

'Tis plainly all a fabrication, made

To injure me. Let me go home to father.

(*She rises to go and the Emperor stops her*).

Emp. Ah! no you cannot leave. Put her to death!

C. K. H. Your officer obeys. (*He leads her off*).

(*Enter a messenger and kneels*).

Messenger. You majesty,

Ill tidings! Chü Ta-hung and his vile brother

Have raised their troops and have attacked the palace.

Emp. Retire. (*exit messenger*). What can we do ?

L. M. H. (*to C. K. F.*) Fight your way through

The imperial city, save his majesty !

(*CHANG KWEI-FANG is about to leave, when CHU TA-YUAN and CHU TA-HUNG rush in armed, followed by soldiers. CHU TA-HUNG strikes at the emperor ; CHANG KWEI-FANG wards off the blow and after a fight with CHU TA-HUNG drives him off. The emperor and CHANG KWEI-FANG are then attacked by CHU TA-YUAN ; CHOU HWA-PANG leads in soldiers and drives off CHU TA-YUAN, who is met and slain by CHANG KWEI-HSIEN. The EMPEROR, LIN MENG-HSIEN and CHANG KWEI-FANG retire. CHU TA-HUNG re-enters and after a fight with CHOU HWA-PANG is slain by him*).

C. P. H. Withdraw the soldiers.

(*Re-enter Emperor, LIN MENG-HSIEN and CHANG KWEI-FANG*).

Emp. How has the fight gone ?

C. H. P. Your majesty, the treacherous cabal
Is totally exterminated now.

Emp. Ha, good ! Grandees, you have secured our throne,
And We, in order to encourage worth
And loyalty, must now consider how
To best reward your meritorious deeds ;
We know not if the civil graduate
Be married yet ?

C. K. F. I am betrothed to one
Of the Ch'en house, but not yet married, sire.

Emp. Yes ; and the military graduate ?

C. K. H. Your humble officer's not yet engaged.

Emp. Then we've a princess to bestow on you
In marriage.

L. M. H. How dare we aspire to one
So high, or hope a princess will descend
To mate with us ?

Emp. We have decided this ;
The President of the Board will make
Proper arrangements for the marriage rites.

C. H. P. Sire, I obey.

Emp. Tell the Ch'en family

That we command their daughter's marriage shall
Take place to-day. Hence brothers, go and don
Your wedding robes and then proceed to worship.

C. K. F. & C. K. H. We thank you majesty.

Emp. Ah ! certainly

Dragons and phoenixes have risen and mated,
This is a grand time for your family,
And 'tis a time of glory for the state.

Exeunt.



附 荐 何 文 秀

THE SACRIFICE FOR THE SOUL OF HO MAN-SAU.

—:0:—

A Chinese Play.
DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HO MAN-SAU, an Officer.

WONG LING, and old man, formerly a chief gaoler.

WONG SHUK-YING, Wife of HO MAN-SAU.

Mrs. MA, Mother, by adoption, of WONG SHUK-YING.

PO TSING, A Nun.

Followers of HO MAN-SAU.

SCENE 1.

Country, with Liu-Fung convent in the distance. Enter HO MAN-SAU and followers.

H. M. S. Although the Emperor has been very kind,
My foe unpunished, troubled is my mind.
Affairs of home I shall remember long ;
And how the cruel-hearted wretch Cheung Tong
Designed a banquet and invited me,
Then slew the slave girl to make misery.
He saw the beauty of my wife was great,
And hence invited me to his estate,
Where, having made me drunk, he killed his slave,
Falsely accused me of the crime most grave,
And bribed the Judge to put me into gaol.
The gaoler, good Wong Ling, became my bail.
He gave his only son for me to die,
And money for my wants he did supply.
He bade me change my name, and surname, too,

And for employment in some office sue.
 Th' examination I with honor passed ;
 And, thank His Majesty, have work at last.
 I am appointed Censor, and am sent
 Out to inspect the frontier government.
 My native village is not far from here ;
 I'll seek my wife ; this mystery make clear.

[*To follower.*] Come here, change clothes with me. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 2.

A Chinese dwelling. Enter WONG SHUK-YING.

W. S. Y. Unluckily my husband was cunared ;
 We parted, and his fate I have not shared.
 Detestable Cheung Tong the woe began,
 Led him to harm and Hades by his plan ;
 Invited him to drink and falsely laid
 On him the crime of murdering the maid.
 Odious Cheung Tong but saw my pretty face,
 Then asked my spouse to drink, with purpose base ;
 But, then, who knew he would the slave girl kill,
 And through his treachery cause such grievous ill,
 By bribing the corrupted Judge to find
 My love a felon of the basest kind ?
 He tried to force me next to marry him ;
 But I, by feigning furious madness grim,
 And scratching all the beauty from my face,
 Caused him to cease from seeking my embrace.
 All this is trifling talk ; so I'll forbear ;
 All Souls' great festival, I am aware
 Is come ; my foster-mother must prepare
 A sacrificial offering, that I may
 Release my husband's soul from Hades' shore,
 And a wife's loving-kindness thus display.

[*Sings.*] Unceasingly my brow
 Is black with woe and wrong ;
 With hate my heart does glow
 Towards the vile Cheung Tong.
 'T was through his lustful heart
 He snared his plighted friend,
 And did the woes impart

That wrought his bitter end.
 A feast with wine he gave
 My husband to delight,
 Did rape and slay his slave,
 And Ho for th' acts indict.
 Have mercy on my dead,
 Who, through a wicked grudge,
 To shameful death was led
 By a corrupted Judge.
 Grant that his soul may climb
 To the immortals' land.
 Grant that Cheung Tong for 's crime
 A lingering death may stand.
 Would that I, too, might die,
 And in a future life
 With Ho, in harmony,
 Live long a happy wife.
 I lift my voice and shout
 To thee, my husband dear;
 I wonder whereabouts
 Thy soul its course doth steer.
 Ah, honoured husband ! My dear Man-Sau ! I cease.

[*Sings.*] I would that I might reach
 The Demon Prince's throne,
 And on my knees beseech
 Redress for what I moan.
 Oh ! come and seize Chenug Tong,
 His body saw in twain !
 For this I fondly long,
 May I this wish obtain !

Enter MRS. MA.

Mrs. M. Shuk-ying, my foster daughter, bade me buy
 And take up to the Liu-Fung nunnery
 A sacrificial offering, and there
 Set up the spirit's tablet and prepare
 That she may to her husband sacrifice.
 All's ready now ; I'll tell her in a trice.

[*Sings.*] Like a bird
 Let me bear
 One kind word

'Twill ease her care.

W. S. Y. Returned, good mother, take a seat I pray.

Mrs. M. Yes.

W. S. Y. Tell me, how must I proceed to-day ?

Come hurry ! quickly cook and eat your rice,

And come along with me to sacrifice.

Mrs. M. [*Sings.*] When in the street,

Let me intreat ;

Do not so sigh,

Lament and cry.

W. S. Y. I understand.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE 3.

Liu-Fung convent. WONG LING outside. [*Sings rapidly.*]

Ah ! very foolishly, indeed,

Did this old silly man proceed !

My son a substitute I gave,

That Ho Man-Sau, from gaol might save ;

And now I'm old and have no son

To see to me when life is done.

Ah, yes ! I'm old and have no son

To see to me when life is done.

When I, Wong Ling, was head of Kam-Wa gaol,

Hateful Cheung Tong with bribery did assail

The Prefect, and induce him to ensnare

Man-Sau, and put his fate in dark despair.

Something uncommon in his mein I spied,

And could not bear that harm should him betide.

So mine own son I gave, who for him died.

I gave him money, bade him change his name,

Go to the capital and there seek fame.

More than ten years since then have passed away ;

Yet still no news from him my woes allay.

Time passed away, the Prefect saw me old,

Therefore dismissed me, and I homeward strolled.

For trade unfit, my little wealth soon went ;

With what I beg I've now to be content.

What matters it ? This kind of talk I'll cease ;

I have in Liu-Fang nunnery a niece,

Who lives on plainest fare. This is the feast

Of All Souls, so I'll get one meal at least.

[*Sings.*] Other gaolers' hearts are bad ;

When a gaoler I'd good food ;
Wherefore then was I so mad ?
Ah ! self censure does no good.

[*Exit.*

Enter PO TSING.

P. T. Rich dainties and fine food are not my care,
With zeal the shaven head and fast I bear ;
I nothing do but pray in Buddha's sight,
The fish, the drum and bell are my delight.
Little Po Tsing from childhood has been bred
And brought up here, a nun with shaven head.
This is the time of All-Souls' festival ;
Our patrons soon will come, I know right well,
To sacrifice. I've leisure and will straight
To th' altar go and till all's ready wait.

[*Sings.*] In Buddha's hall I'll stay,
For worshippers to-day
T' his shrine will come to pray.

[*Retires into convent.*

Enter WONG SHUK-YING and MRS. MA.

W. S. Y. [*Sings.*]
Ah, my grief I've restrained
And from tears have refrained.
For another I've had
Those reflections so sad ;
For my husband they start
From my sorrowful heart,
As I think of the time,
When he lived in life's prime.
Oh, what love ! and how pure !
Until now to endure—
But he's gone from this land
Down to Hades' dark strand.
Parting, hardship and care
Are unpleasant to bear ;
But now daily I seem
To make sadness my theme.
Oh, affliction so great !
Oh, this sorrowful state !
Ah alas ! no relief !

I'm alone in my grief !

Mrs. M. Ah ! you should not fret so.

W.S. Y. [*Sings.*]

Oh ! mother do advise me,
Assist and wisely guide me,
To linger will not wise be,
For fear the men will chide me.

As up we came advancing,
I saw the flags and pennants
O'er Buddha's temple dancing,
And o'er its lowly tenants.

[*They enter the Convent.*]

W. S. Y. [*Sings.*]

Oh, that I were in Hades deep !
Now open is the demons' door,
From every region lonely creep
Ghosts of the unavenged once more ;
Old with the old, young with the young,
Young and more young, old and more old.
Ye old and young the crowd among,
Ye great, ye small, ye shy, ye bold,
I bid ye all come to this shrine,
Look there, at once to Buddha pray !
A nun I see with pure design
Does by the spirit's tablet stay.

Po Tsing [*kneeling at the shrine.*] Oh, Buddha of the boundless
light !

W. S. Y. [*sings.*]

I hope the honoured nun will show
Mercy and my affliction ease—
Kindness, deep as the sea, bestow !
Obtain my husband's soul's release—
San-ts'oi his rank, Man-san his name,
Son of Lord Ho ; his wife Shuk-Ying,
Of surname Wong—release the same
And lasting love to you I'll bring.
Ah ! take this sacrifice !

Po Tsing. Oh Buddha of the boundless light !

W.S. Y. [*Burning incense.*] Sir, husband, my Man-Sau, stop
this suspense,

I entered the Ho house with confidence,

My only hope with thee my lot to share,
And live together a white-haired old pair.
Who'd thought that in three years the duck and drake
Would parted be. 'Tis so. There's no mistake.
Thou oughtest not t' have done so blindly wrong
As friendship to have sworn with vile Cheung Tong.
'Tis pitiful that thou in goal didst die,
That on the wilds thy mangled corpse should lie,
Where thy unburied bones are bleaching still,
Whence none may bring them, though one had the will !
Oh, that thy wife could steal thee back again
To life, and learn if thou didst rest obtain.
'Tis at this feast alone propriety
Allows that I should sacrifice to thee !
Ah ! alas, alas !

[*Pouring out wine, sings.*]

This first cup in respect to thee I pour ;
Because I've failed on the perfidious knave
T' obtain revenge, thy pardon I implore ;
Oh do not hate me in thy lowly grave !

[*After a pause, again pouring wine.*]

The second cup upon the dust I pour ;
Oh ! may the bond of love and harmony
So rudely severed in this life, once more
Be in a future state rejoined with glee.

[*Another pause, again pouring wine.*]

And this third cup in reverence I pour
To thee, with wishes that thy gloomy ghost
May soon on cranes* be carried high, to soar
To fairyland and join th' immortal host.
Oh, husband ! Come and see my plain
Abundant offering, I pray,
Why from accepting it refrain ?
Oh ! why to taste it still delay ?
A thousand times to thee I call
And yet thou answerest not at all ;
To thee ten thousand times I cry,
And still thou dost not once reply ;

* The crane is the reported aerial courser of the immortals. *Vide*
Chinese Reader's Manual, 168.

To think in life thou wert so brave,
 And dead thy ghost can't leave the grave !
 Alas, husband ! [*She faints.*]

Po Tsing [*Going to her.*] Lady, compose yourself.

Mrs. Ma. Ah madam ! [*to Po Tsing*] Teacher !

Po Tsing [*to Mrs. M.*] I have some ginger soup ; let me invite you,
 Give it her to drink, she'll soon be right.

Mrs. M. Many thanks, teacher.

Po Tsing. Follow me. [*Exeunt P. T. and Mrs. Ma.*]

W. S. Y. Alas, 'tis gricvous !

[*Sings.*] My heart with grief is broken now,
 These trickling tears I can't restrain;
 When I reflect how dearly thou
 Didst love me, dear, ere thou wert slain.
 Who knew misfortune and great wrong
 Would fall on thee through thine own wife ?
 Thou oughtest not with that Cheung Tong
 Thus friendship to have sworn for life ;
 The thief thou ought'st not to have led
 Into thy home thy wife to see.
 'Twas this his nature changed, this bred
 His lustful feelings towards me,
 Caused him to spread an artful noose,
 Ask thee to dine, the slave girl kill,
 Of rape and murder thee acense,
 And then by bribery serve thee ill.
 Oh, lamentable 't is ! that ere
 Thy merit was quite realized,
 Or fame attained, thou thus should'st bear
 Such harm, and be so agonized.
 Ah ! wronged, afflicted and oppressed,
 Thy soul was thus to Hades sent !
 Wert thou not grievously distressed ?
 Alas ! and shall I not lament ?
 Oh ! husband, take thy wife away,
 Lead her to see the demon Prince.
 Come, seize Cheung Tong without delay,
 His body saw apart and mince !
 Ah ! ah ! My husband ! I cease now ;
 Ah ! loving husband, dear Man-Sau !

Re-enter Mrs. MA and PO TSING.

P. T. to W. S. Y. Pray compose yourself.

[*Mrs. M. & P. assist W. S. Y. to a seat.*]

HO MAN-SAU *appears outside the Convent.*

H. M. S. [*Sings.*]

This green hill and blue stream

Still appear as before,

'Mid the grass the flow'rs teem

In abundance once more.

Oh, this fierce summer day

Is indeed hard to bear !

Very hard to allay

Is my thirst, I declare.

I'll rest, the weather is extremely hot ;

My thirsty throat has parched and painful got.

A cup of tea I'll beg, my thirst t' allay,

And then will quickly hasten on my way.

Say, shall I enter ? Yes, some rest I need ;

I'll rest a while, then on my way proceed.

[*Enters Convent.*] Stay ! What ! [*reading Tablet*] 'This shrine
is Sau-ts'oi Ho Man-Sau's .

Here Wong Shuk-Ying—Strange !—'his devoted sponse
For his soul's quick release in prayer bows.'

Ah ! then my virtuous wife must think me dead,

And hence for me this sacrifice is spread.

Ah ! ah ! Cheung Tong, 'twas thus thy wolfish heart

Harm did, and husband caused from wife to part.

If e'er a day do come when I seize thee,

Thon'lt not escape, but for thy infamy,

Ten thousand times I'll slash thee with a knife ;

I swear that thon shall not remain alive.

[*Sings*] Deep as the sea 's my wrong,

Vengeance I cannot slake,

This tablet now I long

To drag away and break.

[*H. M. S. is about to seize the tablet, when Mrs. M. sizes him and
prevents him.*]

Mrs. M. Ah, you are very daring !

Would you steal the offering to the spirit ?

H. M. S. Pshaw ! Who is stealing your offering ? Ha ! ha ! ha !
I'm not of the stealer-of-offering sort.

Mrs. M. Then why did you come here ?

H. M. S. This tablet is not to my liking,
You had better burn it.

Mrs. M. Families have their own affairs.

What has this to do with you ? Begone, bastard !

H. M. S. Why should I ask you to do this, unless it concerns me?
The man for whom it is erected is not yet dead, so you
have improperly sacrificed to his ghost.—Better burn it.

Mrs. M. Pshaw ! The mau has been dead many years. Will
you still say he is alive ? You evidently see a ghost.
Begone ! You dead fellow ! Let me call my adopted
daughter. [*To W. S. Y.*] Daughter, rouse yourself !

[*Mrs. M. drags and pushes H. M. S. off the stage.*]

W. S. Y. [*Regaining consciousness, looks about.*] [*Sings.*]

I nearly wept my soul away ;

My scattered senses I've regained ;

Ah, misery !

Husband, I've wept in sore dismay,

Down my pale cheeks the tears have rained.

Ah, my lord !

H. M. S. [*Outside.*] Ah, my lady !

W. S. Y. My husband !

H. M. S. My wife !

W. S. Y. Ha ! A ghost !

Mrs. M. & P. T. [*alarmed.*] What ?

W. S. Y. Mother, sister, alas !

[*Sings.*] The tone of the voice

Was Ho, the Sau-ts'oi's.

Mrs. M. Pshaw ! Why, where could you hear the voice of Ho ?

To steal your offering here a while ago,

A man came, and what do you think he said ?

Why only that your husband is n't yet dead !

He wished to take the tablet off to burn,

For that I drove him out. I can discern

That what he really wanted was to make

A conquest of you ; he'll learn his mistake ;

I'll thrash and cause him his scheme to forsake.

W. S. Y. Stay mother, there's no need to angry get ;

Call him, we will with questions him beset ;
 If well he answereth, then good, I say ;
 If wickedly, thrash him without delay.

Po Tsing. Yes, that's right, call him to an interview.

Mrs. M. Very well, let me call him in [*to H. M. S.*] Halloo !
 You gentleman ! Since you know the whereabouts
 Of Ho Man-Sau, please come remove all doubts
 From his wife's mind, so when some future day
 Husband and wife do meet, their thanks they'll pay
 For your great kindness.

H. M. S. [Returning.] Oh, indeed, well said !
 Why trouble you ? There's a distinction made,
 Madam, betwixt you ladies and us men.

Mrs. M. Oh, this old body will be by !
 What fear then ?
 Please enter.

H. M. S. By your leave, Madam.

H. M. S. [Sings.]
 You just drove me away from your door,
 Now you bid me the lady to meet.
 Meet again wife and husband shall sure,
 And with joy, they shall weep as they greet.

H. M. S. [to W. S. Y.] My respects to you, lady.

W. S. Y. Ha !

W. S. Y. [Sings.]
 He's quite a gentleman I feel,
 My tears I will repress ;
 My rising blushes will conceal,
 Approach and him address ;
 With deep respect I will proceed.

To H. M. S. I greatly do desire
 To question you, Sir—yet, indeed,
 'Tis wrong I should inquire.

W. S. Y. [to H. M. S.] Sir, my respects.

H. M. S. And, lady, mine to you.

W. S. Y. Mother tells me you say—Oh ! is it true
 My husband is not dead ? Sir, I will thank
 You to say where he is—Oh, do be frank !

H. M. S. The lady wishes now to question me.
 Th' old saying is, 'tis difficult to see

What on the far horizon may appear,
While that which is before our eyes is near.

[*Sings.*] For 'the distant,' they say,

'Is beyond the horizon.

The near's where we set eyes on.'

Yon this riddle guess may.

What divides death from life ?

Again husband 'll meet wife.

W. S. Y. Alas !

[*Sings.*] List ! what he says is truly strange.

He asks Shuk-Ying a riddle to guess ;

Since he alone 's in vision's range —

He then must Ho be—nothing less.

Mrs. M. [*Sings.*]

A convent this, where people fast ;

From this mysterious talk refrain,

And this confusing prate. 'Tis past

The rules which the polite maintain.

Man-Sau has o'er ten years been dead !

'Tis plain yon came to trifle and prate.

Po Tsing. [*Sings.*]

Ere to correction yon are led,

Her family's past affairs relate,

And, as your talk is now obscure,

Just stop this mystery, or fleet

The Magistrate will work a cure,

And then you'll see what fate you'll meet.

H. M. S. [*Sings.*]

Oh ! teacher, madam, stay your rage,

I'm truly not a wicked clown.

Know then : my place of parentage

Is near the walls of Kam-Wa town.

While I was young my parents died,

And then my fath'r-in-law did bring

His kindness vast as the sea is wide ;

To me in marriage gave Shuk-Ying.

Ten years with books I toiled along,

Ten gained degree of a *sau-ts'oi*.

No sooner gained than came Chenng Tong

And swore my friendship to enjoy.

He beauty saw, his friend forgot,
 To injure me devised a scheme ;
 Invited me—most wicked plot
 I' th' garden to drink wine with him.
 The odious officer unkind,
 He bribed to cruelly torture me,
 To suffering I seemed consigned,
 'Twas hard to bear captivity.
 Thanks to the gaoler's kind regard,
 He gave his son a substitute
 For me to die ; the gaol unbarred
 And money gave to foil pursuit.
 I mounted soon the golden stairs,*
 Quick the official hat did gain,
 But unavenged all my past cares
 On perjured foe, how rest obtain ?
 I truly thought my love, like sea
 In depth, forgotten was, that thou,
 Adorned in gayest finery,
 Had'st mated with the wolf ere now.
 How could I know thy love unchanged
 Would pure in poverty remain ?
 'Midst troubles thou wast not estranged,
 But prayed the gods we'd meet again.

W. S. Y. [Sings.]

Since love and harmony
 Were severed, how opine
 Husband again to see
 While praying at his shrine ?

Mrs. M. [covering W. S. Y.'s. mouth] Don't so hastily recognize
 this man as your husband !

W. S. Y. [Sings to Mrs. M.]

Think on this past affair !
 Remember, be not rash !
 At parting I did share
 With him a string of cash.
 These we declared we'd wear,
 Aye, and ne'er be without.
 If his he has, declare

* Obtained promotion.

Can there be room for doubt ?

Mother, go and inquire

What proof he has and tell

Him bring it, we desire

No doubt. Say, is this, well?

Mrs. M. Quite proper. Wait, I'll ask. [*to H. M. S.*] Halloo there ! now,

Come can you prove that you are Ho Man-San ?

H. M. S. Eh, madam; proof do you require?

Mrs. M. Yes. Where 's the proof that we desire?

H. M. S. Listen.

H. M. S. [Producing cash string.] E'er since the cash we did
divide,

Most luckily, I've worn my share

Always on girdle at my side.

Madam, examine these with care.

Take them, your judgment I abide.

Mrs. M. [Taking and examining the cash.]

These cash are the identical, indeed,

And are sufficient proof, I must concede.

Mrs. M., to W. S. Y. These are the very cash and proof do make.

W. S. Y. Let me examine them. [*Looking at them.*] Ah, no mistake!

W. S. Y. [*Sings.*]

When we parted, who'd have thought,

That like sundered cash we'd be ?

All past grief will now seem nought,

Now from tears I shall be free !

Husband come, Oh come to me !

W. S. Y. Sir !

H. M. S. Madam !

W. S. Y. Husband !

H. M. S. Wife!

[*Both embracing.*] Never mind now, { Wife.
Husband.

Husband.

[*Both sing*] This meeting docs seem

Like greeting in dream.

Mrs. M. 'Tis day, the sky still blue—how be a dream?

Po Tsing. Lady, by prayer 'twas brought about I deem.

W. S. Y. Ah, husband! [*Sings.*]

For thee I suffered many a year,
For thee I lean as wood appear,
For thee I beauty freely gave,
For thee I risked death and the grave.

H. M. S. [Sings.]

I heard the rogue had lured my wife ;
Therefore I bore a wretched life.
Since when by flight I got away,
Who has supplied thy wants, wife ? Say.

W. S. Y. [Sings.]

True, when thou wert ensnared,
I was of all devoid ;
But foster-mother shared
With me what she enjoyed.

H. M. S. [Sings.] I'll go and reverence her.

[To Mrs. M.] Thy kindness to requite,

I'll daily minister
To thee with all my might.
My mother-in-law is dead ;
When t' office we proceed
With us, thou shalt be led ;
To live in ease thy need.

Mrs. M. [Sings.]

This meeting has brought ease,
Don't mind such trifles as these.

W. S. Y. [Sings.]

Mother treated me with kindness,
Boundless as the sea.
And 'tis n't right that we should mindless
And ungrateful be.

Po Tsing [Sings.]

You're happy now you've met.
Henceforth may you ne'er be
By misery beset
Or happiness e'er flee.

[All retire to one side.]

Enter WONG LING. [Singing.]

I saw the banners waving high
O'er Buddha's roof released,

And wished like old Mung Ching* to try
And sponge upon a priest.

[*Speaking.*] Here I am. Let me see [*Reading Tablet*] Sau ts'oi
Man-Sau,

Lord Ho's shrine [*the others returning.*]

Ah ! Man-Sau, Man-Sau, sure thou

Involvedst me in woe !

H. M. S. Sir, wherefore now

Hast thou such deep dislike to this Man-Sau ?

W. L. This subject you shouldn't seek to introduce ;

To me 'tis truly grievous, and no use.

H. M. S. Can you not pity him, for him lament,

And now you know that he is dead, relent ?

W. L. Ah ! he has still some one to sacrifice

To 's spirit—wherefore then should pity rise

For him who caused my guiltless son to die ?

H. M. S. Tell me your surname and your name, and why

Your guileless son did die.

W. L. I, old Wong Ling,

Was formerly chief of a Prefect's goal.

During my time Cheung Tong a charge did bring

'Gainst Ho Man-Sau, and with bribes did prevail

On the Judge to injure him. I something rare

Saw in his features, and so could not bear

T' increase his wrongs, hence mine own son I gave

A substitute, to die, his life to save,

And money to the capital to go,

And there attend the examinations, so

His fame might me assist, my aid requite.

Who knew when once he went, he'd never write,

Or think my kindness he would thus forget,

Thus prove ungrateful, or that death he'd met ?

I'm old now and white-haired. Oh, pity me !

Without a son, without posterity !

H. M. S. [*Sings.*]

If this kind man had not

Released me, how could I

Up the golden steps have got ?

* Lü Mung Ching is said to have sponged on the priests in his youth.

[*To W. S. Y.*] To honor him let's hie.

[*Both kneel to Wong Ling.*]

W. L. [*Sings.*] You wish to kill me, that I feel.

H. M. S. [*Sings.*]

Thou kindly treatedst me.

Man-Sau and wife together kneel

Low in the dust to thee.

W. S. Y. [*Sings.*]

My husband thanks thee for the care

Thou took'st he might survive ;

Now 'tis as if our parents were

With us again alive.

W. L. [*to H. M. S.*] Ah ! what, are you Man-Sau ?

H. M. S. I am, 'tis true.

W. L. I can't believe it. Let me look at you.

[*Looking at H. M. S.*] It is Man-Sau.

H. M. S. Ah ! much for me you've done.

W. L. Ah ! how dare I presume ? Alas, my son !

H. M. S. Grieve not, kind Sir, for me your son did die ;

I'll treat you as my father and supply

Your wants in age—attend you to the grave.

W. L. What, maintain me in old age ?

Thus behave ?

H. M. S. 'Tis right I should.

W. L. [*Singing.*]

'Tis good. I fear there'll be,

However, no such luck for me.

Mrs. M. There will.

Po Tsing. 'Tis well to know how to do right,

And kindness thus with kindness to requite.

W. S. Y. Propriety requires that yet again

Husband and wife obeisance should maintain.

H. M. S. Good, follow me !

H. M. S. & W. S. Y. Father, pray take a seat [*He sits and both kneel to him.*]

Receive your { son's
daughter's } obeisance, I entreat.

W. L. I daren't ; I daren't.

H. M. S. [*Sings.*]

Man-Sau approaches thee

—In reverence he's bent,
 As though one he did see
 Whom Death to life has sent.
 Thy son doth undertake
 In old age to maintain thee,
 And for thy kindness sake,
 When death comes, to sustain thee.

W. S. Y. [Sings.]

We should share, now we've met,
 Our Happiness with thee ;
 When kindness we forget,
 Or fail to grateful be,
 May we, too, find
 The world unkind.

Mrs. M. [Sings.]

Imperial Heaven, 'tis understood,
 Is not unmindful of the good.

Po Tsing [Sings.]

Oh, may the glory of to-day
 E'er on your dwelling rest, I pray !

W. L. [Sings.] Lift up thy voice

Wong Ling, rejoicee
 In thy glad heart,
 Thou didst not part
 In vain that year
 With son, 'tis clear.

W. L. [to H. M. S.] [Sings.]

May you have sons and grandsous, too,
 To tread the golden steps anew.

H. M. S. [to W. L.] [Sings.]

May father know felicity,
 Vast as the boundless deep blue sea.

W. S. Y. [to W. L.] [Sings.]

May Heaven grant long life to thee,
 May 'st thou strong as the south hills be.

Mrs. M. [to W. L.] [Sings.]

And since the fir and cedar trees
 Aye youthful are, so be as these.

P. T. [to H. M. S. and W. S. Y.] [Sings.]

May man and wife united share

Each other's lot, a white-haired pair.

W. L. [Sings.] May peace o'er this rennion spread.

H. M. S. [Sings.] I thank my brother who is dead.

W. S. Y. [Sings.]

May the bribed officer be caught

And punished for the wrong he wrought.

Mrs. M. [Sings.]

May villainous Cheung Tong

Be buried ere he dies.

Po Tsing. [Sings.]

May you redress your wrong ;

Be happiness your prize.

All sings.] Let's wash our hands and incense burn,

Then thanks to th' throne of Heaven return.

[*Po Tsing accompanies the rest out of Convent. Exeunt.*]



PENG TSU.

A Chinese Legend.

Yama, the stern, black-visaged god of Fate,
Who sits enthroned in Hades in high state,
A record keeps of every mortal's birth,
And day, decreed by Death, for quitting earth.
And his fleet messengers of import dread,
To mortals known as Horse-face and Oxhead,
At his commands to earth aye swiftly hie,
To fetch to Hades mortals doomed to die.
While Yama reigns supreme on Hades' strand,
He temples has throughout the Flowery Land.
And there, where'er the god of Fate's enshrined,
His two imps, Horseface and Oxhead, you'll find.
All who to Yama sacrifice and pray,
Should likewise to his imps oblations pay,
Then, if long life and vigorous age they choose,
The imps may grant what Yama may refuse.
A striking instance of what these can do
Is what occurred in old times to Peng T'su,
Who lived more than three thousand years ago,
And saw eight hundred years ere called below.
A happy thought struck Mr. Peng one day,
When he to Yama's temple went to pray,
For long life and perennial youth he prayed,
For, humanlike, of Death he felt afraid ;
He rich oblations placed on Yama's shrine,
But to the imps he offered choicest wine,
And promised them libations better still,
If they would act according to his will.
The imps delighted to his wine imbibe,
Sought how to earn a further dainty bribe,
And their good devotee accommodate,
By overreaching the stern god of Fate.

Just then the record book was badly worn,
And Yama, seeing its covers soiled and torn,
Ordered his imps to take and bind anew ;
They took the book and silently withdrew,
But Oxhead twitched his ears with cunning guile,
And o'er Horseface's phiz there played a smile,
When they saw all had happened fortunate,
And placed within their reach the Book of Fate.
The book repaired, its binding looked as new
As when great Yama first his pencil drew
Across its pages, to decree the doom
Of the first mortal yielded to the tomb.
The god first praised their work, and then with pride
Perused the book, that hence he might decide
Who fated were to long lives live on earth,
And who to quit it shortly after birth.
But, though successive years to centuries grew,
Peng Tsu's name ne'er again appeared in view ;
He therefore lived in lusty vigorous prime,
And, though all else decayed, untouched by time.
He married many wives, for when one died,
He mourned awhile, then took another bride,
And, lucky in the marriage lottery,
Around him grew a numerous progeny ;
Remote descendants of his widespread clan
Revered the famous patriarchal man,
Who spent in cheerful ease his lengthened life,
Till ill-luck brought his seventy-second wife,
In whom he found a peevish scold and shrew,
And little joy or peace with her he knew ;
But busy Death at last brought him release—
It took his testy wife and left him peace.
Her tongue was hushed in this bright upper land,
But when she reached the nether gloomy strand,
Such a tremendous, chattering din she made,
That Yama sent to see what ailed the jade.
His two imps dragged her forth and cast her prone
In front of Yame on his lofty throne ;
In his dread presence she nor flinched nor quailed,
But only at the stern god scoffed and railed.
' Tell me, great Yama, why it is, I pray

That I so soon am taken from earth away,
While my spouse, favoured more than kings or sages,
Lives undisturbed by Death for countless ages ;
Forgotten or immortal is Peng Tsu,
Beware, oh god, or he'll outlive e'en you !'
On Yama's brows dark, raging passions formed,
Like thunder clouds, and all quaked as he stormed.
He seized the Book of Fate, with looks austere,
And quickly scanned its leaves from year to year,
And century to century, but nought
He saw of the lost name for which he sought ;
Then wrathfully he to the woman said,
' How dare you lie to me ! Do you not dread
My vengeance ? Since in Hades I've held away,
No termagant like you has come this way ;
There's no Peng Tsu's name in this book displayed,
And wretch, in Hades no mistakes are made.'
Dumbfounded first, but still to fury stung,
She dared the god so soon 's she found her tongue :
' I know nought of your book or things below '
She cried, ' but I've lived with, and therefore know
The man—let him live through eternity,
So long as I no more the wretch may see.'
Great Yama was astounded and again
Perused the book with care, but all in vain,
The name he never on its pages read
Amongst the living nor amongst the dead.
He next the binding ripped, for which he praised
For neatly doing gave in former days ;
He deftly cut the stitches, one by one,
And then he found how neatly he'd been done,
For from the binding he displayed to view
The long-lost name he sought for of Peng Tsu.
He called his imps, and as they trembling came,
He took his pencil, scratched across the name,
And said, with a sardonic, cunning leer,
' Hurry to earth and fetch your favourite here.'
They slunk away, abashed, like whipped curs spurned,
And soon to Hades with Peng Tsu returned.
To meet in Hades one so much renowned,

There gathered ghostly shades from all around ;
Peng's wife, with looks of vile vindictiveness
And ugly smiles, like a weird sorceress,
Amongst the foremost pressed, and scoffed and jeered,
' You're dead to earth, dear, now—the mystery's cleared—
Thank me for this, we loved so well above
I couldn't be happy here without you, love.'
Amongst the gaping throng, Peng stood in dread,
Hoping he dreamt; but fearing he was dead,
When Yama said : ' 'Tis true you're called to rest,
Do you complain, or do you ought request ' ?
' You might, oh god,' said Peng, ' have taken my life
Ere I had wedded yonder grinning wife,
In Hades I shall know no rest, I fear ;
Unless she's sent to life, don't leave me here.'
The grim god smiled in answer to Peng's prayer,
And said ' I'll try to please this happy pair,
Rebirth I'll grant them in the world of life,
But ne'er again to meet in married strife ;
By trick my venal imps Peng's death delayed ;
T' were nobler to have faced Fate undismayed.
Go, live th' allotted life and cease to scheme ;
Away ye imps, dip them in Lethe's stream,
And pass them to the mortal's world above,
To live a mortal's life of hate and love.'



MUK LAN'S PARTING.

A Ballad.

[It is not known who wrote this ballad, but some suppose the famous heroine herself wrote it. It is taken from the poetry of the Tang Dynasty.]

Chick, chick, and o'er again chiek, chick,
Muk Lan sits at her door and weaves,
Not heard the loom nor shuttle's elick,
Only is heard the sighs she heaves.

唧 | 復 唧 |
木 蘭 當 戶 織
不 聞 機 杼 聲
唯 聞 女 嘆 息

Ask her on what her thoughts do dwell,
Ask her who 'tis she bears in mind ;
Nought does her thought, she'll say, impel,
On none her memory dwells you'll find.

問 女 何 所 思
問 女 何 所 憶
女 亦 無 所 思
女 亦 無 所 憶

Last night a war placard she read ;
His Majesty calls men to fight ;
The notice o'er twelve sections spread,
And each her father's name did cite.

昨 夜 見 軍 帖
可 汗 大 點 兵
軍 書 十 二 卷
卷 卷 有 爺 名

Her father has no grown-up son,
 No elder brother has Muk Lan ;
 So she to buy a horse has gone,
 That for her father fight she can.

阿爺無大兒
 木蘭無長兄
 願爲市鞍馬
 從此替爺征

In the Eastern mart she buys a steed,
 In the Western mart a saddle buys,
 In the Southern mart a bridle to lead,
 And the Northern mart her whip supplies.

東市買駿馬
 西市買鞍轡
 南市買轡頭
 北市買長鞭

At morn she from her parents parts,
 At eve she stands by Wong Ho's shore.
 At parents' call not now she starts ;
 Heard but the rapid river's roar.

朝辭爺娘去
 暮宿黃河邊
 不聞爺娘喚女聲
 但聞黃河流水鳴濺

She fords and from the river parts,
 By eve has gained the Amur's source.
 At parents' call not now she starts ;
 Heard but the tramp of Mongol horse.

且辭黃河去
 暮至黑水頭
 不聞爺娘喚女聲
 但聞燕山胡騎鳴啾

At the Great Wall their arms they snatch ;
 They pass like birds the border line ;
 The bleak airs pierce the steel-clad watch ;
 The cold lights on their armour shine.

萬里赴戎機
 關山度若飛
 朔氣傳金柝
 寒光照鐵衣

Their chief in a hundred fights lies low ;
 The brave, who fought and toiled ten years
 Return and to the Emperor go ;
 His Majesty in state appears :

將軍百戰死
 壯士十年歸
 歸來見天子
 天子坐明堂

Nobility on all bestows,
 With money freely all rewards,
 And bids each one a wish disclose.
 Muk Lan all office disregards,
 She only asks for camels fleet,
 That to her home she may retreat.

策勳十二轉
 賞賜百千疆
 可汗問所欲
 木蘭不用尚書郎
 願借明駝千
 送兒還故鄉
 百足

Her parents heard their daughter come,
 And to receive and help her went ;
 Her elder sister heard her come,
 And dressed herself for the event ;
 Her younger brother heard her come,
 And he on killing sheep was bent.

爺 娘 聞 女 來
 出 郭 相 扶 將
 阿 姊 聞 妹 來
 當 戶 理 紅 妝
 小 弟 聞 姊 來
 磨 刀 霍 霍 向 猪 羊

Oh, ope for me my East room door !
 Let me sit on my West room bed
 And doff my martial robes ! Once more
 In clothes of old days let me tread ;
 At window dress my cloudy hair,
 At glass deck it with flowers rare.

開 我 東 閣 門
 坐 我 西 間 牀
 脫 我 戰 時 袍
 着 我 舊 時 裳
 當 窓 理 雲 鬢
 對 鏡 帖 花 黃

Her comrades she goes forth to see ;
 They, in astonishment, all say
 ' Twelve years together marched did we,
 Yet you did not your sex betray.'

出 門 看 火 伴
 火 伴 皆 驚 忙
 同 行 十 二 年
 不 知 木 蘭 是 女 郎

She says ' With hares the buck may slide,
 ' The doe deceit and cunning show,
 How, when a pair run side by side,
 Can yon distinguish buck from doe ?

雄 兔 脚 撲 朔
 雌 兔 眼 迷 離
 雙 兔 傍 地 走
 安 能 辨 我 是 雄 雌

HONGKONG:

PRINTED BY KELLY & WALSH, LIMITED,
QUEEN'S ROAD AND DUDELL STREET.

1899.

