LEAVES

FROM

MY CHINESE SCRAPBOOK.

BY

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"WAIFS AND STRAYS FROM THE FAR EAST,"
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TO

MY KIND FRIENDS

MR. AND MRS. GEORGE F. SEWARD,

IN RECOLLECTION

OF

MANY HAPPY HOURS SPENT

AT THE UNITED STATES LEGATION, PEKING.

This Book

IS

DEDICATED.

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CHAPTER I.

*THE FIRST EMPEROR.**

AN eminent writer of the present century has hazarded the conjecture that in the unwritten history of the globe might be found the names of many great and distinguished men of whom the world knows nothing; that in bygone ages and in distant lands there have been Ciceros and Cæsars, Hannibals and Homers,—may we suggest, in all seriousness, Beaconsfields and Bismarcks?—whose fame has never reached the shores of Europe, and whose memories have perished with their lives. Strange to say, we have heard this striking notion characterised as shallow. The criticism seems ungracious: profound it may not be, but there can be no question of its truth, nor of the fact that it is very little realised or thought of. That there are great countries in the world, with long and eventful histories, of which not one man in ten thousand knows the smallest trifle, is a statement

* Authorities consulted:—The *Shih Chi;* the *T'ung Ch'ien;* the *Kok Shi Riak;* the *T'ai P'ing Kuang Chi;* *Mémoires concernant les Chinois;* and *Histoire de la Chine.*

which no one acquainted with China will dispute. The educated European is versed only in the ancient and modern history of the continent to which he belongs, and in that of Western Asia. The rise and fall of the Greek and Roman powers; the development of their intellectual life; the varying fortunes of their component states; the prowess of their commanders; the writings of their dramatists and poets, and the speculations of their philosophers: all these are familiar enough, in a general way, to the well-read gentleman of Europe. But does it ever enter his consciousness that Greece may not be the only land which ever produced a Plato or a Sophocles; that other worlds than that he is so well acquainted with may lie beyond the Ural Mountains and the Caucasus, the literatures of which present a treasure-house of instruction and delight, to which he may have access if he will; that Europe has not monopolised the statesmen and the warriors, the poets and reformers, the men of mark and women of command who have hitherto appeared among the nations of the earth; that deeds of heroism and daring, scenes of voluptuousness and revelry, triumphs of intellect and skill, brilliant campaigns and hard-won victories, revolutions, restorations, and reforms —all the phenomena, in a word, of national and social life—have signalised the history of a giant land whose past is shrouded in obscurity, and whose present is substantially ignored? Hardly; or, if such a speculation were to cross his mind, he would dismiss it as treating of persons and events as far removed from his sphere of being as if they belonged to another planet than our own. It is this apathy and this ignorance which future years will, we hope, dispel.

We have decided to take the reign of the great Emperor Chêng as the subject of the present sketch, because it marks, in many ways, a new departure in the national life of China. For at least four hundred years prior to this time, the country had been in a condition so unsettled as almost to border upon anarchy. It was split up into independent states continually at war with one another and among themselves. No fewer than nine sovereigns reigned over the territory bounded by the modern Chih-li on the north, and Ssŭ-ch'uan on the south; of these the most powerful was the King of Ts'in, whose domains comprised a fifth part of the whole of China, and whose subjects amounted to a tenth of the entire population; while the next in power and importance to Ts'in was his overlord, the King of Chou, who represented the dynasty from which this period of Chinese history takes its name. Now, at the time of which we are writing, there had been war between the states of Chao and Ts'in, at the conclusion of which a treaty had been made and hostages exchanged, according to the fashion of the day, as a guarantee of mutual good faith. Into the details of the dispute itself it is unnecessary to enter; the only point we need remark about it being that the end of the struggle left the state of Chao enfeebled, while the state of Ts'in had proportionately gained in strength. The convention concluded between the two was, however, not entirely one-sided; the King of Ts'in entered into recognisances on his part to abstain from further aggressions, and was forced to include, among the hostages offered to the King of Chao, his own grandson I-jên, then a child of very tender age. This lad spent several years in the principality of Chao, and seems

to have become a great favourite with all who were brought into contact with him. He grew up a bright, clever, high-spirited youth, with frank and engaging manners, and much semblance, at any rate, of amiability; we hear nothing of any leaning to ambition or intrigue, and probably, had he been left to himself, he might have enjoyed a better if not more brilliant future than was actually in store for him. But, by one of those strange and most unlikely *contrétemps* which so often turn the course of the world's affairs when seemingly most full of promise, he became the tool of an adventurer whose daring was only equalled by the success which crowned his schemes.

The man whose influence affected so remarkably the fortunes of the young Prince, and, through him, of China generally, was a travelling jeweller. How the two strangely assorted companions were first brought together is not very clear; but it appears that the Prince, who was very fond of gems, ornaments, and other articles of *vertu*, was attracted to the merchant by the tempting quality of his wares. The fact that Lü Pu-wei was a compatriot of his own, too, may have had some influence in cementing the regard felt towards him by the exiled Prince; but, however it may have been, Lü was not the man to lose whatever advantage might be reaped from intimacy with a scion of the royal house. He accordingly attached himself more closely to the person of the Prince, and let no opportunity pass of insinuating himself into his confidence. Unlike most adventurers, however, he did not rise from humble aspirations step by step to more audacious projects. The curious thing about this man was that he conceived, from the very first, the grand design which he

afterwards kept steadily in view; a design so impudent, and so apparently impossible of accomplishment, that we can hardly help admiring the coolness and fixity of purpose which eventually carried it through. What this plan was, may be stated in two words. It amounted to no less than the acquisition of the throne of Ts'in for his own son.

The difficulties in the way of this project were even greater than might be at first supposed. The Prince, through whom it was to be brought about, was not only a younger son of the heir-apparent his father, but was the offspring of a concubine. The first step, therefore, was to procure his recognition as the legitimate son and successor of the future King; and to this end was the ingenuity of the merchant now directed. Conversing with the Prince one day on affairs of family and state, he took the opportunity of pointing out to him the unsatisfactory nature of his position. He reminded I-jên that, as simply one of a numerous family of children, his present prospects of ever coming to the throne were absolutely *nil*. The old King could not live much longer; the heir-apparent, then a man in the prime of life, would immediately succeed him, and his choice of a successor would probably fall on one or other of his elder sons. Now the future Queen herself was childless,—a matter of great grief to both her husband and herself; and as there seemed no chance of her ever becoming a mother, the only thing that she could do would be to adopt one of her husband's children by a concubine. The great point, therefore, urged the merchant, was that the Princess's choice should fall upon I-jên; to further which, he offered to repair to the court of Ts'in with rich presents of jewellery from the Prince

himself, and do all he could to interest that lady on his behalf.

The Prince entered warmly into the scheme, and begged the merchant to set off at once. That worthy lost no time in commencing his journey, and soon presented himself at the court of Ts'in, where, as the accredited friend of the absent Prince, he met with a cordial welcome. The old King asked him a thousand questions about his grandson; what sort of a youth he was, how he lived, and what the country itself was like. Nor, as may be supposed, were the Prince and Princess less anxious for information; and so skilfully did the envoy play his cards that he succeeded eventually in securing the adoption of his *protégé* by the latter with her husband's full consent, and the rank of preceptor to His Highness for himself.

So far, therefore, the fortune that had attended his efforts was brilliant in the extreme. He was already the acknowledged guardian of the heir-presumptive; a few more years might see him the confidential adviser of the King. But he aspired to be, not the adviser only, but the father, of a king; and now commenced the most difficult part of his intrigues. The first thing to be done was to secure himself a son; for up till now he seems to have been childless. He accordingly repaired to a professed pander, or dealer in female slaves, and gave him an order for the handsomest and most attractive girl that he could find. She was required, also, to be above the average in mental accomplishments, and no difficulty was to be made about price so long as she came up to all the stipulated requirements. The dealer was not long in producing a suitable person; the bargain was soon struck, and the merchant conveyed his purchase in triumph to his house.

As the Prince had insisted upon Lü Pu-wei occupying a palace near his own, in order that their intercourse might be as free and unrestricted as possible, no very considerable time elapsed before his eye fell upon the lovely mistress of his tutor. This girl, instructed by Lü Pu-wei, simulated an excessive coyness, which, added to the many personal graces with which she was endowed, inflamed still more the growing passion of the Prince. The prospect of becoming Queen, and mother of a King, was sufficiently dazzling to one who was even then no more than the property of her employer, and she fell readily into his schemes. At last the fish was hooked. I-jên avowed his passion to his friend, and begged him to let him have the girl. Lü Pu-wei hung back, and affected some resentment. The Prince, however, returned so frequently to the charge, that Lü Pu-wei found no difficulty in pretending to be won over by degrees, and eventually gave his consent. "I give you my most cherished possession," he said, as he yielded to his victim's importunities; "and I only ask that you will see in this act of self-sacrifice a proof of my complete devotion to your person."

It is probable that the merchant so arranged the matter as to make his concubine over to the Prince as soon as ever she declared herself *enceinte*. Some writers have hesitated to believe that the child she afterwards bore was really the son of Lü Pu-wei, on the ground that she had been already living with the latter for a considerable time, and the child was not born for a full year afterwards. It has been urged, too, that as the name of Chêng is held in execration by the *literati* of China generally, as the incendiary of books, they have framed this story by way

of throwing dishonour on his birth. But it is as difficult to believe that so clever a scamp as Lü Pu-wei would have made so clumsy a blunder in his calculations, as that the future Emperor was born after an abnormal pregnancy of twelve months. The fact appears to be that only eight months elapsed between the surrender of the slave-girl to the Prince, and the birth of the child; and in this case the probabilities are certainly in favour of the popular version of its paternity.

No suspicion, however, seems to have suggested itself to the mind of the confiding Prince. He was so much in love with his new bride, and so delighted with the son she presented to him, that he declared his resolution to raise the former to the rank of legal wife, and the latter to the position of his acknowledged heir. As regards the second part of his intention, there need have been no difficulty; for though married for a considerable time, he had no other children. But his wish to make the mother of the child a Princess was firmly resisted by that lady herself, who, acting under the instructions of her accomplice, declined the proposed honour, on the score of her humble origin. She continued to busy herself with household affairs; she nursed her infant herself, and treated her less fortunate companions in the harem with so much meekness and docility as to disarm all jealousy, and even to win their love. She played a waiting game, and lost nothing by her unaspiring policy.

And now we must glance for a moment at what had been going on in the state of Ts'in. It seems to have been a necessity on the part of the old King, Chao Hsiang Wang, to be perpetually at war with somebody; and having no pretext for attacking the states of Han, Wei,

and Chou, he persuaded himself that the treaty he had formerly concluded with the King of Chao was not sufficiently favourable to his own interests to be allowed to stand. He therefore recommenced operations against this state by attempting to gain possession of Yen-yü, a town situated at some distance from Han-tan, the capital of his rival's kingdom. This place, although in an outlying district, was deemed worthy of preservation by the King of Chao and a general named Chao Chih was forthwith despatched with a large army to its relief. On his arrival, however, at the scene of action, he found that it had already been invested by the enemy; and the invading general, on hearing of his approach, immediately decided to give battle. A short but decisive engagement took place, which, owing to good generalship on the part of the Chao commander, ended in the forces of Ts'in being entirely routed. The siege was raised, and the army of Chao Hsiang Wang ignominiously put to flight. But this defeat, though unexpected, did but little to weaken the growing power of Ts'in; and the King of Wei, who had been subdued but a short time previously, thought it prudent to avail himself of its temporary repulse to form a defensive alliance with the King of Tsi. For this purpose he deputed a man named Hsü Chia as his ambassador, accompanied by the philosopher Fan Tsü. The envoys received an honourable welcome at the court of Tsi, the King being so struck with the wisdom and prudent conversation of Fan Tsü that he presented him with a quantity of gold on his departure. This so excited the jealousy of Hsü Chia, who had received no such mark of favour, that on his return to the court of Wei he denounced his colleague as a traitor, representing the present he had received

in the light of a shameless bribe. The evidence against Fan Tsü appeared so crushing that the Premier, before whom the accusation was made, caused him to be beaten within an inch of his life, and left him lying on the highway for dead. The unlucky philosopher, however, managed to crawl away under cover of the night, and immediately repaired to the Ts'inese Embassy, where he offered his services to the ambassador then residing at the court of the King of Wei. The ambassador took in the situation at a glance, accepted the philosopher's proposals, and accompanied him without loss of time to the court of Chao-Hsiang Wang.

The entrance of the philosopher at his first audience seems to have been characterised by extreme rudeness. The old King, on the other hand, no sooner saw that his visitor was clad in a sage's robes than he caused the audience-chamber to be cleared, descended from his throne, and received him on his knees. A dialogue then ensued, in which Fan Tsü rebuked the King for certain disorders in his government, and urged such reforms as he thought necessary. The King took his scolding in good part, and promised that the changes should be made; indeed, such was the effect made upon his mind by the uncompromising counsels of the philosopher that he took him from henceforth into his full confidence, and did nothing without first asking his advice. It is but fair to say, however, that the counsels of Fan Tsü were of a nature in themselves to please the King, as they had for their object the aggrandisement of his territories. "I am the only one in your Majesty's dominions," he said on one occasion, "who fears that your descendants will not remain masters of your present holdings." This remark struck the King with

force, and caused him to place himself unreservedly in the hands of his new Minister.

And now, by a singular freak of fortune, who should come to the court of Ts'in, as ambassador from the King of Wei, but the philosopher's old enemy, Hsü Chia. It must have been a disagreeable surprise to him to meet the rival he fancied he had killed, and still more galling to be compelled in a measure to pay his court to him. Nor did Fan Tsü feel disposed to make things easier for him. He received him with a stern and haughty air, bidding him return to his master and say that it was useless for him to talk of peace until he chose to send the head of Wu Chih, the Premier who had committed so barbarous an outrage upon his person; threatening that, if this were not soon done, he, Fan Tsü, would lead his armies to the very heart of Wei, and lay the capital in ruins. The required head not being forthcoming, two towns of Wei were taken by the troops of Ts'in; but by way of indemnifying himself for his clemency in not razing the capital itself, he set on foot a bloody campaign against the King of Han. The success which attended these cruel measures served only to make the King of Ts'in more anxious for fresh conquests; and irritated by the recent defeat of his soldiers by the forces of Chao, at the attempted capture of Yen-yü, he decided to march straight upon the capital, where his grandson was still living as a hostage.

On receiving a private communication from his grandfather warning him of the impending danger, I-jên escaped from the court of Chao, and soon arrived at his ancestral state. His wife and child he left in the care of Lü Pu-wei; but no sooner was his flight known than Lü himself became the object of suspicion. His connection with the

Prince had been long no secret, and he now found himself for the first time under arrest. The stake for which he had been playing was too high, however, to be relinquished without an effort; and, great as were the difficulties surrounding him, he succeeded in corrupting his guards and making his escape. He soon arrived at the court of Ts'in, bringing with him the Princess—for such she may now be styled—and her son, now a growing lad; where, we need scarcely say, he was enthusiastically received by the King and the heir-apparent, and loaded with gifts and honours.

Then commenced a series of triumphs on the part of the King of Ts'in, followed in each case by massacres of the most wholesale and horrible description. Forty thousand prisoners of war were beheaded in Han and ninety thousand in Chao. Like a swarm of hungry locusts, the troops of Ts'in found lands as the garden of Eden before them which they left a desolate wilderness; nothing escaped their devastations, and the terror of them spread over the whole country. In despair, the King, or Emperor as he has been called, of Chou, ordered a blind attack to be made upon the advancing army by the other princes in a body, but it was too late; and, convinced of the infatuation of his design, he went of his own accord and tendered his submission to his conquering vassal. That monarch received his suzerain with condescension, accepted his humble apologies for the past, and took possession of thirty-six of his towns and thirty thousand soldiers. From this moment the dynasty of Chou may be said to have become extinct. Although the empire was not actually brought under the sway of a single sceptre, the power of the state of Ts'in was growing so rapidly

that it was clear the old order of things was irrevocably doomed; reverses were yet in store for the conquerors, but the day was fast approaching when the great object they had held in view should be once and for all attained.

During this campaign against the states of Han and Chao the King of Ts'in died. But, as if the fates had ordained that nothing should intervene to delay the consummation of his hopes, or retard the accession of the Coming Man, who was to complete the work he had left unfinished, his two successors were speedily cut off. The heir-apparent died a few days after the decease of his father, and I-jên took possession of the throne. He continued the wars which his grandfather had bequeathed to him, and gained great victories over the states of Chao, Han, and Chou; but, in an evil moment, he allowed his energies to be diverted to the state of Wei, and here he received a check. Five princes joined together to resist the rapacious invader, and a bloody engagement took place, in which the ever-victorious army was routed and put to flight. But this disaster was the almost immediate cause of the final triumph of Ts'in. The King took it so much to heart that he sickened and soon died, after a turbulent reign of only five years, thus making way for the son of the adventurer and the courtesan, who was then just thirteen years of age.

To write a sketch, however slight, of the reign of Shih Huang Ti, or the "First Emperor," without giving a detailed account of the steps by which he succeeded in bringing the empire under a single sway, will probably seem to most readers as absurd and vain a task as to write a history of Queen Anne without dwelling upon the great military achievements of the Duke of Marl-

borough and Prince Eugene. We have elected, nevertheless, to pursue this course in a certain measure. To our mind, there is nothing drearier or more sickening than the minute chronicles of petty wars; wars involving no great principle, directed to no righteous end, but simply undertaken to glut the greed of the aggressor or satisfy his taste for blood; wars prompted by the meanest and most unworthy motives, and aided by the foulest perjury and intrigue. That the unification of the empire was an eventual benefit to China we do not dispute; that it called into play the powers of an almost master mind, whose boldness and originality, courage and perseverance, are more or less entitled to our admiration, will be as readily acknowledged. "What must be done," asked the King of Liang in conversation with Mencius two hundred years before, "for the empire to be tranquillised?" "It must be united under one sway," replied the philosopher. So far Shih Huang Ti seems to have been at one with Mencius. But the means he took to accomplish this great end would have been utterly condemned by that high authority. "Who can so unite it?" pursued the King. "One," replied his interlocutor, "who has no pleasure in killing men." It was by a liberal, just, and unselfish policy towards the people that the empire should have been consolidated; a wise, firm, but merciful system of government, which, as Confucius said, would have imparted joy to contiguous states and attracted distant ones. But the times of which we are writing were not calculated to produce the beneficent and prudent ruler here described; and it is no more than justice to Shih Huang Ti to say that he was the natural offspring of the period in which he lived. We shall therefore hurry over the

unpleasing details of his wars and devastations, believing that the laconic style of the Spring and Autumn Classic is the one most suitable for imitation in dealing with a subject so distasteful.

Aided by Lü Pu-wei, who now found himself a Prince of the Realm and confidential adviser to his own son, and the eminent statesman Li Ssŭ, of whom more anon, the new King commenced his operations by sowing dissensions between the states of Chao and Yen. When their mutual animosity had culminated in the outbreak of hostilities, the King of Ts'in affected to espouse the cause of the latter state on the ground of its having come off second best; and, under pretext of rendering assistance to Yen, captured nine cities from Chao, which he added to his own possessions. He then availed himself of a struggle that was going on between Chou and Wei to play a precisely similar game; and, making common cause with the former state, succeeded in reducing the latter to submission. This accomplished, he turned his arms once more against the state of Chao; but on this occasion he suffered a reverse, owing to the bravery and good generalship of Li Mu, the leader of his adversary's forces. Smarting under this check, the baffled conqueror had resort to artifice. By dint of bribes and promises he succeeded in suborning a certain minion of the King of Chao named Ku Kai; and this degraded being, who belonged to a class unhappily never rare at Chinese courts, undertook to ruin the General Li Mu by representing him as a traitor to his master. This infamous design was facilitated by the loss of three most important fastnesses belonging to the state of Chao, which fell into the hands of the enemy, and the unhappy general was forthwith put

to death. The state of Chao being thus enfeebled and disorganised, the next victim was the King of Han. This unfortunate Prince, foreseeing the inevitable calamities in store for him, tendered his submission of his own accord; but the ruthless conqueror, not content with what his neighbour voluntarily relinquished to him, marched upon the capital, made prisoners of the King, his family, and his nobles, and butchered them to a man.

And now occurred an event which shows how utterly heartless and devoid of all human feelings the King of Ts'in had become. It appears that while he and his father, then Prince I-jên, were living as hostages at the court of Chao, he had formed a close friendship with Prince Tan of Yen, a child of his own age or thereabouts, who was stationed there in the same capacity as himself. This Prince, weary of the listless life he was leading in his father's palace, came to the court of Ts'in, never doubting that he would meet with an affectionate welcome at the hands of his former friend; but he little knew how different a person was the conquering King of Ts'in from the playmate of his childhood, and so insultingly cold was the reception he met with, and so mortifying the treatment he continued to receive, that he returned to his father's in disgust. There the affair might have ended; a short time afterwards, however, before his rage had had time to cool, his protection was demanded by a general of Chêng's army, who had somehow incurred the displeasure of his sovereign. Prince Tan received him warmly; but so deep was his resentment towards the King of Ts'in that he thought more of vengeance than of hospitality towards the refugee. His object now was the assassination of Chêng, and he found a ready instrument for his

purpose in a certain man named Ching K'o, a native of Wei, who had private reasons for hating the powerful despot. The great difficulty was to obtain an audience of the King; and Ching K'o suggested that the best means would be to take him, as a present, the head of the offending general. The King of Yen, however, peremptorily forbade so gross a breach of hospitality as the murder of his guest; and the plan would in all probability have fallen through had it not been that a strange but most original idea suggested itself to the intending assassin. He appealed to the general himself, representing that the injuries he had suffered at the hands of the King of Ts'in could only be mortally avenged through the sacrifice of his own life. "By giving me your head," urged Ching K'o, "you place it in my power to kill your own enemy, and to rid the world of its common oppressor; the whole empire will thus owe its enfranchisement to you." "I have but one desire left," replied the general, "and that is, revenge;" with which word he cut his throat, and fell dead upon the spot. Ching K'o then took off the head and repaired with it to the court of Ts'in, obtained an audience of the King, and presented him with his horrible offering. While Chêng was bending forward to examine it, the assassin struck at him with a dagger; but, owing to a quick motion of the King's body, he missed his aim. Recovering himself, he threw the dagger at the King; but it only grazed his robes, and the wretched man was overpowered after a brief struggle, in which he lost a leg. He then made a full confession of the whole conspiracy, and was accordingly put to death.

No better pretext than this could have been forthcoming for Chêng to turn his arms against the state of Yen.

Here he was again victorious, though in consideration of the fact that the King of that state repudiated all knowledge of the plot, and decapitated his son, the Prince of Tan, for being its prime instigator, he left him in temporary possession of his throne. He then, after a brief campaign, succeeded in annihilating the state of Wei; and flushed by his continued triumphs, set on foot a final attack upon the state of Chou. He first despatched an army of two hundred thousand men, under the leadership of Li Hsin; but this force proving terribly insufficient, he entrusted the famous general Wang Ts'ien with another army three times as numerous, and sent him to the relief of his vanquished colleague. In less than a year the entire principality was subdued, and, owing to the moderation of Wang Ts'ien, with comparatively little carnage. This achieved, the King of Ts'in gave the *coup-de-grâce* to the King of Yen, and assumed possession of his state. Seeing the desperate condition of affairs, the King of Tsi came with all his family, in very humble guise, and offered his submission too; upon which the King of Ts'in, now master of the whole of China, allowed him, with unusual clemency, to escape into a barren wilderness, where he died of hunger and destitution. The conqueror then assumed the title of Shih Huang Ti, or the First Emperor, and ordained that all his successors should call themselves Second Emperor, Third Emperor, and so on, from that time forward and for ever.*

The events above recapitulated have brought us to the year 221 B.C., being the twenty-sixth year of his reign and

* *Huang*, Emperor; *Ti*, Ruler—the combination implying that he united the merits of the Three great emperors, with the virtues of the Five great rulers, of antiquity.

the thirty-ninth of his age. We are now at liberty to return to the time of his accession, and trace the course of the more interesting events which marked his domestic history. During the first decade of his reign, affairs of state were placed under the direction of the Emperor's guardian, Lü Pu-wei, whom he created Marquis of Wên Hsin. Now, it will be remembered that the Queen Dowager, widow of the Prince I-jên, had begun her career as the concubine of this man, then a travelling vendor of curiosities; and no sooner was the Prince her husband dead than the relations formerly existing between the two became renewed. For some time the secret of their intercourse seems to have been pretty successfully preserved; but it could not remain so always, and the other Ministers of State began to suspect some scandal. The new Marquis then hit upon a very strange and crooked expedient for averting the danger that might come upon himself. Among his retainers there was a young and very handsome lad named Lao Ai, who, from his soft and beardless face, might very well pass for a eunuch. He suggested, then, to the Queen Dowager that Lao Ai should be admitted into the number of her attendants, in order that, should any further scandal arise about his own familiarities with Her Majesty, suspicion might be diverted towards this boy. The one-sidedness of this scheme seems curious enough, and we are at first disposed to wonder that the selfishness of her paramour did not turn the Queen's affection into disgust. But this insatiable woman, who was but thirty years of age, no sooner saw the beautiful page provided for her than she consented at once to the arrangement, and forthwith abandoned herself to the unrestrained indulgence of her new passion.

This intrigue resulted in the birth of two sons, the influence of the *soi-disant* eunuch growing rapidly greater as the months went by. Soon he was created a Marquis, with the title of Chang Hsin; the territory of T'ai-yuen in the modern province of Shansi was conferred upon him as his fief; the government of the country passed almost entirely into his hands, and strangers from distant parts came and sought employment in his service.

Among the courtiers of the King, however, were certain persons who had on several occasions come into collision with the Queen's paramour, and who consequently bore a hearty grudge against him. Nothing was easier than to effect his ruin, both on account of his gross violation of power, and also on that of his criminal intimacy with the Queen Dowager. These nobles accordingly discovered the state of affairs to the young King, and denounced Lao Ai as an impostor of the worst description. The King immediately despatched some high officials to investigate the affair; whereupon Lao Ai, taking the alarm, stole the royal seal, put himself at the head of an army, and attacked the palace as an avowed rebel. Two eminent commanders, named Chang P'ing and Chang Wên respectively, who held the rank of Princes of the State, then marched against him, and a battle took place at Hsien Yang, in which, says the historian, many hundred heads were struck off. The insurgents were routed, and their leader put to flight; but he was soon captured, and then the true horrors of the whole affair began. The carnage and the cruelty were awful. Every member of the families of his father, his mother, and his wife was put to death. Lao Ai and all his creatures were then tied severally to carts by their four limbs, and torn to pieces;

even the relations of those in his employ were ruthlessly butchered. Those who had but little to do with his crimes, were banished to the modern province of Ssŭ-chuan, to the number of four thousand families; the Dowager was exiled to a place called Yung in Shansi; and her two innocent children were barbarously dashed to pieces in sacks. The King then issued a decree warning all against daring to expostulate with him respecting his treatment of the Queen Mother, threatening that all who did so should be put to death, their limbs cut off, and heaped together in front of the palace gate.

This brutal threat, however, was powerless to restrain the righteous indignation of the people. No fewer than twenty-seven noble-minded men braved the royal monster, and a hideous stack of bloody arms and legs was soon to be seen in the courtyard of the palace. But soon after, a certain man named Mao Chiao, a native of the state of Tsi, undauntedly demanded audience; avowing in the most intrepid manner that his object was the same as that for which his twenty-seven predecessors had been so barbarously murdered. When the King heard of the application, he was lost in astonishment and rage; but being almost incredulous that any one should be so infatuated, and, possibly, satiated for the moment with his recent slaughters, he despatched an attendant to investigate the matter more closely.

"One would think you had never seen the heap of arms and legs in front of the palace gate," was the grim remark of His Majesty, delivered by the messenger to Mao Chiao.

"I have heard," returned Mao Chiao coolly, "that, in the sky, there are just twenty-eight constellations. Up

till the present time, only twenty-seven persons have been killed; I come, because I wish to complete the number." I have no fear of death."

So the messenger returned and reported Mao Chiao's answer to the King. In the meantime all the members of Mao Chiao's family, who lived in the same neighbourhood as he, got wind of the affair, and made off with all speed, carrying their clothes and provisions with them on their backs. The King flew into a terrible rage when he heard what Mao Chiao had said. "This man has come with the deliberate intention of insulting me," he exclaimed. "Let a cauldron be immediately prepared, that he may be boiled to death; the punishment inflicted on the others would be far too merciful for him." Then, grasping a two-edged sword, the ogre seated himself, his mouth in a froth with fury, and ordered the attendants to bring in the delinquent. Mao Chiao advanced quietly to the foot of the throne, prostrated himself twice, then rising, said:—

"There are those living who do not fear death; there are states which do not dread being overthrown. Those who fear death lose their lives; those who dread the overthrow of their states are unable to preserve them. Now wise monarchs are all most eager to hear about life and death, extinction and preservation; does your Majesty desire to do so?"

"What do you mean?" inquired the King.

"Your Majesty's conduct is cruel and outrageous," was the undaunted rejoinder; "don't you know it yourself? You have torn your sham-father to pieces with carts; you tied your two brothers up in sacks and then dashed them to death; you have sent your mother into exile, and barbarously slaughtered all the worthy men who expostu-

lated with you. The vilest tyrants never went to such lengths as this. When the world hears of it, all hearts will be estranged from you, and not a man will come near the state of Ts'in. Your servant presumes to tremble for your Majesty. This is all I have to say."

So saying he stripped off his clothes, and placed himself in readiness to be taken up with the pincers and put into the cauldron to be boiled. But the King, descending from his daïs, stretched forth his hand and stopped him. "Rise, Master," said he, "and put on your robes again. I am willing to receive instruction at your hands." Then he raised him to an honourable place among his counsellors, and set off himself in his royal chariot to fetch the Dowager from her place of banishment, leaving the seat on his left vacant, in order that she might occupy it on the return journey. The lion's mouth was stopped for that time, and the King, rendered uneasy, probably, by the warnings of Mao Chiao, promised that he would not be more truculent than he could help in future.

This incident occurred in the ninth year of his reign, and seventeen years before his assumption of the Imperial title. The year afterwards Lü Pu-wei was banished to the state of Chao, where he led a miserable and discontented life, eventually putting an end to his own existence by poison just twelve years after the accession of his son to the throne. His fate, compared with that of the other actors in the tragedy, was merciful in the extreme.

Ten years after this the Queen Dowager also died. She appears from all accounts to have been a commonplace character, who would have been harmless enough had she not been made the tool of an audacious and unscrupulous adventurer. Her ruling passion seems to have been

sensuality; in other respects she was simply an ignorant woman, characterised by the vulgar ambition to shine so often found among her class. Her part in the events we have detailed was a passive rather than an active one.

In the twenty-eighth year of his reign the Emperor made a grand progress through his dominions. He visited all the famous mountains and rivers in the kingdom, arriving at length on the shore of the Eastern Sea. There, with great pomp and ceremony, he offered solemn sacrifices to the Lords of Heaven and Earth, the canonised spirit of Ch'ih Yû, the Lords of the Yin and Yang, the Sun, the Moon, and the Four Seasons. After these religious exercises he turned south and ascended the mountain of Lan Ya, the prospect from the summit of which so delighted him that he stayed there three months, and built a terrace, on which he erected a monolith in commemoration of his visit. On this he inscribed a lengthy catalogue of his virtues and achievements, for doing which he incurred a severe remonstrance at the hands of the local worthies; but the Emperor, to his credit be it spoken, instead of boiling them alive for their impertinence, contented himself with recommending his disinterested advisers to confine themselves in future to their own concerns.

The event we are now about to relate is so mixed up with legend, and so differently described by different authors, that it is by no means easy to arrive at the actual truth. According to Ssŭ-ma Kuang, there was at this time, a certain mystic in the state of Yen, who had acquired considerable fame by his ability to go through all the Taoist pranks and capers which conduce to the exorcism of demons and the sublimation of the body. Numbers of people in both Yen and Tsi, who had a taste

for the marvellous, were in the habit of resorting to him for instruction; while three Princes had, successively, given in their full adherence to his pretensions, and, in deference to his assurances, sent expeditions across the ocean in search of the Three Isles of Fairyland—P'êng Lai, Fang Chang, and Ying Chou. These islands were said to be situated in the "North Sea," as it was then called, and were, of course, no other than Japan. It was currently believed that those who had made the voyage had actually arrived, had seen the Immortals who inhabited the mystic realm, and had drunk of the Elixir of Immortality. When, therefore, the Emperor arrived in the state of Yen, all the old mystics of the place, among whom was a man named Hsü Fu, overwhelmed him with memorials upon the subject, representing the islands as easy of access, and the acquisition of the wonderful elixir as a certainty. The Emperor, who was neither more nor less superstitious than his contemporaries, turned a ready ear to the story, and forthwith commissioned Hsü Fu to make a new attempt. A ship was then fitted out, and Hsü Fu, accompanied by a thousand virgin boys and girls, set sail for the fair realm. Just as they got within sight of the islands, however, a contrary wind arose and they were driven back to China; nor did they, as far as we are informed, attempt another voyage, it being a condition that, if they were destined to arrive, the wind would certainly be in their favour,—so that it was useless to try and counteract the atmospheric influences by skilful navigation.

So far the Chinese historian. We know for a fact, however, through Japanese histories, that Hsü Fu actually did arrive; indeed, his tomb is still shown to travellers.

"In the seventy-second year of Koré Tenno," says the *Kok Shi Riak*, "a man named Hsü Fu arrived in Japan from the state of Ts'in, accompanied by a thousand persons, consisting of men, women, and children. He also brought with him a certain book, and the object of his visit was to find the Elixir of Immortality. In this he was unsuccessful, and *he therefore never went back.* He took up his abode at Fusiyama, and his memorial temple is still to be seen at Kumano-san." It would appear from this, then, that a second expedition was fitted out and despatched at a later period; unless we are to conclude that the version given by Ssü-ma Kuang is altogether erroneous. The Chinese themselves say that Hsü Fu was the first mortal who ever set foot in Japan, and that it is from him that the entire nation of the Japanese are descended. This theory is to be traced, we believe, to Ou-yang Hsiu, the well-known historian and statesman of the Sung dynasty. The story of his voyage to Japan forms the basis of a curious legend which, though largely mixed with fable, is worth repeating here. "In the reign of Ts'in Shih Huang Ti," we read, "a number of murders were committed in Khokand, and the roads were strewn with corpses. But birds came, holding a certain sort of grass in their beaks which they spread over the faces of the dead men, whereupon the corpses immediately revived. The local authorities having reported the circumstance to the Emperor, he despatched messengers in search of this wonderful grass, commanding them to make inquiries upon the subject of Wang Hsü, the recluse of the Demon Valley, who told them that in the Eastern Sea there was an island called Tsû Chou, where the Herb of Immortality was to be found. 'It grows,' he said, 'in the Coral Fields,

and is known as the plant which nourishes the spirit. 'Its leaves resemble the water-grass called *kû*; it grows separately, and a single blade of it is sufficient to revive a thousand corpses.' Then the Emperor ordered an expedition to go and procure some of it, and sent Hsü Fu with three thousand boys and the same number of girls over the sea in search of the island Tsû Chou. They did not return, and nobody knew what became of them. But some time afterwards, a man named Shên Hsi having attained to immortality, the Yellow Emperor and Lao-tzŭ sent Hsü Fu in a chariot drawn by white tigers, Tu-shih Chün in a chariot drawn by dragons, and Pe-yen Chih in a chariot drawn by white stags, to receive Shên Hsi; after doing which they all returned together. Therefore it became known that Hsü Fu had attained to immortality. Later, in the reign of Hsüan Tsung, of the T'ang dynasty, there was a scholar who was afflicted with a very strange disease, half of his body being dried up and black. As the imperial physicians could make nothing of the case, the patient called his friends together and said, 'My body being in this condition, how can I live any longer? Now I hear that in the Eastern Sea there is an abode of Immortals, and it seems to me that I might go and beg them for a prescription to cure me.' His family were one and all against the project; he insisted, however, and, taking a servant and a supply of provisions with him, he soon arrived at Têng-chou [near Chefoo] on the sea-coast. There he found an empty boat in which he put all the things he had brought with him, hoisted sail, and went whither the wind carried him. In ten days' time he came in sight of a solitary island, on which there were several hundreds of people, all engaged

apparently in some act of worship. On the beach there was a woman washing herbs, of whom he inquired what they were all about. 'The personage in the middle, with white hair and beard,' replied the woman, pointing, 'is the Prince Hsü.' 'And who is the Prince Hsü?' inquired the stranger. 'Don't you know about Hsü Fu, who lived in the reign of Ts'in Shih Huang Ti?' asked the woman. 'Certainly I do,' he answered. 'Well, that is he,' said the woman. Then the assembly dispersed, and the traveller disembarked and went to pay his respects to Hsü Fu, telling him the object of his visit and begging for relief. 'Your malady will be cured now that you have seen me,' replied Hsü Fu. Then he set some fine rice before him, inviting him to eat; but in such tiny bowls that the stranger was rather offended, and complained of the niggardliness of his entertainment. 'As soon as you have eaten what I have set before you,' said the Immortal, 'I will give you more; but I fear you will be unable to finish what you already have.' Then the guest began to eat, and found that one of these little basins contained more than a great many large ones, so that he was more than satisfied. So with the wine; for though it was all in a little cup not bigger than a thimble, there proved to be so much of it that he made himself quite drunk. Next day, the Immortal gave him some black pills; and when he had taken them he evacuated several pints of black fluid, and found that his malady had disappeared. Then the patient besought Hsü Fu to permit him to remain in the capacity of his attendant; but the Immortal would not hear of it. 'You have still duties to perform and a position to keep up in the world,' he replied; 'you may stay no longer here. But do not fear

the length of the journey; I will cause an east wind to blow which will escort you safely home.' Then he gave him a bag of yellow drugs, saying, 'This medicine is a universal panacea. When, on your arrival in China, you meet any sick person, dilute a little with water and give it him to drink.' Then the traveller set sail, and on his arrival showed the elixir to Hsüan Tsung, telling him the story of his adventures; and many were the afflicted persons whom His Majesty caused to be healed by its use."

To return, however, from fable to history. While occupied with his travels through the empire, the Emperor incurred a very narrow risk of assassination. It appears that in the state of Han there was a family named Chang, of high respectability and worth, five generations of whom had served successive kings in the capacity of ministers. At the time of the conquest of Han by the King of Ts'in, this family seems to have been represented by a youth named Liang, who, indignant at the misfortunes of his country, made a secret vow to be revenged upon the usurper. He therefore bided his time, sacrificing lands, time, and all the money he possessed, to the one great object of his life. Eventually, he was in a position to offer a large reward to any man who would undertake to rid the world of such a monster as the King of Ts'in, and ere long a certain bold adventurer presented himself as a candidate for the prize. Chang Liang soon came to terms with him, and the assassin, armed with an enormous hatchet, a hundred and twenty pounds in weight, concealed himself by the side of the road along which the Emperor was expected to pass. The royal *cortège* at length came in sight, headed by the chariot of the sovereign; and the assassin, rushing out of his ambush, dealt

a blow at it which, had His Majesty been inside, would most effectually have quieted him for ever. It is conjectured that the Emperor had got wind of the conspiracy, and consequently rode in the *second* chariot instead of in the first; but, however this may be, the fact remains that the vehicle attacked was empty, the intended victim being in another part of the procession. Suspicion seems to have been immediately directed towards Chang Liang, and search was made for him far and near; but he evaded all pursuit, and lived to see the complete overthrow of the usurper's dynasty. His name has since been handed down to posterity as the reputed author of the celebrated Su Shu, and the man who contributed most to founding and consolidating the glorious dynasty of Han.

The lamentable poverty of all the native histories we have consulted precludes us from giving a proper account of the next great occurrence in the reign of Shih Huang Ti. We refer to the building of the Great Wall; an undertaking which is dismissed, with a bare mention of the fact, in about a couple of lines of large type. "In the thirty-second year of his reign"—B.C. 215—"the general Mêng T'ien drove out the invading Huns at the head of 300,000 soldiers, and took possession of the modern province of Honan, dividing it into forty-four departments. *He then built the Great Wall,* extending it over hill and dale, from the western extremity of Shan-si as far as Kuan-tung in Manchuria; thus covering a stretch of country ten thousand *li* in length." The event is not considered of sufficient importance to be more particularly described; the genius of the Chinese people, probably, not being such as to render them curious respecting the number of men employed,

the cost of the materials and labour, the time occupied in the work, and such like trivial details. The bare fact is all we have: that, in the thirty-third year of Chêng's reign, Mêng T'ien built the Wall. And if this is sufficient for the Chinese, it does not behove a European to be hypercritical.

Nor are we much better off when we approach the great achievement, *par excellence*, of this extraordinary person. That a man of letters should deem a vulgar piece of bricklaying beneath the dignity of his pen, we can well conceive; but that he should pass over the Burning of the Books with almost equal laconism is wonderful indeed. All we are told is, that, in the thirty-fourth year of his reign, the Minister Li Ssŭ presented the following memorial to the Emperor. "In former times," he wrote, "when the empire was divided, and all the feudal princes were fighting among themselves, the peripatetic Sages were in great request. But now that the empire is settled and brought under a single sway, the services of these men are no longer required. The energies of the people should be directed simply to tilling the ground for their livelihood; the educated classes should devote themselves to studying law and the decrees of Government. But instead of this, they guide themselves, not by the present, but by the past, condemning the present order of things as wrong; they put erroneous notions into the heads of the common people, and thereby promote much disorder. If they hear of any decree having been promulgated by your Majesty, each man takes upon himself to discuss its merits and criticise it by the standard of his own erudition; in private, their hearts are disloyal, while in public they make the laws of the realm the subject of their talk in all the streets of the

city. They acquire reputation by ostentatiously extolling your Majesty, and render themselves conspicuous by an affectation of eccentricity, misleading the people by all sorts of unfounded statements. If this is not put a stop to your Majesty's power will be imperilled, and sedition will become rife; while if measures are taken in time, it will be for the good of the empire. I therefore beg that your Majesty will cause all books to be burnt, excepting those on medicine, divination, agriculture, and astronomy, and such as have been written during the present reign; but let all others, particularly poems, histories, and philosophical works, that may be privately possessed, be burnt in a heap at the city gates. If any man dare so much as to mention the two words poetry and history, let him be immolated in the market-place. If any still dare to regard ancient times as preferable to the present, let them and all their families be destroyed. If any officers hear of such offences being committed and fail to report them, let them be regarded as guilty of the same crime themselves. And let all those who have not burnt their books within thirty days after the promulgation of the Decree, be sent into penal servitude. If any persons are desirous of studying law and the Imperial decrees, let them take officers of state for their preceptors."

What a situation have we here for the historian! In what vivid colours might he not depict the consternation and alarm which such a project must have caused throughout the empire, the consultations which no doubt took place among the *literati*, the means devised for evading the cruel decree, and, above all, the scenes which ensued when volume upon volume of precious lore was flung into the bonfire before the very eyes of the indignant owners!

Or, looked at from the more dispassionate standpoint of statesmanship, what an opportunity for weighing the immediate and subsequent results of the decree, for pointing the moral deducible from the eventual failure of the object held in view, and gauging in some measure the real motives which influenced the memorialist in recommending so barbarous and futile a policy to the tyrant! But all this is far beneath the dignity of Chinese history, the highest ideal of which appears to consist in as close an approximation as possible to an almanac. Three words, and three words only, follow the text of the memorial as given by Ssŭ-ma Tsien: "The Emperor agreed." The subject is then dismissed, and another event portrayed in as brief and laconic a style as the preceding. Ssŭ-ma Kuang, however, does add a little incident, for which it behoves us to be duly grateful. It appears that at this time there was a certain descendant of Confucius, named K'ung Fu, who stood foremost among the literary men of the day. To him remarked Ch'ên-yü, a native of the state of Wei, "His Majesty intends to destroy all the books of the former kings. Now you, Sir, as the descendant of the Holy Man, may be considered the representative and chief of the literary world; so you are in great danger." "The knowledge I possess," replied K'ung Fu, "is of no use in the present state of affairs; it is only my friends, such as you, who know me. Now the Emperor, not being my friend, knows nothing of me; in what danger, then, do I stand? I shall just retire into concealment, and wait until he sends after me; and when he does that, there will be no more to fear." One would think that the historian might have deemed it worth while, by the addition of four or even three more characters, to have chronicled the fact that many books

were preserved through the instrumentality of this prudent man; but the narrative finishes abruptly, as above, and we are left utterly in the dark as to whether the misguided monarch ever recovered his senses sufficiently to "send after" K'ung Fu or not. The truth is, we believe, that the descendant of Confucius never had any opportunity of admonishing the Emperor, but continued in retirement for the remainder of his life.

From other sources, however, we may obtain an insight into the circumstances under which the Decree was proposed and carried out. Like Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, the vain-glorious Emperor of China made a great feast, or *fête champêtre*, to which he invited all the princes, nobles, and officers who called him lord. The great plain where this monster entertainment took place was covered with splendid tents, in the midst of which rose the imperial pavilion; tables were set, spread with the richest viands and the most sparkling wines; a thousand flags floated lazily in the breeze, and strains of ceremonial music added due solemnity to the occasion. Instead, however, of erecting an image of gold, like the Western sovereign, to which it was incumbent upon all to offer homage, the Emperor of China was content with a more economical and satisfactory arrangement, by virtue of which he was himself the object of his people's worship. At the conclusion of the grand banquet, the Emperor ascended his throne, and, in the hearing of the assembled thousands, invited any who might wish to do so, to offer their opinion upon the general policy of his government; declaring, in the frankest way, that he should be happy to receive any criticisms or suggestions which might be offered for his consideration.

The first speaker, of course, led off in a laudatory strain,

He was a person named Chou Tsing-chên, who held some office under government at Pu-yèh; and who doubtless owed his rise in life to the successful policy of his master. "If," said this man, "the whole country is now placed under a single sway, accorded the blessings of internal peace, and defended from the incursions of the Tartars, it is simply the result of your Majesty's bravery, foresight, wisdom, and good government. What more do we want, or what more can any one give us? All the virtues and achievements of all the ancient kings together do not reach the sum of those of your Majesty; for you surpass every monarch who ever went before you, from the most ancient down to the present times."

This speech was greeted with immense applause, and the Emperor sat brimming over with self-complacency and delight. But his transports were soon moderated. A certain scholar of rank, named Shun Yu-yueh, indignant at this adulation of one whom he looked upon as a barbarous and uncultured tyrant, and exasperated at the reflection cast upon his beloved antiquity, rose from his seat and denounced the speaker as a sycophant and a flatterer. "The person who has just had the impudence to praise your Majesty in such terms," he said, "does not deserve the title of a Grandee of the Empire, with which he is honoured. He is nothing but a base courtier, a vile flatterer, who, meanly attached to the good fortune to which he has no claim, has no other object than to give you pleasure at the expense of the public weal and your Majesty's own fame. I shall in no way imitate his example;" and then went on to give the Emperor perhaps the severest scolding he had ever received from any of the lettered class, drawing the most invidious comparisons

between the state of things which then existed and that of the early ages. Here he made a mistake; for Shih Huang Ti plumed himself, above all, upon his character as an innovator and an original, and nothing seems to have exasperated him so much as being continually festered about antiquity. On the present occasion, breathing the incense of flattery and surrounded by a myriad realisations of his triumphs, he found it impossible to put up with such remonstrances, and, placing a strong restraint upon his rage, he interrupted the would-be Nathan, and told him not to waste his breath. "These points," he said, "have long ago been discussed and settled; and you have no business to bring them up again. Still, since you have been so ill-advised as to do so, I am ready to go into them once more, and listen to all that can be said upon both sides." Then he called upon Li Ssŭ for his opinion; and Li Ssŭ replied, in a somewhat lengthy speech, which embodied the famous proposal for burning all antiquated books whatever. The effect of such a suggestion, made in the presence of the Emperor and all the nobles, princes, and men of letters, in the midst of an imposing ceremonial, must have been dramatic in the extreme, and would furnish a grand theme alike for painter or for poet. But, whatever may have been the immediate circumstances which led to the adoption of the proposal, and whether it was "inspired" in the first instance by the Emperor or not, we know that it was put in force, and that it was the embodiment and culminating-point of the one great policy of change which was the guiding principle of this mad monarch from the beginning to the end of his reign.

The next enterprise undertaken by the Emperor of

China was one of the highest public utility. It was none other than the construction of a magnificent highway, reaching from the city of Chiu-yuen, not far from the modern capital, to Yün-yang; a distance of eighteen hundred *li*, or six hundred English miles. This great work involved no little engineering skill, for there were valleys to be filled up, rivers to be crossed, mountains to be pierced, and marshes to be drained; and, what was worse, the *literati* began to express opinions of the Emperor and his undertakings unfavourable to his general policy. Of these two classes of obstacles, however,—the physical and the moral—he ignored the one and overcame the other; but not until many years had passed away, and an enormous number of men had spent their energies in accomplishing the task. Yet this was but the commencement of his constructive mania. He now addressed himself to the building of innumerable palaces, the plans, extent, and general description of which were extraordinary in the extreme. His original reason for this was that the capital was fast becoming too populous, and he longed for a quieter abode; so he first decided to build a new palace for himself in the Imperial Forest Park, where he could retire and live at ease. An idea of the magnitude of this suburban retreat may be formed from the fact that its main entrance or front gate was on the peak of a mountain, many tens of *li* to the south, from which stretched three great pathways leading to the palace; while the front hall of the residence itself was five hundred paces from east to west and fifty from north to south. These dimensions, however, are difficult to reconcile with the statement that the upper storey was spacious enough to accommodate more than ten thousand persons;

nor are we much impressed by the fact that it was possible to erect a flagstaff five yards high downstairs. But the most remarkable feature of the whole was the plan on which it was arranged. The various edifices were so disposed as to correspond with and otherwise represent that part of the heavens which lies between the North Star, the Milky Way, and the constellation Aquila, the vacant spaces being denoted by courts, corridors, and winding paths. This, it is said, was intended partly as an acknowledgment of the benign celestial influences to which the Emperor ascribed the brilliant success that had always attended him, and partly as a monument of the vastness of his dominions, which could only be symbolised by an imitation of the starry vault on high. Seven hundred thousand workmen who had suffered the punishment of castration were engaged in this enormous undertaking; stone was brought from the mountains to the north, and wood from the modern provinces of Ssŭ-chuan and Hunan, as far as that of Shansi. Nor was this enough for his ambition. Three hundred palaces were built in the city of Hsien-yang itself, and four hundred more outside, a ponderous monolith being erected on the shores of the Eastern Sea to serve as one entrance to the gigantic labyrinth. Seventy thousand families were told off to live in the palaces when ready, farmers and bonzes being the most numerous, all of whom were instructed to prosecute the duties of their respective callings with assiduity. As the time had not yet arrived for the Emperor to receive the rewards of his achievements in Heaven itself, he anticipated that epoch by transforming that part of Earth honoured by his more immediate presence into a terrestrial Heaven in miniature.

By this time, however, the whole body of his ancient foes, the *literati*, were up in arms, and their indignation at his extravagances took the form of a most cutting satire or lampoon, in which he was represented in sufficiently odious colours. The Emperor was furious, especially as one of the principal movers in the affair was an old favourite of his, a person named Lu Shêu, who had won his patronage by having pandered to his royal master's love of the marvellous and supernatural. The defection of his most trusted sorcerer cut him to the heart, and he had no mind for lenfency. The consequence was that over four hundred and sixty *literati*, proving contumacious, paid for their temerity by a barbarous death, which so excited the indignation of Fu Su, the heir-apparent, as to draw from him a powerful and solemn protest. For this he was sent into exile, being compelled to proceed forthwith to Chang-chun and join the army under General Mêng-t'ien.

Many other instances of atrocity, each one more monstrous and detestable than the other, are recorded of the Emperor about this time,—the most cruel massacres on the most trivial pretexts, and in obedience to the dictates of pure caprice and unwarranted malignity, occurring with fearful regularity. There were, however, other exercises of his power and restlessness which are less revolting to humanity. He instituted a system of investigations by which all the characteristics of every part of his wide domains were accurately ascertained and noted down; all the productions of the various provinces catalogued and valued; the state of agriculture and commerce carefully inquired into; and, in short, the whole empire parcelled out and tabulated. The emblem of the Chou dynasty

had been Fire; he, therefore, as the conqueror of the Chou, adopted as the symbol of his domination the element Water, before which Fire itself is extinguished. He also consecrated the number Six, which was assigned by the astrologers to Mercury, the watery planet; and in pursuance of this fancy instituted a species of senary arithmetic, which formed the basis of all astronomical, geometrical, geomantical, commercial, and musical calculations, as well as of all standard weights and measures. The head-dress or crown he wore on state occasions was six inches high; his chariot, which was drawn by six horses, was six feet long; and the empire itself was divided by the square of six, being distributed into thirty-six provinces. He also selected black as the imperial colour, in which sombre tint he and all his officers were dressed on state occasions; the very flags, banners, furniture, and hangings of the palace being of the same gloomy though appropriate hue. But these and other harmless vagaries were insufficient to distract the attention of the people from his crimes, and the empire was by this time in a state of the profoundest dissatisfaction. Relief seemed hopeless. The imperial power, or, rather, the personal power of the Emperor, was beyond attack. Appeals to his compassion were worse than futile, for they served only to inflame the natural ferocity of his character. There was one weak point, however, and apparently only one, in the composition of this monster, which seemed open to assault; and this was his superstition. On this, then, it was determined to play; and a plot was speedily hatched, which culminated in the presentation to the Emperor of a bit of stone said to have fallen from the skies, and inscribed with an undeniably treasonable

sentence. The shot missed; for the Emperor, shrewdly remarking that the inscription bore no signs of celestial workmanship, had the stone publicly burnt in the presence of a large concourse of persons, and concluded the solemnity by the massacre of all the spectators. It may seem surprising that, after so signal and unexpected a defeat, the malcontents should have resorted to a precisely similar *ruse* a second time; but such was the line they pursued. Brave as was the face that the Emperor put upon the menace he had already received, it was easy to see that he was seriously perturbed. He became gloomy and sullen, while his love of cruelty was fostered by the jealousy and suspicion which now made him their prey. In this condition, we may well imagine the effect upon his superstitious mind when a second stone was placed in his hands—a block of jade, engraved with an imitation of the tortoise-shell. This, he was gravely assured, had been presented to a courier, on his way from a distant province, by a strange and mysterious being clad in flowing robes, with an injunction to lose no time in delivering it to his imperial master; "for," affirmed the apparition, "in less than a year the Dragon Ancestor will be no more." Whether the Emperor really believed the fabrication, or whether he was shrewd enough to recognise the terrible truth that the danger threatening him came from his own subjects, we need not stop to inquire. He turned pale as he took the cold stone up in his hands, and appeared greatly agitated. It was some time before he could recover himself sufficiently to speak; and when at last the words came, they amounted only to a feeble utterance that, the Dragon being immortal, the legend was absurd. Alas! the very fact that that acceptation of the term

Dragon involved an absurdity should have taught him that its true meaning was to be found nearer home. Perhaps it did; for the astrologers having been consulted, they unanimously advised the Emperor to take a journey. The recommendation was put in force. The doomed monarch bent his steps to the beautiful province of Chê-kiang, offering sacrifices as he went to the spirits of the holy Emperors Yao, Shun, and Yü. But, as if the mockery were too great, there his proud steps were stayed. The man who could lift up hands red with the blood of a million innocents in adoration of the three most saintly of the ancient kings, brought by this crowning outrage the doom upon his head. The last sacrifice had been completed, and preparations were being made for the worship of the Spirits of the Mountains, when the Emperor fell sick. Careless of his condition, he neglected the needful remedies till it was too late; and after suffering agonies for some days, he died.

The epoch whose events we have thus hastily and imperfectly sketched is perhaps the saddest in the whole of China's history. Sad, not because of the tyranny, the treachery, the bloodshed, and the crime which were its salient characteristics, but because of the fatal influence it has had upon the minds of the Chinese people ever since. A merely wicked sovereign does no harm to posterity. The memories of Chieh Kuei and Chou Hsin are execrated, but men are no worse for the wretches having lived. The mischief worked by Ts'in Shih Huang, however, is well-nigh irreparable; for he has inspired in the Chinese mind a rooted and consummate horror of *change*. Apart from his depravity, Shih Huang-Ti aspired to be, and was, a great reformer. He sought to build the world

afresh; to substitute new and better things for old ones to wean men's minds from their slavish adherence to the past; to instil into them the great truth that intellect and energy must march with the times; and to remodel worn-out institutions on a new basis. Was not this admirable? Was it not, indeed, the very thing that China needs to-day, and that we foreigners are spasmodically attempting to bring about? And yet the entire scheme was frustrated and brought into lasting disrepute by the selfishness, tyranny, and barbarity of its projector. His motive, in the first place, was impure. He did not aim at the regeneration of China for its own sake, but to feed his personal ambition and self-love. His power was unbounded; but he used it entirely with a view to his own glory and renown. His intellect was grand; but its grandeur was the very means of its abuse. The unpopularity of the reforms he made required the utmost conciliatoriness of policy to reconcile men's minds to them; instead of which we find remonstrances the most respectful being met with punishments of unequalled cruelty, and barbarous tortures being inflicted by way of example on those he knew were guiltless. Who can wonder, then, that the very word Reform should be hateful to the Chinese people, and that they should view any move in that direction with unfeigned suspicion and distrust?

CHAPTER II.

THE EMPRESS REGENT.

It is safe to predict that in the future history of China the name of Tz'ŭ Hsi Tuan Yu Kang I Chao Yü Chuang Ch'êng Huang T'ai Hou will be prominent as that of one of the most remarkable sovereigns who ever guided the destinies of the "black-haired people." And, in fact, there are many features of special interest in the personality and antecedents of the lady about whom we have lately heard so much in connection with the Franco-Chinese campaign, and whose indomitable force of will has been alone instrumental in securing for her the unrivalled position she now occupies. To begin with, it is a remarkable thing for a woman to hold the reins of empire for so long a period as that enjoyed by her present Majesty. The Salic law is rigorously enforced in China, and although a woman may be Regent, she can never become the acknowledged equal of an Emperor in his own right. She may be *de facto* Empress of China, governing as well as reigning; but there must always be an Emperor, in whose name and as whose representative she wields the supreme power. Under no circumstances is a female ever permitted to succeed to the Dragon Throne in her own person; and while this law was undoubtedly the result, in the first instance, of the same just conviction on the part of the

Chinese as that which is now working in England to keep Miss Helen Taylor out of Parliament, the inflexibility of its observance is justified by the infamous examples of female imperial profligacy which in two cases have disgraced the annals of China. The first occurred in the dynasty of Han, an epoch, which is regarded by every good Chinese as one of the most glorious in the history of his country. The Emperor Kao Tsû, or Lofty Ancestor, having abdicated in favour of his son, who died soon afterwards, the Empress Dowager, Lü T'ai Hou, usurped the throne, and reigned wickedly and unjustly for eight years. Jealousy of a more youthful and beautiful rival, the Lady Ch'i, had, even in the lifetime of the Emperor, developed all that was evil in the nature of this woman; and it is related that her vengeance at length prompted her to cut off her rival's hands and feet, put out her eyes, render her deaf and dumb, and then throw her alive upon a dunghill, bidding her young son go and inspect for himself the "human sow." When, on the death of both the old and young Emperors—the latter of whom died a drivelling imbecile, in horror at his mother's crimes—she assumed full power in the state, her reign was a series of the most mischievous political intrigues, and her decease was hailed with deep and heartfelt satisfaction in all parts of her dominions. The other instance occurred in the time of the T'angs, the period when China was most brilliant, most luxurious, most cultured; the golden age of poets and courtiers, musicians and fair women; the time, in short, when China excelled in everything but domestic virtue and political strength. One of the inferior concubines of the reigning sovereign, the future Empress Wu, a woman of low birth, retired, from court on the death of

her protector and embraced a religious life. She is said to have been extraordinarily fascinating,—though it must be confessed that the only portrait of her we have ever seen represents her as particularly plain. But eventually she was discovered in her convent by the successor of the monarch, and after years of the cleverest and most audacious intrigue, found herself in a position of power which for an entire generation proved absolutely unassailable. She was the female counterpart of the great, bad sovereign who burnt the books, boiled the sages, buried courtiers alive, and arrogated to himself the title of The First Emperor. From a purely artistic standpoint, it is a thousand pities that this woman was so vile; for the splendid audacity of her genius, and her wonderful originality and independence of character, would otherwise have combined to make her a true heroine of romance, and one of the most extraordinary and attractive characters in the history of the world. Stories of her strange extravagances are legion. Everybody has read how she claimed authority over nature, and pretended to make the peonies bloom at her command as she walked in the palace gardens; how she had one good, great counsellor, to whom she remained steadfast throughout in spite of her evil propensities; how she strengthened her power by foreign alliances; how she altered the style of her reign no fewer than seventeen times; how she attempted to change the mode of writing Chinese characters; how she held the reins of government for over twenty years in the teeth of the universal execration with which she was regarded; and how, in spite of the actual existence of a real Emperor on one hand, and the Salic law on the other, she assumed and was accorded the title of "Most Holy

Emperor" herself. The end of this woman was in violent antagonism to poetical justice. She was eventually deposed; but she lived her life out in a splendid palace, and passed peacefully away at the last. Her memory and the memory of the Empress Lü are both infamous, and the Chinese point to the reigns of these two women as justifications of the national policy with respect to the exclusion of women. But now another precedent appears on the page of history. The late Eastern Empress, Tz'ŭ An Tuan Yü Chien Ching Chao Ho Chuang Ch'ing Huang T'ai Hou, who died some years ago, is said to have been a virtuous and amiable woman, but devoid of commanding genius. The Chinese speak differently of the Western Empress, the lady who then became sole Regent. She, according to all accounts, is a person of great originality and force of will. Some years ago she was dangerously sick, and for months her condition caused the gravest anxiety at Court. The only food it was possible for her to take was milk, and no fewer than sixty wet-nurses were engaged to keep Her Majesty alive. Physicians were sent for from all parts of the empire, some of whom, in despair of their own nostrums, went secretly and begged medicine from Dr. Dudgeon of Peking, a well-known practitioner who reckons some of the highest mandarins in the metropolis among his patients. The applicants, however, were unsuccessful; the doctor told them plainly that if the Court chose to swallow its pride and call him in he would undertake the case of the illustrious patient with pleasure, but that he certainly objected to confiding his drugs to other people, and letting them reap all the credit in the event of Her Majesty getting well. Suddenly it was announced that the

Empress was dead. But it was the wrong Empress,—the Dowager or Eastern Empress, who was believed to be in perfect health! The event caused a profound sensation in the capital, and numberless were the rumours that passed from mouth to mouth. It was, however, shrouded in mystery, and we shall probably never know the truth about it. Suffice it to say that Tz'ŭ An unexpectedly died, and Tz'ŭ Hsi unexpectedly recovered; and she has continued in excellent health ever since. It is she who now holds the reins of power, and is the undisputed mistress of China. When the present writer saw her a few years ago, she was about three and-forty years of age. Her hair was dressed "butterfly-fashion"—that is, twisted in thick coils along a sort of bar stretching across the top of the head, and protruding on either side—and fastened with gold hair-pins; her straight, well-formed features had an austere look, as she gazed stolidly straight in front of her; and she wore a plain robe of lavender or light-mauve silk, as half-mourning for her son, the late Emperor T'ung Chih. That was before the death of her sister-Empress. Since then her personal influence has very materially increased, and she has dared on several occasions to set all precedent and etiquette aside whenever such restrictions interfered with her own caprices. Tired of her long confinement to the Winter Palace, and in defiance of popular opinion, Her Majesty now goes constantly to the beautiful gardens known as the Nan and Chung Hai, and there gives audiences and holds her court. So thoroughly is she said to throw off the restraints of royalty as to practise archery, and is even reported to have taken lessons in boxing, attired in a sort of Bloomer costume, from an old eunuch. The sight must

be vastly entertaining. Her Majesty, who is no longer in the first bloom of youth, has a dignified presence and a set, stern expression of face. Her appearance, at the age of fifty, in short skirts, hitting out at her venerable preceptor, and, we presume, occasionally receiving punishment herself, must, to say the least of it, cause some scandal to the strait-laced Censors who recently remonstrated with her upon the undue smartness of her headdress; for if it be indecorous for a lady, to say nothing of an Empress, to so far forget her age, her widowhood, and her dignity as to wear showy caps, what must they think when they see her actually pummelling and being pummelled? Many widow ladies are not insensible to the consolations of pretty cap-ribbons; but how many indulge in the relaxation of *la boxe?* We, however, who are only barbarians, can afford to take a more generous view; and it is pleasant, to our mind, to see the Manchu Empress of China credited, even by rumour, with setting so good an example of independence. According to precedent, it would have been more virtuous for Her Majesty, on being left a widow, to have dressed in sackcloth for the rest of her life, used thorns instead of hair-pins, and perhaps even starved herself to death. The Empress Tz'ŭ Hsi has, happily for herself and for China, far more human nature about her; and her name will certainly descend to future generations, in the histories now being compiled, as that of the best Empress that China has ever had, in spite of the archery, the boxing-matches, the smart caps, and the too great economy of skirt.

CHAPTER III.

THE FIFTH PRINCE.

Of the three surviving brothers of the late Emperor Hsien Fêng, the one best known to foreigners is of course His Imperial Highness Kung Ch'in-wang, usually referred to in Chinese as the Sixth Prince. His younger brother Ch'un, the Seventh Prince, and father of the reigning Emperor, is less familiar to us, and for many years was credited with being the uncompromising foe of foreigners. This may have been true in a political sense, though recent events tell a far more favourable tale; and we are able to recall at least one instance in which the Seventh Prince, who happened to be staying at the same temple as a foreign gentleman intent on botanical researches, treated him with the utmost courtesy and cordiality, even going so far as to appoint an hour to receive him for a friendly conversation and the inevitable cup of tea. The position of Prince Ch'un at Court is, of course, of an exceedingly difficult and delicate nature. It is probable that when the Emperor attains his majority the Seventh Prince may be raised to the *otium cum dignitate* of T'ai Shang Huang-ti ("Emperor above the Emperor"), in which he would hold precisely the same position *quoad* his son as an Empress-Dowager towards the reigning monarch. But, as matters stand at present, it is impos-

sible for him to see his son except in private and in an informal manner. Were he to attend Court in public he would either have to *k'o-t'ou* to his own child—which is a sufficiently horrifying idea to a Chinese—or the Emperor would have to *k'o-t'ou* to one of his own subjects —which would be an equal outrage on propriety. He, therefore, only sees his son unofficially, and devotes himself to supervising the lad's education in the privacy of the inner apartments. But there is yet another member of the Imperial fraternity, the eldest of the three, who is known as the Fifth Prince. This gentleman lives in a rather tumble-down-looking palace with green tiles just inside the Ch'i-hua Mên, and is said to be a very original character. He holds the sinecure post of President of the Tsung Jên Fu, or Court of the Imperial Clan—a department which regulates all affairs relating to the Emperor's kindred, and preserves the Yü Tieh or Genealogical Record. In this capacity he has the title of Tsung Ch'ing, or Prince-regulator of the Affairs of the Imperial Clan. The Prince is both popular and poor. Many are the stories told at the capital about the escapades of the Prince of Tun. On one occasion he went to the palace in a very seedy sedan-chair. After he had been there some time the Prince of Kung arrived, and also went in for audience. While the latter was engaged inside, the Prince of Tun came out again, and espied the handsome palanquin of his younger brother. "Whose is this chair?" he asked the attendants. "It belongs to the Sixth Prince," was the reply. "Just the one I wanted," rejoined His Imperial Highness, and before the servants of Prince Kung could recover from their surprise the Fifth Prince stepped nimbly into his

brother's chair, and was carried off in triumph. Whether the Sixth Prince saw the point of the joke when he came out and found the shabby equipage that had been left behind in the place of his own handsome turn-out, history does not record; but this much is vouched for, that, sooner than accept the exchange, His Imperial Highness trudged back to his palace on foot. Soon afterwards the brothers met, and the interview is described as having been like that of the two augurs who did *not* laugh. Not a word was said about the elder Prince's escapade, and the demeanour of the two was characterised by the most scrupulous solemnity and politeness. Sometimes, however, the Prince of Tun's vagaries take a more generous form. One day, so the story goes, a very poor carter, with a cart of the worst and most rickety description, and drawn by a donkey instead of the mule which is employed by all but the very poorest, was hailed by a shabby-looking person about half a mile from the palace of the Prince of Tun. The shabby man took the inside place, and began to chat with the carter, who was sitting, as usual, on the shaft. The conversation turned upon the Imperial family; and the fare, who was apparently a stranger in Peking, evinced a good deal of curiosity to hear all about the much-talked-of Prince of Tun. The carter, who, like the rest of his race, was a gossipy, simple sort of man, informed the stranger of everything he knew. The Prince of Kung, he said, was not very popular; he had the reputation of receiving too many presents, and enriching himself at the expense of the people. But the Prince of Tun, he thought, was not open to that sort of charge. "What kind of a person is the Fifth Prince?" inquired the shabby man. "A very

good man indeed," replied the carter. "And does he never take bribes?" pursued the fare. "Not he," was the reply; "but people do say that he sometimes waylays the fine presents that are being carried to the Prince of Kang, and keeps them for himself—just by way of a joke, you know; and of course the Prince of Kung does not dare object." This idea seemed to amuse the stranger vastly. Then the carter asked where he should set him down. "Drive me to the Liu-yeh Fu" (Prince Kung's palace), said the fare. When they were within a reasonable distance of the door the carter stopped. The stranger asked why he did not go on. The carter replied that it was not permitted to go farther in that direction. The shabby person, however, insisted on his proceeding, and the carter eventually did so, protesting that if he got into trouble his fare should bear the blame. In a few minutes the dirty cart, with the donkey, and the shabby man inside, drew up at the palace of the Sixth Prince. The front doors were immediately flung open, and a cry was raised by all the servants in attendance, "The Fifth Prince has arrived!" The carter looked round in trepidation for the approaching *cortège*, and heartily wished himself a mile underground; when his shabby fare, jumping out, indulged in a good-natured laugh at the poor man's terror, telling him he need not fear, for he was no other than the Prince of Tun himself. That was the last occasion, however, on which the carter drove that cart and donkey, for the next day the Fifth Prince sent him a present of a new and handsome vehicle, with a good stout mule, by means of which he has been earning a comfortable living ever since. Stories of this kind, be they strictly true in every particular or not, are

constantly told about the Prince of Tun, and we may see in him a member of the Imperial family who, without any political position to compare with that of his more illustrious brothers, has achieved an amount of popularity amongst the common people that cannot be without its value to the reigning dynasty.

CHAPTER IV.

A PHASE OF COURT ETIQUETTE.

A VERY amusing chapter in the history of official etiquette in China might be written under the heading of "The Emperor is Thanked." Many years ago the present writer was acquainted with a certain pedagogue, part of whose system of education consisted in extorting the formula, "Thank you, Sir," from his pupils in reply to any question or remark of whatsoever nature that might be addressed to them. If he asked a pupil what the time was, "Half-past two, Sir, thank you," was the correct rejoinder; and the same expression of gratitude was enforced even in acknowledgment of a severe rebuke or the imposition of a task. We may be permitted to doubt whether this practice was conducive to any very high standard of sincerity in the schoolboy mind, and to ask how much real value was attached to the compulsory employment of a formula so servile. The schoolmaster, however, was supported by a precedent of no small authority, had he only known it. The constitutional maxim that "the King can do no wrong" might be translated into the official language of China, "The Emperor can do nothing that is not benevolent." It is entertaining to study the circumstances under which thanks are offered to His Majesty, and the strange inversion of thought and language by which

every relation between the Emperor and the subject is made to appear in the light of favours bestowed and received. Every edict is a benign mandate, which it is an honour, a privilege, an act of grace, to be permitted to obey. This theory extends even to the infliction of punishments. When, some years ago, the boy-Emperor T'ung Chih, in a fit of passion, thought proper to degrade his uncle from the first to the second degree of Imperial rank, the Prince humbly thanked His Majesty for permitting him still to exercise his function as a Grand Councillor. When reinstated on the following day, His Imperial Highness thanked the Emperor in still more grateful terms; and two days after, on the receipt of a bowl of bird's-nest soup, his gratitude could only find expression in a flood of tears. It may be doubted, however, whether the weeping of Prince Kung upon this affecting occasion was of a less ceremonial nature than the performance of hired women who wail and howl at funerals. The Imperial wish for the retirement of an official who is unpopular at Court is generally anticipated by the mandarin himself, who, in a memorial teeming with unpleasantly graphic details of some imaginary complaint, implores the Emperor to let him remain in private life, comparing his fidelity to that of a dog or a horse, and vowing that when his health is re-established he will be readier even than either of those useful animals to roll his head in the dust and die in his master's service. It is noteworthy that a refusal on the part of the Emperor to accede to similar requests is oftener the occasion of thanks than when His Majesty accedes. Only a short time ago the eminent statesman Pao-t'ing implored the Emperor in most moving terms to permit him to retire.

The Emperor refused, sharply reproving him for ingratitude, and the snubbed official meekly thanked His Majesty for not acceding to his request. The gift of a fur cloak, especially when the fur round the neck of the animal is retained and made up, is another and more comprehensible occasion for thanksgiving; and so is the permission to ride on horseback through certain portions of the Imperial enclosure, which are sacred ground as regards less favoured servants of the Throne. One of the most amusing incidents in connection with this practice of perpetual thanksgiving occurred not very long ago. A Manchu officer of high rank, no less a personage indeed than Wulahsich'ungah, President of the Board of Ceremonies, returned thanks for the honour of having been invited to a sacrificial feast by the Emperor. Next day, however, a terrible snubbing was administered to Wulahsich'ungah. The Emperor had received his expression of gratitude with astonishment, for, as it happened, he had never been invited to the feast at all! "His name," says the Decree, "does not appear in the list of guests approved of by Us, and in thus thanking Us he has been guilty of a great piece of carelessness." The unfortunate President is then and there to be committed to the Board of Punishments for the determination of a penalty; and he will probably be less eager to thank the Emperor for invitations not accorded to him in future. It is a remarkable fact that Wulahsich'ungah does not express his gratitude either for the snubbing or the omission of his name from the list of guests; but as a loyal subject he no doubt is duly conscious of the honour done to him in both instances. If, however, the Emperor exacts all this deference and professional gratitude from his

subordinates, it must be admitted that he shows equal politeness, on his side, towards Heaven. Two most auspicious occurrences were some time ago reported to the Throne—a fall of snow in the metropolitan district, nearly half a foot in depth, and the sudden setting of the wind from the north-east—a phenomenon which presages longevity and plenteous harvests. Immediately the Decree went forth, returning thanks for the timely blessing, and announcing His Majesty's intention to proceed in person to the temple outside the back-gate of the palace to offer up his acknowledgments; the imperial princes and dukes had to go to other temples for the same purpose, and the usual rewards were distributed among the Taoist priests of the Ta-kao Tien for the valuable assistance they had rendered in coaxing Heaven to send these happy and long-expected prognostications.

CHAPTER V.

FILIAL PIETY.

When the early Jesuit missionaries to China compiled their valuable *Memoires concernant les Chinois*, they devoted the half of one large volume to the literature which has grown up around the doctrine of filial piety. It is noteworthy, however, that there is a marked abstention from either praise or blame of this celebrated article of faith—for so we may almost call it—on the part of the editors of the series. But we have heard the filial piety of the Chinese commended in the highest terms by foreign critics, and even by foreign missionary critics. One writer, at any rate, has gone so far as to say that in the long-continued existence of the Chinese Empire we have a fulfilment of the Fifth Commandment—"Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land." It would be idle to speculate what connection there may be between respect to parents and a prolongation of land-tenure in any given society, and equally idle to attempt to prove, from what we know of Chinese history, that the doctrine of filial piety as practised in China has directly or indirectly conduced to the preservation of that country in a national and political sense. Our object is less ambitious, and we will state our meaning in the fewest and most pointed words at

our command. Briefly, then, the doctrine of filial piety, as practised and interpreted in China, is in many ways a curse and a calamity to the people. It is a flagrant and flagitious example of a virtue exaggerated into a vice. The admiration of the Chinese is extorted for numerous instances of filial piety that have come down from antiquity, and they are taught to believe that upon this is based their loyalty to the Throne. No brighter pattern of this so-called virtue exists than that of the great Emperor Shun, who, cursed with an unnatural father and a malignant stepmother, who on one occasion burnt his house down over his ears, and on another threw him down a well, went about roaring and weeping to Compassionate Heaven in the channelled fields. And why? —because of his parents' cruelty? No; but because of his own imagined vileness—vileness which can have been the only cause of their ill-treatment of him, so virtuous a person shrinking from imputing any blame to those who had given him life. Is not such a type degrading? Then there was another bright example, an old philosopher, who at the age of seventy used to dress himself up in a baby's frock and dance around and roll about the floor, shaking a rattle or beating a little drum, simply to amuse his doting parents, who are said to have cackled with delight as their venerable offspring jerked himself about and frolicked for their entertainment. Nearly all the instances of filial piety held up to the Chinese for imitation are equally grotesque and mischievous. But worse remains behind. No man, be he a viceroy or a general, or what he may, or whatever age he may have attained, is a free agent so long as his father is alive. In the eye of custom and the law he is a child.

—a minor. The highest and most cultured man in China may thus be legally at the disposal of an unlettered and narrow-minded boor, if it happens that his father was born, and has remained a peasant, and he himself has risen. The ethical works of China teem with admonitions to children how to perform their duty to their parents, but there is scarcely one that touches upon the duty that parents owe their children. It is not too much to say that a Chinese father has more absolute power over the members of his family than the Emperor has over his realm. Only last year the *Peking Gazette* recorded the horrible fact of a mother burying her own child alive, and the Emperor condoning, even if not actually approving, the loathsome crime. Had that son, even by accident or in a fit of lunacy, caused the death of the virago, he would have been slowly sliced to death and the flesh peeled off his bones. Some time after this, an unhappy woman, in trying to save herself from outrage at the hands of her father-in-law, killed him; and instead of being commended for her virtue, was condemned to death by the slicing process. Such is the doctrine of filial piety in China, so much cried up by those who have never studied it. When Voltaire adopted as the motto of his life the stirring war-cry, "*Ecrasez l'Infâme*," what was that Infamous he sought to crush? It was the vile and intolerant spirit that hated, persecuted, tortured, and did to death all who took the liberty of thinking for themselves. That spirit exists still, and everywhere, though in a different form. It is that which gives the license or affords an excuse for all cruelty and rank injustice, and we deliberately affirm that there is no cruelty or injustice ever perpetrated in China grosser than

that which is based upon this pernicious doctrine of filial piety. To be filial a man must be a grovelling slave, ready to repudiate his own knowledge and sacrifice his prospects in life at the dictum of a possibly prejudiced and ignorant father. To be filial a man must never dare to cherish a new or independent thought, for his ancestors had never had such thoughts, and would probably have condemned them if they had. Superstition and obstructiveness of the most fatal type are thus made to hinge upon the doctrine of filial piety—which is by no means confined to a domestic application, but runs through the entire social polity of China—just as they were made to hinge upon Church traditions in the Middle Ages. Fanaticism and its offspring cruelty—the spirit that leads men to bind each other's souls and torture each other's bodies—constitute, to our mind, a sin for which a new name ought to be discovered. It may almost be called sacrilege against the human race, and this is the unpardonable sin, or what should be considered such by all wishers for the mental and corporeal enfranchisement of their fellow-men. The worst feature of it all is, that the evil of which we complain, like evil in the abstract, is simply poisoned and distorted good. Reverence for parents is a natural and human feeling. It has been the mainspring of some of the most beautiful actions ever performed by men. No one will dispute the propriety of the Chinese in placing the relation of paternity and sonhood among the five primary relationships of mankind. But where it is pushed to such an extreme as it is in China, where the father is endowed with the authority of an absolute and irresponsible despot, and the son lowered to being the slave of another man simply because that

other man was instrumental in bringing him into the world, it becomes an outrage, a mischief, and a folly. It strikes at the root of all sense of right and wrong. Such is the perversion of that sense among the Chinese at present that probably not one man who reads the *Peking Gazette* will think there is anything strange in the fact of the Emperor protecting the human tigress who murdered her own son in cold blood. The child is taught even by the proverbial philosophy of China to look upon his parent as a god, while the parent appears to wield autocratic power over the life he has been the accidental means of giving.

There is possibly only one element in this distorted doctrine which is at all healthy. The Emperor, as Son of Heaven, owes filial duty to his Celestial Progenitor, and if he does not pay it his commission is withdrawn. In plain language, if he is a bad sovereign, the disfavour of Heaven is shown by manifold disasters and portents; and when this is the case the people have a right to rebel against the man whom Heaven thus openly rejects. So far, the extreme phase of filial piety results beneficially for the people. But in all other respects it is liable to prove a blight and a hindrance to the country, at once representing and encouraging the old bad spirit of conservatism and cruelty which worked such desolation among men in the bygone ages of the world.

CHAPTER VI.

CHINESE IDEAS OF PATHOLOGY.

THERE are few things more amusing, and at the same time more exasperating, to a European than the utter confusion of thought which characterises the Chinese as a race. The extreme difficulty of getting a direct reply to a simple question, in examinations before a magistrate, for instance, has become almost proverbial. There seems a looseness of reasoning, a want of consecutiveness, in the mental processes of the Chinese which argues an inherent defect in their constitutions; and it is a fact that can be proved by experience, that scarcely a Chinaman will be found free from this strange defect who has not been brought into long and intimate contact with Europeans.

The same phenomenon is, of course, observed in all their so-called scientific theories. Physiology and metaphysics appear to form but one science according to Chinese notions, no clear distinction being recognised between phases of matter and phases of mind. This is almost incomprehensible to a European intellect; but it is none the less a fact. Take, for instance, the idea of *anger*, in the view of a Chinese. In the native language it is *ch'i*, which means, popularly speaking, breath or air. But this is not simply an instance of one word doing duty for two different ideas. Anger has been defined to

us by Chinese as an actual rush of breath, or wind, from the heart to the head, which flushes the face and stiffens the muscles of the neck. No difference is allowed between the material and the immaterial, the cause and the effect. An angry man is said to *shêng ch'i*, produce breath or air, and this air is *anger*, the too great predominance or inrush of which into the human system is apt to bring about insanity or even death. It is a purely physical, not a mental, phenomenon in the eyes of native physicists; or, rather, the Chinese system does not recognise or admit of any element of the immaterial whatever. Another curious example is afforded by the use of the word *hsin* or heart, and the sense in which it is understood. In discussing metaphysical subjects with a cultured Chinese it is almost impossible to make him distinguish clearly between the physical organ and the word in its popular acceptation of mind. In the study of Taoist books the distinction is still more difficult to trace. But it is in what may be called the popular philosophy of the common people that the most glorious confusion arises. There we find the actual blood-pump made the seat or embodiment of the man's mental and moral characteristics; so much so, that every form of what we understand by the term heart-disease should logically be regarded as the sign of some special depravity or sin. Hence comes the curious Chinese doctrine of the effect of climate upon character. Now, the Chinese are sufficiently well acquainted with the functions of the heart, and the relation to that organ of the blood. They know that for perfect health of body it is necessary that the blood should be kept completely pure, and that everything that taints the blood has an injurious effect upon the heart, through which it passes.

It follows, therefore—and we now quote the words of a certain curious old empiric of Peking, a strange compound of shrewdness and folly—that the inhabitants of the northern capital are the most corrupt community in China. The reasoning is clear. The atmosphere of that city is intensely impregnated with two things—foul smells and pulverised ordure. This impure air is inhaled by the lungs; from the lungs it passes into the blood, and the blood thus defiled pours into the heart, which is thus corrupted and contaminated in its turn. Consequently the people whose hearts are thus infected become treacherous and insincere; they lose all sense of morality, propriety, and good faith; and what is worse—concluded our interlocutor solemnly—"foreigners themselves are falling victims to this defiling process too." Of course to argue against this congeries of contradictions is generally a waste of time; for even if one's opponent is pushed into a corner and unable to reply, it by no means follows that he is convinced of the untenableness of his views. The earnest simplicity and seriousness with which an amiable and lettered man in China will sit and propound the most preposterous and fantastic theories that ever entered a human brain, and the profound unconsciousness he shows of the nonsense he is talking, affect one very curiously. Foreign science, such as that of medicine or anatomy, for example, impresses him with the notion of something strange and heterodox, which is too far removed from the traditions of the sages to be ever regarded as more than a *bizarrerie* to be wondered at, instead of a subject calling for grave investigation. He is firmly impressed with the belief that the heart is the seat of the intellect, and is situated in the centre of

the body, although he can feel it beating on his left; that courage resides in the gall, the affections in the liver, the direction of bodily movement in the lungs, temper in the stomach, and mental force and wisdom in the kidneys. It is true that even we in the West appear to sanction this confusion of ideas by speaking of a coward as white-livered, and of a fastidious or haughty person as a man of delicate or proud stomach. But what are popular and figurative expressions with us are scientific axioms among the Chinese, and it will take a long term of educational courses before their eyes are opened to the untenable nature of their theories. At the same time, we must not forget that the action and reaction of the mind upon the body and the body on the mind is still a matter of much mystery even to Western thinkers, and the fact that deaths have actually occurred from the influence of imagination solely ought to make us lenient in dealing with the quaint confusions between mind and matter which exist in the Chinese intellect.

CHAPTER VII.

CHINESE MEDICINES.

THE medical remedies of the Chinese afford a promising field of inquiry to the student of curiosities. No one who is not fairly acquainted with the pseudo-philosophies of China, the strange affinities which are supposed to exist between the five points of the compass, the five colours, the five flavours, the five elements, and other fanciful phenomena, can rightly understand the principles on which certain substances are supposed to be antagonistic to certain humours and conditions of the body. For a rough list of the medicaments in common use in China one has only to study the ordinary Customs returns, which will be quite sufficient to show the very extraordinary character of the articles which go to make up the Chinese pharmacopœia. Some of these medicines are, no doubt, useful enough. The Chinese are known to have a wide knowledge of herbs and simples, and their primitive ideas of surgery are in many instances founded upon true principles. A case in point is the practice of pinching and scraping the skin with a view to drawing out internal inflammation. A slight "touch of the sun," is unmistakably relieved by the hard tweaking of the skin between the eyes and on the breast with a couple of copper cash, until a livid red line or patch is

raised upon the surface; and though the process is not agreeable, the result certainly goes far to justify the principle of counter-irritation on which the treatment is based. Many of the medicines in use, however, are exceedingly coarse and disgusting, and, we should hope, are never resorted to except in extreme cases. A very curious method of procedure is adopted by the doctor who is called in to see a patient. The sick man does not open the interview by detailing his symptoms, as with us. That would involve an insult to the perspicacity of his adviser. It is the doctor who, by feeling the patient's pulse, is expected to detail the various ailments of his patron, which can be correctly diagnosed by a clever practitioner from the slow or hurried beats. He then writes out his prescription, pockets his horse-money or chair-money, as the fee is called, and takes his departure for the time. In most instances the medicine prescribed is of a very cheap and often very nasty description; there are, however, drugs highly prized among the faculty in China which are extremely precious. Diamond-dust is looked upon as a dangerous poison in India and the West; yet there are other precious stones, rare indeed in China, which are said to have a wonderful efficacy in curing certain disorders. A detailed description of one of these peculiar and certainly very expensive remedies lies before us. It consists of white and red coral, rubies or jacinth, pearls, emeralds, musk, and one or two earths in various quantities, crushed into powder, rolled into pills with gum and rose-water, and coated with gold-leaf. As a poison, one would think this composition must be quite invaluable; or as a tit-bit for an ostrich, did such birds exist in China; but as a medicine

it is quite unique. It is said, however, to be an infallible cure for smallpox, measles, scarlet fever, and, in fact, all diseases which arise from blood-poisoning and break out in cutaneous eruptions. The strengthening qualities of the preparation are said, even on European testimony, to be quite remarkable; and the old Jesuits who flourished here during the early part of the present dynasty deliberately affirm that they have seen men snatched from the last convulsions of death by its judicious use. Another famous remedy is called *kû chiu*, or bitter wine. This reminds one of the bitter cup sold by chemists in England some five-and-twenty years ago. The preparation seems to be a strong and invigorating tonic; it is said to have great efficacy in cases of bile, indigestion, colic, and intermittent fevers, and to be an excellent preservative of health if taken, much as Europeans take the nauseous waters of Carlsbad and Aix, the first thing in the morning on an empty stomach. Its ingredients are neither so indigestible nor so expensive as those of the other. It is composed of spirit, aloes, myrrh, frankincense, and saffron. These are to be mixed and exposed to the sun for one month; the bottle to be well shaken from time to time, and the fluid used when it is perfectly clear, and yet impregnated with the various contents. These two remedies are not of Chinese origin. They are said to have been brought from India, where they were originally discovered. Readers of the *Hung Lou Mêng*, one of the most charmingly written novels in the whole world, will remember the burlesque prescription proposed by a Buddhist priest for the ailments of Mademoiselle Pao-chai. It consisted of the pistils of a white moutan-flower, or peony which had

bloomed in the spring, of a white lotus that had bloomed in the summer, of a white poppy that had bloomed in the autumn, and of a white plum-blossom that had bloomed in the winter; of each of these twelve ounces. All these pistils were to be kept over till the vernal equinox of the succeeding year, dried in the sun, mixed into powder, and dissolved in twelve mace-weight of rain, and the same amount of pure dew, hoar-frost, and snowflakes, all of which must have fallen on that particular day. These ingredients were then to be mixed in equal proportions, made into pills the size of a dragon's-eye [*lungan*]; and placed in an old porcelain jar, which must be buried under the roof of a flower. When the patient felt her illness coming on, she was to dig up the jar and swallow one of the pills in a hot decoction of juniper-bark. It is, of course, evident that the due preparation of this medicine depends upon an impossible concatenation of coincidences; and it is just a bit of graceful humour at the expense of the medicos of China, whose abracadabra and affectation of mysticism are a fitting object of ridicule. The fact is, indeed, that the description is scarcely overdrawn, and any one who has had the patience or the curiosity to dip into many of the books which deal with the pharmacopœia in China will testify to the existence of so-called remedies almost, if not quite, as preposterous. In many instances, as in one for tooth-ache, the chances are that the patient would be either dead or cured weeks before the first ingredients of the marvellous panacea had been obtained.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HORSE IN CHINA.

THE China pony plays so important a part in the life of foreigners in the East that a short account of the antecedents of this famous animal in past ages may not be without its interest to our readers. In spite of the general inferiority it presents to its *confrères* of Arabia and the West, its culture has always been an object of considerable attention and solicitude among the Chinese; and though no one who sees the shaggy, unkempt brutes, with their tawdry garniture and jingling necklaces of bells, which are used by the gentry, soldiery, and mandarindom of the empire, is likely to form a very high idea of either the value set upon the animals or the care bestowed upon their welfare, the fact remains that they occupy a high place in the national esteem, and inherit all the *prestige* which four thousand years of national existence can confer upon them.

Now, apart from the assertion—which we are in no way bound to believe—that horses existed as early as the time of Fu Hsi, there is ample evidence in the Classics that they were both known and used in that golden age of China's history immediately preceding the establishment of the dynasty of Hsia. We read in the *Shu Ching* of the milk-white steeds which were harnessed

to the chariot of Yao; and unless we belong to those who see in the name of this great sovereign no more than an impersonation of Heaven, we need not hesitate to accept the correlative inference that the animals referred to were the flesh-and-blood progenitors of the horses we drive to-day. Under the Emperor Yü and his successors the horse seems to have been regularly trained to the exercises of the battlefield, the labours of agriculture, and the excitement of the chase. In the dynasty of Chou it became the subject of special legislation. Horses were divided into six classes, viz., those for the Emperor and nobility, those to be used in war, those for draught and field labour, those for government posts, those for private riding or journeying, and those for carrying burdens. To the Emperor alone were assigned no fewer than forty thousand war-horses; to the princes and other nobles a smaller number, regulated according to their rank. The art of horsemanship was at this time greatly cultivated and admired. No man was permitted to become a cavalry soldier before the age of thirty-five, or to remain such after fifty. It was necessary for him to be tall, robust, and strong, active, and firm in his saddle. "The good rider," it was said, "is glued to his horse like bark to a tree, and characterised by the rapidity of lightning, the immobility of a rock, and the lightness of a feather." As long as this warlike spirit was kept up, and a simple hardy life recognised as that most honourable to the man of rank, the breed and mettle of horses were preserved at a high standard; but when a spirit of sloth and luxury began to prevail, and internal dissensions disturbed the general tranquillity, the animals became the objects of a

pampering and indulgent system which was attended by the most pernicious results. Not only were the horses themselves demoralised, but the people were actually impoverished by the enormous levies laid upon the land for the fodder necessary to their maintenance; insomuch that a certain scholar is said to have frankly told the Emperor that, for his part, he would far sooner be a viceroy's horse than a viceroy's secretary. Nor was this all: the unwholesome luxury in which the horses were reared, and the vast numbers of them which were appropriated to the imperial use, resulted first in the degeneracy of the breed, and then in an alarming mortality. So serious was the mischief which had taken place during the dynasty of Han, that when Kao-Tsû, the first T'ang Emperor, ascended the throne, it was found that the entire cavalry of China consisted but of five thousand horses, all told. When he died he left his successor in a position to collect seven hundred thousand from the different provinces of his realm; and before long the stock of horses had so much increased that it was said they were actually more numerous than all the camels, sheep, and cattle in the land. Then the old abuses gradually crept back; corruption became rife in those departments of state to which was confided the care and maintenance of the Government studs; epidemics broke out among the animals; and when, at the close of the thirteenth century, the dynasty of Sung was overthrown by the Mongol hordes, the supply was found entirely inadequate to resist the charge of the invading cavalry. It was the horses of the Mongols which conquered China; but so badly did the humid atmosphere suit the animals themselves, and so widespread was the corruption prac-

tised by the native cavalry inspectors, that, when the Yuens were ousted in their turn, they actually found themselves without sufficient horses on which to take to flight.

Such being the violent fluctuations which have characterised the fortunes of the horse in China, it may not be uninteresting to turn to the theories current among the Chinese with respect to the proper treatment of the animal. Horses, be it first observed, are said to be subject to the principle Yang, and under the influence of fire. It is therefore necessary that all their stables should face the south. It is also obvious that, for the same reason, no horse should ever be reared in the neighbourhood of silkworms; for silkworms are subject to the opposing principle Yin, and under the influence of stars whose action is at direct variance with that of the stars which govern horses; and it is impossible to say what dire results might accrue to both were these hostile agencies ever allowed to clash. Indeed, a man has only to rub a horse's teeth with silkworms' droppings to prevent him from masticating his hay, while a few mulberry-leaves will, if placed in his mouth, deprive him of the power of eating for ever afterwards. The smallness of a horse's ears, say the Chinese naturalists, indicates a corresponding smallness of his liver; the size of his nostrils, that of his lungs, and consequent staying power in a race; the largeness of his eyes, that of his heart—arguing courage and spirit; while a small stomach is a sure sign that he requires but little food. A horse has no gall; which, it is scarcely necessary to add, is the reason he is so constantly subject to sore eyes. He hates galloping with the wind behind him, but enjoys it when it

blows in his teeth. He is believed also to have a strong objection to cinders, particularly fresh ones; and if he is kept long standing he will get ulcers in his legs. When he rolls in the dust and does not get up again, that is a sign that his bones ache; if on rising he does not shake off the dust, there is something the matter with his skin; if he shakes it off, but fails to snort through his nostrils, his chest is out of order. The maladies to which the horse is most subject are those of the heart, the liver, the stomach, the lungs, and the kidneys. When his heart is wrong the tongue becomes bright red; when his stomach is wrong his lips become discoloured, and have an appearance of laughing; while the other diseases manifest their existence in a variety of ways, all equally relevant and unmistakable. It is, therefore, highly desirable that in the treatment of horses no violence should be done to their natural constitution. That this excellent rule is, however, but seldom observed in its integrity is sufficiently proved by the fact that many horses die before the age of thirty-one, such being the average age of the quadruped as intended by nature. The longer the period of gestation, say the Chinese, the longer the life of the animal; and horses, who have a period of twelve months, live half the life of a man, and twice that of an ox. In order, therefore, to prolong the life of a horse to its full extent three things are necessary. The first is, that a horse should never be transported from the country where he is indigenous to any other. The Tartar horses, it is said, languish and die when carried into the warm, humid provinces of the South; the enervating climate and more generous food work great mischiefs in an animal accustomed to the bracing air and

hardy life of the deserts of the West. This was specially found to be the case on one occasion—in the T'ang dynasty, we believe—when the vanquished Tartars were compelled to pay tribute to the Chinese in horses. The animals not only sickened themselves, but introduced a terrible epidemic among the horses of the country—a fact which was attributed to bad faith on the part of the Tartars, until experience and observation disclosed the true reason. The second is, that a stop should be put to the practices of gelding and of working mares in foal, one of which has a bad effect upon the present generation, and the other upon their descendants. The third and last is, that a horse should be always continued in the duties to which he was originally trained. The hack should not be turned into a beast of burden, nor the charger into a beast of draught. If this is done, say the Chinese veterinaries—as in England, for instance, where many a fine racer ends his days between the shafts of a London cab—the animal will most assuredly come to grief. It is related, as a case in point, that in the T'ang dynasty a certain man had trained his horse to dance and caper in time to the cadences of music—an accomplishment which was considered very wonderful in those days, and brought in a fair amount of money. But one morning the owner died at a village near Hankow, whither he was taking his horse to perform at a great fair then being held; and the animal had to be sold in order to procure a coffin for the deceased. He was purchased by a petty mandarin, who, being unaware of his terpsichorean talents, shut him up in a stable with a couple of mules and an ass. But the confinement was intolerable to the poor beast. He had done nothing but

dance all his life, and as he was unable to follow out what was really his second nature without restraint, relieved his feelings as best he might by capering in his stall. The mules and the ass resented this extraordinary behaviour, which naturally interfered with their own peace and comfort; and the owner, fancying that the animal must be mad, sold him to a neighbouring butcher, who disposed of him, no doubt, for the good of his customers in general.

CHAPTER IX.

HIPPOPHAGY AMONG THE TARTARS.

THE use of animal food among the Chinese dates from the remotest times, and is said to have preceded the knowledge and use of fire. Before the advent of the mythical Emperor Fu Hsi the people ate raw flesh and drank blood warm from their flocks and herds; and when he came he instructed them in the art of cookery, from which fact he derives his other title of The Butcher. From this time downwards the Chinese have been great meat-eaters, consuming, in addition to the various kinds used for food in civilised communities, the flesh of dogs, rats, and asses. These last, however, are only eaten by the poor. The solitary instance, we believe, of a universal food being rejected by a special class of persons is that of beef, which no rigid Confucianist will touch. An ox is euphemistically called the Ta Wu, or Great Beast, which, from its being offered in sacrifice to Heaven by the Emperor, acquires a sacred character; besides which, it renders services to agriculture too noble to permit of its being degraded into an article of food. We may add, however, that no prohibition of the kind is to be found in the Confucian books; it rests upon tradition solely.

It is for much the same reason, perhaps, that horse-flesh is hardly ever eaten in China. The only persons

who are accused of doing so are the very poorest of the poor in Peking itself; and it is not likely that they are able to procure any carcasses but those of worn-out animals who have died a natural death. Among the Tartars, however, horse-flesh is not only a favourite but a staple dish; so much so, indeed, that they are said to have acquired, by long practice, a wonderful power of discriminating, while the animals are yet alive, those whose flesh will prove toothsome and nutritious, and those whom it would be dangerous and bad to eat. They have a way of preparing horse-flesh by first boiling, and then drying it in the cold breezes of the plain; after which they grind it into a sort of powder or meal, which may be preserved for almost any length of time. The Tartar nomad is thus always provided with a nutritious article of food, which can be put into an insignificant compass; since a very small quantity dissolved in boiling water furnishes him with a comfortable bowl of soup, in precisely the same way as a teaspoonful of Liebig's Extract will make a basin of beef-tea. Indeed, there is a very curious resemblance between the preserved horse-flesh powder of the Tartars and the meat-paste recently invented by M. Moride, and introduced by him to the French Academy under the name of "Nutricine." It is prepared by working raw meat into a pulp, and then mixing it with bread or farinaceous substances, which absorb the natural moisture of the meat and so form a paste. This paste is then dried, and the material ground into a powder which is said to last an indefinite time, and may be used in much the same way as its analogue in Tartary. Of course it is necessary that the Tartar horse-flesh should be kept as dry as possible, and also that

it be used almost exclusively in cold climates. These two conditions being complied with, it forms the principal provision of armies when engaged on distant campaigns, or in forced marches through hostile or unproductive territories. It is then of inestimable value, for it renders the soldier entirely independent of harvests, and enables him to maintain his corporeal vigour upon the smallest possible cubic measurement of food.

The Tartar's meat, however, is the Chinaman's poison. All books upon the subject condemn the use of horse-flesh as unhealthy to the last degree, especially that portion of the back which is covered by the saddle. The liver is said to be so impure as to cause death in all who eat it; while the blood and the sweat are so impregnated with venom as to turn all wounds with which they may come in contact into bad gangrenes. But though not to be used as food, the tissues of a horse enter freely into the Chinese pharmacopœia. Horse-broth is an excellent remedy for pleurisy and all sorts of malignant fevers, on account of its cooling properties; while well-cooked horse-nerves act as a general tonic to the system, and impart no small amount of strength to a man who has become weak through illness. Young mothers whose children are cutting their teeth will be glad to hear that by burning the tooth of a horse, grinding it to ashes, mixing it with the infant's saliva, and then rubbing it on the gums, the pain may be greatly moderated and the process of teething materially assisted. The milk of a white mare is useful in cases of phthisis and pulmonary complaints in general; while the hoof, if burnt to ashes, is an excellent preservative against pestilence. Many other parts and products of the animal are of great value in other cases

of emergency; but the prophylactics found in Chinese medical works are, as may be imagined, not always suitable for transcription. In the majority of cases the remedy must be far worse than the disease, as any one may discover for himself by examining the ordinary Customs returns. Our readers may remember a story told of the late Earl of Derby which has no slight bearing upon this point. It appears that at one time his lordship was suffering from one of his severe attacks of gout. An obscure admirer—whose name is of importance chiefly to himself—sent the illustrious sufferer a case of sherry of some very particular brand, which, he said, was of priceless value as an antidote to that complaint. After a few days, however, the wine came back upon his hands, with a polite letter from Lord Derby thanking him most sincerely for his kind intentions, but saying that he had tasted the sherry, and very much preferred the gout.

CHAPTER X.

A PHILOSOPHER WHO NEVER LIVED.

"Do you know," said a nephew of the Marquis Tsêng to a friend of ours a few years ago, "that we have a book in China that bears a very close resemblance to your Bible?"

"I did not know it," replied our friend; "pray, which may it be?"

"It is called the *Works of Lieh-tzŭ*," answered the young Chinese.

Now, such a statement as this was quite sufficient to make us turn our attention to the volumes indicated with something more than usual anticipation; and if we find ourselves unable to endorse the description, we have nevertheless discovered much in the book to interest us, and much that deserves recording. Lieh-tzŭ is said to have flourished *circâ* 400 B.C., and to have been one of the earliest and most illustrious disciples of Lao-tzŭ, the reputed founder of the Taoist philosophy. His book is a congeries of interpolations and additions of a considerably later date; still, it has been honoured with special attention by more than one Emperor, and His Majesty Hsüan Tsung, of the T'ang dynasty (713–756), raised it to the dignity of a classic by the title of *Ch'ung Hsü Ching*, or Sutra of Fulness and Emptiness. About the philosopher

himself, however, scarcely anything is known: so little, indeed, as to lead the vanguard of modern sinologists to doubt, and even to deny, that such a person ever existed in the flesh. He is, in fact, now generally regarded as a sort of Isaac Bickerstaffe—the literary creation of a sect or school; and so far holding a certain position in the Valhalla of Chinese letters, but not entitled to the honours due to a great historic character about whose personality there is no question. Such scruples are a marked feature of modern criticism; and not only has a blow been recently struck at the authorship and personality of Lao-tzŭ himself, but the destructive process is sanctioned and encouraged by no less eminent an authority than the *Quarterly Review*. "A book," says the writer of an article on the 'Sacred Books of the East,' "to a modern mind suggests an author. It was not so then"—in the days of old. "No one of them can be properly said to have had an author. And by this much more is meant than the mere suggestion that the books were at first anonymous, or that the names of their authors have not been handed down to us. In those early times a book was seldom or never composed originally in the shape in which it has come down to us. It was not made: it grew. Sayings, passages, legends, verses, were handed down in a school or were current among a body of disciples. These were gradually, and only gradually, blended together. They were added to; their connection or sequence was altered; they were collected by different hands and at different times into compilations of different tendencies. Finally one or other of these compilations became so much the favourite that—all being handed down by memory alone, liable to have their root cut off

and find no place of refuge' if they were not popular—it alone survived. It is the old story of the struggle for life, and of the survival of the fittest—that is, of the fittest under certain circumstances, the fittest for the needs of the school in which it existed, the fittest for its peculiar environment; not, of course, the fittest absolutely, nor the fittest for the purposes of modern historical research. The books lived, or rather were kept alive, not for the sake of the author, but for the sake of their contents. Hence it is that, though certain of the wise sayings or verses it contains may have authors assigned to them, no really ancient book claims to have an author—a human author. It is only later that the tendency is felt to satisfy the natural craving for a cause by assigning books to individual hands." Candour compels us to admit that these remarks apply with singular aptitude to the book which bears the name of Lieh-tzŭ. It presents all the features of a compilation, and a compilation made by different hands; it contains passage after passage, copied in some instances *verbatim*, in other instances with less exactitude, from at least two classical works of the Taoist school universally recognised as authentic; while nothing, or next to nothing, is known of the man to whom it is attributed, beyond references to him *in the third person* in the very book of which he is the alleged author. We consider, therefore, that we are justified in speaking of him as a philosopher who never lived, and in regarding the Lieh-tzŭ of the *Ch'ung Hsü Ching* as no more than a supposititious personage, projected from the minds of a Taoist literary clique.

But the book remains. That is a visible fact, and with it we now propose to deal. The criticism which

finds in it a resemblance to the Christian Bible may be rejected at the outset as valueless, for the religious element in the work is extremely tenuous. Our readers, however, shall judge for themselves. The first chapter contains speculations respecting the nature and attributes of God, and the processes of Creation, which, as far as they go, are striking enough, and illustrative of that singular independence and originality of thought which forms so honourable a characteristic of the Taoist school. Here, for instance, is a piece of transcendentalism which occurs on the second page of the book. It would have shocked Confucius.

The Origin of Life and Motion.

There is a Life that is uncreated;
There is a Transformer who is changeless.
The Uncreated alone can produce life;
The Changeless alone can evolve change.
That Life cannot but produce;
That Transformer cannot but transform.
Wherefore creations and transformations are perpetual,
And these perpetual creations and transformations continue through all time.
They are seen in the Yin and Yang:
They are displayed in the Four Seasons.
The Uncreated stands, as it were, alone;
The Changeless comes and goes;
His duration can have no end,
Peerless and One—His ways are past finding out.*

The philosopher, taking as his text a very obscure passage in the *Tao Tê Ching*—though he quotes the Book of the Yellow Emperor as his authority—then proceeds to show how it is that the Creator is uncreated and the Transformer changeless; averring that the Supreme

* Dr. Ernst Faber, commenting on this passage, says, "The doctrine here is pantheistic."

Power is self-produced, self-transformed, self-shaped, self-manifested, self-intelligent, self-powerful, self-exhausting, self-reposing;—though, he adds, to speak of these phenomena as actualities, in the common acceptation of the term, is inaccurate. Then he proceeds to describe the evolution of the visible universe:—

The Four Stages.

Now, seeing that that which has form was produced from formlessness, from what can the Universe have sprung? Thus it is that it is said there was first the period of the Great Calm, then of the Great Inception, then of the Great Beginning, and lastly of the Great Concretion. At the time of the Great Calm the primordial aura was yet invisible. The Great Inception was when the primordial aura first began to exist; the Great Beginning was when form first came into being; the Great Concretion was when simple matter first appeared. Then aura, form, and matter were in readiness, but had not yet been separated from one another; and for that reason the condition of things was called Chaos. Chaos means the indiscriminate mingling of everything together before their distribution.

"Invisible, though looked for; inaudible, though listened for; intangible, though clutched at"—therefore was the primordium called the period of Calm, or Stillness; and there is no form to which that Calm was like.

Then the condition of Calm changed, and it became One—*sc.*, the primordial ether came into being. This One changed again, and became Seven; Seven changed, and became Nine; and the changes of the Nine were final. Then a reflex change took place back to the One; and the One was the commencement of that change which resulted in the production of forms. The pure and light ascended, and became Heaven; the turbid and heavy descended, and became Earth; and the harmonious auræ, in combination, produced Man. Heaven and Earth containing in themselves the germinal essence of all things, the visible creation was evolved and came into existence.

The manner in which the various powers of nature supplement and assist each other is then shown with much perspicacity:—

The energy of Heaven and Earth is not sufficient [of itself]; nor is the ability of the Sage, nor the usefulness of created things. For instance, the function of Heaven is to produce and to overshadow; the function of Earth, to shapen and to support; the function of the Sage, to instruct and to reform; and the function of things, to fulfil the purposes for which they were created. This being so, there are directions in which Heaven is deficient, but in which Earth excels; in which the Sage encounters obstruction, but in which things in general have free course. For it is clear that that which produces and overshadows cannot impart shape and support; that which shapens and supports cannot instruct and reform; and he who instructs and reforms cannot act in opposition to the natural purposes of things, which, being once fixed, can never depart from their proper stations in the universal economy. Therefore, the principle of Heaven and Earth, if not Yin, is Yang; the doctrine of the Sage, if not benevolent, is just; the natural property of a thing, if not soft, is hard;—all these follow their inherent properties, and never leave the stations to which they belong. Thus, given Life, there are living creatures which produce other living creatures; given Form, there are forms which impart form to others; given Sound [in the abstract], we have tones which present sounds [in the concrete]; given Colour, we have that which manifests chromatic phenomena; given Flavour, we have that by which we are enabled to perceive tastes. The actual beings produced from what has life themselves die; but the succession of births—the production of living things from living things—is endless. The forms imparted by that which has form are real enough; but that which imparted form in the first instance has no existence. The tones produced by sound [in the abstract] are audible; but the tone-producing sound has never gone forth. The hues manifested by colour are varied; but that which imparts those hues—colour in the abstract—

has never been seen. The sensation produced by flavour is experienced by gustation; but the taste-producing flavour has not been discovered. All these phenomena are functions of the principle of Inaction. The ability *to be* inherent in the Yin and Yang, softness and hardness, shortness and length, circularity and squareness, life and death, heat and cold, floating and sinking, *do* and *re*, production and annihilation, blue and yellow, sweet and bitter, stench and fragrance, appears divorced from both consciousness and power; but really there is nothing beyond either the consciousness or the power [of this principle of Inaction].

Our philosopher has now fairly plunged into a swamp of metaphysical speculation, and soon gets beyond his depth. We will follow him a little farther in his researches, and then proceed to the stories and parables—some comic, some very beautiful, but all quaint and interesting—with which this book abounds.

In the Book of the Yellow Emperor it is written:—"When a form moves, it does not produce another form, but a shadow; when a sound is emitted, it does not produce another sound, but an echo. Immobility does not produce nothing; it produces a something. Forms must come to an end; the Cosmos is finite in point of time, just as I am myself; but where the end leads to nobody knows. . . . It is the destiny of the living to be finite; the finite cannot but come to an end, just as that which is born cannot but give birth in its turn; so that the desire to prolong life, and to *do away with one's end*, is a misunderstanding of one's destiny."

The moral of all which is contentment with one's lot in life, and this forms the subject of the first story that we shall present to our readers. But first let us hear what Lieh-tzŭ and the Yellow Emperor have to say about death, as the illustrations which are given of

their theory a little farther on are of incomparable beauty.

The spiritual or essential part of man's nature pertains to Heaven; his bony framework to the Earth. That which belongs to Heaven is pure and tenuous; that which belongs to the Earth is turbid and dense; and when the spiritual part of a man leaves the form in which it has resided, each reverts to where it first came from. Wherefore the disembodied spirit is called a *kuei* [or ghost], which is something that "reverts" [*kuei*]; for it *reverts* to its original dwelling-place.

The Yellow Emperor said, "The spiritual part enters the gate [it emerged from], the body returns to that from which it sprang; and then what becomes of Me? Between the birth of a man and his death there are four great transformations: from infancy to childhood, from youth to prime, from age to decrepitude, and from the last agonies to annihilation. . . . On reaching this last stage the man finds himself at rest, and thus returns to the point from which he started."

It is this idea of death as rest, as a cessation of all worry, fatigue, and strife, that is so touchingly brought out in the stories we are about to give. First, however, there is a charming little anecdote illustrative of a lesson previously given by our philosopher that we must not overlook. We will call it

The Secret of Contentment.

As Confucius was on a journey to the Great Mountain, he fell in with a man named Jung Ch'i-ch'i, walking in a country place at Ch'êng. He was dressed in deerskin, with a girdle of cord; and he was playing a lute and singing.

"May I ask what makes you so happy, sir?" said Confucius.

"There are many things that make me happy," replied the other. "Of all created beings, human beings are the noblest; it has fallen to my lot to be a human being, and that is one

source of happiness. The difference between the male and the female consists in the former being honourable and the latter base; it has fallen to my lot to be born a male, and that is another source of happiness. Among the crowd of people who come into the world there are some who see neither months nor days—who never live to get free from their swaddling-bands; I have already lived ninety years, and that is my third source of happiness. Poverty is the common lot of scholars, and death is the end of us all. What cause for sorrow is there, then, in quietly fulfilling one's destiny and awaiting the close of life?"

"Excellent!" exclaimed Confucius. "By this means can a man find tranquillity and sereneness in himself."

Here death is regarded simply in the light of the inevitable. In the following stories it is represented in a far more beautiful and attractive guise:—

The Blessedness of Death.

Lin-lei, who had reached the age of a hundred years, and still wore fur clothes at the end of spring, went a-gleaning in the harvest-fields, singing as he walked. Confucius, journeying to the State of Wei, saw him in the field as he passed by, and, turning to his disciples, said—

"That old gentleman is worth speaking to. Go up to him, one of you, and test him with a few questions."

Tzŭ Kung offered to go, and, coming opposite to the old man just in front of a ridge of earth, "Sir," says he, with a sigh, "do you not repine at your lot, that you are singing as you glean?" But Lin-lei continued his course, singing as before; so Tzŭ Kung repeated his question again and again, until Lin-lei raised his eyes and answered him.

"What have I to repine at?" he said.

"Why, Sir," replied Tzŭ Kung, "not diligent in youth, neglectful of opportunities in middle life, wifeless and childless in your old age, and the time of death rapidly approaching, what possible happiness can be yours, that you are singing as you glean?"

"The sources of happiness that I possess," rejoined Lin-lei, smiling, "are equally possessed by all; the only difference is, that others turn them into sources of sorrow. It is just because I was *not* diligent in my youth, and did *not* seize on opportunities during the prime of life, that I have been able to reach my present age; it is because I *am* wifeless and childless in my old age, and because the time of my dissolution *is* drawing nigh, that I am as joyful as you see me."

"Old age," remarked Tzŭ Kung, "is what all men desire; but death is what all men dread. How comes it, Sir, that you find joy in the thought of death?"

"Death," said the old man, "is to life, as going away is to coming. How can we know that to die here is not to be born elsewhere? I know that birth and death are outwardly unlike; but how can I tell whether, in their eager rush for life, men are not under a delusion?—how can I tell whether, if I die to-day, my lot may not prove far preferable to what it was when I was originally born?"

Tzŭ Kung, being weary of instruction, said to Confucius, "I long for rest!"

"There is no rest to be had in life," replied Confucius.

"Then is there no possibility of rest for me?" exclaimed Tzŭ Kung.

"There is," rejoined the Sage. "Look upon the graves around you—the mounds, the votive altars, the cenotaphs, the funeral urns; there can you know what rest is."

"How great, then, is death!" exclaimed Tzŭ Kung. "For the good man it is repose; for the bad man an engulfment."

"You now know the *truth*," observed Confucius. "Men all understand the joys of life, but they ignore its sorrows; they know the decrepitude of old age, but forget that it is the period of ease and leisure; they know the dreadfulness of death, but they do not know its rest."

"How excellent is it," exclaimed Yen-tzŭ, "that from all antiquity death has been the common lot of men! It is rest for the virtuous, and a hiding-away of the bad. Death is just

a going home again. In ancient times it was said that the dead were those who had *returned;* if, then, the dead are those who have returned to their homes, it follows that the living are still travellers; and those who travel without a thought of returning have renounced their homes. Now, if a single person relinquishes his home, the whole world condemns him; but when the whole world relinquishes its [true] home [by avoiding death], there is no one who sees the error!"

We now come to a very curious subject of discussion, in which the disputants shall speak for themselves:—

An Impending Cataclysm.

In the State of Ch'i there lived a man who was so sadly afraid lest earth and sky should burst up and leave his body without a place of habitation, that he lost both his sleep and his appetite. A friend of his, feeling sorry for his anxiety, went to explain the matter to him. "The sky," he said, "is nothing but an accumulation of vapour, and there is no place where this vapour does not exist. Since, then, everybody sits down and stands up, breathes, moves, and rests all day long in the very midst of it, why should you dread its disruption?"

"But if the sky is nothing more than accumulated vapour," replied the nervous man, "does it not follow that the sun, the moon, and the stars will fall from their positions?"

"The heavenly bodies," said his counsellor, "are themselves nothing but luminosities which exist in the midst of this accumulated air; so that even if they were to fall it would be impossible for them to hurt anybody."

"But supposing the earth were to burst up?" pursued the other.

"The earth," he replied, "is just an accumulation of clods, which pervade every empty space; there is no place where these clods or lumps of matter do not exist. Since, then, a man can hobble about or tramp along, walking and stopping alternately the whole day upon the surface of the earth, what reason have you to apprehend its destruction?"

Then the other, much relieved, experienced great joy; and

the friend who had given him the explanation was satisfied, and experienced great joy too. But when Chang Lu-tzŭ heard about it, he laughed, and said, "Rainbows, clouds, mists, wind, rain, and the four seasons—all are produced by accumulations of vapour in the sky. Mountains and hills, rivers and seas, metal and stone, fire and wood—all these consist of accumulated forms upon the earth. Now, knowing what we do about these accumulations of vapour and accumulations of matter, how can it be said that their disruption is impossible [seeing that disruption did actually take place during the state of chaos]? Why, Heaven and Earth themselves are just one little particle in the midst of space; and yet, in the midst of Heaven and Earth there is that which is extremely great, difficult to exhaust, difficult to get to the end of, difficult to fathom, difficult to understand. This is a most certain fact. The man who is sorrowful lest all this should disrupt is really overfearful; while the other, who says that disruption is impossible, is also far from right. Heaven and Earth cannot but disrupt; they will return to a condition when disruption must take place; but it will be quite soon enough to grieve about it when the time for their destruction comes."

When Lieh-tzŭ heard this, he smiled, and said, "Both those who say that Heaven and Earth will disrupt, and those who say they will not, make a great blunder. Whether disruption will or will not take place is a question about which I cannot know anything; yet each of the two theories has its advocate. Thus the living know nothing of death, the dead know nothing of life; the coming know nothing of their departure, the departing know nothing of their return. Whether there is to be disruption or not, why should I trouble myself about it either way?"

The following stories have a raciness that will commend them even to those who find it difficult to see a moral in them, though each is intended to illustrate some special doctrine peculiar to the philosophy of Taoism:—

The Two Robbers.

In the State of Ch'i there lived a very rich man named Kuŏ; in the State of Sung there lived a very poor man named Hsiang. One day Mr. Hsiang went from Sung to Ch'i to ask Mr. Kuŏ what secret he possessed for acquiring wealth; and Mr. Kuŏ replied, "The fact is, that I am an extremely clever robber. When I had been robbing for a year, I had enough to eat; in two years I was in easy circumstances; in three I enjoyed affluence; and from that time to this I have dispensed charity to all the people in my district."

Mr. Hsiang was delighted. He understood very well what robbery was, but he did not understand the principle of the robbery referred to. So he immediately took to climbing over walls and breaking into houses, and nothing that his hand could reach or his eye could see escaped his clutches; but alas! in a very short time the stolen goods led to the detection of his crimes, so that he lost even the property he originally possessed. Then Hsiang, beginning to think that he had been grossly misled by Mr. Kuŏ, went to him and reproached him bitterly. "In what way did you act the robber?" asked Mr. Kuŏ. So Hsiang described all that he had been doing. "What!" exclaimed Kuŏ, "have you really missed the true principle of robbery to such an extent as this? Let me now explain to you what that principle is. You know that Heaven has its seasons and Earth its produce; well, what I steal are these two things. I employ the moistening and fertilising influences of the clouds and rain, the productive and nurturing properties of the mountain and the marsh, to make my corn grow and to ripen my harvests, to build my houses and construct my walls. On dry land I plunder birds and beasts; in the water I plunder fishes and turtles. All this is robbery; for, seeing that corn and harvests, soil and trees, birds and beasts, fish and turtles, are all produced by Heaven, how can they belong to me? Yet in thus robbing Heaven I incur no retribution. But gold, jewels, precious stones, food, silken fabrics, wealth, and property are accumulated by men; Heaven does not bestow them. If, then, you

plunder such things, and suffer for the crime, whom have you to reproach but yourself, pray?"

This puzzled Hsiang greatly, and he thought that Kuŏ was just hoaxing him a second time; so he went and consulted a learned man named Tung Kuŏ about it. Tung Kuŏ, however, pointed out to him that even his body was, in a philosophical sense, stolen from the influences of Nature; that Kuŏ had simply plundered or used that which was the common property of all, and that, while his principle of robbery was just, and deserved no punishment, that of Hsiang was selfish, and led to his conviction as a criminal.*

The Dream of the Yellow Emperor.

During the first fifteen years of the reign of the Yellow Emperor he rejoiced in the love of the whole empire; so he fostered his life, and spent his time in the gratification of his senses; but his skin became shrivelled, his complexion swarthy, his mind confused, and his passions out of gear. During the second fifteen years of his reign he had occasion to mourn over the disorder of his realm; whereupon he exerted all the powers of his mind and put forth all his strength and wisdom in caring for the people; but still his own health and appearance continued as bad as ever. Then the Yellow Emperor groaned, and exclaimed with a sigh, "My faults are indeed excessive! To think that all this misery should result first from my caring too much for myself, and now from endeavouring to benefit my subjects!" Whereupon he renounced the whole machinery of government, abandoned his imperial seraglio, dismissed his guards and eunuchs, removed the frame on which his bells hung, retrenched his table, and retired into a secluded chamber in the great court of his palace, where he purified himself and put on sad-coloured robes, not meddling with State affairs for a period of three months. One day it so happened that he fell asleep and dreamed. He thought he wandered as far as the State of Hua-hsü, a place situated a very long way off. He had no idea how many thousand myriads of *li* he was from

* See my "Taoist Texts," *Yin Fu Ching*, on The Three Plunderers.

home; but certainly neither carts nor boats had ever succeeded in getting so far before. Of course it was only his spirit that was roaming. In this state there was neither general nor king—everything happened of its own accord; the people had no passions, no predilections—spontaneity reigned supreme. They knew nothing about the joys of life or the horrors of death, so that none died before their time; they knew nothing of loving themselves and avoiding those unconnected with them, so that there was neither affection nor hatred among them; they knew nothing of rebelliousness on one hand or obedience on the other, so that benefits and injuries were alike unheard of. There was nothing they loved and cherished, there was nothing they feared and shunned; if they fell into water they were not drowned, or into fire, they were not burned; if they were hacked or struck they suffered neither injury nor pain; if scratched by finger-nails they felt no irritation. They rode through space as easily as treading solid ground, they reclined in vacancy as on a couch; clouds and mists did not obscure their vision, thunderclaps did not disturb their hearing, beauty and repulsiveness did not unsettle their minds, mountains and valleys did not impede their footsteps. Their spirits moved—no more.

Then the Emperor awoke; and immediately the whole thing was plain to him. Beckoning to his three Ministers, he said, "We have now lived in retirement for three months, purifying Our heart and wearing a mourning garb, pondering how best to nourish Our own person and govern others; but all in vain—We failed to discover the secret. At last, wearied out, We fell asleep; and, as We slept, We dreamed." The Emperor then detailed his dream. "Now We have attained to a comprehension of the perfect Way; and We can never more exercise Our mind in searching for it. We know it; We possess it; but We cannot impart it to you."

Twenty-eight more years passed, and the empire enjoyed perfect peace, almost like the State of Hua-hsü. At last the Emperor ascended to the Distant Land, and the people wept his loss for over two hundred years without ceasing.

The Power of Faith.

A certain Mr. Fan had a son named Tzŭ-hua, who enjoyed a good reputation for his chivalrous and generous disposition. He was, in fact, highly respected in his native state, and much beloved by the Prince of Ts'in. He held no office, but his rank was superior to that of the three Ministers of State. All on whom he looked with favour received honours from the Prince; all of whom he spoke disparagingly were forthwith ruined men; all who had the run of his mansion were received as equals at Court. Now, among the hangers-on of Fan Tzŭ-hua some were clever and some were stupid, and these were constantly intriguing against each other. Some were influential, and others powerless; and these vilified and sought to injure each other. But although they thus attempted to ruin and discredit one another in the eyes of Fan Tzŭ-hua, he himself bore no grudge against any one of them; on the contrary, he amused himself day and night in watching them, as though it was all a game or comedy; and this view of the matter soon became general all over the state.

One day Huŏ Shêng and Tzŭ Pŏ, the most honoured of Mr. Fan's guests, went out and wandered far from the town through a wild country place. Passing a night under the roof of a rustic watchman named Shang Ch'iu-k'ai, the two beguiled the hours by conversing upon the fame and power of Tzŭ-hua, saying how he held men's lives and deaths in his hands, and how he could enrich the poor and impoverish the rich. Now, Shang Ch'iu-k'ai had, up till then, been poor to the very verge of starvation; and secreting himself outside the window of his two lodgers, he listened to their conversation. What he heard had such an effect upon him that he forthwith armed himself with a basket, and went off to ask the loan of some grain at Tzŭ-hua's door. Now, Tzŭ-hua's *protégés* were all persons of considerable rank, who dressed in silken robes, drove showy carriages, dawdled along in a lordly style, and stared superciliously at others; and when these gentlemen set eyes on Shang Ch'iu-kai, with his weight of years, his feeble appearance, his swarthy, withered face, and

his disordered cap and clothes, they were filled with contempt and scorn. Very soon they began to insult him and treat him with impertinence, pushing, hustling, and shoving him about; there was nothing, in fact, they did not do to show their superiority. Shang Ch'iu-k'ai bore all their rudeness without the slightest appearance of anger, until the ingenuity of his assailants was exhausted and they themselves tired with their game. Then they drove him to the top of a high tower, and one of them cried with a loud voice, "A thousand ounces of gold to any man who will jump down!" The rest all vied with one another in professing their willingness to do it; but Shang Ch'iu-k'ai, believing them to be in earnest, threw himself over at once. His body looked like a flying bird, and he alighted on the ground without sustaining the slightest injury. Mr. Fan's people all thought it was an affair of pure chance, and made as though there was nothing surprising or extraordinary about it; so they pointed out a place in the bend of the river, where the water was exceptionally deep, and said, "There is a precious pearl at the bottom; dive in and fetch it." So Shang Ch'iu-k'ai complied again, and plunged in; and, sure enough, out he came again with a fine pearl in his hand.

Then, for the first time, the others began to wonder what sort of a man this was; and Tzŭ-hua ordered a residence to be prepared for him, where he could eat and dress. One day a fire suddenly broke out in the family treasure-room; and Tzŭ-hua said to Shang, "If you will venture into the flames and save the dresses that are in danger, I will reward you in proportion to the number of garments you bring out." So Shang went straightway, without the slightest expression of fear, plunged into the burning room, and returned, free from dust and perfectly unscorched. Then they all came to the conclusion that he was in possession of the True Doctrine, and with one consent began to excuse themselves, saying, "We did not know that you possessed the Doctrine when we insulted you; we did not know that you had supernatural powers when we used you with dishonour. Treat us as clods, as deaf and blind! And then we will venture to ask you to instruct us."

"I have no doctrine," replied Shang. "I am perfectly unconscious of possessing any special power. Nevertheless, there is one point which bears upon the matter, and I will try and explain it to you. Lately, two of your number passed a night in my cottage, and I overheard them expatiate upon the great fame and influence of Mr. Fan; saying how he held men's lives in his hand, and how he could enrich the poor and impoverish the rich. All this I believed implicitly; so, regardless of the distance, I came hither; and, having come, I supposed that every word you all uttered was absolutely true. I was only afraid that my own sincerity might fall short of perfection, and that my performance might consequently fall short too; so I ignored all my personal surroundings, and thought nothing of incurring benefits or injuries. My mind was just fixed on one thing, and one thing only; no external object stood in my way. That is my only secret. To-day I am made aware for the first time how I have been abused by your gang. Formerly I kept my amazement and my doubts to myself, and paid close attention to all I heard and saw; now, when I recall my good luck in escaping from death by fire and by water, I tremble at the very recollection and feel hot inside; I quake from head to foot with imaginary terror. Could I dare, think you, to brave such horrors over again?"

From that time forward, whenever the *protégés* of Fan Tzŭ-hua happened to meet even a starving man or a horse-doctor upon the road, they did not venture to treat him rudely; on the contrary, they made a point of descending from their chariots and bowing to him.

The above occurrence came to the ears of Tsai Wo, who went and told Confucius. "Don't you know," said the Sage, in reply, "that the man of perfect faith can influence even external objects—can move heaven and earth, as well as all ghosts and spirits—and can pass freely throughout space without encountering any obstruction? Is it, then, such a great thing that he should be able to brave dangers, even so far as to enter fire and water? If, when the trustfulness of Shang Ch'iu-k'ai was exercised on hypocrites, he even then found no difficulties in his path, how much more when both

parties, the trusting and the trusted, are equally sincere! Lay this to heart, my children."

Men and Brutes.

When the Director-General of State Music, in the days of the Emperor Yao, played on the musical stones, all the animals were attracted by the sound, and came and danced to it; and as the pandean pipes blended harmoniously at the close, phœnixes drew near and listened reverently; thus music was made a means of influencing beasts and birds. In what, then, do the hearts of the brute creation differ from those of human beings? The only differences between them lie in their voices and their outward forms, and the fact that they are unacquainted with the principle of social intercourse. Now, the Sage knows and understands everything, and therefore he is able to induce their obedience, and so make use of them. And there is a department of the intelligence of animals which is naturally identical with that of men. All animals, for instance, are endowed with the instinct of self-preservation, and this without being at all indebted to men for the idea. Males and females pair together, mothers and their offspring love each other; they avoid the open and unsheltered plain, and take refuge in precipitous places dangerous to man; they flee from cold and seek warmth; they live in flocks, and wander with those of their own kind; the young stay inside their lairs, while the full-grown ones go outside; they go to watering in company, and feed when the muster is called. In high antiquity brutes lived in harmony with men, and walked with them without fear. Later, they began to fear men; then they were scattered and cast into disorder. In after ages they concealed themselves, lurking in ambush, and skulking far away in order to escape injury. In one state there were men from time to time who were able to distinguish the language of the different sorts of animals; but this was a special accomplishment, and confined to a few. In high antiquity, however, the men of supernatural wisdom enjoyed a complete knowledge of all the properties, external and internal,

of the lower animals, together with a full understanding of their differentiations and of the sounds they uttered; so that when they called them together they assembled, and when they taught them they received the instruction that was imparted, exactly like human beings. . . . The conclusion of all which is, that the mental powers of all things that have blood and breath are very much the same in all instances.

King Mu and the Magician.

In the reign of Mu, King of Chao, there came from a far Western country a certain magician gifted with the most extraordinary powers. He was able to enter fire and water, pass through stone and metal, remove mountains and rivers, change the position of cities, ride through space without falling, and encounter solid substances without his progress being impeded. The changes and transformations he effected were innumerable and endless; indeed, not only could he alter the external shape of objects, but was actually able to turn the current of other people's thoughts. King Mu received him with the reverence due to a divinity, and served him as though he were a prince; he also prepared a pavilion for him to take his rest in, brought fish, flesh, and fowl to present to him, and told off certain music-girls to play before him for his delectation. The magician, however, looked upon the King's palace as a wretched and sordid hut, and declined to stay in it. The royal banquet, he said, was disgusting, and refused to touch it; while, as for the court ladies who attended him, he condemned them as both ugly and offensive, and would have nothing whatever to do with them!

Thereupon the King caused a new mansion to be built, and set the people at work to paint the walls red and white with the utmost carefulness and skill. All his treasuries were empty by the time the tower was finished, the height of it being ten thousand feet; and he called it the Tower of the Central Heavens. Then he chose the fairest virgins from the States of Chêng and Wei, bright-eyed, beautiful, and alluring; and to them he presented rich perfumes and fragrant

ointments, enjoining them to paint their eyebrows tastefully and adorn their heads, don delicate silks with trailing sashes, powder their faces, darken their eyes, and decorate their arms with jewelled bracelets. He then caused aromatic grass to be spread throughout the tower; the bands played royal music in a gladsome strain; changes of splendid raiment were offered to the guest at stated intervals, and exquisite viands prepared for him every morning. At first the magician again declined to take up his abode there; eventually, however, he was constrained to go, although he did not stay in it more than a few days.

One day, while having an audience of the King, the magician invited His Majesty to accompany him on a journey. The King accordingly laid hold of the magician's sleeve, and then both of them rose high into the air, as far as the very zenith of the heavens, where they found themselves at the magician's palace. It was roofed in with gold and silver beams, incrusted with pearls and jade. It stood far, far above the region of clouds and rain, and nothing led one to suppose that, when seen from below, it would look like nothing but a thick cloud itself. All the phenomena which appealed to the senses were quite different from those which prevailed among mortals, and the King fancied that it must be the Pure City, the Purple Hidden Palace, where the music of the spheres is heard—the home of God Himself. He gazed downward, and saw his own palace far below, with its terraces and arbours, like a mere heap of clods and billets; and then he thought how he would stay where he was for some tens of years, and give over troubling himself about his kingdom. But the magician proposed a further move; so away they soared again, till they came to a region where, if they looked up, there was no sun or moon to be seen, and, if they looked down, no seas or rivers were discernible. The reflection of light and shade dazzled the King's eyes, so that he could no longer see distinctly; strange sounds confused his ears, so that he could not hear distinctly. His whole frame became convulsed with dread, his mind was bewildered, and there was no more spirit left in him. He implored the magician to let him go back;

whereupon the magician gave him a gentle push;—he experienced a sensation of falling, falling, falling, and then suddenly awoke. He was sitting just where he had been before, with his attendants still around him; in front of him was his wine, not yet cooled, and his viands were not yet ready. The King asked what had happened. His courtiers replied, "Your Majesty has been sitting wrapped in silent contemplation."

Thereupon the King fell into a state of abstraction and self-oblivion, which lasted for three months, at the expiration of which he again interrogated the magician about what had occurred. The magician replied, "Your Majesty and I only journeyed in the spirit; how could our bodies have moved? What difference is there between the abodes we lately visited and your Majesty's own palace?—between the places through which we roamed and your Majesty's own grounds? During your Majesty's retirement you have been constantly filled with misgivings that these places were, for the time being, non-existent. Do you think that in so short a time you are able to fathom all the depths of my enchantments?"

The King was greatly pleased at this reply. He lost all interest in the affairs of State, took no more pleasure in his harem, and gave free rein to his imagination. Then he commanded that the six noble steeds, Beauty, Jasper, Bucephalus, Alabaster, Topaz, and Swiftflyer, should be harnessed to his chariot, and off he set with his charioteers and retainers, the horses flying like the wind. They galloped furiously a thousand *li*, when they came to the land of the Mighty Hunter. The Hunter presented the King with the blood of a wild goose to drink, and prepared a bath of the milk of cows and mares for the royal feet. When all were refreshed they started again, and passed the night in a cavern of the Kwên-lun Mountains, to the south of the Vermilion Waters. The next day they ascended the mountain to visit the Palace of the Yellow Emperor, who invested the King with hereditary honours; after which His Majesty was entertained by the Royal Mother of the West, who spread a banquet for him by the side of the Emerald Pool. Then the Queen sang to him, and the King joined his voice with hers. The King's song was of a plaintive character,

and as he watched the sun rapidly sinking below the horizon, and travelling a thousand *li* in the course of a single night, he heaved a profound sigh. "Alas!" he said, "my virtue is far from perfect; for I am still susceptible to the influences of this sweet music. Succeeding generations will not fail to censure me for this fault."

What! King Mu endowed with supernatural powers, think you? He was nothing but a man, able to exhaust the pleasures of which his body was capable, and then after a hundred years to depart this life, while the world imagined that he had ascended bodily from view.

The Dreamer Awake.

The philosopher Lieh-tzŭ said, "The divine men of old never thought when they were awake, and never dreamed when they were asleep."

In a corner of the world towards the extreme West there is a state, the frontiers of which border upon I don't know where. The inhabitants mostly sleep; they wake only once in fifty days, when they believe that the dreams they have been experiencing constitute their real life, and that the realities they see in their waking hours are non-existent.

There was a wealthy man of the Chou dynasty, named Yin Ta-chih, who kept his servants constantly at work, morning, noon, and night, without allowing them a moment's rest. Among them was one old fellow, who, having used up all his strength, was at last entirely worn out. But his master only made him work the harder; so that all day long he groaned and panted over his tasks, and when night came was so thoroughly exhausted that he slept as soundly as a log. Then his mental equilibrium became upset, and he used to dream every night that he was the king of a state, high exalted over the heads of the people, with all the affairs of his realm upon his hands; roaming and taking his pleasure amid palaces and temples, and giving free rein to all his passions and desires, so that his enjoyment was beyond compare. During his waking hours he was nothing but a hard-worked drudge, and

people would pity him, and condole with him upon his arduous life. But the old fellow would reply, "A man's life is passed under two separate conditions—day and night. By day I am a slave, and miserable enough; but by night I am a prince, and happy beyond all comparison. So, after all, what reason have I for grumbling at my lot?"

Now Mr. Yin, his master, was careful and troubled about many things, and the affairs of his wealthy establishment occasioned him constant anxiety; so that when night came round he also fell asleep, exhausted and knocked up. And night after night he dreamt that he was a slave—an overworked runner, always on his legs, doing everything that one can think of, being scolded and sworn at, and beaten with a stick—in fact, there was no hardship that did not fall upon him. The wretched man would sob and whimper in his sleep all night, and it was not till morning dawned that he was silent. At last he fell sick, and took counsel of a friend. "Your position in life," said his friend, "is one of sufficient splendour, and you have greater riches than you want; you surpass your neighbours far and away. And yet you dream that you're a slave! Well, this is nothing more than compensation; it is a proper adjustment of the good and ill that must befall every man in life; it is no more than the common destiny. Do you want your waking and sleeping experiences to be both pleasant? No, no; that is more than you have any right to expect."

Then Mr. Yin thought over what his friend had said, and, in accordance with it, treated his servants with greater kindness, and eased their tasks; while he abstained from undue worry and anxiety about his own affairs, and soon found his malady much relieved.

Which was the Dream?

As a man of the State of Chêng was gathering fuel in the fields, he met with a startled deer. Throwing himself in its way, he struck at it, killing it on the spot; then, fearing lest it might be found, he made haste and concealed the carcass in

a dry ditch, covering it with leaves and sticks. This done, he rejoiced exceedingly. But in a short time he forgot where he had buried it; and thinking that the whole occurrence must have been a dream after all, he turned his face homeward, humming the affair over to himself. It so happened, however, that he was overheard by a passer-by; and this man, taking advantage of what the woodcutter was saying, went and found the deer, and took it. Then he went home and told his wife. "A woodman," he said, "once dreamt he got a deer, but could not remember the place where he had put it; but now I have actually found it myself, so that his dream must have been a true one." "I expect it was you who dreamt about the woodman getting the deer," replied his wife; "how can there be any woodman in the case? It is you who have actually got the deer, so it is you who have had a true dream." "If I've got the deer, what does it matter which of us has been dreaming?" retorted her husband.

Meanwhile the woodcutter went home, feeling considerably put out at the loss of his deer; and that night he had a true dream of the place where he had hidden the carcass, and of the person who had taken it. So he rose with the sun, and hastened, in accordance with his dream, to find him. The upshot was, that the affair was taken into court and argued before a magistrate, who gave the following decision:—"The plaintiff, in the first instance, really did get a deer, and then foolishly said that it was all a dream. He did really dream about the man who afterwards took possession of it, and then foolishly said that his dream was a reality. The defendant really took the deer, and now disputes its possession with the plaintiff. The defendant's wife, again, says her husband only dreamt of the man and the deer; so that, according to her, neither of them got it. However, here we have a deer before us, so I decide that it be equally divided between the contending parties."

When the affair came to the ears of the Prince of Chêng he exclaimed, "The magistrate must have dreamt the whole case himself!" Then he consulted his Prime Minister about it; but the Minister professed himself quite unable to

distinguish the dream-part of the business from the actual occurrences. "There have been only the Yellow Emperor and Confucius," he said, "who were able to distinguish dreams from the waking state; and, as both of them are dead, nobody can discover the truth of the matter. All your Majesty can do is to uphold the decision of the magistrate."

The Advantages of having no Memory.

When Yang-li Hua-tzŭ, of the State of Sung, reached the prime of life he suddenly lost his memory. If he received anything in the morning, he forgot all about it by the evening; if he gave anything away over-night, he forgot all about it by next day. Out of doors he would forget to walk; in the house he would forget to sit down. To-day he would forget what had taken place the day before; and to-morrow he would forget what had happened to-day. His family got perfectly disgusted with him, and engaged the services of a soothsayer to divine when and how he might be cured; but the effort was unsuccessful. Then they resorted to a magician, who came and prayed for the afflicted man; but no result followed. Finally they sent for a doctor; but again the attempt proved useless.

Now in the State of Lu there lived a man of letters, who, taking the initiative himself, volunteered to effect a cure. The sick man's wife and son immediately offered him half their fortune if he would only favour them with a prescription. But the scholar replied, "This is not a malady that can be cured by sortilege and divination, or affected by prayer, or attacked successfully by drugs. I shall address myself to his *mind*. His mind must be changed, and his thoughts diverted into another channel; if this can be accomplished, his recovery will almost surely follow." So saying, he caused Hua-tzŭ to strip naked; whereupon Hua-tzŭ begged that he might have his clothes again. Then he starved him; and Hua-tzŭ begged for food. Then he shut him up in the dark; and Hua-tzŭ begged for light. Thereupon the scholar turned joyfully to the patient's son, exclaiming, "His disease is curable! But

my prescription is a secret that has been handed down from generation to generation, and may not be disclosed to others." So he turned them all out of the room, and remained himself alone with Hua-tzŭ for the space of seven days; and there is no one who knows what he did all that time. But the result was, that an illness which had lasted for years was cured, so to speak, in a single day.

When Hua-tzŭ came to his right senses he flew into a great rage, turned his wife out of doors, flogged his son, and drove away the scholar with a spear. This came to the ears of a certain gentleman of the same state, who asked Hua-tzŭ why he behaved so strangely. Hua-tzŭ replied, "Formerly, when I had no memory, I had no cares; I lived at large, unconscious of anything in the wide world; existence and non-existence were all one to me. But now, all of a sudden, I find myself remembering everything that has occurred for ten years past; births and deaths, gains and losses, joys and sorrows, loves and hates, are mixed up in my memory in the most inextricable confusion, and the future bids fair to be as intolerable as the present. Would that I could recover my former happy state of oblivion! But that is impossible; and there you have the reason why I drove the whole pack of them away."

The Crazy Genius.

There was once a man of the State of Ts'in, named P'ang, who had a son. The boy, when quite little, was extremely clever, and showed signs of an understanding beyond his years; but when he grew up he became crazy. If he heard anybody sing, he thought he was crying; he took white objects for black; perfumes he thought were stenches; if he ate sweet things, he imagined they were bitter; bad conduct he approved as good; in fact, whatever he thought about in the whole world—water, fire, heat, or cold—his ideas were always the exact reverse of the truth.

One day a man named Yang said to the lad's father, "The Superior Man of Lu (Confucius) has a multitude of resources; he will surely be able to effect a cure. Why not ask his

help?" So the father set out for the State of Lu; but on his way he had to pass through the State of Ch'ên, and there he fell in with Lao-tzŭ, to whom he told his story. Lao-tzŭ replied, "How is it that you only know your son to be crazy, and appear quite unconscious that everybody else in the world, by confusing right and wrong, injury and advantage, is suffering from precisely the same disease? I assure you that there is not a single sane man among them. Now, the craziness of one person is not sufficient to impoverish a whole family; that of a single family is not sufficient to impoverish a whole village; nor that of a village to impoverish a state, nor that of a state to impoverish the whole empire. And if the whole world went completely crazy, who would there be left to suffer by it?—while, supposing the whole world to be in the same mental condition as your son, it follows that it is you who are crazy, and not he."

Confucius on Sageship.

The Premier Shang, during an interview with Confucius, asked him whether he was a sage.

"A sage!" replied Confucius; "how could I dare claim to be a sage? And yet my learning is wide, and my knowledge considerable."

"Well, were the Three Princes sages?" asked the Premier.

"The Three Princes," said Confucius, "were virtuous, tolerant, wise, and brave; but whether they were sages I don't know."

"How about the Five Rulers?" inquired the Premier.

"The Five Rulers," replied Confucius, "were virtuous, tolerant, benevolent, and just; but whether they were sages I don't know."

"The Three Emperors, then?" pursued the Premier.

"The Three Emperors," said Confucius, "were virtuous and tolerant, and always acted in accordance with the times; but whether they were sages I don't know."

Then the Premier, greatly astonished, exclaimed, "If so, then, where is a sage to be found?"

Confucius, with a change of countenance, replied, after a short pause, "In the West there is a sage. He governs not, yet there is no disorder; he speaks not, yet he is naturally trusted; he attempts no reforms, yet his influence has free course. Vast and far-reaching are his aims! The people can find no name for it. I suspect that he is a sage; yet I cannot be sure whether even he is or no."

The Premier relapsed into silence, and pondered in his heart whether Confucius were not chaffing him.

We will skip over the next few pages, contenting ourselves with a brief summary of some of their more interesting contents. There is a description of several fabulous countries, their beauties and marvellous productions, together with the strange legends pertaining to their origin. One of these imaginary realms is called the Country of Salamanders, where, to show their filial piety, the people leave the corpses of their relations to rot, and then throw the flesh away and bury their bones; while in another a man drives away his aunt when his uncle dies, on the ground that it is impossible for people to live with the wife of a ghost. A still more curious passage is devoted to a discussion between the Emperor T'ang and his Minister, Hsia Kŏ, about the extent and eternity of matter. The Emperor begins by asking his Minister whether matter existed from the beginning of all things, and the Minister replies by asking how, if it did not, it came to exist at present, and whether their descendants would be justified in denying that matter existed in His Majesty's own day. The Emperor naturally enough rejoins that, by this argument, matter must have existed from all eternity—a remark that the Minister parries by saying that no records remain of the time

before matter existed, and that all such knowledge is beyond the scope of humanity. To the question of the Emperor whether there is any limit to the expanse of the universe, the Minister replies by avowing his entire ignorance; and when the Emperor presses the matter home by saying that "where nothing exists, that is the Infinite, but where there is existence there must be finality," the Minister says plainly that nobody can know anything about the Infinite, as, by the nature of the case, human knowledge is confined to what is limited and finite. Heaven and earth are simply contained in the great whole of the infinite Universe. "How, he asks, can we know that there is not a larger Cosmos, over and above the manifestation of Cosmos that we can see? Then the conversation tails off into a mass of mythology, more curious than important, into which we have no space to follow it.

Confutius at Fault.

One day, as Confucius was travelling in an easterly direction, he came upon two small boys quarrelling, and asked what was the matter. The first replied, "I contend that when the sun rises it is near to us, and that at the zenith it is a long way off." "And I," said the other, "say that it is farthest when it rises, and nearest in the middle of the day." "It isn't," protested the first. "When the sun rises it looks as big as the tent of a cart, while in the middle of the day it is only the size of a saucer. Isn't it clear that when it is farthest it looks small, and when nearest it looks big?" Then the second replied, "But when the sun rises it is quite chilly and cold, while at mid-day it is broiling hot; and doesn't it stand to reason that it is hottest when it is near, and coldest when far off?" Confucius confessed himself unable to decide be-

tween them; whereupon both the urchins mocked him, saying, "Go to; who says that you are a learned man?"

The Mischievous Physician.

Duke Hu of Lu, and Ch'i Ying of Chao, being both sick, bogged a celebrated physician named Pien Ch'üeh to cure them. The doctor did so; and when they were quite well again he said, "The malady you have been suffering from came from outside, and invaded your interiors, and that is why it proved amenable to drugs. But now you have both fallen sick again together, and your malady is growing with your bodies. What do you say?—would you like me to tackle it for you?" "We should first like to hear your diagnosis," replied the two gentlemen. Then the doctor said to the Duke, "Your will is strong, but you have a weak constitution; so, while you are equal to consulting, you are inadequate when it comes to arriving at a decision. Ch'i Ying, on the other hand, has a weak will, but a strong constitution; so that he is defective in deliberation, and therefore suffers from the decisions that he forms. If you two could only effect an exchange of minds, your powers would be equalised to perfection." Whereupon the doctor gave each of them a strong anæsthetic, which caused them to lie in a dead stupor for three days, during which time he cut open their bosoms, took out their hearts, and changed one for the other. Then he poured a wonderful elixir down their throats, and soon they woke up again as well as they had been before. So they took their leave of him and set out for their homes; but the Duke went to the house of Ch'i Ying, where Ch'i Ying's wife and children lived, and of course they did not know him. Meanwhile Ch'i Ying went to the Duke's, where precisely the same experience awaited him; and the next thing was, that Mrs. Ch'i Ying brought an action against Duke Hu, and the Duchess brought one against Ch'i Ying. The magistrate, after hearing the cross-actions, confessed his inability to arrange the difficulty, and decided that it should be referred to the doctor who had done the mischief. The doctor recounted the facts of the case, which was

thereupon dismissed, each man returning to the bosom of his own family.

The Power of Music.

When Kua Pa only thrummed his lute, the birds danced and the fishes capered around. Wên, the Director of Music in Chêng, having heard of this, left his family and attached himself to Shih Hsiang—another famous lutanist—following him whithersoever he went. For three years he was never without his lute in his hand, and yet at the end of that time he was unable to play a single air. Shih Hsiang thereupon said to him, "I think you had better go home again." The Director flung aside his instrument with a deep sigh. "It is not that I cannot thrum the strings," he exclaimed; "it is not that I cannot learn a tune. What I pay attention to has nothing to do with the strings; what I aim at is not mere sound. If a man's heart is not in it, he will never be able to interpret his feelings on any instrument. Therefore it is that I do not venture to put forth my hand and strike the strings. Let me take only a short leave; we will see how I get on when I come back."

In a few days he returned, and went to see his teacher, who said, "Well, and how are you progressing with the lute?"

"I have succeeded," replied the Director of Music.

"Well, let's hear what you can do," rejoined his teacher.

Now, it was the time of spring. The lute-player struck a chord, sounding the second note in the scale, harmonising with the lower fifth, when suddenly the wind blew chill and the plants and trees bore fruit. It was autumn! Then he struck the third note, setting in motion the second lower accord; and gradually a warm wind fanned their faces, and trees and shrubs burst into exuberant foliage. It was summer! Again, he struck the fifth note of the scale, harmonising with it the first upper accord; whereupon hoar-frost appeared and snow began to fall, and the streams and pools froze hard. It was winter! Once more, he struck the fourth note of the scale, setting in motion the fourth upper accord; whereupon the sun

burst out in an excess of brilliancy and heat and the fast-bound ice thawed rapidly. Finally he played a grand chord, the dominant of which was the first note of the scale, and immediately a delicious breeze sprang up, auspicious clouds floated across the sky, a sweet dew fell, and a fountain of pure water bubbled up from the ground.

The teacher, Shih Hsiang, stroked his breast and fairly danced with delight. "Wonderful, wonderful," he cried, "is your playing! You surpass the most gifted of the ancients."

Singing and Weeping.

Once upon a time a certain man named Han Ngo, while on a journey, found that he had taken an insufficient quantity of provisions with him, so on arriving at the next town he had to sing for his food. When he left, the sound of his voice still hovered among the rafters of the room he had occupied, and continued to be heard for three days without interruption, so that the neighbours on either side imagined he was still there. When he came to another place, called Ni Lü, the populace insulted him, whereupon he burst out weeping in stentorian tones. All the children and old folks in the district caught the infection, and they all roared and wept in concert, sitting opposite to each other for three days and eating nothing. When Han Ngo went away they hastened after him, whereupon he returned, and sang them a very long ballad in a very loud voice. Then the children and old people danced with joy and capered delightedly about, quite unable to restrain their feelings and forgetful of their former grief. At last they loaded him with gifts and sped him on his way; and thus the people of that place have been great adepts at singing and weeping ever since, imitating to the present day the sounds bequeathed to them by Han Ngo.

The King and the Marionette.

As King Mu was on his way back from a journey he passed by a place where a very accomplished conjuror, named Yen Shih, was presented before him with a view to His Majesty's

entertainment. The King received him graciously, and asked wherein lay his special proficiency. "Your servant," replied the conjuror, "will endeavour to execute whatever commands your Majesty may be pleased to lay upon me; but I have in readiness a certain piece of mechanism of my own, which I beg your Majesty to inspect first." "Bring it with you another day," said the King, "and then we will look at it together."

Next day the conjuror again sought an audience of the King, and was accordingly ushered into his presence. "But who is this person you have brought with you?" asked the King. "This is my handiwork," replied the conjuror, "and he can sing and act." The King, astonished at this statement, bent his gaze upon the figure as it stepped backwards and forwards, cast its eyes up and down, for all the world like a real man. The extraordinary creature, moving its jaws, then sang a tune, and, raising its hands, danced in time to it, throwing its body into a thousand diverting contortions in a most appropriate manner, so that the King was convinced that it was really a living person. Then he sent for the ladies of his harem to see it with him, when, towards the end of the performance, the actor winked at the Royal concubines, making signs to them with its hands. The King flew into a great rage, and, springing to his feet, made as though he would kill the conjuror on the spot; whereupon the conjuror, in a panic of terror, seized the actor, and then and there *took him to pieces!* He showed the King that it was simply an arrangement or combination of carved wood, glue, and varnish, painted white, black, scarlet, and blue; and the King, examining it himself, found that inside it contained liver, gall, heart, lungs, spleen, kidneys, bowels, and stomach all complete, while the framework consisted of sinews, bones, limbs, joints, skin, teeth, and hair—every one of them an imitation of the real thing. Nothing was wanting; and when the whole contrivance was put together again it looked exactly the same as before. Then the King, to test it, removed the heart, whereupon its mouth could not speak. He removed the liver, and it could no longer see. He removed the spleen, and its foot refused to walk.

Then was King Mu delighted beyond measure, and exclaimed, with a sigh, "Verily the skilfulness of man is on a par with that of the Creator Himself!"

This story is worthy of preservation as a Chinese prototype of Mrs. Shelley's Frankenstein and his horrible monster.*

The Two Archers.

There was once upon a time a very celebrated archer named Kan Ying, who no sooner drew his bow than every animal crouched, and every bird fell. He had a disciple named Fei Wei, who, having learned archery under him, eventually became more skilful than his master; and Fei Wei, in his turn, had a pupil named Ch'i Chang. . . . Now, Ch'i Chang, having probed the method of his instructor to the uttermost, and gained his enthusiastic praise, reflected within himself that he had only one rival in the world—namely, Fei Wei himself. Thereupon he cast about how he might slay Fei Wei, and meeting him one day in a solitary place, he picked a quarrel with him. The two then shot at one another, but such was the unerring accuracy of each man's aim that their arrows met half-way, and the two points striking together, they fell harmless to the ground without raising a speck of dust. The arrows of Fei Wei gave out first; Ch'i Chang had just one left, and he shot it. Fei Wei replied with a twig of thorn, and again the two met midway. At this juncture the two men burst into tears, threw away their bows, prostrated themselves before each other in the dust, and vowed that they would live as father and son for evermore. Then they swore an oath never to divulge the secret of their skill, and branded it upon their shoulders.

* How is it, we may be permitted to ask in passing, that nine persons out of ten speak of Frankenstein as the monster? Even Lord Salisbury committed himself in this way a year or so ago.

Fate and Free Will.

Free Will once said to Fate, "How can your merit be compared with mine?"

"What power have *you* in the affairs of life," retorted Fate, "that you presume to compare yourself with me?"

"Why," replied Free Will, "I claim to be the arbiter of long life and early death; failure and success, ignominy and honour, poverty and wealth, all depend on me."

"The wisdom of Pêng Tsû;" * said Fate, "was certainly not superior to that of the great Emperors Yao and Shun, yet he lived eight hundred years. The abilities of Yen Yuen were not inferior to those of the common herd, and he died at the early age of thirty-two. The virtue of Confucius was certainly not inferior to that of the Feudal Princes, and he was brought to the direst extremities. The conduct of Chou Hsin † was not superior to that of the Three Philanthropists, yet he attained to the imperial dignity. The virtuous Ch'i Ch'a had no rank whatever in the State of Wu, while the infamous T'ien Hêng managed to usurp the throne of Tsi. The incorruptible brothers Pŏ I and Shu Ch'i died of hunger, while the traitor Chi Shih waxed rich. Now, pray, if you, Mr. Free Will, are as powerful as you say you are, how is it that all the good men died early and all the bad ones flourished till they were old?—that the Sage was reduced to misery, while a rebel gained his ends?—that the wise were slighted and the foolish held in honour?—that the virtuous were poor, while the wicked rolled in wealth?"

"You have proved your case," replied Free Will. "It is clear that I have no power whatever. All these things were of *your* ordaining; the fault is yours, not mine."

"What!" exclaimed Fate. "If, as you say, these things are the result of Fate, pray, where does the 'ordaining' come in? All I do is to go blindly forward, or, if I am so impelled, from side to side. How can I tell who are to live long or to

* The Chinese Methuselah.

† The cruellest and most abandoned tyrant who ever reigned in China. His enormities trench on the fabulous.

die early, to succeed or fail, to be honoured or despised, to become rich or remain poor? How am I to know?"

The Puzzle Solved.

Pei-kung Tzŭ said to Hsi-mên Tzŭ, "You and I are contemporaries, and you have succeeded in life. We belong to the same clan, and you are held in honour. We have both the same cast of features, and you are generally popular. We are both able to speak, and you, in this respect, have only ordinary abilities. We both take an active part in public affairs, and you are no more than commonly honest. We are both in office, and your post is an honourable one. We both cultivate our fields, and you have grown rich. We both engage in commerce, and you make large profits. As for me, I dress in coarse rustic clothes, and my food is of the poorest and commonest; my dwelling is a thatched hut; and when I go out I walk on foot. But you! Your clothes are of embroidered silk; you dine on dainty viands; you live in pillared halls; and when you go out you drive in a chariot-and-four. At home you lead a proud and merry life, and treat me with contempt; at Court your manners are abrupt, and your bearing towards me is haughty; while, if we have occasion to go out, you will never walk in my company. Now this has gone on for years; pray, do you consider yourself a more meritorious person than I?"

"Really," replied Hsi-mên Tzŭ, "I cannot go into such details as these. All I know is, that whatever you turn your hand to fails; whatever I do succeeds; and here you have the experimental proof of it. And yet you say that we are equals in every respect. Such audacity is simply unheard-of!"

Pei-kung Tzŭ was silenced; and, greatly confused at the snubbing he had received, went home. On the road he met the teacher Tung Kuŏ, who said, "Where have you been, that you are walking all alone and looking so mortified?" So Pei-kung Tzŭ told him all that had happened; to which Tung Kuŏ rejoined, "Never mind; I will cure you of your soreness.

Let us go back to the man's house together, and see if we can't put him to the question."

When they arrived the teacher went up to Hsi-mên Tzŭ and said to him, without any preface—

"How is it that you have been speaking so insultingly to Pei-kung Tzŭ? Be good enough to inform me."

"It is simply this," replied Hsi-mên Tzŭ. "Pei-kung Tzŭ maintained that all the conditions of our two lives were similar, while our fortunes were quite different. I told him that I couldn't account for it excepting on the ground that he was not so richly endowed with natural gifts as I was. How, I asked him, could he have the audacity to say that we stood upon an equal footing?"

"According to you," rejoined the teacher, "wealth and poverty of natural endowments amount simply to differences in ability and virtue. Now, my definition is quite another thing. The truth is, that Pei-kung Tzŭ is rich in merit but poor in destiny. You are rich in destiny but poor in merit. Your success in life is not a prize due to your wisdom. Pei-kung Tzŭ's failure is not a loss resulting from his stupidity. It is all a matter of fate; it does not rest with the individual. Again, you pride yourself at his expense because of your lucky star; he, on the other hand, suffers shame in spite of his wealth of worth. In short, you neither of you understand the doctrine of Predestination."

"Pray, Sir, forbear," said Hsi-mên Tzŭ. "I do not dare to answer you."

Then Pei-kung Tzŭ, departing, found the common clothes he wore as warm as fur of fox or badger, his pulse of beans as toothsome as the finest rice, and his thatched house as protective as a lordly mansion; he mounted his old cabbage-cart as though it were a chariot of state, and spent the whole of his after-life in the happiest frame of mind, caring not a jot whether glory or shame fell to the lot of himself or anybody else.

The Patriot Friends.

Kuan Chung and Pao Shu were bosom friends, living together in the State of Ts'i. The former was in the service of the young Prince Chiu; the latter served his brother, the young Prince Hsiao Pŏ. Now, the reigning Duke, their father, had a large family, on whom he doted fondly, the Duchess and the ladies of his harem being all considered of equal rank. The people of Ts'i feared lest grave disorders might arise from this weakness of the Duke's; so Kuan Chung, accompanied by one Shao Wu, attended Prince Chiu to the State of Lu, while Pao Shu escorted Prince Hsiao Pŏ to Chü. Their escape having been effected, the smouldering rebellion broke out; the Duke was killed, and the state left without a sovereign. Then both the young Princes contended for the throne; and Kuan Chung, on behalf of his master, Prince Chiu, gave battle to Prince Hsiao Pŏ in the State of Chü, in the course of which engagement he shot an arrow that struck the Prince in the clasp of his belt. Hsiao Pŏ, however, was eventually successful; and afterwards, when he ascended the throne, he brought pressure to bear upon the State of Lu with a view to the execution, by being minced, of his brother and Shao Wu. The former was put to death, and the latter committed suicide, while Kuan Chung was thrown into prison. Then Pao Shu said to his royal master, "Kuan Chung has abilities which fit him to administer a state." "But he's my enemy," replied the young Duke, "and I should like to kill him." "I have heard," rejoined Pao Shu, "that virtuous sovereigns never bear private grudges. Besides, a man who is able to serve one master is also able to serve another, if he chooses. If your Highness wishes to become Chief of the Feudal Princes, it is absolutely necessary for you to secure the aid of Kuan Chung; so you really must set him at liberty." Thereupon the Duke commanded Kuan Chung to be brought before him, and he was accordingly given up by the authorities of Lu. Pao Shu went to meet him on the road, and brought him to the Duke, who received him with great honour, and gave him a post higher than that occupied by the two

hereditary nobles of the state. Pao Shu contented himself with a subordinate position, and the entire administration of affairs was vested in Kuan Chung, who was soon called Father Chung. When, subsequently, the Duke aimed at the Chiefdom of the Feudatories, Kuan Chung heaved a sigh, and thus soliloquised:—

"When I was young and poor I often traded with Pao Shu. On the profits being divided, I always took the larger share; yet Pao Shu never reproached me with covetousness, for he knew that I was poor. I often advised him about his affairs; yet when he came to grief through following my counsel he never reproached me with stupidity, knowing that times were sometimes favourable and sometimes the reverse. I held office thrice, and thrice was dismissed by my sovereign; yet Pao Shu never reproached me with degeneracy, knowing that I was simply unfortunate. Thrice did I wage war, and thrice was I defeated; yet Pao Shu never reproached me with cowardice, knowing that I had an aged mother. And then, when my royal master was defeated and my colleague killed himself, while I escaped with mere imprisonment, Pao Shu never reproached me with shamelessness; for he knew I felt no shame at trifles, but was only ashamed at my reputation not being coextensive with the world. It was my parents who gave me birth, but it is only Pao Shu who knows me."

Thus it is that Kuan Chung and Pao Shu have become a synonym for faithful friendship.

A Cynical Courtier.

Once upon a time Duke Ching went on a journey to the Ox Mountain. As he approached the capital of his state, on his return from the north, he burst into a flood of tears, and exclaimed, "How beautiful is my kingdom, embedded in all the exuberant luxuriance of foliage! Why, then, should I weep? Because I must die, and leave it. Supposing that death had never entered the world in the olden times, and we were all immortal, whither should I bend my steps if once I left this spot?" Then two of his courtiers lifted up their

voices and wept in company. "We depend on your Highness's generosity," they said, "for the coarse food and bad flesh we are able to obtain, and for the ill-tempered horses we harness to our carriages; yet even we do not wish to die,—how much less, indeed, should your Highness?"

Yen-tzŭ, however, laughed at this scene as he stood apart. Thereupon the Duke, wiping away his tears, turned to him and said, "My excursion to-day is a very sad one. My other courtiers join me in weeping; how is it that you alone begin to laugh?"

"If," replied the philosopher, "virtuous monarchs enjoyed perpetual tenure of the throne, Dukes T'ai and Huan would be in possession of it to this day; or if that were the case with brave monarchs, then Dukes Chuang and Ling would similarly be reigning still. If, in short, all these princes were perpetually in power, your Highness would to-day be wearing a straw hat and living among the ditches of some farm, where your occupation would be such as to leave you but little time for thinking about death. If your predecessors had been immortal, how would your Highness have been able to obtain the throne at all? It has now descended to you in the usual manner from those who previously occupied and vacated it, and yet you alone make it a cause of weeping! This is pure selfishness; and it was the sight of a selfish prince and a couple of sycophantic courtiers that led me to laugh on the sly."

The Duke was much abashed, and drank a glass of wine by way of punishing himself. He also exacted the same penalty from his two courtiers.

And now comes a chapter devoted to Yang Chu, a very celebrated philosopher indeed. He lived about the fourth or fifth century B.C., and may be called the Epicurus of China, being, curiously enough, a contemporary of the Western philosopher, whose doctrines his own resembled so closely. "With him," says Mr. Mayers, "he agrees in preaching a sublime indifference to life

and death, and a regard for self in preference to the case of others. Thus Mencius"—his unsparing enemy —"rightly characterises his philosophy as that of Selfishness." The following illustrations of his theory are exceedingly curious and interesting:—

A Chinese Ecclesiastes.

Yang Chu said, "A man who lives to be a hundred has a great allowance of years. There is not one in a thousand who attains to it. . . . Yet what, after all, is a man's life worth to him? What true joy does it afford? Well, he may get elegance and comfort—enjoy beautiful sounds and sights. Yet comfort and elegance cannot suffice him for ever; beautiful sounds and sights cannot be enjoyed indefinitely. Over and above this, there are punishments to deter and rewards to stimulate; and there are various methods of acquiring fame to guide one's policy of action. Thus men get into a constant fluster of work, bustling about in their little hour to acquire empty praise, that they may secure posthumous glory; . . . so that, of course, they lose all the real pleasure there may be in life. For not one hour can they be at ease; for, hemmed up in a sort of prisoner's cage, bound and manacled hand and foot, how can it be otherwise with them? The sages of old knew that birth was just a Coming for a little while, and that death was just a Going; wherefore they followed the promptings of their own natures, and did no violence to their natural bent; never rejecting whatever delights there were to be had in life, never acting with a view to fame, but just following their own spontaneous inclinations," &c.

Now, this is not only a caricature of pure Taoism, but a gross libel on the sages of antiquity; for we shall soon see, in such a story, for instance, as *The Virtuous Profligates*, what Yang Chu meant by "doing no violence to their natural inclinations." Even the irreproachable

Kuan Chung is subsequently pressed into the service and made to utter the most atrocious doctrines.

Live while you can.

Yang Chu said, "It is only the living who differ among themselves; the dead are all alike. When a man is alive, he may be wise or he may be foolish, he may be noble or he may be mean; thus do the living differ. But the dead all stink, they are all corrupt, they all decay till there is nothing left of them; and thus they are all alike. Both these facts are beyond the power of man; neither are they the result of anything that people themselves may do. Some die when they are ten, and some when they are a hundred; the wisest and best die, just as the vilest and worst; a man may live as a Yao or a Shun [the typical saintly Emperors], or as a Chieh or a Shou [say a Nero or a Philip the Second], but when he dies he is nothing but rotten bones in either case. In fact, there is no difference between the rotten bones of a dead saint and those of a dead rascal. Wherefore, in life let us attend to the things of life; why should we trouble our heads about what is to take place after death?"

How to Live Long.

Yen P'ing-chung asked Kuan Chung, saying, "What is the best way to take care of one's health?"

"To do precisely what you please, without hindrance or restraint," replied Kuan Chung; "nothing more."

"Pray descend to particulars," urged his interlocutor.

"The thing is very simple," said Kuan Chung. "Whatever your eye delights to look at, that look at to your heart's content; whatever your ear loves to hear, your nose to smell, your mouth to speak; whatever your body finds pleasure in; whatever your heart prompts you to do, enjoy it all! If there is any sound you love, and you can't hear it, that is restraint of one sense; if there is any beauty you delight to gaze on, and can't, that is restraint of another sense; and so on through all the desires of which your soul is capable. Now,

all these different forms of restraint are the head and front of everything that is deleterious and cruel; so that if these are swept away, and a man quietly waits for death every day of his life in unrestrained enjoyment, you have what I call the true method of preserving one's health. But to be subjected to such restraints does not conduce to the preservation of men's health—no, not if a man lives a hundred years, or a thousand, or ten thousand."

The Virtuous Profligates.

Tzŭ Ch'an, Prime Minister of the State of Chêng, wielded complete power for three years, during which time the virtuous all submitted to his reforms, while the vicious feared his prohibitions; so that the State of Chêng, from its good government, commanded the respectful dread of all the feudal princes. Now, the Minister had two brothers, of whom Chao, the elder, was a drunkard, and Mu, the younger, was a lecher. Chao's house contained a thousand *chung* (about 750 *tun*) of wine; accumulations of yeast stood up like a barricade, and the odour of wine-dregs offended everybody's nose to a distance of a hundred paces from his door. The man was simply reckless in his self-indulgence, and neither knew nor cared what was going on in the world—whether things were prosperous or in danger, whether public affairs were being wisely administered or not, whether his relations lived or died, or whether even his own life were or were not threatened. Mu, on his side, filled his inner rooms, to the number of thirty or forty, with concubines. The place just overflowed with the choicest, most delicate, voluptuous, and seductive girls imaginable. The man was simply a slave to lust, and broke off all intercourse with his relatives and former comrades, skulking away in his harem, where, not satiated with night pleasures, he prolonged them throughout the day. He only went out once every three months, and even then he would have preferred remaining inside. If ever he heard that there was a virgin of unusual beauty in some country place, he would send and tempt her with money, or employ a procuress to abduct her; and if he failed, he turned his pursuit elsewhere.

Now, all this caused daily and nightly distress to their good brother, the Prime Minister; and at last he went privately to a friend of his, one Têng Hsi, to consult him about the matter. "I have heard it said," remarked the Minister, in conversation with his friend, "that if a man can govern himself he can govern his family; and that if he can govern his family he may also govern a state. This saying reasons from the near to the far. But look at my case. I have governed the state successfully, but my family is in utter disorder; so the theory is contrary to fact. What method can I possibly adopt for rescuing these two lads? I pray you, point one out to me."

"For a long time," replied Têng Hsi, "I have wondered greatly at all this; but I did not venture to mention the matter to you first. How is it, then, that you have taken no measures to set them straight? Your best way is to explain to them the dignity and value of life, and allure them, by gentle means, to a knowledge of the nobleness of decorum and rectitude."

So Tzŭ Ch'an acted upon his friend's advice, and took an early opportunity to seek an interview with his two brothers. "The superiority of man over the birds and beasts," he said to them, "consists in intelligence and the power of thought. Now, what intelligence and thought are calculated to promote is uprightness and decorum; and when these are perfected the man's good name is established. But if every desire and passion is gratified, and licentiousness indulged in without restraint, one's very life is put in jeopardy. Be advised by me; if you will only repent by dawn, you may enjoy emoluments from the State ere night."

"We have known all that for a long time," replied Chao and Mu, "and we made our choice ages ago. Do you really suppose we have had to wait for you to tell us? Life is not to be had for the asking, while death comes only too easily; and which, pray, is the more earnestly desired? What? To struggle after rectitude and decorum in order to make a show before others; to feign virtues we don't possess in order to acquire fame,—why, we would very much sooner die at once. No; what we want is to exhaust all the pleasure we can in the course of our lives, and to get all possible delights

out of the present time; all we are afraid of is, that our stomach may overflow, and our mouth be unable to enjoy unrestrained indulgence in wine, or that our strength may give out and leave us impotent to go to extremes in the sweets of lechery. We have no time to grieve over the foulness of our reputation or the danger to which we expose our health. Whereas you employ your administrative ability to sound your own trumpet; you desire to upset our minds by your glibness in talking, and try to please us with promises of glory and pelf. Is not this vile and pitiable on your part? No; we would rather not resemble you."

The two profligates continue to rate the Minister in the same strain, until the poor man retires, speechless and abashed, only to be snubbed in the most heartless fashion by the treacherous Têng Hsi, who upholds the words of Chao and Mu as embodying the true philosophy of life.

Sage or Reprobate?

In the State of Wei there lived a man named Tuan-mu Shu, who inherited a fortune from his ancestors, which, by accumulation, had reached an enormous sum. He took no part in public affairs, but threw himself headlong into a whirlpool of pleasure. Everything that a man could think of he indulged in. He had towers and palaces, parks and pleasances, pools of ornamental water, banquets, chariots, music, and concubines, just like a sovereign prince. There was not a sense left ungratified: what he could not obtain in his own state he sent for from another; in fact, there were no hills or streams, as far as the human foot could go, that were not ransacked for him. Every day he entertained a hundred guests in his pavilions; the fires in his kitchen never went out, and music resounded without ceasing in his halls and piazzas. What he had over, he distributed among his family; what they had over, they distributed among the people in the neighbourhood; and what they were unable to use, they distributed broadcast over the

state. But when Tuan-mu had lived sixty years he began to break up. His strength failed rapidly; his means of living were exhausted. In the course of a single year his treasuries became empty, his jewels disappeared, his chariots and his concubines were no more. Not a penny was left for his heirs; during his illness there was no money to buy medicine, and when he died there was no money to bury him. But all the people in the state who had enjoyed his benefits brought the money they had saved, and restored it to the sons and grandsons of the dead man.

When Ch'in Ku-li heard of this he said, "Tuan-mu Shu was a profligate, who brought disgrace upon his ancestors." Tuan-kan Shêng, on the other hand, said, "Tuan-mu Shu was a most intelligent person, whose ancestors were far inferior to him in virtue."

There is one more striking passage attributed to Yang Chu, sacrilegiously comparing the sad lives of the good and virtuous in Chinese history with the joyful careers of those whose names are execrated, and who are still happily unconscious of the curses heaped on them by posterity; and there are also a few more anecdotes in which he occupies a prominent position. But we have seen quite as much of the apostle of selfishness as is necessary to our purpose, and will proceed at once to a selection from the more pleasing stories with which the book concludes. We may remark, however, in taking our leave of Yang Chu, that Lieh-tzŭ, so far from endorsing his praise of cynicism and vice, says roundly that men who care nothing for integrity and everything for eating are no better than fowls and dogs, and need never hope for the respect of their fellow-men, for they will never get it.

The Leafmaker.

There was a man of Sung who made artificial leaves of jade for the King. The work took three years to finish; the artificer carving and paring the stalks and veins, and reproducing the very down and gloss, so that the result had all the appearance of a luxuriant cluster of bright leaves, in natural disorder, and impossible to distinguish from real ones. The man followed his art as a handicraft, receiving a regular stipend from the State. When Lieh-tzŭ heard of it he said, "Well! if when God created the world He was three years making a bunch of leaves, there would be very few leaves in the world to-day."

Therefore it is that the Sage sets store on good principles and social reformation, not on dexterity and skill.

Luck and no Luck.

There was a certain Mr. Shih, of the State of Lu, who had two sons. One was devoted to study, the other to the profession of arms. The student went to seek his fortune at the Court of the Marquis of Ch'i, who received him cordially, and appointed him tutor to his two young sons; while the soldier repaired to the State of Ch'u, where the Prince made him generalissimo of his forces, conferred large revenues upon his family, and ennobled all his relations.

Now, old Mr. Shih had a neighbour of the name of Mêng, who also had two sons, whose respective professions were the same as those followed by the brothers Shih; but, alas! they were hampered in their life by poverty. Incited by the brilliant fortunes of the young men Shih, old Mr. Mêng asked their father how they had managed to get on so well; and he told him exactly what had taken place. Whereupon he determined that his own two sons should follow their example, and accordingly sent the studious one to the Court of the Prince of Ch'in. But the Prince said, "At present we feudatory princes are all engaged in internecine warfare, and all our thoughts are concentrated upon military equipments, commissariats, and

such things; to talk, as you do, of governing my state on an ethical basis would be its ruin." So he castrated him and sent him away. The other son, who had studied military matters, meanwhile went to the State of Wei, in order to gain the interest of the reigning Marquis. But the Marquis said, "Mine is a weak state, hemmed in between two great ones. My policy is to conciliate the states that are larger than mine by being of service to them, and states that are smaller than mine by dealing kindly with them. That is the way to preserve peace for myself. If I were to rely upon military strength, I might look out for speedy annihilation; and if my people were to desert me and go in a body to some other state, the calamities that would come upon me would be no laughing matter." So he cut off young Mêng's feet, and sent him back to Lu.

Then all the Mêngs, father and sons, smote their breasts and railed on old Mr. Shih. But Mr. Shih said, "All who are lucky enough to hit the right moment prosper; those who miss it are ruined. The methods you adopted were the same as those of my own sons; it is only the results which were different. This was because you missed your opportunities, not because you acted unwisely. Besides, the principle of mundane affairs is not invariably right, while events do not invariably turn out wrong. What was used yesterday is rejected to-day, and what is rejected to-day may perhaps be used to-morrow; but the question whether such a thing is used or rejected is no criterion as to whether it is right or wrong. You may hit upon your opportunity, and come just in the nick of time; but it is never certain that things will turn out in your favour—that must depend on a man's own shrewdness. If he is not shrewd enough, though he be as learned as Confucius and as accomplished as Lü Shang, he will be unsuccessful, whatever course he may adopt."

Then the Mêngs, casting off their resentment, said, with recovered good-humour, "We see it all now! You need not repeat your words."

Guard your own Frontier.

Duke Wên of Chin once started to attend a conference of the feudal princes, the object of which was to organise an attack on the State of Wei. On the journey his Minister, Kung-tzŭ Ch'u, was observed to cast up his eyes and laugh. "What are you laughing at?" demanded the Duke. "I was laughing," replied the Minister, "about a certain neighbour of mine. He was escorting his wife on her way to pay a visit to her parents, when he spied a pretty girl picking mulberry-leaves for silkworms. Delighted at the *rencontre*, he stopped to talk to her, when, happening to turn his head, he saw somebody else paying attention to his wife. That was what I was laughing to myself about."

The Duke understood the hint. He did not proceed any farther, but led his soldiers back; and they had not arrived in their own state when news reached them that an enemy had come during their absence and attacked their northern frontier.

Moderation the Best Policy.

An elderly man lay dying, and as he felt his end drawing near, he called his son to him, and said, "The King has sought to load me with honours, but I have consistently declined them. When I am dead he will seek to confer honours upon you; but mind what I say—accept no land from him which is worth anything. Now, between the States of Ch'u and Yueh there is a bit of ground that is of no use to anybody, and has, moreover, a very bad reputation; for the people of both Ch'u and Yueh believe it to be haunted. This is a kind of property that you may retain for ever." Soon after this the man died, and the King offered a beautiful piece of land to his son. The youth, however, declined it, and begged for the bad piece. This was granted to him, and he has never lost possession of it to this day.

The Folly of being Righteous Over-much.

There was once a man named Yuan Ching-mu, who, during a journey, fainted with hunger on the road. An old robber-

chief called Hu-fu Ch'iu, seeing him in this condition, brought out a kettle of soup and fed him; and when the traveller had swallowed three mouthfuls he recovered so far as to be able to open his eyes. Then, gazing at his deliverer, he said, "Who are you?" "I am Hu-fu Ch'iu," replied the robber. "What!" exclaimed Mr. Yuan; "why, you're a robber, aren't you? How is it you have given me food? My sense of rectitude forbids me to accept your hospitality." Whereupon he knelt with his two hands upon the ground and retched. He was unable, however, to vomit what he had eaten, but coughed and choked so violently that he fell flat down and expired. Now, it is true that Hu-fu Ch'iu was a robber, but his food had been honestly come by; so that to refuse to eat food because it is given by a robber, who only *may* have stolen it, is to lose both the substance and the shadow.

The Elixir of Life.

Once upon a time it was reported that there was a person who professed to have the secret of immortality. The King of Yen, therefore, sent messengers to inquire about it; but they dawdled on the road, and before they had arrived at their destination the man was already dead. Then the King was very angry, and sought to slay the messengers; but his favourite Minister expostulated with him, saying, "There is nothing which causes greater sorrow to men than death; there is nothing they value more highly than life. Now, the very man who said he possessed the secret of immortality is dead himself. How, then, could he have prevented your Majesty from dying?" So the men's lives were spared.

Doing Evil that Good may come.

There was once a man in Han-tan who presented a live pigeon to Chien-tzŭ at dawn one New Year's Day. Chien-tzŭ was delighted, and rewarded him liberally. A visitor asked him his reason for acting thus. "Because," said Chien-tzŭ, "it gives me an opportunity of releasing a captive bird; and to set living creatures free on New Year's morning is a special

manifestation of mercy." The visitor replied, "But if the people know that your Excellency is so fond of setting birds at liberty, they will vie with each other in catching them to begin with, and numbers of the birds will die. If your object is to save their lives, would it not be better to forbid the people to catch them at all? First to catch them, in order to let them go afterwards, is surely to destroy the just proportions of good and evil."

Then Chien tzŭ acknowledged that his visitor was right.

A Youthful Anti-Teleologist.

There was a wealthy man of Chi, named T'ien Tsû, who daily fed a thousand people in his own mansion. Among them was one who reverently presented his host with a fish and a goose. T'ien Tsû looked at the offering and sighed. "How bountiful," he exclaimed, "is Heaven to man! It gives us the nutritious grain for food, and produces birds and fishes for our use." All the guests applauded this pious sentiment to the echo, except the young son of a certain Mr. Pao, a lad of twelve years old, who, leaving his back seat and running forward, said—

"You would be nearer the truth, Sir, if you said that Heaven, Earth, and everything else all belonged to the same category, and that, therefore, nothing in that category is superior to the rest. The only difference which exists is a matter of size, intelligence, and strength, by virtue of which all these things act and prey upon each other; so it is quite a mistake to say that one is created *for the sake* of the others. Whatever a man can get to eat, he eats; how can it be that Heaven originally intended it for the use of man, and therefore created it? Besides, we all know that gnats and mosquitoes suck our skins, and tigers and wolves devour our flesh; so that, according to your theory, we were ourselves created by Heaven for the special benefit of gnats, mosquitoes, tigers, and wolves! Do you believe that, pray?"

The Three Rules of Life.

Once upon a time there were three brothers who went abroad to study ethics. On their return their father said to the eldest—

"Well, and what do ethics consist in?"

"They teach me," replied his son, "to cherish my own health and life, and to regard fame as of secondary importance."

"And what have they taught you?" inquired the father, turning to his second son.

"They teach me to kill myself, if necessary, in order to achieve fame," was the reply.

"And you?" said the father to the youngest.

"They teach me to preserve both body and fame intact," replied the lad.

Now, here you have three different theories all proceeding from a recognised authority. Which of them is right, think you, and which wrong?

CHAPTER XI.

TAOIST HERMITS.

THE tendency of nearly all religions in the direction of asceticism is proved by the existence, in almost every quarter of the globe, of hermits. A desire to flee from the cares and enticements of the world, to shun the face of one's fellow-man, and to devote oneself entirely to the contemplation of the unseen constitutes, in most instances, that frame of mind which impels its subject to abjure the claims of family and friendship and all that makes life sweet. With the growth of enlightenment and the rationalistic spirit, the hermit-race has gradually been dying out. Early in the Middle Ages the anchorite was a recognised institution—a sort of "irregular" in the Church militant, yet one who very often came in for the highest honours of saintship. But it was not the hermit of poetry on whom the approval of the Church was principally bestowed. That variety represented the æsthetic rather than the ascetic type of anchoretics. He wore a very fine, full beard and flowing robes of serge. He lived in a charming grotto, adorned in picturesque fashion with a skull, a crucifix, and an enormous book, and slaked his thirst at the mountain rill which invariably babbled past his door. The hermits of whom saints were made were of a very different cut. They generally went naked,

and affected the peculiarities of Nebuchadnezzar during the seven years in which that hapless monarch was afflicted with lycanthropy. They slept in beds of nettles, in marshes reeking with miasmata and swarming with foul reptiles. They lacerated their skins, already covered with sores and smarting with the bites of insects. Cleanliness and comfort were loathed by them as crimes, dirt and misery being regarded as the highest indications of internal holiness. These men were reverenced in bygone days as saints of the purest ray; and the honour in which they were held was perfectly compatible with times when physical phenomena, such as earthquakes and disease, were attributed to the action of demons. We in the nineteenth century, of course, can see where the mischief lay in the case of these unfortunates. They were really raving lunatics, and at the present day would have been consigned to the restraints of an asylum. In China the hermit-race has never reached quite such an abyss of degradation as in Europe. Indeed the old Taoist and Buddhist mystics of whom we read, and specimens of whom we may even see around us now, were rather interesting characters. They generally chose for their retreat some rocky glen shut in by mountains, sheltered from the burning sun by the thick foliage of trees, and surrounded by every natural feature which makes a landscape lovely. There they passed their lives in that state of mental vacuity and freedom from interest in mundane matters which is the nearest approach to the summit of virtue and bliss. That summit in the articles of the Buddhist Church is called Nirvana. The Taoists look forward to very much the same condition. Their idea of happiness is, after all, a very wise and very pure

one. Perfect indifference to love and hate—the annihilation of all passions, desires, and even preferences—no striving, or wishing to strive—nothing but absolute apathy and profound insensibility to those things which, painful or pleasurable, tend to wear out the bodies and souls of men; such is the Taoist heaven. It is a return to the pure, original, self-existent nature of men, which has been despoiled and injured by contact with worldly matters. How infinitely higher, this, than the wretched superstitions which debased the self-tormentors of the Middle Ages! And there are a few of these Taoists yet to be found—men who are almost entirely uncontaminated by the follies and impostures of modern popular Taoism, and who may be said to represent the true apostolic succession in the Taoist Church. In certain instances some old worthies, who have been dead and gone for centuries, are believed by the simple mountaineers of China to be still alive. Far away in the mountain-range which stretches from Peking across the provinces of Chihli and Shantung there is one very sacred peak, called the Mount of a Hundred Flowers. It is covered with wild flowers, and its bosky dells are said, and with some truth, to be the lurking-place of wolves and panthers. There, according to the legend, live, partly embedded in the soil, certain ancient Taoist hermits. By a long course of absolute conformity with nature they have attained to immortality, and are now in the enjoyment of unearthly bliss. To use a Taoist phrase, their faces are washed by the rains of heaven, and their hair combed by the wind. Their arms are crossed upon their breasts, and their nails have grown so long that they curl round their necks. Flowers

and grass have taken root in their bodies, and flourish luxuriantly; when a man approaches them they turn their eyes upon him, but do not speak. No wild beast ever attacks them, for they are in harmony with all nature. Some of them are over three hundred years old; others are not much over a century; but all have attained to immortality, and some day they will find that their bodies, which have been so long in wearing out, will collapse from sheer withdrawal of vitality, and their spirits be set free. This is all fanciful and fabulous enough; but it is undeniable that that indifference or aversion to vulgar objects of desire which characterises the true Taoist has laid China under many a debt of gratitude. The votary of the Naturalistic philosophy does not always become a hermit any more than the Christian always becomes a priest. He is often in the world, and occupies high offices of state. But circumstances make no difference in him. He is always the same, while living in mean and dirty lane and drinking from a gourd, as he is in the palace itself, the trusted Minister of a monarch. In this position he retains the same incorruptibility, the same indifference to power, that he has when living in obscurity. China has had many such Ministers, and she is rightly proud of them. Emperors and princes are said to have gone in person to solicit the services of some stern recluse whose fame had reached their ears, and to have been unsuccessful in their suit. The delineation of such characters forms a bright page in many a volume of dusty Chinese lore, and they are now held up to the reverence and imitation of the statesmen and scholars of the day.

CHAPTER XII.

A TAOIST PATRIARCH.

ALTHOUGH there is no country in the world in which official position and emoluments are more highly thought of than in China, there are, on the other hand, but few countries where they are more despised by certain schools of thought. The ideal man of Confucius was, first and foremost, an officer or Minister of State; and this conception has lived and flourished among the Chinese down to the present day. As a recoil, however, from the worldliness of the Confucian standard, we have the bright ideal of the Taoists, who look upon wealth and honours as illusory, and see the true Sage rather in him who abandons himself to quietism, contemplation, and the culture of his natural endowments. One of the most illustrious representatives of this persuasion was the patriarch Lü Tsû, about whom many curious stories are told, and to whom is attributed a very original and abstruse commentary upon the *Tao Tê Ching*. Now it must be remembered, at the outset, that a great many of the fairy tales and legends familiar to all children are common to many countries. Mr. W. R. S. Ralston is well known as an indefatigable investigator of what may be called the science of comparative romance, and while his public story-tellings are crowded with children as delighted and

spell-bound as if they were witnessing their first pantomime, he can write as learnedly in the *Nineteenth Century* about Cinderella or Puss in Boots as Max Müller upon the science of language. One of these stories common to so many lands is that of Rip Van Winkle, the Chinese prototype of whom was a person called Wang Chih. Another is that of the King who put his head into a basin of water and took it out again, but in that brief second lived a long, chequered, and laborious career, rose from poverty to wealth, married, had a family, suffered disgrace, and was reduced to penury and old age. The Chinese counterpart of this fabled monarch—who was, if we remember rightly, a Persian—is the illustrious sage of whom we are now writing. It is said that early in life Lü Tsû was animated by ambition, and longed to distinguish himself in the affairs of state. In this he was opposed by the wise counsels of a Taoist philosopher, who expatiated to him on the vanity of earthly things. It was not, however, until a very remarkable dream occurred to him that he was induced to give up his design. Entering an inn one evening, he ordered some rice for his supper, and while it was being cooked fell asleep. Immediately he commenced a long and adventurous career. He thought he rose high in office, passing through all the proper grades, until, when at the pinnacle of greatness, he incurred the imperial displeasure, and was disgraced. Waking with a start, he found that his rice was just ready; and the lesson he laid to heart was, that, for so unsatisfactory a career, which, in spite of its wearisome prolongation, really only lasted a few minutes, it would be foolish to surrender the truer pleasures of indifferentism. He therefore abandoned his high schemes,

cheered his heart with copious libations of wine, and devoted himself to the practice of what may be called the convivial phase of Taoist philosophy. Numbers of disciples followed in his footsteps, convinced that the world was very vain; and from this time Lü Tsû became a shining light of the school whose doctrines he had embraced. His mystically conceived interpretation of the great Taoist classic we have already referred to; but what gave him the widest celebrity he enjoyed was his wonderful talent in working the planchette. He became, in fact, a sort of planchette professor. There are very few of our readers, we suppose, who have witnessed a planchette séance in China. The board is suspended over a tray of clean sand, and through a hole in it hangs a pencil. Incense is burnt, prostrations are performed, and the passing spirit is invoked. Then the planchette begins slowly to wave to and fro, and the pencil traces characters in the sand, which are of a somewhat obscure and oracular signification. A capital description of a *fu luan*, or planchette séance, is given in the novel *P'in Hua Pao Chien*, or "Precious Mirror of Choice Beauties," a translation of which appeared in the *China Review* a few years ago. Through the medium of the planchette Lü Tsû was enabled to purvey much highly-prized information, and his success in the art was such that he is invoked to this very day in Peking, and probably elsewhere, whenever the native mediums can be prevailed upon to give a séance. Among the most valued revelations vouchsafed through the mediumship of Lü Tsû were directions with regard to the cure of diseases. In fact, his fame became so great in this department of spiritualistic art, that he has since been canonised as the Patron

of Medicine, and temples are erected to his honour in all the provinces of China. There are four in the capital—one near the Jesuit Observatory, called the Lü Kung T'ang, close by the shrine built in commemoration of the great Jesuit, Adam Schaal, by the Emperor Shun Chih; one just outside the Front Gate, called the Lü Tsû Tien; and two others, both of which are known as Lü Tsû T'sz. There is also a sanctuary dedicated to him in the Temple of the White Cloud, the great stronghold of Taoism, outside the western wall. On the whole, we should say that Lü Tsû succeeded in acquiring far more fame as a soothsayer and mystic than he would have done had he contented himself with less transcendental studies and risen to be a humble magistrate. There are people in the world not unlike him now; and though we do not suppose that future generations will canonise Madame Blavatsky, or build temples to her coadjutor the quondam editor of the *Hong-Kong Daily Press*, both persons enjoy an amount of fame, or notoriety, that would never have fallen to their share had they stuck to more commonplace pursuits. Spiritualists and mystery-mongers flourish to-day much as they did in China a thousand years ago; and, albeit that comparisons are odious, we cannot help remarking that they do not seem to have improved. There is often a grubbiness about the finger-nails of professional mediums, and a certain shakiness about the proper use of the eighth letter of the alphabet, which go far towards counteracting the effect upon one's mind of their most astonishing performances; whereas our old friend of the T'ang dynasty was a person of undeniable erudition and most cultured tastes, and could lay claim, besides, to a very high position in the philosophic school

he joined. Jargon as his poetry upon the "Cultivation of the Pure Essence" may sound to us to-day, it represented to the scholars of his time a distinct and fashionable phase—or craze—of philosophy and speculation, to the pursuit of which many eminent and pure men devoted their entire lives, and which exercised a profound influence upon more than one Emperor of China.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PEACH AND ITS LEGENDS.

THE peach-gardens of China are a fair sight in all the glory of their springtide bloom, when the trees are laden with blossoms of delicate pink and white and the air sweetened with their rich fragrance. The Chinese, in celebrating their admiration for flowers, give a high place to the blossoms of fruit, which English poets appear generally rather to ignore. Bouquets in English houses do not include these beautiful specimens of nature, which are so favourite an ornament in the libraries and reception-rooms of well-to-do Chinese. The peach is held in special honour in the so-called Flowery Land, and much attention is paid to its cultivation. There are three sorts of peach-trees grown in China—the dwarf, the shrub, and the full-sized tree. Of these the dwarf-peach is perhaps the most highly prized in point of beauty and perfume. It is remarkable for the size, wealth, and colour of its blossoms, and is divided by Chinese florists into eighteen different species. It does not fructify, and is valued only for its peculiarity of form and the rich fragrance of its flowers. The shrub-peach grows to the height of four or five feet, and is much found in the imperial gardens, where it is placed, with that true eye to effect characteristic of the Chinese, on the margins of pools and the

acclivities of those effective pieces of rockwork which form so prominent a feature in artificial landscapes. The *coup d'œil* formed by these masses of peach, apricot, and wild cherry, all in fullest and softest bloom, has been justly called enchanting, and must be seen to be appreciated. Peach-trees also form a very beautiful feature of many natural landscapes in China, and were celebrated during the Sung dynasty by the great historian Ssŭ-ma Kuang, who in some charming verses described the eye of the spectator as being guided by a colossal garland of peach-blossoms, connecting the numerous villages that were dotted over the spreading plains of Lo-yang. The neighbourhood of the Hsi-hu, or Western Lake, near Hangchow, was famous for its wealth of peach-trees, and the greatest care has always been bestowed upon their cultivation. The fruit of the full-sized tree is handsome, though somewhat poor in flavour. Its shape is varied, some specimens being fully spherical, others prolate, others a curiously oblate spheroid —called by foreigners "flat" peaches—while others again are pointed and even hooked. The same diversity prevails in the colour of the pulp, the fruits varying from white and pale green to rich ruby, orange-yellow, and marbled tints.

The peach is said to have reached China in the first instance from Persia, Thibet, Samarcand, and Hami, and to have existed here at any rate for upward of two thousand years. The Emperor Wu Ti of the Han dynasty was presented by his courtiers with a number of foreign seedlings for his garden; the *belles lettres* of all the great dynasties abound in allusions, poetical and otherwise, to the beauty of its flowers, while histories record the fact that peach-trees or their fruit formed part of the tribute

brought to the capital of China by ambassadors from abroad. It would be deemed curious by those who have studied native literature and systems of thought if the peach had not been laid under contribution by the poets and mystics of the country. As a fact, it plays a prominent part in both poetry and philosophy. By some writers it is regarded as an emblem of longevity and marriage. Of course this does not mean that it is the only emblem of either which exists. Longevity is also symbolised by the stork, and conjugal harmony by the music of lutes and bells, the strings of a guitar, and other figures of a like fanciful description. It is the well-known Ode on the Princess's Marriage in the Book of Poetry, according to Dr. Legge's translation, which seems to have originated the metaphor that has been so great a favourite ever since:—

> "Graceful and young the peach-tree stands;
> How rich its flowers, all gleaming bright;
> This bride to her new home repairs;
> Chamber and house she'll order right."

The Taoists, too, attribute occult virtues to the peach. Mr. Mayers, quoting from the Huang Ti Shu, or books of the imperial magician known as the Yellow Emperor, himself a disciple of the still more mystical Kuang Ch'êng-tzŭ, tells us that on one occasion two brothers, named respectively T'u Yu and Yu Liu, who had power over disembodied spirits, passed the ghostly legions in review beneath a peach-tree, and having bound all those who worked evil against mankind with scarlet withes, threw them as food to tigers. In memory of this it was customary for officials on the last day of the year to have figures cut in peach-wood mounted upon reeds, and to paint the likeness of a

tiger upon the doorway as a talisman. At present, adds Mr. Mayers, the names of the two brothers are pasted on the entrance-doors of Chinese houses on New-Year's Eve, to guard the dwelling from harm. Peaches, too, figure largely in Chinese fairy tales and mythology, and formed part of the banquet prepared by the Royal Mother of the West when she paid a visit to the Emperor Chêng, better known as Shih Huang Ti; while a peach-garden was the scene of one of the most celebrated events in Chinese history, when the Oath of Brotherhood was taken between the three heroes who played so important a part in the historical romance of the "Three Kingdoms." There are many other interesting details connected with the peach-tree in Chinese literature, but we have no space to enlarge upon them. Some pundits aver that, properly speaking, the peach is an emblem, not of longevity, but of death; while Western theorists have attempted to connect it with the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, whose fair fruit presented so fatal a temptation to our mother Eve. 'It seems, however, certain that, according to ancient writers, peaches were not admissible in sacrifice, that those with double kernels were a mysterious but unfailing poison, and that the premature fructification of one species of peach-tree was a harbinger of national calamity. All this may be very interesting, but it is not practical. We will conclude with two facts which have the merit of being both. The best manure for peach-trees, according to Chinese horticulturists, is snow; and a cold decoction of pig's-head, poured about the roots and into the trunk itself, is a sure remedy for the insects which prey upon it.

CHAPTER XIV.

TREE AND SERPENT WORSHIP.

In spite of the many praises that have been lavished upon the Chinese for the comparative purity of their religions, it is nevertheless a fact that some of the lowest forms of superstition are to be found in Chinese popular worship. In saying this we do no injustice to the higher developments of the various national religions. We are not unmindful of the pristine monotheistic worship which prevailed in China centuries before Confucianism was known. We do not refer to the Worship of Ancestors, the belief in Fêng-shui, or even the baser developments of the systems of Buddhism and Tao. But we presume that in every country there may be found those who, irrespective of the religion they profess, have hewn out of their individual consciousness ideas unrecognised by their own sacred books, and adopted as objects of worship things which were never contemplated as such by the framers of the religion in question. We have known, for instance, of an Irish Catholic servant being found in the kitchen, on her knees, worshipping the moon; and not the bitterest Protestant will venture to affirm that Popery even in its extremest forms has any room in its pantheon for the lunar goddess. And so in China; here,—irrespective even of that form of Nature-worship of

which we find traces in every issue of the *Peking Gazette*, where sacrifices are ordered to the Spirits of the Hills and Woods, and which may be found in the very earliest records of the Chinese,—still exists an active, though quite unauthorised, system of adoration, the objects of which are manifold and indiscriminate. For instance, tree-worship may be found in China, as distinct in its character as that which existed in the olden days of Britain, when the chief Druid cut the sacred mistletoe from the hoary oak with a golden sickle. The favourite deity, or *numen*, of this worship is identified with the banyan-tree or *sung shu*, and his title is the Banyan Prince. It is affirmed that age has much to do with the divinity or "spiritual efficacy," to use the Chinese term, of this noble tree. The older it grows, the more it increases in spirituality, and the greater honour is paid to it. The chief seat of its worship is said to be Amoy, and some doubt exists whether it is worshipped in any other place. The peach-tree, again, is held in considerable veneration, it having been asserted that no Chinese will venture to burn its wood, lest the spirit which inhabits it should visit his displeasure upon them by an attack of madness. This tree, as we have already seen, is regarded as the symbol of longevity and marriage bliss. It occupies a prominent position in the mysticism of the Taoists, and the Fairy Mother of the West is said to have had one remarkable specimen in her garden which bore once only in three thousand years. Another tree which is superstitiously esteemed in China is that called the *wu-tung shu*, identified by Williams with the *Elæococca verrucosa*. This is said to occupy a position in this land analogous to that of the oak in England. It is

the national tree of China; it is much admired for its stately appearance, as well as for the lightness, durability, and fineness of its wood, and venerated as being the chosen roosting-place of the mysterious phœnix or *fêng huang*, whenever that august bird condescends to pay a visit to the country. It is common enough in Japan, where its wood is used for boxes. But trees are not the only objects of this quasi-worship. Serpents are held sacred too, and are connected in the Chinese mind with the famous deity known as Hsüan T'ien Shang Ti, or Supreme Ruler of the Sombre Heavens, who is generally represented as using one as a footstool. It is not more than twelve years ago that Li Hung-chang himself fell prostrate before an insignificant water-snake, beseeching it to intercede with the great River Dragon to prevent another overflow of the Yellow River. "Five serpents," wrote an observer, about the same time that this truly pitiable spectacle took place, "of very large dimensions, such as are found sometimes among the mountains, and which are said to be over a thousand years old, are worshipped in Fukien with very great reverence. These are believed to have the power of transforming themselves into human shape when they have some fell purpose to execute on man. I have known a case where thousands of men and women have gathered round a serpent that had been killed by the roadside, and have worshipped it for nearly a month. The worship stopped only when it was found that the report of its efficacy to heal disease, &c., was untrue." Tortoises and turtles also enjoy an amount of reverence above most other crawling things; indeed, tortoise-worship may be said to have a somewhat extensive literature

of its own, and dates back as far as 2900 years before the Christian era. Hedgehogs, too, have a faint aroma of sanctity about them, though we never heard that porcupines were similarly favoured; while even rats and mice are regarded with more reverence than they deserve by a few misguided polytheists. We confess to some feeling of surprise at having been assured that the members of that most respectable sect of native teetotallers, the Tsai-li Hui, or Fellowship of Reason, are addicted to these foolish forms of worship. There is no doubt that the Fellowship has decidedly degenerated during the last few years, both in ethical purity and reputation; but it is to be hoped that a veneration for vermin is not reckoned among the signs of its decadence. Perhaps the most dreaded of the brute-deities in China is the fox, which has the power of transforming itself into the likeness of a beautiful woman, and so deceiving the unwary. This superstition is probably universal, and was made use of in the *Peking Gazette* about a year ago in order to screen some faithless eunuchs suspected of complicity in stealing certain objects of value from the imperial palace. Fox-myths, in fact, are to be found well-nigh the whole world over, and nowhere are they so deeply rooted in the minds of the people as in China and Japan. It is the favourite plea of some gay Lothario who has not come home over-night, and presents himself haggard and pale the following day to his anxious family, that he was unlucky enough on his way home the previous evening to meet and be deluded by a "fox."

CHAPTER XV.

THE SOPHISTS OF CHINA.

THE philosophers of Greece and the philosophers of China are all more or less familiar even to those whose reading on such subjects is superficial. Everybody of ordinary education knows something, at any rate, of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle; and most people, at all events in China, have a rough acquaintance with the names of Confucius, Mencius, and Lao-tzŭ. But while the great teachers who have founded schools of thought have now a world-wide fame, the empirics who opposed them in their day have fallen into something very much like oblivion. And yet the Sophists did good service. Superficial prattlers though they were, confessedly arguing for the mere love of argument, and playing with logic much as a clever conjurer plays with peas and thimbles, it cannot be denied that they encouraged the exercise of independent thought, and afforded considerable assistance in bringing the art of ratiocination to perfection. Their very sophisms afforded material for true philosophers to work upon, and the exposure of their clever fallacies was a favourite and by no means unproductive pastime even among those whose object was more to discover truth than to juggle successfully with words. A study of Plato's Dialogues is all that is necessary to prove the

justice of this assertion, for it is to Sophists that we owe some of the finest exhibitions of dialectical skill that the Greek philosophers have bequeathed to us.

Now, just as there were Sophists during the golden age of philosophy in Greece, so were there Sophists, or "garrulous quibblers," as the Chinese call them, during the golden age of philosophy in China. And, as we shall prove, the two classes of men bore a very striking family resemblance to each other, even to the point of advancing almost the same theories and attempting to prove the same paradoxes. Most of our readers are no doubt familiar with the famous fallacies which the Greek Sophists loved to fabricate. "That is my dog. That dog is a father. Therefore, that dog is my father." "If, when you speak the truth, you say you lie, you lie; but you say you lie when you speak the truth; therefore in speaking the truth you lie." "Bread is better than nothing. Nothing is better than Elysium. Therefore bread is better than Elysium." Such were the word-quibbles in the production of which the sophistical quacks of Greece delighted about the time of Socrates; and when we turn to the corresponding period in China we find very much the same phenomenon existing here. There was one very famous Sophist named Hui Shih, who is attacked in a spirited and lively style by Chuang-tzŭ, himself regarded as a Sophist by the orthodox followers of Confucius. "The works of Hui Shih," says his critic, "are numerous and extensive; he has published a great collection of books. But his doctrines are unpractical and contradictory, and his words do not hit the mark; he says just what comes uppermost, without regard to accuracy, affirming that that which is unsurpassably

great, and outside which there is nothing, is the Great Unit; and that that which is infinitesimally small, and inside which there is nothing, is the Atom. He says that the whole universe may be filled with matter even though there be no foundation for anything to rest upon; that heaven is no higher than the earth; that a mountain is as level as a pool; that sunset is the same as the meridian, in that one is the result of the other; that life comes from death, and death from life; that general resemblance is different from resemblance in details, and that this detailed resemblance should therefore be called a difference, while the final resemblances and differences in the universe only amount to saying that the differences are less than the resemblances." Hui Shih is said to have looked upon all this as a very fine performance, about which all his fellow-Sophists delighted to talk and argue. These men would undertake to prove a variety of absurdities—for instance, that there is no heat in fire; that the eye does not see; that a wheel does not triturate the ground; that when you have arrived at the farthest extreme there is nothing to prevent your going farther still; that there is hair upon an egg; that if the half of a stick a foot long be cut off every day, it will take ten thousand generations till there is nothing left. Chuang-tzŭ condemns all this as so much foolish, wordy babble, saying that the Sophists would argue with each other in a circle ceaselessly, puzzling people's minds to no purpose, and simply bent on showing off their own cleverness in disputation. His criticism on the arch-Sophist Hui Shih is dignified and to the point. "He talks away about everything without reflecting; the more he talks the farther he is from finishing. If he

were to confine his attention to one thing only, it would be well enough; then he might be said, by his additional reverence for truth, to have almost attained to it. But the man is incapable of thus setting his mind at rest; he diffuses his mental powers abroad over everything without getting any satisfaction; he just acquires a reputation for controversial skill, and nothing more. Alas for the talents of Hui Shih! He employs them lavishly enough, yet reaps no advantage; he pries into everything, but never thinks of penetrating to the root of anything; he is like a body which runs after its own shadow in hopes to catch it up and stop it." It is difficult to realise that there used actually to be men in this stolid, conservative country, this stronghold of platitudinarian orthodoxy, to whom such a description was applicable. Yet here is the proof of it; and not only were their methods analogous to those of the Greek Sophists, but the theories they advanced were very similar too. The arguments of the Sophist Gorgias on the mysteries of existence remind one very curiously of the speculations which Chuang-tzŭ puts into the mouth of the God of the Northern Sea. The aim of Gorgias is to prove that nothing exists; that if anything does exist, it cannot be an object of knowledge; and that if even anything exists and can be known, it cannot be imparted to others. If anything is, says Gorgias, as quoted by Sextus Empiricus, it must be either being or non-being, or even at one and the same time both being and non-being. All these cases are impossible; for a non-being cannot *be*, because it is the opposite of being; and therefore, if the latter is, the former cannot be; because if it were, it must be at the same time being and non-being. Chuang-tzŭ's North-Sea God is similarly

paradoxical and abstruse. "What is said to exist," he argues, "is so spoken of because it does exist; and, if so, there is nothing in the universe that does not exist. Similarly, what is said not to exist is so spoken of because it does not exist; and, if so, there is nothing in the universe which is not non-existent." This follows close upon the enunciation of a theory which is not without its bearing upon both speculative and practical mathematics. The argument is, briefly, as follows:—"Subtlety is the occult part of the minute. Be a thing subtle or gross, it seems to me that it must have a form. A formless or unsubstantial thing cannot be distinguished as gross or subtle, discriminate as minutely as you will. What can be spoken of is the gross or palpable part of an entity; what can be imagined only is its subtle part or essence; but I take it that what is neither gross nor subtle can neither be talked of nor imagined." Some time ago there died, at Peking, the greatest Chinese mathematician of the present century. His name was Li Shan-lan, and he was Professor of Mathematics at the Tʻung Wên Kuan. But he differed from the mathematicians of Europe in this respect, that he denied the non-existence of a point. A point, said Professor Li, is an infinitesimally small cube; and in saying so he only reproduced the theories put into the mouth of the sophistical God of the Northern Sea, two thousand years ago, by Chuang-tzŭ.

CHAPTER XVI.

PORTENTS.

THE prevalent belief in China respecting the connection between physical phenomena and political events has been productive of at any rate one good result. It has induced the Chinese to keep rigid and, in a measure, accurate records of all events of a striking nature in both astronomy and meteorology, and these cannot but be of value to historians and scientific men alike. If a comet is said to have appeared on a certain day in a certain portion of the heavens, a simple astronomical calculation will at once guide the student of Chinese history to the discovery of some important date which may give the required clue to many a disputed point in the science of chronology. Similarly the record of geological upheavals, overflowings of the Yellow River or the Yang-tzŭ, and such-like disturbances, places a valuable key in the hands of those who study the land of China from a physical or scientific standpoint. It may be left to curious and speculative minds to range through the dim corridors of Chinese history and try to find the corresponding political event of which the physical occurrence was supposed to be the portent. Such a compilation would be more interesting, perhaps, than useful; in any case, the task does not come within our province. Let

us content ourselves with recapitulating some of the more important natural events that have occurred in China during the past two thousand years. Many of these appear at first sight to partake of the apocryphal; but there is no doubt that much that appeared miraculous, and therefore portentous, in the days of Chou, Tsin, and Han was explicable enough, had there only been the requisite amount of natural philosophy at hand to bear upon it. For instance, we read of "red rain" having fallen in the neighbourhoods of Nanking and K'ai-fêng Fu in the years 300 and 1336 A.D., when the Western Tsin and Yuen dynasties held sway. The water which fell is said to have stained cloth with the colour of blood; and even in our own day, some seven or eight years ago, the same phenomenon was reported as having occurred in certain districts of Kiang-si. The explanation of this is probably as simple as that of the red snow mentioned by Aristotle, and observed in recent times in the polar and alpine regions. Black rain—as black as ink—fell, according to native chroniclers, during the reign of Hung Wu, the first Emperor of the Mings; and the river Yang-tzŭ is credited with having suddenly assumed a crimson hue on more than one occasion. These phenomena, it must be confessed, are not so easy of explanation. It is possible that they may have grown out of some metaphorical expression too deep to be understanded of the people; though there is no reason why critics who believe in a similar metamorphosis anciently recorded of the river Nile should hesitate to accept a story which attributes the same marvel to the Yang-tzŭ. The principal scourges to which China seems to have been subject,

about which there can be no doubt, are famines, droughts, inundations, and the ravages of insects. These are said to have been of constant and almost regular recurrence. Earthquakes, though apparently not doing any great mischief, except in one instance when the marble pillars of the Emperor's palace were thrown down in the reign of Hsiao Wu Ti, of the Eastern Tsin dynasty, appear to have occurred more frequently than is generally supposed to have been the case in China. Far greater are the ravages that have been caused by storms. These have constantly destroyed the crops of entire districts in a few hours, and are described as violent in the extreme, having been frequently accompanied with thunderbolts and showers of destructive hail. Indeed, it seems wonderful that the unfortunate people ever reaped any harvests at all, when we read the list of forces arrayed against them. If there were no inundations, sweeping away the produce of their fields, to say nothing of the houses in which they lived and occasionally the men themselves, there was pretty sure to be a drought; or if not a drought, a swarm of grasshoppers or of locusts would devastate the plains, selecting, as, with a sort of infernal instinct, such creatures do, the richest and most fertile districts as their prey. The sufferings of the people in such fatal years are said to have reduced them frequently to cannibalism. They preyed upon each other; they fed themselves on corpses. On three occasions an army of rats invaded the country. In one instance these insatiable vermin, travelling from one place to another, attempted a passage of the Wei river, and were fortunately drowned, their carcasses choking up the banks of the stream for several

days after their destruction. On the other occasion, however, they were more successful. Myriads of the creatures appeared in the neighbourhood of Nanking from the Hu-kuang provinces. They are said to have crossed the brooks and rivers in their course during the night by making themselves into a moving bridge, each animal seizing the tail of the one in front of him with his teeth, and so swimming across; and on arrival at the other side they threw themselves upon the crops and devoured them. Another time they effected the passage of the Yellow River. Among the minor plagues of China, in times past, are recorded thick yellow fogs, described in terms that would do full justice to the November fogs in London; excess of snow in winter; cold, biting winds in the summer months; violent gales, sometimes so charged with dust as to render it impossible to distinguish a man two paces off; hailstones as large as a man's fist; groanings and rumblings underground, and under the waters of the Yellow River; and an occasional landslip. In the year 5 of Chêng Tê of the Ming dynasty we read of a rain of earth, which was no doubt a dust-storm of preternatural violence, and on various other occasions of the appearance on the ground of dew as sweet as sugar to the taste. Only two years ago we heard of "summer-snow" having fallen near Soochow, and the terror of the people in consequence. It is not often that we hear of pestilence, although in the reign of the last Ming Emperors one occurred of such severity that it is said there were not enough survivors to bury the dead, and that a few years earlier the roads were blocked up with corpses; all of which is no doubt greatly exaggerated. Still, it would

be difficult to point out which of the Ten Plagues of Egypt has not visited the Chinese, according to their own account, in one form or another, and each such visitation is regarded by them as a separate and distinct indication of the displeasure of Heaven.

CHAPTER XVII.

FEATHER-BRUSHES.

THERE is, perhaps, nothing for which an educated Chinese feels such keen appreciation as what is called a *kû-tien*, or historical allusion, wherever or in whatever shape it may present itself. It would be a mistake to suppose that the *kû-tien* is only found in literary compositions, although the more elegant and accomplished the writer the more fully adorned will be his essay with references to the events of old as found in the early essayists and poets of China. There are such things as what may be called, without violence to language, embodied *kû-tiens*—customs, and even common objects of every-day use or ornament, around which gather literary and historical associations of the highest interest to the scholar. Just as the naturalist may see in the fully developed organ of an animal the evolutionary product of the embryo which existed in that animal's remote ancestor thousands of years ago, so will the Chinese scholar recognise in a fan or trinket the descendant, degenerate enough, perhaps, but still legitimate, of some forgotten progenitor of the past. It needs no unusual erudition even in Western life, for instance, to see in our modern habit of nodding to an acquaintance a relic of the complete prostrations that were performed in ancient times, or

in the gold-topped cane a civilised form of the ponderous bludgeon once wielded by our forefathers in Scandinavia.

Now there is no commoner object in any house in China, foreign or native, than the feather-brush. It is not very ornamental, nor is it so practically useful, perhaps, as the homely cotton duster used by the ingenuous housemaids of England. Its principal value to the Chinese "boy" lies in the fact of its being a regular and unfailing means of squeezing his master to the extent of at least half a dollar or so a month. That, however, by the way. Even when not thus misused, it occupies what may be called a subordinate, if not menial, position in the household. But it has a history—an ancestry. There was a time when the feather-brush—or its remote progenitor, to speak more accurately—had not been put to the base use of dusting furniture in the remarkably imperfect manner practised by the A-choys and A-lings of modern days. It bore a part, and a very honourable part, in the ancient chivalry of China, being no less than a recognised standard for the mustering of soldiers to battle. An allusion is made to it by Chuang-tzŭ, the St. Paul of Taoism, two hundred years before Christ, who tells us that when the great military leader Sûn, standing on an eminence which overlooked the plain, waved on high his plume of feathers, the men of the State of Ying rushed with one accord into the field and put themselves in battle array. It was, in fact, an ancient military signal, and used, perhaps, much as a flag is used to-day, as a sign for mustering; a bell being struck where now we brandish the flag of truce. There is something strange in the fact of an instrument so honourable being degraded from the battle-field to the

boudoir; but the poets of China view the matter in a vastly different light. It appears to have been a certain Empress who first laid her fair hand upon this old emblem of chivalry, and appropriated it to the use of the "inner chambers;" and high compliments were paid Her Majesty on the occasion by the carpet-knights and versifiers of the Court. But the task of doing so must have taxed the poetic resources of these gentlemen to no ordinary degree. Truth must out; and we are bound to confess that this pretty little bit of history is somewhat tarnished by the reason assigned for the imperial depredation. The fact seems to be, that the Empress wanted something to switch away the insects which infested her apartments. We must not be too severe upon Her Majesty. Our own kings and archbishops swarmed with vermin centuries after the Chinese Empress, in desperation, apparently, at the lively condition of her floors, laid hands upon the martial semaphore and turned it into a weapon of defence against the hopping hosts by which the palace was invaded. Then it became a fashionable article of use and ornament, and a lively trade in the feather-brush sprang up, ably fostered by the Government. It was made generally of actual feathers, and this kind was, and is now, used for dusting furniture. Other sorts, however, were made of horsehair, and these were often placed in the hands of sick persons to wave about and prevent gnats and mosquitoes from annoying them as they lay in bed. It is even possible to see people at the present day walking about and laying about them right and left at their minute assailants. The writer once spent some weeks in the monastery of a certain Buddhist priest, a portly,

full-fed abbot, who was never seen without a bright-green horse-tail, which he used constantly to keep his saintly person free from flies. Indeed, the graceful waving and manipulation of a feather-brush or horse-tail is cultivated as an art, and forms part of the stock-in-trade of many a Chinese *petit maître*. But the ramifications of this subject are too numerous to be followed out in detail on the present occasion. We might describe the use to which the instrument is put as a head-dress; for there are pictures to be seen in which an actual feather-brush is represented as worn on the top of the head, very much in the same way as a soldier wears a plume. The digression, however, would lead to others, and we must forego it. We will only add that the feather-duster has been made of use on several occasions to point a moral, if not adorn a tale, by Chinese moralists, imperial and other. "The superior man renews himself day by day;" "The sage incessantly shakes the dust of the world from off him;" "The purity of the soul can only be preserved by perpetual care;" such are some of the virtuous if somewhat platitudinarian aphorisms which have been taken from the writings of the ancients, and playfully used by modern essayists to reflect on brooms and feather-brushes all the grace and dignity which cluster round the pages of classic lore.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SEVEN WONDERS OF COREA.

THE love of the marvellous, which forms so distinguishing a characteristic of all Eastern and a few Western nations, recently led a Japanese editor to regale his readers with a vivid account of the wonders of Corea. We are no longer told of golden sarcophagi and royal tombs bursting with inexhaustible treasures. That fable seems to have died out, and in its place we are assured that Corea is a land where Nature, and not art, has played some of her strangest freaks. The Seven Wonders of the Old World were all the works of men. The Seven Wonders of Corea are natural—or, as we suppose we ought to say, supernatural. It is a beautiful and fertile land, and it would, perhaps, be strange if no myths were found to be associated with the mountains and forests and rivers which diversify its aspect. The graceful superstitions of classic Greece find but few analogues in the Far East. There is nothing in the mythology of China to compare with them in point of imagery or æsthetic beauty. The naiads and dryads which played at hide-and-seek amid the bosky dells and woodland scenery of the Peloponnesus may be said to have had a few distant relations in the mythology of Chinese fairy-tales, but the relationship was exceedingly remote. There is not wanting, however, even there, in those prosaic Eastern lands,

much in the way of folk-lore that is worthy of attention, especially when the legends are of such a nature as to attract the traveller, and induce him to visit the scenes of the alleged marvels himself. Briefly, the Seven Wonders of Corea are as follow. The first is a certain hot mineral spring near a place called Kin-shan-tao, the healing properties of which are believed to be miraculous. There is no necessity to wait until an angel troubles the water. Its virtues are in constant vigour, and so great are they that they have never failed in efficacy within the memory of man. No matter what disease may afflict the patient, a dip in these healing waters will prove as sure a cure as the bath in Jordan did to leprous Naaman. Therefore, the spring is believed to be divine, and is spoken of accordingly. The second wonder is also connected with water. There are two springs, situated at a considerable distance from each other—in fact, there is almost the breadth of the entire peninsula between them. These have two peculiarities. They are arranged, apparently, on the principle of the "little-man-and-his-wife" of those cottage barometers which are still seen in primitive parts of England. When one is in, the other goes out; or, in plainer words, when one is full, the other is empty; and the Coreans seem to believe that, somewhere deep in the bowels of the earth, there is a mysterious tide, which ebbs and flows with marvellous rapidity at stated intervals of time, filling one spring while it empties the other. But the strangest part of the phenomenon is, that the water is so strongly sweet that whatever is cooked in it, no matter how bad it may be of itself, immediately acquires a most delicious taste. The third is called Cold-wind Cavern. This is a cave

somewhere in the mountains, in which a mysterious wind blows perpetually—a wind so cold as to pierce to the very bones, and so strong that the most powerful man is unable to stand against it. There is something like this to be found in the Western Hills near Peking. Among the ruins of an old temple on the hillside there is a little cave, quite open to the air, and at the farther end of it a hole, opening apparently into the earth, up which rushes a strong blast of cold wind. The entire cave is several degrees colder than the surrounding atmosphere, and the line which divides the two temperatures is very precisely defined. The fourth wonder of Corea is the Ineradicable Forest. This is a large grove of pine-trees, which sprout again directly they are cut down. It matters not what injury is done to the root; the tree may be hacked to pieces or burnt with fire—nothing will avail to destroy it, but up it will sprout again in no time, like a phœnix from its own ashes. The fifth wonder is more wonderful still. This is the Floating Stone, and a temple has been reared in its honour, called the Fou Shih Miao. In front of the temple stands, or appears to stand, the extraordinary stone. It is of great bulk, and a sort of irregular cube in shape. To all appearance it is resting on the ground, and perfectly free from all supports on any side. But if two men, standing at opposite ends of it, hold each the opposite ends of a thread, they will find themselves able to pass the thread *under the stone* without encountering any obstacle! In other words, the stone is actually hovering a little way above the earth, and the miracle can be tested in the way described by anybody who cares to pay the priest a trifling sum for the privilege of doing so. The

sixth wonder also consists of a stone, but a stone of a more practically useful nature. It is called the Warm Rock—very flat and smooth, and forms the summit of a hill upon which there is a pavilion or kiosque for the benefit of travellers. Here they may rest and pass the night. However cold the weather may be, there is no stove, nor any need for one; the stone on which the rest-house stands diffuses its wonderful and benign warmth through every room in it, and the poorest may bask in its comfort. About the seventh wonder we believe that some slight uncertainty exists. There are two objects which are both entitled to the honour. One is simply a relic of Sakya "Ju-lai"—the Buddha who thus comes—in the form of a small chest or case of exquisitely fine workmanship. This is to be seen in a temple somewhere near the sea. The other is far more extraordinary, and we think there should not be a doubt of its claim to "wonder"-ship. It is a drop of the sweat of Buddha. Around the large temple where it is enshrined, for thirty paces square, not a blade of grass will grow; there are no trees, no flowers; the very birds and animals desert it, instinctively recoiling from profaning with their foot-falls a plot of ground so holy. The association of ideas is not particularly happy, for the more natural impression would be that the presence of a relic of so benign a personage would have had a genial and fertilising effect, and instead of a bare blank patch we should have looked for a lovely oasis, gay with lotuses and summer flowers, and full of the song and gambols of those innocent creatures, the protection of whose helplessness forms so distinctive a feature of the gentle teachings of Ju-lai.

CHAPTER XIX.

CHINA'S GREATEST TYRANT.

CHINA may justly be said, in many ways, to be the country of pretensions. There are few things in which the Chinese do not claim pre-eminence, and it is this habit of self-complacency which renders them so very much averse to being enlightened on those points on which they habitually are found wanting. The belief in their own infallibility cannot but be a standing obstacle to the progress of the people in all departments where it prevails, and the difficulty of getting a Chinaman to acknowledge that he is beaten in an argument is but another phase of the same phenomenon. It is a sufficient answer, for him, that, however useless or hurtful a given practice may be, it is the "custom" of the country; and the belief that all the customs which have descended from generation to generation are, for that very reason, incapable of improvement, renders him a very hopeless subject to deal with.

A very few illustrations will, we think, suffice to prove the justice of this remark. In no country, for instance, are morals more highly esteemed as a basis of public administration and private conduct. Nothing could be more unexceptionable than the theories on which the government of the country is professedly carried on.

Foreign writers have over and over again applauded the Chinese for resting all their rules of life on right-reason, and bringing to the test of principle, rather than to that of material welfare or advantage, their general policy of action. In spite of this, China is one of the most miserably misgoverned countries in the whole world. There is, perhaps, no place where peculation is rifer, or more unblushingly carried on. Considering, for instance, the unrivalled estimation in which literature and education are held by both governors and governed, it is astounding to read in the official gazette the gross impositions which are practised every year at the public examinations. Then the innocent are being constantly plundered by the rich and powerful, and although false accusations, made with a view to extorting money, do sometimes recoil upon the guilty parties, it too often happens that the only recompense received by the victim takes the form of an honourable burial for his corpse. The high position accorded to agriculture in China might naturally lead us to look for corresponding results in the fruits and vegetables that are cultivated, and to some sound principles as actuating the Chinese farmer or market-gardener in his work. But what is the state of matters here? China scarcely produces a fruit worth eating. The apples are soft and woolly, the pears not nearly so toothsome as a good turnip, the peaches are full of worms, and all, fruits and vegetables alike, are inferior, tasteless, and poor. The Chinese labourer has no idea of manipulating the ground. He contents himself with scratching its surface, and then deluges it with liquid manure. Of what may be called agricultural chemistry he never heard; still, he fancies that he has no more to

learn, for has not the soil of China been dealt with in the self-same manner for centuries, and could he be so unfilial as to improve upon the methods of his forefathers? The Chinese have acquired some celebrity in point of manual skill. They will carve wonderful balls of ivory one inside the other, and expend no small amount of time and ingenuity in the production of articles of taste. But is there a locksmith in China who can pick a lock without spoiling it, or make the commonest appliance in wood or metal which shall compare with the work of a European artificer, or do what it is intended to do? It seems that the farther we go in our observation of Chinese capabilities, in whatsoever direction, the more essentially inferior we find them. The fact is, that, having reached a certain stage of development, the Chinese have rested content, and have never progressed since. If we accept Mr. Herbert Spencer's definition of Progress, that it is the evolution of the heterogeneous from the homogeneous, we must conclude that the Chinese have no experience of progress themselves at all. Their thought, as a nation, is essentially homogeneous. The slightest divergence towards the heterogeneous is shunned and execrated as incipient heresy. They never ask the why or the wherefore of a fact; suffice it for them that such a thing exists—that such a custom is followed, such a theory held—and it would never occur to a Chinese to inquire into the reason of it, or to test its truth. Innovations are regarded with suspicion almost amounting to horror; and no arguments have any force to a Chinese mind in proving the elementary and insufficient nature of the methods so long in vogue. It is, indeed, undeniable that the Chinese are bound hand and foot by *custom*. This is

often amusingly exemplified in little every-day matters. A high military mandarin, handsomely apparelled, comes riding by on a filthy, spavined little horse that was never combed, perhaps, since it was foaled. To the natural question of a foreigner, "Why don't you groom your horses?" the reply comes, prompt and conclusive, "It is not our custom." Tell a farmer how he may render a naturally unfruitful soil fertile, or improve the flavour of his fruits, or achieve greater results at the cost of less labour by the use of finer implements; he will only stare, and tell you it is not their "custom." Ask a schoolmaster why he forces tiny children to learn by rote a number of abstruse books he does not pretend to understand himself, and why he does not explain those which are capable of explanation; whether he does not think a child would be more benefited by learning something of the world in which he lives than by gabbling over the meaningless *formulæ* of the *Yih Ching*, and be better fitted for the business of life by a little knowledge of arithmetic than by a parrot-familiarity with the conversations between Mencius and King Hui of Liang; he will raise his eyebrows in amazement, and contemptuously reply that such is not their "custom." No real progress can result from such petrifaction of the intellect; a fossil cannot grow. And the disease, as we have pointed out, exists in every department of life: in education, in government, in mechanics, in agriculture, in society. It will cost a mighty effort to free the Chinese from these bonds and ligatures, which have held them in durance vile so long. Naturally utilitarian, they seem to have been despoiled of all power of putting their utilitarianism into practice, and to fall back, in a shiftless way, upon "custom" as their

final court of appeal in everything. There is a movement now, as we all know; but at present it is confined to a very few persons who have had the benefit of foreign intercourse and education, and it will be long before it spreads over the masses in the interior of China.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FLOWER-FAIRIES: A TAOIST FAIRY-TALE.

"At close of day my cottage-door
Is barred by the wind and rain;
The blossoms fall in a crimson shower—
No denizens of my maiden bower
But willow-leaves, remain;
In sweet disorder they lie strewed,
While zephyrs and breezes toss;
And never shall gardener's besom rude
Among their rosy ranks intrude,
As they lie on the verdant moss."

INTRODUCTION.

ACCORDING to a certain delightful Chinese story-book, called *Rare Events in Ancient and Modern Times*, which has afforded us many a pleasant hour of relaxation in the midst of graver studies, there flourished, in the T'ang dynasty, a retired scholar whose name was Ch'ui Hsuän-wei. He was one of those amiable recluses who, though professedly misanthropic, are by no means averse to such pleasures as appeal to their peculiar tastes —an Epicurean, if you will, certainly not a Stoic, but a man who, keeping aloof from the madding crowd, sought no other companionship than that of his books and flowers. He was never married; the presence of another human creature would have taken the edge off the exquisite flavour of his enjoyments. Even his servants

lived outside, and no one was admitted on any pretext but that of urgent business. He loved to pore over those deep, bold volumes of Taoist philosophy which Lao-tzŭ, Chuang-tzŭ, and the other masters of that school have bequeathed to an ungrateful posterity, and which are now regarded by the bigoted Confucianists as the embodiments of all that is heterodox and wrong; but his dearest pleasure was in the cultivation of his magnificent garden, to the laying out of which he had devoted thirty years of his voluptuous but innocent existence. His mansion stood surrounded by flowers—by a splendid wilderness of flowers—gleaming with all those gorgeous colours which only skilful culture can produce, and flourishing on all sides with a luxuriance past conception. In this floral paradise he reigned alone and supreme. He tended his precious flowers with the solicitude of a nurse and the homage of a devotee; while the only sorrows that ever reached him were such as resulted from the blighting of a geranium or the death of a favourite rose.

Having lived for many years in this state of philosophic indolence—which is extolled by Taoist writers as the summit of all obtainable happiness and wisdom—an event occurred which seriously interrupted the noiseless tenor of his way. It was "blue night." The moon shone with unexampled splendour, pouring its silvery effulgence over the garden, and spiritualising every twig and leaf with liquid lustre. Absolute quiet reigned in the little paradise; not a breath of air was heard; and the philosopher was utterly unable to tear himself away from the bewitching influences around him. As he stood, silent and absorbed, a shadow seemed to flit among the

flowers. It was a bluish shadow, and it appeared to be advancing stealthily, as if afraid of being seen. The philosopher strained his eyes and rubbed them, to make sure that it was not a dream. Suddenly the figure of a woman, dressed in a long robe of pale blue, emerged from among the flowery thicket, and moved slowly towards him. By this time the good man was transfixed to the spot with awe. Collecting his senses as best he could, he gasped out an inquiry as to who his mysterious visitor was; but still on she came, silently and noiselessly, saluting him courteously with her graceful head as she approached.

"Who are you?" burst out the philosopher at last. The spell was broken, and he was himself again.

"My dwelling is not very far from yours," replied the Lady of the Azure Robe, opening a pair of vermilion lips and disclosing two rows of teeth as white and glistening as jade. "As I was passing on with my attendants to visit a relative, I felt a longing to rest a while in this beautiful garden of yours; but," added the maiden demurely, "I did not feel quite sure whether you would permit me to do so."

Hsuän-wei thought that it was altogether the most extraordinary thing that had ever happened to him; but such was the fascination of his visitor that he consented with delight. The princess—for such she seemed to be—overwhelmed him with thanks and retired; and in a few minutes returned, bringing with her a bevy of the loveliest girls that ever blessed the eyes of sinful man. The philosopher looked attentively at them in the pale, bright moonlight. Some were carrying flowers, others willow-boughs; all were of the most exquisite and seduc-

tive beauty, and of surpassingly voluptuous grace; but no two were in any way alike. On they trooped, filling the moonlit garden with fair forms; while the bewildered recluse gazed wonderingly at the strange scene, marvelling within himself whence they had all come. At last he recollected himself sufficiently to invite them to enter his pavilion; and when they were all seated he found that he could restrain his curiosity no longer.

"Ladies," he said, "I cannot express my delight at your arrival, unexpected as it is; but I do beg you to tell me at least what your names are, and what relative it is that you are in search of, that you have suddenly invaded my poor domains with your bright presences in the very dead of night."

Then arose a maiden in a green robe, and announced that her name was Aspen. Pointing to one in a white robe, "And hers," she said, "is Plum; the one in a purple garment is named Peach;" and so she went on, presenting them one after another, till she came to a little girl in a crimson robe, whose name, she said, was Pomegranate. "But although we have all different names," added the maiden, "we are all sisters, and all live together. Now the Lady Wind, who is our maternal aunt eighteen times removed, said some days ago that she was coming to visit us; but she has never done so; and as the moon is unusually brilliant to-night, we sisters are going to visit her instead. So we thought that, as you have always been such a dear friend and protector to us, we should like to pay you a call on our way; and here we are, you see!"

Hsuän-wei was just about to make a suitable reply when in came the Lady of the Azure Robe, and

announced the arrival of the Lady Wind. This caused a tremendous flutter among the girls, who all hastened out to welcome her. The philosopher stepped on one side, where he could peep at what was going on without being seen. When the ladies of the many-tinted robes had all made their obeisance, one of them said—

"We were just on the way to visit you, but this kind host detained us"—which was a very artful way of putting it. "We never thought you were so near at hand. However, we have met, and that is the purpose we both had."

"I have been coming to see you for a long while," replied the Lady Wind, "but I have had a great deal to do lately. This is the first time I have had any leisure at all, and you see that I have come at once."

"It is a clear and glorious night," rejoined the girl; "stay and rest with us a while, and we will keep your birthday." Then, turning to the Lady of the Azure Robe, she begged her to procure some wine.

"But may we stay in this place?" inquired the Lady Wind.

"Why not?" replied the lady who had introduced herself by the name of Aspen. "The owner is a kind and worthy man, and the place itself is charming."

"But where is the owner?" asked the new arrival.

Then Hsuän-wei started out of his hiding-place, and, lifting his eyes, beheld the Lady Wind. Her form was graceful, and had a certain gauzy, floating appearance, like a gossamer; but her words were cold, like the breath that plays among the leaves of a forest; and when Hsuän-wei stood near her a chill struck him to the bone, so that he shivered from head to foot. How-

ever, he invited her into the pavilion, where the attendant sylphs had set out materials for an exquisite repast. He placed the Lady Wind in the seat of honour, and all the others took their ranks in order. In a twinkling the table was covered with delicious viands and jars of fragrant wine as luscious as the purest honey. The moon increased in splendour, till the room was as bright as day; rich perfumes rose into the air, sweet and heavy, permeating the persons of the revellers; host and guests drank to each other repeatedly; cups and goblets were mixed together on the table, presenting a scene of most luxurious confusion. At last, when the fumes of the wine were beginning to take effect, a sylph in a red robe filled a huge goblet to the brim and presented it to the Lady Wind, saying, "I have a song to sing to you." Upon which she broke forth as follows:—

"The gauzy robe, worn carelessly,
Displays the charms within,
Pink as cosmetic's artful dye
On lip and cheek and chin;
But ah! the bloom will fade away,
The ruby tint grow pale;
The winds of spring last not for aye—
Who would their loss bewail?"

The singer's voice was sweet and winning, but the listeners seemed to have no great relish for the burden of her song; whereupon a sylph in a white robe presented another goblet to the Lady Wind, saying, "I have also a song, which I will let you hear."

"She is pure as the priceless jade, whiter than driven snow;
Luminous as the lovely moon shining on flow'rs below;
Sighing and singing a sorrowful song, as the sweet spring zephyrs
die—

Who would reproach them with more than a murmured 'Adieu!' as they fly?
And so when her flowery beauty, like all around, decays,
She sighs and smiles unconsciously, and dreams of the bygone days."

The strains of this song were somewhat melancholy; indeed they were almost harrowing. Now the Lady Wind, if the truth must be told, was of a very flighty and frivolous disposition; and, what was worse, she was very fond of wine, and had drunk so many cups that she became quite ungovernable, and began to act in a most extravagant and silly way. When, therefore, she had listened to these two songs, she exclaimed—

"How is it that, on this auspicious occasion, when we are all enjoying ourselves, and delighting in the beautiful view, you sing such sorrowful stuff as this? Besides, the meaning is too obscure for anybody to understand; it's an insult to all the company!"

Whereupon she condemned the two unfortunate songstresses to pay forfeit by drinking a large cup of wine apiece, and said that they would have to sing again. But as she was handing them the cups, it was proved only too plainly that she had taken too many herself; her hands shook so that she could not grasp them securely, and suddenly she lost her hold of them altogether. Crash they went, and the wine flowed all over poor little Pomegranate. Now little Pomegranate was very young and very pretty, and had always been very fond of gay clothes. On this occasion she had on a brand-new embroidered crimson robe, which she was naturally very anxious to keep from wine-stains, as the slightest drop would spoil the colour; and now she was covered with it from head to foot! Unfortunately, too, she had had a little

more than was good for her already; and when she saw her dress ruined, she flushed with anger, and cried—

"Sisters! you are all for courting this aunt of ours, eighteen times removed; but I am not afraid of her, and you may just court her for the future by yourselves."

Then she got up and left the room. The Lady Wind flew into a terrible rage, and exclaiming, "That little girl has found the wine too much for her, in daring to insult me so," she gathered up her robes and prepared to depart. All the sylphs implored her not to go away, but without avail. Then they tried to calm her anger, saying, "Pomegranate is very young, and just now is not quite herself; pray forget what she has done, and to-morrow we will bring her to beg pardon." As, however, nothing would appease the Lady Wind, they accompanied her to the door, and off she flounced in high dudgeon towards the east. Then the sylphs trooped back, and, taking a graceful leave of their entertainer, moved towards a place where the flowers grew thickest, and disappeared.

Up sprang the philosopher, and gave chase. But in his hurry his foot slipped, and he fell sprawling upon his back; and when he picked himself up again there was not one of them in sight. Then he sat down and began to think seriously over what had happened. Could it have been a dream? He was sure he had not been asleep. Were they ghosts? Surely not; their robes were too beautiful, their utterance too distinct, for anything evil. And yet, supposing them to be human beings, how could they have disappeared so suddenly, without leaving so much as a shadow behind them? It was an impenetrable mystery, so far; and the good sage was utterly perplexed. Then he went back into his

pavilion, and not a sign of the late revelry was visible; his chairs and tables stood decorously in their accustomed places, unsullied by the remains of fruit or the dregs of wine; all that he noticed was a subtle odour, a faint sweet fragrance different from anything he had ever perceived before.

But the next night, as he was strolling thoughtfully among his flowers in the clear moonlight, he suddenly found himself once more surrounded by his elfin friends. Where they came from he never could find out; it seemed as though they had sprung out of the ground, or been materialised from the sweet aroma of the flowers. At first they seemed not to perceive him, for they were all busily engaged in urging little Pomegranate to beg pardon of the Aunt Wind. Pomegranate, however, was inexorable. "Why should I go supplicating that horrid old woman?" she cried, with flushing cheeks. "If there's likely to be any mischief, let us ask the dear old gentleman to protect us; what need we be afraid of then?" At this suggestion all the sylphs were quite enraptured, and turning to their kindly host, they explained the whole affair. "You see," said the spokeswoman, "that all we sisters live in your garden, and every year we are injured by malignant gales, so that we never feel at ease; we often ask our aunt, the Lady Wind, to treat us kindly and protect us; but now, alas! Pomegranate has mortally offended her, so we cannot count upon her any more. So, dear, kind guardian, we appeal to you; and if you can help us in our extremity, we shall be very grateful."

"But what power have I to help you?" asked Hsuän-wei, more puzzled than before.

"We don't want you to do anything very difficult," replied little Pomegranate. "All you will have to do is to prepare a crimson flag embroidered in gold with the sun, moon, and stars, and then hoist it to the east of the flowers at daybreak on the first morning of each new year; then we shall feel quite safe. As regards the present year, New Year's Day, of course, is past, so please do it on the 21st of the present moon at dawn instead, when there is just the faintest breath of east wind; then there will be no fear of any recurrence of what happened yesterday."

"That is easy enough," replied the sage politely. "You may certainly rely upon my doing what you ask." Then they all thanked him with one voice, producing a concert of the most melodious music in the world, and said they would never forget his goodness. But no sooner had they finished speaking than off they started as fleetly as if they had wings, waving a smiling adieu to the bewildered philosopher as he panted after them without the smallest chance of being able to catch them up. Suddenly he felt a puff of fragrant wind in his face, and all the fairies simultaneously disappeared.

The next day he set to work, and prepared a splendid flag, in accordance with little Pomegranate's request. On the 21st of the moon he rose before daylight, and, sure enough, there was a little breath of east wind blowing; so he made haste to run it up, and then awaited the result. He had not long to wait. In less time than it takes to write it, a tremendous hurricane sprang up which shook the very earth; the air was filled with whirling dust and flying stones; all the forests in the neighbourhood were injured, and huge trees torn up by

the roots. In his garden, however, everything was calm and still; not a single flower so much as trembled. Then the truth of the whole mystery burst upon Hstiän-wei. The enchanting girls he had been entertaining were the spirits of his own flowers; the little maiden in the crimson robe was nothing but a bud of red pomegranate; and the flighty, excitable lady whom they called their aunt eighteen times removed was the Goddess of the Wind! *

That evening, as soon as the moon was up, all the fairies came garlanded with peach-blossoms and plum-blossoms, to tender their thanks to their preserver. "We know," said one of them, "that we cannot make you any adequate return; but we have brought you these blossoms, which, if you will eat, will confer upon you the gift of everlasting youth. Take them, then, dear friend; long may you live to be the guardian of our race, and then our own lives will be long and happy too!" So the philosopher took the blossoms, and ate them; when suddenly his face grew young again, the wrinkles disappeared from his brow, his complexion became fair and delicate, and he felt a new strong current of energy coursing through his veins. Soon afterwards he attained to a knowledge of the True Way, and shared the immortality of the Genii.

* Unfortunately it is impossible to reproduce in English the expressive *double-entendres* of the original, in which the words *t'ao, li, shih, fêng, &c.*, that stand for peach, plum, pomegranate, and wind, are at first cunningly represented by *other characters having the same sound;* the object being to mislead and puzzle the reader until the *dénouement* is arrived at.

THE STORY.

Now I daresay, remarks our author, that all you gentlemen look upon what I have written about flower-fairies and the Goddess of the Wind as so much incoherent nonsense. I grant that they are things which nobody in the world appears ever to have seen or heard of, and that they are not mentioned in any historical records or classical writing; but strange and supernatural as they are, the world is full of them, though only a very small proportion of them find their way into books; so when they do occur it is not a matter to be wondered at.

Now in the reign of Jên Tsung, of the Sung dynasty, there lived at a village in Kiang-nan an old man named Tsiu Hsien, who belonged to a literary family and possessed a few acres of land. His wife was dead, and had left him without children. He spent his whole life in the cultivation of a handsome flower-garden, for flowers were his very special hobby. He loved them as he might have loved his children had he been blessed with any. He was an indefatigable collector of rare specimens and exotics, which he valued far more than any jewels; and whenever he passed any gay gardens, during his constant rambles, he would insinuate himself into them with a benignant smile, whether he were invited or not. If the flowers were familiar to him, he would trot out again; but if they were at all unique, nobody would be able to drag him away the whole day long. People said that he was flower-mad. If he met with any for sale he always bought them, whether he had any money or not; and when he had none about him, he would just strip off his coat and give it to the seller in payment. Of course

he was often terribly taken in. His mania being notorious, the flower merchants asked of him the most exorbitant prices; while some rascals would even stick cut flowers into a flower-pot, and impose upon him with a rootless plant. But nothing would cure him of his infatuation, and eventually he found himself master of a superb pleasure-ground, full of his choicest favourites. It was surrounded by a bamboo-fence grown all over with red, white, and yellow roses, clematis, almonds, rose-mallows, touch-me-nots, cocks'-crests, sun-flowers, golden lilies, white lilies, pinks, carnations, princes'-feathers, white butterflies, night-falling gold-moneys, camellias, peonies, and a host of others. When they were all in full bloom, they looked like a great screen blazing with a mass of different colours; and by the time one began to fade another opened. The path leading to the house was bordered with bamboos, and the house itself was surrounded by the rarest plants. An eternal spring reigned in this delightful spot. Here flourished the water-sprite flower—as clear as ice and exquisitely pure as jade; the moutan,* with its heavenly fragrance and royal tint; pear-blossoms as white as moonlight, peach-blossoms ruddy as the sun, tea-flowers more precious than pearls, and roses in a blushing cloud.

It was not long before the fame of this wonderful garden spread over all the country side, and people came flocking every day to get a furtive peep over the stone wall which ran around it. No annoyance, however, occurred until one afternoon, when the recluse was sitting, as usual, in the midst of his little paradise. Suddenly he looked up, and saw a coarse, disagreeable face peering

* The Chinese peony.

over the top of the wall. Then a hand was thrust rudely forward, and grasped a beautiful rose of peculiar delicacy. The old gentleman hemmed two or three times, and cast glances of indignation at the intruder; but that personage was the son of an official of some small rank, and disdained to notice the anger of so obscure an individual as Tsiu Hsien. At last, however, the old man could contain himself no longer.

"This humble place is mine, Sir," he said, with as much politeness as he could command; "it is not worth the attention of your worship. I beg you will not demean yourself by entering; you can see the flowers equally well from father a greater distance."

"You old fool," was the young mandarin's reply, "haven't you lived near me long enough to know my name? What do you mean by not wanting to let me see your flowers?"

Then he began to pick flowers right and left; and the unfortunate owner stood by in a grievous state of indignation, yet did not dare to remonstrate. His unwelcome visitor showed no signs of moving; on the contrary, he jumped down into the garden, and then bawled to his servants on the other side to go home and bring some wine. This increased the distress of poor old Tsiu, and emboldened him to enter another protest against the outrage.

"Indeed, Sir," he said, trembling with agitation, "there is no room in my snail-shell of a house fit for your worship to sit in; let me beg you, when you have seen enough, to return to your own mansion and drink there."

"No room?" retorted Chang, pointing to a cosy nook; "that place will suit me very well."

"Nay," said the old gentleman, "that place is far too dirty; your worship can certainly never sit there."

"If that's all," replied Chang, "I can sit upon a bit of carpet; so don't you trouble yourself about me."

Just then his servants came back, carrying all the materials for a luxurious picnic. A piece of cloth was spread upon the ground, and Chang and two or three of his friends, who had now joined him, squatted down and began to play at gamble-fingers, making a most intolerable noise. Chang enjoyed the whole thing immensely, and stared with delight at the old gentleman, who sat scowling helplessly by. Then a vile idea entered his wicked head.

"Here, you old idiot," he roared, with his mouth full of meat and his face all flushed with wine; "you're not worth a place in the corner of my eye, and yet you seem to know something about flowers. Take a cup of wine, and let us drink together!"

"Drink it yourself," said the old gentleman haughtily; "I never touch wine."

"Look here," continued Chang, too tipsy to notice the slight, "I have taken rather a fancy to this garden of yours; what do you say to selling it?"

"Sell my garden!" shrieked the old man, as a pang of rage and terror shot through his heart; "why, it's my very life; you don't know what you're asking. Sell my garden! No, Sir; I will not sell it. I tell you my garden is my life, and I will never part with it."

"Your life, indeed!" retorted Chang scornfully. "Look here; I mean to buy it, so you had better make up your mind to sell at once. And I'll tell you what; as you have nowhere else to live, I'll buy you into the bargain,

and then you can stay here and look after the place for me. Well, what do you say?"

Then all the others chimed in. "Why, there's a stroke of luck for you!" they cried; "why don't you thank his worship for such a gracious offer?" But the old man had grown numb and powerless under the insult, and his lips refused to move.

"What a brute of an old fellow this is!" exclaimed Chang. "Why don't you answer me, Yes or No?"

"I have already told you No," replied the victim, with as much firmness as he could muster; "why do you ask again?"

"Bosh!" was the polite rejoinder. "Now look here; if you dare to say 'No' again, I'll have you arrested. I can do it, mind; so look out for your own skin. I'll give you one more chance."

Tsiu became speechless with grief and indignation. There seemed no hope for him at all. Then he thought his best plan would be to tide over the immediate difficulty by temporising; for Chang was a man of influence, and just then he was very tipsy; the great thing was to get rid of him as soon as possible. So, repressing his wrath by a violent effort, he replied—

"If your worship really wants my garden, we will speak about it in a day or two; it is not a matter that can be settled hastily. Come, gentlemen, you have business; do not let any considerations of politeness detain you longer."

So saying he rose, in the hope of effecting a general move. His plan was successful, and everybody swore that his proposition was very reasonable. Then Chang and his associates staggered to their feet, while the

attendants cleared away the mess they had made, and sauntered slowly towards the gate. Tsiu was in an agony of fear lest they should commit further depredations, and took care to walk between them and the flower-beds. Chang, however, went on ahead, and soon began to climb a piece of rockwork to pick some flowers that had struck his fancy. The old man rushed after him in terror. "Although these flowers are but useless trifles," he panted, "your worship cannot think how much labour is required in the course of a year to produce as many as you see; is it not a grievous pity to spoil them so? If you pick them, they will fade in two days at the very farthest; why should your worship do such mischief?"

"Pooh!" bawled Chang roughly; "what mischief am I doing, pray? You are going to sell me the whole affair to-morrow; so, you see, your flowers are virtually mine now. Supposing I were to pull every one of them up by the roots, what business would it be of yours?"

Then he made as though to thrust Tsiu away; but the old gentleman stood his ground manfully, saying, "You may kill me if you like, for I am but an old man; but you shall not pick my flowers."

"This is a most abominable old fellow," struck in the parasites. "His worship has but taken a few worthless buds; what does he mean by kicking up such a row about it? Do you think, Sir, that you are going to frighten us away?"

Then they all made a general rush upon the flowers, picking them by scores, and throwing them in shocking confusion upon the ground. The poor old fellow's rage was inexpressible; his cries of anguish rose to heaven. He relinquished his hold of Chang, and risked his life in

trying to put a stop to the cruel massacre; but he was overpowered by numbers, while his flowers flew like hail about him. "You pack of cut-throat thieves," he cried, in a paroxysm of despair, "have you no honest calling, that you must come here to insult and injure me? Ah, what value is my life to me any longer?" And with that he butted his head furiously against Chang, who, being shaky on his legs, measured his length upon the ground. Then all the bullies, crying "Shame!" rushed up to avenge the fallen hero. Among them was an elderly man, who, seeing that their victim was already far advanced in years, and fearing that serious mischief might be done, attempted to dissuade them from further violence. He assisted Chang to rise; but Chang was beside himself with drink and fury, and, rushing forward like a mad dog, he struck off all the flowers that remained upon their stems and strewed them all over the place. And even then he was not satisfied, but crushed them to pieces with his feet.

Meanwhile the unhappy Tsiu was beating the earth and calling vainly upon Heaven, rolling all over the ground in impotent frenzy. By this time, however, the cries and shrieks of the combatants had reached the neighbours, who came flocking in, and were aghast at the scene of ruin and desolation, and the strange sight of so many lubberly fellows attacking a feeble old man. They immediately put a stop to the spoliation, and asked what it was all about. Some of them, who were the tenants of Chang's father, were inclined to take the part of Chang. At last, however, they managed to get the bully out of the garden-gate. "Tell that old thief he'd better make me a present of the garden," roared he, by way of

a parting salute; "then we'll consider the affair settled. But if he says so much as half a 'No,' let him look out for his skin." Of course, the neighbours saw the wretch was drunk, and paid no attention to his tipsy nonsense; so, having seen him well off the premises, they came back and tried to comfort poor old Tsiu. But his soul refused to be comforted, and he lifted up his voice and wept. Indeed the case was past all help, and there was nothing for the neighbours to do but to leave him in his misery and return to their several homes.

As they went back their conversation naturally turned upon the events of the afternoon. One man said that it served the old fellow right for locking up his garden and never allowing anybody to see the flowers, and that he had no one but himself to thank for it. But this view of the question excited the indignation of the others, particularly of one man, who retorted with more candour and abruptness than the first speaker at all relished. "Don't talk such arrant nonsense," he blurted out. "There is an old proverb which says that if you cultivate a garden for a year, you will enjoy the flowers for just ten days. People are fond enough of looking at them, but who thinks of the long drudgery that was necessary to bring them to such perfection? Just think, now, what years of toil this poor old man must have devoted to his hobby to produce such a magnificent show; why should you be angry with him for loving his garden and taking pride in it?"—To this nobody was able to reply, and so the subject dropped.

Meanwhile the unfortunate old Tsiu sat, weeping and disconsolate, in the midst of his fallen treasures. Tenderly he picked them up, and talked to them, saying, "O

dear flowers, I have loved you all my life; you never lost a petal or a leaf before. Who could think such sad misfortunes were coming on us all to-day?" Then he fell to sighing and bemoaning himself afresh; the crushed, bruised blossoms lay strewn in sad disorder on his lap; to-morrow, perchance, he would be driven out of his lovely garden altogether.

"What are you crying about, Mr. Tsiu?" suddenly inquired a sharp, clear, pleasant little voice at his elbow. Tsiu turned his head, not a little startled, and beheld, close by him, a lovely and elegant girl of about sixteen summers. He had no idea who she was, or how she had got in; but there she was, and she looked very much indeed as though she meant it.

"Who are you, my little girl?" replied Tsiu, wiping his eyes; "and what has brought you here?"

"Oh, we are near neighbours—I and my family," rejoined the girl, in her sweet, sharp voice, which acted like a tonic upon the old man's unstrung nerves. "I've heard that you have the finest moutan-flowers to be seen anywhere, so I thought I should like to come and look about me a bit. But what is the reason of all this ruin and desolation I see? Who has been murdering all your flowers like this?"

At the mention of his moutan-flowers Tsiu very nearly broke down again; but he mastered his emotion, and told the cheery little girl all about the outrages of Chang To his perplexity, however, she only laughed; she didn't seem to pity him a bit.

"So that is it, is it?" she replied, with a pretty smile. "Now, wouldn't you like to be able to stick all these flowers on their stems again?"

"Don't jest with me, little girl," said Tsiu reproachfully; "I am in no humour for a joke. Who ever heard of such a thing as putting dead flowers on their stalks as they were before?"

"Don't you be so conceited and so sure, as though nobody in the world could do anything that you can't," retorted the child again, with her silvery, saucy laugh. "It so happens that my ancestors were in possession of a secret by which even that wonderful thing might be done; and I don't know but what I might be able to accomplish it myself."

Then old Tsiu began to prick up his ears. "No, but really, little girl," he said, "is there such a secret?"

"Why should there not be, really?" replied the saucy girl, mimicking his earnest tones. Then Tsiu made her a low bow, and said—

"If, my child, you are indeed able to perform this miracle, the old man's obligations to you would be such as he could never hope to repay. See, here is a full-blown rose; operate on this one to begin with."

"Don't bow to me like that," replied the little girl; "but go into the house and fetch me a bowl of nice fresh water." Up jumped old Tsiu with wonderful alacrity, turning the thing over and over in his mind as he walked along. He procured the water, and came trotting briskly back again; but—where was the little girl? She had disappeared; but every flower was on its stem again, as fresh, as blooming, as full of life as ever—not one was lying bruised upon the ground—his favourites were all restored!

The old man could hardly believe his eyes. His delight was more extravagant, even, than his grief had

been. He ran from flower to flower, and from bed to bed, stroking and fondling the pretty blossoms, and congratulating them upon their happy restoration. Their colours were deeper and more brilliant than ever; a spell seemed to have passed over the whole garden. Formerly all the flowers on a single plant were of the same colour; but now they were all diversified—red flowers had become purple, pale flowers had become vivid, and five different hues blazed in splendid contrast where there had been only one before.

When he had given full vent to his joy, he went in search of the delightful little girl who had wrought this charming miracle. He thought she must be hiding somewhere among the flowers; but there was not the slightest trace of her—she had vanished altogether, without leaving so much as a shadow behind. It seemed impossible that she should have gone far, however, so he made for the garden-gate, feeling sure that she would be just outside. But he found it securely bolted, and not looking at all as though anybody had just gone through. Whereupon he opened it, and, sure enough, there was nobody in sight but two old cronies of his, Mr. Yü and Mr. Shan, who were watching a fisherman drying his nets. When they saw Mr. Tsiu come out, they rose and made him a low bow, saying, "We have just heard of the outrage perpetrated upon you by that fellow Chang, but we were in the field at the time, and not able to come before to inquire about it."

"Don't mention the matter," replied Tsiu. "I was, certainly, the victim of that rascal's malevolence; but owing to the timely aid of a dear little girl, who suddenly made her appearance like an angel from heaven,

and by some wonderful means restored every one of my flowers, everything is all right again. But she has gone off as suddenly as she came, without waiting to be thanked; pray, gentlemen, did either of you see which way she took?"

The two old men listened to this story with astonishment. "How is it possible," they said, "that flowers once cut should be refixed? Who was this wonderful girl, pray? And how long is it since she disappeared?"

"Just now," replied Tsiu eagerly; "not a minute ago. You must have seen her go out of the gate."

"We have been here a considerable time," said the old men, "and we have seen no girl; nobody has come out of the gate at all."

When Tsiu heard that, the conviction suddenly flashed upon him that his little benefactress must have been a fairy, and not a human child at all. As he was pondering the affair, his two friends began to question him about it, and he told them the whole story from beginning to end; whereupon they exclaimed, "But how is such a miracle possible? Let us both come into your garden and see it with our own eyes."

So Tsiu ushered them in, and they walked round and round, the excited proprietor never ceasing to repeat, "Oh, it was a fairy. Yes, it must have been a fairy. Human beings cannot work such wonders." Then he burnt a large quantity of fragrant incense, and *kotowed* in gratitude to Heaven, while his two old friends said, "Yes, it must have been so. This is the recompense of your sincerity of heart and your unconquerable love of flowers. Now, to-morrow you must invite Chang and his rascally associates to come here and see the marvel

with their own eyes, that they may be made thoroughly ashamed of themselves."

"Nay, nay," said Tsiu; "not I, indeed. Men of their stamp are like vicious dogs, which, when they are seen at a distance, must be avoided. Why should I go out of my way to ask them here again?"

"You're right, you're right," nodded the two old fellows. Then Tsiu, who had never been in such spirits before, proposed a cup of wine in honour of the occasion; and the three friends sat drinking and hobnobbing till long after sunset, when the visitors got up to go away, leaving the old gentleman as happy and light-hearted as his previous visitors had left him miserable and sad.

The news of the prodigy spread like wildfire over the village, and next morning, as soon as it was light, the people came in crowds to see and hear all about it. They were not at all sure that Tsiu would let them in; none of them knew what a change had come over him since the visit of his fairy benefactress. He had not slept the whole night, but had sat in his garden in the still moonlight meditating upon the events of that most eventful day. Suddenly the thought flashed across him that perhaps all this had happened to him because he had been a little mean and selfish in never permitting any one else to enjoy his garden with him, and he considered how different it might have been if he had had rather more of the liberal, kindly, generous spirit of the fairies. So the next day he flung open his garden-gate, that anybody might come in who wished to, and gave a kindly welcome to the first visitors who presented themselves. The news that the place was free to everybody passed from mouth to mouth, and the long-closed garden

was soon filled with a respectful, wondering, and enchanted throng.

And now we must return to Chang, who had as yet heard nothing of the way in which his mischief had been mended. His rage had not cooled with the hours. "The old rascal butted me with his head yesterday," he said; "shall I have no revenge? I am going to him now, this very minute, to demand possession of his garden; and if he says no, I'll get together a lot of men and make them cut down every stick in the place."

"Don't be afraid of his refusing," replied his friends; "his garden is so close to your own house, you've got him in your power. Only don't destroy any more flowers, or you won't have any left to enjoy yourself."

"Pooh!" said Chang; "they'll bloom again next year, won't they? Come, let us be off at once; it's not polite to keep the old man waiting."

Then they all got up and started; but as they were just going out of the door, a man, seeing whither they were bound, said—

"What, haven't you heard the news? There has been a descent of fairies in Mr. Tsiu's garden, and all the flowers are joined on to their stalks again. And there's what is more wonderful than that, too; for people do say that the flowers are far finer than they were at first—that five colours may now be seen where there was only one before!"

This startled Chang considerably; but he soon recovered himself, and took refuge in disbelief. "As though it was likely," he said scornfully, "that that old thief should have such luck! Besides, how is it that no one ever heard of fairies coming before, but only when

the flowers had been destroyed? It's all a flam, to keep me from going again. He wants to make out that he's under supernatural protection, in order to scare me off!"

"What your worship says is exactly to the point," chimed in the parasites. In a short time they arrived at the garden-gate, both leaves of which were flung open, while the garden was full of visitors, who all had the same marvellous story in their mouths. But all this only hardened Chang's purpose, and he swore, loud enough to be heard, that if the fairies were there even then, he would still seize upon the garden. At last, however, after following a winding path, he found himself at the scene of his outrages of the day before, and then he saw that everything he had heard was true. Not a sign of devastation was visible; every flower bloomed upon its stalk; and there was something strange about their appearance—the more one looked at them the more beautiful they seemed to grow, till at last each flower bore a mysterious resemblance to a smiling human face.

Then Chang was chopfallen indeed; ay, and he was frightened too. But even this had no effect upon his resolution. He cast a cold, malicious glance around him, and then a thought of hideous wickedness came into his head. "Come, let us be off," he said to his associates, abruptly; "there's nothing to be done here."

"What!" exclaimed the parasites, "go away without insisting on the garden being given up to you?"

"Hush!" was the reply; "I have just thought of a splendid plan." Here they passed out of the gate, and began walking along the road again. "I am not going to say one word to old Tsiu, good or bad; but to-morrow his garden will be mine."

Then they all pressed him to tell them what his intention was, and he proceeded as follows:—"You know," he explained, "that there's trouble at Pei-chou. A fellow named Wang Tsêh is after some seditious business, and is driving the people mad with his pretended sorcery and magic. The Privy Council have accordingly sent despatches round to all the districts and departments in the empire, instructing the authorities to put down unflinchingly all manner of heterodox and illicit doctrines that may be current among the people, and to arrest all persons suspected of the black art. The Governor here has offered a reward of three thousand strings of cash to anybody who will give evidence that will lead to the arrest of the ringleaders; so to-morrow I mean to go and lay information about this affair in Tsiu's garden, and send my servant Pa to accuse him of being a magician and seducing the people. He won't be able to stand the examination by torture; he'll confess, and then he'll be put in prison and his garden confiscated. When it is put up for sale, who will dare to buy it? It will just fall into my hands, and the three thousand strings as well."

"Superb!" exclaimed the other wretches, in a chorus of exultation. "The idea is splendid. Waste no time, but set to work at once."

So Chang hurried into the city, and drew up an indictment in due form. Next day he sent his servant with it quite early to the *yamên*, selecting this particular man Pa because he was on good terms with all the *yamên* people, besides being his own right hand in villainy. The magistrate was on the look-out for sorcerers, and found no difficulty whatever in believing a story to which the entire country-side was witness. He there-

fore made out a warrant of arrest, and despatched an officer with Pa to take Tsiu into custody. Chang was in high feather, and distributed largess lavishly among the *yamên* runners, following them at some short distance, that he might enjoy the scene. The poor old man was walking, as usual, in his garden, and paid no attention to the crowd of people whom he saw approaching, thinking they were visitors like the rest. But he was soon undeceived. They suddenly set up a wild halloo, rushed forward in a body, and pinioned his arms securely. The old man was horribly frightened, and cried, "Why, what fault have I committed? What is my crime? I do beseech you, gentlemen, to explain." Then they all bawled out in concert, abusing him for a wicked old sorcerer and rebel; and without allowing him to say a word in his defence, dragged him violently towards the gate. When the neighbours witnessed these proceedings they came flocking together in amazement, and asked what was the matter. "Matter!" retorted the leader of the gang; "do you still ask what is the matter? He's a vile old rebel, and you are every one of you inculpated in the affair." This startled the simple people not a little, and they one and all made off as fast as they could in all directions, fearing lest by some means or other they too should be involved. A few of Tsiu's friends, however, followed him at a distance. Chang remained behind with his parasites, and as soon as the garden was clear they took formal possession of it. They then searched in every nook and corner to see that there were none of Tsiu's people hidden away anywhere; and finding that nobody was left, they locked the garden-gate and trooped off to the magistrate's.

On their arrival they found that the officers had taken old Tsiu into their charge, and had made him kneel down on the stone pavement in front of the inner entrance. The jailers, who had been heavily bribed by Chang, had got their implements of torture in readiness, and were anxiously waiting to commence operations. Just then the magistrate came in, and the examination began.

"What place do you belong to, wizard?" bawled the "father-and-mother-of-his-people," roughly. "What do you mean by coming here and corrupting honest folk with your sorceries? and how many confederates have you?"

These words sounded to Tsiu like a sudden explosion of gunpowder in the dark, and he did not know what to reply. At last he said—

"The insignificant man is a native of the village of Chang-lo; he is not a wizard, and does not come from anywhere else; and he knows nothing of any sorceries."

"What!" roared the magistrate; "will you deny that only the day before yesterday you conjured a number of broken flowers on to their stems again? What do you call that, pray, but the black art?"

When Tsiu heard that, he knew directly that Chang was at the bottom of the whole affair; so he began at the beginning, and told the magistrate everything that had happened from the time of Chang's drunken outrage to the visit of the beneficent little fairy. But the magistrate, whose nature prompted him to take a distorted and one-sided view of everything, would not believe a word of it.

"A very ingenious tale, indeed," he said, with a brutal

laugh. "How many men, do you think, are there not who would be only too glad to be visited by fairies in their distress; and to how many do the fairies come? Do you suppose it was your tears and sobs that brought her to your help? Pray let us know her name; she surely didn't make off without telling you who she was. And you really think you are going to take us in with this? Don't trouble yourselves to accuse him further," continued the mandarin to the bystanders; "he most certainly is a wizard. Quick, now, with the press-boards!"

The words were hardly out of his mouth when all the jailers rushed off to get the instruments of torture, with the ferocity of wolves and tigers. They soon came hurrying back like a swarm of bees, and grasping the old man violently, laid him by the heels, pulled his legs apart, and were just about to apply the torture when the magistrate was seized with a sudden fit of dizziness. He felt his eyes become dim; his head seemed to go round, so that he could no longer hold himself erect; indeed he nearly toppled off his bench. He therefore ordered the adjournment of the case till the next day, and told the jailers to put a *cangue*, or wooden frame, on Tsiu's neck, and lead the unfortunate man back to prison, guarding him strictly in the meantime. Tsiu was accordingly marched back, weeping and bemoaning his sad fate, and followed by a crowd of gaping spectators. On his way he saw Chang. "O Sir," he exclaimed, "I never injured you when you came into my garden the day before yesterday, nor have I committed any fault against you to-day; why do you pursue me with this relentless cruelty, and try to take my life?"

Chang made no reply, but turned on his heel and

walked off, accompanied by his confederates. Then Tsiu's two old friends, Shan and Yü, came up to him and asked him how he fared, saying, "Never mind the false accusation you are now suffering under; to-morrow we and all your neighbours will rally round you, and personally bear witness to your innocence." "May it indeed be so," said Tsiu; "then everything must come all right." Then his jailers turned round and bullied him, saying, "You condemned criminal, you, you do nothing but weep; don't you know you've got to walk?" So Tsiu restrained his tears, and entered his dungeon. All the neighbours brought him food and wine; but they could get no farther than the prison-doors, and the jailers, instead of giving it to the old man, kept it and gobbled it up themselves. At last night came on; and then it really seemed as though his woes had reached their crisis. He was made to lie down upon what was called the "prisoners' bed"—a diabolical contrivance on which all the prisoners were packed close together, and fitted up with heavy beams and ropes so disposed that each man lay under a crushing weight and tightly lashed to the ground; not a muscle could be moved, not a wrist or ankle turned; a living man was just as powerless as a corpse. "Alas, alas!" groaned Tsiu, in his bitterness, "I know not what fairy it was who restored my flowers; yet this wretch makes it an excuse for his persecutions. O fairy, dear fairy! if you have any pity for me, do for me what you did for my poor flowers, and save my life! Help me in this, and I will renounce all my family, give up the world, and enter the True Way!"

No sooner were the words out of his mouth than he espied, in the dim distance, a faint advancing figure. It

was, indeed, no other than his fairy benefactress. Tsiu uttered a wild cry of joy and hope. "Fairy, dear fairy," he exclaimed, "if it is really you, extricate me from the dreadful position I am in!"

"Are you so very anxious to escape?" replied the girl, with a smile. Then she stretched forth her hands; and lo! the manacles with which old Tsiu was bound fell clanking to the ground. Up he sprang, and knocked his head three times upon the floor in speechless gratitude. The first thing he did when his transports of joy were over was to ask the fairy who she was. "I am the Protectress of Flowers," replied she, "at the Emerald Pool in Fairyland, where the Royal Mother reigns. I love you because you love flowers; that is the reason I have been assisting you. Now everything that has happened to you came through Destiny; it was your fate, and could not be avoided. To-morrow all your miseries will end! The Spirit of Flowers has taken a strict account of all Chang's villainies, and made a full report of them to God; and God has deprived him of the measure of his years, and is keeping great tribulation in store for his confederates. Continue the cultivation of your heart for a few years longer, and then I will visit you once more for your everlasting good."

Tsiu bowed his head again in wondering gratitude. "And what method am I to adopt," he asked, "for the cultivation of my heart?"

Then the fairy proceeded to explain how, by continuing to love and care for flowers, his heart would undergo a process of constant renovation; and how, by feeding on certain species, and drinking the dew of heaven, he would gradually bring about the sublimation of his body, and

eventually attain to the immortality of the genii. Tsiu prostrated himself for the third time; and when he raised his head the fairy visitor was gone. But looking upward, he saw her hovering in mid-air and waving her hand in sign that he should follow her.

Tsiu accordingly pulled himself together and began to clamber up the wall of the prison-yard. When he had got half-way he felt his strength beginning to fail; but he made a tremendous effort, and managed to scramble on to the top. No sooner had he gained this point of vantage, however, than he heard a deafening noise below; every gong in the place was being banged and shouts were raised on all sides that one of the prisoners had escaped. This put Tsiu into a dreadful state of trepidation; his hands grew numb, his legs shook, and all of a sudden he tumbled violently off the wall, struck his head upon the ground, and awoke!

He was still in the prison; the whole thing had been a dream. But as he lay on his hard couch he reflected seriously about the matter; he turned it over and over in his mind, and tried to find out the meaning and interpretation of it; arriving at last at the satisfactory conclusion that everything would end happily, and that he need give himself no more anxiety at all.

When Chang saw that the magistrate treated Tsiu as a wizard, he was immeasurably delighted. "Ah," said he, chuckling, "the old wretch was always after something or other which nobody could understand. Well, to-night he'll sleep on the prisoners' bed, and I shall enjoy myself in his garden." "Yes," replied his friends; "the day before yesterday it belonged to him, and now it is your worship's; so it is only proper you should enjoy

it to your heart's content." "Right you are," shouted the hero; so, without further delay, they started off, telling the servants to bring a supply of wine and eatables after them. The neighbours were greatly incensed when they saw the party arrive, but no one dared to speak. Meanwhile Chang and his friends proceeded to the summer-house; but when they got there, and looked round, what was their astonishment to see not a single flower upon its stalk! There they lay, strewed about just as they were when Chang had cut them off; broken and bruised and spoilt. At first nobody could speak for amazement. Chang, however, soon recovered himself. "It is evident," he said, "that the old conjurer has been at his tricks again; if not, how could there be such a change in half a day? It surely can't be the fairy again!" This happy thought was speedily capped by one of the hangers-on. "The old fellow knew that your worship would come to enjoy the flowers again," said he; "and therefore he had recourse to this trick to put you out of countenance." "Well," said Chang, "if it be so, let us enjoy the fallen flowers." So saying, he spread a carpet on the ground, sat down, and laid himself out to make the most of things. He gave a couple of bottles of wine to his trusty servant Pa, and they all ate and drank till sunset, by which time they were more than half-drunk. Suddenly, however, a tremendous gust of wind arose; it swept violently across the garden, gathered up all the scattered flowers, and blew them on to their stalks again! Then, in the twinkling of an eye, every flower was transformed into a beautiful girl, a little over two feet high, each of whom, in apparent obedience to successive puffs of wind, visibly increased in size. At last they appeared in a great

gleaming group of exquisitely lovely fairies, dressed in bright parti-coloured robes. All the intruders were so dazed with their beauty that not one of them could utter a word; when suddenly a girl in a crimson robe began to speak as follows:—

"Sisters, it is now more than ten years that we have lived here in peace and happiness, thanks to the care and cultivation of good old Mr. Tsiu. Who ever imagined that this mad slave would come to suffocate us with the vulgar odour of his presence, and violate us with his venomous hands? And then he throws Mr. Tsiu into prison for being a wizard, because he is scheming to swallow up his garden! But we have now got our enemy before our eyes; what is to hinder us, sisters, from combining our strength and giving him the thrashing he deserves? Nay, it is our duty; first, out of gratitude to our old friend for his goodness; secondly, to revenge ourselves for the injuries and insults that have been heaped upon us. Is there any reason why we should refrain?"

Then all the other fairies cried with one voice, "You are right! You are right! Let us set about it at once; before any of them have time to escape." Whereupon they all pulled down their long sleeves to serve as whips, and flourished them till the cold produced was like that of a piercing wind which cuts to the very bone. By this time the intruders had taken the alarm; and with the cry, "They're devils! they're devils!" a general stampede took place, everybody looking out for himself, and forgetting all about the plates and dishes on the ground. Some tumbled over the stones; others had their faces torn and scratched by the branches of trees;

and no sooner had a man scrambled to his legs than down he fell again. At last, after a series of misfortunes, they came to a dead stop; and, on reconnoitring their ranks, they found that Chang and Pa were missing. Just then the wind stopped, and the heavens grew black; so they all made the best of their way home, barely escaping with their lives—holding their heads, and skulking off like rats. When they reached their own doors, and were just able to draw their breath again, they got together a number of stalwart labourers, whom they provided with torches, to go in search of the two missing ones. Arrived at the garden, the men soon heard a sort of moaning under a large plum-tree; and bringing a light to see what it was, they found the servant Pa, who, having tripped over the trunk of the tree, was lying there with a broken head, utterly unable to rise. Two of them, accordingly, picked him up and carried him home, while the rest hunted all over the garden to find Chang; but all was silent—not a sound was to be heard nor a form to be seen. They discovered, however, to their amazement, that the moutan-flowers were blooming again as brilliantly as ever; not one was on the ground. Then they came to where the plates and dishes had been left; and there they were, all in the greatest possible confusion, while the wine was spilt in every direction—at which they all put their tongues out in astonishment. Some of them set themselves to clearing the things up, and the others resumed their search for Chang. But not a sign of him did they discover. "How can such a thing be possible?" they exclaimed; "the garden is not a large one, and yet we've been round it four or five times without finding so much as his

shadow. Surely the wind can't have blown him away, or the devils of girls devoured him?" So they had no alternative but to go home for that night, and postpone further search for him till the next morning.

Just as they were about to pass through the gate, however, they met another batch of men coming in with lanterns, among whom were no other than the two old gentlemen, Mr. Yü and Mr. Shan. They had heard of all these strange doings, and how Chang had been spirited away; but they knew not whether it were true or false, so they had come to see for themselves, and a party of neighbours had come with them. When, therefore, the two old men inquired of the labourers they met coming out, and found every particular confirmed, they were speechless with amazement. "Well, well," they replied, "you go away; we will search the garden ourselves." So they pottered and peered about, but of course discovered nothing; whereupon they both uttered an ejaculation of helpless perplexity, and went out again. "There is nobody in here," said they to the people who were still waiting outside; "let us lock the gate securely and come away."

The villagers, having lost their head-man, were like a serpent that has lost its head; they knew not how to act; so they all replied, "As you please, gentlemen; as you please; we will do exactly as you tell us." Just as they were on the point of dispersing, however, a labourer who had been peering about with his lantern suddenly cried out, "His honourable worship is found!"

A general rush took place, the people all scudding together like a gust of wind. "Isn't that his silk muffler," continued the man, "hanging on that locust-

tree?" "To be sure it is!" cried everybody. "Then its owner cannot be far off." So the man continued to pry about near the wall, and before he had gone far he uttered an exclamation of horror; for there, sure enough, was Mr. Chang—or all that could be seen of him—with his head stuck hard and fast in a dung-pit!

Yes, there he was; recognisable only by his clothes, as his face was invisible, and his legs pointing upwards to the sky. The labourers rushed forward, and, in spite of the horrible stench, pulled the body out of the hole, and washed it in the nearest ditch. The two old gentlemen, recognising in the bad man's fate the just retribution of Heaven, went home, and the others quietly dispersed. Meanwhile the news had reached Chang's family, and they prepared a coffin and a shroud, and consigned the dishonoured corpse to its last resting-place. By this time the villain Pa had died of the wound in his head, and such was the end of these two wicked men.

Next morning the magistrate, who had recovered from his sickness, took his seat upon the bench, and prepared to go on with the case. But the first thing he heard was, that the accuser was no more; and then all the facts of the occurrence were made known to him by the officers of the court. The magistrate was overwhelmed with astonishment, and could hardly believe his ears; but the story was confirmed by the two old gentlemen and over a hundred of the neighbours, who all came to bear their testimony. Then the magistrate was delighted to think that he had been prevented from applying torture to an innocent man, and, sending for old Tsiu, he told him he was free. He also posted a proclamation outside the garden-gate, warning everybody against daring

to touch the flowers, or trespass in the domain on any pretext whatever. So Tsiu and his friends went in a triumphal procession back to the garden, where they found the moutan-flowers blooming more splendidly than ever; and all the neighbours gave the old gentleman a banquet of wine, to cheer him after his sufferings; after which he invited them in his turn, and the feasting was kept up for several days on end.

From this time forward Tsiu began to follow the directions of the flower-fairy. He lived entirely on flowers, and abjured the use of cooked food altogether. Soon his hair, which had been white with age, turned black again; the wrinkles in his face disappeared; his complexion became as fair and fresh as that of a beautiful boy. At last, as he was sitting one radiant summer's day among his flowers, a warm, sweet wind began to blow; the air filled with clouds, bright with all the colours of the rainbow; white storks, the emblems of longevity, disported themselves in the sky; lovely melodies came floating on the breeze; and a faint, rich perfume was wafted into his nostrils. Raising his eyes in wonder, he saw, approaching from above, a bevy of fairy maidens carrying waving flags, in the midst of whom was the Flower Goddess. "Come," she said, "your period of probation is finished. I have reported your good deeds to God, and He ordains that you shall be raised to the ranks of the genii as Guardian of the Flowers, with power to bless all who love them, and punish all who violate their purity." Then the whole lovely vision rose solemnly into the air, and Tsiu, gazing after it, rose too; and all the flowers in his garden, seemingly endowed with life, accompanied their beloved master; who, look-

ing back as he sailed upward through the sky, raised his hands and continued waving an adieu to his old friends on earth until he arrived in heaven, and was lost sight of for evermore.

THE END.

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