Survey of non-Western Literature
About This Book

This text is collected from several copyright-cleared resources and its readings would serve as the basis for my ENG 195: Survey of non-Western Literature course at Jefferson Community College. The balance of the readings for ENG 195 come from non-Western cultures, although there are some key texts from Western cultures. See the List of Changes for more specific information on the readings.

To create the course, I adopted Lumen Learning’s Introduction to Literature course shell, whose How to Use This Collection is authored by Thomas Chester and which operates with a CC-BY license and was provided by Ivy Tech Community College. Most of the texts are available at Project Gutenberg. I included specific licensing information for each text.

Because it is mostly Western, this original Introduction to Literature material is mostly hidden from student views, but is kept in case instructors wish to use it. It may appear in student views of the Table of Contents even if it is kept private, so students should be notified of this fact.

The non-Western readings are derived from Project Gutenberg texts. While they are listed among the genre parts (chapters), they could as easily be grouped either chronologically, geographically, or even thematically.

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I also adapted a Writer’s Handbook resource for the College that goes into far more depth in coverage of the writing process and MLA style. This resource should be available on the SUNY list of OER textbooks and–especially in the free electronic formats–pairs well with the literature text.

List of Changes

- Added Instructor Resources ENG 195 Grading Rubric, Short Story Terms Assignment, and Sample Syllabus
- In Genre Introduction section, I added Connecting Reading & Writing: The Voice You Hear Assignment; (Re)Reading Poetry: Challenges to Expect; and Stress in Poetry.
- In Literary Analysis part, I retitled the second Reader-Response Criticism page to More About Reader-Response Criticism to differentiate it from the previous page of the same name.
- In Literary Conventions part, I added Tragedy and Comedy, and the Defining Literature pages.
- In Writing About Literature, added several pages, including: Academic Writing Review; Self-Diagnosis of One’s Writing Ailments can be Fun!; Troubleshoot Your Reading; How to Avoid Plagiarizing; The Paragraph Body: Supporting Your Ideas; How not to Write the Introduction and Conclusion; Works Cited Entries: What to Include; Paragraph Menu Settings Use no Extra Vertical Spaces; Annotation: Why Mark Up Your Texts?; Not Taking Sides is Like That Waiting-Room Scene in Beetlejuice. . .; With Analysis, Focus Upon Functions or Effects; How Might I Avoid Letting Source Use Take Over?; and Binary Patterns: A Western Obsession.
- In Poetry Readings and Responses part, added Kabir, Songs of Kabir; The Persian Mystics: Jalaludin Rumi; Lao Tzu, Tao te Ching; and an excerpt from Valmiki, The Ramayana; Haiku Sheet; Background on the Sufis; and The Poems of Sappho.
- In Fiction Readings and Responses, added Rabindranath Tagore, Stories from Tagore; Cao Xueqin, The Dream of the Red Chamber (Chs. I-IX).
- In Nonfiction Readings and Responses, added Plato, Symposium; Sun Tzu, The Art of War; Izumi Shikubu, et al., Diaries of Court Ladies of Old Japan; and Jonathan Swift, A Modest Proposal.
- Added About the Author section to End Matter.
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- About This Book. **Authored by:** Joshua Dickinson. **Provided by:** Jefferson Community College. **Located at:** http://www.sunyjefferson.edu. **Project:** Survey of non-Western Literature. **License:** CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike
Instructor Resources
Note to Instructors

Greetings Instructors,

Welcome to the Open Educational Resources (OER) collection for Introduction to Literature.

This collection is not a “course.” It is a collection of materials designed to assist instructors in teaching and presenting the concepts of Introduction to Literature. Instructors are urged to pick and choose the items that will add to their lesson plans; then instructors can make these items available to students through the LMS, in-class presentations, or even as hand-outs. The material can be used in conjunction with other items instructors find or prepare, or the material can be used as a sole source for the class.

This collection is designed to be helpful for programs or regions that choose not to require students to purchase an actual textbook. Literature anthologies are usually large, cumbersome, and expensive—and most of the literature in the bought anthology cannot be covered in a one semester class. This collection is low cost and easy to access.

The information is divided into 2 major categories:

Information and activities that give students background and terminologies for studying literature
A collection of literature including fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, and drama

While the information provided is complete and ready to use for an Introduction to Literature course, it is NOT considered all-inclusive. Instructors can use these Creative Commons licensed items any way they see fit. However, instructors can also supplement with their own lessons and ideas.

This collection is also a continuous work in progress. We are able to add to this collection easily, keeping it timely, fresh and ever-improving. We are open to new items and ideas.

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Genre Introduction
Too often, reading is viewed as a passive act where the information is poured into static readers’ minds. To succeed at the college level, a reworking of the way one reads may be necessary. Read the following passage from reading researcher Katherine McCormick and jot down your interpretation of its meaning:

Tony slowly got up from the mat, planning his escape. He hesitated a moment and thought. Things were not going well. What bothered him the most was being held, especially since the charge against him had been weak. He considered his present situation. The lock that held him was strong but he thought he could break it . . . . He felt that he was ready to make his move.

From the two possible interpretations here, it seems clear that 1) readers use their previous experiences to make meaning out of a text, and 2) context influences meaning. After all, if we knew we were reading a short story on wrestling, our understanding of the passage would differ. Reading needs to be recognized as an active process. Read the following poem by Thomas Lux and answer all of the questions below in complete sentences. The questions appear after the poem.

The Voice You Hear When You Read Silently
is not silent, it is a speaking-out-loud voice in your head;
it is spoken, a voice is saying it as you read.
It’s the writer’s words, of course, in a literary sense his or her “voice”
but the sound of that voice is the sound of your voice.
Not the sound your friends know or the sound of a tape played back
but your voice
caught in the dark cathedral of your skull, your voice heard by an internal
ear informed by internal abstracts
and what you know by feeling, having felt.
It is your voice saying, for example, the word “barn” that the writer wrote
but the “barn” you say is a barn you know or knew.
The voice in your head, speaking as you read, never says anything
neutrally—some people hated the barn they knew,
some people love the barn they know
so you hear the word loaded and a sensory constellation is lit:

horse-gnawed stalls, hayloft, black heat tape wrapping a water pipe,
a slippery spilled *chirr* of oats from a split sack,

the bony, filthy haunches of cows . . .

And “barn” is only a noun—no verb or subject has entered into the sentence yet!

The voice you hear when you read to yourself is the clearest voice: you speak its speaking to you.

When you hear the word *barn*, what barn or barns from your own life do you first see? What feelings and associations do you have with this word? How do you think the barn in your head is different from the barns in your classmates’ heads?

When you hear the word *cathedral*, what images and associations from your own life come into your head? Once again, how might your classmates’ internal images and associations with the word *cathedral* differ from yours?

Now reread the poem and consider the lines “Not the sound your friends know or the sound of a tape played back / but your voice / caught in the dark cathedral of your skull.” What do you think Lux means by the metaphor “dark cathedral of your skull”? What seems important about his choice of the word *cathedral* (rather than, say, *house* or *cave* or *gymnasium* or *mansion*)? How does *skull* work (rather than *mind* or *brain* or *head*)? Freewriting for several minutes, create your interpretation of “dark cathedral of the skull.”

Finally, reflect for a moment about your thinking processes in trying to interpret “cathedral of the skull.” Did you go back and reread the poem, looking for how this line fits other lines of the poem? Did you explore further your own ideas about cathedrals and skull? See if you can catch yourself in the act of interacting with the text—or actively constructing meaning.

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- Connecting Reading & Writing: The Voice You Hear Response. **Authored by:** Larry Weinstein. **Provided by:** NCTE. **Located at:** http://atc4.bentley.edu/courses/resources/lweinstein/index3.html. **Project:** Survey of non-Western Literature. **License:** CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike
Introduction to Fiction

Click below for a video presentation that gives college students a brief introduction to fiction.

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(Re)Reading Poetry: Challenges to Expect

There are several challenges you should expect with reading poetry:

- Tone is tough to get at times.
- Line breaks draw our attention. We might get mesmerized by them, forgetting the content.
- The subject matter and setting may be elusive, leading us to (mistakenly) believe we’re reading riddles.
- Free verse may see like broken up, fragmented prose instead of poetry. We arrive with preconceptions.
- Repeated images might make us complacent, so that we stop thinking/experiencing a given poem when a familiar horse or crow enters into it. This can be a problem...
- We may not know what we like or notice, so marking up the book can be a difficulty.
- **We read too fast**, losing much of the poem’s cadences and meaning.
- Again, we read way too fast, trying to cover difficult material.
- We fail to heed the invitation the poems images offer, which is often personal. That is, the meanings and connections you may see are not utterly your own, because the poet set them up for you, but at the same time they may be particular to you. This can be a dilemma, since we don’t want to be too relativistic (my truth and that’s all) or too impersonal (the poem has the meaning and nothing I bring matters). Think about it. Do you know what I mean?
- We may dissect the poem’s elements or motifs and forget that it’s an organic, whole thing!
- We may forget to scan the poem thoroughly for its parts, neglecting to analyze the whole.

I could go on *ad nauseum.*

Anyway, I hope you find at least a few things you can do better in this list.

I’m probably putting each error in because I have committed it!

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- (Re)Reading Poetry: Challenges to Expect. **Authored by:** Joshua Dickinson. **Provided by:** Jefferson Community College. **Located at:** http://www.sunyjefferson.edu. **Project:** Survey of non-Western Literature. **License:** CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike
Stress in Poetry

Overview

Stresses allow poets to focus readers’ attention on the meaning of their poetry. We all know that poetry is different from everyday language. A lot of that sense of difference resides in the stresses good poets manipulate in order to create meaningful experiences for readers. I don’t expect you to start counting stresses. Most of the poetry we’ll read is not in formal meter; however, you should become attuned to the sound of the words.

How does the poet choose to use stresses in a given line?

For what purpose does this word get used?

How does this sound?

These are all legitimate questions. I expect you to become aware (in a general way) of the way poets use sound for their purposes. You won’t get to these questions unless you reread the poems. Reading aloud helps, too!

If you get the idea that stresses are relative and that poets play with patterns, you’re in good shape. I also want you to see if the NA poets we read follow iambic patterns. Don’t expect them to rhyme—most contemporary poets couldn’t rhyme if you paid them. (Hah, most contemporary poets couldn’t get paid for their work, either, but that’s another story.)

Stressed Yet?

Okay: read aloud, reread, transitions. What else is there? Lots, actually!

Take stresses, for example. In a heavily accented language like English, words have relative stresses. Here’s an example: “A man, a plan, a canal, Panama.” Not exactly poetry, but it reads the same backwards as it does forwards (it’s a palindrome). We can give this line stresses: put / in for a stressed syllable, and U above the syllable that’s not as stressed.

U / U / U U / / U U

A man, a plan, a canal, Panama

Try an easier one, now:

The rain in Spain falls mainly on the plain.

Where would the stresses go?

U / U / U / U / U /

The rain in Spain falls mainly on the plain.

That’s right!
Form and Content

Now, you might disagree with my stresses here. It’s somewhat open to interpretation. Words have stress patterns (just look in any dictionary). If you wanted to give mainly two stresses in a row, you’d probably avoid stressing “on.” Here’s a major point about reading: Change the form and you change the content.

I don’t like using all caps, but that statement above is the big deal about poetry! Above, you changed the form (the stress pattern you saw), and that changed the content of the poem (its meaning). Form and content—it’s all about form and content. When you look for a change in meaning, you’ll probably also find a change in the form.

Metric Feet? Huh? Are we in Canada?

Poetry is all about patterns. The unstressed-stressed pattern here is very important.

A foot is a measure of stressed. Usually, feet have two syllables (though some have three).

An iamb is a pattern of unstressed stressed syllables. Is the second example iambic? (If you said “yes,” you’re right.)

A trochee is a foot where the first syllable is stressed and the second is unstressed.

Poetry would be pretty boring if poets didn’t vary the pattern. Just like in soccer or hockey, where players make certain moves, poets have moves.

The second example has how many feet? (5)

The second example has ___ syllables? (10)

It’s called iambic pentameter. Its overall pattern is iambic, and it has five feet of two syllables each.

Questions

Why would five-foot lines be a good choice in poetry?

What do ten-syllable (five-foot) lines allow poets to do?

Why would two-foot lines or ten-foot lines have major drawbacks?

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Literary Conventions
## Literary Terms

To discuss and analyze literature it is important to know some of the basic terms and expressions used within the subject area. The following glossary covers the most widely used terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>allegory</td>
<td>Simply put, an allegory is a narrative that has a symbolic meaning. That is, the whole story, its plot, characters and often setting, are all elements that signify a second correlated narrative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alliteration</td>
<td>Alliteration is when a text (most often poetry, but also prose) has three or more succeeding words that start with the same sound. It is usually applied to consonants, either at the beginning of the word or on a stressed syllable within the word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>allusion</td>
<td>In a literary work there will often be a brief reference to a person, place, event or to another literary work. This is called an allusion, and was very common in classic and romantic poetry which had many references to ancient mythology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ambiguity</td>
<td>Ambiguity means double meaning. It is a common literary technique in both poetry and prose to use words and expressions with multiple meanings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>atmosphere</td>
<td>The word covers the mood or ambience that the writer creates in his narrative. The intention is to give the reader a feeling (often dark and foreboding) of what is going to happen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biography</td>
<td>A biography is, simply put, the story of a person’s life. It is a popular genre; people love to read about the lives of famous persons. An autobiography is a biography written by the person himself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blank verse</td>
<td>Blank verse is when a poem (of a certain metric pattern) has no end rhymes. Many of Shakespeare’s texts, both his plays and poems are in blank verse. It will then have a certain melodic rhythm that comes alive when it is recited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>character and characterization</td>
<td>Character refers to the person(s) in a narrative or a play. They can be described directly (through the narrator) or indirectly (through the eyes of other characters. We also use the terms flat or round characters to indicate their complexity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clichè</td>
<td>A verbal clichè is a fixed and often used expression. A structural clichè is a common and predictable element of a narrative. It can be either a character or a turn of the plot. In film and literature clichès are negative elements, since they indicate lack of creativity, both in terms of language and plot arrangements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comedy</td>
<td>A comedy is a play or a film that puts the audience in a good and safe mood. Certain techniques are used to create a good comedy, e.g. mistaken identity and misunderstandings. The audience will be amused and confident that things will turn out happily for the characters (at least the ones who deserve it).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>term</td>
<td>description</td>
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<tr>
<td>connotation</td>
<td>Connotation is the same as denotation, and means that a word (mostly in poetry) has a different meaning than it has in everyday use. E.g. “cold” will in colloquial settings mean low temperature, but as a connotation it may also mean e.g. heartless or unfeeling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>constrast</td>
<td>When certain opposites are juxtaposed, or put up against each other, e.g. two scenes in a film, this will highlight the contrast between them. The effect is that the two elements will mutually amplify each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>epic</td>
<td>This is one of the main literary genes (epic, lyric, dramatic) and will denote a narrative which is told like a story or a plot. There are many sub-genres of epic literature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>epigram</td>
<td>Originally this means some sort of inscription. It is a short, pointed poem that is often witty and well composed with a striking punch line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>epiphany</td>
<td>Epiphany in Greek means “manifestation of God.” In literature it means a sudden and often spiritual awakening, like when a character suddenly sees with clarity the way out of a predicament or a dilemma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>essay</td>
<td>An essay is a composition about a topic, often arguing a certain thesis or stating a point of view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fiction</td>
<td>Fiction, or a fictive narrative is invented, as opposed to a factual presentation of events that are historically true.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foreshadow</td>
<td>To foreshadow is to place hints or bits of information that will lead the reader to an anticipation of the outcome of the narrative. The opening parts of a novel or a short-story will often hold elements of foreshadowing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>genre</td>
<td>Genre is French and means type or form; it is used to categorize literature in groups according to certain criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gothic</td>
<td>In architecture, Gothic means the pointed style that broke with the traditional Roman rounded form of arches and ceilings in cathedrals. In literature the word is used about the type of novels of the late 18th century, containing eerie ingredients like ghosts in derelict castles with dark hallways and hidden doors. Other elements would include violent action, occultism and sorcery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>humanism</td>
<td>This is an alternative denotation of the Renaissance (1550-1650), and it signifies the human as a master of his universe; man is able to seek within himself for answers, but must also appreciate his own shortcomings and inner contradictions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hyperbole and understatement</td>
<td>Hyperbole comes from Greek and means to exaggerate, as opposed to an understatement, which is a blunt way of making a statement by giving it less significance than it really has; e.g to say “bad luck” when a disaster has struck.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>imagery</td>
<td>Imagery is a common term in modern literary theory; it describes poetry that is rich with suggestive images and associations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>irony</td>
<td>In colloquial speech irony means to say the opposite of what one really means (verbal irony). In literature one also has this verbal irony, but also what is called structural irony, where the writer gives his plot a turn that can be read with a double meaning. In a short-story there may be an ironic twist at the ending to sum up the theme.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term</td>
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<tr>
<td>melodrama</td>
<td>Originally a melodrama was a drama with song. In literature the term will denote a plot which is a bit over the top when it comes to effects. The plot will often be sentimental and not strictly credible, and the characters are more exaggerated &quot;types&quot; than believable persons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metaphor</td>
<td>A metaphor is a figure of speech where two or more elements of a different nature are compared with each other, but without &quot;like&quot; or &quot;as&quot;. If the comparison includes &quot;like&quot; or &quot;as&quot; it is called a simile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meter</td>
<td>Meter is a collective term for the rhythmic pattern of a poem. There are a number of metric systems. A text written in meter is called a verse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>motif</td>
<td>Note the spelling. A motif is a recurring element in a literary text. It may be an incident or a phrase that occurs in different situations and settings through the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>myth and legend</td>
<td>Originally a myth is a story derived from mythology, e.g. the ancient religions of Greece and Rome, or Norse mythology. At the time the myth was believed to be true. The story of gods and supernatural beings is a myth, but if the protagonist is a man it is called a legend. Today a myth will usually mean something which is a popular claim, but it is not true.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>narrator and narrative</td>
<td>The narrator is the one that relates the story, and whose information unfolds the plot. The narrative is the story itself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>novel</td>
<td>A novel can be defined as a substantial narrative with many characters and a plot that stretches over a long time span (not always) and may have many settings. There are many sub-categories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>omniscient</td>
<td>To be omniscient means “to know it all,” and is used about a narrator who is everywhere in the story and can reveal the thoughts of all the characters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paradox</td>
<td>A paradox is a phrase or statement which seems self-contradictory, but turns out to have a valid meaning after all. “Fair is foul, and foul is fair” (Shakespeare, Macbeth) is an example of a literary paradox.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pathos</td>
<td>Pathos is Greek and means deep feeling or passion. Today we associate pathos with a slightly overexposed sentimentality designed to evoke pity or compassion of the reader or a theatre audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plot</td>
<td>The plot is the structure and order of actions in a narrative text or a play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>point of view</td>
<td>The point of view is also called “angle” and signifies the way a narrative is told, and from where. The point of view will be the eyes through which we see the narrative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>protagonist</td>
<td>The protagonist is the main character of a narrative. There will also be sub-characters that the protagonist relates to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>satire</td>
<td>A satire is a narrative which will expose a questionable practice or element in a subtle and &quot;concealed&quot; way. A satire can be funny, but has a serious intent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>setting</td>
<td>The setting of a narrative or a play will define where and when the plot takes place. The setting will always be strongly related to the plot, and will include description of weather and light / dark.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>short story</td>
<td>A short story is exactly that – a short story. It has a condensed plot that evolves over a short time span, and has few characters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>soliloquy</strong></td>
<td>This term is used in dramatic literature and means that the actor is speaking to himself, or “aside” as it also is called. It is widely used in many of Shakespeare’s plays.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>stream of consciousness</strong></td>
<td>“Stream of consciousness” was a term which was introduced during modernism, and means that the narrative is based on what goes on in the mind of a protagonist. It is also called interior monologue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>style</strong></td>
<td>The style is the way the writer arranges his narrative and his choice of words. The style will be closely connected to the mood and atmosphere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>symbol</strong></td>
<td>A symbol is an object, expression or event that represents an idea beyond itself. The weather and light/darkness will often have a symbolic meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tragedy</strong></td>
<td>In a tragedy an innocent protagonist will be involved in escalating circumstances with a fatal result. The tragic development is either caused by a flaw in the character’s personality or by events that evolve beyond his control.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>theme</strong></td>
<td>The theme of a narrative or a play is the general idea or underlying message that the writer wants to expose.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Elements of Literature

These are the Elements of Literature, the things that make up every story. This is the first of two videos.

https://youtu.be/9E6JojgCew

These are the elements of literature with Mr. Taylor.

https://youtu.be/O7c_SjKcGbE

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- Elements of Literature with Mr. Taylor (Part 2). **Authored by:** Kenny Taylor. **Located at:** https://youtu.be/O7c_SjKcGbE. **License:** All Rights Reserved. **License Terms:** Standard YouTube License
Defining Literature

Defining literature is always difficult. There are several overlapping definitions. Some concentrate on where the words are—as our discussion is when it questions whether something can be literature if it’s oral. This gets at only part of the question. Other definitions get at what literature feels like to the audience/reader. Other definitions focus on the differences between literature and everyday use of language. By using a combination of approaches (being flexible) we can arrive at a definition.

I’m including a long quote from Jonathan Culler’s wonderful little book Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction. Culler teaches at Cornell. If any of you are serious about English as a major, you should probably read this book. The reason I mention this is that Culler makes literary theory understandable and he cuts through a lot of the current trends in criticism—that’s saying a lot, if you’ve seen some of the strange things to come out of our field of study lately. I wish I had read a book like this before tackling those English classes! Anyway, I’m not going to say much else about this—he goes from pages 18-41 trying to define this strange thing we call literature.

See what you can say about Culler’s take on defining literature. You could respond to it for some discussion postings.

Remember that epic poems like The Odyssey and The Iliad were initially oral—they were only written down much later. They are in our canon. The origins of poetry are oral rather than written.

Note that Culler’s book is published by Oxford UP, so it’s going to have single quotes where there should be double—and other British usages like single – instead of the– for quick shifts in thought. You should continue using Standard American English and MLA format.

The Definition of Literature

What sort of question?

We find ourselves back at the key question, ‘What is literature?’, which will not go away. But what sort of question is it? If a 5-year-old is asking, it’s easy. ‘Literature’, you answer, ‘is stories, poems, and plays.’ But if the questioner is a literary theorist, it’s harder to know how to take the query. It might be a question about the general nature of this object, literature, which both of you already know well. What sort of object or activity is it? What does it do? What purposes does it serve? Thus understood, ‘What is literature?’ asks not for a definition but for an analysis, even an argument about why one might concern oneself with literature at all.

But ‘What is literature?’ might also be a question about distinguishing characteristics of the works known as literature: what distinguishes them from non-literary works? What differentiates literature from other human activities or pastimes? Now people might ask this question because they were wondering how to decide which books are literature and which are not, but it is more likely that they already have an idea what counts as literature and want to know something else: are there any essential, distinguishing features that literary works share?

This is a difficult question. Theorists have wrestled with it, but without notable success. The reasons are not far to seek: works of literature come in all shapes and sizes and most of them seem to have more in common with works that aren’t usually called literature than they do with some other works recognized as literature. Charlotte Bronte’s Jane Eyre, for instance, more closely resembles an autobiography than it does a sonnet, and a poem by Robert Burns – ‘My love is like a red, red rose’—resembles a folk-song more than it does Shakespeare’s Hamlet. Are there qualities shared by poems, plays, and novels that distinguish them from, say, songs, transcriptions of conversations, and autobiographies?
Historical Variations

Even a bit of historical perspective makes this question more complex. For twenty-five centuries people have written works that we call literature today, but the modern sense of literature is scarcely two centuries old. Prior to 1800 literature and analogous terms in other European languages meant writings’ or “book knowledge.” Even today, a scientist who says ‘the literature on evolution is immense’ means not that many poems and novels treat the topic but that much has been written about it. And works that today are studied as literature in English or Latin classes in schools and universities were once treated not as a special kind of writing but as fine examples of the use of language and rhetoric. They were instances of a larger category of exemplary practices of writing and thinking, which included speeches, sermons, history, and philosophy. Students were not asked to interpret them, as we now interpret literary works, seeking to explain what they are ‘really about’. On the contrary, students memorized them, studied their grammar, identified their rhetorical figures and their structures or procedures of argument. A work such as Virgil’s Aeneid, which today is studied as literature, was treated very differently in schools prior to 1850.

The modern Western sense of literature as imaginative writing can be traced to the German Romantic theorists of the late eighteenth century and, if we want a particular source, to a book published in 1800 by a French Baroness, Madame de Staël’s On Literature Considered in its Relations with Social Institutions. But even if we restrict ourselves to the last two centuries, the category of literature becomes slippery:

would works which today count as literature—say poems that seem snippets of ordinary conversation, without rhyme or discernible metre -have qualified as literature for Madame de Staël? And once we begin to think about non-European cultures, the question of what counts as literature becomes increasingly difficult. It is tempting to give it up and conclude that literature is whatever a given society treats as literature—a set of texts that arbiters [tastemakers, critics] recognize as belonging to literature.

I hope this helps!

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Theme

The theme is the main idea, lesson or message in the novel. It usually states an idea about humans, society or life.

You will often be asked to analyze how the theme is expressed. Study the novel to check if any elements are repeated that may suggest a theme. Is there more than one theme? In the Harry Potter stories there may be many themes. One of the most important must be the value of being modest. Harry does not boast, he is humble, loyal and good. That is why he succeeds in the end. This is the lesson that Rowling wants to pass on to us. We are clearly shown what happens to the characters that are selfish and mean.

- The theme is the main idea in the story.
- The message is the lesson the author wants to teach us.

Theme can also be expressed as

- the underlying meaning of a literary work, a general truth about life or mankind.

A theme is the general subject the story revolves around. It often represents universal and timeless ideas that are relevant in most people’s lives.

Even though a novel may have an action-packed story, the underlying theme may be to stick to your friends and be loyal – as in Harry Potter.

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Conflict

If stories were without conflicts or tension, we would be easily bored. The conflict is usually the heart of the story and revolves around the main character. What does Harry struggle with? The main conflict is Harry’s attempt to stop Voldemort, the murderer of his parents, from stealing the Philosopher’s Stone. So, it is a classical fight between good and evil forces. We also note that the world of the wizards clashes with the world of the Muggles, where the Muggles are represented by the stupid Dursleys. These are outer conflicts threatening Harry. However, there are also conflicts going on inside Harry; like, should he:

- Avenge the murder of his parents?
- Live by the wizard rules and obligations?
- Punish the Dursleys for treating him so badly?
- Boast of his skills and abilities?
- Be loyal to his friends?

Conflicts are important to stories to make them interesting.

There may be outer and inner conflicts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict: a struggle between opposing forces. A conflict is a misunderstanding or clash of interests that develops in the story. This often occurs between main characters. It drives the story forward and creates suspense. If a story had no conflict, it would be very boring. A conflict is basically a situation which has to change.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Examples

In a story where someone finds a lump of gold, the conflicts will probably revolve around who gets to keep this gold. The conflict here would involve greed.

If a plane crashes in the mountains, the conflict will deal with survival.

But conflicts may also be on a personal level – like in novels where a person struggles with emotional issues or moral dilemmas.

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Symbolism

A short video explaining symbols in literature.

https://youtu.be/-mjkj36hY-4

Definition of symbolism with examples of poems using symbolism.

https://youtu.be/nl2bmY2XnMk
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Characters and Characterization

The characters are the persons that are involved in the story. Obviously, Harry Potter is the main character. The main character is often called the protagonist. Since *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* is a novel, we meet many other characters as well. Look at the character list on Sparknotes – *Harry Potter*. Which characters would you rank as the most important? It would be surprising if you did not include Harry’s friends Ron and Hermione, his enemies Draco and the scary Voldemort, and not to forget “the good guys,” Professor Dumbledore and the giant Hagrid.

How are the characters described? In the novel we are admitted to Harry’s thoughts and fears and based on that, we can say something about Harry as well as his relationship with other characters.

Most novels will have a hero, a good guy. There is no doubt that Harry Potter is the hero and protagonist, and he has a lot of good friends. How do we know that they are good? We have to depend on information about looks, behavior and speech.

Extracts from the Novel

Study the extracts and then answer the questions which follow.

Extracts from the first chapter of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* used in the analysis.

### Extract 1

If the motorcycle was huge, it was nothing to the man sitting astride it. He was almost twice as tall as a normal man and at least five times as wide. He looked simply too big to be allowed, and so wild – long tangles of bushy black hair and beard hid most of his face, he had hands the size of trash can lids, and his feet in their leather boots were like baby dolphins. In his vast, muscular arms he was holding a bundle of blankets. (Description of Hagrid)

### Extract 2

“S-s-sorry,” sobbed Hagrid, taking out a large, spotted handkerchief and burying his face in it. “But I c-c-can’t stand it – Lily and James dead – an’ poor little Harry off ter live with Muggles – ” (Hagrid talks about Harry’s dead parents and how he has to stay with the humans, the Muggles)

### Extract 3

“Yes, yes, it’s all very sad, but get a grip on yourself, Hagrid, or we’ll be found,” Professor McGonagall whispered, patting Hagrid gingerly on the arm as Dumbledore stepped over the low garden wall and walked to
the front door. He laid Harry gently on the doorstep, took a letter out of his cloak, tucked it inside Harry’s blankets, and then came back to the other two. For a full minute the three of them stood and looked at the little bundle; Hagrid’s shoulders shook, Professor McGonagall blinked furiously, and the twinkling light that usually shone from Dumbledore’s eyes seemed to have gone out. (From the delivery of the orphan Harry at the Dursleys’ doorstep)

Extract 4

“Look”– he murmured, holding out his arm to stop Malfoy. Something bright white was gleaming on the ground. They inched closer. It was the unicorn, all right, and it was dead. Harry had never seen anything so beautiful and sad. Its long, slender legs were stuck out at odd angles where it had fallen and its mane was spread pearly white on the dark leaves. Harry had taken one step toward it when a slithering sound made him freeze where he stood. A bush on the edge of the clearing quivered... Then, out of the shadows, a hooded figure came crawling across the ground like some stalking beast. Harry, Malfoy, and Fang stood transfixed. The cloaked figure reached the unicorn, lowered its head over the wound in the animal’s side, and began to drink its blood. (from the first time Harry meets Voldemort)

Exercises

Study Extracts 1, 2 and 3

How does the author introduce us to Hagrid and Professor Dumbledore? What kind of impression do you get? Do you like them? Why?
Describe in your own words Hagrid’s looks.
How is speech used to describe the characters?

Villains/Antagonists

In most novels we will also meet some “bad guys”. They are often called villains or antagonists. How do we know that they are evil? Study Extract 4 above.

Describe in your own words Voldemort’s looks and behavior.
How does the author tell us that Voldemort is an evil character (an antagonist)?

Character Development

Throughout the story Harry changes a lot. He develops from a loner into a sociable, more mature guy, and he also has to admit that he is mistaken. One of the characters that he thinks is “a bad guy” is actually “a good guy”! In most reports you will be asked to write a characterization of one of the main characters and to comment if they have changed, or not.

Terminology

- The characters are the persons we meet in the story.
- A characterization is a description of the characters.
- The protagonist is the main character, often the hero of the story.
- The antagonist is the villain or enemy in the story.
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- Characters and Characterization (Easy Novel Guide). **Authored by:** Eli M. Huseby and Knut Inge Skifjeld. **Provided by:** NDLa. **Located at:** http://ndla.no/en/node/62750?fag=42. **License:** CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike
Metaphor

How do metaphors help us better understand the world? And, what makes a good metaphor? Explore these questions with writers like Langston Hughes and Carl Sandburg, who have mastered the art of bringing a scene or emotion to life.

Lesson by Jane Hirshfield, animation by Ben Pearce.

https://youtu.be/A0edKgL9EgM
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- The art of the metaphor - Jane Hirshfield. Authored by: TED-Ed. Located at: https://youtu.be/A0edKgL9EgM. License: All Rights Reserved. License Terms: Standard YouTube License
Learn the different kinds of narrative POV: reliable first person, unreliable first person, omniscient third person, limited third person, objective third person, and even the rarely-used second person. Also, better understand why understanding POV is an important life skill, beyond the writing or study of literature.

https://youtu.be/SKi56cPUSFk
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Tragedy and Comedy

Tragedy isn’t Accidental

“That was such a tragic accident.” Huh?

Tragedy is a balloon word, like “culture” or “freedom.” It has been used in so many ways that its exact meaning is lost. I’ll expect you to be more precise with it. Know its roots. Tragedy and comedy are complementary forms. Stemming from early drama (with its rituals), a tragic protagonist makes a choice which leads to their eventual, inevitable destruction. Conversely, comedy’s choices are about marriage and sex. There is usually a marriage at the end of a comedy—they are life-affirming in a positive way.

Typically, tragic protagonists fall from on high and we enjoy watching this inevitable, choice-driven event while noticing the characteristic within them that led to it. In this way, tragedy is much like blues music, where we might feel joy at hearing that someone is “diggin’ my potatoes” (cheating on the singer with “his” woman). The Greeks called this catharsis, a ritual purging (out both ends, grossly enough, but we politely think of the upper one).

What Tragedies Accomplish

Tragedies are life-affirming in a negative sense. The “body count” at the end usually evokes “pity” and “terror.” Aristotle used these terms, and we still do today. And why do we feel good after a tragedy? Why, it didn’t happen to us! That’s one reason. Another is that we shared in someone’s suffering, and this causes us to reflect on things. Are there many ways in which Americans communally share anything? How much more individualized are we now than we were 100 years ago?

Genres and categories like tragedy and comedy are artificially applied to much modern literature, and to all NA literature. When a Mohawk writer is intentionally using tragedy, they are also using their Mohawk culture and mixing in elements from white culture, too. How are readers going to separate these threads? Is it even possible? Do you see what an interesting mess this provides for us as readers? It’s not necessarily a bad thing that we can’t get easy answers.

Problems Using Terms like Tragedy

Not only is tragedy a misused term, then, but when applied to another world literature—like Native American literature—it becomes problematic. If we can test some of these, we won’t have to rely on problem terms like “tragedy” that much.

I’d like you to leave this lecture as a seeker for the tragic and the non-tragic in their properly literary senses, and not merely the pop culture idea of good/bad, which is oversimplified.

What of Comedy, Then?

Well, comedy is easy. . . it’s about union, with most comedies featuring sexual union occurring offstage while the wedding guests joke about how long it will take till the wife starts cheating on the husband. It’s a strange genre, really, with old people trying to create matches for the young, often involving their older friends marrying to maintain wealth and control. Critic Northrop Frye on comedy: “A comedy is not a play which ends happily: it is a

Survey of non-Western Literature
Frye's Use of Mythical Cycles—and I’m not talking Harleys!

Frye continues, connecting comedy and tragedy with the workings of the four seasons.

The mythical backbone of all literature is the cycle of nature, which rolls from birth to death and back again to rebirth. The first half of this cycle, the movement from birth to death, spring to winter, dawn to dark, is the basis of the great alliance of nature and reason, the sense of nature as a rational order in which all movement is toward the increasingly predictable . . . [T]ragedy [and] the history play (always very close to tragedy) . . . are always close to this first half. There may be surprises in the last act of a Shakespearean tragedy, but the pervading feeling is of something inevitable working itself out . . . Comedy, however, is based on the second half of the great cycle, moving from death to rebirth, decadence to renewal, winter to spring, darkness to a new dawn . . . This movement from sterility to renewed life is as natural as the tragic movement, because it happens. But though natural it is somehow irrational: the sense of the alliance of nature with reason and predictable order is no longer present. We can see that death is the inevitable result of birth, but new life is not the inevitable result of death. It is hoped for, even expected, but at its core is something unpredictable and mysterious, something that belongs to the imaginative equivalents of faith, hope, and love, not to the rational virtues (119-22).

So we’re often partly correct about these genres while perhaps missing the key workings of each. There! You are cursed to correct any newscaster who utters “That was a tragic accident!”

And if all this isn’t strangely contingent enough, do some web searches to see how the original festivals of Dionysus worked out (with their Maenads) prior to the Greeks settling down and merely watching plays! See the connections?

“Dionysus Mosaic” by miriam.mollerus is licensed under CC BY 2.0
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- Tragedy and Comedy. **Authored by:** Joshua Dickinson. **Provided by:** Jefferson Community College. **Located at:** http://www.sunyjefferson.edu. **Project:** Survey of non-Western Literature. **License:** CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike
Irony

Defining Irony

Irony is all about noticing contrast. No noticing by you = inaccurate interpretations.

Verbal irony occurs when the intended meaning and the stated meaning are different—and usually opposite. Huh?

Let me clarify. Irony is when the connotation is the opposite of the denotation. Connotations are the contexts, the situations and feelings around a word. Denotations are the dictionary definitions surrounding a word.

When these don’t match up, a space is created. You see that space, and you react to it by giving that situation meaning.

Exemplifying Verbal Irony

Irony is like sarcasm. For example, if I said “That’s a Great tie” to someone with an extremely ugly tie, you would hear the tone in which I said it, right? You could look up “Great” in the dictionary and find that it means good, admirable, wonderful, etc. But “good” is opposite of the usage, right? I mean, I said it so he’d see it was ugly and bad. Some critics dispute this connection between sarcasm and irony.

How to Approach Irony

Ask questions about irony. Use the term in your discussions and your papers.

Do you think you’ll see irony in the works we’ll read? Will it be used in the same ways?

If irony is the difference between the stated meaning and the intended meaning, then is it used by all cultures?

Dramatic and Situation Irony: The Sidekick Types

Dramatic irony arises when an audience knows more about a situation than the character(s). The characters say or do something whose significance they don’t know. For example, you go to Oedipus the King knowing that he has married his mom. You know this, he doesn’t. So, as he discovers this, you watch and appreciate it.

Situational irony would result from a gapping—a difference—between what readers expect and what actually occurs. This is not to be confused with the popular misconception that irony occurs when something surprising or coincidental occurs. (Think of that 90s song by Alanis Morrissette, “Isn’t it Ironic?” which actually featured nonexamples of irony. Now that’s ironic!)
The Irony” by Jack Sirichumsaeng is licensed under CC BY 2.0
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Binary Patterns: A Western Obsession

This or that? Me or you? I or thou? Subject or object?

Along with these basic either/or questions, Western thought is built on other key binaries.

A binary is an either/or choice like the zeroes and ones making up DVDs or other digital codes. While some things lend themselves to “this or that” choices, we know that the world is often much more complicated. The answer “Pepsi or Coke?” might define a person privately, but whether you like one or the other may not carry much public meaning. Ironically, it did carry meaning in the 80s during the Cola Wars.

These either/or choices often have strange histories. For instance, the tragedy/comedy binary informs genres on television and in literature. It is based on a thinker, Aristotle, who was not even approving of literature. Dig into the history of tragedy and comedy and you will find some strangeness. For instance, tragedy was supposed by Aristotle to feature someone making a choice which leads inevitably to their downfall, which we witness and feel catharsis, a sense of purging out of both ends. . .! Weird enough for you? It makes a certain amount of sense, just as listening to a blues song makes us feel happy, but it’s what we’d call contingent: based on a quirky, particular set of happenings that did not have to occur. So binaries are contingent. (Call this the non-tragic theory of approaching binaries.) And comedy was supposed to involve a mating and joining offstage in early Greek comedies—which were held at the festival of the god Dionysus, at which, originally, his devotees called Maenads were said to mate with willing victims on mountainsides, after which they would rend apart the sacrificial victim. And this is what informs our genres—and has done so for 2,500 years. So I’d add necessary vs. contingent as a binary that can be useful.

For more on the strangeness of binaries, you might do a search for humor theory or look at the history of academia (gowns, gavels, graduations. . .). Or if you’re talking good or evil, one might look at how evil always comes back (Sauron, Voldemort). Weirdly enough, this even contributes to a type of cannibalism whereby an enemy’s body is eaten so that his soul can be erased—for a time—from the eternal battlefield. As the cliche goes, “The truth is stranger than fiction.” In fields like literary analysis, there is no “capital-T Truth.” That idea of there being one would go back to Plato and his theory of Forms.

So these issues have histories of which we should become aware. As a critical reader, it is important for you to take note of binaries and gauge their effects. Though they may exclude other choices, it is the case that humans notice contrasts and oppositions.

Binaries are crutches, tools. They can work but can put blinders on what we notice. Early in stages of the writing or critical thinking processes, they can be useful.

Which side of a binary does the author notice or value more?
Which views are portrayed as negative?
What is undervalued or missing from a given text?

In a writing course, then, you might create a persuasive essay that argues one side against another. We contribute to these ongoing debates most thoughtfully if we realize that they arguments will continue, however well we write about them! Just don’t fall into the trap of thinking that the world is either/or, comforting as that notion may be.
Binary Patterns. **Authored by:** Joshua Dickinson. **Provided by:** Jefferson Community College. **Located at:** http://www.sunyjefferson.edu. **Project:** Survey of non-Western Literature. **License:** CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike
Writing About Literature
Academic Writing Review

Remember these items as you edit your essay. They can make a big difference. I hope this sort of things helps. It’s incomplete, but it’s a start.

Think of the purpose of your paper, and of how each paragraph helps you fulfill it. As I mentioned elsewhere, the essays in the book aren’t pure models for the academic writing we will be doing. What we write should look more solid, even if it is less flashy. You’ll need to cite details and quickly follow up on their meanings through strong interpretation of the cited material. Topic sentences and transitions are key elements as well.

Thesis/Introduction

- Set up your thesis; it’s best to place it near/at the end of the introduction.
- Two-part introductions or other types of unconventional introductions tend not to work. Why? The writer tends not to do the jobs of the introduction. These include previewing the rest of the essay, setting up the thesis (and showing other sides to the point you’re trying to prove).
- Make sure your introduction promises what you’ll do. (Don’t say “In this essay I’ll. . .” or “First, I’ll discuss,” though. Just go ahead and start previewing the paper.)
- Avoid using “I” as much as possible.
- “Don’t use don’t.” Avoid contractions–as I haven’t in this posting!
- “Oh, I almost forgot.” Be careful of the formal writing voice you need to use. Don’t sound chatty. I want you to write more formally than you are in your postings.

Thesis Checklist

With the thesis statement, keep the following questions in mind. They might work for most academic writing. Get good at asking follow-up questions of your own so that you can edit your work.

- Is it a statement?
- Is it a complex sentence? (Most good thesis statements provide an overview of what you’ll go into. Therefore, most good thesis statements need to be complex sentences.)
- Does it take into account your 2-3 main reasons? (These are usually your body paragraph topics, right?)
- Does it take different sides into account? You want to appear fair, and the thesis is a great place for you to frame the merits and weak points of contending sides.
- Where will you locate this statement? Usually, though not always, we put the thesis either at the end of the introduction, or near the end. This allows us to set up the thesis carefully. Your introduction should take care to preview what you’ll get into in the body paragraphs, just as the conclusion reviews what you did.

Paraphrasing

- Starting/ending paragraphs with quotes is often a warning sign. Why is that?
- When editing, check for strong topic sentences. Are they there? (Go a step further: did your major topics make it into the introduction as preview material, and into the conclusion as review?)
- Citing properly matters. If readers are wondering where a source begins or ends, they are not attending to the content you chose to cite. Their job of appreciating what you brought to the essay is made impossible by citing problems.
- Do interpret between quotes. Avoid stacking two or three quotes. I’m more interested in what you have to write about the quotes than what’s in the quotes.
- Fix the problems with Smart Quotes. (See that mini-lecture in Module 1.)
- Are your paragraphs connected directly to the thesis? How? (Is the connection clear enough?)
- End paragraphs well. (Consider transitions as well as restatement of topic sentence.)
Interpretation

Perhaps the biggest frustration is that many of you include great quotes. They’re promising, they’re useful, they’re. . . sitting there! Use the words in the quote. Get readers to see their meaning. If you aren’t doing some work at this level, then you aren’t interpreting. Good readers are waiting for you to prove your points through close reading of the text. (Sell us on what the words mean. That takes some time.)

Conclusion

- Lack of a conclusion will seriously affect your readers’ reactions to the essay (and thus, your grade).
- I value strong conclusions that restate your points and remind readers about how you proved your claim(s).
- Do not add new information to the conclusion.
- Restate your thesis at a strategic point. Otherwise, readers will not remember your work soon afterwards—or a week from now.
- Be detailed: this is where you remind us of what you did.
- Don’t write two or three sentences and “be done with it.”
Self-Diagnosis of One's Writing Ailments can be Fun!

Is using plain language the law?

The following humorous site, “How to Write Good,” is located on the Plainlanguage.gov page. It lists and breaks severa writing rules. In breaking the rules, they illustrate them. It is an engaging way to learn the rules of English–especially since they always seem to have exceptions.

Note that not all of the rules are really rules anymore. For instance, the one about ending a sentence on a preposition is one we have largely gotten out of. (Get it?)

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- Self-Diagnosis of One’s Writing Ailments can be Fun!. **Authored by:** PLAIN. **Provided by:** PLAIN. **Located at:** http://www.plainlanguage.gov/examples/humor/writegood.cfm. **License:** CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike
How to Avoid Plagiarizing

**Tip #1: Make Sure You Are Very Certain about What Is and is Not Plagiarism**

https://youtu.be/t5dRz6ZEkj8

**Tip #2: Give Yourself Plenty of Time to Complete an Assignment**

Running out of time on an assignment is a main cause of plagiarism. Rushing to meet a deadline can result in carelessness (leading to unintentional plagiarism – see the next tip) and the desire to find a quick, easy solution such as copying someone else’s work. Don’t give in to that temptation! Plagiarism is a serious academic offense, and the chance of being caught (which is likely) is not worth it.

Avoid this situation entirely by starting your assignment far ahead of time and planning out when you will complete each phase of the writing process. Even if your teacher does not require you to turn in materials for each stage of the writing process (i.e. brainstorming, creating a thesis statement, outlining, drafting, revising, etc.), set your own personal deadlines for each step along the way and make sure to give yourself more than enough time to finish everything.

**Tip #3: Document Everything**

Plagiarism isn’t always a conscious choice. Sometimes it can be unintentional, typically resulting from poor documentation of one’s sources during the research phase. For example, sometimes students will write down an idea from a source using words identical to or very close to those in the original, but then when they go to write their paper forget that the material was not already in their own words. Adopting good research habits can prevent this type of plagiarism.

Print, photocopy, or scan the relevant pages of every source you are using (including the title and copyright pages, since they have the information you need for a bibliographic citation). When taking notes by hand (or typed into a file), list the bibliographic information for each source you use. Make sure to put quotation marks around any wordings taken directly from the source (and note the page where you found it), and remember to put everything else into your own words right away, so there is no danger of forgetting something is a quote. Documenting where all of your ideas, information, quotations, and so on come from is an important step in avoiding plagiarism.

**Tip #4: Don’t Include Too Much Material Taken from Other Sources**
Writing assignments are about your ideas, your interpretations, and your ability to synthesize information. You should use relevant sources to support your ideas using evidence such as quotes, paraphrases, and summaries, as well as statistics and other data. But don’t lose sight of the fact that your argument is central! Including too much material from other sources can result in a paper that feels like it has been pasted together from a variety of authors, rather than a cohesive essay. Such papers also run a much higher risk of setting off plagiarism warnings in SafeAssign or other plagiarism-detecting software. Try to find a balance: use enough evidence from credible sources to prove your points but don’t let the ideas of others take the place of your own thoughts.

**Tip #5: When in Doubt, Give a Citation**

There are certain types of information – typically referred to as common knowledge – that don’t require a citation when you include them in your writing. These are facts that are widely known and can be easily found in a number of sources. They are not ideas that originated with one particular source. Examples include scientific facts (for example, that solid, liquid, and gas are three states of matter), general historical information (for example, that George Washington was the first US president), or even information commonly known to certain groups of people but not others (for example, most musicians know that a C major triad includes the notes C, E, and G, even though many non-musicians would have no idea what a C major triad is).

For everything else, you need to include a citation, regardless of whether you are quoting directly from the source, paraphrasing it, or giving a summary. If you are at all unsure whether something qualifies as common knowledge or not, give a citation. You can also consult a more experienced figure in your field, such as your instructor, to find out if something counts as common knowledge or not.

In academic writing, the “Quote Sandwich” approach is useful for incorporating other writers’ voices into your essays. It gives meaning and context to a quote, and helps you avoid plagiarism. This 3-step approach offers your readers a deeper understanding of what the quote is and how it relates to your essay’s goals.

1. **Step 1**: Provide context for the source. If you haven’t used it yet in the essay, tell us the source’s title and author (if known), and any other information that’s relevant, like the purpose of the organization that published it, for instance.
2. **Step 2**: Provide the quote itself. Be sure to format correctly and use quotation marks around exact language.
3. **Step 3**: Provide a summary and/or analysis of what the quote says, and how it relates to the subject matter of your essay and your thesis.

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- How to Avoid Plagiarizing. **Authored by**: Vallerie Mott. **Provided by**: Lumen. **Located at**: https://courses.lumenlearning.com/styleguide/. **Project**: Survey of non-Western Literature. **License**: CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike
The Paragraph Body: Supporting Your Ideas

Whether the drafting of a paragraph begins with a main idea or whether that idea surfaces in the revision process, once you have that main idea, you’ll want to make sure that the idea has enough support. The job of the paragraph body is to develop and support the topic. Here’s one way that you might think about it:

- **Topic sentence:** what is the main claim of your paragraph; what is the most important idea that you want your readers to take away from this paragraph?
- **Support in the form of evidence:** how can you prove that your claim or idea is true (or important, or noteworthy, or relevant)?
- **Support in the form of analysis or evaluation:** what discussion can you provide that helps your readers see the connection between the evidence and your claim?
- **Transition:** how can you help your readers move from the idea you’re currently discussing to the next idea presented? (For more specific discussion about transitions, see the following section on “Developing Relationships between Ideas”).

For more on methods of development that can help you to develop and organize your ideas within paragraphs, see “Patterns of Organization and Methods of Development” later in this section of this text.

**Types of support might include**
- Reasons.
- Facts.
- Statistics.
- Quotations.
- Examples.

Now that we have a good idea what it means to develop support for the main ideas of your paragraphs, let’s talk about how to make sure that those supporting details are solid and convincing.

**Good vs. Weak Support**

What questions will your readers have? What will they need to know? What makes for good supporting details? Why might readers consider some evidence to be weak?

If you’re already developing paragraphs, it’s likely that you already have a plan for your essay, at least at the most basic level. You know what your topic is, you might have a working thesis, and you probably have at least a couple of supporting ideas in mind that will further develop and support your thesis.

So imagine you’re developing a paragraph on one of these supporting ideas and you need to make sure that the support that you develop for this idea is solid. Considering some of the points about understanding and appealing to your audience (from the Audience and Purpose and the Prewriting sections of this text) can also be helpful in determining what your readers will consider good support and what they’ll consider to be weak. Here are some tips on what to strive for and what to avoid when it comes to supporting details.

**Good support**
- Is relevant and focused (sticks to the point).
- Is well developed.
- Provides sufficient detail.
- Is vivid and descriptive.
• Is well organized.
• Is coherent and consistent.
• Highlights key terms and ideas.

Weak Support
• Lacks a clear connection to the point that it’s meant to support.
• Lacks development.
• Lacks detail or gives too much detail.
• Is vague and imprecise.
• Lacks organization.
• Seems disjointed (ideas don’t clearly relate to each other).
• Lacks emphasis of key terms and ideas.

Breaking, Combining, or Beginning New Paragraphs

Like sentence length, paragraph length varies. There is no single ideal length for “the perfect paragraph.” There are some general guidelines, however. Some writing handbooks or resources suggest that a paragraph should be at least three or four sentences; others suggest that 100 to 200 words is a good target to shoot for. In academic writing, paragraphs tend to be longer, while in less formal or less complex writing, such as in a newspaper, paragraphs tend to be much shorter. Two-thirds to three-fourths of a page is usually a good target length for paragraphs at your current level of college writing. If your readers can’t see a paragraph break on the page, they might wonder if the paragraph is ever going to end or they might lose interest.

The most important thing to keep in mind here is that the amount of space needed to develop one idea will likely be different than the amount of space needed to develop another. So when is a paragraph complete? The answer is, when it’s fully developed. The guidelines above for providing good support should help.

Some signals that it’s time to end a paragraph and start a new one include that
• You’re ready to begin developing a new idea.
• You want to emphasize a point by setting it apart.
• You’re getting ready to continue discussing the same idea but in a different way (e.g. shifting from comparison to contrast).
• You notice that your current paragraph is getting too long (more than three-fourths of a page or so), and you think your writers will need a visual break.

Some signals that you may want to combine paragraphs include that
• You notice that some of your paragraphs appear to be short and choppy.
• You have multiple paragraphs on the same topic.
• You have undeveloped material that needs to be united under a clear topic.

Finally, paragraph number is a lot like paragraph length. You may have been asked in the past to write a five paragraph essay. There’s nothing inherently wrong with a five-paragraph essay, but just like sentence length and paragraph length, the number of paragraphs in an essay depends upon what’s needed to get the job done. There’s really no way to know that until you start writing. So try not to worry too much about the proper length and number of things. Just start writing and see where the essay and the paragraphs take you. There will be plenty of time to sort out the organization in the revision process. You’re not trying to fit pegs into holes here. You’re letting your ideas unfold. Give yourself—and them—the space to let that happen.

Developing Relationships Between Ideas

So you have a main idea, and you have supporting ideas, but how can you be sure that your readers will understand the relationships between them? How are the ideas tied to each other? One way to emphasize these relationships is through the use of clear transitions between ideas. Like every other part of your essay, transitions have a job to do. They form logical connections between the ideas presented in an essay or paragraph, and they give readers clues that reveal how you want them to think about (process, organize, or use) the topics presented.
Why are Transitions Important?

Transitions signal the order of ideas, highlight relationships, unify concepts, and let readers know what’s coming next or remind them about what’s already been covered. When instructors or peers comment that your writing is choppy, abrupt, or needs to “flow better,” those are some signals that you might need to work on building some better transitions into your writing. If a reader comments that she’s not sure how something relates to your thesis or main idea, a transition is probably the right tool for the job.

When Is the Right Time to Build in Transitions?

There’s no right answer to this question. Sometimes transitions occur spontaneously, but just as often (or maybe even more often) good transitions are developed in revision. While drafting, we often write what we think, sometimes without much reflection about how the ideas fit together or relate to one another. If your thought process jumps around a lot (and that’s okay), it’s more likely that you will need to pay careful attention to reorganization and to providing solid transitions as you revise.

When you’re working on building transitions into an essay, consider the essay’s overall organization. Consider using reverse outlining and other organizational strategies presented in this text to identify key ideas in your essay and to get a clearer look at how the ideas can be best organized. This can help you determine where transitions are needed.

Let’s take some time to consider the importance of transitions at the sentence level and transitions between paragraphs.

Sentence-Level Transitions

Transitions between sentences often use “connecting words” to emphasize relationships between one sentence and another. A friend and coworker suggests the “something old something new” approach, meaning that the idea behind a transition is to introduce something new while connecting it to something old from an earlier point in the essay or paragraph. Here are some examples of ways that writers use connecting words (highlighted with red text and italicized) to show connections between ideas in adjacent sentences:

To Show Similarity
When I was growing up, my mother taught me to say “please” and “thank you” as one small way that I could show appreciation and respect for others. In the same way, I have tried to impress the importance of manners on my own children.
Other connecting words that show similarity include also, similarly, and likewise.

To Show Contrast
Some scientists take the existence of black holes for granted; however, in 2014, a physicist at the University of North Carolina claimed to have mathematically proven that they do not exist.
Other connecting words that show contrast include in spite of, on the other hand, in contrast, and yet.

To Exemplify
The cost of college tuition is higher than ever, so students are becoming increasingly motivated to keep costs as low as possible. For example, a rising number of students are signing up to spend their first two years at a less costly community college before transferring to a more expensive four-year school to finish their degrees.
Other connecting words that show example include for instance, specifically, and to illustrate.

To Show Cause and Effect
Where previously painters had to grind and mix their own dry pigments with linseed oil inside their studios, in the 1840s, new innovations in pigments allowed paints to be premixed in tubes. Consequently, this new
technology facilitated the practice of painting outdoors and was a crucial tool for impressionist painters, such as Monet, Cezanne, Renoir, and Cassatt. Other connecting words that show cause and effect include therefore, so, and thus.

To Show Additional Support
When choosing a good trail bike, experts recommend 120–140 millimeters of suspension travel; that’s the amount that the frame or fork is able to flex or compress. Additionally, they recommend a 67–69 degree head-tube angle, as a steeper head-tube angle allows for faster turning and climbing. Other connecting words that show additional support include also, besides, equally important, and in addition.

A Word of Caution
Single-word or short-phrase transitions can be helpful to signal a shift in ideas within a paragraph, rather than between paragraphs (see the discussion below about transitions between paragraphs). But it’s also important to understand that these types of transitions shouldn’t be frequent within a paragraph. As with anything else that happens in your writing, they should be used when they feel natural and feel like the right choice. Here are some examples to help you see the difference between transitions that feel like they occur naturally and transitions that seem forced and make the paragraph awkward to read:

Too Many Transitions: The Impressionist painters of the late 19th century are well known for their visible brush strokes, for their ability to convey a realistic sense of light, and for their everyday subjects portrayed in outdoor settings. In spite of this fact, many casual admirers of their work are unaware of the scientific innovations that made it possible this movement in art to take place. Then, in 1841, an American painter named John Rand invented the collapsible paint tube. To illustrate the importance of this invention, pigments previously had to be ground and mixed in a fairly complex process that made it difficult for artists to travel with them. For example, the mixtures were commonly stored in pieces of pig bladder to keep the paint from drying out. In addition, when working with their palettes, painters had to puncture the bladder, squeeze out some paint, and then mend the bladder again to keep the rest of the paint mixture from drying out. Thus, Rand’s collapsible tube freed the painters from these cumbersome and messy processes, allowing artists to be more mobile and to paint in the open air.

Subtle Transitions that Aid Reader Understanding: The Impressionist painters of the late 19th century are well known for their visible brush strokes, for their ability to convey a realistic sense of light, and for their everyday subjects portrayed in outdoor settings. However, many casual admirers of their work are unaware of the scientific innovations that made it possible for this movement in art to take place. In 1841, an American painter named John Rand invented the collapsible paint tube. Before this invention, pigments had to be ground and mixed in a fairly complex process that made it difficult for artists to travel with them. The mixtures were commonly stored in pieces of pig bladder to keep the paint from drying out. When working with their palettes, painters had to puncture the bladder, squeeze out some paint, and then mend the bladder again to keep the rest of the paint mixture from drying out. Rand’s collapsible tube freed the painters from these cumbersome and messy processes, allowing artists to be more mobile and to paint in the open air.

Transitions between Paragraphs and Sections
It’s important to consider how to emphasize the relationships not just between sentences but also between paragraphs in your essay. Here are a few strategies to help you show your readers how the main ideas of your paragraphs relate to each other and also to your thesis.

Use Signposts
Signposts are words or phrases that indicate where you are in the process of organizing an idea; for example, signposts might indicate that you are introducing a new concept, that you are summarizing an idea, or that you are concluding your thoughts. Some of the most common signposts include words and phrases like first, then, next, finally, in sum, and in conclusion. Be careful not to overuse these types of transitions in your writing. Your readers will quickly find them tiring or too obvious. Instead, think of more creative ways to let your readers know where they are situated within the ideas presented in your essay. You might say, “The first problem with this practice is...” Or you might say, “The next thing to consider is...” Or you might say, “Some final thoughts about this topic are....”
Use Forward-Looking Sentences at the End of Paragraphs
Sometimes, as you conclude a paragraph, you might want to give your readers a hint about what’s coming next. For example, imagine that you’re writing an essay about the benefits of trees to the environment and you’ve just wrapped up a paragraph about how trees absorb pollutants and provide oxygen. You might conclude with a forward-looking sentence like this: “Trees benefits to local air quality are important, but surely they have more to offer our communities than clean air.” This might conclude a paragraph (or series of paragraphs) and then prepare your readers for additional paragraphs to come that cover the topics of trees’ shade value and ability to slow water evaporation on hot summer days. This transitional strategy can be tricky to employ smoothly. Make sure that the conclusion of your paragraph doesn’t sound like you’re leaving your readers hanging with the introduction of a completely new or unrelated topic.

Use Backward-Looking Sentences at the Beginning of Paragraphs
Rather than concluding a paragraph by looking forward, you might instead begin a paragraph by looking back. Continuing with the example above of an essay about the value of trees, let’s think about how we might begin a new paragraph or section by first taking a moment to look back. Maybe you just concluded a paragraph on the topic of trees’ ability to decrease soil erosion and you’re getting ready to talk about how they provide habitats for urban wildlife. Beginning the opening of a new paragraph or section of the essay with a backward-looking transition might look something like this: “While their benefits to soil and water conservation are great, the value that trees provide to our urban wildlife also cannot be overlooked.”

Evaluate Transitions for Predictability or Conspicuousness
Finally, the most important thing about transitions is that you don’t want them to become repetitive or too obvious. Reading your draft aloud is a great revision strategy for so many reasons, and revising your essay for transitions is no exception to this rule. If you read your essay aloud, you’re likely to hear the areas that sound choppy or abrupt. This can help you make note of areas where transitions need to be added. Repetition is another problem that can be easier to spot if you read your essay aloud. If you notice yourself using the same transitions over and over again, take time to find some alternatives. And if the transitions frequently stand out as you read aloud, you may want to see if you can find some subtler strategies.

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- The Paragraph Body from The Word on College Reading and Writing. **Authored by:** Monique Babin, Clackamas Community College Carol Burnell, Clackamas Community College Susan Pesznecker, Portland State University. **Provided by:** Open Textbook Library. **Located at:** https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/BookDetail.aspx?bookId=471. **Project:** Survey of non-Western Literature. **License:** CC BY-NC: Attribution-NonCommercial
Works Cited Entries: What to Include

The Indian River State College Library pages have many useful pages covering MLA style and how to approach it. I like this page on what goes into a works cited entry for the way it reminds us that the entries have common elements we should remember.

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Paragraph Menu Settings
Use No Extra Vertical Spaces

MLA calls for double-spacing with no extra spaces (around titles, heading, between paragraphs). Avoid getting a significant penalty for multiple MLA errors.

Here’s a screen shot of the proper Paragraph menu settings in Word:

When managing the works cited page, use the Paragraph menu to create the hanging indent that indent the second or third lines of a given works cited entry.

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Writing an Introduction to a Literary Analysis Essay

This video discusses the steps to take when writing an introduction to a literary analysis paper.

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- How to write an Introduction to a Literary Analysis Paper. **Authored by:** MrBarberteaches. **Located at:** https://youtu.be/_p9FVfJ6urA. **License:** All Rights Reserved. **License Terms:** Standard YouTube License.
MLA In-Text Citations

Because the use of in-text citations will be so integral to your writing processes, being able to instantly craft correct citations and identify incorrect citations will save you time during writing and will help you avoid having unnecessary points taken off for citation errors.

Here is the standard correct in-text citation style according to MLA guidelines:

“Quotation” (Author’s Last Name Page Number).

Take a moment to carefully consider the placement of the parts and punctuation of this in-text citation. Note that there is no punctuation indicating the end of a sentence inside of the quotation marks—closing punctuation should instead follow the parentheses. There is also no punctuation between the author’s last name and the page number inside of the parentheses. The misplacement of these simple punctuation marks is one of the most common errors students make when crafting in-text citations.

Include the right information in the in-text citation. Every time you reference material in your paper, you must tell the reader the name of the author whose information you are citing. You must include a page number that tells the reader where, in the source, they can find this information. The most basic structure for an in-text citation looks like this: (Smith 123).

So, let’s say we have the following quote, which comes from page 100 of Elizabeth Gaskell’s *North and South*:

“Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it.”[1]

The following examples show incorrect MLA formatting:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incorrect because the period falls within the quotation marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it.” (Gaskell 100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it” (Gaskell, 100). Incorrect because the comma separating the author’s last name and the page number

“Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it” (Elizabeth Gaskell 100). Incorrect because the author’s full name is used instead of just her last name

“Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it” (North and South 100). Incorrect because the title of the work appears, rather than the author’s last name; the title should only be used if no author name is provided

The following example shows correct MLA formatting:

“Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it” (Gaskell 100).

However, there are exceptions to the above citation guideline. Consider the following format of an in-text citation, which is also formed correctly.

Elizabeth Gaskell’s narrator makes it clear that “Margaret had never spoken of Helstone since she left it” (100).

Do you notice the difference between this citation format and the format of the first example? Unlike the first example, this citation does not list the author’s last name inside the parentheses. This is because the last name is included in quotation’s introduction, which makes the identity of the author clear to the reader. Including the author’s last name again inside of the parenthesis would be thus redundant and is not required for MLA citation.

The same rule about inclusion of the author’s last name applies for paraphrased information, as well, as shown in the following example:

Elizabeth Gaskell’s narrator makes it clear that her protagonist does not speak of her home once she is in Milton (100).

In this paraphrase, the author’s last name precedes the paraphrased material, but as in the case of quotation integration, if the author’s last name is not described in the paraphrase then it is required inside of the parentheses before the page number.
Being more compliant with MLA in-text citation guidelines will become easier if you review these examples and the citation rules on which they rely.
In-text citations are often parenthetical, meaning you add information to the end of a sentence in parentheses. But if you include that necessary information in the language of the sentence itself, you should not include the parenthetical citation. This example shows you proper uses of in-text citations.


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- MLA In-text citations graphic. **Authored by:** Kim Louie for Lumen Learning. **License:** CC BY: Attribution

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- In-Text Citations in MLA 8th Edition. **Authored by:** EasyBib. **Located at:** http://www.easybib.com/guides/citation-guides/mla-8/in-text-citations/. **License:** CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike
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- Formatting In-text Citations (MLA). **Authored by:** Jennifer Yirinec and Lauren Cutlip. **Provided by:** Writing Commons. **Located at:** http://writingcommons.org/open-text/writing-processes/format/mla-format/444-formatting-in-text-citations-mla. **License:** CC BY-NC-ND: Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives
Because of the wide variety of source formats, MLA 8 now requires that researchers follow a simple set of guidelines to create appropriate citations (instead of looking up one of the fifty-nine types of sources inside the previous handbook and following the instructions). Although there are still distinct rules you need to follow to create a citation, the rules are less rigid and allow for you to look for the main components of a citation and construct it yourself. This means you will need to think about the source and its information, select the appropriate components, and organize it in a logical and useful manner.

Regardless of the source type, you are now asked to locate the same “core elements” from your sources and place them in a standard order in order to create citations. These core elements are explained in detail below. Note that you do not need to memorize every step of this process, but should take this opportunity to understand how citations are created. You can always return to this page, to the MLA handbook, the MLA Style Center, or to other online resources to help you create the citations you need for your paper. Click through the following slides to learn more about each component and to see examples of MLA citations.

You can also download the presentation here. Watch this video to see examples of how to identify the core elements needed in a citation:

https://youtu.be/lSekgYAdQcU?t=2m7s

Practice

Practice your mastery of MLA documentation by correctly ordering the following citations from the Santa Fe College library:

- Book – Desktop Version | Touchscreen Version
- Chapter in an Edited Book – Desktop Version | Touchscreen Version
- Article from a Print Journal – Desktop Version | Touchscreen Version
- Journal Article from a Library Database – Desktop Version | Touchscreen Version
- Web Page – Desktop Version | Touchscreen Version
- Video – Desktop Version | Touchscreen Version

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Annotation: Why Mark Up Your Texts?

Marking up your book properly is a survival skill in college literature classes. Most instructors expect you to develop your own system for noting “significant stuff” when reading. Marking up your book will allow you to locate information while testing.

Even if you are renting a text or reading it on a Kindle or other device, there are annotation tools. In fact, some of the electronic tools can allow you to collect your annotations.

How to Mark Up Your Book
There is no set way to mark up a text, but active readers tend to do several of the following things:

- Underline important passages. As an alternative, you could put vertical lines in the margin next to important areas.
- Put ?, ! or questions of your own in the margins next to confusing or surprising passages. This way, you won’t have to stop your reading for too long in order to look up words, phrases, etc.
- Draw lines and arrows between connected ideas. Try and find your own level of connections so that these become more meaningful.
- List concepts, themes, or the names of other authors in the margins. These indicate connections.
- List the page number or beginning of a quote similar to the one you’re annotating. Connect one quote with another. Quotes can be linked based on similarity, difference, emphasis, subtlety, etc. It’s up to you.
- Doubt the author. Be skeptical this in the margins! Insults work, too. . .
- Use literary terms like irony, ambiguity, symbolism, tone to indicate where the author is making these moves.
- Create your own shorthand for marking the book. This could be as simple as using the triangle (delta), the mathematical symbol for change. I have a bunch of these. Seriously, this works.

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- Annotation: Why Mark Up Your Texts?. **Author** by: Joshua Dickinson. **Provided by**: Jefferson Community College. **Located at**: [http://www.sunyjefferson.edu](http://www.sunyjefferson.edu). **Project**: Survey of non-Western Literature. **License**: [CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)
It is important that we recognize the benefits and limitations of methodology. Likely, you know your major discipline’s approaches well. There are ways of being recognized or not. For instance, in Jeopardy contests, one has to phrase the answer in the form of a question. In discussion postings, many instructors require the post subject to be in sentence form. In Fast Times at Ridgemont High, Jeff Spicoli, the surfer doesn’t recognize his little brother: “Curtis, you know I don’t hear you unless you knock. . . “ (Heckerling). In science, hypotheses have to be provable. In academic writing, thesis claims must be both provable and arguable.

I’m reminded of the notion of Purgatory, an invention of Dante in his La Divina Commedia (Divine Comedy). This gets played up famously in Beetlejuice and its waiting room scene:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ei-2xTsyL8w

What’s interesting is that this echoes Dante, who puts people who failed to distinguish themselves into Hell. For Dante’s Italians, not choosing was worse than choosing an opposite side to one’s preferred side. Strangely enough, we are often more knowledgeable of our opponents—more tolerant of them, even—than of those who never choose. He even puts the neutral angels into Hell. In that era (1300 Florence), he even put living people into Hell, claiming that these people were so bad that demons inhabited their bodies and they were already in hell.

So these ideas can receive dogmatic answers. They get recognized or not, but over time they accrete meaning, slow down, and become concrete. (No Dogma references necessary. . . )

What I find interesting is that we’re often struggling with the miniscule rules of MLA style in the same way.

As with science, though, we can essentialize this a bit: We are always already entering ongoing conversations. We do have to be for or against something. Likely ways of being against something are going to lead to tone issues and assumptions about audience agreement.

As the Beetlejuice move states, “Take a number!” and “It’s showtime!” (Burton).

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At the college level, putting in the right-sounding quotes in the right-looking spots of a body paragraph is insufficient. Writers are expected to use the quotes as excuses to argue their points. Close reading is a crucial skill which helps the writer make sense of how something makes sense. Humanities courses largely aim to enhance or bring about readers’ abilities to handle complex, indirect texts that demand multiple responses.

Close reading is an analytical activity where the writer picks parts of larger whole and discusses how they function. This can be done while annotating or deciding what to say about an annotated chunk of text. Because your audience often knows the text and has ideas about how it works, it is up to you to do more than simply point out the existence of an important line, phrase, or word. Within the line, the critic must move from pointing out an idea to arguing how it functions. What effect is created by that phrase? How does this word affect readers? These questions get proved after careful setup and cited quotation work.

Once you have dissected a speech, description, or dialogue, remember that you have committed a fairly aggressive, destructive act. You yanked a part from the whole. Remember to use the late portions of paragraphs to put the pieces back together. (“Pick up your toys when you are done with them!”)

**What You Might Look for in a Text**

Focus on an author’s use of complexity by discussing the effects of any of the following:

- word choice (diction)
- word order (syntax)
- connotation
denotation
- irony (dramatic, situational, verbal)
symbolism
- mood
tone
- paradox (seeming contradiction)
- how words fit/bring about character
- rhetorical appeals (logos, ethos, pathos)
- logical patterns (valid or not)
- Rhetorical modes (description, narration, definition, process, illustration, comparison/contrast, classification/division, cause/effect, argument)

Basically, looking for moves of any sort is a good starting point with analysis.
Literary Analysis
The Nature of Analysis

Learning Objectives

Define analysis.
Show how we use analysis in everyday situations and in academic writing and discussion.
Understand the components of analysis (assertions, examples, explanations, significance), and explain why each is a necessary part of any analysis.
Show how too much attention to one particular component of analysis makes an essay seem like a different type of writing.

Jeff is not happy. His clock shows 2 a.m., but his computer screen shows nothing. For the last four hours he has tried to get started on an essay on William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, but he just doesn’t know where to begin. “It’s Professor Johnson’s fault I’m in this mess,” he thinks to himself. “My other teachers always told me exactly what and how to write, but Professor Johnson asked us to focus on what each of us finds important about the play. She even told us that no one knows Shakespeare’s real intentions, and that a million ways to analyze the play are possible.” Jeff slams his hand down on the table. “If this is true, how do I know when I’ve found the right interpretation?” And Professor Johnson made it even more difficult for Jeff by instructing her students not to summarize the plot or give unsupported opinions, but to come up with their own interpretations, show why they are important, and justify them through close readings of particular scenes. “No one has ever shown me how to do this,” Jeff grumbles to himself as he gulps down his third cup of coffee.

In actuality, Jeff already possesses the ability to write an analytical essay. He would have realized this if he had considered the discussions and activities he engaged in during the previous week. In planning a date, and in thinking of the best way to convince his parents to send him more money, Jeff had to carefully evaluate a variety of situations to develop a point of view that he then had to justify and show why it mattered. In each of these instances, he made plenty of assertions, statements which present points of view; used examples, specific passages, scenes, events, or items which inspire these points of view; gave explanations, statements which reveal how the examples support and/or complicate the assertions; and provided significance, statements which reveal the importance of the analysis to our personal and/or cultural concerns.

Analysis is a way of understanding a subject by using each of these elements, expressing an opinion (making assertions), supporting that opinion (including examples), justifying that opinion (explaining the examples), and showing why the opinion matters (extending the significance). The second letter in the second component (examples) helps create the acronym AXES, which is the plural form of both axe and axis. This acronym provides a way not only to remember the four components but also to visualize them working together. Like an axe, analysis allows us to “chop” our subjects into their essential components so that we can examine the pieces more thoroughly, and, like an axis, analysis inspires insights that become the new reference points around which we rearrange these pieces.

Though a complete analysis always needs to use these elements, the reasons for engaging in it may vary widely. For instance, sometimes the goal is to persuade the reader to accept an interpretation or to adapt a course of action, and other times the goal is to explore several possible interpretations or courses of action without settling on any one in particular. But whether the goal is to persuade, explore, or enlighten, analysis should always spring from a careful examination of a given subject. I always tell my students that they do not need to convince me that their points of view are correct but rather to reveal that they have thought about their subject thoroughly and arrived at reasonable and significant considerations.

The structure and form of an analysis can vary as widely as the many reasons for producing one. Though an analysis should include attention to each of the four main components, it should not be written in a formulaic...
manner, like those tiresome five-paragraph essays you might recall from high school: “I spent my summer vacation in three ways: working, partying and relaxing. Each of these activities helped me in three aspects of my life: mentally, physically and psychologically.” At best, formulaic essays serve as training wheels that need to come off when you are ready for more sophisticated kinds of writing. Rigorous analysis doesn’t rely on formulas or clichés, and its elements may occur in different orders and with various emphases, depending on your purpose and audience. In fact, individual elements may sometimes blend together because a section may serve more than one function. With practice, you won’t even need to recall the acronym AXES when producing an analysis, because you will have mastered when and how to express each of its components.

Though it would be impossible to outline all the possible manifestations and combinations of these elements of analysis, this book will help you to create, balance, and express each of them with precision, clarity, and voice. The first task is to make certain all these elements are present to some degree throughout your paper, because when any one is missing or dominates too much, the essay starts to drift from analysis to a different mode of writing. Consider, for instance, how Jeff might have gotten off track when trying to respond to the following speech from *The Tempest*, when the character Prospero becomes morose as the play he is putting on within the play becomes interrupted:

Our revels now are ended. These, our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits and
Are melted into air; into thin air.
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision
The cloud capped towers, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep
(Act IV, Scene 1: 148-57).

**Response 1: Review (assertion emphasis)**

This is a very famous speech about how our lives are like dreams. No wonder Shakespeare is such a great playwright. He continuously and brilliantly demonstrates that he knows what life is about; this is why this is such a great speech and I would recommend this play for everybody.

Assertions are necessary to communicate your points of view, but when you make only declarative statements of taste, your essays will seem less like analyses and more like reviews. A review can be useful, especially when considering whether a movie might be worth spending money on, but in an analysis you should not just state your opinions but also explain how you arrived at them and explore why they matter.

**Response 2: Summary (example emphasis)**

First Prospero gets angry because his play was interrupted, causing his magical actors to disappear. Next, he shows how everything will dissolve in time: the sets of his theater, the actors, and even “the great globe itself.”
He concludes by comparing our lives to dreams, pointing out how both are surrounded by sleep.

Like a review, a summary can sometimes be useful, especially when we want the plot of a piece or basic arguments of a policy described to us in a hurry. However, a summary stops short of being an analysis because it simply covers the main aspects of the object for analysis and does not provide any new perspective as to why it is significant. Though you need to provide examples, you should select and discuss only those details that shed the most light on your points of view. Always remember that people want to read your essay to learn your perspective on what you are analyzing; otherwise, they could just examine the piece for themselves.

Response 3: Description (explanation emphasis)

In Prospero’s speech, Shakespeare points out how life, plays, and dreams are always being interrupted. He makes a lot of comparisons between these different areas of existence, yet makes them all seem somewhat similar. I never really thought about how they are all so similar, but Shakespeare helps me consider ways they kind of fit together.

Though you should explain how you derived your assertions from your examples and not just let the piece speak for itself, you should not do so in too general a manner. You do not want to give the impression that you are trying to remember the details of a piece that you are too lazy to pull out and reconsider, but that you are engaging in a close reading or a careful consideration of all the aspects of an issue. Your analysis should seem like it was a challenge for you to write, and not something that you pieced together from vague recollections.

Response 4: Tangent (significance emphasis)

This speech reminds me that life is short. My father keeps telling me that life is over before you even realize it, and he should know because he’s getting pretty old (he’s in his late 40s!). I think it also shows that it’s important to be careful about what you dream of because these dreams may affect the way you choose to live your life. I dream about being a famous surfer and that’s what makes me try hard to be one.

If an essay had no significance, the reader might constantly think, “So what?” You might provide a very close reading of the piece, but unless you have a reason for drawing our attention to it, your essay will not leave the reader with anything new or important to consider. Be careful, however, not to leave the piece completely behind when discussing why it matters, or your essay will seem less like an analysis and more like an excuse to deliver a soapbox speech or to write about something that is easier for you to discuss.

Response 5: Analysis (attention to each
In *The Tempest*, William Shakespeare connects plays, lives, and dreams by showing that while each contains an illusion of permanence, they’re all only temporary. The “baseless fabric of this vision” of “cloud capped towers” may immediately refer to the painted sets contained within the “great globe itself,” the name of Shakespeare’s theater. Yet when we measure time in years rather than hours, we can see that most of the real “cloud capped towers” of the Seventeenth Century have already faded and at some point in the future even the globe we live on will disappear and “leave not a rack behind.” Likewise, it is not just the actors who are “such stuff as dreams are made on,” but all of us. We are unconscious of the world before we are born and after we die, so our waking lives mirror our sleeping lives. Thinking of it this way leaves me with mixed feelings. On the one hand, I find it a bit disturbing to be reminded that neither we nor our world are permanent and all that we do will dissipate in time. On the other hand, it inspires me to enjoy my life further and not to worry too much about my inability to accomplish every one of my goals because nothing I do will last forever anyway.

Had Jeff not waited until the last minute to write his essay, he might have come up with a paragraph like this last one that gives adequate attention to each of the elements of analysis. The main assertion that our dreams, our lives, and our creative works only provide an illusion of permanence sets the analytical stage in a compelling fashion. The examples are well chosen and intelligently explained. For instance, the analysis shows that whether we see the “cloud capped towers” as actually existing or as paintings on the sets of the stage, they both have succumbed to time. Finally, it reveals the significance of the author’s perspective without coming to a trite conclusion or skipping off on a tangent. In general, the analysis reflects the thoughts of a writer who is engaged enough with the text to take the time to carefully consider the quote and reflect on its implications. Though the paragraph could use a more thorough development (especially of the significance) and a more deliberate style, it certainly reveals a more compelling analysis than the previous four paragraphs.

So is it a waste of time to write paragraphs that mostly consist of summaries, opinions, descriptions, or tangents? Absolutely not. Thinking and writing are not separate processes but occur simultaneously, and we often need to produce responses that focus on one of these simpler rhetorical modes before we can understand the underlying complexity that allows us to develop a more thorough analysis. And Jeff will experience essentially the same thinking and writing process when he switches from his Shakespeare essay to the ones he’s composing for his courses in history, political science, and psychology. Understanding an event, an issue, or an aspect of human nature requires careful attention to the details of what happened and to the arguments and theories that make up a particular perspective. But before Jeff can develop his own point of view on any of these subjects, he first needs to consider what might influence the way he sees them, a process that will require him to look at his culture and his experiences while consulting the points of view of others.

**Exercises**

Write about a time you tried to persuade a friend to see a creative work, issue or subject in the way that you do. What assertions did you make? What examples did you use to back them up? How did you explain how you saw the examples? How did you reveal the lasting significance of the decision that you wanted your friend to make? How did these components take a different form the next time you tried to persuade your friend to see a different subject in a new light?

**Key Takeaways**

- We use analysis many times throughout the day, especially when trying to persuade others to see our points of view.
- Analysis consists of four main components: assertions (our points of view), examples (evidence that supports these points of view), explanations (justifications of these points of view), and significance (discussions of why these points of view matter).
These components need to be present for an effective analysis, but not in a strictly formulaic manner; they can appear throughout an essay to various degrees and in various orders.

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Multicultural Societies Explained

Click here to view the presentation “Multicultural Societies Explained” by Amendor As and Åse Elin Langeland, from NDLA.
survey of non-western literature

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How to Analyze a Short Story

What Is a Short Story?

A short story is a work of short, narrative prose that is usually centered around one single event. It is limited in scope and has an introduction, body and conclusion. Although a short story has much in common with a novel (See How to Analyze a Novel), it is written with much greater precision. You will often be asked to write a literary analysis. An analysis of a short story requires basic knowledge of literary elements. The following guide and questions may help you:

Setting

Setting is a description of where and when the story takes place. In a short story there are fewer settings compared to a novel. The time is more limited. Ask yourself the following questions:

- How is the setting created? Consider geography, weather, time of day, social conditions, etc.
- What role does setting play in the story? Is it an important part of the plot or theme? Or is it just a backdrop against which the action takes place?

Study the time period, which is also part of the setting, and ask yourself the following:

- When was the story written?
- Does it take place in the present, the past, or the future?
- How does the time period affect the language, atmosphere or social circumstances of the short story?

Characterization

Characterization deals with how the characters in the story are described. In short stories there are usually fewer characters compared to a novel. They usually focus on one central character or protagonist. Ask yourself the following:

- Who is the main character?
- Are the main character and other characters described through dialogue – by the way they speak (dialect or slang for instance)?
- Has the author described the characters by physical appearance, thoughts and feelings, and interaction (the way they act towards others)?
• Are they static/flat characters who do not change?
• Are they dynamic/round characters who DO change?
• What type of characters are they? What qualities stand out? Are they stereotypes?
• Are the characters believable?

Plot and structure

The plot is the main sequence of events that make up the story. In short stories the plot is usually centered around one experience or significant moment. Consider the following questions:

• What is the most important event?
• How is the plot structured? Is it linear, chronological or does it move around?
• Is the plot believable?

Narrator and Point of view

The narrator is the person telling the story. Consider this question: Are the narrator and the main character the same?

By point of view we mean from whose eyes the story is being told. Short stories tend to be told through one character’s point of view. The following are important questions to consider:

• Who is the narrator or speaker in the story?
• Does the author speak through the main character?
• Is the story written in the first person “I” point of view?
• Is the story written in a detached third person “he/she” point of view?
• Is there an “all-knowing” third person who can reveal what all the characters are thinking and doing at all times and in all places?

Conflict

Conflict or tension is usually the heart of the short story and is related to the main character. In a short story there is usually one main struggle.

• How would you describe the main conflict?
• Is it an internal conflict within the character?
• Is it an external conflict caused by the surroundings or environment the main character finds himself/herself in?

Climax

The climax is the point of greatest tension or intensity in the short story. It can also be the point where events take a major turn as the story races towards its conclusion. Ask yourself:

• Is there a turning point in the story?
• When does the climax take place?

Theme

The theme is the main idea, lesson, or message in the short story. It may be an abstract idea about the human condition, society, or life. Ask yourself:

• How is the theme expressed?
- Are any elements repeated and therefore suggest a theme?
- Is there more than one theme?

**Style**

The author’s style has to do with the his or her vocabulary, use of imagery, tone, or the feeling of the story. It has to do with the author’s attitude toward the subject. In some short stories the tone can be ironic, humorous, cold, or dramatic.

- Is the author’s language full of figurative language?
- What images are used?
- Does the author use a lot of symbolism? Metaphors (comparisons that do not use “as” or “like”) or similes (comparisons that use “as” or “like”)?

Your literary analysis of a short story will often be in the form of an essay where you may be asked to give your opinions of the short story at the end. Choose the elements that made the greatest impression on you. Point out which character/characters you liked best or least and always support your arguments.

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How to Analyze Poetry

Poetry is a form of expression. The poet uses his/her own personal and private language which leaves poetry open to different interpretations. Although the poet may have had one specific idea or purpose in mind, the reader’s response may be completely different. Nevertheless, this does not mean that you may interpret poetry any way you wish. All interpretations must be supported by direct reference to the text. As with any type of literary analysis, you need a basic knowledge of the elements of poetry. The following guide and questions will help you.

- Read the poem in its entirety to get a general impression.
- What is the poem about?
- What is the title of the poem?
- Who is speaker or narrative voice of the poem
- To whom is the speaker speaking?
- What is the purpose of the poem: to describe, amuse, entertain, narrate, inform, express grief, celebrate or commemorate?
- What is the tone of the poem? Sad, happy, melancholy, bitter?

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How to Analyze a Novel

Setting

*Setting* is a description of where and when the story takes place.

- What aspects make up the setting?
  - Geography, weather, time of day, social conditions?
- What role does setting play in the story? Is it an important part of the plot or theme? Or is it just a backdrop against which the action takes place?
- Study the time period which is also part of the setting
- When was the story written?
  - Does it take place in the present, the past, or the future?
  - How does the time period affect the language, atmosphere or social circumstances of the novel?

Characterization

*Characterization* deals with how the characters are described.

- through dialogue?
- by the way they speak?
- physical appearance? thoughts and feelings?
- interaction – the way they act towards other characters?
- Are they static characters who do not change?
- Do they develop by the end of the story?
- What type of characters are they?
- What qualities stand out?
- Are they stereotypes?
- Are the characters believable?

Plot and structure

The *plot* is the main sequence of events that make up the story.

- What are the most important events?
- How is the plot structured? Is it linear, chronological or does it move back and forth?
- Are there turning points, a climax and/or an anticlimax?
- Is the plot believable?

Narrator and Point of view

The *narrator* is the person telling the story.

*Point of view*: whose eyes the story is being told through.

- Who is the narrator or speaker in the story?
- Is the narrator the main character?
• Does the author speak through one of the characters?
• Is the story written in the first person “I” point of view?
• Is the story written in a detached third person “he/she” point of view?
• Is the story written in an “all-knowing” 3rd person who can reveal what all the characters are thinking and doing at all times and in all places?

Conflict

*Conflict* or tension is usually the heart of the novel and is related to the main character.

- How would you describe the main conflict?
  - Is it internal where the character suffers inwardly?
  - Is it external caused by the surroundings or environment the main character finds himself/herself in?

Theme

The *theme* is the main idea, lesson or message in the novel. It is usually an abstract, universal idea about the human condition, society or life, to name a few.

- How does the theme shine through in the story?
- Are any elements repeated that may suggest a theme?
- What other themes are there?

Style

The author’s style has to do with the author’s vocabulary, use of imagery, tone or feeling of the story. It has to do with his attitude towards the subject. In some novels the tone can be ironic, humorous, cold or dramatic.

- Is the text full of figurative language?
- Does the author use a lot of symbolism? Metaphors, similes?
  - An example of a metaphor is when someone says, “My love, you are a rose”. An example of a simile is “My darling, you are like a rose.”
- What images are used?

Your literary analysis of a novel will often be in the form of an essay or book report where you will be asked to give your opinions of the novel at the end. To conclude, choose the elements that made the greatest impression on you. Point out which characters you liked best or least and always support your arguments. Try to view the novel as a whole and try to give a balanced analysis.

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- How to Analyze a Novel. **Authored by**: Carol Dwankowski, Celia Suzanna Sandor, and Catharine Ruud. **Provided by**: NDLA. **Located at**: http://ndla.no/en/node/13288?fag=42. **License**: CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike
Reader-Response Criticism

Summary

We have examined many schools of literary criticism. Here you will find an in-depth look at one of them: Reader-Response.

The Purpose of Reader-Response

Reader-response suggests that the role of the reader is essential to the meaning of a text, for only in the reading experience does the literary work come alive. For example, in Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818), the monster doesn’t exist, so to speak, until the reader reads *Frankenstein* and reanimates it to life, becoming a co-creator of the text.

Thus, the purpose of a reading response is examining, explaining, and defending your personal reaction to a text. Your critical reading of a text asks you to explore:

- why you like or dislike the text;
- explain whether you agree or disagree with the author;
- identify the text’s purpose; and
- critique the text.

There is no right or wrong answer to a reading response. Nonetheless, it is important that you demonstrate an understanding of the reading and clearly explain and support your reactions. Do not use the standard approach of just writing: “I liked this text because it is so cool and the ending made me feel happy,” or “I hated it because it was stupid, and had nothing at all to do with my life, and was too negative and boring.” In writing a response you may assume the reader has already read the text. Thus, do not summarize the contents of the text at length. Instead, take a systematic, analytical approach to the text.

Write as a Scholar

When writing a reader-response write as an educated adult addressing other adults or fellow scholars. As a beginning scholar, if you write that something has nothing to do with you or does not pass your “Who cares?” test, but many other people think that it is important and great, readers will probably not agree with you that the text is dull or boring. Instead, they may conclude that you are dull and boring, that you are too immature or uneducated to understand what important things the author wrote.

Criticize with Examples

If you did not like a text, that is fine, but criticize it either from:

- **principle**, for example:
  - Is the text racist?
  - Does the text unreasonably puts down things, such as religion, or groups of people, such as women or adolescents, conservatives or democrats, etc?
  - Does the text include factual errors or outright lies? It is too dark and despairing? Is it falsely positive?

- **form**, for example:
  - Is the text poorly written?
  - Does it contain too much verbal “fat”?
  - Is it too emotional or too childish?
  - Does it have too many facts and figures?
Are there typos or other errors in the text?
Do the ideas wander around without making a point?

In each of these cases, do not simply criticize, but give examples. As a beginning scholar, be cautious of criticizing any text as “confusing” or “crazy,” since readers might simply conclude that you are too ignorant or slow to understand and appreciate it.

The Structure of a Reader-Response Essay

Choosing a text to study is the first step in writing a reader-response essay. Once you have chosen the text, your challenge is to connect with it and have a “conversation” with the text.

In the beginning paragraph of your reader-response essay, be sure to mention the following:

- title of the work to which you are responding;
- the author; and
- the main thesis of the text.

Then, do your best to answer the questions below. Remember, however, that you are writing an essay, not filling out a short-answer worksheet. You do not need to work through these questions in order, one by one, in your essay. Rather, your paper as a whole should be sure to address these questions in some way.

- **What does the text have to do with you, personally, and with your life (past, present or future)?** It is not acceptable to write that the text has NOTHING to do with you, since just about everything humans can write has to do in some way with every other human.
- **How much does the text agree or clash with your view of the world, and what you consider right and wrong?** Use several quotes as examples of how it agrees with and supports what you think about the world, about right and wrong, and about what you think it is to be human. Use quotes and examples to discuss how the text disagrees with what you think about the world and about right and wrong.
- **What did you learn, and how much were your views and opinions challenged or changed by this text, if at all?** Did the text communicate with you? Why or why not? Give examples of how your views might have changed or been strengthened (or perhaps, of why the text failed to convince you, the way it is). Please do not write “I agree with everything the author wrote,” since everybody disagrees about something, even if it is a tiny point. Use quotes to illustrate your points of challenge, or where you were persuaded, or where it left you cold.
- **How well does the text address things that you, personally, care about and consider important to the world?** How does it address things that are important to your family, your community, your ethnic group, to people of your economic or social class or background, or your faith tradition? If not, who does or did the text serve? Did it pass the “Who cares?” test? Use quotes from the text to illustrate.
- **What can you praise about the text? What problems did you have with it?** Reading and writing “critically” does not mean the same thing as “criticizing,” in everyday language (complaining or griping, fault-finding, nit-picking). Your “critique” can and should be positive and praise the text if possible, as well as pointing out problems, disagreements and shortcomings.
- **How well did you enjoy the text (or not) as entertainment or as a work of art?** Use quotes or examples to illustrate the quality of the text as art or entertainment. Of course, be aware that some texts are not meant to be entertainment or art: a news report or textbook, for instance, may be neither entertaining or artistic, but may still be important and successful.

For the conclusion, you might want to discuss:

- your overall reaction to the text;
- whether you would read something else like this in the future;
- whether you would read something else by this author; and
- if you would recommend read this text to someone else and why.

Key Takeaways

- In reader-response, the reader is essential to the meaning of a text for they bring the text to life.
- The purpose of a reading response is examining, explaining, and defending your personal reaction to a text.
- When writing a reader-response, write as an educated adult addressing other adults or fellow scholars.
- As a beginning scholar, be cautious of criticizing any text as “boring,” “crazy,” or “dull.” If you do criticize, base your criticism on the principles and form of the text itself.
- The challenge of a reader-response is to show how you connected with the text.
Examples

Reader-Response Essay Example

To Misread or to Rebel: A Woman’s Reading of “The Secret Life of Walter Mitty”

At its simplest, reading is “an activity that is guided by the text; this must be processed by the reader who is then, in turn, affected by what he has processed” (Iser 63). The text is the compass and map, the reader is the explorer. However, the explorer cannot disregard those unexpected boulders in the path which he or she encounters along the journey that are not written on the map. Likewise, the woman reader does not come to the text without outside influences. She comes with her experiences as a woman—a professional woman, a divorcée, a single mother. Her reading, then, is influenced by her experiences. So when she reads a piece of literature like “The Secret Life of Walter Mitty” by James Thurber, which paints a highly negative picture of Mitty’s wife, the woman reader is forced to either misread the story and accept Mrs. Mitty as a domineering, mothering wife, or rebel against that picture and become angry at the society which sees her that way.

Due to pre-existing sociosexual standards, women see characters, family structures, even societal structures from the bottom as an oppressed group rather than from a powerful position on the top, as men do. As Louise Rosenblatt states: a reader’s “tendency toward identification [with characters or events] will certainly be guided by our preoccupations at the time we read. Our problems and needs may lead us to focus on those characters and situations through which we may achieve the satisfactions, the balanced vision, or perhaps merely the unequivocal motives unattained in our own lives” (38). A woman reader who feels chained by her role as a housewife is more likely to identify with an individual who is oppressed or feels trapped than the reader’s executive husband is. Likewise, a woman who is unable to have children might respond to a story of a child’s death more emotionally than a woman who does not want children. However, if the perspective of a woman does not match that of the male author whose work she is reading, a woman reader who has been shaped by a male-dominated society is forced to misread the text, reacting to the “words on the page in one way rather than another because she operates according to the same set of rules that the author used to generate them” (Tompkins xvii). By accepting the author’s perspective and reading the text as he intended, the woman reader is forced to disregard her own, female perspective. This, in turn, leads to a concept called “asymmetrical contingency,” described by Iser as that which occurs “when Partner A gives up trying to implement his own behavioral plan and without resistance follows that of Partner B. He adapts himself to and is absorbed by the behavioral strategy of B” (164). Using this argument, it becomes clear that a woman reader (Partner A) when faced with a text written by a man (Partner B) will most likely succumb to the perspective of the writer and she is thus forced to misread the text. Or, she could rebel against the text and raise an angry, feminist voice in protest.

James Thurber, in the eyes of most literary critics, is one of the foremost American humorists of the 20th century, and his short story “The Secret Life of Walter Mitty” is believed to have “ushered in a major [literary] period ... where the individual can maintain his self ... an appropriate way of assaulting rigid forms” (Elias 432). The rigid form in Thurber’s story is Mrs. Mitty, the main character’s wife. She is portrayed by Walter Mitty as a horrible, mothering nag. As a way of escaping her constant griping, he imagines fantastic daydreams which carry him away from Mrs. Mitty’s voice. Yet she repeatedly interrupts his reveries and Mitty responds to her as though she is “grossly unfamiliar, like a strange woman who had yelled at him in the crowd” (286). Not only is his wife annoying to him, but she is also distant and removed from what he cares about, like a stranger. When she does speak to him, it seems reflective of the way a mother would speak to a child. For example, Mrs. Mitty asks, “‘Why don’t you wear your gloves? Have you lost your gloves?’ Walter Mitty reached in a pocket and brought out the gloves. He put them on, but after she had turned and gone into the building and he had driven on to a red light, he took them off again” (286). Mrs. Mitty’s care for her husband’s health is seen as nagging to Walter Mitty, and the audience is amused that he responds like a child and does the opposite of what Mrs. Mitty asked of him. Finally, the clearest way in which Mrs. Mitty is portrayed as a burdensome wife is at the end of the piece when Walter, waiting for his wife to exit the store, imagines that he is facing “the firing squad; erect and motionless, proud and disdainful, Walter Mitty the Undefeated, inscrutable to the last” (289). Not only is Mrs. Mitty portrayed as a mothering, bothersome hen, but she is ultimately described as that which will be the death of Walter Mitty.

Mrs. Mitty is a direct literary descendant of the first woman to be stereotyped as a nagging wife, Dame Van Winkle, the creation of the American writer, Washington Irving. Likewise, Walter Mitty is a reflection of his dreaming predecessor, Rip Van Winkle, who falls into a deep sleep for a hundred years and awakes to the relief of
So how does a woman reader respond to this portrayal of Mrs. Mitty? If she were to follow Iser’s claim, she would defer to the male point of view presented by the author. She would sympathize with Mitty, as Thurber wants us to do, and see domineering women in her own life that resemble Mrs. Mitty. She may see her mother and remember all the times that she nagged her about zipping up her coat against the bitter winter wind. Or the female reader might identify Mrs. Mitty with her controlling mother-in-law and chuckle at Mitty’s attempts to escape her control, just as her husband tries to escape the criticism and control of his own mother. Iser’s ideal female reader would undoubtedly look at her own position as mother and wife and would vow to never become such a domineering person. This reader would probably also agree with a critic who says that “Mitty has a wife who embodies the authority of a society in which the husband cannot function” (Lindner 440). She could see the faults in a relationship that is too controlled by a woman and recognize that a man needs to feel important and dominant in his relationship with his wife. It could be said that the female reader would agree completely with Thurber’s portrayal of the domineering wife. The female reader could simply misread the text.

Or, the female reader could rebel against the text. She could see Mrs. Mitty as a woman who is trying to do her best to keep her husband well and cared for. She could see Walter as a man with a fleeting grip on reality who daydreams that he is a fighter pilot, a brilliant surgeon, a gun expert, or a military hero, when he actually is a poor driver with a slow reaction time to a green traffic light. The female reader could read critics of Thurber who say that by allowing his wife to dominate him, Mitty becomes a “non-hero in a civilization in which women are winning the battle of the sexes” (Hasley 533) and become angry that a woman’s fight for equality is seen merely as a battle between the sexes. She could read Walter’s daydreams as his attempt to dominate his wife, since all of his fantasies center on him in traditional roles of power. This, for most women, would cause anger at Mitty (and indirectly Thurber) for creating and promoting a society which believes that women need to stay subservient to men. From a male point of view, it becomes a battle of the sexes. In a woman’s eyes, her reading is simply a struggle for equality within the text and in the world outside that the text reflects.

It is certain that women misread “The Secret Life of Walter Mitty.” I did. I found myself initially wishing that Mrs. Mitty would just let Walter daydream in peace. But after reading the story again and paying attention to the portrayal of Mrs. Mitty, I realized that it is imperative that women rebel against the texts that would oppress them. By misreading a text, the woman reader understands it in a way that is conventional and acceptable to the literary world. But in so doing, she is also distancing herself from the text, not fully embracing it or its meaning in her life. By rebelling against the text, the female reader not only has to understand the point of view of the author and the male audience, but she also has to formulate her own opinions and create a sort of dialogue between the text and herself. Rebelling against the text and the stereotypes encourages an active dialogue between the woman and the text which, in turn, guarantees an active and (most likely) angry reader response. I became a resisting reader.

Works Cited


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Fiction Readings and Responses
Cao Xueqin, The Dream of the Red Chamber (Chs. I-IX)

HUNG LOU MENG, BOOK I (Chs. I-IX)

OR, THE DREAM OF THE RED CHAMBER, A CHINESE NOVEL IN TWO BOOKS

BY

CAO XUEQIN

Translated by H. BENCRAFT JOLY

BOOK I.

PREFACE.

This translation was suggested not by any pretensions to range myself among the ranks of the body of sinologues, but by the perplexities and difficulties experienced by me as a student in Peking, when, at the completion of the Tzu Erh Chi, I had to plunge in the maze of the Hung Lou Meng.

Shortcomings are, I feel sure, to be discovered, both in the prose, as well as among the doggerel and uncouth rhymes, in which the text has been more adhered to than rhythm; but I shall feel satisfied with the result, if I succeed, even in the least degree, in affording a helping hand to present and future students of the Chinese language.

H. BENCRAFT JOLY, H.B.M. Vice-Consulate, Macao, 1st September, 1891.

THE DREAM OF THE RED CHAMBER.

CHAPTER I.

Chen Shih-yin, in a vision, apprehends perception and spirituality.
Chia Yü-ts’un, in the (windy and dusty) world, cherishes fond thoughts of a beautiful maiden.

This is the opening section; this the first chapter. Subsequent to the visions of a dream which he had, on some previous occasion, experienced, the writer personally relates, he designedly concealed the true circumstances, and borrowed the attributes of perception and spirituality to relate this story of the Record of the Stone. With this purpose, he made use of such designations as Chen Shih-yin (truth under the garb of fiction) and the like. What are, however, the events recorded in this work? Who are the dramatis personae?

Weared with the drudgery experienced of late in the world, the author speaking for himself, goes on to explain, with the lack of success which attended every single concern, I suddenly bethought myself of the womankind of past ages. Passing one by one under a minute scrutiny, I felt that in action and in lore, one and all were far above
me; that in spite of the majesty of my manliness, I could not, in point of fact, compare with these characters of the gentle sex. And my shame forsooth then knew no bounds; while regret, on the other hand, was of no avail, as there was not even a remote possibility of a day of remedy.

On this very day it was that I became desirous to compile, in a connected form, for publication throughout the world, with a view to (universal) information, how that I bear inexorable and manifold retribution; inasmuch as what time, by the sustenance of the benevolence of Heaven, and the virtue of my ancestors, my apparel was rich and fine, and as what days my fare was savory and sumptuous, I disregarded the bounty of education and nurture of father and mother, and paid no heed to the virtue of precept and injunction of teachers and friends, with the result that I incurred the punishment, of failure recently in the least trifle, and the reckless waste of half my lifetime. There have been meanwhile, generation after generation, those in the inner chambers, the whole mass of whom could not, on any account, be, through my influence, allowed to fall into extinction, in order that I, unfilial as I have been, may have the means to screen my own shortcomings.

Hence it is that the thatched shed, with bamboo mat windows, the bed of tow and the stove of brick, which are at present my share, are not sufficient to deter me from carrying out the fixed purpose of my mind. And could I, furthermore, confront the morning breeze, the evening moon, the willows by the steps and the flowers in the courtyard, methinks these would moisten to a greater degree my mortal pen with ink; but though I lack culture and erudition, what harm is there, however, in employing fiction and unrecondite language to give utterance to the merits of these characters? And were I also able to induce the inmates of the inner chamber to understand and diffuse them, could I besides break the weariness of even so much as a single moment, or could I open the eyes of my contemporaries, will it not forsooth prove a boon?

This consideration has led to the usage of such names as Chia Yü-ts’un and other similar appellations.

More than any in these pages have been employed such words as dreams and visions; but these dreams constitute the main argument of this work, and combine, furthermore, the design of giving a word of warning to my readers.

Reader, can you suggest whence the story begins?

The narration may border on the limits of incoherency and triviality, but it possesses considerable zest. But to begin.

The Empress Nü Wo, (the goddess of works,) in fashioning blocks of stones, for the repair of the heavens, prepared, at the Ta Huang Hills and Wu Ch‘i cave, 36,501 blocks of rough stone, each twelve chang in height, and twenty-four chang square. Of these stones, the Empress Wo only used 36,500; so that one single block remained over and above, without being turned to any account. This was cast down the Ch‘ing Keng peak. This stone, strange to say, after having undergone a process of refinement, attained a nature of efficiency, and could, by its innate powers, set itself into motion and was able to expand and to contract.

When it became aware that the whole number of blocks had been made use of to repair the heavens, that it alone had been destitute of the necessary properties and had been unfit to attain selection, it forthwith felt within itself vexation and shame, and day and night, it gave way to anguish and sorrow.

One day, while it lamented its lot, it suddenly caught sight, at a great distance, of a Buddhist bonze and of a Taoist priest coming towards that direction. Their appearance was uncommon, their easy manner remarkable. When they drew near this Ch‘ing Keng peak, they sat on the ground to rest, and began to converse. But on noticing the block newly-polished and brilliantly clear, which had moreover contracted in dimensions, and become no larger than the pendant of a fan, they were greatly filled with admiration. The Buddhist priest picked it up, and laid it in the palm of his hand.

“Your appearance,” he said laughingly, “may well declare you to be a supernatural object, but as you lack any inherent quality it is necessary to inscribe a few characters on you, so that every one who shall see you may at once recognise you to be a remarkable thing. And subsequently, when you will be taken into a country where honour and affluence will reign, into a family cultured in mind and of official status, in a land where flowers and trees shall flourish with luxuriance, in a town of refinement, renown and glory; when you once will have been there...”

The stone listened with intense delight.

“What characters may I ask,” it consequently inquired, “will you inscribe? and what place will I be taken to? pray, pray explain to me in lucid terms.” “You mustn’t be inquisitive,” the bonze replied, with a smile, “in days to come you’ll certainly understand everything.” Having concluded these words, he forthwith put the stone in his sleeve,
and proceeded leisurely on his journey, in company with the Taoist priest. Whither, however, he took the stone, is not divulged. Nor can it be known how many centuries and ages elapsed, before a Taoist priest, K’ung K’ung by name, passed, during his researches after the eternal reason and his quest after immortality, by these Ta Huang Hills, Wu Ch’i cave and Ch’ing Keng Peak. Suddenly perceiving a large block of stone, on the surface of which the traces of characters giving, in a connected form, the various incidents of its fate, could be clearly deciphered, K’ung K’ung examined them from first to last. They, in fact, explained how that this block of worthless stone had originally been devoid of the properties essential for the repairs to the heavens, how it would be transmuted into human form and introduced by Mang Mang the High Lord, and Miao Miao, the Divine, into the world of mortals, and how it would be led over the other bank (across the San Sara). On the surface, the record of the spot where it would fall, the place of its birth, as well as various family trifles and trivial love affairs of young ladies, verses, odes, speeches and enigmas was still complete; but the name of the dynasty and the year of the reign were obliterated, and could not be ascertained.

On the obverse, were also the following enigmatical verses:

Lacking in virtues meet the azure skies to mend,
In vain the mortal world full many a year I wend,
Of a former and after life these facts that be,
Who will for a tradition strange record for me?

K’ung K’ung, the Taoist, having pondered over these lines for a while, became aware that this stone had a history of some kind.

“Brother stone,” he forthwith said, addressing the stone, “the concerns of past days recorded on you possess, according to your own account, a considerable amount of interest, and have been for this reason inscribed, with the intent of soliciting generations to hand them down as remarkable occurrences. But in my own opinion, they lack, in the first place, any data by means of which to establish the name of the Emperor and the year of his reign; and, in the second place, these constitute no record of any excellent policy, adopted by any high worthies or high loyal statesmen, in the government of the state, or in the rule of public morals. The contents simply treat of a certain number of maidens, of exceptional character; either of their love affairs or infatuations, or of their small deserts or insignificant talents; and were I to transcribe the whole collection of them, they would, nevertheless, not be estimated as a book of any exceptional worth.”

“Sir Priest,” the stone replied with assurance, “why are you so excessively dull? The dynasties recorded in the rustic histories, which have been written from age to age, have, I am fain to think, invariably assumed, under false pretences, the mere nomenclature of the Han and T’ang dynasties. They differ from the events inscribed on my block, which do not borrow this customary practice, but, being based on my own experiences and natural feelings, present, on the contrary, a novel and unique character. Besides, in the pages of these rustic histories, either the aspersions upon sovereigns and statesmen, or the strictures upon individuals, their wives, and their daughters, or the deeds of licentiousness and violence are too numerous to be computed. Indeed, there is one more kind of loose literature, the wantonness and pollution in which work most easy havoc upon youth.

“As regards the works, in which the characters of scholars and beauties is delineated their allusions are again repeatedly of Wen Chün, their theme in every page of Tzu Chien; a thousand volumes present no diversity; and a thousand characters are but a counterpart of each other. What is more, these works, throughout all their pages, cannot help bordering on extreme licence. The authors, however, had no other object in view than to give utterance to a few sentimental odes and elegant ballads of their own, and for this reason they have fictitiously invented the names and surnames of both men and women, and necessarily introduced, in addition, some low characters, who should, like a buffoon in a play, create some excitement in the plot.

“Still more loathsome is a kind of pedantic and profligate literature, perfectly devoid of all natural sentiment, full of self-contradictions; and, in fact, the contrast to those maidens in my work, whom I have, during half my lifetime, seen with my own eyes and heard with my own ears. And though I will not presume to estimate them as superior to the heroes and heroines in the works of former ages, yet the perusal of the motives and issues of their experiences, may likewise afford matter sufficient to banish dulness, and to break the spell of melancholy.

“As regards the several stanzas of doggerel verse, they may too evoke such laughter as to compel the reader to blurt out the rice, and to spurt out the wine.

“In these pages, the scenes depicting the anguish of separation, the bliss of reunion, and the fortunes of prosperity and of adversity are all, in every detail, true to human nature, and I have not taken upon myself to make the slightest addition, or alteration, which might lead to the perversion of the truth.
“My only object has been that men may, after a drinking bout, or after they wake from sleep or when in need of relaxation from the pressure of business, take up this light literature, and not only expunge the traces of antiquated books, and obtain a new kind of distraction, but that they may also lay by a long life as well as energy and strength; for it bears no point of similarity to those works, whose designs are false, whose course is immoral. Now, Sir Priest, what are your views on the subject?”

K’ung K’ung having pondered for a while over the words, to which he had listened intently, re-perused, throughout, this record of the stone; and finding that the general purport consisted of nought else than a treatise on love, and likewise of an accurate transcription of facts, without the least taint of profligacy injurious to the times, he thereupon copied the contents, from beginning to end, to the intent of charging the world to hand them down as a strange story.

Hence it was that K’ung K’ung, the Taoist, in consequence of his perception, (in his state of) abstraction, of passion, the generation, from this passion, of voluptuousness, the transmission of this voluptuousness into passion, and the apprehension, by means of passion, of its unreality, forthwith altered his name for that of “Ch’ing Tseng” (the Voluptuous Bonze), and changed the title of “the Memoir of a Stone” (Shih-t’ou-chi,) for that of “Ch’ing Tseng Lu,” The Record of the Voluptuous Bonze; while K’ung Mei-chi of Tung Lu gave it the name of “Feng Yüeh Pao Chien,” “The Precious Mirror of Voluptuousness.” In later years, owing to the devotion by Tsao Hsüeh-ch’ii in the Tao Hung study, of ten years to the perusal and revision of the work, the additions and modifications effected by him five times, the affix of an index and the division into periods and chapters, the book was again entitled “Chin Ling Shih Erh Ch’ai,” “The Twelve Maidens of Chin Lin.” A stanza was furthermore composed for the purpose. This then, and no other, is the origin of the Record of the Stone. The poet says appositely:—

Pages full of silly litter,
Tears a handful sour and bitter;
All a fool the author hold,
But their zest who can unfold?

You have now understood the causes which brought about the Record of the Stone, but as you are not, as yet, aware what characters are depicted, and what circumstances are related on the surface of the block, reader, please lend an ear to the narrative on the stone, which runs as follows:—

In old days, the land in the South East lay low. In this South-East part of the world, was situated a walled town, Ku Su by name. Within the walls a locality, called the Ch’ang Men, was more than all others throughout the mortal world, the centre, which held the second, if not the first place for fashion and life. Beyond this Ch’ang Men was a street called Shih-li-chieh (Ten Li street); in this street a lane, the Jen Ch’ing lane (Humanity and Purity); and in this lane stood an old temple, which on account of its diminutive dimensions, was called, by general consent, the Gourd temple. Next door to this temple lived the family of a district official, Chen by surname, Fei by name, and Shih-yin by style. His wife, née Feng, possessed a worthy and virtuous disposition, and had a clear perception of moral propriety and good conduct. This family, though not in actual possession of excessive affinity and honours, was, nevertheless, in their district, conceded to be a clan of well-to-do standing. As this Chen Shih-yin was of a contented and unambitious frame of mind, and entertained no hankering after any official distinction, but day after day of his life took delight in gazing at flowers, planting bamboos, sipping his wine and conning poetical works, he was in fact, in the indulgence of these pursuits, as happy as a supernatural being.

One thing alone marred his happiness. He had lived over half a century and had, as yet, no male offspring around his knees. He had one only child, a daughter, whose infant name was Ying Lien. She was just three years of age.

Of a sudden, while in this state of unconsciousness, it seemed as if he had betaken himself on foot to some spot or other whither he could not discriminate. Unexpectedly he espied, in the opposite direction, two priests coming towards him: the one a Buddhist, the other a Taoist. As they advanced they kept up the conversation in which they were engaged. “Whither do you purpose taking the object you have brought away?” he heard the Taoist inquire. To this question the Buddhist replied with a smile: “Set your mind at ease,” he said; “there’s now in maturity a plot of a general character involving mundane pleasures, which will presently come to a denouement. The whole number of the votaries of volupputuousness have, as yet, not been quickened or entered the world, and I mean to avail myself of this occasion to introduce this object among their number, so as to give it a chance to go through the span of human existence.” “The votaries of voluptuousness of these days will naturally have again to endure the ills of life during their course through the mortal world,” the Taoist remarked; “but when, I wonder, will they spring into existence? and in what place will they descend?”

“The account of these circumstances,” the bonze ventured to reply, “is enough to make you laugh! They amount to
this: there existed in the west, on the bank of the Ling (spiritual) river, by the side of the San Sheng (thrice-born) stone, a blade of the Chiang Chu (purple pearl) grass. At about the same time it was that the block of stone was, consequent upon its rejection by the goddess of works, also left to ramble and wander to its own gratification, and to roam about at pleasure to every and any place. One day it came within the precincts of the Ching Huan (Monitory Vision) Fairy; and this Fairy, cognizant of the fact that this stone had a history, detained it, therefore, to reside at the Ch’ih Hsia (purple clouds) palace, and apportioned to it the duties of attendant on Shen Ying, a fairy of the Ch’ih Hsia palace.

“This stone would, however, often stroll along the banks of the Ling river, and having at the sight of the blade of spiritual grass been filled with admiration, it, day by day, moistened its roots with sweet dew. This purple pearl grass, at the outset, tarried for months and years; but being at a later period imbued with the essence and luxuriance of heaven and earth, and having incessantly received the moisture and nurture of the sweet dew, divested itself, in course of time, of the form of a grass; assuming, in lieu, a human nature, which gradually became perfected into the person of a girl.

“Every day she was wont to wander beyond the confines of the Li Hen (divested animosities) heavens. When hungry she fed on the Pi Ch’ing (hidden love) fruit—when thirsty she drank the Kuan ch’ou (discharged sorrows,) water. Having, however, up to this time, not shewn her gratitude for the virtue of nurture lavished upon her, the result was but natural that she should resolve in her heart upon a constant and incessant purpose to make suitable acknowledgment.

“I have been,” she would often commune within herself, “the recipient of the gracious bounty of rain and dew, but I possess no such water as was lavished upon me to repay it! But should it ever descend into the world in the form of a human being, I will also betake myself thither, along with it; and if I can only have the means of making restitution to it, with the tears of a whole lifetime, I may be able to make adequate return.”

“This resolution it is that will evolve the descent into the world of so many pleasure-bound spirits of retribution and the experience of fantastic destinies; and this crimson pearl blade will also be among the number. The stone still lies in its original place, and why should not you and I take it along before the tribunal of the Monitory Vision Fairy, and place on its behalf its name on record, so that it should descend into the world, in company with these spirits of passion, and bring this plot to an issue?”

“It is indeed ridiculous,” interposed the Taoist. “Never before have I heard even the very mention of restitution by means of tears! Why should not you and I avail ourselves of this opportunity to likewise go down into the world? and if successful in effecting the salvation of a few of them, will it not be a work meritorious and virtuous?”

“This proposal,” remarked the Buddhist, “is quite in harmony with my own views. Come along then with me to the palace of the Monitory Vision Fairy, and let us deliver up this good-for-nothing object, and have done with it! And when the company of pleasure-bound spirits of wrath descend into human existence, you and I can then enter the world. Half of them have already fallen into the dusty universe, but the whole number of them have not, as yet, come together.”

“Such being the case,” the Taoist acquiesced, “I am ready to follow you, whenever you please to go.”

But to return to Chen Shih-yin. Having heard every one of these words distinctly, he could not refrain from forthwith stepping forward and paying homage. “My spiritual lords,” he said, as he smiled, “accept my obeisance.” The Buddhist and Taoist priests lost no time in responding to the compliment, and they exchanged the usual salutations. “My spiritual lords,” Shih-yin continued; “I have just heard the conversation that passed between you, on causes and effects, a conversation the like of which few mortals have forsooth listened to; but your younger brother is sluggish of intellect, and cannot lucidly fathom the import! Yet could this dulness and simplicity be graciously dispelled, your younger brother may, by listening minutely, with undefiled ear and careful attention, to a certain degree be aroused to a sense of understanding; and what is more, possibly find the means of escaping the anguish of sinking down into Hades.”

The two spirits smiled, “The conversation,” they added, “refers to the primordial scheme and cannot be divulged before the proper season; but, when the time comes, mind do not forget us two, and you will readily be able to escape from the fiery furnace.”

Shih-yin, after this reply, felt it difficult to make any further inquiries. “The primordial scheme,” he however remarked smiling, “cannot, of course, be divulged; but what manner of thing, I wonder, is the good-for-nothing object you alluded to a short while back? May I not be allowed to judge for myself?”

“This object about which you ask,” the Buddhist Bonze responded, “is intended, I may tell you, by fate to be just
glanced at by you." With these words he produced it, and handed it over to Shih-yin.

Shih-yin received it. On scrutiny he found it, in fact, to be a beautiful gem, so lustrous and so clear that the traces of characters on the surface were distinctly visible. The characters inscribed consisted of the four "T'ung Ling Pao Yü," "Precious Gem of Spiritual Perception." On the obverse, were also several columns of minute words, which he was just in the act of looking at intently, when the Buddhist at once expostulated.

"We have already reached," he exclaimed, "the confines of vision." Snatching it violently out of his hands, he walked away with the Taoist, under a lofty stone portal, on the face of which appeared in large type the four characters: "T'ai Hsü Huan Ching," "The Visionary limits of the Great Void." On each side was a scroll with the lines:

When falsehood stands for truth, truth likewise becomes false,
Where naught be made to aught, aught changes into naught.

Shih-yin meant also to follow them on the other side, but, as he was about to make one step forward, he suddenly heard a crash, just as if the mountains had fallen into ruins, and the earth sunk into destruction. As Shih-yin uttered a loud shout, he looked with strained eye; but all he could see was the fiery sun shining, with glowing rays, while the banana leaves drooped their heads. By that time, half of the circumstances connected with the dream he had had, had already slipped from his memory.

He also noticed a nurse coming towards him with Ying Lien in her arms. To Shih-yin's eyes his daughter appeared even more beautiful, such a bright gem, so precious, and so lovable. Forthwith stretching out his arms, he took her over, and, as he held her in his embrace, he coaxed her to play with him for a while; after which he brought her up to the street to see the great stir occasioned by the procession that was going past.

He was about to come in, when he caught sight of two priests, one a Taoist, the other a Buddhist, coming hither from the opposite direction. The Buddhist had a head covered with mange, and went barefooted. The Taoist had a limping foot, and his hair was all dishevelled.

Like maniacs, they jostled along, chattering and laughing as they drew near.

As soon as they reached Shih-yin's door, and they perceived him with Ying Lien in his arms, the Bonze began to weep aloud.

Turning towards Shih-yin, he said to him: "My good Sir, why need you carry in your embrace this living but luckless thing, which will involve father and mother in trouble?"

These words did not escape Shih-yin's ear; but persuaded that they amounted to raving talk, he paid no heed whatever to the bonze.

"Part with her and give her to me," the Buddhist still went on to say.

Shih-yin could not restrain his annoyance; and hastily pressing his daughter closer to him, he was intent upon going in, when the bonze pointed his hand at him, and burst out in a loud fit of laughter.

He then gave utterance to the four lines that follow:

You indulge your tender daughter and are laughed at as inane;
Vain you face the snow, oh mirror! for it will evanescence wane,
When the festival of lanterns is gone by, guard 'gainst your doom,
'Tis what time the flames will kindle, and the fire will consume.

Shih-yin understood distinctly the full import of what he heard; but his heart was still full of conjectures. He was about to inquire who and what they were, when he heard the Taoist remark,—"You and I cannot speed together; let us now part company, and each of us will be then able to go after his own business. After the lapse of three ages, I shall be at the Pei Mang mount, waiting for you; and we can, after our reunion, betake ourselves to the Visionary Confines of the Great Void, there to cancel the name of the stone from the records."

"Excellent! first rate!" exclaimed the Bonze. And at the conclusion of these words, the two men parted, each going his own way, and no trace was again seen of them.

"These two men," Shih-yin then pondered within his heart, "must have had many experiences, and I ought really
to have made more inquiries of them; but at this juncture to indulge in regret is anyhow too late."

While Shih-yin gave way to these foolish reflections, he suddenly noticed the arrival of a penniless scholar, Chia by surname, Hua by name, Shih-fei by style and Yü-ts’un by nickname, who had taken up his quarters in the Gourd temple next door. This Chia Yü-ts’un was originally a denizen of Hu-Chow, and was also of literary and official parentage, but as he was born of the youngest stock, and the possessions of his paternal and maternal ancestors were completely exhausted, and his parents and relatives were dead, he remained the sole and only survivor; and, as he found his residence in his native place of no avail, he therefore entered the capital in search of that reputation, which would enable him to put the family estate on a proper standing. He had arrived at this place since the year before last, and had, what is more, lived all along in very straitened circumstances. He had made the temple his temporary quarters, and earned a living by daily occupying himself in composing documents and writing letters for customers. Thus it was that Shih-yin had been in constant relations with him.

As soon as Yü-ts’un perceived Shih-yin, he lost no time in saluting him. “My worthy Sir,” he observed with a forced smile; “how is it you are leaning against the door and looking out? Is there perchance any news astir in the streets, or in the public places?”

“None whatever,” replied Shih-yin, as he returned the smile. “Just a while back, my young daughter was in sobs, and I coaxed her out here to amuse her. I am just now without anything whatever to attend to, so that, dear brother Chia, you come just in the nick of time. Please walk into my mean abode, and let us endeavour, in each other’s company, to while away this long summer day.”

After he had made this remark, he bade a servant take his daughter in, while he, hand-in-hand with Yü-ts’un, walked into the library, where a young page served tea. They had hardly exchanged a few sentences, when one of the household came in, in flying haste, to announce that Mr. Yen had come to pay a visit.

Shih-yin at once stood up. “Pray excuse my rudeness,” he remarked apologetically, “but do sit down; I shall shortly rejoin you, and enjoy the pleasure of your society.” “My dear Sir,” answered Yü-ts’un, as he got up, also in a conceding way, “suit your own convenience. I’ve often had the honour of being your guest, and what will it matter if I wait a little?” While these apologies were yet being spoken, Shih-yin had already walked out into the front parlour. During his absence, Yü-ts’un occupied himself in turning over the pages of some poetical work to dispel ennui, when suddenly he heard, outside the window, a woman’s cough. Yü-ts’un hurriedly got up and looked out. He saw at a glance that it was a servant girl engaged in picking flowers. Her deportment was out of the common; her eyes so bright, her eyebrows so well defined. Though not a perfect beauty, she possessed nevertheless charms sufficient to arouse the feelings. Yü-ts’un unwittingly gazed at her with fixed eye. This waiting-maid, belonging to the Chen family, had done picking flowers, and was on the point of going in, when she of a sudden raised her eyes and became aware of the presence of some person inside the window, whose head-gear consisted of a turban in tatters, while his clothes were the worse for wear. But in spite of his poverty, he was naturally endowed with a round waist, a broad back, a fat face, a square mouth; added to this, his eyebrows were swordlike, his eyes resembled stars, his nose was straight, his cheeks square.

This servant girl turned away in a hurry and made her escape.

“This man so burly and strong,” she communed within herself, “yet at the same time got up in such poor attire, must, I expect, be no one else than the man, whose name is Chia Yü-ts’un or such like, time after time referred to by my master, and to whom he has repeatedly wished to give a helping hand, but has failed to find a favourable opportunity. And as related to our family there is no connexion or friend in such straits, I feel certain it cannot be any other person than he. Strange to say, my master has further remarked that this man will, for a certainty, not always continue in such a state of destitution.”

As she indulged in this train of thought, she could not restrain herself from turning her head round once or twice.

When Yü-ts’un perceived that she had looked back, he readily interpreted it as a sign that in her heart her thoughts had been of him, and he was frantic with irrepressible joy.

“This girl,” he mused, “is, no doubt, keen-eyed and eminently shrewd, and one in this world who has seen through me.”

The servant youth, after a short time, came into the room; and when Yü-ts’un made inquiries and found out from him that the guests in the front parlour had been detained to dinner, he could not very well wait any longer, and promptly walked away down a side passage and out of a back door.

When the guests had taken their leave, Shih-yin did not go back to rejoin Yü-ts’un, as he had come to know that he
had already left.

In time the mid-autumn festivities drew near; and Shih-yin, after the family banquet was over, had a separate table laid in the library, and crossed over, in the moonlight, as far as the temple and invited Yü-ts’un to come round.

The fact is that Yü-ts’un, ever since the day on which he had seen the girl of the Chen family turn twice round to glance at him, flattered himself that she was friendly disposed towards him, and incessantly fostered fond thoughts of her in his heart. And on this day, which happened to be the mid-autumn feast, he could not, as he gazed at the moon, refrain from cherishing her remembrance. Hence it was that he gave vent to these pentameter verses:

Alas! not yet divined my lifelong wish,
And anguish ceaseless comes upon anguish
I came, and sad at heart, my brow I frowned;
She went, and oft her head to look turned round.
Facing the breeze, her shadow she doth watch,
Who’s meet this moonlight night with her to match?
The lustrous rays if they my wish but read
Would soon alight upon her beauteous head!

Yü-ts’un having, after this recitation, recalled again to mind how that throughout his lifetime his literary attainments had had an adverse fate and not met with an opportunity (of reaping distinction), went on to rub his brow, and as he raised his eyes to the skies, he heaved a deep sigh and once more intoned a couplet aloud:

The gem in the cask a high price it seeks,
The pin in the case to take wing it waits.

As luck would have it, Shih-yin was at the moment approaching, and upon hearing the lines, he said with a smile: “My dear Yü-ts’un, really your attainments are of no ordinary capacity.”

Yü-ts’un lost no time in smiling and replying. “It would be presumption in my part to think so,” he observed. “I was simply at random humming a few verses composed by former writers, and what reason is there to laud me to such an excessive degree? To what, my dear Sir, do I owe the pleasure of your visit?” he went on to inquire. “Tonight,” replied Shih-yin, “is the mid-autumn feast, generally known as the full-moon festival; and as I could not help thinking that living, as you my worthy brother are, as a mere stranger in this Buddhist temple, you could not but experience the feeling of loneliness. I have, for the express purpose, prepared a small entertainment, and will be pleased if you will come to my mean abode to have a glass of wine. But I wonder whether you will entertain favourably my modest invitation?” Yü-ts’un, after listening to the proposal, put forward no refusal of any sort; but remarked complacently: “Being the recipient of such marked attention, how can I presume to repel your generous consideration?”

As he gave expression to these words, he walked off there and then, in company with Shih-yin, and came over once again into the court in front of the library. In a few minutes, tea was over.

The cups and dishes had been laid from an early hour, and needless to say the wines were luscious; the fare sumptuous.

The two friends took their seats. At first they leisurely replenished their glasses, and quietly sipped their wine; but as, little by little, they entered into conversation, their good cheer grew more genial, and unawares the glasses began to fly round, and the cups to be exchanged.

At this very hour, in every house of the neighbourhood, sounded the fife and lute, while the inmates indulged in music and singing. Above head, the orb of the radiant moon shone with an all-pervading splendour, and with a steady lustrous light, while the two friends, as their exuberance increased, drained their cups dry so soon as they reached their lips.

Yü-ts’un, at this stage of the collation, was considerably under the influence of wine, and the vehemence of his high spirits was irrepressible. As he gazed at the moon, he fostered thoughts, to which he gave vent by the recital of a double couplet.

’Tis what time three meets five, Selene is a globe!
Her pure rays fill the court, the jadelike rails enrobe!
Lo! in the heavens her disk to view doth now arise,
And in the earth below to gaze men lift their eyes.

“Excellent!” cried Shih-yin with a loud voice, after he had heard these lines; “I have repeatedly maintained that it was impossible for you to remain long inferior to any, and now the verses you have recited are a prognostic of your rapid advancement. Already it is evident that, before long, you will extend your footsteps far above the clouds! I must congratulate you! I must congratulate you! Let me, with my own hands, pour a glass of wine to pay you my compliments.”

Yü-ts’un drained the cup. “What I am about to say,” he explained as he suddenly heaved a sigh, “is not the maudlin talk of a man under the effects of wine. As far as the subjects at present set in the examinations go, I could, perchance, also have well been able to enter the list, and to send in my name as a candidate; but I have, just now, no means whatever to make provision for luggage and for travelling expenses. The distance too to Shen Ching is a long one, and I could not depend upon the sale of papers or the composition of essays to find the means of getting there.”

Shih-yin gave him no time to conclude. “Why did you not speak about this sooner?” he interposed with haste. “I have long entertained this suspicion; but as, whenever I met you, this conversation was never broached, I did not presume to make myself officious. But if such be the state of affairs just now, I lack, I admit, literary qualification, but on the two subjects of friendly spirit and pecuniary means, I have, nevertheless, some experience. Moreover, I rejoice that next year is just the season for the triennial examinations, and you should start for the capital with all despatch; and in the tripos next spring, you will, by carrying the prize, be able to do justice to the proficiency you can boast of. As regards the travelling expenses and the other items, the provision of everything necessary for you by my own self will again not render nugatory your mean acquaintance with me.”

Forthwith, he directed a servant lad to go and pack up at once fifty taels of pure silver and two suits of winter clothes.

“The nineteenth,” he continued, “is a propitious day, and you should lose no time in hiring a boat and starting on your journey westwards. And when, by your eminent talents, you shall have soared high to a lofty position, and we meet again next winter, will not the occasion be extremely felicitous?”

Yü-ts’un accepted the money and clothes with but scanty expression of gratitude. In fact, he paid no thought whatever to the gifts, but went on, again drinking his wine, as he chattered and laughed.

It was only when the third watch of that day had already struck that the two friends parted company; and Shih-yin, after seeing Yü-ts’un off, retired to his room and slept, with one sleep all through, never waking until the sun was well up in the skies.

Remembering the occurrence of the previous night, he meant to write a couple of letters of recommendation for Yü-ts’un to take along with him to the capital, to enable him, after handing them over at the mansions of certain officials, to find some place as a temporary home. He accordingly despatched a servant to ask him to come round, but the man returned and reported that from what the bonze said, “Mr. Chia had started on his journey to the capital, at the fifth watch of that very morning, that he had also left a message with the bonze to deliver to you, Sir, to the effect that men of letters paid no heed to lucky or unlucky days, that the sole consideration with them was the nature of the matter in hand, and that he could find no time to come round in person and bid good-bye.”

Shih-yin after hearing this message had no alternative but to banish the subject from his thoughts.

In comfortable circumstances, time indeed goes by with easy stride. Soon drew near also the happy festival of the 15th of the 1st moon, and Shih-yin told a servant Huo Ch’i to take Ying Lien to see the sacrificial fires and flowery lanterns.

About the middle of the night, Huo Ch’i was hard pressed, and he forthwith set Ying Lien down on the doorstep of a certain house. When he felt relieved, he came back to take her up, but failed to find anywhere any trace of Ying Lien. In a terrible plight, Huo Ch’i prosecuted his search throughout half the night; but even by the dawn of day, he had not discovered any clue of her whereabouts. Huo Ch’i, lacking, on the other hand, the courage to go back and face his master, promptly made his escape to his native village.

Shih-yin—in fact, the husband as well as the wife—seeing that their child had not come home during the whole night, readily concluded that some mishap must have befallen her. Hastily they despatched several servants to go in search of her, but one and all returned to report that there was neither vestige nor tidings of her.
This couple had only had this child, and this at the meridian of their life, so that her sudden disappearance plunged them in such great distress that day and night they mourned her loss to such a point as to well nigh pay no heed to their very lives.

A month in no time went by. Shih-yin was the first to fall ill, and his wife, Dame Feng, likewise, by dint of fretting for her daughter, was also prostrated with sickness. The doctor was, day after day, sent for, and the oracle consulted by means of divination.

Little did any one think that on this day, being the 15th of the 3rd moon, while the sacrificial oblations were being prepared in the Hu Lu temple, a pan with oil would have caught fire, through the want of care on the part of the bonze, and that in a short time the flames would have consumed the paper pasted on the windows.

Among the natives of this district bamboo fences and wooden partitions were in general use, and these too proved a source of calamity so ordained by fate (to consummate this decree).

With promptness (the fire) extended to two buildings, then enveloped three, then dragged four (into ruin), and then spread to five houses, until the whole street was in a blaze, resembling the flames of a volcano. Though both the military and the people at once ran to the rescue, the fire had already assumed a serious hold, so that it was impossible for them to afford any effective assistance for its suppression.

It blazed away straight through the night, before it was extinguished, and consumed, there is in fact no saying how many dwelling houses. Anyhow, pitiful to relate, the Chen house, situated as it was next door to the temple, was, at an early part of the evening, reduced to a heap of tiles and bricks; and nothing but the lives of that couple and several inmates of the family did not sustain any injuries.

Shih-yin was in despair, but all he could do was to stamp his feet and heave deep sighs. After consulting with his wife, they betook themselves to a farm of theirs, where they took up their quarters temporarily. But as it happened that water had of late years been scarce, and no crops been reaped, robbers and thieves had sprung up like bees, and though the Government troops were bent upon their capture, it was anyhow difficult to settle down quietly on the farm. He therefore had no other resource than to convert, at a loss, the whole of his property into money, and to take his wife and two servant girls and come over for shelter to the house of his father-in-law.

His father-in-law, Feng Su, by name, was a native of Ta Ju Chou. Although only a labourer, he was nevertheless in easy circumstances at home. When he on this occasion saw his son-in-law come to him in such distress, he forthwith felt at heart considerable displeasure. Fortunately Shih-yin had still in his possession the money derived from the unprofitable realization of his property, so that he produced and handed it to his father-in-law, commissioning him to purchase, whenever a suitable opportunity presented itself, a house and land as a provision for food and raiment against days to come. This Feng Su, however, only expended the half of the sum, and pocketed the other half, merely acquiring for him some fallow land and a dilapidated house.

Shih-yin being, on the other hand, a man of books and with no experience in matters connected with business and with sowing and reaping, subsisted, by hook and by crook, for about a year or two, when he became more impoverished.

In his presence, Feng Su would readily give vent to specious utterances, while, with others, and behind his back, he on the contrary expressed his indignation against his improvidence in his mode of living, and against his sole delight of eating and playing the lazy.

Shih-yin, aware of the want of harmony with his father-in-law, could not help giving way, in his own heart, to feelings of regret and pain. In addition to this, the fright and vexation which he had undergone the year before, the anguish and suffering (he had had to endure), had already worked havoc (on his constitution); and being a man advanced in years, and assailed by the joint attack of poverty and disease, he at length gradually began to display symptoms of decline.

Strange coincidence, as he, on this day, came leaning on his staff and with considerable strain, as far as the street for a little relaxation, he suddenly caught sight, approaching from the off side, of a Taoist priest with a crippled foot; his maniac appearance so repulsive, his shoes of straw, his dress all in tatters, muttering several sentiments to this effect:

All men spiritual life know to be good,
But fame to disregard they ne’er succeed!
From old till now the statesmen where are they?
Waste lie their graves, a heap of grass, extinct.
All men spiritual life know to be good,
But to forget gold, silver, ill succeed!
Through life they grudge their hoardings to be scant,
And when plenty has come, their eyelids close.
All men spiritual life hold to be good,
Yet to forget wives, maids, they ne'er succeed!
Who speak of grateful love while lives their lord,
And dead their lord, another they pursue.
All men spiritual life know to be good,
But sons and grandsons to forget never succeed!
From old till now of parents soft many,
But filial sons and grandsons who have seen?

Shih-yin upon hearing these words, hastily came up to the priest, “What were you so glibly holding forth?” he inquired. “All I could hear were a lot of hao liao (excellent, finality.”)

“You may well have heard the two words ‘hao liao,’” answered the Taoist with a smile, “but can you be said to have fathomed their meaning? You should know that all things in this world are excellent, when they have attained finality; when they have attained finality, they are excellent; but when they have not attained finality, they are not excellent; if they would be excellent, they should attain finality. My song is entitled Excellent-finality (hao liao).”

Shih-yin was gifted with a natural perspicacity that enabled him, as soon as he heard these remarks, to grasp their spirit.

“Wait a while,” he therefore said smilingly; “let me unravel this excellent-finality song of yours; do you mind?”

“Please by all means go on with the interpretation,” urged the Taoist; whereupon Shih-yin proceeded in this strain:

Sordid rooms and vacant courts,
Replete in years gone by with beds where statesmen lay;
Parched grass and withered banian trees,
Where once were halls for song and dance!
Spiders’ webs the carved pillars intertwine,
The green gauze now is also pasted on the straw windows!
What about the cosmetic fresh concocted or the powder just scented;
Why has the hair too on each temple become white like hoarfrost!
Yesterday the tumulus of yellow earth buried the bleached bones,
To-night under the red silk curtain reclines the couple!
Gold fills the coffers, silver fills the boxes,
But in a twinkle, the beggars will all abuse you!
While you deplore that the life of others is not long,
You forget that you yourself are approaching death!
You educate your sons with all propriety,
But they may some day, ‘tis hard to say become thieves;
Though you choose (your fare and home) the fatted beam,
You may, who can say, fall into some place of easy virtue!
Through your dislike of the gauze hat as mean,
You have come to be locked in a cangue;
Yesterday, poor fellow, you felt cold in a tattered coat,
To-day, you despise the purple embroidered dress as long!
Confusion reigns far and wide! you have just sung your part, I come on the boards,
Instead of yours, you recognise another as your native land;
What utter perversion!
In one word, it comes to this we make wedding clothes for others!
(We sow for others to reap.)

The crazy limping Taoist clapped his hands. “Your interpretation is explicit,” he remarked with a hearty laugh, “your interpretation is explicit!”

Shih-yin promptly said nothing more than,—“Walk on;” and seizing the stole from the Taoist’s shoulder, he flung it over his own. He did not, however, return home, but leisurely walked away, in company with the eccentric priest.
The report of his disappearance was at once bruited abroad, and plunged the whole neighbourhood in commotion; and converted into a piece of news, it was circulated from mouth to mouth.

Dame Feng, Shih-yin’s wife, upon hearing the tidings, had such a fit of weeping that she hung between life and death; but her only alternative was to consult with her father, and to despatch servants on all sides to institute inquiries. No news was however received of him, and she had nothing else to do but to practise resignation, and to remain dependent upon the support of her parents for her subsistence. She had fortunately still by her side, to wait upon her, two servant girls, who had been with her in days gone by; and the three of them, mistress as well as servants, occupied themselves day and night with needlework, to assist her father in his daily expenses.

This Feng Su had after all, in spite of his daily murmurings against his bad luck, no help but to submit to the inevitable.

On a certain day, the elder servant girl of the Chen family was at the door purchasing thread, and while there, she of a sudden heard in the street shouts of runners clearing the way, and every one explain that the new magistrate had come to take up his office.

The girl, as she peeped out from inside the door, perceived the lictors and policemen go by two by two; and when unexpectedly in a state chair, was carried past an official, in black hat and red coat, she was indeed quite taken aback.

“The face of this officer would seem familiar,” she argued within herself; “just as if I had seen him somewhere or other ere this.”

Shortly she entered the house, and banishing at once the occurrence from her mind, she did not give it a second thought. At night, however, while she was waiting to go to bed, she suddenly heard a sound like a rap at the door. A band of men boisterously cried out: “We are messengers, deputed by the worthy magistrate of this district, and come to summon one of you to an enquiry.”

Feng Su, upon hearing these words, fell into such a terrible consternation that his eyes stared wide and his mouth gaped.

What calamity was impending is not as yet ascertained, but, reader, listen to the explanation contained in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

The spirit of Mrs. Chia Shih-yin departs from the town of Yang Chou.
Leng Tzu-hsing dilates upon the Jung Kuo Mansion.

To continue. Feng Su, upon hearing the shouts of the public messengers, came out in a flurry and forcing a smile, he asked them to explain (their errand); but all these people did was to continue bawling out: “Be quick, and ask Mr. Chen to come out.”

“My surname is Feng,” said Feng Su, as he promptly forced himself to smile; “It is’nt Chen at all: I had once a son-in-law whose surname was Chen, but he has left home, it is now already a year or two back. Is it perchance about him that you are inquiring?”

To which the public servants remarked: “We know nothing about Chen or Chia (true or false); but as he is your son-in-law, we’ll take you at once along with us to make verbal answer to our master and have done with it.”

And forthwith the whole bevy of public servants hustled Feng Su on, as they went on their way back; while every one in the Feng family was seized with consternation, and could not imagine what it was all about.

It was no earlier than the second watch, when Feng Su returned home; and they, one and all, pressed him with questions as to what had happened.

“The fact is,” he explained, “the newly-appointed Magistrate, whose surname is Chia, whose name is Huo and who is a native of Hu-chow, has been on intimate terms, in years gone by, with our son-in-law; that at the sight of the girl Chiaoo Hsing, standing at the door, in the act of buying thread, he concluded that he must have shifted his quarters over here, and hence it was that his messengers came to fetch him. I gave him a clear account of the
various circumstances (of his misfortunes), and the Magistrate was for a time much distressed and expressed his regret. He then went on to make inquiries about my grand-daughter, and I explained that she had been lost, while looking at the illuminations. ‘No matter,’ put in the Magistrate, ‘I will by and by order my men to make search, and I feel certain that they will find her and bring her back.’ Then ensued a short conversation, after which I was about to go, when he presented me with the sum of two taels.”

The mistress of the Chen family (Mrs. Chen Shih-yin) could not but feel very much affected by what she heard, and the whole evening she uttered not a word.

The next day, at an early hour, Yü-ts’un sent some of his men to bring over to Chen’s wife presents, consisting of two packets of silver, and four pieces of brocaded silk, as a token of gratitude, and to Feng Su also a confidential letter, requesting him to ask of Mrs. Chen her maid Chiao Hsing to become his second wife.

Feng Su was so intensely delighted that his eyebrows expanded, his eyes smiled, and he felt eager to toady to the Magistrate (by presenting the girl to him). He hastened to employ all his persuasive powers with his daughter (to further his purpose), and on the same evening he forthwith escorted Chiao Hsing in a small chair to the Yamên.

The joy experienced by Yü-ts’un need not be dilated upon. He also presented Feng Su with a packet containing one hundred ounces of gold; and sent numerous valuable presents to Mrs. Chen, enjoining her “to live cheerfully in the anticipation of finding out the whereabouts of her daughter.”

It must be explained, however, that the maid Chi’ao Hsing was the very person, who, a few years ago, had looked round at Yü-ts’un and who, by one simple, unpremeditated glance, evolved, in fact, this extraordinary destiny which was indeed an event beyond conception.

Who would ever have foreseen that fate and fortune would both have so favoured her that she should, contrary to all anticipation, give birth to a son, after living with Yü-ts’un barely a year, that in addition to this, after the lapse of another half year, Yü-ts’un’s wife should have contracted a sudden illness and departed this life, and that Yü-ts’un should have at once raised her to the rank of first wife. Her destiny is adequately expressed by the lines:

Through but one single, casual look
Soon an exalted place she took.

The fact is that after Yü-ts’un had been presented with the money by Shih-yin, he promptly started on the 16th day for the capital, and at the triennial great tripos, his wishes were gratified to the full. Having successfully carried off his degree of graduate of the third rank, his name was put by selection on the list for provincial appointments. By this time, he had been raised to the rank of Magistrate in this district; but, in spite of the excellence and sufficiency of his accomplishments and abilities, he could not escape being ambitious and overbearing. He failed besides, confident as he was in his own merits, in respect toward his superiors, with the result that these officials looked upon him scornfully with the corner of the eye.

A year had hardly elapsed, when he was readily denounced in a memorial to the Throne by the High Provincial authorities, who represented that he was of a haughty disposition, that he had taken upon himself to introduce innovations in the rites and ceremonies, that overtly, while he endeavoured to enjoy the reputation of probity and uprightness, he, secretly, combined the nature of the tiger and wolf; with the consequence that he had been the cause of much trouble in the district, and that he had made life intolerable for the people, &c. &c.

The Dragon countenance of the Emperor was considerably incensed. His Majesty lost no time in issuing commands, in reply to the Memorial, that he should be deprived of his official status.

On the arrival of the despatch from the Board, great was the joy felt by every officer, without exception, of the prefecture in which he had held office. Yü-ts’un, though at heart intensely mortified and incensed, betrayed not the least outward symptom of annoyance, but still preserved, as of old, a smiling and cheerful countenance.

He handed over charge of all official business and removed the savings which he had accumulated during the several years he had been in office, his family and all his chattels to his original home; where, after having put everything in proper order, he himself travelled (carried the winds and sleeved the moon) far and wide, visiting every relic of note in the whole Empire.

As luck would have it, on a certain day while making a second journey through the Wei Yang district, he heard the news that the Salt Commissioner appointed this year was Lin Ju-hai. This Lin Ju-hai’s family name was Lin, his name Hai and his style Ju-hai. He had obtained the third place in the previous triennial examination, and had, by this time, already risen to the rank of Director of the Court of Censors. He was a native of Kú Su. He had been
recently named by Imperial appointment a Censor attached to the Salt Inspectorate, and had arrived at his post only a short while back.

In fact, the ancestors of Lin Ju-hai had, from years back, successively inherited the title of Marquis, which rank, by its present descent to Ju-hai, had already been enjoyed by five generations. When first conferred, the hereditary right to the title had been limited to three generations; but of late years, by an act of magnanimous favour and generous beneficence, extraordinary bounty had been superadded; and on the arrival of the succession to the father of Ju-hai, the right had been extended to another degree. It had now descended to Ju-hai, who had, besides this title of nobility, begun his career as a successful graduate. But though his family had been through uninterrupted ages the recipient of imperial bounties, his kindred had all been anyhow men of culture.

The only misfortune had been that the several branches of the Lin family had not been prolific, so that the numbers of its members continued limited; and though there existed several households, they were all however to Ju-hai no closer relatives than first cousins. Neither were there any connections of the same lineage, or of the same parentage.

Ju-hai was at this date past forty; and had only had a son, who had died the previous year, in the third year of his age. Though he had several handmaids, he had not had the good fortune of having another son; but this was too a matter that could not be remedied.

By his wife, née Chia, he had a daughter, to whom the infant name of Tai Yü was given. She was, at this time, in her fifth year. Upon her the parents doated as much as if she were a brilliant pearl in the palm of their hand. Seeing that she was endowed with natural gifts of intelligence and good looks, they also felt solicitous to bestow upon her a certain knowledge of books, with no other purpose than that of satisfying, by this illusory way, their wishes of having a son to nurture and of dispelling the anguish felt by them, on account of the desolation and void in their family circle (round their knees).

But to proceed. Yü-ts’un, while sojourning at an inn, was unexpectedly laid up with a violent chill. Finding on his recovery, that his funds were not sufficient to pay his expenses, he was thinking of looking out for some house where he could find a resting place when he suddenly came across two friends acquainted with the new Salt Commissioner. Knowing that this official was desirous to find a tutor to instruct his daughter, they lost no time in recommending Yü-ts’un, who moved into the Yamên.

His female pupil was youthful in years and delicate in physique, so that her lessons were irregular. Besides herself, there were only two waiting girls, who remained in attendance during the hours of study, so that Yü-ts’un was spared considerable trouble and had a suitable opportunity to attend to the improvement of his health.

In a twinkle, another year and more slipped by, and when least expected, the mother of his ward, née Chia, was carried away after a short illness. His pupil (during her mother’s sickness) was dutiful in her attendance, and prepared the medicines for her use. (And after her death,) she went into the deepest mourning prescribed by the rites, and gave way to such excess of grief that, naturally delicate as she was, her old complaint, on this account, broke out anew.

Being unable for a considerable time to prosecute her studies, Yü-ts’un lived at leisure and had no duties to attend to. Whenever therefore the wind was genial and the sun mild, he was wont to stroll at random, after he had done with his meals.

On this particular day, he, by some accident, extended his walk beyond the suburbs, and desirous to contemplate the nature of the rustic scenery, he, with listless step, came up to a spot encircled by hills and streaming pools, by luxuriant clumps of trees and thick groves of bamboos. Nestling in the dense foliage stood a temple. The doors and courts were in ruins. The walls, inner and outer, in disrepair. An inscription on a tablet testified that this was the temple of Spiritual Perception. On the sides of the door was also a pair of old and dilapidated scrolls with the following enigmatical verses.

Behind ample there is, yet to retract the hand, the mind heeds not, until.
Before the mortal vision lies no path, when comes to turn the will.

“These two sentences,” Yü-ts’un pondered after perusal, “although simple in language, are profound in signification. I have previous to this visited many a spacious temple, located on hills of note, but never have I beheld an inscription referring to anything of the kind. The meaning contained in these words must, I feel certain, owe their origin to the experiences of some person or other; but there’s no saying. But why should I not go in and inquire for myself?”
Upon walking in, he at a glance caught sight of no one else, but of a very aged bonze, of unkempt appearance, cooking his rice. When Yü-ts’un perceived that he paid no notice, he went up to him and asked him one or two questions, but as the old priest was dull of hearing and a dotard, and as he had lost his teeth, and his tongue was blunt, he made most irrelevant replies.

Yü-ts’un lost all patience with him, and withdrew again from the compound with the intention of going as far as the village public house to have a drink or two, so as to enhance the enjoyment of the rustic scenery. With easy stride, he accordingly walked up to the place. Scarcely had he passed the threshold of the public house, when he perceived some one or other among the visitors who had been sitting sipping their wine on the divan, jump up and come up to greet him, with a face beaming with laughter.

“What a strange meeting! What a strange meeting!” he exclaimed aloud.

Yü-ts’un speedily looked at him, (and remembered) that this person had, in past days, carried on business in a curio establishment in the capital, and that his surname was Leng and his style Tzu-hsing.

A mutual friendship had existed between them during their sojourn, in days of yore, in the capital; and as Yü-ts’un had entertained the highest opinion of Leng Tzu-hsing, as being a man of action and of great abilities, while this Leng Tzu-hsing, on the other hand, borrowed of the reputation of refinement enjoyed by Yü-ts’un, the two had consequently all along lived in perfect harmony and companionship.

“When did you get here?” Yü-ts’un eagerly inquired also smilingly. “I wasn’t in the least aware of your arrival. This unexpected meeting is positively a strange piece of good fortune.”

“I went home,” Tzu-hsing replied, “about the close of last year, but now as I am again bound to the capital, I passed through here on my way to look up a friend of mine and talk some matters over. He had the kindness to press me to stay with him for a couple of days longer, and as I after all have no urgent business to attend to, I am tarrying a few days, but purpose starting about the middle of the moon. My friend is busy to-day, so I roamed listlessly as far as here, never dreaming of such a fortunate meeting.”

While speaking, he made Yü-ts’un sit down at the same table, and ordered a fresh supply of wine and eatables; and as the two friends chatted of one thing and another, they slowly sipped their wine.

The conversation ran on what had occurred after the separation, and Yü-ts’un inquired, “Is there any news of any kind in the capital?”

“There’s nothing new whatever,” answered Tzu-hsing. “There is one thing however: in the family of one of your worthy kinsmen, of the same name as yourself, a trifling, but yet remarkable, occurrence has taken place.”

“None of my kindred reside in the capital,” rejoined Yü-ts’un with a smile. “To what can you be alluding?”

“How can it be that you people who have the same surname do not belong to one clan?” remarked Tzu-hsing, sarcastically.

“In whose family?” inquired Yü-ts’un.

“The Chia family,” replied Tzu-hsing smiling, “whose quarters are in the Jung Kuo Mansion, does not after all reflect discredit upon the lintel of your door, my venerable friend.”

“What!” exclaimed Yü-ts’un, “did this affair take place in that family? Were we to begin reckoning, we would find the members of my clan to be anything but limited in number. Since the time of our ancestor Chia Fu, who lived while the Eastern Han dynasty occupied the Throne, the branches of our family have been numerous and flourishing; they are now to be found in every single province, and who could, with any accuracy, ascertain their whereabouts? As regards the Jung-kuo branch in particular, their names are in fact inscribed on the same register as our own, but rich and exalted as they are, we have never presumed to claim them as our relatives, so that we have become more and more estranged.”

“Don’t make any such assertions,” Tzu-hsing remarked with a sigh, “the present two mansions of Jung and Ning have both alike also suffered reverses, and they cannot come up to their state of days of yore.”

“Up to this day, these two households of Ning and of Jung,” Yü-ts’un suggested, “still maintain a very large retinue of people, and how can it be that they have met with reverses?”

“To explain this would be indeed a long story,” said Leng Tzu-hsing. “Last year,” continued Yü-ts’un, “I arrived at
Chin Ling, as I entertained a wish to visit the remains of interest of the six dynasties, and as I on that day entered the walled town of Shih T’ou, I passed by the entrance of that old residence. On the east side of the street, stood the Ning Kuo mansion; on the west the Jung Kuo mansion; and these two, adjoining each other as they do, cover in fact well-nigh half of the whole length of the street. Outside the front gate everything was, it is true, lonely and deserted; but at a glance into the interior over the enclosing wall, I perceived that the halls, pavilions, two-storied structures and porches presented still a majestic and lofty appearance. Even the flower garden, which extends over the whole area of the back grounds, with its trees and rockeries, also possessed to that day an air of luxuriance and freshness, which betrayed no signs of a ruined or decrepit establishment."

"You have had the good fortune of starting in life as a graduate," explained Tzu-tsing as he smiled, "and yet are not aware of the saying uttered by some one of old: that a centipede even when dead does not lie stiff. (These families) may, according to your version, not be up to the prosperity of former years, but, compared with the family of an ordinary official, their condition anyhow presents a difference. Of late the number of the inmates has, day by day, been on the increase; their affairs have become daily more numerous; of masters and servants, high and low, who live in ease and respectability very many there are; but of those who exercise any forethought, or make any provision, there is not even one. In their daily wants, their extravagances, and their expenditure, they are also unable to adapt themselves to circumstances and practise economy; (so that though) the present external framework may not have suffered any considerable collapse, their purses have anyhow begun to feel an exhausting process! But this is a mere trifle. There is another more serious matter. Would any one ever believe that in such families of official status, in a clan of education and culture, the sons and grandsons of the present age would after all be each (succeeding) generation below the standard of the former?"

Yü-ts’un, having listened to these remarks, observed: "How ever can it be possible that families of such education and refinement can observe any system of training and nurture which is not excellent? Concerning the other branches, I am not in a position to say anything: but restricting myself to the two mansions of Jung and Ning, they are those in which, above all others, the education of their children is methodical."

"I was just now alluding to none other than these two establishments," Tzu-hsing observed with a sigh; "but let me tell you all. In days of yore, the duke of Ning Kuo and the duke of Jung Kuo were two uterine brothers. The Ning duke was the elder; he had four sons. After the death of the duke of Ning Kuo, his eldest son, Chia Tai-hua, came into the title. He also had two sons; but the eldest, whose name was Hu, died at the age of eight or nine; and the only survivor, the second son, Chia Ching, inherited the title. His whole mind is at this time set upon Taoist doctrines; his sole delight is to burn the pill and refine the dual powers; while every other thought finds no place in his mind. Happily, he had, at an early age, left a son, Chia Chen, behind in the lay world, and his father, engrossed as his whole heart was with the idea of attaining spiritual life, ceded the succession of the official title to him. His parent is, besides, not willing to return to the original family seat, but lives outside the walls of the capital, foolishly hobnobbing with all the Taoist priests. This Mr. Chen had also a son, Chia Jung, who is, at this period, just in his sixteenth year. Mr. Ching gives at present no attention to anything at all, so that Mr. Chen naturally devotes no time to his studies, but being bent upon nought else but incessant high pleasure, he has subverted the order of things in the Ning Kuo mansion, and yet no one can summon the courage to come and hold him in check. But I’ll now tell you about the Jung mansion for your edification. The strange occurrence, to which I alluded just now, came about in this manner. After the demise of the Jung duke, the eldest son, Chia Tai-shan, inherited the rank. He took to himself as wife, the daughter of Marquis Shih, a noble family of Chin Ling, by whom he had two sons; the elder being Chia She, the younger Chia Cheng. This Tai Shan is now dead long ago; but his wife is still alive, and the elder son, Chia She, succeeded to the degree. He is a man of amiable and genial disposition, but he likewise gives no thought to the direction of any domestic concern. The second son Chia Cheng displayed, from his early childhood, a great liking for books, and grew up to be correct and upright in character. His grandfather doated upon him, and would have had him start in life through the arena of public examinations, but, when least expected, Tai-shan, being on the point of death, bequeathed a petition, which was laid before the Emperor. His Majesty, out of regard for his former minister, issued immediate commands that the elder son should inherit the estate, and further inquired how many sons there were besides him, all of whom he at once expressed a wish to be introduced in his imperial presence. His Majesty, moreover, displayed exceptional favour, and conferred upon Mr. Cheng the brevet rank of second class Assistant Secretary (of a Board), and commanded him to enter the Board to acquire the necessary experience. He has already now been promoted to the office of second class Secretary. This Mr. Cheng’s wife, née Wang, first gave birth to a son called Chia Chu, who became a Licentiate in his fourteenth year. At barely twenty, he married, but fell ill and died soon after the birth of a son. Her (Mrs. Cheng’s) second child was a daughter, who came into the world, by a strange coincidence, on the first day of the year. She had an unexpected (pleasure) in the birth, the succeeding year, of another son, who, still more remarkable to say, had, at the time of his birth, a piece of variegated and crystal-like brilliant jade in his mouth, on which were yet visible the outlines of several characters. Now, tell me, was not this a novel and strange occurrence? eh?"
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Strange indeed! exclaimed Yü-ts’un with a smile; “but I presume the coming experiences of this being will not be mean.”

Tzu-hsing gave a faint smile. “One and all,” he remarked, “entertain the same idea. Hence it is that his mother doats upon him like upon a precious jewel. On the day of his first birthday, Mr. Cheng readily entertained a wish to put the bent of his inclinations to the test, and placed before the child all kinds of things, without number, for him to grasp from. Contrary to every expectation, he scorned every other object, and, stretching forth his hand, he simply took hold of rouge, powder and a few hair-pins, with which he began to play. Mr. Cheng experienced at once displeasure, as he maintained that this youth would, by and bye, grow up into a sybarite, devoted to wine and women, and for this reason it is, that he soon began to feel not much attachment for him. But his grandmother is the one who, in spite of everything, prizes him like the breath of her own life. The very mention of what happened is even strange! He is now grown up to be seven or eight years old, and, although exceptionally wilful, in intelligence and precocity, however, not one in a hundred could come up to him! And as for the utterances of this child, they are no less remarkable. The bones and flesh of woman, he argues, are made of water, while those of man of mud. ‘Women to my eyes are pure and pleasing,’ he says, ‘while at the sight of man, I readily feel how corrupt, foul and repelling they are!’ Now tell me, are not these words ridiculous? There can be no doubt whatever that he will by and bye turn out to be a licentious roué.”

Yü-ts’un, whose countenance suddenly assumed a stern air, promptly interrupted the conversation. “It doesn’t quite follow,” he suggested. “You people don’t, I regret to say, understand the destiny of this child. The fact is that even the old Hanlin scholar Mr. Cheng was erroneously looked upon as a loose rake and dissolute debauchee! But unless a person, through much study of books and knowledge of letters, so increases (in lore) as to attain the talent of discerning the nature of things, and the vigour of mind to fathom the Taoist reason as well as to comprehend the first principle, he is not in a position to form any judgment.”

Tzu-hsing upon perceiving the weighty import of what he propounded, “Please explain,” he asked hastily, “the drift (of your argument).” To which Yü-ts’un responded: “Of the human beings created by the operation of heaven and earth, if we exclude those who are gifted with extreme benevolence and extreme viciousness, the rest, for the most part, present no striking diversity. If they be extremely benevolent, they fall in, at the time of their birth, with an era of propitious fortune; while those extremely vicious correspond, at the time of their existence, with an era of calamity. When those who coexist with propitious fortune come into life, the world is in order; when those who coexist with unpropitious fortune come into life, the world is in danger. Yao, Shun, Yu, Ch’eng T’ang, Wen Wang, Wu Wang, Chou Kung, Chao Kung, Confucius, Mencius, T’ung Hu, Han Hsin, Chou Tzu, Ch’eng Tzu, Chu Tzu and Chang Tzu were ordained to see light in an auspicious era. Whereas Chi’i Yu, Kung Kung, Chieh Wang, Chou Wang, Shih Huang, Wang Mang, Tsao Ts’aio, Wen Wen, An Hu-shan, Ch’in Kuei and others were one and all destined to come into the world during a calamitous age. Those endowed with extreme benevolence set the world in order; those possessed of extreme maliciousness turn the world into disorder. Purity, intelligence, spirituality and subtlety constitute the vital spirit of right which pervades heaven and earth, and the persons gifted with benevolence are its natural fruit. Malignity and perversity constitute the spirit of evil, which permeates heaven and earth, and malicious persons are affected by its influence. The days of perpetual happiness and eminent good fortune, and the era of perfect peace and tranquility, which now prevail, are the offspring of the pure, intelligent, divine and subtle spirit which ascends above, to the very Emperor, and below reaches the rustic and uncultured classes. Every one is without exception under its influence. The superfluity of the subtle spirit expands far and wide, and finding nowhere to betake itself to, becomes, in due course, transformed into dew, or gentle breeze; and, by a process of diffusion, it pervades the whole world.

“The spirit of malignity and perversity, unable to expand under the brilliant sky and transmuting sun, eventually coagulates, pervades and stops up the deep gutters and extensive caverns; and when of a sudden the wind agitates it or it be impelled by the clouds, and any slight disposition, on its part, supervenes to set itself in motion, or to break its bounds, and so little as even the minutest fraction does unexpectedly find an outlet, and happens to come across any spirit of perception and subtlety which may be at the time passing by, the spirit of right does not yield to the spirit of evil, and the spirit of evil is again envious of the spirit of right, so that the two do not harmonize. Just like wind, water, thunder and lightning, which, when they meet in the bowels of the earth, must necessarily, as they are both to dissolve and are likewise unable to yield, clash and explode to the end that they may at length exhaust themselves. Hence it is that these spirits have also forcibly to diffuse themselves into the human race to find an outlet, so that they may then completely disperse, with the result that men and women are suddenly imbued with these spirits and spring into existence. At best, (these human beings) cannot be generated into philanthropists or perfect men; at worst, they cannot also embody extreme perversity or extreme wickedness. Yet placed among one million beings, the spirit of intelligence, refinement, perception and subtlety will be above these one million beings; while, on the other hand, the perverse, depraved and inhuman embodiment will likewise be below the million of men. Born in a noble and wealthy family, these men will be a salacious, lustful lot; born of literary, virtuous or poor parentage, they will turn out retired scholars or men of mark; though they may by some
of two families were on terms of great intimacy, and I myself likewise enjoyed the pleasure of their friendship for many a day.

“Last year, when at Chin Ling,” Yü-ts’un continued with a smile, “some one recommended me as resident tutor to the school in the Chen mansion; and when I moved into it I saw for myself the state of things. Who would ever think that that household was grand and luxurious to such a degree! But they are an affluent family, and withal full of propriety, so that a school like this was of course not one easy to obtain. The pupil, however, was, it is true, a young tyro, but far more troublesome to teach than a candidate for the examination of graduate of the second degree. Were I to enter into details, you would indeed have a laugh. ‘I must needs,’ he explained, ‘have the company of two girls in my studies to enable me to read at all, and to keep likewise my brain clear. Otherwise, if perchance, I did not then know, of its being able to alleviate the soreness. After I had, with this purpose, given one plausible explanation. ‘Once,’ he replied, ‘when in the agony of pain, I gave vent to shouting girls, in the hope, perchance, I did not then know, of its being able to alleviate the soreness. After I had, with this purpose, given one

words are of the utmost import! Whenever you have occasion to allude to them, you must, before you can do so with impunity, take pure water and scented tea and rinse your mouths. In the event of any slip of the tongue, I shall at once have your teeth extracted, and your eyes gouged out.’ His obstinacy and waywardness are, in every respect, out of the common. After he was allowed to leave school, and to return home, he became, at the sight of the young ladies, so tractable, gentle, sharp, and polite, transformed, in fact, like one of them. And though, for this reason, his father has punished him on more than one occasion, by giving him a sound thrashing, such as brought him to the verge of death, he cannot however change. Whenever he was being beaten, and could no more endure the pain, he was wont to promptly break forth in promiscuous loud shouts, ‘Girls! girls!’ The young ladies, who heard him from the inner chambers, subsequently made fun of him. ‘Why,’ they said, ‘when you are being thrashed, and you are in pain, your only thought is to bawl out girls! Is it perchance that you expect us young ladies to go and intercede for you? How is that you have no sense of shame?’ To their taunts he gave a most plausible explanation. ‘Once,’ he replied, ‘when in the agony of pain, I gave vent to shouting girls, in the hope, perchance, I did not then know, of its being able to alleviate the soreness. After I had, with this purpose, given one cry, I really felt the pain considerably better; and now that I have obtained this secret spell, I have recourse, at once, when I am in the height of anguish, to shouts of girls, one shout after another. Now what do you say to this? Isn’t this absurd, eh?’

“The grandmother is so infatuated by her extreme tenderness for this youth, that, time after time, she has, on her grandson’s account, found fault with the tutor, and called her son to task, with the result that I resigned my post and took my leave. A youth, with a disposition such as his, cannot assuredly either perpetuate intact the estate of his father and grandfather, or follow the injunctions of teacher or advice of friends. The pity is, however, that there are, in that family, several excellent female cousins, the like of all of whom it would be difficult to discover.”

“Quite so!” remarked Tzu-hsing; “there are now three young ladies in the Chia family who are simply perfection itself. The eldest is a daughter of Mr. Cheng, Yuan Ch’un by name, who, on account of her excellence, filial piety, talents, and virtue, has been selected as a governess in the palace. The second is the daughter of Mr. She’s handmaid, and is called Ying Ch’un; the third is T’an Ch’un, the child of Mr. Cheng’s handmaid; while the fourth is the uterine sister of Mr. Chen of the Ning Mansion. Her name is Hsi Ch’un. As dowager lady Shih is so fondly
attached to her granddaughters, they come, for the most part, over to their grandmother’s place to prosecute their studies together, and each one of these girls is, I hear, without a fault."

“More admirable,” observed Yü-ts’un, “is the régime (adhered to) in the Chen family, where the names of the female children have all been selected from the list of male names, and are unlike all those out-of-the-way names, such as Spring Blossom, Scented Gem, and the like flowery terms in vogue in other families. But how is it that the Chia family have likewise fallen into this common practice?”

“Not so!” ventured Tzu-h’sing. “It is simply because the eldest daughter was born on the first of the first moon, that the name of Yuan Ch’un was given to her; while with the rest this character Ch’un (spring) was then followed. The names of the senior generation are, in like manner, adopted from those of their brothers; and there is at present an instance in support of this. The wife of your present worthy master, Mr. Lin, is the uterine sister of Mr. Chia. She and Mr. Chia Cheng, and she went, while at home, under the name of Chia Min. Should you question the truth of what I say, you are at liberty, on your return, to make minute inquiries and you’ll be convinced.”

Yü-ts’un clapped his hands and said smiling, “It’s so, I know! for this female pupil of mine, whose name is Tai-yü, invariably pronounces the character min as mi, whenever she comes across it in the course of her reading; while, in writing, when she comes to the character ‘min,’ she likewise reduces the strokes by one, sometimes by two. Often have I speculated in my mind (as to the cause), but the remarks I’ve heard you mention, convince me, without doubt, that it is no other reason (than that of reverence to her mother’s name). Strange enough, this pupil of mine is unique in her speech and deportment, and in no way like any ordinary young lady. Besides, knowing, as I do now, that she is the granddaughter of the Jung family, it is no matter of surprise to me that she is what she is. Poor girl, her mother, after all, died in the course of the last month.”

Tzu-hsing heaved a sigh. “Of three elderly sisters,” he explained, “this one was the youngest, and she too is gone! Of the sisters of the senior generation not one even survives! But now we’ll see what the husbands of this younger generation will be like by and bye!”

“Yes,” replied Yü-ts’un. “But some while back you mentioned that Mr. Cheng has had a son, born with a piece of jade in his mouth, and that he has besides a tender-aged grandson left by his eldest son; but is it likely that this Mr. She has not, himself, as yet, had any male issue?”

“After Mr. Cheng had this son with the jade,” Tzu-hsing added, “his handmaid gave birth to another son, who whether he be good or bad, I don’t at all know. At all events, he has by his side two sons and a grandson, but what these will grow up to be by and bye, I cannot tell. As regards Mr. Chia She, he too has had two sons; the second of whom, Chia Lien, is by this time about twenty. He took to wife a relative of his, a niece of Mr. Cheng’s wife, a Miss Wang, and has now been married for the last two years. This Mr. Lien has lately obtained by purchase the rank of sub-prefect. He too takes little pleasure in books, but as far as worldly affairs go, he is so versatile and glib of tongue, that he has recently taken up his quarters with his uncle Mr. Cheng, to whom he gives a helping hand in the management of domestic matters. Who would have thought it, however, ever since his marriage with his worthy wife, not a single person, whether high or low, has there been who has not looked up to her with regard: with the result that Mr. Lien himself has, in fact, had to take a back seat (lit. withdrew 35 li). In looks, she is also so extremely beautiful, in speech so extremely quick and fluent, in ingenuity so deep and astute, that even a man could, in no way, come up to her mark.”

After hearing these remarks Yü-ts’un smiled. “You now perceive,” he said, “that my argument is no fallacy, and that the several persons about whom you and I have just been talking are, we may presume, human beings, who, one and all, have been generated by the spirit of right, and the spirit of evil, and come to life by the same royal road; but of course there’s no saying.”

“Enough,” cried Tzu-hsing, “of right and enough of evil; we’ve been doing nothing but settling other people’s accounts; come now, have another glass, and you’ll be the better for it!”

“While bent upon talking,” Yü-ts’un explained, “I’ve had more glasses than is good for me.”

“Speaking of irrelevant matters about other people,” Tzu-hsing rejoined complacently, “is quite the thing to help us swallow our wine; so come now; what harm will happen, if we do have a few glasses more.”

Yü-ts’un thereupon looked out of the window.

“The day is also far advanced,” he remarked, “and if we don’t take care, the gates will be closing; let us leisurely enter the city, and as we go along, there will be nothing to prevent us from continuing our chat.”
Forthwith the two friends rose from their seats, settled and paid their wine bill, and were just going, when they unexpectedly heard some one from behind say with a loud voice:

"Accept my congratulations, Brother Yü-ts'ün; I've now come, with the express purpose of giving you the welcome news!"

Yü-ts'ün lost no time in turning his head round to look at the speaker. But reader, if you wish to learn who the man was, listen to the details given in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III.

Lin Ju-hai appeals to his brother-in-law, Chia Cheng, recommending Yü-ts'ün, his daughter's tutor, to his consideration.

Dowager lady Chia sends to fetch her granddaughter, out of commiseration for her being a motherless child.

But to proceed with our narrative.

Yü-ts'ün, on speedily turning round, perceived that the speaker was no other than a certain Chang Ju-kuei, an old colleague of his, who had been denounced and deprived of office, on account of some case or other; a native of that district, who had, since his degradation, resided in his family home.

Having lately come to hear the news that a memorial, presented in the capital, that the former officers (who had been cashiered) should be reinstated, had received the imperial consent, he had promptly done all he could, in every nook and corner, to obtain influence, and to find the means (of righting his position,) when he, unexpectedly, came across Yü-ts'ün, to whom he therefore lost no time in offering his congratulations. The two friends exchanged the conventional salutations, and Chang Ju-kuei forthwith communicated the tidings to Yü-ts'ün.

Yü-ts'ün was delighted, but after he had made a few remarks, in a great hurry, each took his leave and sped on his own way homewards.

Leng Tzu-hsing, upon hearing this conversation, hastened at once to propose a plan, advising Yü-ts'ün to request Lin Ju-hai, in his turn, to appeal in the capital to Mr. Chia Cheng for support.

Yü-ts'ün accepted the suggestion, and parted from his companion.

On his return to his quarters, he made all haste to lay his hand on the Metropolitan Gazette, and having ascertained that the news was authentic, he had on the next day a personal consultation with Ju-hai.

"Providence and good fortune are both alike propitious!" exclaimed Ju-hai. "After the death of my wife, my mother-in-law, whose residence is in the capital, was so very solicitous on my daughter's account, for having no one to depend upon, that she despatched, at an early period, boats with men and women servants to come and fetch her. But my child was at the time not quite over her illness, and that is why she has not yet started. I was, this very moment, cogitating to send my daughter to the capital. And in view of the obligation, under which I am to you for the instruction you have heretofore conferred upon her, remaining as yet unrequited, there is no reason why, when such an opportunity as this presents itself, I should not do my utmost to find means to make proper acknowledgment. I have already, in anticipation, given the matter my attention, and written a letter of recommendation to my brother-in-law, urging him to put everything right for you, in order that I may, to a certain extent, be able to give effect to my modest wishes. As for any outlay that may prove necessary, I have given proper explanation, in the letter to my brother-in-law, so that you, my brother, need not trouble yourself by giving way to much anxiety."

As Yü-ts'ün bowed and expressed his appreciation in most profuse language,—

"Pray," he asked, "where does your honoured brother-in-law reside? and what is his official capacity? But I fear I'm too coarse in my manner, and could not presume to obtrude myself in his presence."

Ju-hai smiled. "And yet," he remarked, "this brother-in-law of mine is after all of one and the same family as your worthy self, for he is the grandson of the Duke Jung. My elder brother-in-law has now inherited the status of Captain-General of the first grade. His name is She, his style Ngen-hou. My second brother-in-law's name is
Cheng, his style is Tzu-chou. His present post is that of a Second class Secretary in the Board of Works. He is modest and kindhearted, and has much in him of the habits of his grandfather; not one of that purse-proud and haughty kind of men. That is why I have written to him and made the request on your behalf. Were he different to what he really is, not only would he cast a slur upon your honest purpose, honourable brother, but I myself likewise would not have been as prompt in taking action."

When Yü-ts’un heard these remarks, he at length credited what had been told him by Tzu-hsing the day before, and he lost no time in again expressing his sense of gratitude to Lin Ju-hai.

Ju-hai resumed the conversation.

“I have fixed,” (he explained,) “upon the second of next month, for my young daughter’s departure for the capital, and, if you, brother mine, were to travel along with her, would it not be an advantage to herself, as well as to yourself?”

Yü-ts’un signified his acquiescence as he listened to his proposal; feeling in his inner self extremely elated.

Ju-hai availed himself of the earliest opportunity to get ready the presents (for the capital) and all the requirements for the journey, which (when completed,) Yü-ts’un took over one by one. His pupil could not, at first, brook the idea, of a separation from her father, but the pressing wishes of her grandmother left her no course (but to comply).

“Your father,” Ju-hai furthermore argued with her, “is already fifty; and I entertain no wish to marry again; and then you are always ailing; besides, with your extreme youth, you have, above, no mother of your own to take care of you, and below, no sisters to attend to you. If you now go and have your maternal grandmother, as well as your mother’s brothers and your cousins to depend upon, you will be doing the best thing to reduce the anxiety which I feel in my heart on your behalf. Why then should you not go?”

Tai-yü, after listening to what her father had to say, parted from him in a flood of tears and followed her nurse and several old matrons from the Jung mansion on board her boat, and set out on her journey.

Yü-ts’un had a boat to himself, and with two youths to wait on him, he prosecuted his voyage in the wake of Tai-yü.

By a certain day, they reached Ching Tu; and Yü-ts’un, after first adjusting his hat and clothes, came, attended by a youth, to the door of the Jung mansion, and sent in a card, which showed his lineage.

Chia Cheng had, by this time, perused his brother-in-law’s letter, and he speedily asked him to walk in. When they met, he found in Yü-ts’un an imposing manner and polite address.

This Chia Cheng had, in fact, a great penchant above all things for men of education, men courteous to the talented, respectful to the learned, ready to lend a helping hand to the needy and to succour the distressed, and was, to a great extent, like his grandfather. As it was besides a wish intimated by his brother-in-law, he therefore treated Yü-ts’un with a consideration still more unusual, and readily strained all his resources to assist him.

On the very day on which the memorial was submitted to the Throne, he obtained by his efforts, a reinstatement to office, and before the expiry of two months, Yü-t’sun was forthwith selected to fill the appointment of prefect of Ying T’ien in Chin Ling. Taking leave of Chia Cheng, he chose a propitious day, and proceeded to his post, where we will leave him without further notice for the present.

But to return to Tai-yü. On the day on which she left the boat, and the moment she put her foot on shore, there were forthwith at her disposal chairs for her own use, and carts for the luggage, sent over from the Jung mansion.

Lin Tai-yü had often heard her mother recount how different was her grandmother’s house from that of other people’s; and having seen for herself how above the common run were already the attendants of the three grades, (sent to wait upon her,) in attire, in their fare, in all their articles of use, “how much more,” (she thought to herself) "now that I am going to her home, must I be careful at every step, and circumspect at every moment! Nor must I utter one word too many, nor make one step more than is proper, for fear lest I should be ridiculed by any of them!”

From the moment she got into the chair, and they had entered within the city walls, she found, as she looked around, through the gauze window, at the bustle in the streets and public places and at the immense concourse of people, everything naturally so unlike what she had seen elsewhere.

After they had also been a considerable time on the way, she suddenly caught sight, at the northern end of the
street, of two huge squatting lions of marble and of three lofty gates with (knockers representing) the heads of animals. In front of these gates, sat, in a row, about ten men in coloured hats and fine attire. The main gate was not open. It was only through the side gates, on the east and west, that people went in and came out. Above the centre gate was a tablet. On this tablet were inscribed in five large characters—“The Ning Kuo mansion erected by imperial command.”

“This must be grandmother’s eldest son’s residence,” reflected Tai-yü.

Towards the east, again, at no great distance, were three more high gateways, likewise of the same kind as those she had just seen. This was the Jung Kuo mansion.

They did not however go in by the main gate; but simply made their entrance through the east side door.

With the sedans on their shoulders, (the bearers) proceeded about the distance of the throw of an arrow, when upon turning a corner, they hastily put down the chairs. The matrons, who came behind, one and all also dismounted. (The bearers) were changed for four youths of seventeen or eighteen, with hats and clothes without a blemish, and while they carried the chair, the whole bevy of matrons followed on foot.

When they reached a creeper-laden gate, the sedan was put down, and all the youths stepped back and retired. The matrons came forward, raised the screen, and supported Tai-yü to descend from the chair.

Lin Tai-yü entered the door with the creepers, resting on the hand of a matron.

On both sides was a verandah, like two outstretched arms. An Entrance Hall stood in the centre, in the middle of which was a door-screen of Ta Li marble, set in an ebony frame. On the other side of this screen were three very small halls. At the back of these came at once an extensive courtyard, belonging to the main building.

In the front part were five parlours, the frieze of the ceiling of which was all carved, and the pillars ornamented. On either side, were covered avenues, resembling passages through a rock. In the side-rooms were suspended cages, full of parrots of every colour, thrushes, and birds of every description.

On the terrace-steps, sat several waiting maids, dressed in red and green, and the whole company of them advanced, with beaming faces, to greet them, when they saw the party approach. “Her venerable ladyship,” they said, “was at this very moment thinking of you, miss, and, by a strange coincidence, here you are.”

Three or four of them forthwith vied with each other in raising the door curtain, while at the same time was heard some one announce: “Miss Lin has arrived.”

No sooner had she entered the room, than she espied two servants supporting a venerable lady, with silver-white hair, coming forward to greet her. Convinced that this lady must be her grandmother, she was about to prostrate herself and pay her obeisance, when she was quickly clasped in the arms of her grandmother, who held her close against her bosom; and as she called her “my liver! my flesh!” (my love! my darling!) she began to sob aloud.

The bystanders too, at once, without one exception, melted into tears; and Tai-yü herself found some difficulty in restraining her sobs. Little by little the whole party succeeded in consoling her, and Tai-yü at length paid her obeisance to her grandmother. Her ladyship thereupon pointed them out one by one to Tai-yü. “This,” she said, “is the wife of your uncle, your mother’s elder brother; this is the wife of your uncle, her second brother; and this is your eldest sister-in-law Chu, the wife of your senior cousin Chu.”

Tai-yü bowed to each one of them (with folded arms).

“Ask the young ladies in,” dowager lady Chia went on to say; “tell them a guest from afar has just arrived, one who comes for the first time; and that they may not go to their lessons.”

The servants with one voice signified their obedience, and two of them speedily went to carry out her orders.

Not long after three nurses and five or six waiting-maids were seen ushering in three young ladies. The first was somewhat plump in figure and of medium height; her cheeks had a congealed appearance, like a fresh lichee; her nose was glossy like goose fat. She was gracious, demure, and lovable to look at.

The second had sloping shoulders, and a slim waist. Tall and slender was she in stature, with a face like the egg of a goose. Her eyes so beautiful, with their well-curved eyebrows, possessed in their gaze a bewitching flash. At the very sight of her refined and elegant manners all idea of vulgarity was forgotten.
The third was below the medium size, and her mien was, as yet, childlike.

In their head ornaments, jewelry, and dress, the get-up of the three young ladies was identical.

Tai-yü speedily rose to greet them and to exchange salutations. After they had made each other’s acquaintance, they all took a seat, whereupon the servants brought the tea. Their conversation was confined to Tai-yü’s mother,—how she had fallen ill, what doctors had attended her, what medicines had been given her, and how she had been buried and mourned; and dowager lady Chia was naturally again in great anguish.

“Of all my daughters,” she remarked, “your mother was the one I loved best, and now in a twinkle, she has passed away, before me too, and I’ve not been able to so much as see her face. How can this not make my heart sore-stricken?”

And as she gave vent to these feelings, she took Tai-yü’s hand in hers, and again gave way to sobs; and it was only after the members of the family had quickly made use of much exhortation and coaxing, that they succeeded, little by little, in stopping her tears.

They all perceived that Tai-yü, despite her youthful years and appearance, was lady-like in her deportment and address, and that though with her delicate figure and countenance, (she seemed as if) unable to bear the very weight of her clothes, she possessed, however, a certain captivating air. And as they readily noticed the symptoms of a weak constitution, they went on in consequence to make inquiries as to what medicines she ordinarily took, and how it was that her complaint had not been cured.

“I have,” explained Tai-yü, “been in this state ever since I was born; though I’ve taken medicines from the very time I was able to eat rice, up to the present, and have been treated by ever so many doctors of note, I’ve not derived any benefit. In the year when I was yet only three, I remember a mangy-headed bonze coming to our house, and saying that he would take me along, and make a nun of me; but my father and mother would, on no account, give their consent. ‘As you cannot bear to part from her and to give her up,’ he then remarked, ‘her ailment will, I fear, never, throughout her life, be cured. If you wish to see her all right, it is only to be done by not letting her, from this day forward, on any account, listen to the sound of weeping, or see, with the exception of her parents, any relatives outside the family circle. Then alone will she be able to go through this existence in peace and in quiet.’ No one heeded the nonsensical talk of this raving priest; but here am I, up to this very day, dosing myself with ginseng pills as a tonic.”

“What a lucky coincidence!” interposed dowager lady Chia; “some of these pills are being compounded here, and I’ll simply tell them to have an extra supply made; that’s all.”

Hardly had she finished these words, when a sound of laughter was heard from the back courtyard. “Here I am too late!” the voice said, “and not in time to receive the distant visitor!”

“Every one of all these people,” reflected Tai-yü, “holds her peace and suppresses the very breath of her mouth; and who, I wonder, is this coming in this reckless and rude manner?”

While, as yet, preoccupied with these thoughts, she caught sight of a crowd of married women and waiting-maids enter from the back room, pressing round a regular beauty.

The attire of this person bore no similarity to that of the young ladies. In all her splendour and lustre, she looked like a fairy or a goddess. In her coiffure, she had a band of gold filigree work, representing the eight precious things, inlaid with pearls; and wore pins, at the head of each of which were five phoenixes in a rampant position, with pendants of pearls. On her neck, she had a reddish gold necklet, like coiled dragons, with a fringe of tassels. On her person, she wore a tight-sleeved jacket, of dark red flowered satin, covered with hundreds of butterflies, embroidered in gold, interspersed with flowers. Over all, she had a variegated stiff-silk pelisse, lined with slate-blue ermine; while her nether garments consisted of a jupe of kingfisher-colour foreign crepe, brocaded with flowers.

She had a pair of eyes, triangular in shape like those of the red phoenix, two eyebrows, curved upwards at each temple, like willow leaves. Her stature was elegant; her figure graceful; her powdered face like dawning spring, majestic, yet not haughty. Her carnation lips, long before they parted, betrayed a smile.

Tai-yü eagerly rose and greeted her.

Old lady Chia then smiled. “You don’t know her,” she observed. “This is a cunning vixen, who has made quite a name in this establishment! In Nanking, she went by the appellation of vixen, and if you simply call her Feng
Vixen, it will do."

Tai-yü was just at a loss how to address her, when all her cousins informed Tai-yü, that this was her sister-in-law Lien.

Tai-yü had not, it is true, made her acquaintance before, but she had heard her mother mention that her eldest maternal uncle Chia She’s son, Chia Lien, had married the niece of Madame Wang, her second brother's wife, a girl who had, from her infancy, purposely been nurtured to supply the place of a son, and to whom the school name of Wang Hsi-feng had been given.

Tai-yü lost no time in returning her smile and saluting her with all propriety, addressing her as my sister-in-law. This Hsi-feng laid hold of Tai-yü’s hand, and minutely scrutinised her, for a while, from head to foot; after which she led her back next to dowager lady Chia, where they both took a seat.

"If really there be a being of such beauty in the world," she consequently observed with a smile, “I may well consider as having set eyes upon it to-day! Besides, in the air of her whole person, she doesn’t in fact look like your granddaughter-in-law, our worthy ancestor, but in every way like your ladyship's own kindred-granddaughter! It’s no wonder then that your venerable ladyship should have, day after day, had her unforgotten, even for a second, in your lips and heart. It’s a pity, however, that this cousin of mine should have such a hard lot! How did it happen that our aunt died at such an early period?"

As she uttered these words, she hastily took her handkerchief and wiped the tears from her eyes.

“I’ve only just recovered from a fit of crying,” dowager lady Chia observed, as she smiled, “and have you again come to start me? Your cousin has only now arrived from a distant journey, and she is so delicate to boot! Besides, we have a few minutes back succeeded in coaxing her to restrain her sobs, so drop at once making any allusion to your former remarks!”

This Hsi-feng, upon hearing these words, lost no time in converting her sorrow into joy.

“Quite right," she remarked. “But at the sight of my cousin, my whole heart was absorbed in her, and I felt happy, and yet wounded at heart: but having disregarded my venerable ancestor's presence, I deserve to be beaten, I do indeed!“

And hastily taking once more Tai-yü’s hand in her own: “How old are you, cousin?” she inquired; “Have you been to school? What medicines are you taking? while you live here, you mustn’t feel homesick; and if there’s anything you would like to eat, or to play with, mind you come and tell me! or should the waiting maids or the matrons fail in their duties, don’t forget also to report them to me.”

Addressing at the same time the matrons, she went on to ask, “Have Miss Lin’s luggage and effects been brought in? How many servants has she brought along with her? Go, as soon as you can, and sweep two lower rooms and ask them to go and rest.”

As she spake, tea and refreshments had already been served, and Hsi-feng herself handed round the cups and offered the fruits.

Upon hearing the question further put by her maternal aunt Secunda, “Whether the issue of the monthly allowances of money had been finished or not yet?” Hsi-feng replied: “The issue of the money has also been completed; but a few moments back, when I went along with several servants to the back upper-loft, in search of the satins, we looked for ever so long, but we saw nothing of the kind of satins alluded to by you, madame, yesterday; so may it not be that your memory misgives you?”

“Whether there be any or not, of that special kind, is of no consequence,” observed Madame Wang. “You should take out,” she therefore went on to add, “any two pieces which first come under your hand, for this cousin of yours to make herself dresses with; and in the evening, if I don’t forget, I’ll send some one to fetch them.”

“I’ve in fact already made every provision,” rejoined Hsi-feng; “knowing very well that my cousin would be arriving within these two days, I have had everything got ready for her. And when you, madame, go back, if you will pass an eye over everything, I shall be able to send them round.”

Madame Wang gave a smile, nodded her head assentingly, but uttered not a word by way of reply.

The tea and fruit had by this time been cleared, and dowager lady Chia directed two old nurses to take Tai-yü to go and see her two maternal uncles; whereupon Chia She’s wife, Madame Hsing, hastily stood up and with a
smiling face suggested, “I’ll take my niece over; for it will after all be considerably better if I go!”

“Quite so!” answered dowager lady Chia, smiling; “you can go home too, and there will be no need for you to come over again!”

Madame Hsing expressed her assent, and forthwith led Tai-yü to take leave of madame Wang. The whole party escorted them as far as the door of the Entrance Hall, hung with creepers, where several youths had drawn a carriage, painted light blue, with a kingfisher-coloured hood.

Madame Hsing led Tai-yü by the hand and they got up into their seats. The whole company of matrons put the curtain down, and then bade the youths raise the carriage; who dragged it along, until they came to an open space, where they at length put the mules into harness.

Going out again by the eastern side gate, they proceeded in an easterly direction, passed the main entrance of the Jung mansion, and entered a lofty doorway painted black. On the arrival in front of the ceremonial gate, they at once dismounted from the curricle, and madame Hsing, hand-in-hand with Tai-yü, walked into the court.

“These grounds,” surmised Tai-yü to herself, “must have been originally converted from a piece partitioned from the garden of the Jung mansion.”

Having entered three rows of ceremonial gates they actually caught sight of the main structure, with its vestibules and porches, all of which, though on a small scale, were full of artistic and unique beauty. They were nothing like the lofty, imposing, massive and luxurious style of architecture on the other side, yet the avenues and rockeries, in the various places in the court, were all in perfect taste.

When they reached the interior of the principal pavilion, a large concourse of handmaids and waiting maids, got up in gala dress, were already there to greet them. Madame Hsing pressed Tai-yü into a seat, while she bade some one go into the outer library and request Mr. Chia She to come over.

In a few minutes the servant returned. “Master,” she explained, “says: ‘that he has not felt quite well for several days, that as the meeting with Miss Lin will affect both her as well as himself, he does not for the present feel equal to seeing each other, that he advises Miss Lin not to feel despondent or homesick; that she ought to feel quite at home with her venerable ladyship, (her grandmother,) as well as her maternal aunts; that her cousins are, it is true, blunt, but that if all the young ladies associated together in one place, they may also perchance dispel some dulness; that if ever (Miss Lin) has any grievance, she should at once speak out, and on no account feel a stranger; and everything will then be right.”

Tai-yü lost no time in respectfully standing up, resuming her seat after she had listened to every sentence of the message to her. After a while, she said goodbye, and though madame Hsing used every argument to induce her to stay for the repast and then leave, Tai-yü smiled and said, “I shouldn’t under ordinary circumstances refuse the invitation to dinner, which you, aunt, in your love kindly extend to me, but I have still to cross over and pay my respects to my maternal uncle Secundus; if I went too late, it would, I fear, be a lack of respect on my part; but I shall accept on another occasion. I hope therefore that you will, dear aunt, kindly excuse me.”

“If such be the case,” madame Hsing replied, “it’s all right.” And presently directing two nurses to take her niece over, in the carriage, in which they had come a while back, Tai-yü thereupon took her leave; madame Hsing escorting her as far as the ceremonial gate, where she gave some further directions to all the company of servants. She followed the curricle with her eyes so long as it remained in sight, and at length retraced her footsteps.

Tai-yü shortly entered the Jung Mansion, descended from the carriage, and preceded by all the nurses, she at once proceeded towards the east, turned a corner, passed through an Entrance Hall, running east and west, and walked in a southern direction, at the back of the Large Hall. On the inner side of a ceremonial gate, and at the upper end of a spacious court, stood a large main building, with five apartments, flanked on both sides byouthouses (stretching out) like the antlers on the head of deer; side-gates, resembling passages through a hill, establishing a thorough communication all round; (a main building) lofty, majestic, solid and grand, and unlike those in the compound of dowager lady Chia.

Tai-yü readily concluded that this at last was the main inner suite of apartments. A raised broad road led in a straight line to the large gate. Upon entering the Hall, and raising her head, she first of all perceived before her a large tablet with blue ground, upon which figured nine dragons of reddish gold. The inscription on this tablet consisted of three characters as large as a peck-measure, and declared that this was the Hall of Glorious Felicity.
At the end, was a row of characters of minute size, denoting the year, month and day, upon which His Majesty had been pleased to confer the tablet upon Chia Yuan, Duke of Jung Kuo. Besides this tablet, were numberless costly articles bearing the autograph of the Emperor. On the large black ebony table, engraved with dragons, were placed three antique blue and green bronze tripods, about three feet in height. On the wall hung a large picture representing black dragons, such as were seen in waiting chambers of the Sui dynasty. On one side stood a gold cup of chased work, while on the other, a crystal casket. On the ground were placed, in two rows, sixteen chairs, made of hard-grained cedar.

There was also a pair of scrolls consisting of black-wood antithetical tablets, inlaid with the strokes of words in chased gold. Their burden was this:

On the platform shine resplendent pearls like sun or moon,
And the sheen of the Hall façade gleams like russet sky.

Below, was a row of small characters, denoting that the scroll had been written by the hand of Mu Shih, a fellow-countryman and old friend of the family, who, for his meritorious services, had the hereditary title of Prince of Tung Ngan conferred upon him.

The fact is that madame Wang was also not in the habit of sitting and resting, in this main apartment, but in three side-rooms on the east, so that the nurses at once led Tai-yü through the door of the eastern wing.

On a stove-couch, near the window, was spread a foreign red carpet. On the side of honour, were laid deep red reclining-cushions, with dragons, with gold cash (for scales), and an oblong brown-coloured sitting-cushion with gold-cash-spotted dragons. On the two sides, stood one of a pair of small teapoys of foreign lacquer of peach-blossom pattern. On the teapoy on the left, were spread out Wen Wang tripods, spoons, chopsticks and scent-bottles. On the teapoy on the right, were vases from the Ju Kiln, painted with girls of great beauty, in which were placed seasonal flowers; (on it were) also teacups, a tea service and the like articles.

On the floor on the west side of the room, were four chairs in a row, all of which were covered with antimacassars, embroidered with silverish-red flowers, while below, at the feet of these chairs, stood four footstools. On either side, was also one of a pair of high teapoys, and these teapoys were covered with teacups and flower vases.

The other nick-nacks need not be minutely described.

The old nurses pressed Tai-yü to sit down on the stove-couch; but, on perceiving near the edge of the couch two embroidered cushions, placed one opposite the other, she thought of the gradation of seats, and did not therefore place herself on the couch, but on a chair on the eastern side of the room; whereupon the waiting maids, in attendance in these quarters, hastened to serve the tea.

While Tai-yü was sipping her tea, she observed the headgear, dress, deportment and manners of the several waiting maids, which she really found so unlike what she had seen in other households. She had hardly finished her tea, when she noticed a waiting maid approach, dressed in a red satin jacket, and a waistcoat of blue satin with scollops.

“My lady requests Miss Lin to come over and sit with her,” she remarked as she put on a smile.

The old nurses, upon hearing this message, speedily ushered Tai-yü again out of this apartment, into the three-roomed small main building by the eastern porch.

On the stove-couch, situated at the principal part of the room, was placed, in a transverse position, a low couch-table, at the upper end of which were laid out, in a heap, books and a tea service. Against the partition-wall, on the east side, facing the west, was a reclining pillow, made of blue satin, neither old nor new.

Madame Wang, however, occupied the lower seat, on the west side, on which was likewise placed a rather shabby blue satin sitting-rug, with a back-cushion; and upon perceiving Tai-yü come in she urged her at once to sit on the east side.

Tai-yü concluded, in her mind, that this seat must certainly belong to Chia Cheng, and espying, next to the couch, a row of three chairs, covered with antimacassars, strewn with embroidered flowers, somewhat also the worse for use, Tai-yü sat down on one of these chairs.

But as madame Wang pressed her again and again to sit on the couch, Tai-yü had at length to take a seat next to her.
“Your uncle,” madame Wang explained, “is gone to observe this day as a fast day, but you’ll see him by and bye. There’s, however, one thing I want to talk to you about. Your three female cousins are all, it is true, everything that is nice; and you will, when later on you come together for study, or to learn how to do needlework, or whenever, at any time, you romp and laugh together, find them all most obliging; but there’s one thing that causes me very much concern. I have here one, who is the very root of retribution, the incarnation of all mischief, one who is a ne’er-do-well, a prince of malignant spirits in this family. He is gone to-day to pay his vows in the temple, and is not back yet, but you will see him in the evening, when you will readily be able to judge for yourself. One thing you must do, and that is, from this time forth, not to pay any notice to him. All these cousins of yours don’t venture to bring any taint upon themselves by provoking him.”

Tai-yü had in days gone by heard her mother explain that she had a nephew, born into the world, holding a piece of jade in his mouth, who was perverse beyond measure, who took no pleasure in his books, and whose sole great delight was to play the giddy dog in the inner apartments; that her maternal grandmother, on the other hand, loved him so fondly that no one ever presumed to call him to account, so that when, in this instance, she heard madame Wang’s advice, she at once felt certain that it must be this very cousin.

“Isn’t it to the cousin born with jade in his mouth, that you are alluding to, aunt?” she inquired as she returned her smile. “When I was at home, I remember my mother telling me more than once of this very cousin, who (she said) was a year older than I, and whose infant name was Pao-yü. She added that his disposition was really wayward, but that he treats all his cousins with the utmost consideration. Besides, now that I have come here, I shall, of course, be always together with my female cousins, while the boys will have their own court, and separate quarters; and how ever will there be any cause of bringing any slur upon myself by provoking him?”

“You don’t know the reasons (that prompt me to warn you),” replied madame Wang laughingly. “He is so unlike all the rest, all because he has, since his youth up, been doated upon by our old lady! The fact is that he has been spoilt, through over-indulgence, by being always in the company of his female cousins! If his female cousins pay no heed to him, he is, at any rate, somewhat orderly, but the day his cousins say one word more to him than usual, much trouble forthwith arises, at the outburst of delight in his heart. That’s why I enjoin upon you not to heed him. From his mouth, at one time, issue sugared words and mellifluous phrases; and at another, like the heavens devoid of the sun, he becomes a raving fool; so whatever you do, don’t believe all he says.”

Tai-yü was assenting to every bit of advice as it was uttered, when unexpectedly she beheld a waiting-maid walk in. “Her venerable ladyship over there,” she said, “has sent word about the evening meal.”

Madame Wang hastily took Tai-yü by the hand, and emerging by the door of the back-room, they went eastwards by the verandah at the back. Past the side gate, was a roadway, running north and south. On the southern side were a pavilion with three divisions and a Reception Hall with a colonnade. On the north, stood a large screen wall, painted white; behind it was a very small building, with a door of half the ordinary size.

“These are your cousin Feng’s rooms,” explained madame Wang to Tai-yü, as she pointed to them smiling. “You’ll know in future your way to come and find her; and if you ever lack anything, mind you mention it to her, and she’ll make it all right.”

At the door of this court, were also several youths, who had recently had the tufts of their hair tied together, who all dropped their hands against their sides, and stood in a respectful posture. Madame Wang then led Tai-yü by the hand through a corridor, running east and west, into what was dowager lady Chia’s back-court. Forthwith they entered the door of the back suite of rooms, where stood, already in attendance, a large number of servants, who, when they saw madame Wang arrive, set to work setting the tables and chairs in order.

Chia Chu’s wife, née Li, served the eatables, while Hsi-feng placed the chopsticks, and madame Wang brought the soup in. Dowager lady Chia was seated all alone on the divan, in the main part of the apartment, on the two sides of which stood four vacant chairs.

Hsi-feng at once drew Tai-yü, meaning to make her sit in the foremost chair on the left side, but Tai-yü steadily and concedingly declined.

“Your aunts and sisters-in-law, standing on the right and left,” dowager lady Chia smilingly explained, “won’t have their repast in here, and as you’re a guest, it’s but proper that you should take that seat.”

Then alone it was that Tai-yü asked for permission to sit down, seating herself on the chair.

Madame Wang likewise took a seat at old lady Chia’s instance; and the three cousins, Ying Ch’un and the others, having craved for leave to sit down, at length came forward, and Ying Ch’un took the first chair on the right, T’an
Ch’un the second, and Hsi Ch’un the second on the left. Waiting maids stood by holding in their hands, flips and finger-bowls and napkins, while Mrs. Li and lady Feng, the two of them, kept near the table advising them what to eat, and pressing them to help themselves.

In the outer apartments, the married women and waiting-maids in attendance, were, it is true, very numerous; but not even so much as the sound of the cawing of a crow could be heard.

The repast over, each one was presented by a waiting-maid, with tea in a small tea tray; but the Lin family had all along impressed upon the mind of their daughter that in order to show due regard to happiness, and to preserve good health, it was essential, after every meal, to wait a while, before drinking any tea, so that it should not do any harm to the intestines. When, therefore, Tai-yü perceived how many habits there were in this establishment unlike those which prevailed in her home, she too had no alternative but to conform herself to a certain extent with them. Upon taking over the cup of tea, servants came once more and presented finger-bowls for them to rinse their mouths, and Tai-yü also rinsed hers; and after they had all again finished washing their hands, tea was eventually served a second time, and this was, at length, the tea that was intended to be drunk.

“You can all go,” observed dowager lady Chia, “and let us alone to have a chat.”

Madame Wang rose as soon as she heard these words, and having made a few irrelevant remarks, she led the way and left the room along with the two ladies, Mrs. Li and lady Feng.

Dowager lady Chia, having inquired of Tai-yü what books she was reading, “I have just begun reading the Four Books,” Tai-yü replied. “What books are my cousins reading?” Tai-yü went on to ask.

“Books, you say!” exclaimed dowager lady Chia; “why all they know are a few characters, that’s all.”

The sentence was barely out of her lips, when a continuous sounding of footsteps was heard outside, and a waiting maid entered and announced that Pao-yü was coming. Tai-yü was speculating in her mind how it was that this Pao-yü had turned out such a good-for-nothing fellow, when he happened to walk in.

He was, in fact, a young man of tender years, wearing on his head, to hold his hair together, a cap of gold of purplish tinge, inlaid with precious gems. Parallel with his eyebrows was attached a circlet, embroidered with gold, and representing two dragons snatching a pearl. He wore an archery-sleeved deep red jacket, with hundreds of butterflies worked in gold of two different shades, interspersed with flowers; and was girded with a sash of variegated silk, with clusters of designs, to which was attached long tassels; a kind of sash worn in the palace. Over all, he had a slate-blue fringed coat of Japanese brocaded satin, with eight bunches of flowers in relief; and wore a pair of light blue satin white-soled, half-dress court-shoes.

His face was like the full moon at mid-autumn; his complexion, like morning flowers in spring; the hair along his temples, as if chiselled with a knife; his eyebrows, as if pencilled with ink; his nose like a suspended gallbladder (a well-cut and shapely nose); his eyes like vernal waves; his angry look even resembled a smile; his glance, even when stern, was full of sentiment.

Round his neck he had a gold dragon necklet with a fringe; also a cord of variegated silk, to which was attached a piece of beautiful jade.

As soon as Tai-yü became conscious of his presence, she was quite taken aback. “How very strange!” she was reflecting in her mind; “it would seem as if I had seen him somewhere or other, for his face appears extremely familiar to my eyes;” when she noticed Pao-yü face dowager lady Chia and make his obeisance. “Go and see your mother and then come back,” remarked her venerable ladyship; and at once he turned round and quitted the room.

On his return, he had already changed his hat and suit. All round his head, he had a fringe of short hair, plaited into small queues, and bound with red silk. The queues were gathered up at the crown, and all the hair, which had been allowed to grow since his birth, was plaited into a thick queue, which looked as black and as glossy as lacquer. Between the crown of the head and the extremity of the queue, hung a string of four large pearls, with pendants of gold, representing the eight precious things. On his person, he wore a long silvery-red coat, more or less old, bestrewn with embroidery of flowers. He had still round his neck the necklet, precious gem, amulet of Recorded Name, philacteries, and other ornaments. Below were partly visible a fir-cone coloured brocaded silk pair of trousers, socks spotted with black designs, with ornamented edges, and a pair of deep red, thick-soled shoes.

(Got up as he was now,) his face displayed a still whiter appearance, as if painted, and his eyes as if they were set
off with carnation. As he rolled his eyes, they brimmed with love. When he gave utterance to speech, he seemed to smile. But the chief natural pleasing feature was mainly centred in the curve of his eyebrows. The ten thousand and one fond sentiments, fostered by him during the whole of his existence, were all amassed in the corner of his eyes.

His outward appearance may have been pleasing to the highest degree, but yet it was no easy matter to fathom what lay beneath it.

There are a couple of roundelays, composed by a later poet, (after the excellent rhythm of the) Hsi Chiang Yueh, which depict Pao-yü in a most adequate manner.

The roundelays run as follows:

To gloom and passion prone, without a rhyme,
Inane and madlike was he many a time,
His outer self, forsooth, fine may have been,
But one wild, howling waste his mind within:
Addled his brain that nothing he could see;
A dunce! to read essays so loth to be!
Perverse in bearing, in temper wayward;
For human censure he had no regard.
When rich, wealth to enjoy he knew not how;
When poor, to poverty he could not bow.
Alas! what utter waste of lustrous grace!
To state, to family what a disgrace!
Of ne’er-do-wells below he was the prime,
Unfilial like him none up to this time.
Ye lads, pampered with sumptuous fare and dress,
Beware! In this youth’s footsteps do not press!

But to proceed with our story.

"You have gone and changed your clothes," observed dowager lady Chia, "before being introduced to the distant guest. Why don’t you yet salute your cousin?"

Pao-yü had long ago become aware of the presence of a most beautiful young lady, who, he readily concluded, must be no other than the daughter of his aunt Lin. He hastened to advance up to her, and make his bow; and after their introduction, he resumed his seat, whence he minutely scrutinised her features, (which he thought) so unlike those of all other girls.

Her two arched eyebrows, thick as clustered smoke, bore a certain not very pronounced frowning wrinkle. She had a pair of eyes, which possessed a cheerful, and yet one would say, a sad expression, overflowing with sentiment. Her face showed the prints of sorrow stamped on her two dimpled cheeks. She was beautiful, but her whole frame was the prey of a hereditary disease. The tears in her eyes glistened like small specks. Her balmy breath was so gentle. She was as demure as a lovely flower reflected in the water. Her gait resembled a frail willow, agitated by the wind. Her heart, compared with that of Pi Kan, had one more aperture of intelligence; while her ailment exceeded (in intensity) by three degrees the ailment of Hsi-Tzu.

Pao-yü, having concluded his scrutiny of her, put on a smile and said,
"This cousin I have already seen in days gone by."

"There you are again with your nonsense," exclaimed lady Chia, sneeringly; "how could you have seen her before?"

"Though I may not have seen her, ere this," observed Pao-yü with a smirk, "yet when I look at her face, it seems so familiar, and to my mind, it would appear as if we had been old acquaintances; just as if, in fact, we were now meeting after a long separation."

"That will do! that will do!" remarked dowager lady Chia; "such being the case, you will be the more intimate."

Pao-yü, thereupon, went up to Tai-yü, and taking a seat next to her, continued to look at her again with all intentness for a good long while.
“Have you read any books, cousin?” he asked.

“I haven’t as yet,” replied Tai-yü, “read any books, as I have only been to school for a year; all I know are simply a few characters.”

“What is your worthy name, cousin?” Pao-yü went on to ask; whereupon Tai-yü speedily told him her name.

“Your style?” inquired Pao-yü; to which question Tai-yü replied, “I have no style.”

“I’ll give you a style,” suggested Pao-yü smilingly; “won’t the double style ‘P’in P’in,’ ‘knitting brows,’ do very well?”

“From what part of the standard books does that come?” T’an Ch’un hastily interposed.

“It is stated in the Thorough Research into the state of Creation from remote ages to the present day,” Pao-yü went on to explain, “that, in the western quarter, there exists a stone, called Tai, (black,) which can be used, in lieu of ink, to blacken the eyebrows with. Besides the eyebrows of this cousin taper in a way, as if they were contracted, so that the selection of these two characters is most appropriate, isn’t it?”

“This is just another plagiarism, I fear,” observed T’an Ch’un, with an ironic smirk.

“Exclusive of the Four Books,” Pao-yü remarked smilingly, “the majority of works are plagiarised; and is it only I, perchance, who plagiarise? Have you got any jade or not?” he went on to inquire, addressing Tai-yü, (to the discomfiture) of all who could not make out what he meant.

“It’s because he has a jade himself,” Tai-yü forthwith reasoned within her mind, “that he asks me whether I have one or not.—No; I haven’t one,” she replied. “That jade of yours is besides a rare object, and how could every one have one?”

As soon as Pao-yü heard this remark, he at once burst out in a fit of his raving complaint, and unclasping the gem, he dashed it disdainfully on the floor. “Rare object, indeed!” he shouted, as he heaped invective on it; “it has no idea how to discriminate the excellent from the mean, among human beings; and do tell me, has it any perception or not? I too can do without this rubbish!”

All those, who stood below, were startled; and in a body they pressed forward, vying with each other as to who should pick up the gem.

Dowager lady Chia was so distressed that she clasped Pao-yü in her embrace. “You child of wrath,” she exclaimed. “When you get into a passion, it’s easy enough for you to beat and abuse people; but what makes you fling away that stem of life?”

Pao-yü’s face was covered with the traces of tears. “All my cousins here, senior as well as junior,” he rejoined, as he sobbed, “have no gem, and if it’s only I to have one, there’s no fun in it, I maintain! and now comes this angelic sort of cousin, and she too has none, so that it’s clear enough that it is no profitable thing.”

Dowager lady Chia hastened to coax him. “This cousin of yours,” she explained, “would, under former circumstances, have come here with a jade; and it’s because your aunt felt unable, as she lay on her death-bed, to reconcile herself to the separation from your cousin, that in the absence of any remedy, she forthwith took the gem belonging to her (daughter), along with her (in the grave); so that, in the first place, by the fulfilment of the rites of burying the living with the dead might be accomplished the filial piety of your cousin; and in the second place, that the spirit of your aunt might also, for the time being, use it to gratify the wish of gazing on your cousin. That’s why she simply told you that she had no jade; for she couldn’t very well have had any desire to give vent to self-praise. Now, how can you ever compare yourself with her? and don’t you yet carefully and circumspectly put it on? Mind, your mother may come to know what you have done!”

As she uttered these words, she speedily took the jade over from the hand of the waiting-maid, and she herself fastened it on for him.

When Pao-yü heard this explanation, he indulged in reflection, but could not even then advance any further arguments.

A nurse came at the moment and inquired about Tai-yü’s quarters, and dowager lady Chia at once added, “Shift Pao-yü along with me, into the warm room of my suite of apartments, and put your mistress, Miss Lin, temporarily
in the green gauze house; and when the rest of the winter is over, and repairs are taken in hand in spring in their rooms, an additional wing can be put up for her to take up her quarters in.”

“My dear ancestor,” ventured Pao-yü; “the bed I occupy outside the green gauze house is very comfortable; and what need is there again for me to leave it and come and disturb your old ladyship’s peace and quiet?”

“Well, all right,” observed dowager lady Chia, after some consideration; “but let each one of you have a nurse, as well as a waiting-maid to attend on you; the other servants can remain in the outside rooms and keep night watch and be ready to answer any call.”

At an early hour, besides, Hsi-feng had sent a servant round with a grey flowered curtain, embroidered coverlets and satin quilts and other such articles.

Tai-yü had brought along with her only two servants; the one was her own nurse, dame Wang, and the other was a young waiting-maid of sixteen, whose name was called Hsüeh Yen. Dowager lady Chia, perceiving that Hsüeh Yen was too youthful and quite a child in her manner, while nurse Wang was, on the other hand, too aged, conjectured that Tai-yü would, in all her wants, not have things as she liked, so she detached two waiting-maids, who were her own personal attendants, named Tzu Chüan and Ying Ko, and attached them to Tai-yü’s service. Just as had Ying Ch’ün and the other girls, each one of whom had besides the wet nurses of their youth, four other nurses to advise and direct them, and exclusive of two personal maids to look after their dress and toilette, four or five additional young maids to do the washing and sweeping of the rooms and the running about backwards and forwards on errands.

Nurse Wang, Tzu Chüan and other girls entered at once upon their attendance on Tai-yü in the green gauze rooms, while Pao-yü’s wet-nurse, dame Li, together with an elderly waiting-maid, called Hsi Jen, were on duty in the room with the large bed.

This Hsi Jen had also been, originally, one of dowager lady Chia’s servant-girls. Her name was in days gone by, Chen Chu. As her venerable ladyship, in her tender love for Pao-yü, had feared that Pao-yü’s servant girls were not equal to their duties, she readily handed her to Pao-yü, as she had hitherto had experience of how sincere and considerate she was at heart.

Pao-yü, knowing that her surname was at one time Hua, and having once seen in some verses of an ancient poet, the line “the fragrance of flowers wafts itself into man,” lost no time in explaining the fact to dowager lady Chia, who at once changed her name into Hsi Jen.

This Hsi Jen had several simple traits. While in attendance upon dowager lady Chia, in her heart and her eyes there was no one but her venerable ladyship, and her alone; and now in her attendance upon Pao-yü, her heart and her eyes were again full of Pao-yü, and him alone. But as Pao-yü was of a perverse temperament and did not heed her repeated injunctions, she felt at heart exceedingly grieved.

At night, after nurse Li had fallen asleep, seeing that in the inner chambers, Tai-yü, Ying Ko and the others had not as yet retired to rest, she disrobed herself, and with gentle step walked in.

“How is it, miss,” she inquired smiling, “that you have not turned in as yet?”

Tai-yü at once put on a smile. “Sit down, sister,” she rejoined, pressing her to take a seat. Hsi Jen sat on the edge of the bed.

“Miss Lin,” interposed Ying Ko smirkingly, “has been here in an awful state of mind! She has cried so to herself, that her eyes were flooded, as soon as she dried her tears. ‘It’s only to-day that I’ve come,’ she said, ‘and I’ve already been the cause of the outbreak of your young master’s failing. Now had he broken that jade, as he hurled it on the ground, wouldn’t it have been my fault? Hence it was that she was so wounded at heart, that I had all the trouble in the world, before I could appease her.”

“Desist at once, Miss! Don’t go on like this,” Hsi Jen advised her; “there will, I fear, in the future, happen things far more strange and ridiculous than this; and if you allow yourself to be wounded and affected to such a degree by a conduct such as his, you will, I apprehend, suffer endless wounds and anguish; so be quick and dispel this over-sensitive nature!”

“What you sisters advise me,” replied Tai-yü, “I shall bear in mind, and it will be all right.”

They had another chat, which lasted for some time, before they at length retired to rest for the night.
The next day, (she and her cousins) got up at an early hour and went over to pay their respects to dowager lady Chia, after which upon coming to madame Wang’s apartments, they happened to find madame Wang and Hsi-feng together, opening the letters which had arrived from Chin Ling. There were also in the room two married women, who had been sent from madame Wang’s elder brother’s wife’s house to deliver a message.

Tai-yü was, it is true, not aware of what was up, but T’an Ch’un and the others knew that they were discussing the son of her mother’s sister, married in the Hsüeh family, in the city of Chin Ling, a cousin of theirs, Hsüeh P’an, who relying upon his wealth and influence had, by assaulting a man, committed homicide, and who was now to be tried in the court of the Ying T’ien Prefecture.

Her maternal uncle, Wang Tzu-t’eng, had now, on the receipt of the tidings, despatched messengers to bring over the news to the Chia family. But the next chapter will explain what was the ultimate issue of the wish entertained in this mansion to send for the Hsüeh family to come to the capital.

CHAPTER IV.

An ill-fated girl happens to meet an ill-fated young man.
The Hu Lu Bonze adjudicates the Hu Lu case.

Tai-yü, for we shall now return to our story, having come, along with her cousin to madame Wang’s apartments, found madame Wang discussing certain domestic occurrences with the messengers, who had arrived from her elder brother’s wife’s home, and conversing also about the case of homicide, in which the family of her mother’s sister had become involved, and other such relevant topics. Perceiving how pressing and perplexing were the matters in which madame Wang was engaged, the young ladies promptly left her apartments, and came over to the rooms of their widow sister-in-law, Mrs. Li.

This Mrs. Li had originally been the spouse of Chia Chu. Although Chu had died at an early age, he had the good fortune of leaving behind him a son, to whom the name of Chia Lan was given. He was, at this period, just in his fifth year, and had already entered school, and applied himself to books.

This Mrs. Li was also the daughter of an official of note in Chin Ling. Her father’s name was Li Shou-chung, who had, at one time, been Imperial Libationer. Among his kindred, men as well as women had all devoted themselves to poetry and letters; but ever since Li Shou-chung continued the line of succession, he readily asserted that the absence of literary attainments in his daughter was indeed a virtue, so that it soon came about that she did not apply herself in real earnest to learning; with the result that all she studied were some parts of the “Four Books for women,” and the “Memoirs of excellent women,” that all she read did not extend beyond a limited number of characters, and that all she committed to memory were the examples of these few worthy female characters of dynasties of yore; while she attached special importance to spinning and female handiwork. To this reason is to be assigned the name selected for her, of Li Wan (Li, the weaver), and the style of Kung Ts’ai (Palace Sempstress).

Hence it was that, though this Li Wan still continued, after the loss of her mate, while she was as yet in the spring of her life, to live amidst affluence and luxury, she nevertheless resembled in every respect a block of rotten wood or dead ashes. She had no inclination whatsoever to inquire after anything or to listen to anything; while her sole and exclusive thought was to wait upon her relatives and educate her son; and, in addition to this, to teach her young sisters-in-law to do needlework and to read aloud.

Tai-yü was, it is true, at this period living as a guest in the Chia mansion, where she certainly had the several young ladies to associate with her, but, outside her aged father, (she thought) there was really no need for her to extend affection to any of the rest.

But we will now speak of Chia Yü-ts’un. Having obtained the appointment of Prefect of Ying T’ien, he had no sooner arrived at his post than a charge of manslaughter was laid before his court. This had arisen from some rivalry between two parties in the purchase of a slave-girl, either of whom would not yield his right; with the result that a serious assault occurred, which ended in homicide.

Yü-ts’un had, with all promptitude, the servants of the plaintiffs brought before him, and subjected them to an examination.

“The victim of the assault,” the plaintiffs deposed, “was your servants’ master. Having on a certain day, purchased a servant-girl, she unexpectedly turned out to be a girl who had been carried away and sold by a kidnapper. This kidnapper had, first of all, got hold of our family’s money, and our master had given out that he would on the third
day, which was a propitious day, take her over into the house, but this kidnapper stealthily sold her over again to
the Hsüeh family. When we came to know of this, we went in search of the seller to lay hold of him, and bring back
the girl by force. But the Hsüeh party has been all along the bully of Chin Ling, full of confidence in his wealth, full
of presumption on account of his prestige; and his arrogant menials in a body seized our master and beat him to
death. The murderous master and his crew have all long ago made good their escape, leaving no trace behind
them, while there only remain several parties not concerned in the affair. Your servants have for a whole year
lodged complaints, but there has been no one to do our cause justice, and we therefore implore your Lordship to
have the bloodstained criminals arrested, and thus conduce to the maintenance of humanity and benevolence; and
the living, as well as the dead, will feel boundless gratitude for this heavenly bounty."

When Yü-ts’un heard their appeal, he flew into a fiery rage. “What!” he exclaimed, “How could a case of such
gravity have taken place as the murder of a man, and the culprits have been allowed to run away scot-free,
without being arrested? Issue warrants, and despatch constables to at once lay hold of the relatives of the
bloodstained criminals and bring them to be examined by means of torture.”

Thereupon he espied a Retainer, who was standing by the judgment-table, wink at him, signifying that he should
not issue the warrants. Yü-t’sun gave way to secret suspicion, and felt compelled to desist.

Withdrawning from the Court-room, he retired into a private chamber, from whence he dismissed his followers,
only keeping this single Retainer to wait upon him.

The Retainer speedily advanced and paid his obeisance. “Your worship,” he said smiling, “has persistently been
rising in official honours, and increasing in wealth so that, in the course of about eight or nine years, you have
forgotten me.”

“Your face is, however, extremely familiar,” observed Yü-ts’un, “but I cannot, for the moment, recall who you are.”

“Honourable people forget many things,” remarked the Retainer, as he smiled. “What! Have you even forgotten
the place where you started in life? and do you not remember what occurred, in years gone by, in the Hu Lu
Temple?”

Yü-ts’un was filled with extreme astonishment; and past events then began to dawn upon him.

The fact is that this Retainer had been at one time a young priest in the Hu Lu temple; but as, after its destruction
by fire, he had no place to rest his frame, he remembered how light and easy was, after all, this kind of
occupation, and being unable to reconcile himself to the solitude and quiet of a temple, he accordingly availed
himself of his years, which were as yet few, to let his hair grow, and become a retainer.

Yü-ts’un had had no idea that it was he. Hastily taking his hand in his, he smilingly observed, “You are, indeed, an
old acquaintance!” and then pressed him to take a seat, so as to have a chat with more ease, but the Retainer
would not presume to sit down.

“Friendships,” Yü-ts’un remarked, putting on a smiling expression, “contracted in poor circumstances should not
be forgotten! This is a private room; so that if you sat down, what would it matter?”

The Retainer thereupon craved permission to take a seat, and sat down gingerly, all awry.

“Why did you, a short while back,” Yü-ts’un inquired, “not allow me to issue the warrants?”

“Your illustrious office,” replied the Retainer, “has brought your worship here, and is it likely you have not
transcribed some philactery of your post in this province!”

“What is an office-philactery?” asked Yü-ts’un with alacrity.

“Now-a-days,” explained the Retainer, “those who become local officers provide themselves invariably with a
secret list, in which are entered the names and surnames of the most influential and affluent gentry of note in the
province. This is in vogue in every province. Should inadvertently, at any moment, one give umbrage to persons of
this status, why, not only office, but I fear even one’s life, it would be difficult to preserve. That’s why these lists
are called office-philacteries. This Hsüeh family, just a while back spoken of, how could your worship presume to
provoke? This case in question affords no difficulties whatever in the way of a settlement; but the prefects, who
have held office before you, have all, by doing violence to the feelings and good name of these people, come to the
end they did.”

As he uttered these words, he produced, from inside a purse which he had handy, a transcribed office-philactery,
which he handed over to Yü-ts’un; who upon perusal, found it full of trite and unpolished expressions of public opinion, with regard to the leading clans and notable official families in that particular district. They ran as follows:

The “Chia” family is not “chia,” a myth; white jade form the Halls; gold compose their horses! The “A Fang” Palace is three hundred li in extent, but is no fit residence for a “Shih” of Chin Ling. The eastern seas lack white jade beds, and the “Lung Wang,” king of the Dragons, has come to ask for one of the Chin Ling Wang, (Mr. Wang of Chin Ling.) In a plenteous year, snow, (Hsüeh,) is very plentiful; their pearls and gems are like sand, their gold like iron.

Scarcely had Yü-ts’un done reading, when suddenly was heard the announcement, communicated by the beating of a gong, that Mr. Wang had come to pay his respects.

Yü-ts’un hastily adjusted his official clothes and hat, and went out of the room to greet and receive the visitor. Returning after a short while he proceeded to question the Retainer (about what he had been perusing.)

“These four families,” explained the Retainer, “are all interlaced by ties of relationship, so that if you offend one, you offend all; if you honour one, you honour all. For support and protection, they all have those to take care of their interests! Now this Hsüeh, who is charged with homicide, is indeed the Hsüeh implied by ‘in a plenteous year, (Hsüeh,) snow, is very plentiful.’ In fact, not only has he these three families to rely upon, but his (father’s) old friends, and his own relatives and friends are both to be found in the capital, as well as abroad in the provinces; and they are, what is more, not few in number. Who is it then that your Worship purposes having arrested?”

When Yü-ts’un had heard these remarks, he forthwith put on a smile and inquired of the Retainer, “If what you say be true, how is then this lawsuit to be settled? Are you also perchance well aware of the place of retreat of this homicide?”

“I don’t deceive your Worship,” the Retainer ventured smiling, “when I say that not only do I know the hiding-place of this homicide, but that I also am acquainted with the man who kidnapped and sold the girl; I likewise knew full well the poor devil and buyer, now deceased. But wait, and I’ll tell your worship all, with full details. This person, who succumbed to the assault, was the son of a minor gentry. His name was Feng Yuan. His father and mother are both deceased, and he has likewise no brothers. He looked after some scanty property in order to eke out a living. His age was eighteen or nineteen; and he had a strong penchant for men’s, and not much for women’s society. But this was too the retribution (for sins committed) in a previous existence! for coming, by a strange coincidence, in the way of this kidnapper, who was selling the maid, he straightway at a glance fell in love with this girl, and made up his mind to purchase her and make her his second wife; entering an oath not to associate with any male friends, nor even to marry another girl. And so much in earnest was he in this matter that he had to wait until after the third day before she could enter his household (so as to make the necessary preparations for the marriage). But who would have foreseen the issue? This kidnapper quietly disposed of her again by sale to the Hsüeh family; his intention being to pocket the price-money from both parties, and effect his escape. Contrary to his calculations, he couldn’t after all run away in time, and the two buyers laid hold of him and beat him, till he was half dead; but neither of them would take his coin back, each insisting upon the possession of the girl. But do you think that young gentleman, Mr. Hsüeh, would yield his claim to her person? Why, he at once summoned his servants and bade them have recourse to force; and, taking this young man Feng, they assailed him till they made mincemeat of him. He was then carried back to his home, where he finally died after the expiry of three days. This young Mr. Hsüeh had previously chosen a day, on which he meant to set out for the capital, and though he had beaten the young man Feng to death, and carried off the girl, he nevertheless behaved in the manner of a man who had had no concern in the affair. And all he gave his mind to was to take his family and go along on his way; but not in any wise in order to evade (the consequences) of this (occurrence). This case of homicide, (he looked upon) as a most trivial and insignificant matter, which, (he thought), his brother and servants, who were on the spot, would be enough to settle. But, however, enough of this person. Now does your worship know who this girl is who was sold?”

“How could I possibly know?” answered Yü-ts’un.

“And yet,” remarked the Retainer, as he laughed coldly, “this is a person to whom you are indebted for great obligations; for she is no one else than the daughter of Mr. Chen, who lived next door to the Hu Lu temple. Her infant name is ‘Ying Lien.’”

“What! is it really she?” exclaimed Yü-ts’un full of surprise. “I heard that she had been kidnapped, ever since she was five years old; but has she only been sold recently?”
“Kidnappers of this kind,” continued the Retainer, “only abduct infant girls, whom they bring up till they reach the age of twelve or thirteen, when they take them into strange districts and dispose of them through their agents. In days gone by, we used daily to coax this girl, Ying Lien, to romp with us, so that we got to be exceedingly friendly. Hence it is that though, with the lapse of seven or eight years, her mien has assumed a more surpassingly lovely appearance, her general features have, on the other hand, undergone no change; and this is why I can recognise her. Besides, in the centre of her two eyebrows, she had a spot, of the size of a grain of rice, of carnation colour, which she has had ever since she was born into the world. This kidnapper, it also happened, rented my house to live in; and on a certain day, on which the kidnapper was not at home, I even set her a few questions. She said, ‘that the kidnapper had so beaten her, that she felt intimidated, and couldn't on any account, venture to speak out; simply averring that the kidnapper was her own father, and that, as he had no funds to repay his debts, he had consequently disposed of her by sale!’ I tried time after time to induce her to answer me, but she again gave way to tears and added no more than: ‘I don’t really remember anything of my youth.’ Of this, anyhow, there can be no doubt; on a certain day the young man Feng and the kidnapper met, said the money was paid down; but as the kidnapper happened to be intoxicated, Ying Lien exclaimed, as she sighed: ‘My punishment has this day been consummated!’ Later on again, when she heard that young Feng would, after three days, have her taken over to his house, she once more underwent a change and put on such a sorrowful look that, unable to brook the sight of it, I waited till the kidnapper went out, when I again told my wife to go and cheer her by representing to her that this Mr. Feng’s fixed purpose to wait for a propitious day, on which to come and take her over, was ample proof that he would not look upon her as a servant-girl. ‘Furthermore,’ (explained my wife to her), ‘he is a sort of person exceedingly given to fast habits, and has at home ample means to live upon, so that if, besides, with his extreme aversion to women, he actually purchases you now, at a fancy price, you should be able to guess the issue, without any explanation. You have to bear suspense only for two or three days, and what need is there to be sorrowful and dejected?’ After these assurances, she became somewhat composed, flattering herself that she would from henceforth have a home of her own.

“But who would believe that the world is but full of disappointments! On the succeeding day, it came about that the kidnapper again sold her to the Hsüeh family! Had he disposed of her to any other party, no harm would anyhow have resulted; but this young gentleman Hsüeh, who is nicknamed by all, ‘the Foolish and overbearing Prince,’ is the most perverse and passionate being in the whole world. What is more, he throws money away as if it were dust. The day on which he gave the thrashing with blows like falling leaves and flowing water, he dragged (lit. pull alive, drag dead) Ying Lien away more dead than alive, by sheer force, and no one, even up to this date, is aware whether she be among the dead or the living. This young Feng had a spell of empty happiness; for (not only) was his wish not fulfilled, but on the contrary he spent money and lost his life; and was not this a lamentable case?”

When Yü-ts’un heard this account he also heaved a sigh. “This was indeed,” he observed, “a retribution in store for them! Their encounter was likewise not accidental; for had it been, how was it that this Feng Yüan took a fancy to Ying Lien?

“This Ying Lien had, during all these years, to endure much harsh treatment from the hands of the kidnapper, and had, at length, obtained the means of escape; and being besides full of warm feeling, had he actually made her his wife, and had they come together, the event would certainly have been happy; but, as luck would have it, there occurred again this contretemps.

“This Hsüeh is, it is true, more laden with riches and honours than Feng was, but when we bear in mind what kind of man he is he certainly, with his large bevy of handmaids, and his licentious and inordinate habits, cannot ever be held equal to Feng Yüan, who had set his heart upon one person! This may appositely be termed a fantastic sentimental destiny, which, by a strange coincidence, befell a couple consisting of an ill-fated young fellow and girl! But why discuss third parties? The only thing now is how to decide this case, so as to put things right.”

“Your worship,” remarked the Retainer smiling, “displayed, in years gone by, such great intelligence and decision, and how is it that today you, on the contrary, become a person without any resources! Your servant has heard that the promotion of your worship to fill up this office is due to the exertions of the Chia and Wang families; and as this Hsüeh P’an is a relative of the Chia mansion, why doesn’t your worship take your craft along with the stream, and bring, by the performance of a kindness, this case to an issue, so that you may again in days to come, be able to go and face the two Dukes Chia and Wang?”

“What you suggest,” replied Yü-ts’un, “is, of course, right enough; but this case involves a human life, and honoured as I have been, by His Majesty the Emperor, by a restoration to office, and selection to an appointment, how can I at the very moment, when I may strain all my energies to show my gratitude, by reason of a private consideration, set the laws at nought? This is a thing which I really haven’t the courage to do.”

“What your worship says is naturally right and proper,” remarked the Retainer at these words, smiling
Yü-ts’un drooped his head for a considerable time.

“What is there in your idea to be done?” he at length inquired.

“Your servant,” responded the Retainer, “has already devised a most excellent plan. It’s this: To-morrow, when your Lordship sits in court, you should, merely for form’s sake, make much ado, by despatching letters and issuing warrants for the arrest of the culprits. The murderer will naturally not be forthcoming; and as the plaintiffs will be strong in their displeasure, you will of course have some members of the clan of the Hsüeh family, together with a few servants and others, taken into custody, and examined under torture, when your servant will be behind the scenes to bring matters to a settlement, by bidding them report that the victim had succumbed to a sudden ailment, and by urging the whole number of the kindred, as well as the headmen of the place, to hand in a declaration to that effect. Your Worship can aver that you understand perfectly how to write charms in dust, and conjure the spirit; having had an altar, covered with dust, placed in the court, you should bid the military and people to come and look on to their heart’s content. Your Worship can give out that the divining spirit has declared: ‘that the deceased, Feng Yüan, and Hsüeh P’an had been enemies in a former life, that having now met in the narrow road, their destinies were consummated; that Hsüeh P’an has, by this time, contracted some indescribable disease and perished from the effects of the persecution of the spirit of Feng.’ That as the calamity had originated entirely from the action of the kidnapper, exclusive of dealing with the kidnapper according to law, the rest need not be interfered with, and so on. Your servant will be in the background to speak to the kidnapper and urge him to make a full confession; and when people find that the response of the divining spirit harmonizes with the statements of the kidnapper, they will, as a matter of course, entertain no suspicion.

“The Hsüeh family have plenty of money, so that if your Worship adjudicates that they should pay five hundred, they can afford it, or one thousand will also be within their means; and this sum can be handed to the Feng family to meet the outlay of burning incense and burial expenses. The Feng family are, besides, people of not much consequence, and (the fuss made by them) being simply for money, they too will, when they have got the cash in hand, have nothing more to say. But may it please your worship to consider carefully this plan and see what you think of it?”

“It isn’t a safe course! It isn’t a safe course!” Yü-ts’un observed as he smiled. “Let me further think and deliberate; and possibly by succeeding in suppressing public criticism, the matter might also be settled.”

These two closed their consultation by a fixed determination, and the next day, when he sat in judgment, he marked off a whole company of the plaintiffs as well as of the accused, as were mentioned by name, and had them brought before him. Yü-ts’un examined them with additional minuteness, and discovered in point of fact, that the inmates of the Feng family were extremely few, that they merely relied upon this charge with the idea of obtaining some compensation for joss-sticks and burials; and that the Hsüeh family, presuming on their prestige and confident of patronage, had been obstinate in the refusal to make any mutual concession, with the result that confusion had supervened, and that no decision had been arrived at.

Following readily the bent of his feelings, Yü-ts’un disregarded the laws, and adjudicated this suit in a random way; and as the Feng family came in for a considerable sum, with which to meet the expense for incense and the funeral, they had, after all, not very much to say (in the way of objections.)

With all despatch, Yü-ts’un wrote and forwarded two letters, one to Chia Cheng, and the other to Wang Tzu-t’eng, at that time commander-in-chief of a Metropolitan Division, simply informing them: that the case, in which their worthy nephew was concerned, had come to a close, and that there was no need for them to give way to any extreme solicitude.

This case had been settled through the exclusive action of the young priest of the Hu Lu temple, now an official Retainer; and Yü-ts’un, apprehending, on the other hand, lest he might in the presence of others, divulge the circumstances connected with the days gone by, when he was in a state of penury, naturally felt very unhappy in his mind. But at a later period, he succeeded, by ultimately finding in him some shortcoming, and deporting him to a far-away place, in setting his fears at rest.

But we will put Yü-ts’un on one side, and refer to the young man Hsüeh, who purchased Ying Lien, and assaulted Feng Yuan to death.
He too was a native of Chin Ling and belonged to a family literary during successive generations; but this young Hsüeh had recently, when of tender age, lost his father, and his widowed mother out of pity for his being the only male issue and a fatherless child, could not help doating on him and indulging him to such a degree, that when he, in course of time, grew up to years of manhood, he was good for nothing.

In their home, furthermore, was the wealth of a millionaire, and they were, at this time, in receipt of an income from His Majesty’s privy purse, for the purvey of various articles.

This young Hsüeh went at school under the name of P’an. His style was Wen Ch’i. His natural habits were extravagant; his language haughty and supercilious. He had, of course, also been to school, but all he knew was a limited number of characters, and those not well. The whole day long, his sole delight was in cock-fighting and horse-racing, rambling over hills and doing the sights.

Though a Purveyor, by Imperial appointment, he had not the least idea of anything relating to matters of business or of the world. All he was good for was: to take advantage of the friendships enjoyed by his grandfather in days of old, to present himself at the Board of Revenue to perfunctorily sign his name and to draw the allowance and rations; while the rest of his affairs he, needless to say, left his partners and old servants of the family to manage for him.

His widowed mother, a Miss Wang, was the youngest sister of Wang Tzu-t’eng, whose present office was that of Commander-in-Chief of a Metropolitan Division; and was, with Madame Wang, the spouse of Chia Cheng, of the Jung Kuo Mansion, sisters born of one mother. She was, in this year, more or less forty years of age and had only one son: this Hsüeh P’an.

She also had a daughter, who was two years younger than Hsüeh P’an, and whose infant name was Pao Ch’ai. She was beautiful in appearance, and elegant and refined in deportment. In days gone by, when her father lived, he was extremely fond of this girl, and had her read books and study characters, so that, as compared with her brother, she was actually a hundred times his superior. Having become aware, ever since her father’s death, that her brother could not appease the anguish of her mother’s heart, she at once dispelled all thoughts of books, and gave her sole mind to needlework, to the menage and other such concerns, so as to be able to participate in her mother’s sorrow, and to bear the fatigue in lieu of her.

As of late the Emperor on the Throne held learning and propriety in high esteem, His Majesty called together and singled out talent and ability, upon which he deigned to display exceptional grace and favour. Besides the number called forth from private life and chosen as Imperial secondary wives, the daughters of families of hereditary official status and renown were without exception, reported by name to the authorities, and communicated to the Board, in anticipation of the selection for maids in waiting to the Imperial Princesses and daughters of Imperial Princes in their studies, and for filling up the offices of persons of eminence, to urge them to become excellent.

Ever since the death of Hsüeh P’an’s father, the various assistants, managers and partners, and other employes in the respective provinces, perceiving how youthful Hsüeh P’an was in years, and how much he lacked worldly experience, readily availed themselves of the time to begin swindling and defrauding. The business, carried on in various different places in the capital, gradually also began to fall off and to show a deficit.

Hsüeh P’an had all along heard that the capital was the one place for gaieties, and was just entertaining the idea of going on a visit, when he eagerly jumped at the opportunity (that presented itself,) first of all to escort his sister, who was going to wait for the selection, in the second place to see his relatives, and in the third to enter personally the capital, (professedly) to settle up long-standing accounts, and to make arrangements for new outlays, but, in reality, with the sole purpose of seeing the life and splendour of the metropolis.

He therefore, had, at an early period, got ready his baggage and small luggage, as well as the presents for relatives and friends, things of every description of local production, presents in acknowledgment of favours received, and other such effects, and he was about to choose a day to start on his journey when unexpectedly he came in the way of the kidnapper who offered Ying Lien for sale. As soon as Hsüeh P’an saw how distinguee Ying Lien was in her appearance, he formed the resolution of buying her; and when he encountered Feng Yüan, come with the object of depriving him of her, he in the assurance of superiority, called his sturdy menials together, who set upon Feng Yüan and beat him to death. Forthwith collecting all the affairs of the household, and entrusting them one by one to the charge of some members of the clan and several elderly servants of the family, he promptly took his mother, sister and others and after all started on his distant journey, while the charge of homicide he, however, treated as child’s play, flattering himself that if he spent a few filthy pieces of money, there was no doubt as to its settlement.
He had been on his journey how many days, he had not reckoned, when, on a certain day, as they were about to enter the capital, he furthermore heard that his maternal uncle, Wang Tzu-t’eng, had been raised to the rank of Supreme Governor of nine provinces, and had been honoured with an Imperial command to leave the capital and inspect the frontiers.

Hsüeh P’an was at heart secretly elated. “I was just lamenting,” he thought, “that on my visit to the capital, I would have my maternal uncle to exercise control over me, and that I wouldn’t be able to gambol and frisk to my heart’s content, but now that he is leaving the capital, on promotion, it’s evident that Heaven accomplishes man’s wishes.”

As he consequently held consultation with his mother; “Though we have,” he argued, “several houses of our own in the capital, yet for these last ten years or so, there has been no one to live in them, and the people charged with the looking after them must unavoidably have stealthily rented them to some one or other. It’s therefore needful to let servants go ahead to sweep and get the place in proper order, before we can very well go ourselves.”

“What need is there to go to such trouble?” retorted his mother; “the main object of our present visit to the capital is first of all to pay our respects to our relatives and friends; and it is, either at your elder uncle’s, my brother’s place, or at your other uncle’s, my sister’s husband’s home, both of which families’ houses are extremely spacious, that we can put up provisionally, and by and bye, at our ease, we can send servants to make our house tidy. Now won’t this be a considerable saving of trouble?”

“My uncle, your brother,” suggested Hsüeh P’an, “has just been raised to an appointment in an outside province, so that, of course, in his house, things must be topsy-turvey, on account of his departure; and should we betake ourselves, like a hive of bees and a long trail, to him for shelter; won’t we appear very inconsiderate?”

“Your uncle,” remarked his mother, “is, it is true, going on promotion, but there’s besides the house of your aunt, my sister. What is more, during these last few years from both your uncle’s and aunt’s have, time after time, been sent messages, and letters forwarded, asking us to come over; and now that we’ve come, is it likely, though your uncle is busy with his preparations to start on his journey, that your aunt of the Chia family won’t do all she can to press us to stay? Besides, were we to have our house got ready in a scramble, won’t it make people think it strange? I however know your idea very well that were we kept to stay at your uncle’s and aunt’s, you won’t escape being under strict restraint, unlike what would be the case were we to live in our own house, as you would be free then to act as you please! Such being the case, go, on your own account, and choose some place to take up your quarters in, while I myself, who have been separated from your aunt and cousins for these several years, would however like to stay with them for a few days; and I’ll go along with your sister and look up your aunt at her home. What do you say; will this suit you or not?”

Hsüeh P’an, upon hearing his mother speak in this strain, knew well enough that he could not bring her round from her determination; and he had no help but to issue the necessary directions to the servants to make straight for the Jung Kuo mansion. Madame Wang had by this time already come to know that in the lawsuit, in which Hsüeh P’an was concerned, Chia Yü-ts’un had fortunately intervened and lent his good offices, and was at length more composed in her mind. But when she again saw that her eldest brother had been advanced to a post on the frontier, she was just deploring that, deprived of the intercourse of the relatives of her mother’s family, how doubly lonely she would feel; when, after the lapse of a few days, some one of the household brought the unexpected announcement that “our lady, your sister, has, with the young gentleman, the young lady and her whole household, entered the capital and have dismounted from their vehicles outside the main entrance.” This news so delighted Madame Wang that she rushed out, with a few attendants, to greet them in the large Entrance Hall, and brought Mrs. Hsüeh and the others into her house.

The two sisters were now reunited, at an advanced period of their lives, so that mixed feelings of sorrow and joy thronged together, but on these it is, of course, needless to dilate.

After conversing for a time on what had occurred, subsequent to their separation, Madame Wang took them to pay their obeisance to Dowager lady Chia. They then handed over the various kinds of presents and indigenous articles, and after the whole family had been introduced, a banquet was also spread to greet the guests.

Hsüeh P’an, having paid his respects to Chia Cheng and Chia Lien, was likewise taken to see Chia She, Chia Chen and the other members.

Chia Cheng sent a messenger to tell Madame Wang that “‘aunt’ Hsüeh had already seen many springs and autumns, while their nephew was of tender age, with no experience, so that there was every fear, were he to live outside, that something would again take place. In the South-east corner of our compound,” (he sent word,) “there are in the Pear Fragrance Court, over ten apartments, all of which are vacant and lying idle; and we were to tell
the servants to sweep them, and invite ‘aunt’ Hsüeh and the young gentleman and lady to take up their quarters there, it would be an extremely wise thing.”

Madame Wang had in fact been entertaining the wish to keep them to live with them, when dowager lady Chia also sent some one to say that, “Mrs. Hsüeh should be asked to put up in the mansion in order that a greater friendliness should exist between them all.”

Mrs. Hsüeh herself had all along been desirous to live in one place with her relatives, so as to be able to keep a certain check over her son, fearing that, if they lived in a separate house outside, the natural bent of his habits would run riot, and that some calamity would be brought on; and she therefore, there and then, expressed her sense of appreciation, and accepted the invitation. She further privately told madame Wang in clear terms, that every kind of daily expense and general contribution would have to be entirely avoided and withdrawn as that would be the only thing to justify her to make any protracted stay. And madame Wang aware that she had, in her home, no difficulty in this line, promptly in fact complied with her wishes.

From this date it was that “aunt” Hsüeh and her children took up their quarters in the Pear Fragrance Court.

This Court of Pear Fragrance had, we must explain, been at one time used as a place for the quiet retirement of the Duke Jung in his advanced years. It was on a small scale, but ingeniously laid out. There were, at least, over ten structures. The front halls and the back houses were all in perfect style. There was a separate door giving on to the street, and the people of the household of Hsüeh P’an used this door to go in and out. At the south-west quarter, there was also a side door, which communicated with a narrow roadway. Beyond this narrow road, was the eastern court of madame Wang’s principal apartment; so that every day, either after her repast, or in the evening, Mrs. Hsüeh would readily come over and converse, on one thing and another, with dowager lady Chia, or have a chat with madame Wang; while Pao-ch’ai came together, day after day, with Tai yü, Ying-ch’un, her sisters and the other girls, either to read, to play chess, or to do needlework, and the pleasure which they derived was indeed perfect.

Hsüeh P’an however had all along from the first instance, been loth to live in the Chia mansion, as he dreaded that with the discipline enforced by his uncle, he would not be able to be his own master; but his mother had made up her mind so positively to remain there, and what was more, every one in the Chia mansion was most pressing in their efforts to keep them, that there was no alternative for him but to take up his quarters temporarily there, while he at the same time directed servants to go and sweep the apartments of their own house, with a view that they should move into them when they were ready.

But, contrary to expectation, after they had been in their quarters for not over a month, Hsüeh P’an came to be on intimate relations with all the young men among the kindred of the Chia mansion, the half of whom were extravagant in their habits, so that great was, of course, his delight to frequent them. To-day, they would come together to drink wine; the next day to look at flowers. They even assembled to gamble, to dissipate and to go everywhere and anywhere; leading, with all their enticements, Hsüeh P’an so far astray, that he became far worse, by a hundred times, than he was hitherto.

Although it must be conceded that Chia Cheng was in the education of his children quite correct, and in the control of his family quite systematic, yet in the first place, the clan was so large and the members so numerous, that he was unable to attend to the entire supervision; and, in the second place, the head of the family, at this period, was Chia Chen, who, as the eldest grandchild of the Ning mansion, had likewise now come into the inheritance of the official status, with the result that all matters connected with the clan devolved upon his sole and exclusive control. In the third place, public as well as private concerns were manifold and complex, and being a man of negligent disposition, he estimated ordinary affairs of so little consequence that any respite from his official duties he devoted to no more than the study of books and the playing of chess.

Furthermore, this Pear Fragrance Court was separated by two rows of buildings from his quarters and was also provided with a separate door opening into the street, so that, being able at their own heart’s desire to go out and to come in, these several young fellows could well indulge their caprices, and gratify the bent of their minds.

Hence it was that Hsüeh P’an, in course of time gradually extinguished from his memory every idea of shifting their quarters.

But what transpired, on subsequent days, the following chapter will explain.
CHAPTER V.

The spirit of Chia Pao-yü visits the confines of the Great Void.
The Monitory Vision Fairy expounds, in ballads, the Dream of the Red Chamber.

Having in the fourth Chapter explained, to some degree, the circumstances attending the settlement of the mother and children of the Hsüeh family in the Jung mansion, and other incidental matters, we will now revert to Lin Tai-yü.

Ever since her arrival in the Jung mansion, dowager lady Chia showed her the highest sympathy and affection, so that in everything connected with sleeping, eating, rising and accommodation she was on the same footing as Pao-yü; with the result that Ying Ch’un, Hsi Ch’un and T’an Ch’un, her three granddaughters, had after all to take a back seat. In fact, the intimate and close friendliness and love which sprung up between the two persons Pao-yü and Tai-yü, was, in the same degree, of an exceptional kind, as compared with those existing between the others. By daylight they were wont to walk together, and to sit together. At night, they would desist together, and rest together. Really it was a case of harmony in language and concord in ideas, of the consistency of varnish or of glue, (a close friendship), when at this unexpected juncture there came this girl, Hsüeh Pao-ch’ai, who, though not very much older in years (than the others), was, nevertheless, in manner so correct, and in features so beautiful that the consensus of opinion was that Tai-yü herself could not come up to her standard.

What is more, in her ways Pao-Ch’ai was so full of good tact, so considerate and accommodating, so unlike Tai-yü, who was supercilious, self-confident, and without any regard for the world below, that the natural consequence was that she soon completely won the hearts of the lower classes. Even the whole number of waiting-maids would also for the most part, play and joke with Pao-ch’ai. Hence it was that Tai-yü fostered, in her heart, considerable feelings of resentment, but of this however Pao-ch’ai had not the least inkling.

Pao-yü was, likewise, in the prime of his boyhood, and was, besides, as far as the bent of his natural disposition was concerned, in every respect absurd and perverse; regarding his cousins, whether male or female, one and all with one common sentiment, and without any distinction whatever between the degrees of distant or close relationship. Sitting and sleeping, as he now was under the same roof with Tai-yü in dowager lady Chia’s suite of rooms, he naturally became comparatively more friendly with her than with his other cousins; and this friendliness led to greater intimacy and this intimacy once established, rendered unavoidable the occurrence of the blight of harmony from unforeseen slight pretexts.

These two had had on this very day, for some unknown reason, words between them more or less unfriendly, and Tai-yü was again sitting all alone in her room, giving way to tears. Pao-yü was once more within himself quite conscience-smitten for his ungraceful remarks, and coming forward, he humbly made advances, until, at length, Tai-yü little by little came round.

As the plum blossom, in the eastern part of the garden of the Ning mansion, was in full bloom, Chia Chen’s spouse, Mrs. Yu, made preparations for a collation, (purposing) to send invitations to dowager lady Chia, mesdames Hsing, and Wang, and the other members of the family, to come and admire the flowers; and when the day arrived the first thing she did was to take Chia Jung and his wife, the two of them, and come and ask them round in person. Dowager lady Chia and the other inmates crossed over after their early meal; and they at once promenaded the Hui Fang (Concentrated Fragrance) Garden. First tea was served, and next wine; but the entertainment was no more than a family banquet of the kindred of the two mansions of Ning and Jung, so that there was a total lack of any novel or original recreation that could be put on record.

After a little time, Pao-yü felt tired and languid and inclined for his midday siesta. “Take good care,” dowager lady Chia enjoined some of them, “and stay with him, while he rests for a while, when he can come back;” whereupon Chia Jung’s wife, Mrs. Ch’in, smiled and said with eagerness: “We got ready in here a room for uncle Pao, so let your venerable ladyship set your mind at ease. Just hand him over to my charge, and he will be quite safe. Mothers and sisters,” she continued, addressing herself to Pao-yü’s nurses and waiting maids, “invite uncle Pao to follow me in here.”

Dowager lady Chia had always been aware of the fact that Mrs. Ch’in was a most trustworthy person, naturally courteous and scrupulous, and in every action likewise so benign and gentle; indeed the most estimable among the whole number of her great grandsons’ wives, so that when she saw her about to go and attend to Pao-yü, she felt that, for a certainty, everything would be well.
Mrs. Ch’in, there and then, led away a company of attendants, and came into the rooms inside the drawing room. Pao-yü, upon raising his head, and catching sight of a picture hung on the upper wall, representing a human figure, in perfect style, the subject of which was a portrait of Yen Li, speedily felt his heart sink within him.

There was also a pair of scrolls, the text of which was:

A thorough insight into worldly matters arises from knowledge;
A clear perception of human nature emanates from literary lore.

On perusal of these two sentences, albeit the room was sumptuous and beautifully laid out, he would on no account remain in it. “Let us go at once,” he hastened to observe, “let us go at once.”

Mrs. Ch’in upon hearing his objections smiled. “If this,” she said, “is really not nice, where are you going? if you won’t remain here, well then come into my room.”

Pao-yü nodded his head and gave a faint grin.

“Where do you find the propriety,” a nurse thereupon interposed, “of an uncle going to sleep in the room of a nephew’s wife?”

“Ai ya!” exclaimed Mrs. Ch’in laughing, “I don’t mind whether he gets angry or not (at what I say); but how old can he be as to reverentially shun all these things? Why my brother was with me here last month; didn’t you see him? he’s, true enough, of the same age as uncle Pao, but were the two of them to stand side by side, I suspect that he would be much higher in stature.”

“How is it,” asked Pao-yü, “that I didn’t see him? Bring him along and let me have a look at him!”

“He’s separated,” they all ventured as they laughed, “by a distance of twenty or thirty li, and how can he be brought along? but you’ll see him some day.”

As they were talking, they reached the interior of Mrs. Ch’in’s apartments. As soon as they got in, a very faint puff of sweet fragrance was wafted into their nostrils. Pao-yü readily felt his eyes itch and his bones grow weak. “What a fine smell!” he exclaimed several consecutive times.

Upon entering the apartments, and gazing at the partition wall, he saw a picture the handiwork of T’ang Po-hu, consisting of Begonias drooping in the spring time; on either side of which was one of a pair of scrolls, written by Ch’in Tai-hsü, a Literary Chancellor of the Sung era, running as follows:

A gentle chill doth circumscribe the dreaming man, because the spring is cold.
The fragrant whiff, which wafts itself into man’s nose, is the perfume of wine!

On the table was a mirror, one which had been placed, in days of yore, in the Mirror Palace of the Emperor Wu Tse-t’ien. On one side stood a gold platter, in which Fei Yen, who lived in the Ch’ao state, used to stand and dance. In this platter, was laid a quince, which An Lu-shan had flung at the Empress T’ai Chen, inflicting a wound on her breast. In the upper part of the room, stood a divan ornamented with gems, on which the Emperor’s daughter, Shou Ch’ang, was wont to sleep, in the Han Chang Palace Hanging, were curtains embroidered with strings of pearls, by T’ung Ch’ang, the Imperial Princess.

“It’s nice in here, it’s nice in here,” exclaimed Pao-yü with a chuckle.

“This room of mine,” observed Mrs. Ch’in smilingly, “is I think, good enough for even spirits to live in!” and, as she uttered these words, she with her own hands, opened a gauze coverlet, which had been washed by Hsi Shih, and removed a bridal pillow, which had been held in the arms of Hung Niang. Instantly, the nurses attended to Pao-yü, until he had laid down comfortably; when they quietly dispersed, leaving only the four waiting maids: Hsi Jen, Ch’iu Wen, Ch’ing Wen and She Yueh to keep him company.

“Mind be careful, as you sit under the eaves,” Mrs. Ch’in recommended the young waiting maids, “that the cats do not start a fight!”

Pao-yü then closed his eyes, and, little by little, became drowsy, and fell asleep.

It seemed to him just as if Mrs. Ch’in was walking ahead of him. Forthwith, with listless and unsettled step, he
followed Mrs. Ch’in to some spot or other, where he saw carnation-like railings, jade-like steps, verdant trees and limpid pools—a spot where actually no trace of any human being could be met with, where of the shifting mundane dust little had penetrated.

Pao-yü felt, in his dream, quite delighted. “This place,” he mused, “is pleasant, and I may as well spend my whole lifetime in here! though I may have to lose my home, I’m quite ready for the sacrifice, for it’s far better being here than being flogged, day after day, by father, mother, and teacher.”

While he pondered in this erratic strain, he suddenly heard the voice of some human being at the back of the rocks, giving vent to this song:

Like scattering clouds doth fleet a vernal dream;  
The transient flowers pass like a running stream;  
Maidens and youths bear this, ye all, in mind;  
In useless grief what profit will ye find?

Pao-yü perceived that the voice was that of a girl. The song was barely at an end, when he soon espied in the opposite direction, a beautiful girl advancing with majestic and elastic step; a girl quite unlike any ordinary mortal being. There is this poem, which gives an adequate description of her:

Lo she just quits the willow bank; and sudden now she issues from the flower-bedecked house;  
As onward alone she speeds, she startles the birds perched in the trees, by the pavilion; to which as she draws nigh, her shadow flits by the verandah!  
Her fairy clothes now flutter in the wind! a fragrant perfume like unto musk or olea is wafted in the air; Her apparel lotus-like is sudden wont to move; and the jingle of her ornaments strikes the ear.  
Her dimpled cheeks resemble, as they smile, a vernal peach; her kingfisher coiffure is like a cumulus of clouds; her lips part cherry-like; her pomegranate-like teeth conceal a fragrant breath.  
Her slender waist, so beauteous to look at, is like the skipping snow wafted by a gust of wind; the sheen of her pearls and kingfisher trinkets abounds with splendour, green as the feathers of a duck, and yellow as the plumes of a goose; Now she issues to view, and now is hidden among the flowers; beautiful she is when displeased, beautiful when in high spirits; with lissome step, she treads along the pond, as if she soars on wings or sways in the air.  
Her eyebrows are crescent moons, and knit under her smiles; she speaks, and yet she seems no word to utter; her lotus-like feet with ease pursue their course; she stops, and yet she seems still to be in motion; the charms of her figure all vie with ice in purity, and in splendour with precious gems; Lovely is her brilliant attire, so full of grandeur and refined grace.  
Loveable her countenance, as if moulded from some fragrant substance, or carved from white jade; elegant is her person, like a phoenix, dignified like a dragon soaring high.  
What is her chastity like? Like a white plum in spring with snow nestling in its broken skin; Her purity? Like autumn orchids bedecked with dewdrops.  
Her modesty? Like a fir-tree growing in a barren plain; Her comeliness? Like russet clouds reflected in a limpid pool.  
Her gracefulness? Like a dragon in motion wriggling in a stream; Her refinement? Like the rays of the moon shooting on to a cool river.  
Sure is she to put Hsi Tzu to shame! Bound to put Wang Ch’iang to the blush! What a remarkable person! Where was she born? and whence does she come?  
One thing is true that in Fairy-land there is no second like her! that
in the Purple Courts of Heaven there is no one fit to be her peer!
Forsooth, who can it be, so surpassingly beautiful!

Pao-yü, upon realising that she was a fairy, was much elated; and with eagerness advanced and made a bow.

“My divine sister,” he ventured, as he put on a smile. “I don’t know whence you come, and whither you are going. Nor have I any idea what this place is, but I make bold to entreat that you would take my hand and lead me on.”

“My abode,” replied the Fairy, “is above the Heavens of Divested Animosities, and in the ocean of Discharged Sorrows. I’m the Fairy of Monitory Vision, of the cave of Drooping Fragrance, in the mount of Emitted Spring, within the confines of the Great Void. I preside over the voluptuous affections and sensual debts among the mortal race, and supervise in the dusty world, the envies of women and the lusts of man. It’s because I’ve recently come to hear that the retribution for voluptuousness extends up to this place, that I betake myself here in order to find suitable opportunities of disseminating mutual affections. My encounter with you now is also not a matter of accident! This spot is not distant from my confines. I have nothing much there besides a cup of the tender buds of tea plucked by my own hands, and a pitcher of luscious wine, fermented by me as well as several spritelike singing and dancing maidens of great proficiency, and twelve ballads of spiritual song, recently completed, on the Dream of the Red Chamber; but won’t you come along with me for a stroll?”

Pao-yü, at this proposal, felt elated to such an extraordinary degree that he could skip from joy, and there and then discarding from his mind all idea of where Mrs. Ch’in was, he readily followed the Fairy.

They reached some spot, where there was a stone tablet, put up in a horizontal position, on which were visible the four large characters: “The confines of the Great Void,” on either side of which was one of a pair of scrolls, with the two antithetical sentences:

When falsehood stands for truth, truth likewise becomes false;
When naught be made to aught, aught changes into naught!

Past the Portal stood the door of a Palace, and horizontally, above this door, were the four large characters: “The Sea of Retribution, the Heaven of Love.” There were also a pair of scrolls, with the inscription in large characters:

Passion, alas! thick as the earth, and lofty as the skies, from ages past to the present hath held incessant sway;
How pitiful your lot! ye lustful men and women envious, that your voluptuous debts should be so hard to pay!

Pao-yü, after perusal, communed with his own heart. “Is it really so!” he thought, “but I wonder what implies the passion from old till now, and what are the voluptuous debts! Henceforward, I must enlighten myself!”

Pao-yü was bent upon this train of thoughts when he unwittingly attracted several evil spirits into his heart, and with speedy step he followed in the track of the fairy, and entered two rows of doors when he perceived that the Lateral Halls were, on both sides, full of tablets and scrolls, the number of which he could not in one moment ascertain. He however discriminated in numerous places the inscriptions: The Board of Lustful Love; the Board of contracted grudges; The Board of Matutinal sobs; the Board of nocturnal tears; the Board of vernal affections; and the Board of autumnal anguish.

After he had perused these inscriptions, he felt impelled to turn round and address the Fairy. “May I venture to trouble my Fairy,” he said, “to take me along for a turn into the interior of each of these Boards? May I be allowed, I wonder, to do so?”

“Inside each of these Boards,” explained the Fairy, “are accumulated the registers with the records of all women of the whole world; of those who have passed away, as well as of those who have not as yet come into it, and you, with your mortal eyes and human body, could not possibly be allowed to know anything in anticipation.”

But would Pao-yü, upon hearing these words, submit to this decree? He went on to implore her permission again and again, until the Fairy casting her eye upon the tablet of the board in front of her observed, “Well, all right! you may go into this board and reap some transient pleasure.”

Pao-yü was indescribably joyous, and, as he raised his head, he perceived that the text on the tablet consisted of the three characters: the Board of Ill-fated lives; and that on each side was a scroll with the inscription:

Upon one’s self are mainly brought regrets in spring and autumn gloom;
A face, flowerlike may be, and moonlike too; but beauty all for whom?

Upon perusal of the scroll Pao-yü was, at once, the more stirred with admiration; and, as he crossed the door, and reached the interior, the only things that struck his eye were about ten large presses, the whole number of which were sealed with paper slips; on every one of these slips, he perceived that there were phrases peculiar to each province.

Pao-yü was in his mind merely bent upon discerning, from the rest, the slip referring to his own native village, when he espied, on the other side, a slip with the large characters: “the Principal Record of the Twelve Maidens of Chin Ling.”

“What is the meaning,” therefore inquired Pao-yü, “of the Principal
Record of the Twelve Maidens of Chin Ling?”

“As this is the record,” explained the Fairy, “of the most excellent and prominent girls in your honourable province, it is, for this reason, called the Principal Record.”

“I’ve often heard people say,” observed Pao-yü, “that Chin Ling is of vast extent; and how can there only be twelve maidens in it! why, at present, in our own family alone, there are more or less several hundreds of young girls!”

The Fairy gave a faint smile. “Through there be,” she rejoined, “so large a number of girls in your honourable province, those only of any note have been selected and entered in this record. The two presses, on the two sides, contain those who are second best; while, for all who remain, as they are of the ordinary run, there are, consequently, no registers to make any entry of them in.”

Pao-yü upon looking at the press below, perceived the inscription: “Secondary Record of the twelve girls of Chin Ling;” while again in another press was inscribed: “Supplementary Secondary Record of the Twelve girls of Chin Ling.” Forthwith stretching out his hand, Pao-yü opened first the doors of the press, containing the “supplementary secondary Record,” extracted a volume of the registers, and opened it. When he came to examine it, he saw on the front page a representation of something, which, though bearing no resemblance to a human being, presented, at the same time, no similitude to scenery; consisting simply of huge blotches made with ink.

The whole paper was full of nothing else but black clouds and turbid mists, after which appeared the traces of a few characters, explaining that—

A cloudless moon is rare forsooth to see,
And pretty clouds so soon scatter and flee!
Thy heart is deeper than the heavens are high,
Thy frame consists of base ignominy!
Thy looks and clever mind resentment will provoke,
And thine untimely death vile slander will evoke!
A loving noble youth in vain for love will yearn.

After reading these lines, Pao-yü looked below, where was pictured a bouquet of fresh flowers and a bed covered with tattered matting. There were also several distiches running as follows:

Thy self-esteem for kindly gentleness is but a fancy vain!
Thy charms that they can match the olea or orchid, but thoughts inane!
While an actor will, envious lot! with fortune’s smiles be born,
A youth of noble birth will, strange to say, be luckless and forlorn.

Pao-yü perused these sentences, but could not unfold their meaning, so, at once discarding this press, he went over and opened the door of the press of the “Secondary Records” and took out a book, in which, on examination, he found a representation of a twig of Olea fragrans. Below, was a pond, the water of which was parched up and the mud dry, the lotus flowers decayed, and even the roots dead. At the back were these lines:

The lotus root and flower but one fragrance will give;
How deep alas! the wounds of thy life’s span will be;
What time a desolate tree in two places will live,
Back to its native home the fragrant ghost will flee!

Pao-yü read these lines, but failed to understand what they meant. He then went and fetched the “Principal Record,” and set to looking it over. He saw on the first page a picture of two rotten trees, while on these trees was suspended a jade girdle. There was also a heap of snow, and under this snow was a golden hair-pin. There were in
addition these four lines in verse:

Bitter thy cup will be, e’en were the virtue thine to stop the loom,
Thine though the gift the willow fluff to sing, pity who will thy doom?
High in the trees doth hang the girdle of white jade,
And lo! among the snow the golden pin is laid!

To Pao-yü the meaning was again, though he read the lines over, quite unintelligible. He was, about to make inquiries, but he felt convinced that the Fairy would be both to divulge the decrees of Heaven; and though intent upon discarding the book, he could not however tear himself away from it. Forthwith, therefore, he prosecuted a further perusal of what came next, when he caught sight of a picture of a bow. On this bow hung a citron. There was also this ode:

Full twenty years right and wrong to expound will be thy fate!
What place pomegranate blossoms come in bloom will face the Palace Gate!
The third portion of spring, of the first spring in beauty short will fall!
When tiger meets with hare thou wilt return to sleep perennial.

Further on, was also a sketch of two persons flying a kite; a broad expanse of sea, and a large vessel; while in this vessel was a girl, who screened her face bedewed with tears. These four lines were likewise visible:

Pure and bright will be thy gifts, thy purpose very high;
But born thou wilt be late in life and luck be passed by;
At the tomb feast thou wilt repine tearful along the stream,
East winds may blow, but home miles off will be, even in dream.

After this followed a picture of several streaks of fleeting clouds, and of a creek whose waters were exhausted, with the text:

Riches and honours too what benefit are they?
In swaddling clothes thou’lt be when parents pass away;
The rays will slant, quick as the twinkle of an eye;
The Hsiang stream will recede, the Ch’u clouds onward fly!

Then came a picture of a beautiful gem, which had fallen into the mire, with the verse:

Thine aim is chastity, but chaste thou wilt not be;
Abstraction is thy faith, but void thou may’st not see;
Thy precious, gemlike self will, pitiful to say,
Into the mundane mire collapse at length some day.

A rough sketch followed of a savage wolf, in pursuit of a beautiful girl, trying to pounce upon her as he wished to devour her. This was the burden of the distich:

Thy mate is like a savage wolf prowling among the hills;
His wish once gratified a haughty spirit his heart fills!
Though fair thy form like flowers or willows in the golden moon,
Upon the yellow beam to hang will shortly be its doom.

Below, was an old temple, in the interior of which was a beautiful person, just in the act of reading the religious manuals, as she sat all alone; with this inscription:

In light esteem thou hold’st the charms of the three springs for their short-liv’d fate;
Thine attire of past years to lay aside thou chang’st, a Taoist dress to don;
How sad, alas! of a reputed house and noble kindred the scion,
Alone, behold! she sleeps under a glimmering light, an old idol for mate.
Next in order came a hill of ice, on which stood a hen-phoenix, while under it was this motto:

When time ends, sure coincidence, the phoenix doth alight;
The talents of this human form all know and living see,
For first to yield she kens, then to control, and third genial to be;
But sad to say, things in Chin Ling are in more sorry plight.

This was succeeded by a representation of a desolate village, and a dreary inn. A pretty girl sat in there, spinning thread. These were the sentiments affixed below:

When riches will have flown will honours then avail?
When ruin breaks your home, e’en relatives will fail!
But sudden through the aid extended to Dame Liu,
A friend in need fortune will make to rise for you.

Following these verses, was drawn a pot of Orchids, by the side of which, was a beautiful maiden in a phoenix-crown and cloudy mantle (bridal dress); and to this picture was appended this device:

What time spring wanes, then fades the bloom of peach as well as plum!
Who ever can like a pot of the olea be winsome!
With ice thy purity will vie, vain their envy will be!
In vain a laughing-stock people will try to make of thee.

At the end of this poetical device, came the representation of a lofty edifice, on which was a beauteous girl, suspending herself on a beam to commit suicide; with this verse:

Love high as heav’n, love ocean-wide, thy lovely form will don;
What time love will encounter love, license must rise wanton;
Why hold that all impiety in Jung doth find its spring,
The source of trouble, verily, is centred most in Ning.

Pao-yü was still bent upon prosecuting his perusal, when the Fairy perceiving that his intellect was eminent and bright, and his natural talents quickwitted, and apprehending lest the decrees of heaven should be divulged, hastily closed the Book of Record, and addressed herself to Pao-yü. “Come along with me,” she said smiling, “and see some wonderful scenery. What’s the need of staying here and beating this gourd of ennui?”

In a dazed state, Pao-yü listlessly discarded the record, and again followed in the footsteps of the Fairy. On their arrival at the back, he saw carnation portières, and embroidered curtains, ornamented pillars, and carved eaves. But no words can adequately give an idea of the vermilion apartments glistening with splendour, of the floors garnished with gold, of the snow reflecting lustrous windows, of the palatial mansions made of gems. He also saw fairyland flowers, beautiful and fragrant, and extraordinary vegetation, full of perfume. The spot was indeed elysian.

He again heard the Fairy observe with a smiling face: “Come out all of you at once and greet the honoured guest!”

These words were scarcely completed, when he espied fairies walk out of the mansion, all of whom were, with their dangling lotus sleeves, and their fluttering feather habiliments, as comely as spring flowers, and as winsome as the autumn moon. As soon as they caught sight of Pao-yü, they all, with one voice, resentfully reproached the Monitory Vision Fairy. “Ignorant as to who the honoured guest could be,” they argued, “we hastened to come out to offer our greetings simply because you, elder sister, had told us that, on this day, and at this very time, there would be sure to come on a visit, the spirit of the younger sister of Chiang Chu. That’s the reason why we’ve been waiting for ever so long; and now why do you, in lieu of her, introduce this vile object to contaminate the confines of pure and spotless maidens?”

As soon as Pao-yü heard these remarks, he was forthwith plunged in such a state of consternation that he would have retired, but he found it impossible to do so. In fact, he felt the consciousness of the foulness and corruption of his own nature quite intolerable. The Monitory Vision Fairy promptly took Pao-yü’s hand in her own, and turning towards her younger sisters, smiled and explained: “You, and all of you, are not aware of the why and wherefore. To-day I did mean to have gone to the Jung mansion to fetch Chiang Chu, but as I went by the Ning mansion, I unexpectedly came across the ghosts of the two dukes of Jung and Ning, who addressed me in this wise: ‘Our family has, since the dynasty established itself on the Throne, enjoyed merit and fame, which pervaded many ages, and riches and honours transmitted from generation to generation. One hundred years have already elapsed, but this good fortune has now waned, and this propitious luck is exhausted; so much so that they could
not be retrieved! Our sons and grandsons may be many, but there is no one among them who has the means to continue the family estate, with the exception of our kindred grandson, Pao-yü alone, who, though perverse in disposition and wayward by nature, is nevertheless intelligent and quick-witted and qualified in a measure to give effect to our hopes. But alas! the good fortune of our family is entirely decayed, so that we fear there is no person to incite him to enter the right way! Fortunately you worthy fairy come at an unexpected moment, and we venture to trust that you will, above all things, warn him against the foolish indulgence of inordinate desire, lascivious affections and other such things, in the hope that he may, at your instigation, be able to escape the snares of those girls who will allure him with their blandishments, and to enter on the right track; and we two brothers will be ever grateful.'

"On language such as this being addressed to me, my feelings of commiseration naturally burst forth; and I brought him here, and bade him, first of all, carefully peruse the records of the whole lives of the maidens in his family, belonging to the three grades, the upper, middle and lower, but as he has not yet fathomed the import, I have consequently led him into this place to experience the vision of drinking, eating, singing and licentious love, in the hope, there is no saying, of his at length attaining that perception."

Having concluded these remarks, she led Pao-yü by the hand into the apartment, where he felt a whiff of subtle fragrance, but what it was that reached his nostrils he could not tell.

To Pao-yü's eager and incessant inquiries, the Fairy made reply with a sardonic smile. "This perfume," she said, "is not to be found in the world, and how could you discern what it is? This is made of the essence of the first sprouts of rare herbs, growing on all hills of fame and places of superior excellence, admixed with the oil of every species of splendid shrubs in precious groves, and is called the marrow of Conglomerated Fragrance."

At these words Pao-yü was, of course, full of no other feeling than wonder.

The whole party advanced and took their seats, and a young maidservant presented tea, which Pao-yü found of pure aroma, of excellent flavour and of no ordinary kind. "What is the name of this tea?" he therefore asked; upon which the Fairy explained. "This tea," she added, "originates from the Hills of Emitted Spring and the Valley of Drooping Fragrance, and is, besides, brewed in the night dew, found on spiritual plants and divine leaves. The name of this tea is 'one thousand red in one hole.'"

At these words Pao-yü nodded his head, and extolled its qualities. Espying in the room lutes, with jasper mountings, and tripods, inlaid with gems, antique paintings, and new poetical works, which were to be seen everywhere, he felt more than ever in a high state of delight. Below the windows, were also shreds of velvet sputtered about and a toilet case stained with the traces of time and smudged with cosmetic; while on the partition wall was likewise suspended a pair of scrolls, with the inscription:

A lonesome, small, ethereal, beauteous nook!
What help is there, but Heaven's will to brook?

Pao-yü having completed his inspection felt full of admiration, and proceeded to ascertain the names and surnames of the Fairies. One was called the Fairy of Lustful Dreams; another "the High Ruler of Propagated Passion;" the name of one was "the Golden Maiden of Perpetuated Sorrow;" of another the "Intelligent Maiden of Transmitted Hatred." (In fact,) the respective Taoist appellations were not of one and the same kind.

In a short while, young maid-servants came in and laid the table, put the chairs in their places, and spread out wines and eatables. There were actually crystal tankards overflowing with luscious wines, and amber glasses full to the brim with pearly strong liquors. But still less need is there to give any further details about the sumptuousness of the refreshments.

Pao-yü found it difficult, on account of the unusual purity of the bouquet of the wine, to again restrain himself from making inquiries about it.

"This wine," observed the Monitory Dream Fairy, "is made of the twigs of hundreds of flowers, and the juice of ten thousands of trees, with the addition of must composed of unicorn marrow, and yeast prepared with phoenix milk. Hence the name of 'Ten thousand Beauties in one Cup' was given to it."

Pao-yü sang its incessant praise, and, while he sipped his wine, twelve dancing girls came forward, and requested to be told what songs they were to sing.

"Take," suggested the Fairy, "the newly-composed Twelve Sections of the
The singing girls signified their obedience, and forthwith they lightly clapped the castagnettes and gently thrummed the virginals. These were the words which they were heard to sing:

At the time of the opening of the heavens and the laying out of the earth chaos prevailed.

They had just sung this one line when the Fairy exclaimed: “This ballad is unlike the ballads written in the dusty world whose purport is to hand down remarkable events, in which the distinction of scholars, girls, old men and women, and fools is essential, and in which are furthermore introduced the lyrics of the Southern and Northern Palaces. These fairy songs consist either of elegaic effusions on some person or impressions of some occurrence or other, and are impromptu songs readily set to the music of wind or string instruments, so that any one who is not cognisant of their gist cannot appreciate the beauties contained in them. So you are not likely, I fear, to understand this lyric with any clearness; and unless you first peruse the text and then listen to the ballad, you will, instead of pleasure, feel as if you were chewing wax (devoid of any zest).”

After these remarks, she turned her head round, and directed a young maid-servant to fetch the text of the Dream of the Red Chamber, which she handed to Pao-yü, who took it over; and as he followed the words with his eyes, with his ears he listened to the strains of this song:

Preface of the Dream of the Red Chamber.—When the Heavens were opened and earth was laid out chaos prevailed! What was the germ of love? It arises entirely from the strength of licentious love.

What day, by the will of heaven, I felt wounded at heart, and what time I was at leisure, I made an attempt to disburden my sad heart; and with this object in view I indited this Dream of the Bed Chamber, on the subject of a disconsolate gold trinket and an unfortunate piece of jade.

Waste of a whole Lifetime. All maintain that the match between gold and jade will be happy. All I can think of is the solemn oath contracted in days gone by by the plant and stone! Vain will I gaze upon the snow, Hsüeh, [Pao-ch’ai], pure as crystal and lustrous like a gem of the eminent priest living among the hills! Never will I forget the noiseless Fairy Grove, Lin [Tai-yü], beyond the confines of the mortal world! Alas! now only have I come to believe that human happiness is incomplete; and that a couple may be bound by the ties of wedlock for life, but that after all their hearts are not easy to lull into contentment.

Vain knitting of the brows. The one is a spirit flower of Fairyland; the other is a beautiful jade without a blemish. Do you maintain that their union will not be remarkable? Why how then is it that he has come to meet her again in this existence? If the union will you say, be strange, how is it then that their love affair will be but empty words? The one in her loneliness will give way to useless sighs. The other in vain will yearn and crave. The one will be like the reflection of the moon in water; the other like a flower reflected in a mirror. Consider, how many drops of tears can there be in the eyes? and how could they continue to drop from autumn to winter and from spring to flow till summer time?

But to come to Pao-yü. After he had heard these ballads, so diffuse and vague, he failed to see any point of beauty in them; but the plaintive melody of the sound was nevertheless sufficient to drive away his spirit and exhilarate his soul. Hence it was that he did not make any inquiries about the arguments, and that he did not ask about the matter treated, but simply making these ballads the means for the time being of dispelling melancholy, he therefore went on with the perusal of what came below.

Despicable Spirit of Death! You will be rejoicing that glory is at its height when hateful death will come once again, and with eyes wide with horror, you will discard all things, and dimly and softly the fragrant spirit will waste and dissolve! You will yearn for native home, but distant will be the way, and lofty the mountains. Hence it is that you will betake yourself in search of father and mother, while they lie under the influence of a dream, and hold discourse with them. “Your child,” you will say, “has already trodden the path of death! Oh my parents, it behoves you to speedily retrace your steps and make good your escape!”

Separated from Relatives. You will speed on a journey of three thousand li at the mercy of wind and rain, and tear yourself from all your family ties and your native home! Your fears will be lest anguish should do any harm to your parents in their failing years! “Father and mother,” you will bid them, “do not think with any anxiety of your child. From ages past poverty as well as success have both had a fixed destiny; and is it likely that separation and reunion are not subject to predestination? Though we may now be far apart in two different places, we must each of us try and preserve good cheer. Your abject child has, it is true, gone from home, but abstain from distressing yourselves on her account!”
Sorrows in the midst of joy. While wrapped as yet in swaddling clothes, father and mother, both alas! will depart, and dwell though you will in that mass of gauze, who is there who will know how to spoil you with any fond attention? Born you will be fortunately with ample moral courage, and high-minded and boundless resources, for your parents will not have, in the least, their child’s secret feelings at heart! You will be like a moon appearing to view when the rain holds up, shedding its rays upon the Jade Hall; or a gentle breeze (wafting its breath upon it). Wedded to a husband, fairy like fair and accomplished, you will enjoy a happiness enduring as the earth and perennial as the Heavens! and you will be the means of snapping asunder the bitter fate of your youth! But, after all, the clouds will scatter in Kao T’ang and the waters of the Hsiang river will get parched! This is the inevitable destiny of dissolution and continuance which prevails in the mortal world, and what need is there to indulge in useless grief?

Intolerable to the world. Your figure will be as winsome as an olea fragrans; your talents as ample as those of a Fairy! You will by nature be so haughty that of the whole human race few will be like you! You will look upon a meat diet as one of dirt, and treat splendour as coarse and loathsome! And yet you will not be aware that your high notions will bring upon you the excessive hatred of man! You will be very eager in your desire after chastity, but the human race will despise you! Alas, you will wax old in that antique temple hall under a faint light, where you will waste ungrateful for beauty, looks and freshness! But after all you will still be worldly, corrupt and unmindful of your vows; just like a spotless white jade you will be whose fate is to fall into the mire! And what need will there be for the grandson of a prince or the son of a duke to deplore that his will not be the good fortune (of winning your affections)?

The Voluptuary. You will resemble a wolf in the mountains! a savage beast devoid of all human feeling! Regardless in every way of the obligations of days gone by, your sole pleasure will be in the indulgence of haughtiness, extravagance, licentiousness and dissolute habits! You will be inordinate in your conjugal affections, and look down upon the beautiful charms of the child of a marquis, as if they were cat-tail rush or willow; trampling upon the honourable daughter of a ducal mansion, as if she were one of the common herd. Pitiful to say, the fragrant spirit and beauteous ghost will in a year softly and gently pass away!

The Perception that all things are transient like flowers. You will look lightly upon the three springs and regard the blush of the peach and the green of the willow as of no avail. You will beat out the fire of splendour, and treat solitary retirement as genial! What is it that you say about the delicate peaches in the heavens (marriage) being excellent, and the petals of the almond in the clouds being plentiful (children)? Let him who has after all seen one of them, (really a mortal being) go safely through the autumn, (wade safely through old age), behold the people in the white Poplar village groan and sigh; and the spirits under the green maple whine and moan! Still more wide in expanse than even the heavens is the dead vegetation which covers the graves! The moral is this, that the burden of man is poverty one day and affluence another; that bloom in spring, and decay in autumn, constitute the doom of vegetable life! In the same way, this calamity of birth and the visitation of death, who is able to escape? But I have heard it said that there grows in the western quarter a tree called the P’o So (Patient Bearing) which bears the fruit of Immortal life!
mankind should not have, in their old age, the burden of poverty to bear, yet it is also essential that a store of benevolent deeds should be laid up for the benefit of sons and grandsons! (Your son) may come to be dignified in appearance and wear on his head the official tassel, and on his chest may be suspended the gold seal resplendent in lustre; he may be imposing in his majesty, and he may rise high in status and emoluments, but the dark and dreary way which leads to death is short! Are the generals and ministers who have been from ages of old still in the flesh, forsooth? They exist only in a futile name handed down to posterity to reverence!

Death ensues when things propitious reign! Upon the ornamented beam will settle at the close of spring the fragrant dust! Your reckless indulgence of licentious love and your naturally moonlike face will soon be the source of the ruin of a family. The decadence of the family estate will emanate entirely from Ching; while the wane of the family affairs will be entirely attributable to the fault of Ning! Licentious love will be the main reason of the long-standing grudge.

The flying birds each perch upon the trees! The family estates of those in official positions will fade! The gold and silver of the rich and honoured will be scattered! those who will have conferred benefit will, even in death, find the means of escape! those devoid of human feelings will reap manifest retribution! Those indebted for a life will make, in due time, payment with their lives; those indebted for tears have already (gone) to exhaust their tears! Mutual injuries will be revenged in no light manner! Separation and reunion will both alike be determined by predestination! You wish to know why your life will be short; look into your previous existence! Verily, riches and honours, which will come with old age, will likewise be a question of chance! Those who will hold the world in light esteem will retire within the gate of abstraction; while those who will be allured by enticement will have forfeited their lives (The Chia family will fulfil its destiny) as surely as birds take to the trees after they have exhausted all they had to eat, and which as they drop down will pile up a hoary, vast and lofty heap of dust, (leaving) indeed a void behind!

When the maidens had finished the ballads, they went on to sing the “Supplementary Record;“ but the Monitory Vision Fairy, perceiving the total absence of any interest in Pao-yü, heaved a sigh. “You silly brat!” she exclaimed. “What! haven’t you, even now, attained perception!”

“There’s no need for you to go on singing,” speedily observed Pao-yü, as he interrupted the singing maidens; and feeling drowsy and dull, he pleaded being under the effects of wine, and begged to be allowed to lie down.

The Fairy then gave orders to clear away the remains of the feast, and escorted Pao-yü to a suite of female apartments, where the splendour of such objects as were laid out was a thing which he had not hitherto seen. But what evoked in him wonder still more intense, was the sight, at an early period, of a girl seated in the room, who, in the freshness of her beauty and winsomeness of her charms, bore some resemblance to Pao-ch’ai, while, in elegance and comeliness, on the other hand, to Tai-yu.

While he was plunged in a state of perplexity, the Fairy suddenly remarked: “All those female apartments and ladies’ chambers in so many wealthy and honourable families in the world are, without exception, polluted by voluptuous opulent puppets and by all that bevy of profligate girls. But still more despicable are those from old till now numberless dissolute roués, one and all of whom maintain that libidinous affections do not constitute lewdness; and who try, further, to prove that licentious love is not tantamount to lewdness. But all these arguments are mere apologies for their shortcomings, and a screen for their pollutions; for if libidinous affection be lewdness, still more does the perception of licentious love constitute lewdness. Hence it is that the indulgence of sensuality and the gratification of licentious affection originate entirely from a relish of lust, as well as from a hankering after licentious love. Lo you, who are the object of my love, are the most lewd being under the heavens! What! haven’t you, even now, attained perception!“

Pao-yü was quite dumbstruck by what he heard, and hastily smiling, he said by way of reply: “My Fairy labours under a misapprehension. Simply because of my reluctance to read my books my parents have, on repeated occasions, extended to me injunction and reprimand, and would I have the courage to go so far as to rashly plunge in lewd habits? Besides, I am still young in years, and have no notion what is implied by lewdness!”

“No! not so!” exclaimed the Fairy; “lewdness, although one thing in principle is, as far as meaning goes, subject to different constructions; as is exemplified by those in the world whose heart is set upon lewdness. Some delight solely in faces and figures; others find insatiable pleasure in singing and dancing; some in dalliance and raillery; others in the incessant indulgence of their lusts; and these regret that all the beautiful maidens under the heavens cannot minister to their short-lived pleasure. These several kinds of persons are foul objects steeped skin and all in lewdness. The lustful love, for instance, which has sprung to life and taken root in your natural affections, I and such as myself extend to it the character of an abstract lewdness; but abstract lewdness can be grasped by the mind, but cannot be transmitted by the mouth; can be fathomed by the spirit, but cannot be divulged in words. As you now are imbued with this desire only in the abstract, you are certainly well fit to be a trustworthy friend in
Having ended these remarks, she initiated him into the mysteries of licentious love, and, pushing Pao-yü into the room, she closed the door, and took her departure all alone. Pao-yü in a dazed state complied with the admonitions given him by the Fairy, and the natural result was, of course, a violent flirtation, the circumstances of which it would be impossible to recount.

When the next day came, he was by that time so attached to her by ties of tender love and their conversation was so gentle and full of charm that he could not brook to part from K'o Ching. Hand-in-hand, the two of them therefore, went out for a stroll, when they unexpectedly reached a place, where nothing else met their gaze than thorns and brambles, which covered the ground, and a wolf and a tiger walking side by side. Before them stretched the course of a black stream, which obstructed their progress; and over this stream there was, what is more, no bridge to enable one to cross it.

While they were exercising their minds with perplexity, they suddenly espied the Fairy coming from the back in pursuit of them. “Desist at once,” she exclaimed, “from making any advance into the stream; it is urgent that you should, with all speed, turn your faces round!”

Pao-yü lost no time in standing still. “What is this place?” he inquired.

“This is the Ford of Enticement,” explained the Fairy. “Its depth is ten thousand chang; its breadth is a thousand li; in its stream there are no boats or paddles by means of which to effect a passage. There is simply a raft, of which Mu Chu-shih directs the rudder, and which Hui Shih chen punts with the poles. They receive no compensation in the shape of gold or silver, but when they come across any one whose destiny it is to cross, they ferry him over. You now have by accident strolled as far as here, and had you fallen into the stream you would have rendered quite useless the advice and admonition which I previously gave you.”

These words were scarcely concluded, when suddenly was heard from the midst of the Ford of Enticement, a sound like unto a peal of thunder, whereupon a whole crowd of gobblins and sea-urchins laid hands upon Pao-yü and dragged him down.

This so filled Pao-yü with consternation that he fell into a perspiration as profuse as rain, and he simultaneously broke forth and shouted, “Rescue me, K’o Ching!”

These cries so terrified Hsi Jen and the other waiting-maids, that they rushed forward, and taking Pao-yü in their arms. “Don’t be afraid, Pao-yü,” they said, “we are here.”

But we must observe that Mrs. Ch’in was just inside the apartment in the act of recommending the young waiting-maids to be mindful that the cats and dogs did not start a fight, when she unawares heard Pao-yü, in his dream, call her by her infant name. In a melancholy mood she therefore communed within herself. “As far as my infant name goes, there is, in this establishment, no one who has any idea what it is, and how is it that he has come to know it, and that he utters it in his dream?” And she was at this period unable to fathom the reason. But, reader, listen to the explanations given in the chapter which follows.

**CHAPTER VI.**

Chia Pao-yü reaps his first experience in licentious love.
Old Goody Liu pays a visit to the Jung Kuo Mansion.
Mrs. Ch’in, to resume our narrative, upon hearing Pao-yü call her in his dream by her infant name, was at heart very exercised, but she did not however feel at liberty to make any minute inquiry.

Pao-yü was, at this time, in such a dazed state, as if he had lost something, and the servants promptly gave him a decoction of lungngan. After he had taken a few sips, he forthwith rose and tidied his clothes.

Hsi Jen put out her hand to fasten the band of his garment, and as soon as she did so, and it came in contact with his person, it felt so icy cold to the touch, covered as it was all over with perspiration, that she speedily withdrew her hand in utter surprise.

“What’s the matter with you?” she exclaimed.

A blush suffused Pao-yü’s face, and he took Hsi Jen’s hand in a tight grip. Hsi Jen was a girl with all her wits about her; she was besides a couple of years older than Pao-yü and had recently come to know something of the world, so that at the sight of his state, she to a great extent readily accounted for the reason in her heart. From modest shame, she unconsciously became purple in the face, and not venturing to ask another question she continued adjusting his clothes. This task accomplished, she followed him over to old lady Chia’s apartments; and after a hurry-scurry meal, they came back to this side, and Hsi Jen availed herself of the absence of the nurses and waiting-maids to hand Pao-yü another garment to change.

“Please, dear Hsi Jen, don’t tell any one,” entreated Pao-yü, with concealed shame.

“What did you dream of?” inquired Hsi Jen, smiling, as she tried to stifle her blushes, “and whence comes all this perspiration?”

“It’s a long story,” said Pao-yü, “which only a few words will not suffice to explain.”

He accordingly recounted minutely, for her benefit, the subject of his dream. When he came to where the Fairy had explained to him the mysteries of love, Hsi Jen was overpowered with modesty and covered her face with her hands; and as she bent down, she gave way to a fit of laughter. Pao-yü had always been fond of Hsi Jen, on account of her gentleness, pretty looks and graceful and elegant manner, and he forthwith expounded to her all the mysteries he had been taught by the Fairy.

Hsi Jen was, of course, well aware that dowager lady Chia had given her over to Pao-yü, so that her present behaviour was likewise no transgression. And subsequently she secretly attempted with Pao-yü a violent flirtation, and lucky enough no one broke in upon them during their tête-à-tête. From this date, Pao-yü treated Hsi Jen with special regard, far more than he showed to the other girls, while Hsi Jen herself was still more demonstrative in her attentions to Pao-yü. But for a time we will make no further remark about them.

As regards the household of the Jung mansion, the inmates may, on adding up the total number, not have been found many; yet, counting the high as well as the low, there were three hundred persons and more. Their affairs may not have been very numerous, still there were, every day, ten and twenty matters to settle; in fact, the household resembled, in every way, ravelled hemp, devoid even of a clue-end, which could be used as an introduction.

Just as we were considering what matter and what person it would be best to begin writing of, by a lucky coincidence suddenly from a distance of a thousand li, a person small and insignificant as a grain of mustard seed happened, on account of her distant relationship with the Jung family, to come on this very day to the Jung mansion on a visit. We shall therefore readily commence by speaking of this family, as it after all affords an excellent clue for a beginning.

The surname of this mean and humble family was in point of fact Wang. They were natives of this district. Their ancestor had filled a minor office in the capital, and had, in years gone by, been acquainted with lady Feng’s grandfather, that is madame Wang’s father. Being covetous of the influence and affluence of the Wang family, he consequently joined ancestors with them, and was recognised by them as a nephew.

At that time, there were only madame Wang’s eldest brother, that is lady Feng’s father, and madame Wang herself, who knew anything of these distant relations, from the fact of having followed their parents to the capital. The rest of the family had one and all no idea about them.

This ancestor had, at this date, been dead long ago, leaving only one son called Wang Ch’eng. As the family estate was in a state of ruin, he once more moved outside the city walls and settled down in his native village. Wang Ch’eng also died soon after his father, leaving a son, known in his infancy as Kou Erh, who married a Miss Liu, by
whom he had a son called by the infant name of Pan Erh, as well as a daughter, Ch’ing Erh. His family consisted of four, and he earned a living from farming.

As Kou Erh was always busy with something or other during the day and his wife, dame Liu, on the other hand, drew the water, pounded the rice and attended to all the other domestic concerns, the brother and sister, Ch’ing Erh and Pan Erh, the two of them, had no one to look after them. (Hence it was that) Kou Erh brought over his mother-in-law, old goody Liu, to live with them.

This goody Liu was an old widow, with a good deal of experience. She had besides no son round her knees, so that she was dependent for her maintenance on a couple of acres of poor land, with the result that when her son-in-law received her in his home, she naturally was ever willing to exert heart and mind to help her daughter and her son-in-law to earn their living.

This year, the autumn had come to an end, winter had commenced, and the weather had begun to be quite cold. No provision had been made in the household for the winter months, and Kou Erh was, inevitably, exceedingly exercised in his heart. Having had several cups of wine to dispel his distress, he sat at home and tried to seize upon every trifle to give vent to his displeasure. His wife had not the courage to force herself in his way, and hence goody Liu it was who encouraged him, as she could not bear to see the state of the domestic affairs.

“Don’t pull me up for talking too much,” she said; “but who of us country people isn’t honest and open-hearted? As the size of the bowl we hold, so is the quantity of the rice we eat. In your young days, you were dependent on the support of your old father, so that eating and drinking became quite a habit with you; that’s how, at the present time, your resources are quite uncertain; when you had money, you looked ahead, and didn’t mind behind; and now that you have no money, you blindly fly into huffs. A fine fellow and a capital hero you have made! Living though we now be away from the capital, we are after all at the feet of the Emperor; this city of Ch’ang Ngan is strewn all over with money, but the pity is that there’s no one able to go and fetch it away; and it’s no use your staying at home and kicking your feet about.”

“All you old lady know,” rejoined Kou Erh, after he had heard what she had to say, “is to sit on the couch and talk trash! Is it likely you would have me go and play the robber?”

“Who tells you to become a robber?” asked goody Liu. “But it would be well, after all, that we should put our heads together and devise some means; for otherwise, is the money, pray, able of itself to run into our house?”

“Had there been a way,” observed Kou Erh, smiling sarcastically, “would I have waited up to this moment? I have besides no revenue collectors as relatives, or friends in official positions; and what way could we devise? ‘But even had I any, they wouldn’t be likely, I fear, to pay any heed to such as ourselves!’

“That, too, doesn’t follow,” remarked goody Liu; “the planning of affairs rests with man, but the accomplishment of them rests with Heaven. After we have laid our plans, we may, who can say, by relying on the sustenance of the gods, find some favourable occasion. Leave it to me, I’ll try and devise some lucky chance for you people! In years gone by, you joined ancestors with the Wang family of Chin Ling, and twenty years back, they treated you with consideration; but of late, you’ve been so high and mighty, and not condescended to go and bow to them, that an estrangement has arisen. I remember how in years gone by, I and my daughter paid them a visit. The second daughter of the family was really so pleasant and knew so well how to treat people with kindness, and without in fact any high airs! She’s at present the wife of Mr. Chia, the second son of the Jung Kuo mansion; and I hear people say that now that she’s advanced in years, she’s still more considerate to the poor, regardful of the old, and very fond of preparing vegetable food for the bonzes and performing charitable deeds. The head of the Wang mansion has, it is true, been raised to some office on the frontier, but I hope that this lady Secunda will anyhow notice us. How is it then that you don’t find your way as far as there; for she may possibly remember old times, and some good may, no one can say, come of it? I only wish that she would display some of her kind-heartedness, and pluck one hair from her person which would be, yea thicker than our waist.”

“What you suggest, mother, is quite correct,” interposed Mrs. Liu, Kou Erh’s wife, who stood by and took up the conversation, “but with such mouth and phiz as yours and mine, how could we present ourselves before her door? Why I fear that the man at her gate won’t also like to go and announce us! and we’d better not go and have our mouths slapped in public!”

Kou Erh, who would have thought it, prized highly both affluence and fame, so that when he heard these remarks, he forthwith began to feel at heart a little more at ease. When he furthermore heard what his wife had to say, he at once caught up the word as he smiled.

“Old mother,” he rejoined; “since that be your idea, and what’s more, you have in days gone by seen this lady on
one occasion, why shouldn’t you, old lady, start to-morrow on a visit to her and first ascertain how the wind blows!”

“Ai Ya!” exclaimed old Goody, “It may very well be said that the marquis’ door is like the wide ocean! what sort of thing am I? why the servants of that family wouldn’t even recognise me! even were I to go, it would be on a wild goose chase.”

“No matter about that,” observed Kou Erh; “I’ll tell you a good way; you just take along with you, your grandson, little Pan Erh, and go first and call upon Chou Jui, who is attached to that household; and when once you’ve seen him, there will be some little chance. This Chou Jui, at one time, was connected with my father in some affair or other, and we were on excellent terms with him.”

“That I too know,” replied goody Liu, “but the thing is that you’ve had no dealings with him for so long, that who knows how he’s disposed towards us now? this would be hard to say. Besides, you’re a man, and with a mouth and phiz like that of yours, you couldn’t, on any account, go on this errand. My daughter is a young woman, and she too couldn’t very well go and expose herself to public gaze. But by my sacrificing this old face of mine, and by going and knocking it (against the wall) there may, after all, be some benefit and all of us might reap profit.”

That very same evening, they laid their plans, and the next morning before the break of day, old goody Liu speedily got up, and having performed her toilette, she gave a few useful hints to Pan Erh; who, being a child of five or six years of age, was, when he heard that he was to be taken into the city, at once so delighted that there was nothing that he would not agree to.

Without further delay, goody Liu led off Pan Erh, and entered the city, and reaching the Ning Jung street, she came to the main entrance of the Jung mansion, where, next to the marble lions, were to be seen a crowd of chairs and horses. Goody Liu could not however muster the courage to go by, but having shaken her clothes, and said a few more seasonable words to Pan Erh, she subsequently squatted in front of the side gate, whence she could see a number of servants, swelling out their chests, pushing out their stomachs, gesticulating with their hands and kicking their feet about, while they were seated at the main entrance chattering about one thing and another.

Goody Liu felt constrained to edge herself forward. “Gentlemen,” she ventured, “may happiness betide you!”

The whole company of servants scrutinised her for a time. “Where do you come from?” they at length inquired.

“I’ve come to look up Mr. Chou, an attendant of my lady’s,” remarked goody Liu, as she forced a smile; “which of you, gentlemen, shall I trouble to do me the favour of asking him to come out?”

The servants, after hearing what she had to say, paid, the whole number of them, no heed to her; and it was after the lapse of a considerable time that they suggested: “Go and wait at a distance, at the foot of that wall; and in a short while, the visitors, who are in their house, will be coming out.”

Among the party of attendants was an old man, who interposed,

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“That I too know,” he expostulated; “why make a fool of her?” and turning to goody Liu: “This Mr. Chou,” he said, “is gone south: his house is at the back row; his wife is anyhow at home; so go round this way, until you reach the door, at the back street, where, if you will ask about her, you will be on the right track.”

Goody Liu, having expressed her thanks, forthwith went, leading Pan Erh by the hand, round to the back door, where she saw several pedlars resting their burdens. There were also those who sold things to eat, and those who sold playthings and toys; and besides these, twenty or thirty boys bawled and shouted, making quite a noise.

Goody Liu readily caught hold of one of them. “I’d like to ask you just a word, my young friend,” she observed; “there’s a Mrs. Chou here; is she at home?”

“Which Mrs. Chou?” inquired the boy; “we here have three Mrs. Chous; and there are also two young married ladies of the name of Chou. What are the duties of the one you want, I wonder?”

“She’s a waiting-woman of my lady,” replied goody Liu.

“It’s easy to get at her,” added the boy; “just come along with me.”

Leading the way for goody Liu into the backyard, they reached the wall of a court, when he pointed and said, “This is her house.—Mother Chou!” he went on to shout with alacrity; “there’s an old lady who wants to see you.”

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Chou Jui’s wife was at home, and with all haste she came out to greet her visitor. “Who is it?” she asked.

Goody Liu advanced up to her. “How are you,” she inquired, “Mrs. Chou?”

Mrs. Chou looked at her for some time before she at length smiled and replied, “Old goody Liu, are you well? How many years is it since we’ve seen each other; tell me, for I forget just now; but please come in and sit.”

“You’re a lady of rank,” answered goody Liu smiling, as she walked along, “and do forget many things. How could you remember such as ourselves?”

With these words still in her mouth, they had entered the house, whereupon Mrs. Chou ordered a hired waiting-maid to pour the tea. While they were having their tea she remarked, “How Pan Erh has managed to grow!” and then went on to make inquiries on the subject of various matters, which had occurred after their separation.

“To-day,” she also asked of goody Liu, “were you simply passing by? or did you come with any express object?”

“I’ve come, the fact is, with an object!” promptly replied goody Liu; “(first of all) to see you, my dear sister-in-law; and, in the second place also, to inquire after my lady’s health. If you could introduce me to see her for a while, it would be better; but if you can’t, I must readily borrow your good offices, my sister-in-law, to convey my message.”

Mr. Chou Jui’s wife, after listening to these words, at once became to a great extent aware of the object of her visit. Her husband had, however, in years gone by in his attempt to purchase some land, obtained considerably the support of Kou Erh, so that when she, on this occasion, saw goody Liu in such a dilemma, she could not make up her mind to refuse her wish. Being in the second place keen upon making a display of her own respectability, she therefore said smilingly:

“Old goody Liu, pray compose your mind! You’ve come from far off with a pure heart and honest purpose, and how can I ever not show you the way how to see this living Buddha? Properly speaking, when people come and guests arrive, and verbal messages have to be given, these matters are not any of my business, as we all here have each one kind of duties to carry out. My husband has the special charge of the rents of land coming in, during the two seasons of spring and autumn, and when at leisure, he takes the young gentlemen out of doors, and then his business is done. As for myself, I have to accompany my lady and young married ladies on anything connected with out-of-doors; but as you are a relative of my lady and have besides treated me as a high person and come to me for help, I’ll, after all, break this custom and deliver your message. There’s only one thing, however, and which you, old lady, don’t know. We here are not what we were five years before. My lady now doesn’t much worry herself about anything; and it’s entirely lady Secunda who looks after the menage. But who do you presume is this lady Secunda? She’s the niece of my lady, and the daughter of my master, the eldest maternal uncle of by-gone days. Her infant name was Feng Ko.”

“Is it really she?” inquired promptly goody Liu, after this explanation. “Isn’t it strange? what I said about her years back has come out quite correct; but from all you say, shall I to-day be able to see her?”

“That goes without saying,” replied Chou Jui’s wife; “when any visitors come now-a-days, it’s always lady Feng who does the honours and entertains them, and it’s better to-day that you should see her for a while, for then you will not have walked all this way to no purpose.”

“O mi to fu!” exclaimed old goody Liu; “I leave it entirely to your convenience, sister-in-law.”

“What’s that you’re saying?” observed Chou Jui’s wife. “The proverb says: ‘Our convenience is the convenience of others.’ All I have to do is to just utter one word, and what trouble will that be to me.”

Saying this, she bade the young waiting maid go to the side pavilion, and quietly ascertain whether, in her old ladyship’s apartment, table had been laid.

The young waiting-maid went on this errand, and during this while, the two of them continued a conversation on certain irrelevant matters.

“This lady Feng,” observed goody Liu, “can this year be no older than twenty, and yet so talented as to manage such a household as this! the like of her is not easy to find!”

“Hai! my dear old goody,” said Chou Jui’s wife, after listening to her, “it’s not easy to explain; but this lady Feng, though young in years, is nevertheless, in the management of affairs, superior to any man. She has now excelled the others and developed the very features of a beautiful young woman. To say the least, she has ten thousand
eyes in her heart, and were they willing to wager their mouths, why ten men gifted with eloquence couldn’t even
outdo her? But by and bye, when you’ve seen her, you’ll know all about her! There’s only this thing, she can’t help
being rather too severe in their treatment of those below her.”

While yet she spake, the young waiting-maid returned. “In her venerable lady’s apartment,” she reported, “repast
has been spread, and already finished; lady Secunda is in madame Wang’s chamber.”

As soon as Chou Jui’s wife heard this news, she speedily got up and pressed goody Liu to be off at once. “This is,”
she urged, “just the hour for her meal, and as she is free we had better first go and wait for her; for were we to be
even one step too late, a crowd of servants will come with their reports, and it will then be difficult to speak to
her; and after her siesta, she’ll have still less time to herself.”

As she passed these remarks, they all descended the couch together. Goody Liu adjusted their dresses, and,
having impressed a few more words of advice on Pan Erh, they followed Chou Jui’s wife through winding passages
to Chia Lien’s house. They came in the first instance into the side pavilion, where Chou Jui’s wife placed old goody
Liu to wait a little, while she herself went ahead, past the screen-wall and into the entrance of the court.

Hearing that lady Feng had not come out, she went in search of an elderly waiting-maid of lady Feng, P’ing Erh by
name, who enjoyed her confidence, to whom Chou Jui’s wife first recounted from beginning to end the history of
old goody Liu.

“She has come to-day,” she went on to explain, “from a distance to pay her obeisance. In days gone by, our lady
used often to meet her, so that, on this occasion, she can’t but receive her; and this is why I’ve brought her in! I’ll
wait here for lady Feng to come down, and explain everything to her; and I trust she’ll not call me to task for
officious rudeness.”

P’ing Erh, after hearing what she had to say, speedily devised the plan of asking them to walk in, and to sit there
pending (lady Feng’s arrival), when all would be right.

Chou Jui’s wife thereupon went out and led them in. When they ascended the steps of the main apartment, a
young waiting-maid raised a red woollen portière, and as soon as they entered the hall, they smelt a whiff of
perfume as it came wafted into their faces: what the scent was they could not discriminate; but their persons felt
as if they were among the clouds.

The articles of furniture and ornaments in the whole room were all so brilliant to the sight, and so vying in
splendour that they made the head to swim and the eyes to blink, and old goody Liu did nothing else the while
than nod her head, smack her lips and invoke Buddha. Forthwith she was led to the eastern side into the suite of
apartments, where was the bedroom of Chia Lien’s eldest daughter. P’ing Erh, who was standing by the edge of
the stove-couch, cast a couple of glances at old goody Liu, and felt constrained to inquire how she was, and to
press her to have a seat.

Goody Liu, noticing that P’ing Erh was entirely robed in silks, that she had gold pins fixed in her hair, and silver
ornaments in her coiffure, and that her countenance resembled a flower or the moon (in beauty), readily imagined
her to be lady Feng, and was about to address her as my lady; but when she heard Mrs. Chou speak to her as Miss
P’ing, and P’ing Erh promptly address Chou Jui’s wife as Mrs. Chou, she eventually became aware that she could
be no more than a waiting-maid of a certain respectability.

She at once pressed old goody Liu and Pan Erh to take a seat on the stove-couch. P’ing Erh and Chou Jui’s wife sat
face to face, on the edges of the couch. The waiting-maids brought the tea. After they had partaken of it, old goody
Liu could hear nothing but a “lo tang, lo tang” noise, resembling very much the sound of a bolting frame
winnowing flour, and she could not resist looking now to the East, and now to the West. Suddenly in the great
Hall, she espied, suspended on a pillar, a box at the bottom of which hung something like the weight of a balance,
which incessantly wagged to and fro.

“What can this thing be?” communed goody Liu in her heart, “What can be its use?” While she was aghast, she
unexpectedly heard a sound of “tang” like the sound of a golden bell or copper cymbal, which gave her quite a
start. In a twinkle of the eyes followed eight or nine consecutive strokes; and she was bent upon inquiring what it
was, when she caught sight of several waiting-maids enter in a confused crowd. “Our lady has come down!” they
announced.

P’ing Erh, together with Chou Jui’s wife, rose with all haste. “Old goody Liu,” they urged, “do sit down and wait till
it’s time, when we’ll come and ask you in.”
Saying this, they went out to meet lady Feng.

Old goody Liu, with suppressed voice and ear intent, waited in perfect silence. She heard at a distance the voices of some people laughing, whereupon about ten or twenty women, with rustling clothes and petticoats, made their entrance, one by one, into the hall, and thence into the room on the other quarter. She also detected two or three women, with red-lacquered boxes in their hands, come over on this part and remain in waiting.

“Get the repast ready!” she heard some one from the offside say.

The servants gradually dispersed and went out; and there only remained in attendance a few of them to bring in the courses. For a long time, not so much as the caw of a crow could be heard, when she unexpectedly perceived two servants carry in a couch-table, and lay it on this side of the divan. Upon this table were placed bowls and plates, in proper order replete, as usual, with fish and meats; but of these only a few kinds were slightly touched.

As soon as Pan Erh perceived (all these delicacies), he set up such a noise, and would have some meat to eat, but goody Liu administered to him such a slap, that he had to keep away.

Suddenly, she saw Mrs. Chou approach, full of smiles, and as she waved her hand, she called her. Goody Liu understood her meaning, and at once pulling Pan Erh off the couch, she proceeded to the centre of the Hall; and after Mrs. Chou had whispered to her again for a while, they came at length with slow step into the room on this side, where they saw on the outside of the door, suspended by brass hooks, a deep red flowered soft portière. Below the window, on the southern side, was a stove-couch, and on this couch was spread a crimson carpet. Leaning against the wooden partition wall, on the east side, stood a chain-embroidered back-cushion and a reclining pillow. There was also spread a large watered satin sitting cushion with a gold embroidered centre, and on the side stood cuspidores made of silver.

Lady Feng, when at home, usually wore on her head a front-piece of dark martin à la Chao Chün, surrounded with tassels of strung pearls. She had on a robe of peach-red flowered satin, a short pelisse of slate-blue stiff silk, lined with squirrel, and a jupe of deep red foreign crepe, lined with ermine. Resplendent with pearl-powder and with cosmetics, she sat in there, stately and majestic, with a small brass poker in her hands, with which she was stirring the ashes of the hand-stove. P’ing Erh stood by the side of the couch, holding a very small lacquered tea-tray. In this tray was a small tea-cup with a cover. Lady Feng neither took any tea, nor did she raise her head, but was intent upon stirring the ashes of the hand-stove.

“How is it you haven’t yet asked her to come in?” she slowly inquired; and as she spake, she turned herself round and was about to ask for some tea, when she perceived that Mrs. Chou had already introduced the two persons and that they were standing in front of her.

She forthwith pretended to rise, but did not actually get up, and with a face radiant with smiles, she ascertained about their health, after which she went in to chide Chou Jui’s wife. “Why didn’t you tell me they had come before?” she said.

Old goody Liu was already by this time prostrated on the ground, and after making several obeisances, “How are you, my lady?” she inquired.

“Dear Mrs. Chou,” lady Feng immediately observed, “do pull her up, and don’t let her prostrate herself! I’m yet young in years and don’t know her much; what’s more, I’ve no idea what’s the degree of the relationship between us, and I daren’t speak directly to her.”

“This is the old lady about whom I spoke a short while back,” speedily explained Mrs. Chou.

Lady Feng nodded her head assenting.

By this time old goody Liu had taken a seat on the edge of the stove-couch. As for Pan Erh, he had gone further, and taken refuge behind her back; and though she tried, by every means, to coax him to come forward and make a bow, he would not, for the life of him, consent.

“Relatives though we be,” remarked lady Feng, as she smiled, “we haven’t seen much of each other, so that our relations have been quite distant. But those who know how matters stand will assert that you all despise us, and won’t often come to look us up; while those mean people, who don’t know the truth, will imagine that we have no eyes to look at any one.”

Old goody Liu promptly invoked Buddha. “We are at home in great straits,” she pleaded, “and that’s why it wasn’t
easy for us to manage to get away and come! Even supposing we had come as far as this, had we not given your
dayship a slap on the mouth, those gentlemen would also, in point of fact, have looked down upon us as a mean
lot.”

“Why, language such as this,” exclaimed lady Feng smilingly, “cannot help making one’s heart full of displeasure!
We simply rely upon the reputation of our grandfather to maintain the status of a penniless official; that’s all!
Why, in whose household is there anything substantial? we are merely the denuded skeleton of what we were in
days of old, and no more! As the proverb has it: The Emperor himself has three families of poverty-stricken
relatives; and how much more such as you and I?”

Having passed these remarks, she inquired of Mrs. Chou, “Have you let madame know, yes or no?”

“We are now waiting,” replied Mrs. Chou, “for my lady’s orders.”

“Go and have a look,” said lady Feng; “but, should there be any one there, or should she be busy, then don’t make
any mention; but wait until she’s free, when you can tell her about it and see what she says.”

Chou Jui’s wife, having expressed her compliance, went off on this errand. During her absence, lady Feng gave
orders to some servants to take a few fruits and hand them to Pan Erh to eat; and she was inquiring about one
thing and another, when there came a large number of married women, who had the direction of affairs in the
household, to make their several reports.

P’ing Erh announced their arrival to lady Feng, who said: “I’m now engaged in entertaining some guests, so let
them come back again in the evening; but should there be anything pressing then bring it in and I’ll settle it at
once.”

P’ing Erh left the room, but she returned in a short while. “I’ve asked them,” she observed, “but as there’s nothing
of any urgency, I told them to disperse.” Lady Feng nodded her head in token of approval, when she perceived
Chou Jui’s wife come back. “Our lady,” she reported, as she addressed lady Feng, “says that she has no leisure to-
day, that if you, lady Secunda, will entertain them, it will come to the same thing; that she’s much obliged for their
kind attention in going to the trouble of coming; that if they have come simply on a stroll, then well and good, but
that if they have aught to say, they should tell you, lady Secunda, which will be tantamount to their telling her.”

“I’ve nothing to say,” interposed old goody Liu. “I simply come to see our elder and our younger lady, which is a
duty on my part, a relative as I am.”

“Well, if there’s nothing particular that you’ve got to say, all right,” Mrs. Chou forthwith added, “but if you do
have anything, don’t hesitate telling lady Secunda, and it will be just as if you had told our lady.”

As she uttered these words, she winked at goody Liu. Goody Liu understood what she meant, but before she could
give vent to a word, her face got scarlet, and though she would have liked not to make any mention of the object
of her visit, she felt constrained to suppress her shame and to speak out.

“Properly speaking,” she observed, “this being the first time I see you, my lady, I shouldn’t mention what I’ve to
say, but as I come here from far off to seek your assistance, my old friend, I have no help but to mention it.”

She had barely spoken as much as this, when she heard the youths at the inner-door cry out: “The young
gentleman from the Eastern Mansion has come.”

Lady Feng promptly interrupted her. “Old goody Liu,” she remarked, “you needn’t add anything more.” She, at the
same time, inquired, “Where’s your master, Mr. Jung?” when became audible the sound of footsteps along the
way, and in walked a young man of seventeen or eighteen. His appearance was handsome, his person slender and
graceful. He had on light furs, a girdle of value, costly clothes and a beautiful cap.

At this stage, goody Liu did not know whether it was best to sit down or to stand up, neither could she find
anywhere to hide herself.

“Pray sit down,” urged lady Feng, with a laugh; “this is my nephew!” Old goody Liu then wriggled herself, now one
way, and then another, on to the edge of the couch, where she took a seat.

“My father,” Chia Jung smilingly ventured, “has sent me to ask a favour of you, aunt. On some previous occasion,
our grand aunt gave you, dear aunt, a stove-couch glass screen, and as to-morrow father has invited some guests
of high standing, he wishes to borrow it to lay it out for a little show; after which he purposes sending it back
again.”
"You’re late by a day," replied lady Feng. "It was only yesterday that I gave it to some one."

Chia Jung, upon hearing this, forthwith, with giggles and smiles, made, near the edge of the couch, a sort of genuflexion. "Aunt," he went on, "if you don’t lend it, father will again say that I don’t know how to speak, and I shall get another sound thrashing. You must have pity upon your nephew, aunt."

"I’ve never seen anything like this," observed lady Feng sneeringly; "the things belonging to the Wang family are all good, but where have you put all those things of yours? the only good way is that you shouldn’t see anything of ours, for as soon as you catch sight of anything, you at once entertain a wish to carry it off."

"Pray, aunt," entreated Chia Jung with a smile, "do show me some compassion."

"Mind your skin!" lady Feng warned him, "if you do chip or spoil it in the least."

She then bade P’ing Erh take the keys of the door of the upstairs room and send for several trustworthy persons to carry it away.

Chia Jung was so elated that his eyebrows dilated and his eyes smiled. "I’ve brought myself," he added, with vehemence, "some men to take it away; I won’t let them recklessly bump it about."

Saying this, he speedily got up and left the room.

Lady Feng suddenly bethought herself of something, and turning towards the window, she called out, "Jung Erh, come back." Several servants who stood outside caught up her words: "Mr. Jung," they cried, "you’re requested to go back;" whereupon Chia Jung turned round and retraced his steps; and with hands drooping respectfully against his sides, he stood ready to listen to his aunt’s wishes.

Lady Feng was however intent upon gently sipping her tea, and after a good long while of abstraction, she at last smiled: "Never mind," she remarked; "you can go. But come after you’ve had your evening meal, and I’ll then tell you about it. Just now there are visitors here; and besides, I don’t feel in the humour."

Chia Jung thereupon retired with gentle step.

Old goody Liu, by this time, felt more composed in body and heart. "I’ve to-day brought your nephew," she then explained, "not for anything else, but because his father and mother haven’t at home so much as anything to eat; the weather besides is already cold, so that I had no help but to take your nephew along and come to you, old friend, for assistance!"

As she uttered these words, she again pushed Pan Erh forward. "What did your father at home tell you to say?" she asked of him; "and what did he send us over here to do? Was it only to give our minds to eating fruit?"

Lady Feng had long ago understood what she meant to convey, and finding that she had no idea how to express herself in a decent manner, she readily interrupted her with a smile. "You needn’t mention anything," she observed, "I’m well aware of how things stand;" and addressing herself to Mrs. Chou, she inquired, "Has this old lady had breakfast, yes or no?"

Old goody Liu hurried to explain. "As soon as it was daylight," she proceeded, "we started with all speed on our way here, and had we even so much as time to have any breakfast?"

Lady Feng promptly gave orders to send for something to eat. In a short while Chou Jui’s wife had called for a table of viands for the guests, which was laid in the room on the eastern side, and then came to take goody Liu and Pan Erh over to have their repast.

"My dear Mrs. Chou," enjoined lady Feng, "give them all they want, as I can’t attend to them myself;" which said, they hastily passed over into the room on the eastern side.

Lady Feng having again called Mrs. Chou, asked her: "When you first informed madame about them, what did she say?" "Our Lady observed," replied Chou Jui’s wife, "that they don’t really belong to the same family; that, in former years, their grandfather was an official at the same place as our old master; that hence it came that they joined ancestors; that these few years there hasn’t been much intercourse (between their family and ours); that some years back, whenever they came on a visit, they were never permitted to go empty-handed, and that as their coming on this occasion to see us is also a kind attention on their part, they shouldn’t be slighted. If they’ve anything to say," (our lady continued), "tell lady Secunda to do the necessary, and that will be right."
“Isn’t it strange!” exclaimed lady Feng, as soon as she had heard the message; “since we are all one family, how is it I’m not familiar even with so much as their shadow?”

While she was uttering these words, old goody Liu had had her repast and come over, dragging Pan Erh; and, licking her lips and smacking her mouth, she expressed her thanks.

Lady Feng smiled. “Do pray sit down,” she said, “and listen to what I’m going to tell you. What you, old lady, meant a little while back to convey, I’m already as much as yourself well acquainted with! Relatives, as we are, we shouldn’t in fact have waited until you came to the threshold of our doors, but ought, as is but right, to have attended to your needs. But the thing is that, of late, the household affairs are exceedingly numerous, and our lady, advanced in years as she is, couldn’t at a moment, it may possibly be, bethink herself of you all! What’s more, when I took over charge of the management of the menage, I myself didn’t know of all these family connections! Besides, though to look at us from outside everything has a grand and splendid aspect, people aren’t aware that large establishments have such great hardships, which, were we to recount to others, they would hardly like to credit as true. But since you’ve now come from a great distance, and this is the first occasion that you open your mouth to address me, how can I very well allow you to return to your home with empty hands! By a lucky coincidence our lady gave, yesterday, to the waiting-maids, twenty taels to make clothes with, a sum which they haven’t as yet touched, and if you don’t despise it as too little, you may take it home as a first instalment, and employ it for your wants.”

When old goody Liu heard the mention made by lady Feng of their hardships, she imagined that there was no hope; but upon hearing her again speak of giving her twenty taels, she was exceedingly delighted, so much so that her eyebrows dilated and her eyes gleamed with smiles.

“We too know,” she smilingly remarked, “all about difficulties! but the proverb says, ‘A camel dying of leanness is even bigger by much than a horse!’ No matter what those distresses may be, were you yet to pluck one single hair from your body, my old friend, it would be stouter than our own waist.”

Chou Jui’s wife stood by, and on hearing her make these coarse utterances, she did all she could to give her a hint by winking, and make her desist. Lady Feng laughed and paid no heed; but calling P’ing Erh, she bade her fetch the parcel of money, which had been given to them the previous day, and to also bring a string of cash; and when these had been placed before goody Liu’s eyes: “This is,” said lady Feng, “silver to the amount of twenty taels, which was for the time given to these young girls to make winter clothes with; but some other day, when you’ve nothing to do, come again on a stroll, in evidence of the good feeling which should exist between relatives. It’s besides already late, and I don’t wish to detain you longer and all for no purpose; but, on your return home, present my compliments to all those of yours to whom I should send them.”

As she spake, she stood up. Old goody Liu gave utterance to a thousand and ten thousand expressions of gratitude, and taking the silver and cash, she followed Chou Jui’s wife on her way to the out-houses. “Well, mother dear,” inquired Mrs. Chou, “what did you think of my lady that you couldn’t speak; and that whenever you opened your mouth it was all ‘your nephew.’ I’ll make just one remark, and I don’t mind if you do get angry. Had he even been your kindred nephew, you should in fact have been somewhat milder in your language; for that gentleman, Mr. Jung, is her kith and kin nephew, and whence has appeared such another nephew of hers (as Pan Erh)?”

Old goody Liu smiled. “My dear sister-in-law,” she replied, “as I gazed upon her, were my heart and eyes, pray, full of admiration or not? and how then could I speak as I should?”

As they were chatting, they reached Chou Jui’s house. They had been sitting for a while, when old goody Liu produced a piece of silver, which she was purposing to leave behind, to be given to the young servants in Chou Jui’s house to purchase fruit to eat; but how could Mrs. Chou satiate her eye with such a small piece of silver? She was determined in her refusal to accept it, so that old goody Liu, after assuring her of her boundless gratitude, took her departure out of the back gate she had come in from.

Reader, you do not know what happened after old goody Liu left, but listen to the explanation which will be given in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

Presentation of artificial flowers made in the Palace.
Chia Lien disports himself with Hsi-feng.
Pao-yü meets Ch’in Chung at a family party.
To resume our narrative. Chou Jui’s wife having seen old goody Liu off, speedily came to report the visit to madame Wang; but, contrary to her expectation, she did not find madame Wang in the drawing-room; and it was after inquiring of the waiting-maids that she eventually learnt that she had just gone over to have a chat with “aunt” Hsüeh. Mrs. Chou, upon hearing this, hastily went out by the eastern corner door, and through the yard on the east, into the Pear Fragrance Court.

As soon as she reached the entrance, she caught sight of madame Wang’s waiting-maid, Chin Ch’uan-erh, playing about on the terrace steps, with a young girl, who had just let her hair grow. When they saw Chou Jui’s wife approach, they forthwith surmised that she must have some message to deliver, so they pursed up their lips and directed her to the inner-room. Chou Jui’s wife gently raised the curtain-screen, and upon entering discovered madame Wang, in voluble conversation with “aunt” Hsüeh, about family questions and people in general.

Mrs. Chou did not venture to disturb them, and accordingly came into the inner room, where she found Hsüeh Pao-ch’ai in a house dress, with her hair simply twisted into a knot round the top of the head, sitting on the inner edge of the stove-couch, leaning on a small divan table, in the act of copying a pattern for embroidery, with the waiting-maid Ying Erh. When she saw her enter, Pao Ch’ai hastily put down her pencil, and turning round with a face beaming with smiles, “Sister Chou,” she said, “take a seat.”

Chou Jui’s wife likewise promptly returned the smile.

“How is my young lady?” she inquired, as she sat down on the edge of the couch. “I haven’t seen you come over on the other side for two or three days! Has Mr. Pao-yü perhaps given you offence?”

“What an idea!” exclaimed Pao Ch’ai, with a smile. “It’s simply that I’ve had for the last couple of days my old complaint again, and that I’ve in consequence kept quiet all this time, and looked after myself.”

“Is that it?” asked Chou Jui’s wife; “but after all, what rooted kind of complaint are you subject to, miss? you should lose really no time in sending for a doctor to diagnose it, and give you something to make you all right. With your tender years, to have an organic ailment is indeed no trifle!”

Pao Ch’ai laughed when she heard these remarks.

“Pray,” she said, “don’t allude to this again; for this ailment of mine I’ve seen, I can’t tell you, how many doctors; taken no end of medicine and spent I don’t know how much money; but the more we did so, not the least little bit of relief did I see. Lucky enough, we eventually came across a bald-pated bonze, whose speciality was the cure of nameless illnesses. We therefore sent for him to see me, and he said that I had brought this along with me from the womb as a sort of inflammatory virus, that luckily I had a constitution strong and hale so that it didn’t matter; and that it would be of no avail if I took pills or any medicines. He then told me a prescription from abroad, and gave me also a packet of a certain powder as a preparative, with a peculiar smell and strange flavour. He advised me, whenever my complaint broke out, to take a pill, which would be sure to put me right again. And this has, after all, strange to say, done me a great deal of good.”

“What kind of prescription is this one from abroad, I wonder,” remarked Mrs. Chou; “if you, miss, would only tell me, it would be worth our while bearing it in mind, and recommending it to others: and if ever we came across any one afflicted with this disease, we would also be doing a charitable deed.”

“You’d better not ask for the prescription,” rejoined Pao Ch’ai smiling. “Why, its enough to wear one out with perplexity! the necessaries and ingredients are few, and all easy to get, but it would be difficult to find the lucky moment! You want twelve ounces of the pollen of the white peone, which flowers in spring, twelve ounces of the pollen of the white summer lily, twelve ounces of the pollen of the autumn hibiscus flower, and twelve ounces of the white plum in bloom in the winter. You take the four kinds of pollen, and put them in the sun, on the very day of the vernal equinox of the succeeding year to get dry, and then you mix them with the powder and pound them well together. You again want twelve mace of water, fallen on ‘rain water’ day…..”

“Good gracious!” exclaimed Mrs. Chou promptly, as she laughed. “From all you say, why you want three years’ time! and what if no rain falls on ‘rain water’ day! What would one then do?”

“Quite so!” Pao Ch’ai remarked smilingly; “how can there be such an opportune rain on that very day! but to wait is also the best thing, there’s nothing else to be done. Besides, you want twelve mace of dew, collected on ‘White Dew’ day, and twelve mace of the hoar frost, gathered on ‘Frost Descent’ day, and twelve mace of snow, fallen on ‘Slight Snow’ day! You next take these four kinds of waters and mix them with the other ingredients, and make pills of the size of a lungngan. You keep them in an old porcelain jar, and bury them under the roots of some

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flowers; and when the ailment betrays itself, you produce it and take a pill, washing it down with two candareens of a yellow cedar decoction.”

“O-mi-to-fu!” cried Mrs. Chou, when she heard all this, bursting out laughing. “It’s really enough to kill one! you might wait ten years and find no such lucky moments!”

“Fortunate for me, however,” pursued Pao Ch’ai, “in the course of a year or two, after the bonze had told me about this prescription, we got all the ingredients; and, after much trouble, we compounded a supply, which we have now brought along with us from the south to the north; and lies at present under the pear trees.”

“Has this medicine any name or other of its own?” further inquired Mrs. Chou.

“It has a name,” replied Pao Ch’ai; “the mangy-headed bonze also told it me; he called it ‘cold fragrance’ pill.”

Chou Jui’s wife nodded her head, as she heard these words. “What do you feel like after all when this complaint manifests itself?” she went on to ask.

“Nothing much,” replied Pao Ch’ai; “I simply pant and cough a bit; but after I’ve taken a pill, I get over it, and it’s all gone.”

Mrs. Chou was bent upon making some further remark, when madame Wang was suddenly heard to enquire, “Who is in here?”

Mrs. Chou went out hurriedly and answered; and forthwith told her all about old goody Liu’s visit. Having waited for a while, and seeing that madame Wang had nothing to say, she was on the point of retiring, when “aunt” Hsueh unexpectedly remarked smiling: “Wait a bit! I’ve something to give you to take along with you.”

And as she spoke, she called for Hsiang Ling. The sound of the screen-board against the sides of the door was heard, and in walked the waiting-maid, who had been playing with Chin Ch’uan-erh. “Did my lady call?” she asked.

“Bring that box of flowers,” said Mrs. Hsueh.

Hsiang Ling assented, and brought from the other side a small embroidered silk box.

“These,” explained “aunt” Hsüeh, “are a new kind of flowers, made in the palace. They consist of twelve twigs of flowers of piled gauze. I thought of them yesterday, and as they will, the pity is, only get old, if uselessly put away, why not give them to the girls to wear them in their hair! I meant to have sent them over yesterday, but I forgot all about them. You come to-day most opportunely, and if you will take them with you, I shall have got them off my hands. To the three young ladies in your family give two twigs each, and of the six that will remain give a couple to Miss Lin, and the other four to lady Feng.”

“Better keep them and give them to your daughter Pao Ch’ai to wear,” observed madame Wang, “and have done with it; why think of all the others?”

“You don’t know, sister,” replied “aunt” Hsüeh, “what a crotchety thing Pao Ch’ai is! she has no liking for flower or powder.”

With these words on her lips, Chou Jui’s wife took the box and walked out of the door of the room. Perceiving that Chin Ch’uan-erh was still sunning herself outside, Chou Jui’s wife asked her: “Isn’t this Hsiang Ling, the waiting-maid that we’ve often heard of as having been purchased just before the departure of the Hsüeh family for the capital, and on whose account there occurred some case of manslaughter or other?”

“Of course it’s she,” replied Chin Ch’uan. But as they were talking, they saw Hsiang Ling draw near smirkingly, and Chou Jui’s wife at once seized her by the hand, and after minutely scrutinizing her face for a time, she turned round to Chin Ch’uan-erh and smiled. “With these features she really resembles slightly the style of lady Jung of our Eastern Mansion.”

“So I too maintain!” said Chin Ch’uan-erh.

Chou Jui’s wife then asked Hsiang Ling, “At what age did you enter this family? and where are your father and mother at present?” and also inquired, “In what year of your teens are you? and of what place are you a native?”

But Hsiang Ling, after listening to all these questions, simply nodded her head and replied, “I can’t remember.”
When Mrs. Chou and Chin Ch’uan-erh heard these words, their spirits changed to grief, and for a while they felt affected and wounded at heart; but in a short time, Mrs. Chou brought the flowers into the room at the back of madame Wang’s principal apartment.

The fact is that dowager lady Chia had explained that as her granddaughters were too numerous, it would not be convenient to crowd them together in one place, that Pao-yü and Tai-yü should only remain with her in this part to break her loneliness, but that Ying Ch’un, T’an Ch’un, and Hsi Ch’un, the three of them, should move on this side in the three rooms within the antechamber, at the back of madame lady Wang’s quarters; and that Li Wan should be told off to be their attendant and to keep an eye over them.

Chou Jui’s wife, therefore, on this occasion came first to these rooms as they were on her way, but she only found a few waiting-maids assembled in the antechamber, waiting silently to obey a call.

Ying Ch’un’s waiting-maid, Ssu Chi, together with Shih Shu, T’an Ch’un’s waiting-maid, just at this moment raised the curtain, and made their egress, each holding in her hand a tea-cup and saucer; and Chou Jui’s wife readily concluding that the young ladies were sitting together also walked into the inner room, where she only saw Ying Ch’un and T’an Ch’un seated near the window, in the act of playing chess. Mrs. Chou presented the flowers and explained whence they came, and what they were.

The girls forthwith interrupted their game, and both with a curtsey, expressed their thanks, and directed the waiting-maids to put the flowers away.

Mrs. Chou complied with their wishes (and handing over the flowers); “Miss Hsi Ch’un,” she remarked, “is not at home; and possibly she’s over there with our old lady.”

“She’s in that room, isn’t she?” inquired the waiting-maids.

Mrs. Chou at these words readily came into the room on this side, where she found Hsi Ch’un, in company with a certain Chih Neng, a young nun of the “moon reflected on water” convent, talking and laughing together. On seeing Chou Jui’s wife enter, Hsi Ch’un at once asked what she wanted, whereupon Chou Jui’s wife opened the box of flowers, and explained who had sent them.

“I was just telling Chih Neng,” remarked Hsi Ch’un laughing, “that I also purpose shortly shaving my head and becoming a nun; and strange enough, here you again bring me flowers; but supposing I shave my head, where can I wear them?”

They were all very much amused for a time with this remark, and Hsi Ch’un told her waiting-maid, Ju Hua, to come and take over the flowers.

“What time did you come over?” then inquired Mrs. Chou of Chih Neng. “Where is that bald-pated and crotchety superior of yours gone?”

“We came,” explained Chih Neng, “as soon as it was day; after calling upon madame Wang, my superior went over to pay a visit in the mansion of Mr. Yü, and told me to wait for her here.”

“Have you received,” further asked Mrs. Chou, “the monthly allowance for incense offering due on the fifteenth or not?”

“I can’t say,” replied Chih Neng.

“Who’s now in charge of the issue of the monthly allowances to the various temples?” interposed Hsi Ch’un, addressing Mrs. Chou, as soon as she heard what was said.

“It’s Yü Hsin,” replied Chou Jui’s wife, “who’s intrusted with the charge.”

“That’s how it is,” observed Hsi Ch’un with a chuckle; “soon after the arrival of the Superior, Yü Hsin’s wife came over and kept on whispering with her for some time; so I presume it must have been about this allowance.”

Mrs. Chou then went on to bandy a few words with Chih Neng, after which she came over to lady Feng’s apartments. Proceeding by a narrow passage, she passed under Li Wan’s back windows, and went along the wall ornamented with creepers on the west. Going out of the western side gate, she entered lady Feng’s court, and walked over into the Entrance Hall, where she only found the waiting-girl Feng Erh, sitting on the doorsteps of lady Feng’s apartments.
When she caught sight of Mrs. Chou approaching, she at once waved her hand, bidding her go to the eastern room. Chou Jui’s wife understood her meaning, and hastily came on tiptoe to the chamber on the east, where she saw a nurse patting lady Feng’s daughter to sleep.

Mrs. Chou promptly asked the nurse in a low tone of voice: “Is the young lady asleep at this early hour? But if even she is I must wake her up.”

The nurse nodded her head in assent, but as these inquiries were being made, a sound of laughter came from over the other side, in which lady Feng’s voice could be detected; followed, shortly after, by the sound of a door opening, and out came P’ing Erh, with a large brass basin in her hands, which she told Feng Erh to fill with water and take inside.

P’ing Erh forthwith entered the room on this side, and upon perceiving Chou Jui’s wife: “What have you come here again for, my old lady?” she readily inquired.

Chou Jui’s wife rose without any delay, and handed her the box. “I’ve come,” said she, “to bring you a present of flowers.”

Upon hearing this, P’ing Erh opened the box, and took out four sprigs, and, turning round, walked out of the room. In a short while she came from the inner room with two sprigs in her hand, and calling first of all Ts’ai Ming, she bade her take the flowers over to the mansion on the other side and present them to “madame” Jung, after which she asked Mrs. Chou to express her thanks on her return.

Chou Jui’s wife thereupon came over to dowager lady Chia’s room on this side of the compound, and as she was going through the Entrance Hall, she casually came, face to face, with her daughter, got up in gala dress, just coming from the house of her mother-in-law.

“What are you running over here for at this time?” promptly inquired Mrs. Chou.

“Have you been well of late, mother?” asked her daughter. “I’ve been waiting for ever so long at home, but you never come out! What’s there so pressing that has prevented you from returning home? I waited till I was tired, and then went on all alone, and paid my respects to our venerable lady; I’m now, on my way to inquire about our lady Wang. What errand haven’t you delivered as yet, ma; and what is it you’re holding?”

“All! as luck would have it,” rejoined Chou Jui’s wife smilingly, “old goody Liu came over to-day, so that besides my own hundred and one duties, I’ve had to run about here and there ever so long, and all for her! While attending to these, Mrs. Hsueh came across me, and asked me to take these flowers to the young ladies, and I’ve been at it up to this very moment, and haven’t done yet! But coming at this time, you must surely have something or other that you want me to do for you! what’s it?”

“Really ma, you’re quick at guessing!” exclaimed her daughter with a smile; “I’ll tell you what it’s all about. The day before yesterday, your son-in-law had a glass of wine too many, and began altercating with some person or other; and some one, I don’t know why, spread some evil report, saying that his antecedents were not clear, and lodged a charge against him at the Yamen, pressing the authorities to deport him to his native place. That’s why I’ve come over to consult with you, as to whom we should appeal to, to do us this favour of helping us out of our dilemma!”

“I knew at once,” Mrs. Chou remarked after listening, “that there was something wrong; but this is nothing hard to settle! Go home and wait for me and I’ll come straightway, as soon as I’ve taken these flowers to Miss Lin; our madame Wang and lady Secunda have both no leisure (to attend to you now,) so go back and wait for me! What’s the use of so much hurry!”

Her daughter, upon hearing this, forthwith turned round to go back, when she added as she walked away, “Mind, mother, and make haste.”

“All right,” replied Chou Jui’s wife, “of course I will; you are young yet, and without experience, and that’s why you are in this flurry.”

As she spoke, she betook herself into Tai-yü’s apartments. Contrary to her expectation Tai-yü was not at this time in her own room, but in Pao-yü’s; where they were amusing themselves in trying to solve the “nine strung rings” puzzle. On entering Mrs. Chou put on a smile. “‘Aunt’ Hsüeh,” she explained, “has told me to bring these flowers and present them to you to wear in your hair.”
“What flowers?” exclaimed Pao-yü. “Bring them here and let me see them.”

As he uttered these words, he readily stretched out his hands and took them over, and upon opening the box and looking in, he discovered, in fact, two twigs of a novel and artistic kind of artificial flowers, of piled gauze, made in the palace.

Tai-yü merely cast a glance at them, as Pao-yü held them. “Have these flowers,” she inquired eagerly, “been sent to me alone, or have all the other girls got some too?”

“Each one of the young ladies has the same,” replied Mrs. Chou; “and these two twigs are intended for you, miss.”

Tai-yü forced a smile. “Oh! I see,” she observed. “If all the others hadn’t chosen, even these which remain over wouldn’t have been given to me.”

Chou Jui’s wife did not utter a word in reply.

“Sister Chou, what took you over on the other side?” asked Pao-yü.

“I was told that our madame Wang was over there,” explained Mrs. Chou, “and as I went to give her a message, ‘aunt’ Hsüeh seized the opportunity to ask me to bring over these flowers.”

“What was cousin Pao Ch’ai doing at home?” asked Pao-yü. “How is it she’s not even been over for these few days?”

“She’s not quite well,” remarked Mrs. Chou.

When Pao-yü heard this news, “Who’ll go,” he speedily ascertained of the waiting-maids, “and inquire after her? Tell her that cousin Lin and I have sent round to ask how our aunt and cousin are getting on! ask her what she’s ailing from and what medicines she’s taking, and explain to her that I know I ought to have gone over myself, but that on my coming back from school a short while back, I again got a slight chill; and that I’ll go in person another day.”

While Pao-yü was yet speaking, Hsi Hsüeh volunteered to take the message, and went off at once; and Mrs. Chou herself took her leave without another word.

Mrs. Chou’s son-in-law was, in fact, Leng Tzu-hsing, the intimate friend of Yü-ts’un. Having recently become involved with some party in a lawsuit, on account of the sale of some curios, he had expressly charged his wife to come and sue for the favour (of a helping hand). Chou Jui’s wife, relying upon her master’s prestige, did not so much as take the affair to heart; and having waited till evening, she simply went over and requested lady Feng to befriend her, and the matter was forthwith ended.

When the lamps were lit, lady Feng came over, after having disrobed herself, to see madame Wang. “I’ve already taken charge,” she observed, “of the things sent round to-day by the Chen family. As for the presents from us to them, we should avail ourselves of the return of the boats, by which the fresh delicacies for the new year were forwarded, to hand them to them to carry back.”

Madame Wang nodded her head in token of approval.

“The birthday presents,” continued lady Feng, “for lady Ling Ngan, the mother of the Earl of Ling Ngan, have already been got together, and whom will you depute to take them over?”

“See,” suggested madame Wang, “who has nothing to do; let four maids go and all will be right! why come again and ask me?”

“Our eldest sister-in-law Chen,” proceeded lady Feng, “came over to invite me to go to-morrow to their place for a little change. I don’t think there will be anything for me to do to-morrow.”

“Whether there be or not,” replied madame Wang, “it doesn’t matter; you must go, for whenever she comes with an invitation, it includes us, who are your seniors, so that, of course, it isn’t such a pleasant thing for you; but as she doesn’t ask us this time, but only asks you, it’s evident that she’s anxious that you should have a little distraction, and you mustn’t disappoint her good intention. Besides it’s certainly right that you should go over for a change.”

Lady Feng assented, and presently Li Wan, Ying Ch’un and the other cousins, likewise paid each her evening
salutation and retired to their respective rooms, where nothing of any notice transpired.

The next day lady Feng completed her toilette, and came over first to tell madame Wang that she was off, and then went to say good-bye to dowager lady Chia; but when Pao-yü heard where she was going, he also wished to go; and as lady Feng had no help but to give in, and to wait until he had changed his clothes, the sister and brother-in-law got into a carriage, and in a short while entered the Ning mansion.

Mrs. Yu, the wife of Chia Chen, and Mrs. Ch’in, the wife of Mr. Chia Jung, the two sisters-in-law, had, along with a number of maids, waiting-girls, and other servants, come as far as the ceremonial gate to receive them, and Mrs. Yu, upon meeting lady Feng, for a while indulged, as was her wont, in humorous remarks, after which, leading Pao-yü by the hand, they entered the drawing room and took their seats, Mrs. Ch’in handed tea round.

“What have you people invited me to come here for?” promptly asked lady Feng; “if you have anything to present me with, hand it to me at once, for I’ve other things to attend to.”

Mrs. Yu and Mrs. Ch’in had barely any time to exchange any further remarks, when several matrons interposed, smilingly: “Had our lady not come to-day, there would have been no help for it, but having come, you can’t have it all your own way.”

While they were conversing about one thing and another, they caught sight of Chia Jung come in to pay his respects, which prompted Pao-yü to inquire, “Isn’t my elder brother at home to-day?”

“He’s gone out of town to-day,” replied Mrs. Yu, “to inquire after his grandfather. You’ll find sitting here,” she continued, “very dull, and why not go out and have a stroll?”

“A strange coincidence has taken place to-day,” urged Mrs. Ch’in, with a smile; “some time back you, uncle Pao, expressed a wish to see my brother, and to-day he too happens to be here at home. I think he’s in the library; but why not go and see for yourself, uncle Pao?”

Pao-yü descended at once from the stove-couch, and was about to go, when Mrs. Yu bade the servants to mind and go with him. “Don’t you let him get into trouble,” she enjoined. “It’s a far different thing when he comes over under the charge of his grandmother, when he’s all right.”

“If that be so,” remarked lady Feng, “why not ask the young gentleman to come in, and then I too can see him. There isn’t, I hope, any objection to my seeing him?”

“Never mind! never mind!” observed Mrs. Yu, smilingly; “it’s as well that you shouldn’t see him. This brother of mine is not, like the boys of our Chia family, accustomed to roughly banging and knocking about. Other people’s children are brought up politely and properly, and not in this vixenish style of yours. Why, you’d ridicule him to death!”

“I won’t laugh at him then, that’s all,” smiled lady Feng; “tell them to bring him in at once.”

“He’s shy,” proceeded Mrs. Ch’in, “and has seen nothing much of the world, so that you are sure to be put out when you see him, sister.”

“What an idea!” exclaimed lady Feng. “Were he even No Cha himself, I’d like to see him; so don’t talk trash; if, after all, you don’t bring him round at once, I’ll give you a good slap on the mouth.”

“I daren’t be obstinate,” answered Mrs. Ch’in smiling; “I’ll bring him round!”

In a short while she did in fact lead in a young lad, who, compared with Pao-yü, was somewhat more slight but, from all appearances, superior to Pao-yü in eyes and eyebrows, (good looks), which were so clear and well-defined, in white complexion and in ruddy lips, as well as graceful appearance and pleasing manners. He was however bashful and timid, like a girl.

In a shy and demure way, he made a bow to lady Feng and asked after her health.

Lady Feng was simply delighted with him. “You take a low seat next to him!” she ventured laughingly as she first pushed Pao-yü back. Then readily stooping forward, she took this lad by the hand and asked him to take a seat next to her. Presently she inquired about his age, his studies and such matters, when she found that at school he went under the name of Ch’in Chung.

The matrons and maids in attendance on lady Feng, perceiving that this was the first time their mistress met Ch’in
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Chung, (and knowing) that she had not at hand the usual presents, forthwith ran over to the other side and told P’ing Erh about it.

P’ing Erh, aware of the close intimacy that existed between lady Feng and Mrs. Ch’in, speedily took upon herself to decide, and selecting a piece of silk, and two small gold medals, (bearing the wish that he should attain) the highest degree, the senior wranglership, she handed them to the servants who had come over, to take away.

Lady Feng, however, explained that her presents were too mean by far, but Mrs. Ch’in and the others expressed their appreciation of them; and in a short time the repast was over, and Mrs. Yu, lady Feng and Mrs. Ch’in played at dominoes, but of this no details need be given; while both Pao-yü and Ch’in Chung sat down, got up and talked, as they pleased.

Since he had first glanced at Ch’in Chung, and seen what kind of person he was, he felt at heart as if he had lost something, and after being plunged in a dazed state for a time, he began again to give way to foolish thoughts in his mind.

“There are then such beings as he in the world!” he reflected. “I now see there are! I’m however no better than a wallowing pig or a mangy cow! Despicable destiny! why was I ever born in this household of a marquis and in the mansion of a duke? Had I seen the light in the home of some penniless scholar, or poverty-stricken official, I could long ago have enjoyed the communion of his friendship, and I would not have lived my whole existence in vain! Though more honourable than he, it is indeed evident that silk and satins only serve to swathe this rotten trunk of mine, and choice wines and rich meats only to gorge the filthy drain and miry sewer of this body of mine! Wealth! and splendour! ye are no more than contaminated with pollution by me!”

Ever since Ch’in Chung had noticed Pao-yü’s unusual appearance, his sedate deportment, and what is more, his hat ornamented with gold, and his dress full of embroidery, attended by beautiful maids and handsome youths, he did not indeed think it a matter of surprise that every one was fond of him.

“Born as I have had the misfortune to be,” he went on to commune within himself, “in an honest, though poor family, how can I presume to enjoy his companionship! This is verily a proof of what a barrier poverty and wealth set between man and man. What a serious misfortune is this too in this mortal world!”

In wild and inane ideas of the same strain, indulged these two youths!

Pao-yü by and by further asked of him what books he was reading, and Ch’in Chung, in answer to these inquiries, told him the truth. A few more questions and answers followed; and after about ten remarks, a greater intimacy sprang up between them.

Tea and fruits were shortly served, and while they were having their tea, Pao-yü suggested, “We two don’t take any wine, and why shouldn’t we have our fruit served on the small couch inside, and go and sit there, and thus save you all the trouble?”

The two of them thereupon came into the inner apartment to have their tea; and Mrs. Ch’in attended to the laying out of fruit and wines for lady Feng, and hurriedly entered the room and hinted to Pao-yü: “Dear uncle Pao, your nephew is young, and should he happen to say anything disrespectful, do please overlook it, for my sake, for though shy, he’s naturally of a perverse and wilful disposition, and is rather given to having his own way.”

“Off with you!” cried Pao-yü laughing; “I know it all.” Mrs. Ch’in then went on to give a bit of advice to her brother, and at length came to keep lady Feng company. Presently lady Feng and Mrs. Yu sent another servant to tell Pao-yü that there was outside of everything they might wish to eat and that they should mind and go and ask for it; and Pao-yü simply signified that they would; but his mind was not set upon drinking or eating; all he did was to keep making inquiries of Ch’in Chung about recent family concerns.

Ch’in Chung went on to explain that his tutor had last year relinquished his post, that his father was advanced in years and afflicted with disease, and had multifarious public duties to preoccupy his mind, so that he had as yet had no time to make arrangements for another tutor, and that all he did was no more than to keep up his old tasks; that as regards study, it was likewise necessary to have the company of one or two intimate friends, as then only, by dint of a frequent exchange of ideas and opinions, one could arrive at progress; and Pao-yü gave him no time to complete, but eagerly urged, “Quite so! But in our household, we have a family school, and those of our kindred who have no means sufficient to engage the services of a tutor are at liberty to come over for the sake of study, and the sons and brothers of our relatives are likewise free to join the class. As my own tutor went home last year, I am now also wasting my time doing nothing; my father’s intention was that I too should have gone over to this school, so that I might at least temporarily keep up what I have already read, pending the arrival of my
tutor next year, when I could again very well resume my studies alone at home. But my grandmother raised objections; maintaining first of all, that the boys who attend the family classes being so numerous, she feared we would be sure to be up to mischief, which wouldn’t be at all proper; and that, in the second place, as I had been ill for some time, the matter should be dropped, for the present. But as, from what you say, your worthy father is very much exercised on this score, you should, on your return, tell him all about it, and come over to our school. I’ll also be there as your schoolmate; and as you and I will reap mutual benefit from each other’s companionship, won’t it be nice!"

“When my father was at home the other day,” Ch’in Chung smiled and said, “he alluded to the question of a tutor, and explained that the free schools were an excellent institution. He even meant to have come and talked matters over with his son-in-law’s father about my introduction, but with the urgent concerns here, he didn’t think it right for him to come about this small thing, and make any trouble. But if you really believe that I might be of use to you, in either grinding the ink, or washing the slab, why shouldn’t you at once make the needful arrangements, so that neither you nor I may idle our time? And as we shall be able to come together often and talk matters over, and set at the same time our parents’ minds at ease, and to enjoy the pleasure of friendship, won’t it be a profitable thing!”

“Compose your mind!” suggested Pao-yü. “We can by and by first of all, tell your brother-in-law, and your sister as well as sister-in-law Secunda Lien; and on your return home to-day, lose no time in explaining all to your worthy father, and when I get back, I’ll speak to my grandmother; and I can’t see why our wishes shouldn’t speedily be accomplished.”

By the time they had arrived at this conclusion, the day was far advanced, and the lights were about to be lit; and they came out and watched them once more for a time as they played at dominoes. When they came to settle their accounts Mrs. Ch’in and Mrs. Yu were again the losers and had to bear the expense of a theatrical and dinner party; and while deciding that they should enjoy this treat the day after the morrow, they also had the evening repast.

Darkness having set in, Mrs. Yu gave orders that two youths should accompany Mr. Ch’in home. The matrons went out to deliver the directions, and after a somewhat long interval, Ch’in Chung said goodbye and was about to start on his way.

“Whom have you told off to escort him?” asked Mrs. Yu.

“Chiao Ta,” replied the matrons, “has been told to go, but it happens that he’s under the effects of drink and making free use again of abusive language.”

Mrs. Yu and Mrs. Chin remonstrated. “What’s the use,” they said, “of asking him? that mean fellow shouldn’t be chosen, but you will go again and provoke him.”

“People always maintain,” added lady Feng, “that you are far too lenient. But fancy allowing servants in this household to go on in this way; why, what will be the end of it?”

“You don’t mean to tell me,” observed Mrs. Yu, “that you don’t know this Chiao Ta? Why, even the gentlemen one and all pay no heed to his doings! your eldest brother, Chia Cheng, he too doesn’t notice him. It’s all because when he was young he followed our ancestor in three or four wars, and because on one occasion, by extracting our senior from the heap of slain and carrying him on his back, he saved his life. He himself suffered hunger and stole food for his master to eat; they had no water for two days; and when he did get half a bowl, he gave it to his master, while he himself had sewage water. He now simply presumes upon the sentimental obligations imposed by these services. When the seniors of the family still lived, they all looked upon him with exceptional regard; but who at present ventures to interfere with him? He is also advanced in years, and doesn’t care about any decent manners; his sole delight is wine; and when he gets drunk, there isn’t a single person whom he won’t abuse. I’ve again and again told the stewards not to henceforward ask Chiao Ta to do any work whatever, but to treat him as dead and gone; and here he’s sent again to-day.”

“How can I not know all about this Chiao Ta?” remarked lady Feng; “but the secret of all this trouble is, that you won’t take any decisive step. Why not pack him off to some distant farm, and have done with him?” And as she spoke, “Is our carriage ready?” she went on to inquire.

“All ready and waiting,” interposed the married women.

Lady Feng also got up, said good-bye, and hand in hand with Pao-yü, they walked out of the room, escorted by Mrs. Yu and the party, as far as the entrance of the Main Hall, where they saw the lamps shedding a brilliant light
and the attendants all waiting on the platforms. Chiao Ta, however, availing himself of Chia Chen’s absence from home, and elated by wine, began to abuse the head steward Lai Erh for his injustice.

“You bully of the weak and coward with the strong,” he cried, “when there’s any pleasant charge, you send the other servants, but when it’s a question of seeing any one home in the dark, then you ask me, you disorderly clown! a nice way you act the steward, indeed! Do you forget that if Mr. Chiao Ta chose to raise one leg, it would be a good deal higher than your head! Remember please, that twenty years ago, Mr. Chiao Ta wouldn’t even so much as look at any one, no matter who it was; not to mention a pack of hybrid creatures like yourselves!”

While he went on cursing and railing with all his might, Chia Jung appeared walking by lady Feng’s carriage. All the servants having tried to hush him and not succeeding, Chia Jung became exasperated; and forthwith blew him up for a time. “Let some one bind him up,” he cried, “and tomorrow, when he’s over the wine, I’ll call him to task, and we’ll see if he won’t seek death.”

Chiao Ta showed no consideration for Chia Jung. On the contrary, he shouted with more vigour. Going up to Chia Jung: “Brother Jung,” he said, “don’t put on the airs of a master with Chiao Ta. Not to speak of a man such as you, why even your father and grandfather wouldn’t presume to display such side with Chiao Ta. Were it not for Chiao Ta, and him alone, where would your office, honours, riches and dignity be? Your ancestor, whom I brought back from the jaws of death, heaped up all this estate, but up to this very day have I received no thanks for the services I rendered! on the contrary, you come here and play the master; don’t say a word more, and things may come right; but if you do, I’ll plunge the blade of a knife white in you and extract it red.”

Lady Feng, from inside the carriage, remarked to Chia Jung: “Don’t you yet pack off this insolent fellow! Why, if you keep him in your house, won’t he be a source of mischief? Besides, were relatives and friends to hear about these things, won’t they have a laugh at our expense, that a household like ours should be so devoid of all propriety?”

Chia Jung assented. The whole band of servants finding that Chiao Ta was getting too insolent had no help but to come up and throw him over, and binding him up, they dragged him towards the stables. Chiao Ta abused even Chia Chen with still more vehemence, and shouted in a boisterous manner. “I want to go,” he cried, “to the family Ancestral Temple and mourn my old master. Who would have ever imagined that he would leave behind such vile creatures of descendants as you all, day after day indulging in obscene and incestuous practices, ‘in scraping of the ashes’ and in philandering with brothers-in-law. I know all about your doings; the best thing is to hide one’s stump of an arm in one’s sleeve!” (wash one’s dirty clothes at home).

The servants who stood by, upon hearing this wild talk, were quite at their wits’ end, and they at once seized him, tied him up, and filled his mouth to the fullest extent with mud mixed with some horse refuse.

Lady Feng and Chia Jung heard all he said from a distance, but pretended not to hear; but Pao-yü, seated in the carriage as he was, also caught this extravagant talk and inquired of lady Feng: “Sister, did you hear him say ‘scraping of the ashes?’ What’s it?”

“Don’t talk such rubbish!” hastily shouted lady Feng; “it was the maudlin talk of a drunkard! A nice boy you are! not to speak of your listening, but you must also inquire! wait and I’ll tell your mother and we’ll see if she doesn’t seriously take you to task.”

Pao-yü was in such a state of fright that he speedily entreated her to forgive him. “My dear sister,” he craved, “I won’t venture again to say anything of the kind”

“My dear brother, if that be so, it’s all right!” rejoined lady Feng reassuringly; “on our return we’ll speak to her venerable ladyship and ask her to send some one to arrange matters in the family school, and invite Ch’in Chung to come to school for his studies.”

While yet this conversation was going on, they arrived at the Jung Mansion.

Reader, do you wish to know what follows? if you do, the next chapter will unfold it.
CHAPTER VIII.

By a strange coincidence, Chia Pao-yü becomes acquainted with the golden clasp.
In an unexpected meeting, Hsüeh Pao-ch’ai sees the jade of spiritual perception.

Pao-yü and lady Feng, we will now explain, paid, on their return home, their respects to all the inmates, and Pao-yü availed himself of the first occasion to tell dowager lady Chia of his wish that Ch’in Chung should come over to the family school. “The presence for himself of a friend as schoolmate would,” he argued, “be fitly excellent to stir him to zeal,” and he went on to speak in terms of high praise of Ch’in Chung, his character and his manners, which most of all made people esteem him.

Lady Feng besides stood by him and backed his request. “In a day or two,” she added, “Ch’in Chung will be coming to pay his obeisance to your venerable ladyship.”

This bit of news greatly rejoiced the heart of dowager lady Chia, and lady Feng likewise did not let the opportunity slip, without inviting the old lady to attend the theatrical performance to come off the day after the morrow. Dowager lady Chia was, it is true, well on in years, but was, nevertheless, very fond of enjoyment, so that when the day arrived and Mrs. Yu came over to invite her round, she forthwith took madame Wang, Lin Tai-yü, Pao-yü and others along and went to the play.

It was about noon, when dowager lady Chia returned to her apartments for her siesta; and madame Wang, who was habitually partial to a quiet life, also took her departure after she had seen the old lady retire. Lady Feng subsequently took the seat of honour; and the party enjoyed themselves immensely till the evening, when they broke up.

But to return to Pao-yü. Having accompanied his grandmother Chia back home, and waited till her ladyship was in her midday sleep, he had in fact an inclination to return to the performance, but he was afraid lest he should be a burden to Mrs. Ch’in and the rest and lest they should not feel at ease. Remembering therefore that Pao Ch’ai had been at home unwell for the last few days, and that he had not been to see her, he was anxious to go and look her up, but he dreaded that if he went by the side gate, at the back of the drawing-room, he would be prevented by something or other, and fearing, what would be making matters worse, lest he should come across his father, he consequently thought it better to go on his way by a detour. The nurses and waiting-maids thereupon came to help him to change his clothes; but they saw him not change, but go out again by the second door. These nurses and maids could not help following him out; but they were still under the impression that he was going over to the other mansion to see the theatricals. Contrary to their speculations, upon reaching the entrance hall, he forthwith went to the east, then turned to the north, and walking round by the rear of the hall, he happened to come face to face with two of the family companions, Mr. Ch’an Kuang, and Mr. Tan T’ing-jen. As soon as they caught sight of Pao-yü, they both readily drew up to him, and as they smiled, the one put his arm round his waist, while the other grasped him by the hand.

“Oh divine brother!” they both exclaimed, “this we call dreaming a pleasant dream, for it’s no easy thing to come across you!”

While continuing their remarks they paid their salutations, and inquired after his health; and it was only after they had chatted for ever so long, that they went on their way. The nurse called out to them and stopped them, “Have you two gentlemen,” she said, “come out from seeing master?”

They both nodded assent. “Your master,” they explained, “is in the Meng P’o Chai small library having his siesta; so that you can go through there with no fear.”

As they uttered these words, they walked away.

This remark also evoked a smile from Pao-yü, but without further delay he turned a corner, went towards the north, and came into the Pear Fragrance Court, where, as luck would have it, he met the head manager of the Household Treasury, Wu Hsin-teng, who, in company with the head of the granary, Tai Liang, and several other head stewards, seven persons in all, was issuing out of the Account Room.

On seeing Pao-yü approaching, they, in a body, stood still, and hung down their arms against their sides. One of them alone, a certain butler, called Ch’ien Hua, promptly came forward, as he had not seen Pao-yü for many a day,
and bending on one knee, paid his respects to Pao-yü. Pao-yü at once gave a smile and pulled him up.

“The day before yesterday,” smiled all the bystanders, “we were somewhere together and saw some characters written by you, master Secundus, in the composite style. The writing is certainly better than it was before! When will you give us a few sheets to stick on the wall?”

“Where did you see them?” inquired Pao-yü, with a grin.

“They are to be found in more than one place,” they replied, “and every one praises them very much, and what’s more, asks us for a few.”

“They are not worth having,” observed Pao-yü smilingly; “but if you do want any, tell my young servants and it will be all right.”

As he said these words, he moved onwards. The whole party waited till he had gone by, before they separated, each one to go his own way.

But we need not dilate upon matters of no moment, but return to Pao-yü.

On coming to the Pear Fragrance Court, he entered, first, into “aunt” Hsüeh’s room, where he found her getting some needlework ready to give to the waiting-maids to work at. Pao-yü forthwith paid his respects to her, and “aunt” Hsüeh, taking him by the hand, drew him towards her and clasped him in her embrace.

“With this cold weather,” she smilingly urged, “it’s too kind of you, my dear child, to think of coming to see me; come along on the stove-couch at once!—Bring some tea,” she continued, addressing the servants, “and make it as hot as it can be!”

“Isn’t Hsüeh P’an at home?” Pao-yü having inquired: “He’s like a horse without a halter,” Mrs. Hsüeh remarked with a sigh; “he’s daily running here and there and everywhere, and nothing can induce him to stay at home one single day.”

“Is sister (Pao Ch’ai) all right again?” asked Pao-yü. “Yes,” replied Mrs. Hsüeh, “she’s well again. It was very kind of you two days ago to again think of her, and send round to inquire after her. She’s now in there, and you can go and see her. It’s warmer there than it’s here; go and sit with her inside, and, as soon as I’ve put everything away, I’ll come and join you and have a chat.”

Pao-yü, upon hearing this, jumped down with alacrity from the stove-couch, and walked up to the door of the inner room, where he saw hanging a portière somewhat the worse for use, made of red silk. Pao-yü raised the portière and making one step towards the interior, he found Pao Ch’ai seated on the couch, busy over some needlework. On the top of her head was gathered, and made into a knot, her chevelure, black as lacquer, and glossy like pomade. She wore a honey-coloured wadded robe, a rose-brown short-sleeved jacket, lined with the fur of the squirrel of two colours: the “gold and silver;” and a jupe of leek-yellow silk. Her whole costume was neither too new, neither too old, and displayed no sign of extravagance.

Her lips, though not rouged, were naturally red; her eyebrows, though not pencilled, were yet blue black; her face resembled a silver basin, and her eyes, juicy plums. She was sparing in her words, chary in her talk, so much so that people said that she posed as a simpleton. She was quiet in the acquittal of her duties and scrupulous as to the proper season for everything. “I practise simplicity,” she would say of herself.

“How are you? are you quite well again, sister?” inquired Pao-yü, as he gazed at her; whereupon Pao Ch’ai raised her head, and perceiving Pao-yü walk in, she got up at once and replied with a smile, “I’m all right again; many thanks for your kindness in thinking of me.”

While uttering this, she pressed him to take a seat on the stove-couch, and as he sat down on the very edge of the couch, she told Ying Erh to bring tea and asked likewise after dowager lady Chia and lady Feng. “And are all the rest of the young ladies quite well?” she inquired.

Saying this she scrutinised Pao-yü, who she saw had a head-dress of purplish-gold twisted threads, studded with precious stones. His forehead was bound with a gold circlet, representing two dragons, clasping a pearl. On his person he wore a light yellow, archery-sleeved jacket, ornamented with rampant dragons, and lined with fur from the ribs of the silver fox; and was clasped with a dark sash, embroidered with different-coloured butterflies and birds. Round his neck was hung an amulet, consisting of a clasp of longevity, a talisman of recorded name, and, in addition to these, the precious jade which he had had in his mouth at the time of his birth.
“I’ve daily heard every one speak of this jade,” said Pao Ch’ai with a smile, “but haven’t, after all, had an opportunity of looking at it closely, but anyhow to-day I must see it.”

As she spoke, she drew near. Pao-yü himself approached, and taking it from his neck, he placed it in Pao Ch’ai’s hand. Pao Ch’ai held it in her palm. It appeared to her very much like the egg of a bird, resplendent as it was like a bright russet cloud; shiny and smooth like variegated curd and covered with a net for the sake of protection.

Readers, you should know that this was the very block of useless stone which had been on the Ta Huang Hills, and which had dropped into the Ch’ing Keng cave, in a state of metamorphosis. A later writer expresses his feelings in a satirical way as follows:

Nü Wo’s fusion of stones was e’er a myth inane,
But from this myth hath sprung fiction still more insane!
Lost is the subtle life, divine, and real!—gone!
Assumed, mean subterfuge! foul bags of skin and bone!
Fortune, when once adverse, how true! gold glows no more!
In evil days, alas! the jade’s splendour is o’er!
Bones, white and bleached, in nameless hill-like mounds are flung,
Bones once of youths renowned and maidens fair and young.

The rejected stone has in fact already given a record of the circumstances of its transformation, and the inscription in seal characters, engraved upon it by the bald-headed bonze, and below will now be also appended a faithful representation of it; but its real size is so very diminutive, as to allow of its being held by a child in his mouth while yet unborn, that were it to have been drawn in its exact proportions, the characters would, it is feared, have been so insignificant in size, that the beholder would have had to waste much of his eyesight, and it would besides have been no pleasant thing.

While therefore its shape has been adhered to, its size has unavoidably been slightly enlarged, to admit of the reader being able, conveniently, to peruse the inscription, even by very lamplight, and though he may be under the influence of wine.

These explanations have been given to obviate any such sneering remarks as: “What could be, pray, the size of the mouth of a child in his mother’s womb, and how could it grasp such a large and clumsy thing?”

On the face of the jade was written:

Precious Gem of Spiritual Perception.
If thou wilt lose me not and never forget me,
Eternal life and constant luck will be with thee!

On the reverse was written:

1 To exorcise evil spirits and the accessory visitations; 2 To cure predestined sickness; 3 To prognosticate weal and woe.

Pao Ch’ai having looked at the amulet, twisted it again to the face, and scrutinising it closely, read aloud:

If thou wilt lose me not and never forget me,
Eternal life and constant luck will be with thee!

She perused these lines twice, and, turning round, she asked Ying Erh laughingly: “Why don’t you go and pour the tea? what are you standing here like an idiot!”

“These two lines which I’ve heard,” smiled Ying Erh, “would appear to pair with the two lines on your necklet, miss!”

“What!” eagerly observed Pao-yü with a grin, when he caught these words, “are there really eight characters too on your necklet, cousin? do let me too see it.”

“Don’t listen to what she says,” remarked Pao Ch’ai, “there are no characters on it.”

“My dear cousin,” pleaded Pao-yü entreatingly, “how is it you’ve seen mine?”

Pao Ch’ai was brought quite at bay by this remark of his, and she consequently added, “There are also two
propitious phrases engraved on this charm, and that’s why I wear it every day. Otherwise, what pleasure would there be in carrying a clumsy thing.”

As she spoke, she unfastened the button, and produced from inside her crimson robe, a crystal-like locket, set with pearls and gems, and with a brilliant golden fringe. Pao-yü promptly received it from her, and upon minute examination, found that there were in fact four characters on each side; the eight characters on both sides forming two sentences of good omen. The similitude of the locket is likewise then given below. On the face of the locket is written:

“Part not from me and cast me not away;”

And on the reverse:

“And youth, perennial freshness will display!”

Pao-yü examined the charm, and having also read the inscription twice over aloud, and then twice again to himself, he said as he smiled, “Dear cousin, these eight characters of yours form together with mine an antithetical verse.”

“They were presented to her,” ventured Ying Erh, “by a mangy-pated bonze, who explained that they should be engraved on a golden trinket.”

Pao Ch’ai left her no time to finish what she wished to say, but speedily called her to task for not going to bring the tea, and then inquired of Pao-yü “Where he had come from?”

Pao-yü, had by this time, drawn quite close to Pao Ch’ai, and perceived whiff after whiff of some perfume or other, of what kind he could not tell. “What perfume have you used, my cousin,” he forthwith asked, “to fumigate your dresses with? I really don’t remember smelling any perfumery of the kind before.”

“I’m very averse,” replied Pao Ch’ai blandly, “to the odour of fumigation; good clothes become impregnated with the smell of smoke.”

“In that case,” observed Pao-yü, “what scent is it?”

“Yes, I remember,” Pao Ch’ai answered, after some reflection; “it’s the scent of the ‘cold fragrance’ pills which I took this morning.”

“What are these cold fragrance pills,” remarked Pao-yü smiling, “that they have such a fine smell? Give me, cousin, a pill to try.”

“Here you are with your nonsense again,” Pao Ch’ai rejoined laughingly; “is a pill a thing to be taken recklessly?”

She had scarcely finished speaking, when she heard suddenly some one outside say, “Miss Lin is come;” and shortly Lin Tai-yü walked in in a jaunty manner.

“Oh, I come at a wrong moment!” she exclaimed forthwith, smirking significantly when she caught sight of Pao-yü.

Pao-yü and the rest lost no time in rising and offering her a seat, whereupon Pao Ch’ai added with a smile, “How can you say such things?”

“Had I known sooner,” continued Tai-yü, “that he was here, I would have kept away.”

“I can’t fathom this meaning of yours,” protested Pao Ch’ai.

“If one comes,” Tai-yü urged smiling, “then all come, and when one doesn’t come, then no one comes. Now were he to come to-day, and I to come to-morrow, wouldn’t there be, by a division of this kind, always some one with you every day? and in this way, you wouldn’t feel too lonely, nor too crowded. How is it, cousin, that you didn’t understand what I meant to imply?”

“Is it snowing?” inquired Pao-yü, upon noticing that she wore a cloak made of crimson camlet, buttoning in front.

“It has been snowing for some time,” ventured the matrons, who were standing below. “Fetch my wrapper!” Pao-yü remarked, and Tai-yü readily laughed. “Am I not right? I come, and, of course, he must go at once.”
“Did I ever mention that I was going?” questioned Pao-yü; “I only wish it brought to have it ready when I want it.”

“It’s a snowy day,” consequently remarked Pao-yü’s nurse, dame Li, “and we must also look to the time, but you had better remain here and amuse yourself with your cousin. Your aunt has, in there, got ready tea and fruits. I’ll tell the waiting-maid to go and fetch your wrapper and the boys to return home.” Pao-yü assented, and nurse Li left the room and told the boys that they were at liberty to go.

By this time Mrs. Hsüeh had prepared tea and several kinds of nice things and kept them all to partake of those delicacies. Pao-yü, having spoken highly of some goose feet and ducks’ tongues he had tasted some days before, at his eldest sister-in-law’s, Mrs. Yu’s, “aunt” Hsüeh promptly produced several dishes of the same kind, made by herself, and gave them to Pao-yü to try. “With a little wine,” added Pao-yü with a smile, “they would be first rate.”

Mrs. Hsüeh thereupon bade the servants fetch some wine of the best quality; but dame Li came forward and remonstrated. “My lady,” she said, “never mind the wine.”

Pao-yü smilingly pleaded: “My nurse, I’ll take just one cup and no more.”

“It’s no use,” nurse Li replied, “were your grandmother and mother present, I wouldn’t care if you drank a whole jar. I remember the day when I turned my eyes away but for a moment, and some ignorant fool or other, merely with the view of pandering for your favour, gave you only a drop of wine to drink, and how this brought reproaches upon me for a couple of days. You don’t know, my lady, you have no idea of his disposition! it’s really dreadful; and when he has had a little wine he shows far more temper. On days when her venerable ladyship is in high spirits, she allows him to have his own way about drinking, but he’s not allowed to have wine on any and every day; and why should I have to suffer inside and all for nothing at all?”

“You antiquated thing!” replied Mrs. Hsüeh laughing, “set your mind at ease, and go and drink your own wine! I won’t let him have too much, and should even the old lady say anything, let the fault be mine.”

Saying this, she asked a waiting-maid to take nurse Li along with her and give her also a glass of wine so as to keep out the cold air.

When nurse Li heard these words, she had no alternative but to go for a time with all the others and have some wine to drink.

“The wine need not be warmed: I prefer it cold!” Pao-yü went on to suggest meanwhile.

“That won’t do,” remonstrated Mrs. Hsüeh; “cold wine will make your hand tremble when you write.”

“You have,” interposed Pao Ch’ai smiling, “the good fortune, cousin Pao-yü, of having daily opportunities of acquiring a knowledge of every kind of subject, and yet don’t you know that the properties of wine are mostly heating? If you drink wine warm, its effects soon dispel, but if you drink it cold, it at once congeals in you; and as upon your intestines devolves the warming of it, how can you not derive any harm? and won’t you yet from this time change this habit of yours? leave off at once drinking that cold wine.”

Pao-yü finding that the words he had heard contained a good deal of sense, speedily put down the cold wine, and having asked them to warm it, he at length drank it.

Tai-yü was bent upon cracking melon seeds, saying nothing but simply pursing up her lips and smiling, when, strange coincidence, Hsüeh Yen, Tai-yü’s waiting-maid, walked in and handed her mistress a small hand-stove.

“Who told you to bring it?” ascertained Tai-yü grinningly. “I’m sorry to have given whoever it is the trouble; I’m obliged to her. But did she ever imagine that I would freeze to death?”

“Tzu Chuan was afraid,” replied Hsüeh Yen, “that you would, miss, feel cold, and she asked me to bring it over.”

Tai-yü took it over and held it in her lap. “How is it,” she smiled, “that you listen to what she tells you, but that you treat what I say, day after day, as so much wind blowing past your ears! How is it that you at once do what she bids you, with even greater alacrity than you would an imperial edict?”

When Pao-yü heard this, he felt sure in his mind that Tai-yü was availing herself of this opportunity to make fun of him, but he made no remark, merely laughing to himself and paying no further notice. Pao Ch’ai, again, knew full well that this habit was a weak point with Tai-yü, so she too did not go out of her way to heed what she said.

“You’ve always been delicate and unable to stand the cold,” interposed “aunt” Hsüeh, “and is it not a kind
attention on their part to have thought of you?"

"You don’t know, aunt, how it really stands,” responded Tai-yü smilingly; “fortunately enough, it was sent to me here at your quarters; for had it been in any one else’s house, wouldn’t it have been a slight upon them? Is it forsooth nice to think that people haven’t so much as a hand-stove, and that one has fussily to be sent over from home? People won’t say that the waiting-maids are too officious, but will imagine that I’m in the habit of behaving in this offensive fashion."

“You’re far too punctilious,” remarked Mrs. Hsüeh, “as to entertain such notions! No such ideas as these crossed my mind just now.”

While they were conversing, Pao-yü had taken so much as three cups of wine, and nurse Li came forward again to prevent him from having any more. Pao-yü was just then in a state of exultation and excitement, (a state) enhanced by the conversation and laughter of his cousins, so that was he ready to agree to having no more! But he was constrained in a humble spirit to entreat for permission. “My dear nurse,” he implored, “I’ll just take two more cups and then have no more.”

“You’d better be careful,” added nurse Li, “your father is at home to-day, and see that you’re ready to be examined in your lessons.”

When Pao-yü heard this mention, his spirits at once sank within him, and gently putting the wine aside, he dropped his head upon his breast.

Tai-yü promptly remonstrated. “You’ve thrown cold water,” she said, “over the spirits of the whole company; why, if uncle should ask to see you, well, say that aunt Hsüeh detained you. This old nurse of yours has been drinking, and again makes us the means of clearing her muddled head!”

While saying this, she gave Pao-yü a big nudge with the intent of stirring up his spirits, adding, as she addressed him in a low tone of voice: “Don’t let us heed that old thing, but mind our own enjoyment.”

Dame Li also knew very well Tai-yü’s disposition, and therefore remarked: “Now, Miss Lin, don’t you urge him on; you should after all, give him good advice, as he may, I think, listen to a good deal of what you say to him.”

“Why should I urge him on?” rejoined Lin Tai-yü, with a sarcastic smile, “nor will I trouble myself to give him advice. You, old lady, are far too scrupulous! Old lady Chia has also time after time given him wine, and if he now takes a cup or two more here, at his aunt’s, lady Hsüeh’s house, there’s no harm that I can see. Is it perhaps, who knows, that aunt is a stranger in this establishment, and that we have in fact no right to come over here to see her?”

Nurse Li was both vexed and amused by the words she had just heard. “Really,” she observed, “every remark this girl Lin utters is sharper than a razor! I didn’t say anything much!”

Pao Ch’ai too could not suppress a smile, and as she pinched Tai-yü’s cheek, she exclaimed, “Oh the tongue of this frowning girl! one can neither resent what it says, nor yet listen to it with any gratification!”

“Don’t be afraid!” Mrs. Hsüeh went on to say, “don’t be afraid; my son, you’ve come to see me, and although I’ve nothing good to give you, you mustn’t, through fright, let the trifle you’ve taken lie heavy on your stomach, and thus make me uneasy; but just drink at your pleasure, and as much as you like, and let the blame fall on my shoulders. What’s more, you can stay to dinner with me, and then go home; or if you do get tipsy, you can sleep with me, that’s all.”

She thereupon told the servants to heat some more wine. “I’ll come,” she continued, “and keep you company while you have two or three cups, after which we’ll have something to eat!”

It was only after these assurances that Pao-yü’s spirits began at length, once more to revive, and dame Li then directed the waiting-maids what to do. “You remain here,” she enjoined, “and mind, be diligent while I go home and change; when I’ll come back again. Don’t allow him,” she also whispered to “aunt” Hsüeh, “to have all his own way and drink too much.”

Having said this, she betook herself back to her quarters; and during this while, though there were two or three nurses in attendance, they did not concern themselves with what was going on. As soon as they saw that nurse Li had left, they likewise all quietly slipped out, at the first opportunity they found, while there remained but two waiting-maids, who were only too glad to curry favour with Pao-yü. But fortunately “aunt” Hsüeh, by much
coaxing and persuading, only let him have a few cups, and the wine being then promptly cleared away, pickled bamboo shoots and chicken-skin soup were prepared, of which Pao-yü drank with relish several bowls full, eating besides more than half a bowl of finest rice congee.

By this time, Hsüeh Pao Ch'ai and Lin Tai-yü had also finished their repast; and when Pao-yü had drunk a few cups of strong tea, Mrs. Hsüeh felt more easy in her mind. Hsüeh Yen and the others, three or four of them in all, had also had their meal, and came in to wait upon them.

"Are you now going or not?" inquired Tai-yü of Pao-yü.

Pao-yü looked askance with his drowsy eyes. "If you want to go," he observed, "I'll go with you."

Tai-yü hearing this, speedily rose. "We've been here nearly the whole day," she said, "and ought to be going back."

As she spoke the two of them bade good-bye, and the waiting-maids at once presented a hood to each of them.

Pao-yü readily lowered his head slightly and told a waiting-maid to put it on. The girl promptly took the hood, made of deep red cloth, and shaking it out of its folds, she put it on Pao-yü's head.

"That will do," hastily exclaimed Pao-yü. "You stupid thing! gently a bit; is it likely you've never seen any one put one on before? let me do it myself."

"Come over here, and I'll put it on for you," suggested Tai-yü, as she stood on the edge of the couch. Pao-yü eagerly approached her, and Tai-yü carefully kept the cap, to which his hair was bound, fast down, and taking the hood she rested its edge on the circlet round his forehead. She then raised the ball of crimson velvet, which was as large as a walnut, and put it in such a way that, as it waved tremulously, it should appear outside the hood. These arrangements completed she cast a look for a while at what she had done. "That's right now," she added, "throw your wrapper over you!"

When Pao-yü caught these words, he eventually took the wrapper and threw it over his shoulders.

"None of your nurses," hurriedly interposed aunt Hsüeh, "are yet come, so you had better wait a while."

"Why should we wait for them?" observed Pao-yü. "We have the waiting-maids to escort us, and surely they should be enough."

Mrs. Hsüeh finding it difficult to set her mind at ease deputed two married women to accompany the two cousins; and after they had both expressed (to these women) their regret at having troubled them, they came straightway to dowager lady Chia's suite of apartments.

Her venerable ladyship had not, as yet, had her evening repast. Hearing that they had been at Mrs. Hsüeh's, she was extremely pleased; but noticing that Pao-yü had had some wine, she gave orders that he should be taken to his room, and put to bed, and not be allowed to come out again.

"Do take good care of him," she therefore enjoined the servants, and when suddenly she bethought herself of Pao-yü's attendants, "How is it," she at once inquired of them all, "that I don't see nurse Li here?"

They did not venture to tell her the truth, and when suddenly she bethought herself of Pao-yü's attendants, "How is it," she at once inquired of them all, "that I don't see nurse Li here?"

"She's better off than your venerable ladyship," remarked Pao-yü, turning round and swaying from side to side. "Why then ask after her? Were I rid of her, I believe I might live a little longer."

While uttering these words, he reached the door of his bedroom, where he saw pen and ink laid out on the writing table.

"That's nice," exclaimed Ch'ing Wen, as she came to meet him with a smile on her face, "you tell me to prepare the ink for you, but though when you get up, you were full of the idea of writing, you only wrote three characters, when you discarded the pencil, and ran away, fooling me, by making me wait the whole day! Come now at once and exhaust all this ink before you're let off."

Pao-yü then remembered what had taken place in the morning. "Where are the three characters I wrote?" he consequently inquired, smiling.
"Why this man is tipsy," remarked Ch’ing Wen sneeringly. "As you were going to the other mansion, you told me to stick them over the door. I was afraid lest any one else should spoil them, as they were being pasted, so I climbed up a high ladder and was ever so long in putting them up myself; my hands are even now numb with cold."

"Oh I forgot all about it," replied Pao-yü grinning, "if your hands are cold, come and I’ll rub them warm for you."

Promptly stretching out his hand, he took those of Ch’ing Wen in his, and the two of them looked at the three characters, which he recently had written, and which were pasted above the door. In a short while, Tai-yü came.

"My dear cousin," Pao-yü said to her smilingly, "tell me without any prevarication which of the three characters is the best written?"

Tai-yü raised her head and perceived the three characters: Red, Rue, Hall. "They’re all well done," she rejoined, with a smirk, "How is it you’ve written them so well? By and bye you must also write a tablet for me."

"Are you again making fun of me?" asked Pao-yü smiling; "what about sister Hsi Jen?" he went on to inquire.

Ch’ing Wen pouted her lips, pointing towards the stove-couch in the inner room, and, on looking in, Pao-yü espied Hsi Jen fast asleep in her daily costume.

"Well," Pao-yü observed laughing, "there’s no harm in it, but its rather early to sleep. When I was having my early meal, on the other side," he proceeded, speaking to Ch’ing Wen, "there was a small dish of dumplings, with bean-curd outside; and as I thought you would like to have some, I asked Mrs. Yu for them, telling her that I would keep them, and eat them in the evening; I told some one to bring them over, but have you perchance seen them?"

"Be quick and drop that subject," suggested Ch’ing Wen; "as soon as they were brought over, I at once knew they were intended for me; as I had just finished my meal, I put them by in there, but when nurse Li came she saw them. ‘Pao-yü,’ she said, ‘is not likely to eat them, so I’ll take them and give them to my grandson.’ And forthwith she bade some one take them over to her home."

While she was speaking, Hsi Hsüeh brought in tea, and Pao-yü pressed his cousin Lin to have a cup.

"Miss Lin has gone long ago," observed all of them, as they burst out laughing, "and do you offer her tea?"

Pao-yü drank about half a cup, when he also suddenly bethought himself of some tea, which had been brewed in the morning. "This morning," he therefore inquired of Hsi Hsüeh, "when you made a cup of maple-dew tea, I told you that that kind of tea requires brewing three or four times before its colour appears; and how is that you now again bring me this tea?"

"I did really put it by," answered Hsi Hsüeh, "but nurse Li came and drank it, and then went off."

Pao-yü upon hearing this, dashed the cup he held in his hand on the ground, and as it broke into small fragments, with a crash, it spattered Hsi Hsüeh’s petticoat all over.

"Of whose family is she the mistress?" inquired Pao-yü of Hsi Hsüeh, as he jumped up, "that you all pay such deference to her. I just simply had a little of her milk, when I was a brat, and that’s all; and now she has got into the way of thinking herself more high and mighty than even the heads of the family! She should be packed off, and then we shall all have peace and quiet."

Saying this, he was bent upon going, there and then, to tell dowager lady Chia to have his nurse driven away. Hsi Jen was really not asleep, but simply feigning, with the idea, when Pao-yü came, to startle him in play. At first, when she heard him speak of writing, and inquire after the dumplings, she did not think it necessary to get up, but when he flung the tea-cup on the floor, and got into a temper, she promptly jumped up and tried to appease him, and to prevent him by coaxing from carrying out his threat.

A waiting-maid sent by dowager lady Chia came in, meanwhile, to ask what was the matter.

"I had just gone to pour tea," replied Hsi Jen, without the least hesitation, "and I slipped on the snow and fell, while the cup dropped from my hand and broke. Your decision to send her away is good," she went on to advise Pao-yü, "and we are all willing to go also; and why not avail yourself of this opportunity to dismiss us in a body? It will be for our good, and you too on the other hand, needn’t perplex yourself about not getting better people to come and wait on you!"
When Pao-yü heard this taunt, he had at length not a word to say, and supported by Hsi Jen and the other attendants on to the couch, they divested him of his clothes. But they failed to understand the drift of what Pao-yü kept on still muttering, and all they could make out was an endless string of words; but his eyes grew heavier and drowsier, and they forthwith waited upon him until he went to sleep; when Hsi Jen unclasped the jade of spiritual perception, and rolling it up in a handkerchief, she lay it under the mattress, with the idea that when he put it on the next day it should not chill his neck.

Pao-yü fell sound asleep the moment he lay his head on the pillow. By this time nurse Li and the others had come in, but when they heard that Pao-yü was tipsy, they too did not venture to approach, but gently made inquiries as to whether he was asleep or not. On hearing that he was, they took their departure with their minds more at ease.

The next morning the moment Pao-yü awoke, some one came in to tell him that young Mr. Jung, living in the mansion on the other side, had brought Ch’in Chung to pay him a visit.

Pao-yü speedily went out to greet them and to take them over to pay their respects to dowager lady Chia. Her venerable ladyship upon perceiving that Ch’in Chung, with his handsome countenance, and his refined manners, would be a fit companion for Pao-yü in his studies, felt extremely delighted at heart; and having readily detained him to tea, and kept him to dinner, she went further and directed a servant to escort him to see madame Wang and the rest of the family.

With the fond regard of the whole household for Mrs. Ch’in, they were, when they saw what a kind of person Ch’in Chung was, so enchanted with him, that at the time of his departure, they all had presents to give him; even dowager lady Chia herself presented him with a purse and a golden image of the God of Learning, with a view that it should incite him to study and harmony.

“Your house,” she further advised him, “is far off, and when it’s cold or hot, it would be inconvenient for you to come all that way, so you had better come and live over here with me. You’ll then be always with your cousin Pao-yü, and you won’t be together, in your studies, with those fellow-pupils of yours who have no idea what progress means.”

Ch’in Chung made a suitable answer to each one of her remarks, and on his return home he told everything to his father.

His father, Ch’in Pang-yeh, held at present the post of Secretary in the Peking Field Force, and was well-nigh seventy. His wife had died at an early period, and as she left no issue, he adopted a son and a daughter from a foundling asylum.

But who would have thought it, the boy also died, and there only remained the girl, known as Kó Ch’ing in her infancy, who when she grew up, was beautiful in face and graceful in manners, and who by reason of some relationship with the Chia family, was consequently united by the ties of marriage (to one of the household).

Ch’in Pang-yeh was in his fiftieth year when he at length got this son. As his tutor had the previous year left to go south, he remained at home keeping up his former lessons; and (his father) had been just thinking of talking over the matter with his relatives of the Chia family, and sending his son to the private school, when, as luck would have it, this opportunity of meeting Pao-yü presented itself.

Knowing besides that the family school was under the direction of the venerable scholar Chia Tai-ju, and hoping that by joining his class, (his son) might advance in knowledge and by these means reap reputation, he was therefore intensely gratified. The only drawbacks were that his official emoluments were scanty, and that both the eyes of everyone in the other establishment were set upon riches and honours, so that he could not contribute anything short of the amount (given by others); but his son’s welfare throughout life was a serious consideration, and he, needless to say, had to scrape together from the East and to collect from the West; and making a parcel, with all deference, of twenty-four taels for an introduction present, he came along with Ch’in Chung to Tai-ju’s house to pay their respects. But he had to wait subsequently until Pao-yü could fix on an auspicious date on which they could together enter the school.

As for what happened after they came to school, the next chapter will divulge.
CHAPTER IX.

Chia Cheng gives good advice to his wayward son.
Li Kuei receives a reprimand.
Chia Jui and Li Kuei rebuke the obstinate youths!
Ming Yen causes trouble in the school-room.

But to return to our story. Mr. Ch’in, the father, and Ch’in Chung, his son, only waited until the receipt, by the hands of a servant, of a letter from the Chia family about the date on which they were to go to school. Indeed, Pao-yü was only too impatient that he and Ch’in Chung should come together, and, without loss of time, he fixed upon two days later as the day upon which they were definitely to begin their studies, and he despatched a servant with a letter to this effect.

On the day appointed, as soon as it was daylight, Pao-yü turned out of bed. Hsi Jen had already by that time got books, pencils and all writing necessaries in perfect readiness, and was sitting on the edge of the bed in a moping mood; but as soon as she saw Pao-yü approach, she was constrained to wait upon him in his toilette and ablutions.

Pao-yü, noticing how despondent she was, made it a point to address her. “My dear sister,” he said, “how is it you aren’t again yourself? Is it likely that you bear me a grudge for being about to go to school, because when I leave you, you’ll all feel dull?”

Hsi Jen smiled. “What an ideal” she replied. “Study is a most excellent thing, and without it a whole lifetime is a mere waste, and what good comes in the long run? There’s only one thing, which is simply that when engaged in reading your books, you should set your mind on your books; and that you should think of home when not engaged in reading. Whatever you do, don’t romp together with them, for were you to meet our master, your father, it will be no joke! Although it’s asserted that a scholar must strain every nerve to excel, yet it’s preferable that the tasks should be somewhat fewer, as, in the first place, when one eats too much, one cannot digest it; and, in the second place, good health must also be carefully attended to. This is my view on the subject, and you should at all times consider it in practice.”

While Hsi Jen gave utterance to a sentence, Pao-yü nodded his head in sign of approval of that sentence. Hsi Jen then went on to speak. “I’ve also packed up,” she continued, “your long pelisse, and handed it to the pages to take it over; so mind, when it’s cold in the school-room, please remember to put on this extra clothing, for it’s not like home, where you have people to look after you. The foot-stove and hand-stove, I’ve also sent over; and urge that pack of lazy-bones to attend to their work, for if you say nothing, they will be so engrossed in their frolics, that they’ll be loth to move, and let you, all for nothing, take a chill and ruin your constitution.”

“Compose your mind,” replied Pao-yü; “when I go out, I know well enough how to attend to everything my own self. But you people shouldn’t remain in this room, and mope yourselves to death; and it would be well if you would often go over to cousin Lin’s for a romp.”

While saying this, he had completed his toilette, and Hsi Jen pressed him to go and wish good morning to dowager lady Chia, Chia Cheng, madame Wang, and the other members of the family.

Pao-yü, after having gone on to give a few orders to Ch’ing Wen and She Yueh, at length left his apartments, and coming over, paid his obeisance to dowager lady Chia. Her venerable Ladyship had likewise, as a matter of course, a few recommendations to make to him, which ended, he next went and greeted madame Wang; and leaving again her quarters, he came into the library to wish Chia Cheng good morning.

As it happened, Chia Cheng had on this day returned home at an early hour, and was, at this moment, in the library, engaged in a friendly chat with a few gentlemen, who were family companions. Suddenly perceiving Pao-yü come in to pay his respects, and report that he was about to go to school, Chia Cheng gave a sardonic smile. “If you do again,” he remarked, “make allusions to the words going to school, you’ll make even me blush to death with shame! My advice to you is that you should after all go your own way and play; that’s the best thing for you; and mind you don’t pollute with dirt this floor by standing here, and soil this door of mine by leaning against it!”

The family companions stood up and smilingly expostulated.

“Venerable Sir,” they pleaded, “why need you be so down upon him? Our worthy brother is this day going to school, and may in two or three years be able to display his abilities and establish his reputation. He will, beyond doubt, not behave like a child, as he did in years gone past. But as the time for breakfast is also drawing nigh, you
should, worthy brother, go at once.”

When these words had been spoken, two among them, who were advanced in years, readily took Pao-yü by the hand, and led him out of the library.

“Who are in attendance upon Pao-yü?” Chia Cheng having inquired, he heard a suitable reply, “We, Sir!” given from outside; and three or four sturdy fellows entered at an early period and fell on one knee, and bowed and paid their obeisance.

When Chia Cheng came to scrutinise who they were, and he recognised Li Kuei, the son of Pao-yü’s nurse, he addressed himself to him. “You people,” he said, “remain waiting upon him the whole day long at school, but what books has he after all read? Books indeed! why, he has read and filled his brains with a lot of trashy words and nonsensical phrases, and learnt some ingenious way of waywardness. Wait till I have a little leisure, and I’ll set to work, first and foremost, and flay your skin off, and then settle accounts with that good-for-nothing!”

This threat so terrified Li Kuei that he hastily fell on both his knees, pulled off his hat, knocked his head on the ground, and gave vent to repeated assenting utterances: “Oh, quite so, Sir! Our elder brother Mr. Pao has,” he continued, “already read up to the third book of the Book of Odes, up to where there’s something or other like: ‘Yiu, Yiu, the deer bleat; the lotus leaves and duckweed.’ Your servant wouldn’t presume to tell a lie!”

As he said this, the whole company burst out into a boisterous fit of laughter, and Chia Cheng himself could not also contain his countenance and had to laugh. “Were he even,” he observed, “to read thirty books of the Book of Odes, it would be as much an imposition upon people and no more, as (when the thief) who, in order to steal the bell, stops up his own ears! You go and present my compliments to the gentleman in the schoolroom, and tell him, from my part, that the whole lot of Odes and old writings are of no use, as they are subjects for empty show; and that he should, above all things, take the Four Books, and explain them to him, from first to last, and make him know them all thoroughly by heart,—that this is the most important thing!”

Li Kuei signified his obedience with all promptitude, and perceiving that Chia Cheng had nothing more to say, he retired out of the room.

During this while, Pao-yü had been standing all alone outside in the court, waiting quietly with suppressed voice, and when they came out he at once walked away in their company.

Li Kuei and his companions observed as they shook their clothes, “Did you, worthy brother, hear what he said that he would first of all flay our skins off! People’s servants acquire some respectability from the master whom they serve, but we poor fellows fruitlessly wait upon you, and are beaten and blown up in the bargain. It would be well if we were, from henceforward, to be treated with a certain amount of regard.”

Pao-yü smiled, “Dear Brother,” he added, “don’t feel aggrieved; I’ll invite you to come round to-morrow!”

“My young ancestor,” replied Li Kuei, “who presumes to look forward to an invitation? all I entreat you is to listen to one or two words I have to say, that’s all.”

As they talked they came over once more to dowager lady Chia’s on this side.

Ch’in Chung had already arrived, and the old lady was first having a chat with him. Fortwith the two of them exchanged salutations, and took leave of her ladyship; but Pao-yü, suddenly remembering that he had not said good-bye to Tai-yü, promptly betook himself again to Tai-yü’s quarters to do so.

Tai-yü was, at this time, below the window, facing the mirror, and adjusting her toilette. Upon hearing Pao-yü mention that he was on his way to school, she smiled and remarked, “That’s right! you’re now going to school and you’ll be sure to reach the lunar palace and pluck the olea fragrans; but I can’t go along with you.”

“My dear cousin,” rejoined Pao-yü, “wait for me to come out from school, before you have your evening meal; wait also until I come to prepare the cosmetic of rouge.”

After a protracted chat, he at length tore himself away and took his departure.

“How is it,” interposed Tai-yü, as she once again called out to him and stopped him, “that you don’t go and bid farewell to your cousin Pao Ch’ai?”

Pao-yü smiled, and saying not a word by way of reply he straightway walked to school, accompanied by Ch’in Chung.
This public school, which it must be noticed was also not far from his quarters, had been originally instituted by
the founder of the establishment, with the idea that should there be among the young fellows of his clan any who
had not the means to engage a tutor, they should readily be able to enter this class for the prosecution of their
studies; that all those of the family who held official position should all give (the institution) pecuniary assistance,
with a view to meet the expenses necessary for allowances to the students; and that they were to select men
advanced in years and possessed of virtue to act as tutors of the family school.

The two of them, Ch’ìn Chung and Pao-yü, had now entered the class, and after they and the whole number of
their schoolmates had made each other’s acquaintance, their studies were commenced. Ever since this time, these
two were wont to come together, go together, get up together, and sit together, till they became more intimate
and close. Besides, dowager lady Chia got very fond of Ch’ìn Chung, and would again and again keep him to stay
with them for three and five days at a time, treating him as if he were one of her own great-grandsons. Perceiving
that in Ch’ìn Chung’s home there was not much in the way of sufficiency, she also helped him in clothes and other
necessaries; and scarcely had one or two months elapsed before Ch’ìn Chung got on friendly terms with every one
in the Jung mansion.

Pao-yü was, however, a human being who could not practise contentment and observe propriety; and as his sole
delight was to have every caprice gratified, he naturally developed a craving disposition. “We two, you and I, are,”
he was also wont secretly to tell Ch’ìn Chung, “of the same age, and fellow-scholars besides, so that there’s no
need in the future to pay any regard to our relationship of uncle and nephew; and we should treat each other as
brothers or friends, that’s all.”

Ch’ìn Chung at first (explained that) he could not be so presumptuous; but as Pao-yü would not listen to any such
ting. Indeed, after Hsüeh P’an had come over to take up his quarters in madame Wang’s suite of apartments, he shortly
came to hear of the existence of a family school, and that this school was mainly attended by young fellows of
tender years, and inordinate ideas were suddenly aroused in him. While he therefore fictitiously gave out that he
gone to school, [he was as irregular in his attendance as the fisherman] who catches fish for three days, and suns
his nets for the next two; simply presenting his school-fee gift to Chia Tai-jui and making not the least progress in
his studies; his sole dream being to knit a number of familiar friendships. Who would have thought it, there were
brothers or friends, that’s all.”

Ever since the arrival of the two young fellows, Ch’ìn Chung and Pao-yü, both of whom were in appearance as
handsome as budding flowers, and they, on the one hand, saw how modest and genial Ch’ìn Chung was, how he
blushed before he uttered a word, how he was timid and demure like a girl, and on the other hand, how that Pao-
yü was naturally proficient in abasing and demeaning himself, how he was so affable and good-natured,
considerate in his temperament and so full of conversation, and how that these two were, in consequence, on such
terms of intimate friendship, it was, in fact, no matter of surprise that the whole company of fellow-students began
to foster envious thoughts, that they, behind their backs, passed on their account, this one one disparaging
remark and that one another, and that they insinuated slanderous lies against them, which extended inside as well
as outside the school-room.

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his nets for the next two; simply presenting his school-fee gift to Chia Tai-jui and making not the least progress in
his studies; his sole dream being to knit a number of familiar friendships. Who would have thought it, there were
in this school young pupils, who, in their greed to obtain money, clothes and eatables from Hsüeh P’an, allowed
themselves to be cajoled by him, and played tricks upon; but on this topic, it is likewise superfluous to dilate at
any length.

There were also two lovable young scholars, relatives of what branch of the family is not known, and whose real
surnames and names have also not been ascertained, who, by reason of their good and winsome looks, were, by
the pupils in the whole class, given two nicknames, to one that of “Hsiang Lin,” “Fragrant Love,” and to the other
“Yü Ai,” “Precious Affection.” But although every one entertained feelings of secret admiration for them, and had
the wish to take liberties with the young fellows, they lived, nevertheless, one and all, in such terror of Hsüeh
P’an’s imperious influence, that they had not the courage to come forward and interfere with them.

As soon as Ch’ìn Chung and Pao-yü had, at this time, come to school, and they had made the acquaintance of these
two fellow-pupils, they too could not help becoming attached to them and admiring them, but as they also came to
know that they were great friends of Hsüeh P’an, they did not, in consequence, venture to treat them lightly, or to
be unseemly in their behaviour towards them. Hsiang Lin and Yü Ai both kept to themselves the same feelings,
which they fostered for Ch’in Chung and Pao-yü, and to this reason is to be assigned the fact that though these four persons nurtured fond thoughts in their hearts there was however no visible sign of them. Day after day, each one of them would, during school hours, sit in four distinct places: but their eight eyes were secretly linked together; and, while indulging either in innuendoes or in double entendres, their hearts, in spite of the distance between them, reflected the whole number of their thoughts.

But though their outward attempts were devoted to evade the detection of other people’s eyes, it happened again that, while least expected, several sly lads discovered the real state of affairs, with the result that the whole school stealthily frowned their eyebrows at them, winked their eyes at them, or coughed at them, or raised their voices at them; and these proceedings were, in fact, not restricted to one single day.

As luck would have it, on this day Tai-jui was, on account of business, compelled to go home; and having left them as a task no more than a heptameter line for an antithetical couplet, explaining that they should find a sentence to rhyme, and that the following day when he came back, he would set them their lessons, he went on to hand the affairs connected with the class to his elder grandson, Chia Jui, whom he asked to take charge.

Wonderful to say Hsüeh P’an had of late not frequented school very often, not even so much as to answer the roll, so that Ch’in Chung availed himself of his absence to ogle and smirk with Hsiang Lin; and these two pretending that they had to go out, came into the back court for a chat.

“Does your worthy father at home mind your having any friends?” Ch’in Chung was the first to ask. But this sentence was scarcely ended, when they heard a sound of coughing coming from behind. Both were taken much aback, and, speedily turning their heads round to see, they found that it was a fellow-scholar of theirs, called Chin Jung.

Hsiang Lin was naturally of somewhat hasty temperament, so that with shame and anger mutually impelling each other, he inquired of him, “What’s there to cough at? Is it likely you wouldn’t have us speak to each other?”

“I don’t mind your speaking,” Chin Jung observed laughing; “but would you perchance not have me cough? I’ll tell you what, however; if you have anything to say, why not utter it in intelligible language? Were you allowed to go on in this mysterious manner, what strange doings would you be up to? But I have sure enough found you out, so what’s the need of still prevaricating? But if you will, first of all, let me partake of a share in your little game, you and I can hold our tongue and utter not a word. If not, why the whole school will begin to turn the matter over.”

At these words, Ch’in Chung and Hsiang Lin were so exasperated that their blood rushed up to their faces. “What have you found out?” they hastily asked.

“What I have now detected,” replied Chin Jung smiling, “is the plain truth!” and saying this he went on to clap his hands and to call out with a loud voice as he laughed: “They have moulded some nice well-baked cakes, won’t you fellows come and buy one to eat!” (These two have been up to larks, won’t you come and have some fun!)

Both Ch’in Chung and Hsiang Lin felt resentful as well as fuming with rage, and with hurried step they went in, in search of Chia Jui, to whom they reported Chin Jung, explaining that Chin Jung had insulted them both, without any rhyme or reason.

The fact is that this Chia Jui was, in an extraordinary degree, a man with an eye to the main chance, and devoid of any sense of propriety. His wont was at school to take advantage of public matters to serve his private interest, and to bring pressure upon his pupils with the intent that they should regale him. While subsequently he also lent his countenance to Hsüeh P’an, scheming to get some money or eatables out of him, he left him entirely free to indulge in disorderly behaviour; and not only did he not go out of his way to hold him in check, but, on the contrary, he encouraged him, infamous though he was already, to become a bully, so as to curry favour with him.

But this Hsüeh P’an was, by nature, gifted with a fickle disposition; to-day, he would incline to the east, and tomorrow to the west, so that having recently obtained new friends, he put Hsiang Lin and Yü Ai aside. Chin Jung too was at one time an intimate friend of his, but ever since he had acquired the friendship of the two lads, Hsiang Lin and Yü Ai, he forthwith deposed Chin Jung. Of late, he had already come to look down upon even Hsiang Lin and Yü Ai, with the result that Chia Jui as well was deprived of those who could lend him support, or stand by him; but he bore Hsüeh P’an no grudge, for wearying with old friends, as soon as he found new ones, but felt angry that Hsiang Lin and Yü Ai had not put in a word on his behalf with Hsüeh P’an. Chia Jui, Chin Jung and in fact the whole crowd of them were, for this reason, just harbouring a jealous grudge against these two, so that when he saw Ch’in Chung and Hsiang Lin come on this occasion and lodge a complaint against Chin Jung, Chia Jui readily felt displeasure creep into his heart; and, although he did not venture to call Ch’in Chung to account, he nevertheless made an example of Hsiang Lin. And instead (of taking his part), he called him a busybody and
denounced him in much abusive language, with the result that Hsiang Lin did not, contrariwise, profit in any way, but brought displeasure upon himself. Even Ch’in Chung grumbled against the treatment, as each of them resumed their places.

Chin Jung became still more haughty, and wagging his head and smacking his lips, he gave vent to many more abusive epithets; but as it happened that they also reached Yü Ai’s ears, the two of them, though seated apart, began an altercation in a loud tone of voice.

Chin Jung, with obstinate pertinacity, clung to his version. “Just a short while back,” he said, “I actually came upon them, as they were indulging in demonstrations of intimate friendship in the back court. These two had resolved to be one in close friendship, and were eloquent in their protestations, mindful only in persistently talking their trash, but they were not aware of the presence of another person.”

But his language had, contrary to all expectations, given, from the very first, umbrage to another person, and who do you, (gentle reader,) imagine this person to have been?

This person was, in fact, one whose name was Chia Se; a grandson likewise of a main branch of the Ning mansion. His parents had died at an early period, and he had, ever since his youth, lived with Chia Chen. He had at this time grown to be sixteen years of age, and was, as compared with Chia Jung, still more handsome and good looking. These two cousins were united by ties of the closest intimacy, and were always together, whether they went out or stayed at home.

The inmates of the Ning mansion were many in number, and their opinions of a mixed kind; and that whole bevy of servants, devoid as they were of all sense of right, solely excelled in the practice of inventing stories to backbite their masters; and this is how some mean person or other again, who it was is not known, insinuated slanderous and opprobrious reports (against Chia Se). Chia Chen had, presumably, also come to hear some unfavourable criticisms (on his account), and having, of course, to save himself from odium and suspicion, he had, at this juncture, after all, to apportion him separate quarters, and to bid Chia Se move outside the Ning mansion, where he went and established a home of his own to live in.

This Chia Se was handsome as far as external appearances went, and intelligent withal in his inward natural gifts, but, though he nominally came to school, it was simply however as a mere blind; for he treated, as he had ever done, as legitimate occupations, such things as cock fighting, dog-racing and visiting places of easy virtue. And as, above, he had Chia Chen to spoil him by over-indulgence; and below, there was Chia Jung to stand by him, who of the clan could consequently presume to run counter to him?

Seeing that he was on the closest terms of friendship with Chia Jung, how could he reconcile himself to the harsh treatment which he now saw Ch’in Chung receive from some persons? Being now bent upon pushing himself forward to revenge the injustice, he was, for the time, giving himself up to communing with his own heart. “Chin Jung, Chia Jui and the rest are,” he pondered, “friends of uncle Hsüeh, but I too am on friendly terms with him, and he with me, and if I do come forward and they tell old Hsüeh, won’t we impair the harmony which exists between us? and if I don’t concern myself, such idle tales make, when spoken, every one feel uncomfortable; and why shouldn’t I now devise some means to hold them in check, so as to stop their mouths, and prevent any loss of face!”

Having concluded this train of thought, he also pretended that he had to go out, and, walking as far as the back, he, with low voice, called to his side Ming Yen, the page attending upon Pao-yü in his studies, and in one way and another, he made use of several remarks to egg him on.

This Ming Yen was the smartest of Pao-yü’s attendants, but he was also young in years and lacked experience, so that he lent a patient ear to what Chia Se had to say about the way Chin Jung had insulted Ch’in Chung. “Even your own master, Pao-yü,” (Chia Se added), “is involved, and if you don’t let him know a bit of your mind, he will next time be still more arrogant.”

This Ming Yen was always ready, even with no valid excuse, to be insolent and overbearing to people, so that after hearing the news and being furthermore instigated by Chia Se, he speedily rushed into the schoolroom and cried out “Chin Jung;” nor did he address him as Mr. Chin, but merely shouted “What kind of fellow is this called Chin?”

Chia Se presently shuffled his feet, while he designedly adjusted his dress and looked at the rays of the sun. “It’s time,” he observed and walking forthwith, first up to Chia Jui, he explained to him that he had something to attend to and would like to get away a little early; and as Chia Jui did not venture to stop him, he had no alternative but to let him have his way and go.
During this while, Ming Yen had entered the room and promptly seizing Chin Jung in a grip: “What we do, whether proper or improper,” he said, “doesn’t concern you! It’s enough anyway that we don’t defile your father! A fine brat you are indeed, to come out and meddle with your Mr. Ming!”

These words plunged the scholars of the whole class in such consternation that they all wistfully and absently looked at him.

“Ming Yen,” hastily shouted out Chia Jui, “you’re not to kick up a rumpus.”

Chin Jung was so full of anger that his face was quite yellow. “What a subversion of propriety! a slave and a menial to venture to behave in this manner! I’ll just simply speak to your master,” he exclaimed as he readily pushed his hands off and was about to go and lay hold of Pao-yü to beat him.

Ch’in Chung was on the point of turning round to leave the room, when with a sound of ‘whiff’ which reached him from behind, he at once caught sight of a square inkslab come flying that way. Who had thrown it he could not say, but it struck the desk where Chia Lan and Chia Chûn were seated.

These two, Chia Lan and Chia Chûn, were also the great-grandsons of a close branch of the Jung mansion. This Chia Chûn had been left fatherless at an early age, and his mother doated upon him in an unusual manner, and it was because at school he was on most friendly terms with Chia Lan, that these two sat together at the same desk. Who would have believed that Chia Chûn would, in spite of being young in years, have had an extremely strong mind, and that he would be mostly up to mischief without the least fear of any one. He watched with listless eye from his seat Chin Jung’s friends stealthily assist Chin Jung, as they flung an inkslab to strike Ming Yen, but when, as luck would have it, it hit the wrong mark, and fell just in front of him, smashing to atoms the porcelain inkslab and water bottle, and smudging his whole book with ink, Chia Chûn was, of course, much incensed, and hastily gave way to abuse. “You consummate pugnacious criminal rowdies! why, doesn’t this amount to all of you taking a share in the fight!” And as he uttered this abuse, he too forthwith seized an inkslab, which he was bent upon flinging.

Chia Lan was one who always tried to avoid trouble, so that he lost no time in pressing down the inkslab, while with all the words his mouth could express, he tried to pacify him, adding “My dear brother, it’s no business of yours and mine.”

Chia Chûn could not repress his resentment; and perceiving that the inkslab was held down, he at once laid hold of a box containing books, which he flung in this direction; but being, after all, short of stature, and weak of strength, he was unable to send it anywhere near the mark; so that it dropped instead when it got as far as the desk belonging to Pao-yü and Ch’in Chung, while a dreadful crash became audible as it fell smash on the table. The books, papers, pencils, inkslabs, and other writing materials were all scattered over the whole table; and Pao-yü’s cup besides containing tea was itself broken to pieces and the tea spilt.

Chia Chûn forthwith jumped forward with the intent of assailing the person who had flung the inkslab at the very moment that Chin Jung took hold of a long bamboo pole which was near by; but as the space was limited, and the pupils many, how could he very well brandish a long stick? Ming Yen at an early period received a whack, and he shouted wildly, “Don’t you fellows yet come to start a fight.”

Pao-yü had, besides, along with him several pages, one of whom was called Sao Hung, another Ch’u Yo, another Mo Yü. These three were naturally up to every mischief, so that with one voice, bawling boisterously, “You children of doubtful mothers, have you taken up arms?” Mo Yü promptly took up the bar of a door; while Sao Hung and Ch’u Yo both laid hold of horsewhips, and they all rushed forward like a hive of bees.

Chia Jui was driven to a state of exasperation; now he kept this one in check, and the next moment he reasoned with another, but who would listen to his words? They followed the bent of their inclinations and stirred up a serious disturbance.

Of the whole company of wayward young fellows, some there were who gave sly blows for fun’s sake; others there were who were not gifted with much pluck and hid themselves on one side; there were those too who stood on the tables, clapping their hands and laughing immoderately, shouting out: “Go at it.”

The row was, at this stage, like water bubbling over in a cauldron, when several elderly servants, like Li Kuei and others, who stood outside, heard the uproar commence inside, and one and all came in with all haste and united in their efforts to pacify them. Upon asking “What’s the matter?” the whole bevy of voices shouted out different versions; this one giving this account, while another again another story. But Li Kuei temporised by rebuking Ming Yen and others, four in all, and packing them off.
Ch’in Chung’s head had, at an early period, come into contact with Chin Jung’s pole and had had the skin grazed off. Pao-yü was in the act of rubbing it for him, with the overlap of his coat, but realising that the whole lot of them had been hushed up, he forthwith bade Li Kuei collect his books.

“Bring my horse round,” he cried; “I’m going to tell Mr. Chia Tai-ju that we have been insulted. I won’t venture to tell him anything else, but (tell him I will) that having come with all propriety and made our report to Mr. Chia Jui, Mr. Chia Jui instead (of helping us) threw the fault upon our shoulders. That while he heard people abuse us, he went so far as to instigate them to beat us; that Ming Yen seeing others insult us, did naturally take our part; but that they, instead (of desisting,) combined together and struck Ming Yen and even broke open Ch’in Chung’s head. And that how is it possible for us to continue our studies in here?”

“My dear sir,” replied Li Kuei coaxingly, “don’t be so impatient! As Mr. Chia Tai-ju has had something to attend to and gone home, were you now, for a trifle like this, to go and disturb that aged gentleman, it will make us, indeed, appear as if we had no sense of propriety: my idea is that wherever a thing takes place, there should it be settled; and what’s the need of going and troubling an old man like him. This is all you, Mr. Chia Jui, who is to blame; for in the absence of Mr. Chia Tai-ju, you, sir, are the head in this school, and every one looks to you to take action. Had all the pupils been at fault, those who deserved a beating should have been beaten, and those who merited punishment should have been punished! and why did you wait until things came to such a pass, and didn’t even exercise any check?”

“I blew them up,” pleaded Chia Jui, “but not one of them would listen.”

“I’ll speak out, whether you, worthy sir, resent what I’m going to say or not,” ventured Li Kuei. “It’s you, sir, who all along have had considerable blame attached to your name; that’s why all these young men wouldn’t hear you! Now if this affair is bruited, until it reaches Mr. Chia Tai-ju’s ears, why even you, sir, will not be able to escape condemnation; and why don’t you at once make up your mind to disentangle the ravelled mess and dispel all trouble and have done with it!”

“Disentangle what?” inquired Pao-yü; “I shall certainly go and make my report.”

“If Chin Jung stays here,” interposed Ch’in Chung sobbing, “I mean to go back home.”

“Why that?” asked Pao-yü. “Is it likely that others can safely come and that you and I can’t? I feel it my bounden duty to tell every one everything at home so as to expel Chin Jung. This Chin Jung,” he went on to inquire as he turned towards Lei Kuei, “is the relative or friend of what branch of the family?”

Li Kuei gave way to reflection and then said by way of reply: “There’s no need whatever for you to raise this question; for were you to go and report the matter to the branch of the family to which he belongs, the harmony which should exist between cousins will be still more impaired.”

“He’s the nephew of Mrs. Huang, of the Eastern mansion,” interposed Ming Yen from outside the window. “What a determined and self-confident fellow he must be to even come and bully us; Mrs. Huang is his paternal aunt! That mother of yours is only good for tossing about like a millstone, for kneeling before our lady Lien, and begging for something to pawn. I’ve no eye for such a specimen of mistress.”

“What!” speedily shouted Li Kuei, “does this son of a dog happen to know of the existence of all these gnawing maggots?” (these disparaging facts).

Pao-yü gave a sardonic smile. “I was wondering whose relative he was,” he remarked; “is he really sister-in-law Huang’s nephew? well, I’ll go at once and speak to her.”

As he uttered these words, his purpose was to start there and then, and he called Ming Yen in, to come and pack up his books. Ming Yen walked in and put the books away. “Master,” he went on to suggest, in an exultant manner, “there’s no need for you to go yourself to see her; I’ll go to her house and tell her that our old lady has something to ask of her. I can hire a carriage to bring her over, and then, in the presence of her venerable ladyship, she can be spoken to; and won’t this way save a lot of trouble?”

“Do you want to die?” speedily shouted Li Kuei; “mind, when you go back, whether right or wrong. I’ll first give you a good bumping, and then go and report you to our master and mistress, and just tell them that it’s you, and only you, who instigated Mr. Pao-yü! I’ve succeeded, after ever so much trouble, in coaxing them, and mending matters to a certain extent, and now you come again to continue a new plan. It’s you who stirred up this row in the school-room; and not to speak of your finding, as would have been the proper course, some way of suppressing it, there you are instead still jumping into the fire.”
Ming Yen, at this juncture, could not muster the courage to utter a sound. By this time Chia Jui had also apprehended that if the row came to be beyond clearing up, he himself would likewise not be clear of blame, so that circumstances compelled him to pocket his grievances and to come and entreat Ch’in Chung as well as to make apologies to Pao-yü. These two young fellows would not at first listen to his advances, but Pao-yü at length explained that he would not go and report the occurrence, provided only Chin Jung admitted his being in the wrong. Chin Jung refused, at the outset, to agree to this, but he ultimately could find no way out of it, as Chia Jui himself urged him to make some temporising apology.

Li Kuei and the others felt compelled to tender Chin Jung some good advice: “It’s you,” they said, “who have given rise to the disturbance, and if you don’t act in this manner, how will the matter ever be brought to an end?” so that Chin Jung found it difficult to persist in his obstinacy, and was constrained to make a bow to Ch’in Chung.

Pao-yü was, however, not yet satisfied, but would insist upon his knocking his head on the ground, and Chia Jui, whose sole aim was to temporarily smother the affair, quietly again urged Chin Jung, adding that the proverb has it: “That if you keep down the anger of a minute, you will for a whole life-time feel no remorse.”

Whether Chin Jung complied or not to his advice is not known, but the following chapter will explain.

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Arthur Conan Doyle,  
"Scandal in Bohemia,"  
1891

To Sherlock Holmes she is always the woman. I have seldom heard him mention her under any other name. In his eyes she eclipses and predominates the whole of her sex. It was not that he felt any emotion akin to love for Irene Adler. All emotions, and that one particularly, were abhorrent to his cold, precise, but admirably balanced mind. He was, I take it, the most perfect reasoning and observing machine that the world has seen; but, as a lover, he would have placed himself in a false position. He never spoke of the softer passions, save with a gibe and a sneer. They were admirable things for the observer—excellent for drawing the veil from men’s motives and actions. But for the trained reasoner to admit such intrusions into his own delicate and finely adjusted temperament was to introduce a distracting factor which might throw a doubt upon all his mental results. Grit in a sensitive instrument, or a crack in one of his own high-power lenses, would not be more disturbing than a strong emotion in a nature such as his. And yet there was but one woman to him, and that woman was the late Irene Adler, of dubious and questionable memory.

I had seen little of Holmes lately. My marriage had drifted us away from each other. My own complete happiness, and the home-centred interests which rise up around the man who first finds himself master of his own establishment, were sufficient to absorb all my attention; while Holmes, who loathed every form of society with his whole Bohemian soul, remained in our lodgings in Baker-street, buried among his old books, and alternating from week to week between cocaine and ambition, the drowsiness of the drug, and the fierce energy of his own keen nature. He was still, as ever, deeply attracted by the study of crime, and occupied his immense faculties and extraordinary powers of observation in following out those clues, and clearing up those mysteries, which had been abandoned as hopeless by the official police. From time to time I heard some vague account of his doings: of his summons to Odessa in the case of the Trepoff murder, of his clearing up of the singular tragedy of the Atkinson brothers at Trincomalee, and finally of the mission which he had accomplished so delicately and successfully for the reigning family of Holland. Beyond these signs of his activity, however, which I merely shared with all the readers of the daily press, I knew little of my former friend and companion.

One night—it was on the 20th of March, 1888—I was returning from a journey to a patient (for I had now returned to civil practice), when my way led me through Baker-street. As I passed the well-remembered door, which must always be associated in my mind with my wooing, and with the dark incidents of the Study in Scarlet, I was seized with a keen desire to see Holmes again, and to know how he was employing his extraordinary powers. His rooms were brilliantly lit, and, even as I looked up, I saw his tall spare figure pass twice in a dark silhouette against the blind. He was pacing the room swiftly, eagerly, with his head sunk upon his chest and his hands clasped behind him. To me, who knew his every mood and habit, his attitude and manner told their own story. He was at work again. He had risen out of his drug-created dreams and was hot upon the scent of some new problem. I rang the bell, and was shown up to the chamber which had formerly been in part my own.

His manner was not effusive. It seldom was; but he was glad, I think, to see me. With hardly a word spoken, but with a kindly eye, he waved me to an armchair, threw across his case of cigars, and indicated a spirit case and a gasogene in the corner. Then he stood before the fire and looked me over in his singular introspective fashion.

“Wedlock suits you,” he remarked. “I think, Watson, that you have put on seven and a half pounds since I saw you.”

“Seven,” I answered.
“Indeed, I should have thought a little more. Just a trifle more, I fancy, Watson. And in practice again, I observe. You did not tell me that you intended to go into harness.”

“Then, how do you know?”

“I see it, I deduce it. How do I know that you have been getting yourself very wet lately, and that you have a most clumsy and careless servant girl?”

“My dear Holmes,” said I, “this is too much. You would certainly have been burned, had you lived a few centuries ago. It is true that I had a country walk on Thursday and came home in a dreadful mess; but, as I have changed my clothes, I can’t imagine how you deduce it. As to Mary Jane, she is incorrigible, and my wife has given her notice; but there again I fail to see how you work it out.”

He chuckled to himself and rubbed his long nervous hands together.

“It is simplicity itself,” said he; “my eyes tell me that on the inside of your left shoe, just where the firelight strikes it, the leather is scored by six almost parallel cuts. Obviously they have been caused by someone who has very carelessly scraped round the edges of the sole in order to remove crusted mud from it. Hence, you see, my double deduction that you had been out in vile weather, and that you had a particularly malignant boot-slitting specimen of the London slavey. As to your practice, if a gentleman walks into my rooms smelling of iodoform, with a black mark of nitrate of silver upon his right fore-finger, and a bulge on the side of his top-hat to show where he has secreted his stethoscope, I must be dull indeed, if I do not pronounce him to be an active member of the medical profession.”

I could not help laughing at the ease with which he explained his process of deduction. “When I hear you give your reasons,” I remarked, “the thing always appears to me to be so ridiculously simple that I could easily do it myself, though at each successive instance of your reasoning I am baffled until you explain your process. And yet I believe that my eyes are as good as yours.”

“Quite so,” he answered, lighting a cigarette, and throwing himself down into an armchair. “You see, but you do not observe. The distinction is clear. For example, you have frequently seen the steps which lead up from the hall to this room.”

“Frequently.”

“How often?”

“Well, some hundreds of times.”

“Then how many are there?”

“How many! I don’t know.”

“Quite so! You have not observed. And yet you have seen. That is just my point. Now, I know that there are seventeen steps, because I have both seen and observed. By the way, since you are interested in these little problems, and since you are good enough to chronicle one or two of my trifling experiences, you may be interested in this.” He threw over a sheet of thick, pink-tinted notepaper which had been lying open upon the table. “It came by the last post,” said he. “Read it aloud.”

The note was undated, and without either signature or address.

“There will call upon you to-night, at a quarter to eight o’clock,” it said, “a gentleman who desires to consult you upon a matter of the very deepest moment. Your recent services to one of the royal houses of Europe have shown that you are one who may safely be trusted with matters which are of an importance which can hardly be exaggerated. This account of you we have from all quarters received. Be in your chamber then at that hour, and do not take it amiss if your visitor wear a mask.”

“This is indeed a mystery,” I remarked. “What do you imagine that it means?”

“I have no data yet. It is a capital mistake to theorise before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts. But the note itself. What do you deduce from it?”

I carefully examined the writing, and the paper upon which it was written.
“The man who wrote it was presumably well to do,” I remarked, endeavouring to imitate my companion’s processes. “Such paper could not be bought under half a crown a packet. It is peculiarly strong and stiff.”

“Peculiar—that is the very word,” said Holmes. “It is not an English paper at all. Hold it up to the light.”

I did so, and saw a large E with a small g, a P, and a large G with a small t woven into the texture of the paper.

“What do you make of that?” asked Holmes.

“The name of the maker, no doubt; or his monogram, rather.”

“Not at all. The G with the small t stands for ‘Gesellschaft,’ which is the German for ‘Company.’ It is a customary contraction like our ‘Co.’ P, of course, stands for ‘Papier.’ Now for the Eg. Let us glance at our Continental Gazetteer.” He took down a heavy brown volume from his shelves. “Eglow, Eglonitz—here we are, Egria. It is in a German-speaking country—in Bohemia, not far from Carlsbad. ‘Remarkable as being the scene of the death of Wallenstein, and for its numerous glass factories and paper mills.’ Ha, ha, my boy, what do you make of that?” His eyes sparkled, and he sent up a great blue triumphant cloud from his cigarette.

“The paper was made in Bohemia,” I said.

“Precisely. And the man who wrote the note is a German. Do you note the peculiar construction of the sentence—’This account of you we have from all quarters received.’ A Frenchman or Russian could not have written that. It is the German who is so un courteous to his verbs. It only remains, therefore, to discover what is wanted by this German who writes upon Bohemian paper, and prefers wearing a mask to showing his face. And here he comes, if I am not mistaken, to resolve all our doubts.”

As he spoke there was the sharp sound of horses’ hoofs and grating wheels against the curb, followed by a sharp pull at the bell. Holmes whistled.

“A pair, by the sound,” said he. “Yes,” he continued, glancing out of the window. “A nice little brougham and a pair of beauties. A hundred and fifty guineas apiece. There’s money in this case, Watson, if there is nothing else.”

“I think that I had better go, Holmes.”

“But your client—”

“Never mind him. I may want your help, and so may he. Here he comes. Sit down in that armchair, Doctor, and give us your best attention.”

A slow and heavy step, which had been heard upon the stairs and in the passage, paused immediately outside the door. Then there was a loud and authoritative tap.

“Come in!” said Holmes.

A man entered who could hardly have been less than six feet six inches in height, with the chest and limbs of a Hercules. His dress was rich with a richness which would, in England, be looked upon as akin to bad taste. Heavy bands of Astrakhan were slashed across the sleeves and fronts of his double-breasted coat, while the deep blue cloak which was thrown over his shoulders was lined with flame-coloured silk, and secured at the neck with a brooch which consisted of a single flaming beryl. Boots which extended half way up his calves, and which were trimmed at the tops with rich brown fur, completed the impression of barbaric opulence which was suggested by his whole appearance. He carried a broad-brimmed hat in his hand, while he wore across the upper part of his face, extending down past the cheek-bones, a black vizard mask, which he had apparently adjusted that very moment, for his hand was still raised to it as he entered. From the lower part of the face he appeared to be a man of strong character, with a thick, hanging lip, and a long, straight chin suggestive of resolution pushed to the length of obstinacy.

“You had my note?” he asked, with a deep harsh voice and a strongly marked German accent. “I told you that I would call.” He looked from one to the other of us, as if uncertain which to address.

“Pray take a seat,” said Holmes. “This is my friend and colleague, Dr. Watson, who is occasionally good enough to help me in my cases. Whom have I the honour to address?”
“You may address me as the Count Von Kramm, a Bohemian nobleman. I understand that this gentleman, your friend, is a man of honour and discretion, whom I may trust with a matter of the most extreme importance. If not, I should much prefer to communicate with you alone.”

I rose to go, but Holmes caught me by the wrist and pushed me back into my chair. “It is both, or none,” said he. “You may say before this gentleman anything which you may say to me.”

The Count shrugged his broad shoulders. “Then I must begin,” said he, “by binding you both to absolute secrecy for two years, at the end of that time the matter will be of no importance. At present it is not too much to say that it is of such weight it may have an influence upon European history.”

“I promise,” said Holmes.

“And I.”

“You will excuse this mask,” continued our strange visitor. “The august person who employs me wishes his agent to be unknown to you, and I may confess at once that the title by which I have just called myself is not exactly my own.”

“I was aware of it,” said Holmes dryly.

“The circumstances are of great delicacy, and every precaution has to be taken to quench what might grow to be an immense scandal and seriously compromise one of the reigning families of Europe. To speak plainly, the matter implicates the great House of Ormstein, hereditary kings of Bohemia.”

“I was also aware of that,” murmured Holmes, settling himself down in his armchair and closing his eyes.

Our visitor glanced with some apparent surprise at the languid, lounging figure of the man who had been no doubt depicted to him as the most incisive reasoner, and most energetic agent in Europe. Holmes slowly reopened his eyes, and looked impatiently at his gigantic client.

“If your Majesty would condescend to state your case,” he remarked, “I should be better able to advise you.”

The man sprang from his chair and paced up and down the room in uncontrollable agitation. Then, with a gesture of desperation, he tore the mask from his face and hurled it upon the ground. “You are right,” he cried, “I am the King. Why should I attempt to conceal it?”

“Why, indeed?” murmured Holmes. “Your Majesty had not spoken before I was aware that I was addressing Wilhelm Gottsreich Sigismond von Ormstein, Grand Duke of Cassel-Felstein, and hereditary King of Bohemia.”

“But you can understand,” said our strange visitor, sitting down once more and passing his hand over his high white forehead, “you can understand that I am not accustomed to doing such business in my own person. Yet the matter was so delicate that I could not confide it to an agent without putting myself in his power. I have come incognito from Prague for the purpose of consulting you.”

“Then, pray consult,” said Holmes, shutting his eyes once more.

“The facts are briefly these: Some five years ago, during a lengthy visit to Warsaw, I made the acquaintance of the well-known adventuress, Irene Adler. The name is no doubt familiar to you.”

“Kindly look her up in my index, Doctor,” murmured Holmes, without opening his eyes. For many years he had adopted a system of docketing all paragraphs concerning men and things, so that it was difficult to name a subject or a person on which he could not at once furnish information. In this case I found her biography sandwiched in between that of a Hebrew Rabbi and that of a staff-commander who had written a monograph upon the deep sea fishes.

“Let me see?” said Holmes. “Hum! Born in New Jersey in the year 1858. Contralto—hum! La Scala, hum! Prima donna Imperial Opera of Warsaw—yes! Retired from operatic stage—ha! Living in London—quite so! Your Majesty, as I understand, became entangled with this young person, wrote her some compromising letters, and is now desirous of getting those letters back.”

“Precisely so. But how—”

“Was there a secret marriage?”
“None.”

“No legal papers or certificates?”

“None.”

“Then I fail to follow your Majesty. If this young person should produce her letters for blackmailing or other purposes, how is she to prove their authenticity?”

“There is the writing.”

“Pooh, pooh! Forgery.”

“My private notepaper.”

“Stolen.”

“My own seal.”

“Imitated.”

“My photograph.”

“Bought.”

“We were both in the photograph.”

“Oh, dear! That is very bad! Your Majesty has indeed committed an indiscretion.”

“I was mad—insane.”

“You have compromised yourself seriously.”

“I was only Crown Prince then. I was young. I am but thirty now.”

“It must be recovered.”

“We have tried and failed.”

“Your Majesty must pay. It must be bought.”

“She will not sell.”

“Stolen, then.”

“Five attempts have been made. Twice burglars in my pay ransacked her house. Once we diverted her luggage when she travelled. Twice she has been waylaid. There has been no result.”

“No sign of it?”

“Absolutely none.”

Holmes laughed. “It is quite a pretty little problem,” said he.

“But a very serious one to me,” returned the King, reproachfully.

“Very, indeed. And what does she propose to do with the photograph?”

“To ruin me.”

“But how?”

“I am about to be married.”

“So I have heard.”
“To Clotilde Lothman von Saxe-Meningen, second daughter of the King of Scandinavia. You may know the strict principles of her family. She is herself the very soul of delicacy. A shadow of a doubt as to my conduct would bring the matter to an end.”

“And Irene Adler?”

“Threatens to send them the photograph. And she will do it. I know that she will do it. You do not know her, but she has a soul of steel. She has the face of the most beautiful of women, and the mind of the most resolute of men. Rather than I should marry another woman, there are no lengths to which she would not go—none.”

“You are sure that she has not sent it yet?”

“I am sure.”

“And why?”

“Because she has said that she would send it on the day when the betrothal was publicly proclaimed. That will be next Monday.”

“Oh, then we have three days yet,” said Holmes, with a yawn. “That is very fortunate, as I have one or two matters of importance to look into just at present. Your Majesty will, of course, stay in London for the present?”

“Certainly. You will find me at the Langham, under the name of the Count Von Kramm.”

“Then I shall drop you a line to let you know how we progress.”

“Pray do so. I shall be all anxiety.”

“Then, as to money?”

“You have carte blanche.”

“Absolutely?”

“I tell you that I would give one of the provinces of my kingdom to have that photograph.”

“And for present expenses?”

The King took a heavy chamois leather bag from under his cloak, and laid it on the table.

“There are three hundred pounds in gold, and seven hundred in notes,” he said.

Holmes scribbled a receipt upon a sheet of his note-book, and handed it to him.

“And mademoiselle’s address?” he asked.

“Is Briony Lodge, Serpentine-avenue, St. John’s Wood.”

Holmes took a note of it. “One other question,” said he. “Was the photograph a cabinet?”

“It was.”

“Then, good night, your Majesty, and I trust that we shall soon have some good news for you. And good night, Watson,” he added, as the wheels of the Royal brougham rolled down the street. “If you will be good enough to call to-morrow afternoon at three o’clock, I should like to chat this little matter over with you.”

II.[edit]

At three o’clock precisely I was at Baker-street, but Holmes had not yet returned. The landlady informed me that he had left the house shortly after eight o’clock in the morning. I sat down beside the fire, however, with the intention of awaiting him, however long he might be. I was already deeply interested in his inquiry, for, though it was surrounded by none of the grim and strange features which were associated with the two crimes which I have already recorded, still, the nature of the case and the exalted station of his client gave it a character of its own.
Indeed, apart from the nature of the investigation which my friend had on hand, there was something in his masterly grasp of a situation, and his keen, incisive reasoning, which made it a pleasure to me to study his system of work, and to follow the quick, subtle methods by which he disentangled the most inextricable mysteries. So accustomed was I to his invariable success that the very possibility of his failing had ceased to enter into my head.

It was close upon four before the door opened, and a drunken-looking groom, ill-kempt and side-whiskered, with an inflamed face and disreputable clothes, walked into the room. Accustomed as I was to my friend’s amazing powers in the use of disguises, I had to look three times before I was certain that it was indeed he. With a nod he vanished into the bedroom, whence he emerged in five minutes tweed-suited and respectable, as of old. Putting his hands into his pockets, he stretched out his legs in front of the fire, and laughed heartily for some minutes.

“Well, really!” he cried, and then he choked; and laughed again until he was obliged to lie back, limp and helpless, in the chair.

“What is it?”

“It’s quite too funny. I am sure you could never guess how I employed my morning, or what I ended by doing.”

“I can’t imagine. I suppose that you have been watching the habits, and perhaps the house, of Miss Irene Adler.”

“Quite so, but the sequel was rather unusual. I will tell you, however. I left the house a little after eight o’clock this morning, in the character of a groom out of work. There is a wonderful sympathy and freemasonry among horsey men. Be one of them, and you will know all that there is to know. I soon found Briony Lodge. It is a bijou villa, with a garden at the back, but built out in front right up to the road, two stories. Chubb lock to the door. Large sitting-room on the right side, well furnished, with long windows almost to the floor, and those preposterous English window fasteners which a child could open. Behind there was nothing remarkable, save that the passage window could be reached from the top of the coach-house. I walked round it and examined it closely from every point of view, but without noting anything else of interest.

“I then lounged down the street, and found, as I expected, that there was a mews in a lane which runs down by one wall of the garden. I lent the ostlers a hand in rubbing down their horses, and I received in exchange twopence, a glass of half-and-half, two fills of shag tobacco, and as much information as I could desire about Miss Adler, to say nothing of half a dozen other people in the neighbourhood in whom I was not in the least interested, but whose biographies I was compelled to listen to.”

“And what of Irene Adler?” I asked.

“Oh, she has turned all the men’s heads down in that part. She is the daintiest thing under a bonnet on this planet. So say the Serpentine-mews, to a man. She lives quietly, sings at concerts, drives out at five every day, and returns at seven sharp for dinner. Seldom goes out at other times, except when she sings. Has only one male visitor, but a good deal of him. He is dark, handsome, and dashing; never calls less than once a day, and often twice. He is a Mr. Godfrey Norton, of the Inner Temple. See the advantages of a cabman as a confidant. They had driven him home a dozen times from Serpentine-mews, and knew all about him. When I had listened to all they had to tell, I began to walk up and down near Briony Lodge once more, and to think over my plan of campaign.

“This Godfrey Norton was evidently an important factor in the matter. He was a lawyer. That sounded ominous. What was the relation between them, and what the object of his repeated visits? Was she his client, his friend, or his mistress? If the former, she had probably transferred the photograph to his keeping. If the latter, it was less likely. On the issue of this question depended whether I should continue my work at Briony Lodge, or turn my attention to the gentleman’s chambers in the Temple. It was a delicate point, and it widened the field of my inquiry. I fear that I bore you with these details, but I have to let you see my little difficulties, if you are to understand the situation."

“I am following you closely,” I answered.

“I was still balancing the matter in my mind, when a hansom cab drove up to Briony Lodge, and a gentleman sprang out. He was a remarkably handsome man, dark, aquiline, and moustached—evidently the man of whom I had heard. He appeared to be in a great hurry, shouted to the cabman to wait, and brushed past the maid who opened the door with the air of a man who was thoroughly at home.

“He was in the house about half an hour, and I could catch glimpses of him, in the windows of the sitting-room, pacing up and down, talking excitedly and waving his arms. Of her I could see nothing. Presently he emerged, looking even more flurried than before. As he stepped up to the cab, he pulled a gold watch from his pocket and
looked at it earnestly. ‘Drive like the devil,’ he shouted, ‘first to Gross & Hankey’s in Regent-street, and then to
the Church of St. Monica in the Edgware-road. Half a guinea if you do it in twenty minutes!’

“Away they went, and I was just wondering whether I should not do well to follow them, when up the lane came
a neat little landau, the coachman with his coat only half buttoned, and his tie under his ear, while all the tags of
his harness were sticking out of the buckles. It hadn’t pulled up before she shot out of the hall door and into it. I only
catched a glimpse of her at the moment, but she was a lovely woman, with a face that a man might die for.

“The Church of St. Monica, John,’ she cried, ‘and half a sovereign if you reach it in twenty minutes.’

“This was quite too good to lose, Watson. I was just balancing whether I should run for it, or whether I should
perch behind her landau, when a cab came through the street. The driver looked twice at such a shabby fare; but I
jumped in before he could object. ‘The Church of St. Monica,’ said I, ‘and half a sovereign if you reach it in twenty
minutes.’ It was twenty-five minutes to twelve, and of course it was clear enough what was in the wind.

“My cabby drove fast. I don’t think I ever drove faster, but the others were there before us. The cab and the
landau with their steaming horses were in front of the door when I arrived. I paid the man, and hurried into
the church. There was not a soul there save the two whom I had followed and a surpliced clergyman, who seemed to
be expostulating with them. They were all three standing in a knot in front of the altar. I lounged up the side aisle
like any other idler who has dropped into a church. Suddenly, to my surprise, the three at the altar faced round to
me, and Godfrey Norton came running as hard as he could towards me.”

“Thank God!” he cried. “You’ll do. Come! Come!”

“What then?” I asked.

“Come man, come, only three minutes, or it won’t be legal.”

I was half dragged up to the altar, and, before I knew where I was, I found myself mumbling responses which
were whispered in my ear, and vouching for things of which I knew nothing, and generally assisting in the secure
tying up of Irene Adler, spinster, to Godfrey Norton, bachelor. It was all done in an instant, and there was the
gentleman thanking me on the one side and the lady on the other, while the clergyman beamed on me in front. It
was the most preposterous position in which I ever found myself in my life, and it was the thought of it that
started me laughing just now. It seems that there had been some informality about their license, that the
clergyman absolutely refused to marry them without a witness of some sort, and that my lucky appearance saved
the bridegroom from having to sally out into the streets in search of a best man. The bride gave me a sovereign,
and I mean to wear it on my watch chain in memory of the occasion.”

“This is a very unexpected turn of affairs,” said I; “and what then?”

“Well, I found my plans very seriously menaced. It looked as if the pair might take an immediate departure, and so
necessitate very prompt and energetic measures on my part. At the church door, however, they separated, he
driving back to the Temple, and she to her own house. ‘I shall drive out in the Park at five as usual,’ she said as
she left him. I heard no more. They drove away in different directions, and I went off to make my own
arrangements.”

“Which are?”

“Some cold beef and a glass of beer,” he answered, ringing the bell. “I have been too busy to think of food, and I
am likely to be busier still this evening. By the way, Doctor, I shall want your co-operation.”

“I shall be delighted.”

“You don’t mind breaking the law?”

“Not in the least.”

“Nor running a chance of arrest?”

“Not in a good cause.”

“Oh, the cause is excellent!”

“Then I am your man.”
“I was sure that I might rely on you.”

“But what is it you wish?”

“When Mrs. Turner has brought in the tray I will make it clear to you. Now,” he said, as he turned hungrily on the simple fare that our landlady had provided, “I must discuss it while I eat, for I have not much time. It is nearly five now. In two hours we must be on the scene of action. Miss Irene, or Madame, rather, returns from her drive at seven. We must be at Briony Lodge to meet her.”

“And what then?”

“You must leave that to me. I have already arranged what is to occur. There is only one point on which I must insist. You must not interfere, come what may. You understand?”

“I am to be neutral?”

“To do nothing whatever. There will probably be some small unpleasantness. Do not join in it. It will end in my being conveyed into the house. Four or five minutes afterwards the sitting-room window will open. You are to station yourself close to that open window.”

“Yes.”

“You are to watch me, for I will be visible to you.”

“Yes.”

“And when I raise my hand—so—you will throw into the room what I give you to throw, and will, at the same time, raise the cry of fire. You quite follow me?”

“Entirely.”

“It is nothing very formidable,” he said, taking a long cigar-shaped roll from his pocket. “It is an ordinary plumber’s smoke-rocket, fitted with a cap at either end to make it self-lighting. Your task is confined to that. When you raise your cry of fire, it will be taken up by quite a number of people. You may then walk to the end of the street, and I will rejoin you in ten minutes. I hope that I have made myself clear?”

“I am to remain neutral, to get near the window, to watch you, and, at the signal, to throw in this object, then to raise the cry of fire, and to wait you at the corner of the street.”

“Precisely.”

“Then you may entirely rely on me.”

“That is excellent. I think perhaps it is almost time that I prepare for the new rôle I have to play.”

He disappeared into his bedroom, and returned in a few minutes in the character of an amiable and simple-minded Nonconformist clergyman. His broad black hat, his baggy trousers, his white tie, his sympathetic smile, and general look of peering and benevolent curiosity were such as Mr. John Hare alone could have equalled. It was not merely that Holmes changed his costume. His expression, his manner, his very soul seemed to vary with every fresh part that he assumed. The stage lost a fine actor, even as science lost an acute reasoner, when he became a specialist in crime.

It was a quarter past six when we left Baker-street, and it still wanted ten minutes to the hour when we found ourselves in Serpentine-avenue. It was already dusk, and the lamps were just being lighted as we paced up and down in front of Briony Lodge, waiting for the coming of its occupant. The house was just such as I had pictured it from Sherlock Holmes’ succinct description, but the locality appeared to be less private than I expected. On the contrary, for a small street in a quiet neighbourhood, it was remarkably animated. There was a group of shabbily-dressed men smoking and laughing in a corner, a scissors grinder with his wheel, two guardsmen who were flirting with a nurse-girl, and several well-dressed young men who were lounging up and down with cigars in their mouths.

“You see,” remarked Holmes, as we paced to and fro in front of the house, “this marriage rather simplifies matters. The photograph becomes a double-edged weapon now. The chances are that she would be as averse to its being seen by Mr. Godfrey Norton, as our client is to its coming to the eyes of his Princess. Now the question
is—Where are we to find the photograph?"

"Where, indeed?"

"It is most unlikely that she carries it about with her. It is cabinet size. Too large for easy concealment about a woman’s dress. She knows that the King is capable of having her waylaid and searched. Two attempts of the sort have already been made. We may take it then that she does not carry it about with her."

"Where, then?"

"Her banker or her lawyer. There is that double possibility. But I am inclined to think neither. Women are naturally secretive, and they like to do their own secreting. Why should she hand it over to anyone else? She could trust her own guardianship, but she could not tell what indirect or political influence might be brought to bear upon a business man. Besides, remember that she had resolved to use it within a few days. It must be where she can lay her hands upon it. It must be in her own house."

"But it has twice been burgled."

"Pshaw! They did not know how to look."

"But how will you look?"

"I will not look."

"What then?"

"I will get her to show me."

"But she will refuse."

"She will not be able to. But I hear the rumble of wheels. It is her carriage. Now carry out my orders to the letter."

As he spoke the gleam of the sidelights of a carriage came round the curve of the avenue. It was a smart little landau which rattled up to the door of Briony Lodge. As it pulled up one of the loafing men at the corner dashed forward to open the door in the hope of earning a copper, but was elbowed away by another loafer who had rushed up with the same intention. A fierce quarrel broke out, which was increased by the two guardsmen, who took sides with one of the loungers, and by the scissors grinder, who was equally hot upon the other side. A blow was struck, and in an instant the lady, who had stepped from her carriage, was the centre of a little knot of flushed and struggling men who struck savagely at each other with their fists and sticks. Holmes dashed into the crowd to protect the lady; but, just as he reached her, he gave a cry and dropped to the ground, with the blood running freely down his face. At his fall the guardsmen took to their heels in one direction and the loungers in the other, while a number of better dressed people, who had watched the scuffle without taking part in it, crowded in to help the lady and to attend to the injured man. Irene Adler, as I will still call her, had hurried up the steps; but she stood at the top with her superb figure outlined against the lights of the hall, looking back into the street.

"Is the poor gentleman much hurt?" she asked.

"He is dead," cried several voices.

"No, no, there’s life in him," shouted another. "But he’ll be gone before you can get him to hospital."

"He’s a brave fellow," said a woman. "They would have had the lady’s purse and watch if it hadn’t been for him. They were a gang, and a rough one too. Ah, he’s breathing now."

"He can’t lie in the street. May we bring him in, marm?"

"Surely. Bring him into the sitting-room. There is a comfortable sofa. This way, please!"

Slowly and solemnly he was borne into Briony Lodge, and laid out in the principal room, while I still observed the proceedings from my post by the window. The lamps had been lit, but the blinds had not been drawn, so that I could see Holmes as he lay upon the couch. I do not know whether he was seized with compunction at that moment for the part he was playing, but I know that I never felt more heartily ashamed of myself in my life than when I saw the beautiful creature against whom I was conspiring, or the grace and kindliness with which she waited upon the injured man. And yet it would be the blackest treachery to Holmes to draw back now from the
part which he had entrusted to me. I hardened my heart, and took the smoke-rocket from under my ulster. After all, I thought, we are not injuring her. We are but preventing her from injuring another.

Holmes had sat up upon the couch, and I saw him motion like a man who is in need of air. A maid rushed across and threw open the window. At the same instant I saw him raise his hand, and at the signal I tossed my rocket into the room with a cry of "Fire." The word was no sooner out of my mouth than the whole crowd of spectators, well dressed and ill—gentlemen, ostlers, and servant maids—joined in a general shriek of "Fire." Thick clouds of smoke curled through the room and out at the open window. I caught a glimpse of rushing figures, and a moment later the voice of Holmes from within, assuring them that it was a false alarm. Slipping through the shouting crowd I made my way to the corner of the street, and in ten minutes was rejoiced to find my friend's arm in mine, and to get away from the scene of uproar. He walked swiftly and in silence for some few minutes, until we had turned down one of the quiet streets which lead towards the Edgware-road.

"You did it very nicely, Doctor," he remarked. "Nothing could have been better. It is all right."

"You have the photograph!"

"I know where it is."

"And how did you find out?"

"She showed me, as I told you that she would."

"I am still in the dark."

"I do not wish to make a mystery," said he laughing. "The matter was perfectly simple. You, of course, saw that everyone in the street was an accomplice. They were all engaged for the evening."

"I guessed as much."

"Then, when the row broke out, I had a little moist red paint in the palm of my hand. I rushed forward, fell down, clapped my hand to my face, and became a piteous spectacle. It is an old trick."

"That also I could fathom."

"Then they carried me in. She was bound to have me in. What else could she do? And into her sitting-room, which was the very room which I suspected. It lay between that and her bedroom, and I was determined to see which. They laid me on a couch, I motioned for air, they were compelled to open the window, and you had your chance."

"How did that help you?"

"It was all-important. When a woman thinks that her house is on fire, her instinct is at once to rush to the thing which she values most. It is a perfectly overpowering impulse, and I have more than once taken advantage of it. In the case of the Darlington Substitution Scandal it was of use to me, and also in the Arnsworth Castle business. A married woman grabs at her baby—an unmarried one reaches for her jewel box. Now it was clear to me that our lady of to-day had nothing in the house more precious to her than what we are in quest of. She would rush to secure it. The alarm of fire was admirably done. The smoke and shouting were enough to shake nerves of steel. She responded beautifully. The photograph is in a recess behind a sliding panel just above the right bell pull. She was there in an instant, and I caught a glimpse of it as she half drew it out. When I cried out that it was a false alarm, she replaced it, glanced at the rocket, rushed from the room, and I have not seen her since. I rose, and, making my excuses, escaped from the house. I hesitated whether to attempt to secure the photograph at once; but the coachman had come in, and, as he was watching me narrowly, it seemed safer to wait. A little over-precipitance may ruin all."

"And now?" I asked.

"Our quest is practically finished. I shall call with the King to-morrow, and with you, if you care to come with us. We will be shown into the sitting-room to wait for the lady, but it is probable that when she comes she may find neither us nor the photograph. It might be a satisfaction to His Majesty to regain it with his own hands."

"And when will you call?"

"At eight in the morning. She will not be up, so that we shall have a clear field. Besides, we must be prompt, for this marriage may mean a complete change in her life and habits. I must wire to the King without delay."
We had reached Baker-street, and had stopped at the door. He was searching his pockets for the key, when someone passing said:—

“Good-night, Mister Sherlock Holmes.”

There were several people on the pavement at the time, but the greeting appeared to come from a slim youth in an ulster who had hurried by.

“I’ve heard that voice before,” said Holmes, staring down the dimly lit street. “Now, I wonder who the deuce that could have been.”

III.[edit]

I slept at Baker-street that night, and we were engaged upon our toast and coffee in the morning when the King of Bohemia rushed into the room.

“You have really got it!” he cried, grasping Sherlock Holmes by either shoulder, and looking eagerly into his face.

“Not yet.”

“But you have hopes?”

“I have hopes.”

“Then, come. I am all impatience to be gone.”

“We must have a cab.”

“No, my brougham is waiting.”

“Then that will simplify matters.” We descended, and started off once more for Briony Lodge.

“Irene Adler is married,” remarked Holmes.

“Married! When?”

“Yesterday.”

“But to whom?”

“To an English lawyer named Norton.”

“But she could not love him?”

“I am in hopes that she does.”

“And why in hopes?”

“Because it would spare your Majesty all fear of future annoyance. If the lady loves her husband, she does not love your Majesty. If she does not love your Majesty, there is no reason why she should interfere with your Majesty’s plan.”

“It is true. And yet—! Well! I wish she had been of my own station! What a queen she would have made!” He relapsed into a moody silence which was not broken, until we drew up in Serpentine-avenue.

The door of Briony Lodge was open, and an elderly woman stood upon the steps. She watched us with a sardonic eye as we stepped from the brougham.

“Mr. Sherlock Holmes, I believe?” said she.

“I am Mr. Holmes,” answered my companion, looking at her with a questioning and rather startled gaze.

“Indeed! My mistress told me that you were likely to call. She left this morning with her husband, by the 5.15 train from Charing-cross, for the Continent.”
“What!” Sherlock Holmes staggered back, white with chagrin and surprise. “Do you mean that she has left England?”

“Never to return.”

“And the papers?” asked the King, hoarsely. “All is lost.”

“We shall see.” He pushed past the servant, and rushed into the drawing-room, followed by the King and myself. The furniture was scattered about in every direction, with dismantled shelves, and open drawers, as if the lady had hurriedly ransacked them before her flight. Holmes rushed at the bell-pull, tore back a small sliding shutter, and, plunging in his hand, pulled out a photograph and a letter. The photograph was of Irene Adler herself in evening dress, the letter was superscribed to “Sherlock Holmes, Esq. To be left till called for.” My friend tore it open, and we all three read it together. It was dated at midnight of the preceding night, and ran in this way:—

“My Dear Mr. Sherlock Holmes,—You really did it very well. You took me in completely. Until after the alarm of fire, I had not a suspicion. But then, when I found how I had betrayed myself, I began to think. I had been warned against you months ago. I had been told that, if the King employed an agent, it would certainly be you. And your address had been given me. Yet, with all this, you made me reveal what you wanted to know. Even after I became suspicious, I found it hard to think evil of such a dear, kind old clergyman. But, you know, I have been trained as an actress myself. Male costume is nothing new to me. I often take advantage of the freedom which it gives. I sent John, the coachman, to watch you, ran up stairs, got into my walking clothes, as I call them, and came down just as you departed.

“Well, I followed you to your door, and so made sure that I was really an object of interest to the celebrated Mr. Sherlock Holmes. Then I, rather imprudently, wished you good night, and started for the Temple to see my husband.

“We both thought the best resource was flight, when pursued by so formidable an antagonist; so you will find the nest empty when you call to-morrow. As to the photograph, your client may rest in peace. I love and am loved by a better man than he. The King may do what he will without hindrance from one whom he has cruelly wronged. I keep it only to safeguard myself, and to preserve a weapon which will always secure me from any steps which he might take in the future. I leave a photograph which he might care to possess; and I remain, dear Mr. Sherlock Holmes, very truly yours,

“Irene Norton, née Adler.”

“What a woman—oh, what a woman!” cried the King of Bohemia, when we had all three read this epistle. “Did I not tell you how quick and resolute she was? Would she not have made an admirable queen? Is it not a pity that she was not on my level?”

“From what I have seen of the lady, she seems, indeed, to be on a very different level to your Majesty,” said Holmes, coldly. “I am sorry that I have not been able to bring your Majesty’s business to a more successful conclusion.”

“On the contrary, my dear sir,” cried the King. “Nothing could be more successful. I know that her word is inviolate. The photograph is now as safe as if it were in the fire.”

“I am glad to hear your Majesty say so.”

“I am immensely indebted to you. Pray tell me in what way I can reward you. This ring—.” He slipped an emerald snake ring from his finger, and held it out upon the palm of his hand.

“Your Majesty has something which I should value even more highly,” said Holmes.

“You have but to name it.”

“This photograph!”

The King stared at him in amazement.

“Irene’s photograph!” he cried. “Certainly, if you wish it.”

“I thank your Majesty. Then there is no more to be done in the matter. I have the honour to wish you a very good
morning." He bowed, and, turning away without observing the hand which the King had stretched out to him, he set off in my company for his chambers.

And that was how a great scandal threatened to affect the kingdom of Bohemia, and how the best plans of Mr. Sherlock Holmes were beaten by a woman’s wit. He used to make merry over the cleverness of women, but I have not heard him do it of late. And when he speaks of Irene Adler, or when he refers to her photograph, it is always under the honourable title of the woman.

**Sir Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle** (22 May 1859 – 7 July 1930) was a Scottish writer and physician, most noted for creating the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes and writing stories about him which are generally considered milestones in the field of crime fiction. He is also known for writing the fictional adventures of a second character he invented, Professor Challenger, and for popularizing the mystery of the *Mary Celeste*. He was a prolific writer whose other works include fantasy and science fiction stories, plays, romances, poetry, non-fiction and historical novels.

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Rabindranath Tagore, Stories from Tagore

By THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

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PREFACE

Every experienced teacher must have noticed the difficulty of instructing Indian children out of books that are specially intended for use in English schools. It is not merely that the subjects are unfamiliar, but almost every phrase has English associations that are strange to Indian ears. The environment in which they are written is unknown to the Indian school boy and his mind becomes overburdened with its details which he fails to understand. He cannot give his whole attention to the language and thus master it quickly.

The present Indian story-book avoids some at least of these impediments. The surroundings described in it are those of the students' everyday life; the sentiments and characters are familiar. The stories are simply told, and the notes at the end will be sufficient to explain obscure passages. It should be possible for the Indian student to follow the pages of the book easily and intelligently. Those students who have read the stories in the original will have the further advantage of knowing beforehand the whole trend of the narrative and thus they will be able to concentrate their thoughts on the English language itself.

It is proposed to publish together in a single volume the original stories whose English translations are given in this Reader. Versions of the same stories in the different Indian vernaculars have already appeared, and others are likely to follow.

Two of the longest stories in this book—“Master Mashai” and “The Son of Rashmani”—are reproduced in English for the first time. The rest of the stories have been taken, with slight revision, from two English volumes entitled “The Hungry Stones” and “Mashi.” A short paragraph has been added from the original Bengali at the end of the story called “The Postmaster.” This was unfortunately omitted in the first English edition.

The list of words to be studied has been chosen from each story in order to bring to notice different types of English words. The lists are in no sense exhaustive. The end in view has been to endeavour to create an interest in Indian words and their history, which may lead on to further study.

ONCE THERE WAS A KING

“Once upon a time there was a king.”

When we were children there was no need to know who the king in the fairy story was. It didn’t matter whether he was called Shiladitya or Shaliban, whether he lived at Kashi or Kanauj. The thing that made a seven-year-old boy’s heart go thump, thump with delight was this one sovereign truth, this reality of all realities: “Once there was a king.”

But the readers of this modern age are far more exact and exacting. When they hear such an opening to a story, they are at once critical and suspicious. They apply the searchlight of science to its legendary haze and ask: “Which king?”

The story-tellers have become more precise in their turn. They are no longer content with the old indefinite, “There was a king,” but assume instead a look of profound learning and begin: “Once there was a king named Ajatasatru.”
The modern reader’s curiosity, however, is not so easily satisfied. He blinks at the author through his scientific spectacles and asks again: “Which Ajatasatru?”

When we were young, we understood all sweet things; and we could detect the sweets of a fairy story by an unerring science of our own. We never cared for such useless things as knowledge. We only cared for truth. And our unsophisticated little hearts knew well where the Crystal Palace of Truth lay and how to reach it. But to-day we are expected to write pages of facts, while the truth is simply this:

“There was a king.”

I remember vividly that evening in Calcutta when the fairy story began. The rain and the storm had been incessant. The whole of the city was flooded. The water was knee-deep in our lane. I had a straining hope, which was almost a certainty, that my tutor would be prevented from coming that evening. I sat on the stool in the far corner of the verandah looking down the lane, with a heart beating faster and faster. Every minute I kept my eye on the rain, and when it began to diminish I prayed with all my might: “Please, God, send some more rain till half-past seven is over.” For I was quite ready to believe that there was no other need for rain except to protect one helpless boy one evening in one corner of Calcutta from the deadly clutches of his tutor.

If not in answer to my prayer, at any rate according to some grosser law of nature, the rain did not give up.

But, alas, nor did my teacher!

Exactly to the minute, in the bend of the lane, I saw his approaching umbrella. The great bubble of hope burst in my breast, and my heart collapsed. Truly, if there is a punishment to fit the crime after death, then my tutor will be born again as me, and I shall be born as my tutor.

As soon as I saw his umbrella I ran as hard as I could to my mother’s room. My mother and my grandmother were sitting opposite one another playing cards by the light of a lamp. I ran into the room, and flung myself on the bed beside my mother, and said:

“Mother, the tutor has come, and I have such a bad headache; couldn’t I have no lessons to-day?”

I hope no child of immature age will be allowed to read this story, and I sincerely trust it will not be used in text-books or primers for junior classes. For what I did was dreadfully bad, and I received no punishment whatever. On the contrary, my wickedness was crowned with success.

My mother said to me: “All right,” and turning to the servant added: “Tell the tutor that he can go back home.”

It was perfectly plain that she didn’t think my illness very serious, as she went on with her game as before and took no further notice. And I also, burying my head in the pillow, laughed to my heart’s content. We perfectly understood one another, my mother and I.

But every one must know how hard it is for a boy of seven years old to keep up the illusion of illness for a long time. After about a minute I got hold of Grandmother and said: “Grannie, do tell me a story.”

At last Mother threw down the cards and said: “You had better do what he wants. I can’t manage him.” Perhaps she had it in her mind that she would have no tiresome tutor on the morrow, while I should be obliged to be back at those stupid lessons.

As soon as ever Mother had given way, I rushed at Grannie. I got hold of her hand, and, dancing with delight, dragged her inside my mosquito curtain on to the bed. I clutched hold of the bolster with both hands in my excitement, and jumped up and down with joy, and when I had got a little quieter said: “Now, Grannie, let’s have the story!”

Grannie went on: “And the king had a queen.”

That was good to begin with. He had only one!

It is usual for kings in fairy stories to be extravagant in queens. And whenever we hear that there are two queens
our hearts begin to sink. One is sure to be unhappy. But in Grannie’s story that danger was past. He had only one
queen.

We next hear that the king had not got any son. At the age of seven I didn’t think there was any need to bother if a
man had no son. He might only have been in the way.

Nor are we greatly excited when we hear that the king has gone away into the forest to practise austerities in
order to get a son. There was only one thing that would have made me go into the forest, and that was to get away
from my tutor!

But the king left behind with his queen a small girl, who grew up into a beautiful princess.

Twelve years pass away, and the king goes on practising austerities, and never thinks all this while of his beautiful
daughter. The princess has reached [Pg 40] the full bloom of her youth. The age of marriage has passed, but the
king does not return. And the queen pines away with grief and cries: “Is my golden daughter destined to die
unmarried? Ah me, what a fate is mine!”

Then the queen sent men to the king to entreat him earnestly to come back for a single night and take one meal in
the palace. And the king consented.

The queen cooked with her own hand, and with the greatest care, sixty-four dishes. She made a seat for him of
sandal-wood and arranged the food in plates of gold and cups of silver. The princess stood behind with the
peacock-tail fan in her hand. The king, after twelve years’ absence, came into the house, and the princess waved
the fan, lighting up all the room with her beauty. The king looked in his daughter’s face and forgot to take his
food.

At last he asked his queen: “Pray, who is this girl whose beauty shines as the gold image of the goddess? Whose
daughter is she?”

The queen beat her forehead and cried: “Ah, how evil is my fate! Do you not know your own daughter?”

The king was struck with amazement. He said at last: “My tiny daughter has grown to be a woman.” [Pg 41]

“What else?” the queen said with a sigh. “Do you not know that twelve years have passed by?”

“But why did you not give her in marriage?” asked the king.

“You were away,” the queen said. “And how could I find her a suitable husband?”

The king became vehement with excitement. “The first man I see to-morrow,” he said, “when I come out of the
palace shall marry her.”

The princess went on waving her fan of peacock feathers, and the king finished his meal.

The next morning, as the king came out of his palace, he saw the son of a Brahman gathering sticks in the forest
outside the palace gates. His age was about seven or eight.

The King said: “I will marry my daughter to him.”

Who can interfere with a king’s command? At once the boy was called, and the marriage garlands were exchanged
between him and the princess.

At this point I came up close to my wise Grannie and asked her eagerly: “When then?”

In the bottom of my heart there was a devout wish to substitute myself for that fortunate wood-gatherer of seven
years old. The night was resonant with the patter of rain. The earthen lamp by my bedside was burning low. My
grandmother’s voice [Pg 42] droned on as she told the story. And all these things served to create in a corner of
my credulous heart the belief that I had been gathering sticks in the dawn of some indefinite time in the kingdom
of some unknown king, and in a moment garlands had been exchanged between me and the princess, beautiful as
the Goddess of Grace. She had a gold band on her hair and gold earrings in her ears. She had a necklace and
bracelets of gold, and a golden waist-chain round her waist, and a pair of golden anklets tinkled above her feet.

If my grandmother were an author, how many explanations she would have to offer for this little story! First of all,
every one would ask why the king remained twelve years in the forest? Secondly, why should the king’s daughter
remain unmarried all that while? This would be regarded as absurd.

Even if she could have got so far without a quarrel, still there would have been a great hue and cry about the marriage itself. First, it never happened. Secondly, how could there be a marriage between a princess of the Warrior Caste and a boy of the priestly Brahman Caste? Her readers would have imagined at once that the writer was preaching against our social customs in an underhand way. And they would write letters to the papers.

So I pray with all my heart that my grandmother [Pg 43] may be born a grandmother again, and not through some cursed fate take birth as her luckless grandson.

With a throb of joy and delight, I asked Grannie: “What then?”

Grannie went on: Then the princess took her little husband away in great distress, and built a large palace with seven wings, and began to cherish her husband with great care.

I jumped up and down in my bed and clutched at the bolster more tightly than ever and said: “What then?”

Grannie continued: The little boy went to school and learnt many lessons from his teachers, and as he grew up his class-fellows began to ask him: “Who is that beautiful lady living with you in the palace with the seven wings?”

The Brahman’s son was eager to know who she was. He could only remember how one day he had been gathering sticks and a great disturbance arose. But all that was so long ago that he had no clear recollection.

Four or five years passed in this way. His companions always asked him: “Who is that beautiful lady in the palace with the seven wings?” And the Brahman’s son would come back from school and sadly tell the princess: “My school companions always ask me who is that beautiful lady in the palace [Pg 44] with the seven wings, and I can give them no reply. Tell me, oh, tell me, who you are!”

The princess said: “Let it pass to-day. I will tell you some other day.” And every day the Brahman’s son would ask: “Who are you?” and the princess would reply: “Let it pass to-day. I will tell you some other day.” In this manner four or five more years passed away.

At last the Brahman’s son became very impatient and said: “If you do not tell me to-day who you are, O beautiful lady, I will leave this palace with the seven wings.” Then the princess said: “I will certainly tell you to-morrow.”

Next day the Brahman’s son, as soon as he came home from school, said: “Now, tell me who you are.” The princess said: “To-night I will tell you after supper, when you are in bed.”

The Brahman’s son said: “Very well”; and he began to count the hours in expectation of the night. And the princess, on her side, spread white flowers over the golden bed, and lighted a gold lamp with fragrant oil, and adorned her hair, and dressed herself in a beautiful robe of blue, and began to count the hours in expectation of the night.

That evening when her husband, the Brahman’s son, had finished his meal, too excited almost to eat, and had gone to the golden bed in the bedchamber [Pg 45] strewn with flowers, he said to himself: “To-night I shall surely know who this beautiful lady is in the palace with the seven wings.”

The princess took for her food that which was left over by her husband, and slowly entered the bedchamber. She had to answer that night the question, who was the beautiful lady that lived in the palace with the seven wings. And as she went up to the bed to tell him she found a serpent had crept out of the flowers and had bitten the Brahman’s son. Her boy-husband was lying on the bed of flowers, with face pale in death.

My heart suddenly ceased to throb, and I asked with choking voice: “What then?”

Grannie said: “Then …”

But what is the use of going on any further with the story? It would only lead on to what was more and more impossible. The boy of seven did not know that, if there were some “What then?” after death, no grandmother of a grandmother could tell us all about it.

But the child’s faith never admits defeat, and it would snatch at the mantle of death itself to turn him back. It would be outrageous for him to think that such a story of one teacherless evening could so suddenly come to a stop. Therefore the grandmother had to call back her story from the ever-shut [Pg 46] chamber of the great End, but she does it so simply: it is merely by floating the dead body on a banana stem on the river, and having some
incantations read by a magician. But in that rainy night and in the dim light of a lamp death loses all its horror in the mind of the boy, and seems nothing more than a deep slumber of a single night. When the story ends the tired eyelids are weighed down with sleep. Thus it is that we send the little body of the child floating on the back of sleep over the still water of time, and then in the morning read a few verses of incantation to restore him to the world of life and light.

THE CHILD’S RETURN

Raicharan was twelve years old when he came as a servant to his master’s house. He belonged to the same caste as his master and was given his master’s little son to nurse. As time went on the boy left Raicharan’s arms to go to school. From school he went on to college, and after college he entered the judicial service. Always, until he married, Raicharan was his sole attendant.

But when a mistress came into the house, Raicharan found two masters instead of one. All his former influence passed to the new mistress. This was compensated by a fresh arrival. Anukul had a son born to him and Raicharan by his unsparing attentions soon got a complete hold over the child. He used to toss him up in his arms, call to him in absurd baby language, put his face close to the baby’s and draw it away again with a laugh.

Presently the child was able to crawl and cross the doorway. When Raicharan went to catch him, he [Pg 52] would scream with mischievous laughter and make for safety. Raicharan was amazed at the profound skill and exact judgment the baby showed when pursued. He would say to his mistress with a look of awe and mystery: “Your son will be a judge some day.”

New wonders came in their turn. When the baby began to toddle, that was to Raicharan an epoch in human history. When he called his father Ba-ba and his mother Ma-ma and Raicharan Chan-na, then Raicharan’s ecstasy knew no bounds. He went out to tell the news to all the world.

After a while Raicharan was asked to show his ingenuity in other ways. He had, for instance, to play the part of a horse, holding the reins between his teeth and prancing with his feet. He had also to wrestle with his little charge; and if he could not, by a wrestler’s trick, fall on his back defeated at the end a great outcry was certain.

About this time Anukul was transferred to a district on the banks of the Padma. On his way through Calcutta he bought his son a little go-cart. He bought him also a yellow satin waistcoat, a gold-laced cap, and some gold bracelets and anklets. Raicharan was wont to take these out and put them on his little charge, with ceremonial pride, whenever they went for a walk. [Pg 53]

Then came the rainy season and day after day the rain poured down in torrents. The hungry river, like an enormous serpent, swallowed down terraces, villages, cornfields, and covered with its flood the tall grasses and wild casuarinas on the sandbanks. From time to time there was a deep thud as the river-banks crumbled. The unceasing roar of the main current could be heard from far away. Masses of foam, carried swiftly past, proved to the eye the swiftness of the stream.

One afternoon the rain cleared. It was cloudy, but cool and bright. Raicharan’s little despot did not want to stay in on such a fine afternoon. His lordship climbed into the go-cart. Raicharan, between the shafts, dragged him slowly along till he reached the rice-fields on the banks of the river. There was no one in the fields and no boat on the stream. Across the water, on the farther side, the clouds were rifted in the west. The silent ceremonial of the setting sun was revealed in all its glowing splendour. In the midst of that stillness the child, all of a sudden, pointed with his finger in front of him and cried: “Chan-na! Pitty fow.”

Close by on a mud-flat stood a large Kadamba tree in full flower. My lord, the baby, looked at it with greedy eyes and Raicharan knew his meaning. Only a short time before he had made, out of these [Pg 54] very flower balls, a small go-cart; and the child had been so entirely happy dragging it about with a string, that for the whole day Raicharan was not asked to put on the reins at all. He was promoted from a horse into a groom.

But Raicharan had no wish that evening to go splashing knee-deep through the mud to reach the flowers. So he quickly pointed his finger in the opposite direction, calling out: “Look, baby, look! Look at the bird.” And with all sorts of curious noises he pushed the go-cart rapidly away from the tree.
But a child, destined to be a judge, cannot be put off so easily. And besides, there was at the time nothing to attract his eyes. And you cannot keep up for ever the pretence of an imaginary bird.

The little Master’s mind was made up, and Raicharan was at his wits’ end. “Very well, baby,” he said at last, “you sit still in the cart, and I’ll go and get you the pretty flower. Only mind you don’t go near the water.”

As he said this, he made his legs bare to the knee, and waded through the oozing mud towards the tree.

The moment Raicharan had gone, his little Master’s thoughts went off at racing speed to the forbidden water. The baby saw the river rushing by, splashing and gurgling as it went. It seemed as though the disobedient wavelets themselves were running away from some greater Raicharan with the laughter of a thousand children. At the sight of their mischief, the heart of the human child grew excited and restless. He got down stealthily from the go-cart and toddled off towards the river. On his way he picked up a small stick and leant over the bank of the stream pretending to fish. The mischievous fairies of the river with their mysterious voices seemed inviting him into their play-house.

Raicharan had plucked a handful of flowers from the tree and was carrying them back in the end of his cloth, with his face wreathed in smiles. But when he reached the go-cart there was no one there. He looked on all sides and there was no one there. He looked back at the cart and there was no one there.

In that first terrible moment his blood froze within him. Before his eyes the whole universe swam round like a dark mist. From the depth of his broken heart he gave one piercing cry: “Master, Master, little Master.”

But no voice answered “Chan-na.” No child laughed mischievously back: no scream of baby delight welcomed his return. Only the river ran on with its splashing, gurgling noise as before,—as though it knew nothing at all and had no time to attend to such a tiny human event as the death of a child.

As the evening passed by Raicharan’s mistress became very anxious. She sent men out on all sides to search. They went with lanterns in their hands and reached at last the banks of the Padma. There they found Raicharan rushing up and down the fields, like a stormy wind, shouting the cry of despair: “Master, Master, little Master!”

When they got Raicharan home at last, he fell prostrate at the feet of his mistress. They shook him, and questioned him, and asked him repeatedly where he had left the child; but all he could say was that he knew nothing.

Though every one held the opinion that the Padma had swallowed the child, there was a lurking doubt left in the mind. For a band of gipsies had been noticed outside the village that afternoon, and some suspicion rested on them. The mother went so far in her wild grief as to think it possible that Raicharan himself had stolen the child. She called him aside with piteous entreaty and said: “Raicharan, give me back my baby. Give me back my child. Take from me any money you ask, but give me back my child!”

Raicharan only beat his forehead in reply. His mistress ordered him out of the house. Anukul tried to reason his wife out of this wholly unjust suspicion: “Why on earth,” he said, “should he commit such a crime as that?”

The mother only replied: “The baby had gold ornaments on his body. Who knows?”

It was impossible to reason with her after that.

II

Raicharan went back to his own village. Up to this time he had had no son, and there was no hope that any child would now be born to him. But it came about before the end of a year that his wife gave birth to a son and died.

An overwhelming resentment at first grew up in Raicharan’s heart at the sight of this new baby. At the back of his mind was resentful suspicion that it had come as a usurper in place of the little Master. He also thought it would be a grave offence to be happy with a son of his own after what had happened to his master’s little child. Indeed, if it had not been for a widowed sister, who mothered the new baby, it would not have lived long.

But a change gradually came over Raicharan’s mind. A wonderful thing happened. This new baby in turn began to crawl about, and cross the doorway with mischief in its face. It also showed an amusing cleverness in making its escape to safety. Its voice, its sounds of laughter and tears, its gestures, were those of the little Master. On some days, when Raicharan listened to its crying, his heart suddenly began thumping wildly against his ribs,
and it seemed to him that his former little Master was crying somewhere in the unknown land of death because he had lost his Chan-na.

Phailna (for that was the name Raicharan’s sister gave to the new baby) soon began to talk. It learnt to say Ba-ba and Ma-ma with a baby accent. When Raicharan heard those familiar sounds the mystery suddenly became clear. The little Master could not cast off the spell of his Chan-na and therefore he had been reborn in his own house.

The three arguments in favour of this were, to Raicharan, altogether beyond dispute:

The new baby was born soon after his little master’s death.

His wife could never have accumulated such merit as to give birth to a son in middle age.

The new baby walked with a toddle and called out Ba-ba and Ma-ma.—There was no sign lacking which marked out the future judge.

Then suddenly Raicharan remembered that terrible accusation of the mother. “Ah,” he said to himself with amazement, “the mother’s heart was right. She knew I had stolen her child.” [Pg 59]

When once he had come to this conclusion, he was filled with remorse for his past neglect. He now gave himself over, body and soul, to the new baby and became its devoted attendant. He began to bring it up as if it were the son of a rich man. He bought a go-cart, a yellow satin waistcoat, and a gold-embroidered cap. He melted down the ornaments of his dead wife and made gold bangles and anklets. He refused to let the little child play with any one of the neighbourhood and became himself its sole companion day and night. As the baby grew up to boyhood, he was so petted and spoilt and clad in such finery that the village children would call him “Your Lordship,” and jeer at him; and older people regarded Raicharan as unaccountably crazy about the child.

At last the time came for the boy to go to school. Raicharan sold his small piece of land and went to Calcutta. There he got employment with great difficulty as a servant and sent Phailna to school. He spared no pains to give him the best education, the best clothes, the best food. Meanwhile, he himself lived on a mere handful of rice and would say in secret: “Ah, my little Master, my dear little Master, you loved me so much that you came back to my house! You shall never suffer from any neglect of mine.” [Pg 60]

Twelve years passed away in this manner. The boy was able to read and write well. He was bright and healthy and good-looking. He paid a great deal of attention to his personal appearance and was specially careful in parting his hair. He was inclined to extravagance and finery and spent money freely. He could never quite look on Raicharan as a father, because, though fatherly in affection, he had the manner of a servant. A further fault was this, that Raicharan kept secret from every one that he himself was the father of the child.

The students of the hostel, where Phailna was a boarder, were greatly amused by Raicharan’s country manners, and I have to confess that behind his father’s back Phailna joined in their fun. But, in the bottom of their hearts, all the students loved the innocent and tender-hearted old man, and Phailna was very fond of him also. But, as I have said before, he loved him with a kind of condescension.

Raicharan grew older and older, and his employer was continually finding fault with him for his incompetent work. He had been starving himself for the boy’s sake, so he had grown physically weak and no longer up to his daily task. He would forget things and his mind became dull and stupid. But his employer expected a full servant’s work out of him and [Pg 61] would not brook excuses. The money that Raicharan had brought with him from the sale of his land was exhausted. The boy was continually grumbling about his clothes and asking for more money.

III

Raicharan made up his mind. He gave up the situation where he was working as a servant, and left some money with Phailna and said: “I have some business to do at home in my village, and shall be back soon.”

He went off at once to Baraset where Anukul was magistrate. Anukul’s wife was still broken down with grief. She had had no other child.

One day Anukul was resting after a long and weary day in court. His wife was buying, at an exorbitant price, a herb from a mendicant quack, which was said to ensure the birth of a child. A voice of greeting was heard in the courtyard. Anukul went out to see who was there. It was Raicharan. Anukul’s heart was softened when he saw his old servant. He asked him many questions and offered to take him back into service.
Raicharan smiled faintly and said in reply: “I want to make obeisance to my mistress.”

Anukul went with Raicharan into the house, where the mistress did not receive him as warmly as his old master. Raicharan took no notice of this, but folded his hands and said: “It was not the Padma that stole your baby. It was I.”

Anukul exclaimed: “Great God! Eh! What! Where is he?”

Raicharan replied: “He is with me. I will bring him the day after to-morrow.”

It was Sunday. There was no magistrate’s court sitting. Both husband and wife were looking expectantly along the road, waiting from early morning for Raicharan’s appearance. At ten o’clock he came leading Phailna by the hand.

Anukul’s wife, without a question, took the boy into her lap and was wild with excitement, sometimes laughing, sometimes weeping, touching him, kissing his hair and his forehead, and gazing into his face with hungry, eager eyes. The boy was very good-looking and dressed like a gentleman’s son. The heart of Anukul brimmed over with a sudden rush of affection.

Nevertheless the magistrate in him asked: “Have you any proofs?”

Raicharan said: “How could there be any proof of such a deed? God alone knows that I stole your boy, and no one else in the world.”

When Anukul saw how eagerly his wife was clinging to the boy, he realised the futility of asking for proofs. It would be wiser to believe. And then,—where could an old man like Raicharan get such a boy from? And why should his faithful servant deceive him for nothing?

“But,” he added severely, “Raicharan, you must not stay here.”

“Where shall I go, Master?” said Raicharan, in a choking voice, folding his hands. “I am old. Who will take in an old man as a servant?”

The mistress said: “Let him stay. My child will be pleased. I forgive him.”

But Anukul’s magisterial conscience would not allow him. “No,” he said, “he cannot be forgiven for what he has done.”

Raicharan bowed to the ground and clasped Anukul’s feet. “Master,” he cried, “let me stay. It was not I who did it. It was God.”

Anukul’s conscience was more shocked than ever when Raicharan tried to put the blame on God’s shoulders.

“No,” he said, “I could not allow it. I cannot trust you any more. You have done an act of treachery.”

Raicharan rose to his feet and said: “It was not I who did it.”

“Who was it then?” asked Anukul.

Raicharan replied: “It was my fate.”

But no educated man could take this for an excuse. Anukul remained obdurate.

When Phailna saw that he was the wealthy magistrate’s son, and not Raicharan’s, he was angry at first, thinking that he had been cheated all this time of his birthright. But seeing Raicharan in distress, he generously said to his father: “Father, forgive him. Even if you don’t let him live with us, let him have a small monthly pension.”

After hearing this, Raicharan did not utter another word. He looked for the last time on the face of his son. He made obeisance to his old master and mistress. Then he went out and was mingled with the numberless people of the world.

At the end of the month Anukul sent him some money to his village. But the money came back. There was no one there of the name of Raicharan.
Adhar Babu lives upon the interest of the capital left him by his father. Only the brokers, negotiating loans, come to his drawing room and smoke the silver-chased hookah, and the clerks from the attorney’s office discuss the terms of some mortgage or the amount of the stamp fees. He is so careful with his money that even the most dogged efforts of the boys from the local football club fail to make any impression on his pocket.

At the time this story opens a new guest came into his household. After a long period of despair, his wife, Nanibala, bore him a son.

The child resembled his mother,—large eyes, well-formed nose, and fair complexion. Ratikanta, Adharlal’s protégé, gave verdict,—“He is worthy of this noble house.” They named him Venugopal.

Never before had Adharlal’s wife expressed any opinion differing from her husband’s on household expenses. There had been a hot discussion now and then about the propriety of some necessary item and up to this time she had merely acknowledged defeat with silent contempt. But now Adharlal could no longer maintain his supremacy. He had to give way little by little when things for his son were in question.

As Venugopal grew up, his father gradually became accustomed to spending money on him. He obtained an old teacher, who had a considerable repute for his learning and also for his success in dragging impassable boys through their examinations. But such a training does not lead to the cultivation of amiability. This man tried his best to win the boy’s heart, but the little that was left in him of the natural milk of human kindness had turned sour, and the child repulsed his advances from the very beginning. The mother, in consequence, objected to him strongly, and complained that the very sight of him made her boy ill. So the teacher left.

Just then, Haralal made his appearance with a dirty dress and a torn pair of old canvas shoes. Haralal’s mother, who was a widow, had kept him with great difficulty at a District school out of the scanty earnings which she made by cooking in strange houses and husking rice. He managed to pass the Matriculation and determined to go to College. As a result of his half-starved condition, his pinched face tapered to a point in an unnatural manner,—like Cape Comorin in the map of India; and the only broad portion of it was his forehead, which resembled the ranges of the Himalayas.

The servant asked Haralal what he wanted, and he answered timidly that he wished to see the master.

The servant answered sharply: “You can’t see him.” Haralal was hesitating, at a loss what to do next, when Venugopal, who had finished his game in the garden, suddenly came to the door. The servant shouted at Haralal: “Get away.” Quite unaccountably Venugopal grew excited and cried: “No, he shan’t get away.” And he dragged the stranger to his father.

Adharlal had just risen from his mid-day sleep and was sitting quietly on the upper verandah in his cane chair, rocking his legs. Ratikanta was enjoying his hookah, seated in a chair next to him. He asked Haralal how far he had got in his reading. The young man bent his head and answered that he had passed the Matriculation.

Ratikanta looked stern and expressed surprise that he should be so backward for his age. Haralal kept silence. It was Ratikanta’s special pleasure to torture his patron’s dependants, whether actual or potential.

Suddenly it struck Adharlal that he would be able to employ this youth as a tutor for his son on next to nothing. He agreed, there and then, to take him at a salary of five rupees a month with board and lodging free.

This time the post of tutor remained occupied longer than before. From the very beginning of their acquaintance Haralal and his pupil became great friends. Never before did Haralal have such an opportunity of loving any young human creature. His mother had been so poor and dependent, that he had never had the privilege of playing with the children where she was employed at work. He had not hitherto suspected the hidden stores of love which lay all the while accumulating in his own heart.
Venu, also, was glad to find a companion in Haralal. He was the only boy in the house. His two younger sisters were looked down upon, as unworthy of being his playmates. So his new tutor became his only companion, patiently bearing the undivided weight of the tyranny of his child friend. [Pg 73]

IV

Venu was now eleven. Haralal had passed his Intermediate, winning a scholarship. He was working hard for his B.A. degree. After College lectures were over, he would take Venu out into the public park and tell him stories about the heroes from Greek History and Victor Hugo's romances. The child used to get quite impatient to run to Haralal, after school hours, in spite of his mother's attempts to keep him by her side.

This displeased Nanibala. She thought that it was a deep-laid plot of Haralal's to captivate her boy, in order to prolong his own appointment. One day she talked to him from behind the purdah: “It is your duty to teach my son only for an hour or two in the morning and evening. But why are you always with him? The child has nearly forgotten his own parents. You must understand that a man of your position is no fit companion for a boy belonging to this house.”

Haralal's voice choked a little as he answered that for the future he would merely be Venu's teacher and would keep away from him at other times.

It was Haralal's usual practice to begin his College study early before dawn. The child would come to him directly after he had washed himself. There was a small pool in the garden and they used to feed the fish in it with puffed rice. Venu was also engaged in building a miniature garden-house, at the corner of the garden, with its liliputian gates and hedges and gravel paths. When the sun became too hot they would go back into the house, and Venu would have his morning lesson from Haralal.

On the day in question Venu had risen earlier than usual, because he wished to hear the end of the story which Haralal had begun the evening before. But he found his teacher absent. When asked about him, the door-servant said that he had gone out. At lesson time Venu remained unnaturally quiet. He never even asked Haralal why he had gone out, but went on mechanically with his lessons. When the child was with his mother taking his breakfast, she asked him what had happened to make him so gloomy, and why he was not eating his food. Venu gave no answer. After his meal his mother caressed him and questioned him repeatedly. Venu burst out crying and said,—“Master Mashai.” His mother asked Venu,—“What about Master Mashai?” But Venu found it difficult to name the offence which his teacher had committed.

His mother said to Venu: “Has your Master Mashai been saying anything to you against me?” [Pg 75]

Venu could not understand the question and went away.

V

There was a theft in Adhar Babu's house. The police were called in to investigate. Even Haralal's trunks were searched. Ratikanta said with meaning: “The man who steals anything, does not keep his thefts in his own box.”

Adharlal called his son's tutor and said to him: “It will not be convenient for me to keep any of you in my own house. From to-day you will have to take up your quarters outside, only coming in to teach my son at the proper time.”

Ratikanta said sagely, drawing at his hookah: “That is a good proposal,—good for both parties.”

Haralal did not utter a word, but he sent a letter saying that it would be no longer possible for him to remain as tutor to Venu.

When Venu came back from school, he found his tutor's room empty. Even that broken steel trunk of his was absent. The rope was stretched across the corner, but there were no clothes or towel hanging on it. Only on the table, which formerly was strewn with books and papers, stood a bowl containing some gold-fish with a label on which was written the word “Venu” in Haralal's hand-writing. [Pg 76] The boy ran up at once to his father and asked him what had happened. His father told him that Haralal had resigned his post. Venu went to his room and flung himself down and began to cry. Adharlal did not know what to do with him.

The next day, when Haralal was sitting on his wooden bedstead in the Hostel, debating with himself whether he
should attend his college lectures, suddenly he saw Adhar Babu’s servant coming into his room followed by Venu. Venu at once ran up to him and threw his arms round his neck asking him to come back to the house.

Haralal could not explain why it was absolutely impossible for him to go back, but the memory of those clinging arms and that pathetic request used to choke his breath with emotion long after.

VI

Haralal found out, after this, that his mind was in an unsettled state, and that he had but a small chance of winning the scholarship, even if he could pass the examination. At the same time, he knew that, without the scholarship, he could not continue his studies. So he tried to get employment in some office.

Fortunately for him, an English Manager of a big merchant firm took a fancy to him at first sight. [Pg 77] After only a brief exchange of words the Manager asked him if he had any experience, and could he bring any testimonial. Haralal could only answer “No”, nevertheless a post was offered him of twenty rupees a month and fifteen rupees were allowed him in advance to help him to come properly dressed to the office.

The Manager made Haralal work extremely hard. He had to stay on after office hours and sometimes go to his master’s house late in the evening. But, in this way, he learnt his work quicker than others, and his fellow clerks became jealous of him and tried to injure him, but without effect. He rented a small house in a narrow lane and brought his mother to live with him as soon as his salary was raised to forty rupees a month. Thus happiness came back to his mother after weary years of waiting.

Haralal’s mother used to express a desire to see Venugopal, of whom she had heard so much. She wished to prepare some dishes with her own hand and to ask him to come just once to dine with her son. Haralal avoided the subject by saying that his house was not big enough to invite him for that purpose.

VII

The news reached Haralal that Venu’s mother had died. He could not wait a moment, but went at once [Pg 78] to Adharlal’s house to see Venu. After that they began to see each other frequently.

But times had changed. Venu, stroking his budding moustache, had grown quite a young man of fashion. Friends, befitting his present condition, were numerous. That old dilapidated study chair and ink-stained desk had vanished, and the room now seemed to be bursting with pride at its new acquisitions,—its looking-glasses, oleographs, and other furniture. Venu had entered college, but showed no haste in crossing the boundary of the Intermediate examination.

Haralal remembered his mother’s request to invite Venu to dinner. After great hesitation, he did so. Venugopal, with his handsome face, at once won the mother’s heart. But as soon as ever the meal was over he became impatient to go, and looking at his gold watch he explained that he had pressing engagements elsewhere. Then he jumped into his carriage, which was waiting at the door, and drove away. Haralal with a sigh said to himself that he would never invite him again.

VIII

One day, on returning from office, Haralal noticed the presence of a man in the dark room on the ground floor of his house. Possibly he would have [Pg 79] passed him by, had not the heavy scent of some foreign perfume attracted his attention. Haralal asked who was there, and the answer came:

“It is I, Master Mashai.”

“What is the matter, Venu?” said Haralal. “When did you arrive?”

“I came hours ago,” said Venu. “I did not know that you returned so late.”

They went upstairs together and Haralal lighted the lamp and asked Venu whether all was well. Venu replied that his college classes were becoming a fearful bore, and his father did not realize how dreadfully hard it was for him to go on in the same class, year after year, with students much younger than himself. Haralal asked him what he wished to do. Venu then told him that he wanted to go to England and become a barrister. He gave an instance of
a student, much less advanced than himself, who was getting ready to go. Haralal asked him if he had received his father's permission. Venu replied that his father would not hear a word of it until he had passed the Intermediate, and that was an impossibility in his present frame of mind. Haralal suggested that he himself should go and try to talk over his father.

“No,” said Venu, “I can never allow that!”

Haralal asked Venu to stay for dinner and while [Pg 80] they were waiting he gently placed his hand on Venu’s shoulder and said:

“Venu, you should not quarrel with your father, or leave home.”

Venu jumped up angrily and said that if he was not welcome, he could go elsewhere. Haralal caught him by the hand and implored him not to go away without taking his food. But Venu snatched away his hand and was just leaving the room when Haralal’s mother brought the food in on a tray. On seeing Venu about to leave she pressed him to remain and he did so with bad grace.

While he was eating the sound of a carriage stopping at the door was heard. First a servant entered the room with creaking shoes and then Adhar Babu himself. Venu’s face became pale. The mother left the room as soon as she saw strangers enter. Adhar Babu called out to Haralal in a voice thick with anger:

“Ratikanta gave me full warning, but I could not believe that you had such devilish cunning hidden in you. So, you think you’re going to live upon Venu? This is sheer kidnapping, and I shall prosecute you in the Police Court.”

Venu silently followed his father and went out of the house. [Pg 81]

IX

The firm to which Haralal belonged began to buy up large quantities of rice and dhal from the country districts. To pay for this, Haralal had to take the cash every Saturday morning by the early train and disburse it. There were special centres where the brokers and middlemen would come with their receipts and accounts for settlement. Some discussion had taken place in the office about Haralal being entrusted with this work, without any security, but the Manager undertook all the responsibility and said that a security was not needed. This special work used to go on from the middle of December to the middle of April. Haralal would get back from it very late at night.

One day, after his return, he was told by his mother that Venu had called and that she had persuaded him to take his dinner at their house. This happened more than once. The mother said that it was because Venu missed his own mother, and the tears came into her eyes as she spoke about it.

One day Venu waited for Haralal to return and had a long talk with him.

“Master Mashai!” he said. “Father has become so cantankerous of late that I cannot live with him any longer. And, besides, I know that he is [Pg 82] getting ready to marry again. Ratikanta is seeking a suitable match, and they are always conspiring about it. There used to be a time when my father would get anxious, if I were absent from home even for a few hours. Now, if I am away for more than a week, he takes no notice,—indeed he is greatly relieved. If this marriage takes place, I feel that I cannot live in the house any longer. You must show me a way out of this. I want to become independent.”

Haralal felt deeply pained, but he did not know how to help his former pupil. Venu said that he was determined to go to England and become a barrister. Somehow or other he must get the passage money out of his father: he could borrow it on a note of hand and his father would have to pay when the creditors filed a suit. With this borrowed money he would get away, and when he was in England his father was certain to remit his expenses.

“But who is there,” Haralal asked, “who would advance you the money?”

“You!” said Venu.

“I!” exclaimed Haralal in amazement.

“Yes,” said Venu, “I’ve seen the servant bringing heaps of money here in bags.”

“The servant and the money belong to someone else.” [Pg 83]
Haralal explained why the money came to his house at night, like birds to their nest, to be scattered next morning.

“But can’t the Manager advance the sum?” Venu asked.

“He may do so,” said Haralal, “if your father stands security.”

The discussion ended at this point.

X

One Friday night a carriage and pair stopped before Haralal’s lodging house. When Venu was announced Haralal was counting money in his bedroom, seated on the floor. Venu entered the room dressed in a strange manner. He had discarded his Bengali dress and was wearing a Parsee coat and trousers and had a cap on his head. Rings were prominent on almost all the fingers of both hands, and a thick gold chain was hanging round his neck: there was a gold-watch in his pocket, and diamond studs could be seen peeping from his shirt sleeves. Haralal at once asked him what was the matter and why he was wearing that dress.

“My father’s marriage,” said Venu, “comes off to-morrow. He tried hard to keep it from me, but I found it out. I asked him to allow me to go to our garden-house at Barrackpur for a few days, and [Pg 84] he was only too glad to get rid of me so easily. I am going there, and I wish to God I had never to come back.”

Haralal looked pointedly at the rings on his fingers. Venu explained that they had belonged to his mother. Haralal then asked him if he had already had his dinner. He answered, “Yes, haven’t you had yours?”

“No,” said Haralal, “I cannot leave this room until I have all the money safely locked up in this iron chest.”

“Go and take your dinner,” said Venu, “while I keep guard here: your mother will be waiting for you.”

For a moment Haralal hesitated, and then he went out and had his dinner. In a short time he came back with his mother and the three of them sat among the bags of money talking together. When it was about midnight, Venu took out his watch and looked at it and jumped up saying that he would miss his train. Then he asked Haralal to keep all his rings and his watch and chain until he asked for them again. Haralal put them all together in a leather bag and laid it in the iron safe. Venu went out.

The canvas bags containing the currency notes had already been placed in the safe: only the loose coins [Pg 85] remained to be counted over and put away with the rest.

XI

Haralal lay down on the floor of the same room, with the key under his pillow, and went to sleep. He dreamt that Venu’s mother was loudly reproaching him from behind the curtain. Her words were indistinct, but rays of different colours from the jewels on her body kept piercing the curtain like needles and violently vibrating. Haralal struggled to call Venu, but his voice seemed to forsake him. At last, with a noise, the curtain fell down. Haralal started up from his sleep and found darkness piled up round about him. A sudden gust of wind had flung open the window and put out the light. Haralal’s whole body was wet with perspiration. He relighted the lamp and saw, by the clock, that it was four in the morning. There was no time to sleep again; for he had to get ready to start.

After Haralal had washed his face and hands his mother called from her own room,—“Baba, why are you up so soon?”

It was the habit of Haralal to see his mother’s face the first thing in the morning in order to bring a blessing upon the day. His mother said to him: [Pg 86] “I was dreaming that you were going out to bring back a bride for yourself.” Haralal went to his own bedroom and began to take out the bags containing the silver and the currency notes.

Suddenly his heart stopped beating. Three of the bags appeared to be empty. He knocked them against the iron safe, but this only proved his fear to be true. He opened them and shook them with all his might. Two letters from Venu dropped out from one of the bags. One was addressed to his father and one to Haralal.

Haralal tore open his own letter and began reading. The words seemed to run into one another. He trimmed the lamp, but felt as if he could not understand what he read. Yet the purport of the letter was clear. Venu had taken three thousand rupees, in currency notes, and had started for England. The steamer was to sail before day-break.
that very morning. The letter ended with the words: “I am explaining everything in a letter to my father. He will pay off the debt; and then, again, my mother’s ornaments, which I have left in your care, will more than cover the amount I have taken.”

Haralal locked up his room and hired a carriage and went with all haste to the jetty. But he did not know even the name of the steamer which Venu had taken. He ran the whole length of the wharves from Prinsep’s Ghat to Metiaburuj. He found that two steamers had started on their voyage to England early that morning. It was impossible for him to know which of them carried Venu, or how to reach him.

When Haralal got home, the sun was strong and the whole of Calcutta was awake. Everything before his eyes seemed blurred. He felt as if he were pushing against a fearful obstacle which was bodiless and without pity. His mother came on the verandah to ask him anxiously where he had gone. With a dry laugh he said to her,—“To bring home a bride for myself,” and then he fainted away.

On opening his eyes after a while, Haralal asked his mother to leave him. Entering his room he shut the door from the inside while his mother remained seated on the floor of the verandah in the fierce glare of the sun. She kept calling to him fitfully, almost mechanically,—“Baba, Baba!”

The servant came from the Manager’s office and knocked at the door, saying that they would miss the train if they did not start out at once. Haralal called from inside, “It will not be possible for me to start this morning.”

“Then where are we to go, Sir?”

“I will tell you later on.” [Pg 88]

The servant went downstairs with a gesture of impatience.

Suddenly Haralal thought of the ornaments which Venu had left behind. Up till now he had completely forgotten about them, but with the thought came instant relief. He took the leather bag containing them, and also Venu’s letter to his father, and left the house.

Before he reached Adharlal’s house he could hear the bands playing for the wedding, yet on entering he could feel that there had been some disturbance. Haralal was told that there had been a theft the night before and one or two servants were suspected. Adhar Babu was sitting in the upper verandah flushed with anger and Ratikanta was smoking his hookah. Haralal said to Adhar Babu, “I have something private to tell you.” Adharlal flared up, “I have no time now!” He was afraid that Haralal had come to borrow money or to ask his help. Ratikanta suggested that if there was any delicacy in making the request in his presence he would leave the place. Adharlal told him angrily to sit where he was. Then Haralal handed over the bag which Venu had left behind. Adharlal asked what was inside it and Haralal opened it and gave the contents into his hands.

Then Adhar Babu said with a sneer: “It’s a [Pg 89] paying business that you two have started—you and your former pupil! You were certain that the stolen property would be traced, and so you come along with it to me to claim a reward!”

Haralal presented the letter which Venu had written to his father. This only made Adharlal all the more furious.

“What’s all this?” he shouted, “I’ll call for the police! My son has not yet come of age,—and you have smuggled him out of the country! I’ll bet my soul you’ve lent him a few hundred rupees, and then taken a note of hand for three thousand! But I am not going to be bound by this!”

“I never advanced him any money at all,” said Haralal.

“What did you do then?” said Adharlal, “Do you mean to tell me he broke open your safe and stole it?”

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“I never advanced him any money at all,” said Haralal.

“Then how did he find it?” said Adharlal, “Do you mean to tell me he broke open your safe and stole it?”

Haralal stood silent.

Ratikanta sarcastically remarked: “I don’t believe this fellow ever set hands on as much as three thousand rupees in his life.”

When Haralal left the house he seemed to have lost the power of dreading anything, or even of being anxious. His mind seemed to refuse to work. Directly he entered the lane he saw a carriage waiting before his own lodging. For a moment he felt [Pg 90] certain that it was Venu’s. It was impossible to believe that his calamity could be so hopelessly final.
Haralal went up quickly, but found an English assistant from the firm sitting inside the carriage. The man came out when he saw Haralal and took him by the hand and asked him: “Why didn’t you go out by train this morning?” The servant had told the Manager his suspicions and he had sent this man to find out.

Haralal answered: “Notes to the amount of three thousand rupees are missing.”

The man asked how that could have happened.

Haralal remained silent.

The man said to Haralal: “Let us go upstairs together and see where you keep your money.” They went up to the room and counted the money and made a thorough search of the house.

When the mother saw this she could not contain herself any longer. She came out before the stranger and said: “Baba, what has happened?” He answered in broken Hindustani that some money had been stolen.

“Stolen!” the mother cried, “Why! How could it be stolen? Who could do such a dastardly thing?” Haralal said to her: “Mother, don’t say a word.”

The man collected the remainder of the money and told Haralal to come with him to the Manager. The mother barred the way and said:

“Sir, where are you taking my son? I have brought him up, starving and straining to do honest work. My son would never touch money belonging to others.”

The Englishman, not knowing Bengali, said, “Achcha! Achcha!” Haralal told his mother not to be anxious; he would explain it all to the Manager and soon be back again. The mother entreated him, with a distressed voice,

“Baba, you haven’t taken a morsel of food all morning.” Haralal stepped into the carriage and drove away, and the mother sank to the ground in the anguish of her heart.

The Manager said to Haralal: “Tell me the truth. What did happen?”

Haralal said to him, “I haven’t taken any money.”

“I fully believe it,” said the Manager, “but surely you know who has taken it.”

Haralal looked on the ground and remained silent.

“Somebody,” said the Manager, “must have taken it away with your connivance.”

“Nobody,” replied Haralal, “could take it away with my knowledge without taking first my life.”

“Look here, Haralal,” said the Manager, “I [Pg 92] trusted you completely. I took no security. I employed you in a post of great responsibility. Every one in the office was against me for doing so. The three thousand rupees is a small matter, but the shame of all this to me is a great matter. I will do one thing. I will give you the whole day to bring back this money. If you do so, I shall say nothing about it and I will keep you on in your post.”

It was now eleven o’clock. Haralal with bent head went out of the office. The clerks began to discuss the affair with exultation.

“What can I do? What can I do?” Haralal repeated to himself, as he walked along like one dazed, the sun’s heat pouring down upon him. At last his mind ceased to think at all about what could be done, but the mechanical walk went on without ceasing.

This city of Calcutta, which offered its shelter to thousands and thousands of men had become like a steel trap. He could see no way out. The whole body of people were conspiring to surround and hold him captive—this most insignificant of men, whom no one knew. Nobody had any special grudge against him, yet everybody was his enemy. The crowd passed by, brushing against him: the clerks of the offices were eating their lunch on the road side from their plates made of leaves: a tired wayfarer [Pg 93] on the Maidan, under the shade of a tree, was lying with one hand beneath his head and one leg upraised over the other: The up-country women, crowded into hackney carriages, were wending their way to the temple: a chuprassie came up with a letter and asked him the address on the envelope,—so the afternoon went by.
Then came the time when the offices were all about to close. Carriages started off in all directions, carrying people back to their homes. The clerks, packed tightly on the seats of the trams, looked at the theatre advertisements as they returned to their lodgings. From to-day, Haralal had neither his work in the office, nor release from work in the evening. He had no need to hurry to catch the tram to take him to his home. All the busy occupations of the city—the buildings—the horses and carriages—the incessant traffic—seemed, now at one time, to swell into dreadful reality, and at another time, to subside into the shadowy unreal.

Haralal had taken neither food, nor rest, nor shelter all that day.

The street lamps were lighted from one road to another and it seemed to him that a watchful darkness, like some demon, was keeping its eyes wide open to guard every movement of its victim. Haralal did not even have the energy to enquire [Pg 94] how late it was. The veins on his forehead throbbed, and he felt as if his head would burst. Through the paroxysms of pain, which alternated with the apathy of dejection, only one thought came again and again to his mind; among the innumerable multitudes in that vast city, only one name found its way through his dry throat,—“Mother!”

He said to himself, “At the deep of night, when no one is awake to capture me—me, who am the least of all men,—I will silently creep to my mother’s arms and fall asleep, and may I never wake again!”

Haralal’s one trouble was lest some police officer should molest him in the presence of his mother, and this kept him back from going home. When it became impossible for him at last to bear the weight of his own body, he hailed a carriage. The driver asked him where he wanted to go. He said: “Nowhere, I want to drive across the Maidan to get the fresh air.” The man at first did not believe him and was about to drive on, when Haralal put a rupee into his hand as an advance payment. Thereupon the driver crossed, and then re-crossed, the Maidan from one side to the other, traversing the different roads.

Haralal laid his throbbing head on the side of the open window of the carriage and closed his eyes. [Pg 95] Slowly all the pain abated. His body became cool. A deep and intense peace filled his heart and a supreme deliverance seemed to embrace him on every side. It was not true,—the day’s despair which threatened him with its grip of utter helplessness. It was not true, it was false. He knew now that it was only an empty fear of the mind. Deliverance was in the infinite sky and there was no end to peace. No king or emperor in the world had the power to keep captive this nonentity, this Haralal. In the sky, surrounding his emancipated heart on every side, he felt the presence of his mother, that one poor woman. She seemed to grow and grow till she filled the infinity of darkness. All the roads and buildings and shops of Calcutta gradually became enveloped by her. In her presence vanished all the aching pains and thoughts and consciousness of Haralal. It burst,—that bubble filled with the hot vapour of pain. And now there was neither darkness nor light, but only one tense fulness.

The Cathedral clock struck one. The driver called out impatiently: “Babu, my horse can’t go on any longer. Where do you want to go?”

There came no answer.

The driver came down and shook Haralal and asked him again where he wanted to go.

There came no answer. [Pg 96]

And the answer was never received from Haralal, where he wanted to go.

SUBHA

When the girl was given the name of Subhashini, who could have guessed that she would prove dumb? Her two elder sisters were Sukeshini and Suhasini, and for the sake of uniformity her father named his youngest girl Subhashini. She was called Subha for short.

Her two elder sisters had been married with the usual cost and difficulty, and now the youngest daughter lay like a silent weight upon the heart of her parents. All the world seemed to think that, because she did not speak, therefore she did not feel; it discussed her future and its own anxiety freely in her presence. She had understood from her earliest childhood that God had sent her like a curse to her father’s house, so she withdrew herself from ordinary people and tried to live apart. If only they would all forget her she felt she could endure it. But who can forget pain? Night and day her parents’ minds were aching on her account. Especially her mother looked upon her as a deformity [Pg 102] in herself. To a mother a daughter is a more closely intimate part of herself than a son can
be; and a fault in her is a source of personal shame. Banikantha, Subha’s father, loved her rather better than his other daughters; her mother regarded her with aversion as a stain upon her own body.

If Subha lacked speech, she did not lack a pair of large dark eyes, shaded with long lashes; and her lips trembled like a leaf in response to any thought that rose in her mind.

When we express our thought in words, the medium is not found easily. There must be a process of translation, which is often inexact, and then we fall into error. But black eyes need no translating; the mind itself throws a shadow upon them. In them thought opens or shuts, shines forth or goes out in darkness, hangs steadfast like the setting moon or like the swift and restless lightning illumines all quarters of the sky. They who from birth have had no other speech than the trembling of their lips learn a language of the eyes, endless in expression, deep as the sea, clear as the heavens, wherein play dawn and sunset, light and shadow. The dumb have a lonely grandeur like Nature’s own. Wherefore the other children almost dreaded Subha and never played with her. She was silent and companionless as noontide. [Pg 103]

The hamlet where she lived was Chandipur. Its river, small for a river of Bengal, kept to its narrow bounds like a daughter of the middle class. This busy streak of water never overflowed its banks, but went about its duties as though it were a member of every family in the villages beside it. On either side were houses and banks shaded with trees. So stepping from her queenly throne, the river-goddess became a garden deity of each home, and forgetful of herself performed her task of endless benediction with swift and cheerful foot.

Banikantha’s house looked out upon the stream. Every hut and stack in the place could be seen by the passing boatmen. I know not if amid these signs of worldly wealth any one noticed the little girl who, when her work was done, stole away to the waterside and sat there. But here Nature fulfilled her want of speech and spoke for her. The murmur of the brook, the voice of the village folk, the songs of the boatmen, the crying of the birds and rustle of trees mingled and were one with the trembling of her heart. They became one vast wave of sound which beat upon her restless soul. This murmur and movement of Nature were the dumb girl’s language; that speech of the dark eyes, which the long lashes shaded, was the language of the world about her. From the trees, where the [Pg 104] cicalas chirped, to the quiet stars there was nothing but signs and gestures, weeping and sighing. And in the deep mid-noon, when the boatmen and fisher-folk had gone to their dinner, when the villagers slept and birds were still, when the ferry-boats were idle, when the great busy world paused in its toil and became suddenly a lonely, awful giant, then beneath the vast impressive heavens there were only dumb Nature and a dumb girl, sitting very silent,—one under the spreading sunlight, the other where a small tree cast its shadow.

But Subha was not altogether without friends. In the stall were two cows, Sarbbashi and Panguli. They had never heard their names from her lips, but they knew her footfall. Though she had no words, she murmured lovingly and they understood her gentle murmuring better than all speech. When she fondled them or scolded or coaxed them, they understood her better than men could do. Subha would come to the shed and throw her arms round Sarbbashi’s neck; she would rub her cheek against her friend’s, and Panguli would turn her great kind eyes and lick her face. The girl paid them three regular visits every day and others that were irregular. Whenever she heard any words that hurt her, she would come to these dumb friends out of due time. It was as though they guessed her anguish [Pg 105] of spirit from her quiet look of sadness. Coming close to her, they would rub their horns softly against her arms, and in dumb, puzzled fashion try to comfort her. Besides these two, there were goats and a kitten; but Subha had not the same equality of friendship with them, though they showed the same attachment. Every time it got a chance, night or day, the kitten would jump into her lap, and settle down to slumber, and show its appreciation of an aid to sleep as Subha drew her soft fingers over its neck and back.

Subha had a comrade also among the higher animals, and it is hard to say what were the girl’s relations with him; for he could speak, and his gift of speech left them without any common language. He was the youngest boy of the Gosains, Pratap by name, an idle fellow. After long effort, his parents had abandoned the hope that he would ever make his living. Now losels have this advantage, that, though their own folk disapprove of them, they are generally popular with every one else. Having no work to chain them, they become public property. Just as every town needs an open space where all may breathe, so a village needs two or three gentlemen of leisure, who can give time to all; then, if we are lazy and want a companion, one is to hand.

Pratap’s chief ambition was to catch fish. He [Pg 106] managed to waste a lot of time this way, and might be seen almost any afternoon so employed. It was thus most often that he met Subha. Whatever he was about, he liked a companion; and, when one is catching fish, a silent companion is best of all. Pratap respected Subha for her taciturnity, and, as every one called her Subha, he showed his affection by calling her Su. Subha used to sit beneath a tamarind, and Pratap, a little distance off, would cast his line. Pratap took with him a small allowance of betel, and Subha prepared it for him. And I think that, sitting and gazing a long while, she desired ardently to bring some great help to Pratap, to be of real aid, to prove by any means that she was not a useless burden to the world. But there was nothing to do. Then she turned to the Creator in prayer for some rare power, that by an
astonishing miracle she might startle Pratap into exclaiming: “My! I never dreamt our Su could have done this!”

Only think, if Subha had been a water nymph, she might have risen slowly from the river, bringing the gem of a snake’s crown to the landing-place. Then Pratap, leaving his paltry fishing, might dive into the lower world, and see there, on a golden bed in a palace of silver, whom else but dumb little Su, Banikantha’s child? Yes, our Su, the only [Pg 107] daughter of the king of that shining city of jewels! But that might not be, it was impossible. Not that anything is really impossible, but Su had been born, not into the royal house of Patalpur, but into Banikantha’s family, and she knew no means of astonishing the Gosains’ boy.

Gradually she grew up. Gradually she began to find herself. A new inexpressible consciousness like a tide from the central places of the sea, when the moon is full, swept through her. She saw herself, questioned herself, but no answer came that she could understand.

Once upon a time, late on a night of full moon, she slowly opened her door and peeped out timidly. Nature, herself at full moon, like lonely Subha, was looking down on the sleeping earth. Her strong young life beat within her; joy and sadness filled her being to its brim; she reached the limits even of her own illimitable loneliness, nay, passed beyond them. Her heart was heavy, and she could not speak. At the skirts of this silent troubled Mother there stood a silent troubled girl.

The thought of her marriage filled her parents with an anxious care. People blamed them, and even talked of making them outcasts. Banikantha was well off; they had fish-curry twice daily; and consequently he did not lack enemies. Then the [Pg 108] women interfered, and Bani went away for a few days. Presently he returned and said: “We must go to Calcutta.”

They got ready to go to this strange country. Subha’s heart was heavy with tears, like a mist-wrapt dawn. With a vague fear that had been gathering for days, she dogged her father and mother like a dumb animal. With her large eyes wide open, she scanned their faces as though she wished to learn something. But not a word did they vouchsafe. One afternoon in the midst of all this, as Pratap was fishing, he laughed: “So then, Su, they have caught your bridegroom, and you are going to be married! Mind you don’t forget me altogether!” Then he turned his mind again to his fish. As a stricken doe looks in the hunter’s face, asking in silent agony: “What have I done to you?” so Subha looked at Pratap. That day she sat no longer beneath her tree. Banikantha, having finished his nap, was smoking in his bedroom when Subha dropped down at his feet and burst out weeping as she gazed towards him. Banikantha tried to comfort her, and his cheek grew wet with tears.

It was settled that on the morrow they should go to Calcutta. Subha went to the cow-shed to bid farewell to her childhood’s comrades. She fed them with her hand; she clasped their necks; she looked into their faces, and tears fell fast from the eyes which spoke for her. That night was the tenth of the moon. Subha left her room, and flung herself down on her grassy couch beside her dear river. It was as if she threw her arms about Earth, her strong silent mother, and tried to say: “Do not let me leave you, mother. Put your arms about me, as I have put mine about you, and hold me fast.”

One day in a house in Calcutta, Subha’s mother dressed her up with great care. She imprisoned her hair, knotting it up in laces, she hung her about with ornaments, and did her best to kill her natural beauty. Subha’s eyes filled with tears. Her mother, fearing they would grow swollen with weeping, scolded her harshly, but the tears disregarded the scolding. The bridegroom came with a friend to inspect the bride. Her parents were dizzy with anxiety and fear when they saw the god arrive to select the beast for his sacrifice. Behind the stage, the mother called her instructions aloud, and increased her daughter’s weeping twofold, before she sent her into the examiner’s presence. The great man, after scanning her a long time, observed: “Not so bad.”

He took special note of her tears, and thought she must have a tender heart. He put it to her credit in the account, arguing that the heart, which [Pg 110] to-day was distressed at leaving her parents, would presently prove a useful possession. Like the oyster’s pearls, the child’s tears only increased her value, and he made no other comment.

The almanac was consulted, and the marriage took place on an auspicious day. Having delivered over their dumb girl into another’s hands, Subha’s parents returned home. Thank God! Their caste in this and their safety in the next world were assured! The bridegroom’s work lay in the west, and shortly after the marriage he took his wife thither.

In less than ten days every one knew that the bride was dumb! At least, if any one did not, it was not her fault, for she deceived no one. Her eyes told them everything, though no one understood her. She looked on every hand, she found no speech, she missed the faces, familiar from birth, of those who had understood a dumb girl’s language. In her silent heart there sounded an endless, voiceless weeping, which only the Searcher of Hearts
could hear.

THE POSTMASTER

The postmaster first took up his duties in the village of Ulapur. Though the village was a small one, there was an indigo factory near by, and the proprietor, an Englishman, had managed to get a post office established.

Our postmaster belonged to Calcutta. He felt like a fish out of water in this remote village. His office and living-room were in a dark thatched shed, not far from a green, slimy pond, surrounded on all sides by a dense growth.

The men employed in the indigo factory had no leisure; moreover, they were hardly desirable companions for decent folk. Nor is a Calcutta boy an adept in the art of associating with others. Among strangers he appears either proud or ill at ease. At any rate, the postmaster had but little company; nor had he much to do.

At times he tried his hand at writing a verse or two. That the movement of the leaves and the clouds of the sky were enough to fill life with joy—such were the sentiments to which he sought to give expression. But God knows that the poor fellow would have felt it as the gift of a new life, if some genie of the Arabian Nights had in one night swept away the trees, leaves and all, and replaced them with a macadamised road, hiding the clouds from view with rows of tall houses.

The postmaster’s salary was small. He had to cook his own meals, which he used to share with Ratan, an orphan girl of the village, who did odd jobs for him.

When in the evening the smoke began to curl up from the village cowsheds, and the cicadas chirped in every bush; when the mendicants of the Baül sect sang their shrill songs in their daily meeting-place, when any poet, who had attempted to watch the movement of the leaves in the dense bamboo thickets, would have felt a ghostly shiver run down his back, the postmaster would light his little lamp, and call out “Ratan.”

Ratan would sit outside waiting for this call, and, instead of coming in at once, would reply, “Did you call me, sir?”

“What are you doing?” the postmaster would ask.

“I must be going to light the kitchen fire,” would be the answer.

And the postmaster would say: “Oh, let the kitchen fire be for awhile; light me my pipe first.”

At last Ratan would enter, with puffed-out cheeks, vigorously blowing into a flame a live coal to light the tobacco. This would give the postmaster an opportunity of conversing. “Well, Ratan,” perhaps he would begin, “do you remember anything of your mother?” That was a fertile subject. Ratan partly remembered, and partly didn’t. Her father had been fonder of her than her mother; him she recollected more vividly. He used to come home in the evening after his work, and one or two evenings stood out more clearly than others, like pictures in her memory. Ratan would sit on the floor near the postmaster’s feet, as memories crowded in upon her. She called to mind a little brother that she had—and how on some bygone cloudy day she had played at fishing with him on the edge of the pond, with a twig for a make-believe fishing-rod. Such little incidents would drive out greater events from her mind. Thus, as they talked, it would often get very late, and the postmaster would feel too lazy to do any cooking at all. Ratan would then hastily light the fire, and toast some unleavened bread, which, with the cold remnants of the morning meal, was enough for their supper.

On some evenings, seated at his desk in the corner of the big empty shed, the postmaster too would call up memories of his own home, of his mother and his sister, of those for whom in his exile his heart was sad,—memories which were always haunting him, but which he could not talk about with the men of the factory, though he found himself naturally recalling them aloud in the presence of the simple little girl. And so it came about that the girl would allude to his people as mother, brother, and sister, as if she had known them all her life. In fact, she had a complete picture of each one of them painted in her little heart.

One noon, during a break in the rains, there was a cool soft breeze blowing; the smell of the damp grass and leaves in the hot sun felt like the warm breathing of the tired earth on one’s body. A persistent bird went on all the afternoon repeating the burden of its one complaint in Nature’s audience chamber.

The postmaster had nothing to do. The shimmer of the freshly washed leaves, and the banked-up remnants of the retreating rain-clouds were sights to see; and the postmaster was watching them and thinking to himself: “Oh, if only some kindred soul were near—just one loving human being whom I could hold near my heart!” This was
exactly, he went on to think, what that bird was trying to say, [Pg 119] and it was the same feeling which the murmuring leaves were striving to express. But no one knows, or would believe, that such an idea might also take possession of an ill-paid village postmaster in the deep, silent mid-day interval of his work.

The postmaster sighed, and called out “Ratan.” Ratan was then sprawling beneath the guava-tree, busily engaged in eating unripe guavas. At the voice of her master, she ran up breathlessly, saying: “Were you calling, Dada?” “I was thinking,” said the postmaster, “of teaching you to read.” And then for the rest of the afternoon he taught her the alphabet.

Thus, in a very short time, Ratan had got as far as the double consonants.

It seemed as though the showers of the season would never end. Canals, ditches, and hollows were all overflowing with water. Day and night the patter of rain was heard, and the croaking of frogs. The village roads became impassable, and marketing had to be done in punts.

One heavily clouded morning, the postmaster’s little pupil had been long waiting outside the door for her call, but, not hearing it as usual, she took up her dog-eared book, and slowly entered the room. She found her master stretched out on his bed, and, thinking that he was resting, she was about to retire [Pg 120] on tip-toe, when she suddenly heard her name—“Ratan!” She turned at once and asked: “Were you sleeping, Dada?” The postmaster in a plaintive voice said: “I am not well. Feel my head; is it very hot?”

In the loneliness of his exile, and in the gloom of the rains, his ailing body needed a little tender nursing. He longed to remember the touch on the forehead of soft hands with tinkling bracelets, to imagine the presence of loving womanhood, the nearness of mother and sister. And the exile was not disappointed. Ratan ceased to be a little girl. She at once stepped into the post of mother, called in the village doctor, gave the patient his pills at the proper intervals, sat up all night by his pillow, cooked his gruel for him, and every now and then asked: “Are you feeling a little better, Dada?”

It was some time before the postmaster, with weakened body, was able to leave his sick-bed. “No more of this,” said he with decision. “I must get a transfer.” He at once wrote off to Calcutta an application for a transfer, on the ground of the unhealthiness of the place.

Relieved from her duties as nurse, Ratan again took up her old place outside the door. But she no longer heard the same old call. She would sometimes peep inside furtively to find the postmaster [Pg 121] sitting on his chair, or stretched on his bed, and staring absent-mindedly into the air. While Ratan was awaiting her call, the postmaster was awaiting a reply to his application. The girl read her old lessons over and over again,—her great fear was lest, when the call came, she might be found wanting in the double consonants. At last, after a week, the call did come one evening. With an overflowing heart Ratan rushed into the room with her—“Were you calling me, Dada?”

The postmaster said: “I am going away to-morrow, Ratan.”

“Where are you going, Dada?”

“I am going home.”

“When will you come back?”

“I am not coming back.”

Ratan asked no other question. The postmaster, of his own accord, went on to tell her that his application for a transfer had been rejected, so he had resigned his post and was going home.

For a long time neither of them spoke another word. The lamp went on dimly burning, and from a leak in one corner of the thatch water dripped steadily into an earthen vessel on the floor beneath it.

After a while Ratan rose, and went off to the kitchen to prepare the meal; but she was not so [Pg 122] quick about it as on other days. Many new things to think of had entered her little brain. When the postmaster had finished his supper, the girl suddenly asked him: “Dada, will you take me to your home?”

The postmaster laughed. “What an idea!” said he; but he did not think it necessary to explain to the girl wherein lay the absurdity.

That whole night, in her waking and in her dreams, the postmaster’s laughing reply haunted her—“What an idea!”
On getting up in the morning, the postmaster found his bath ready. He had stuck to his Calcutta habit of bathing in water drawn and kept in pitchers, instead of taking a plunge in the river as was the custom of the village. For some reason or other, the girl could not ask him about the time of his departure, so she had fetched the water from the river long before sunrise, that it should be ready as early as he might want it. After the bath came a call for Ratan. She entered noiselessly, and looked silently into her master’s face for orders. The master said: “You need not be anxious about my going away, Ratan; I shall tell my successor to look after you.” These words were kindly meant, no doubt: but inscrutable are the ways of a woman’s heart! [Pg 123]

Ratan had borne many a scolding from her master without complaint, but these kind words she could not bear. She burst out weeping, and said: “No, no, you need not tell anybody anything at all about me; I don’t want to stay on here.”

The postmaster was dumbfounded. He had never seen Ratan like this before.

The new incumbent duly arrived, and the postmaster, having given over charge, prepared to depart. Just before starting he called Ratan and said: “Here is something for you; I hope it will keep you for some little time.” He brought out from his pocket the whole of his month’s salary, retaining only a trifle for his travelling expenses. Then Ratan fell at his feet and cried: “Oh, Dada, I pray you, don’t give me anything, don’t in any way trouble about me,” and then she ran away out of sight.

The postmaster heaved a sigh, took up his carpet bag, put his umbrella over his shoulder, and, accompanied by a man carrying his many-coloured tin trunk, he slowly made for the boat.

When he got in and the boat was under way, and the rain-swollen river, like a stream of tears welling up from the earth, swirled and sobbed at her bows, then he felt a pain at heart; the grief-stricken face of a village girl seemed to represent for him the great unspoken pervading grief of Mother Earth herself. At one time he had an impulse to go back, and bring away along with him that lonesome waif, forsaken of the world. But the wind had just filled the sails, the boat had got well into the middle of the turbulent current, and already the village was left behind, and its outlying burning-ground came in sight.

So the traveller, borne on the breast of the swift-flowing river, consoled himself with philosophical reflections on the numberless meetings and partings going on in the world—on death, the great parting, from which none returns.

But Ratan had no philosophy. She was wandering about the post office in a flood of tears. It may be that she had still a lurking hope in some corner of her heart that her Dada would return, and that is why she could not tear herself away. Alas for our foolish human nature! Its fond mistakes are persistent. The dictates of reason take a long time to assert their own sway. The surest proofs meanwhile are disbelieved. False hope is clung to with all one’s might and main, till a day comes when it has sucked the heart dry and it forcibly breaks through its bonds and departs. After that comes the misery of awakening, and then once again the longing to get back into the maze of the same mistakes.

THE CASTAWAY

Towards evening the storm was at its height. From the terrific downpour of rain, the crash of thunder, and the repeated flashes of lightning, you might think that a battle of the gods and demons was raging in the skies. Black clouds waved like the Flags of Doom. The Ganges was lashed into a fury, and the trees of the gardens on either bank swayed from side to side with sighs and groans.

In a closed room of one of the riverside houses at Chandernagore, a husband and his wife were seated on a bedspread on the floor, intently discussing. An earthen lamp burned beside them.

The husband, Sharat, was saying: “I wish you would stay on a few days more; you would then be able to return home quite strong again.”

The wife, Kiran, was saying: “I have quite recovered already. It will not, cannot possibly, do me any harm to go home now.”

Every married person will at once understand that the conversation was not quite so brief as I have [Pg 130] reported it. The matter was not difficult, but the arguments for and against did not advance it towards a solution. Like a rudderless boat, the discussion kept turning round and round the same point; and at last threatened to be overwhelmed in a flood of tears.
Sharat said: “The doctor thinks you should stop here a few days longer.”

Kiran replied: “Your doctor knows everything!”

“Well,” said Sharat, “you know that just now all sorts of illnesses are abroad. You would do well to stop here a month or two more.”

“And at this moment I suppose every one in this place is perfectly well!”

What had happened was this: Kiran was a universal favourite with her family and neighbours, so that, when she fell seriously ill, they were all anxious. The village wiseacres thought it shameless for her husband to make so much fuss about a mere wife and even to suggest a change of air, and asked if Sharat supposed that no woman had ever been ill before, or whether he had found out that the folk of the place to which he meant to take her were immortal. Did he imagine that the writ of Fate did not run there? But Sharat and his mother turned a deaf ear to them, thinking that the little [Pg 131] life of their darling was of greater importance than the united wisdom of a village. People are wont to reason thus when danger threatens their loved ones. So Sharat went to Chandernagore, and Kiran recovered, though she was still very weak. There was a pinched look on her face which filled the beholder with pity, and made his heart tremble, as he thought how narrowly she had escaped death.

Kiran was fond of society and amusement; the loneliness of her riverside villa did not suit her at all. There was nothing to do, there were no interesting neighbours, and she hated to be busy all day with medicine and dieting. There was no fun in measuring doses and making fomentations. Such was the subject discussed in their closed room on this stormy evening.

So long as Kiran deigned to argue, there was a chance of a fair fight. When she ceased to reply, and with a toss of her head disconsolately looked the other way, the poor man was disarmed. He was on the point of surrendering unconditionally when a servant shouted a message through the shut door.

Sharat got up and on opening the door learnt that a boat had been upset in the storm, and that one of the occupants, a young Brahmin boy, had succeeded in swimming ashore at their garden. [Pg 132]

Kiran was at once her own sweet self and set to work to get out some dry clothes for the boy. She then warmed a cup of milk and invited him to her room.

The boy had long curly hair, big expressive eyes, and no sign yet of hair on the face. Kiran, after getting him to drink some milk asked him all about himself.

He told her that his name was Nilkanta, and that he belonged to a theatrical troupe. They were coming to play in a neighbouring villa when the boat had suddenly foundered in the storm. He had no idea what had become of his companions. He was a good swimmer and had just managed to reach the shore.

The boy stayed with them. His narrow escape from a terrible death made Kiran take a warm interest in him. Sharat thought the boy’s appearance at this moment rather a good thing, as his wife would now have something to amuse her, and might be persuaded to stay on for some time longer. Her mother-in-law, too, was pleased at the prospect of profiting their Brahmin guest by her kindness. And Nilkanta himself was delighted at his double escape from his master and from the other world, as well as at finding a home in this wealthy family.

But in a short while Sharat and his mother [Pg 133] changed their opinion, and longed for his departure. The boy found a secret pleasure in smoking Sharat’s hookahs; he would calmly go off in pouring rain with Sharat’s best silk umbrella for a stroll through the village, and make friends with all whom he met. Moreover, he had got hold of a mongrel village dog which he petted so recklessly that it came indoors with muddy paws, and left tokens of its visit on Sharat’s spotless bed. Then he gathered about him a devoted band of boys of all sorts and sizes, and the result was that not a solitary mango in the neighbourhood had a chance of ripening that season.

There is no doubt that Kiran had a hand in spoiling the boy. Sharat often warned her about it, but she would not listen to him. She made a dandy of him with Sharat’s cast-off clothes, and gave him new ones also. And because she felt drawn towards him, and had a curiosity to know more about him, she was constantly calling him to her own room. After her bath and midday meal Kiran would be seated on the bedstead with her betel-leaf box by her side; and while her maid combed and dried her hair, Nilkanta would stand in front and recite pieces out of his repertory with appropriate gesture and song, his elf-locks waving wildly. Thus the long afternoon hours passed merrily away. Kiran would often try to persuade Sharat to sit with her as one [Pg 134] of the audience, but Sharat, who had taken a cordial dislike to the boy, refused; nor could Nilkanta do his part half so well when Sharat was there. His mother would sometimes be lured by the hope of hearing sacred names in the recitation; but love of her
mid-day sleep speedily overcame devotion, and she lay lapped in dreams.

The boy often got his ears boxed and pulled by Sharat, but as this was nothing to what he had been used to as a member of the troupe, he did not mind it in the least. In his short experience of the world he had come to the conclusion that, as the earth consisted of land and water, so human life was made up of eatings and beatings, and that the beatings largely predominated.

It was hard to tell Nilkanta’s age. If it was about fourteen or fifteen, then his face was too old for his years; if seventeen or eighteen, then it was too young. He was either a man too early or a boy too late. The fact was that, joining the theatrical band when very young, he had played the parts of Radhika, Damayanti, and Sita, and a thoughtful Providence so arranged things that he grew to the exact stature that his manager required, and then growth ceased.

Since every one saw how small Nilkanta was, and [Pg 135] he himself felt small, he did not receive due respect for his years. Causes, natural and artificial, combined to make him sometimes seem immature for seventeen years, and at other times a mere lad of fourteen but far too knowing even for seventeen. And as no sign of hair appeared on his face, the confusion became greater. Either because he smoked or because he used language beyond his years, his lips puckered into lines that showed him to be old and hard; but innocence and youth shone in his large eyes. I fancy that his heart remained young, but the hot glare of publicity had been a forcing-house that ripened untimely his outward aspect.

In the quiet shelter of Sharat’s house and garden at Chandernagore, Nature had leisure to work her way unimpeded. Nilkanta had lingered in a kind of unnatural youth, but now he silently and swiftly overpassed that stage. His seventeen or eighteen years came to adequate revelation. No one observed the change, and its first sign was this, that when Kiran treated him like a boy, he felt ashamed. When the gay Kiran one day proposed that he should play the part of lady’s companion, the idea of woman’s dress hurt him, though he could not say why. So now, when she called for him to act over again his old characters, he disappeared. [Pg 136]

It never occurred to Nilkanta that he was even now not much more than a lad-of-all-work in a strolling company. He even made up his mind to pick up a little education from Sharat’s factor. But, because he was the pet of his master’s wife, the factor could not endure the sight of him. Also, his restless training made it impossible for him to keep his mind long engaged; sooner or later, the alphabet did a misty dance before his eyes. He would sit long enough with an open book on his lap, leaning against a champak bush beside the Ganges. The waves sighed below, boats floated past, birds flitted and twittered restlessly above. What thoughts passed through his mind as he looked down on that book he alone knew, if indeed he did know. He never advanced from one word to another, but the glorious thought, that he was actually reading a book, filled his soul with exultation. Whenever a boat went by, he lifted his book, and pretended to be reading hard, shouting at the top of his voice. But his energy dropped as soon as the audience was gone.

Formerly he sang his songs automatically, but now their tunes stirred in his mind. Their words were of little import and full of trifling alliteration. Even the feeble meaning they had was beyond his comprehension; yet when he sang [Pg 137]—

Twice-born bird, ah! wherefore stirred To wrong our royal lady? Goose, ah, say why wilt thou slay Her in forest shady?

then he felt as if transported to another world and to fear other folk. This familiar earth and his own poor life became music, and he was transformed. That tale of the goose and the king’s daughter flung upon the mirror of his mind a picture of surpassing beauty. It is impossible to say what he imagined himself to be, but the destitute little slave of the theatrical troupe faded from his memory.

When with evening the child of want lies down, dirty and hungry, in his squalid home, and hears of prince and princess and fabled gold, then in the dark hovel with its dim flickering candle, his mind springs free from its bonds of poverty and misery and walks in fresh beauty and glowing raiment, strong beyond all fear of hindrance, through that fairy realm where all is possible.

Even so, this drudge of wandering players fashioned himself and his world anew, as he moved in spirit amid his songs. The lapping water, rustling leaves, and calling birds; the goddess who had given shelter to him, the helpless, the God-forsaken; her gracious, lovely face, her exquisite arms with their shining bangles, her rosy feet as soft as [Pg 138] flower-petals; all these by some magic became one with the music of his song. When the singing ended, the mirage faded, and the Nilkanta of the stage appeared again, with his wild elf-locks. Fresh from the complaints of his neighbour, the owner of the despoiled mango-orchard, Sharat would come and box his ears and cuff him. The boy Nilkanta, the misleader of adoring youths, went forth once more, to make ever new mischief
by land and water and in the branches that are above the earth.

Shortly after the advent of Nilkanta, Sharat’s younger brother, Satish, came to spend his college vacation with them. Kiran was hugely pleased at finding a fresh occupation. She and Satish were of the same age, and the time passed pleasantly in games and quarrels and reconciliations and laughter and even tears. Suddenly she would clasp him over the eyes from behind with vermilion-stained hands, or she would write “monkey” on his back, or else she would bolt the door on him from the outside amidst peals of laughter. Satish in his turn did not take things lying down; he would steal her keys and rings; he would put pepper among her betel, he would tie her to the bed when she was not looking.

Meanwhile, heaven only knows what possessed [Pg 139] poor Nilkanta. He was suddenly filled with a bitterness which he must avenge on somebody or something. He thrashed his devoted boy-followers for no fault, and sent them away crying. He would kick his pet mongrel till it made the skies resound with its whinings. When he went out for a walk, he would litter his path with twigs and leaves beaten from the roadside shrubs with his cane.

Kiran liked to see people enjoying good fare. Nilkanta had an immense capacity for eating, and never refused a good thing however often it was offered. So Kiran liked to send for him to have his meals in her presence, and ply him with delicacies, happy in the bliss of seeing this Brahmin boy eat to satiety. After Satish’s arrival she had much less spare time on her hands, and was seldom present when Nilkanta’s meals were served. Before, her absence made no difference to the boy’s appetite, and he would not rise till he had drained his cup of milk and rinsed it thoroughly with water.

But now, if Kiran was not present to ask him to try this and that, he was miserable, and nothing tasted right. He would get up, without eating much, and say to the serving-maid in a choking voice: “I am not hungry.” He thought in imagination that the news of his repeated refusal, “I am not hungry,” would reach Kiran; he pictured her concern, [Pg 140] and hoped that she would send for him, and press him to eat. But nothing of the sort happened. Nilkanta never knew and never sent for him; and the maid finished whatever he left. He would then put out the lamp in his room, and throw himself on his bed in the darkness, burying his head in the pillow in a paroxysm of sobs.

What was his grievance? Against whom? And from whom did he expect redress? At last, when no one else came, Mother Sleep soothed with her soft caresses the wounded heart of the motherless lad.

Nilkanta came to the unshakable conviction that Satish was poisoning Kiran’s mind against him. If Kiran was absent-minded, and had not her usual smile, he would jump to the conclusion that some trick of Satish had made her angry with him. He took to praying to the gods, with all the fervour of his hate, to make him at the next rebirth Satish, and Satish him. He had an idea that a Brahmin’s wrath could never be in vain; and the more he tried to consume Satish with the fire of his curses, the more did his own heart burn within him. And upstairs he would hear Satish laughing and joking with his sister-in-law.

Nilkanta never dared openly to show his enmity to Satish. But he would contrive a hundred petty ways of causing him annoyance. When Satish went [Pg 141] for a swim in the river, and left his soap on the steps of the bathing-place, on coming back for it he would find that it had disappeared. Once he found his favourite striped tunic floating past him on the water, and thought it had been blown away by the wind.

One day Kiran, desiring to entertain Satish, sent for Nilkanta to recite as usual, but he stood there in gloomy silence. Quite surprised, Kiran asked him what was the matter. But he remained silent. And when again pressed by her to repeat some particular favourite piece of hers, he answered: “I don’t remember,” and walked away.

At last the time came for their return home. Everybody was busy packing up. Satish was going with them. But to Nilkanta nobody said a word. The question whether he was to go or not seemed to have occurred to nobody.

The subject, as a matter of fact, had been raised by Kiran, who had proposed to take him along with them. But her husband and his mother and brother had all objected so strenuously that she let the matter drop. A couple of days before they were to start, she sent for the boy, and with kind words advised him to go back to his own home. So many days had he felt neglected that this touch of kindness was too much for him; he burst into [Pg 142] tears. Kiran’s eyes were also brimming over. She was filled with remorse at the thought that she had created a tie of affection, which could not be permanent.

But Satish was much annoyed at the blubbering of this overgrown boy. “Why does the fool stand there howling instead of speaking?” said he. When Kiran scolded him for an unfeeling creature, he replied: “My dear sister, you do not understand. You are too good and trustful. This fellow turns up from the Lord knows where, and is treated like a king. Naturally the tiger has no wish to become a mouse again. And he has evidently discovered that there is nothing like a tear or two to soften your heart.”
Nilkanta hurriedly left the spot. He felt he would like to be a knife to cut Satish to pieces; a needle to pierce him through and through; a fire to burn him to ashes. But Satish was not even scared. It was only his own heart that bled and bled.

Satish had brought with him from Calcutta a grand inkstand. The inkpot was set in a mother-of-pearl boat drawn by a German-silver goose supporting a penholder. It was a great favourite of his, and he cleaned it carefully every day with an old silk handkerchief. Kiran would laugh, and tapping the silver bird’s beak would say [Pg 143]—

Twice-born bird, ah! wherefore stirred To wrong our royal lady?

and the usual war of words would break out between her and her brother-in-law.

The day before they were to start, the inkstand was missing and could nowhere be found. Kiran smiled, and said: “Brother-in-law, your goose has flown off to look for your Damayanti.”

But Satish was in a great rage. He was certain that Nilkanta had stolen it—for several people said they had seen him prowling about the room the night before. He had the accused brought before him. Kiran also was there. “You have stolen my inkstand, you thief!” he blurted out. “Bring it back at once.” Nilkanta had always taken punishment from Sharat, deserved or undeserved, with perfect equanimity. But, when he was called a thief in Kiran’s presence, his eyes blazed with a fierce anger, his breast swelled, and his throat choked. If Satish had said another word, he would have flown at him like a wild cat and used his nails like claws.

Kiran was greatly distressed at the scene, and taking the boy into another room said in her sweet, kind way: “Nilu, if you really have taken that inkstand give it to me quietly, and I shall see that no one says another word to you about it.” Big tears coursed down the boy’s cheeks, till at last he [Pg 144] hid his face in his hands, and wept bitterly. Kiran came back from the room and said: “I am sure Nilkanta has not taken the inkstand.” Sharat and Satish were equally positive that no other than Nilkanta could have done it.

But Kiran said determinedly: “Never.”

Sharat wanted to cross-examine the boy, but his wife refused to allow it.

Then Satish suggested that his room and box should be searched. And Kiran said: “If you dare do such a thing I will never forgive you. You shall not spy on the poor innocent boy.” And as she spoke, her wonderful eyes filled with tears. That settled the matter and effectually prevented any further molestation of Nilkanta.

Kiran’s heart overflowed with pity at this attempted outrage on a homeless lad. She got two new suits of clothes and a pair of shoes, and with these and a banknote in her hand she quietly went into Nilkanta’s room in the evening. She intended to put these parting presents into his box as a surprise. The box itself had been her gift.

From her bunch of keys she selected one that fitted and noiselessly opened the box. It was so jumbled up with odds and ends that the new clothes would not go in. So she thought she had better take everything out and pack the box for him. At [Pg 145] first knives, tops, kite-flying reels, bamboo twigs, polished shells for peeling green mangoes, bottoms of broken tumblers and such like things dear to a boy’s heart were discovered. Then there came a layer of linen, clean and otherwise. And from under the linen there emerged the missing inkstand, goose and all.

Kiran, with flushed face, sat down helplessly with the inkstand in her hand, puzzled and wondering.

In the meantime, Nilkanta had come into the room from behind without Kiran knowing it. He had seen the whole thing and thought that Kiran had come like a thief to catch him in his thieving,—and that his deed was out. How could he ever hope to convince her that he was not a thief, and that only revenge had prompted him to take the inkstand, which he meant to throw into the river at the first chance? In a weak moment he had put it in the box instead. “He was not a thief,” his heart cried out, “not a thief!” Then what was he? What could he say? That he had stolen, and yet he was not a thief? He could never explain to Kiran how grievously wrong she was. And then, how could he bear the thought that she had tried to spy on him?

At last Kiran with a deep sigh replaced the inkstand in the box, and, as if she were the thief herself, covered it up with the linen and the trinkets [Pg 146] as they were before; and at the top she placed the presents, together with the banknote which she had brought for him.

The next day the boy was nowhere to be found. The villagers had not seen him; the police could discover no trace of him. Said Sharat: “Now, as a matter of curiosity, let us have a look at his box.” But Kiran was obstinate in her refusal to allow that to be done.
She had the box brought up to her own room; and taking out the inkstand alone, she threw it into the river.

The whole family went home. In a day the garden became desolate. And only that starving mongrel of Nilkanta’s remained prowling along the river-bank, whining and whining as if its heart would break.
Click on the following link and read “Lorry Raja” by Madhuri Vijay. The first time you read the story, simply enjoy it. (NOTE: This site requires registration – registration is free.)

- “Lorry Raja” by Madhuri Vijay, from Narrative

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Analysis of "Lorry Raja"

Click on the link below to read the following blog entry by Karen Carlson. Pay close attention to the paragraph that begins, “That’s what makes this story, as familiar as it is, work for me: it’s lovely writing. Yet I wonder, as I always do: when something stands up and announces itself as lovely writing, is it really lovely writing? Or is it one step removed from lovely writing, which would really be sort of invisible…?”

Also note Carlson’s next paragraph, which describes the “heartstrings effect.”


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Poetry Readings and Responses
Edgar Allan Poe, "The Raven," 1845

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Phillis Wheatley, Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral, 1773

POEMS
ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS,
RELIGIOUS AND MORAL.

BY PHILLIS WHEATLEY,
NEGRO SERVANT TO MR. JOHN WHEATLEY,
OF BOSTON, IN NEW-ENGLAND.

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON,
THE FOLLOWING POEMS ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.
BY HER MUCH OBLIGED, VERY HUMBLE AND DEVOTED SERVANT.
PHILLIS WHEATLEY.

BOSTON, JUNE 12, 1773.

P R E F A C E.

THE following POEMS were written originally for the Amusement of the Author, as they were the Products of her leisure Moments. She had no Intention ever to have published them; nor would they now have made their Appearance, but at the Importunity of many of her best, and most generous Friends; to whom she considers herself, as under the greatest Obligations.

As her Attempts in Poetry are now sent into the World, it is hoped the Critic will not severely censure their Defects; and we presume they have too much Merit to be cast aside with Contempt, as worthless and trifling Effusions.

As to the Disadvantages she has laboured under, with Regard to Learning, nothing needs to be offered, as her Master’s Letter in the following Page will sufficiently show the Difficulties in this Respect she had to encounter.

With all their Imperfections, the Poems are now humbly submitted to the Perusal of the Public.

The following is a Copy of a LETTER sent by the Author’s Master to the Publisher.

PHILLIS was brought from Africa to America, in the Year 1761, between seven and eight Years of Age. Without any Assistance from School Education, and by only what she was taught in the Family, she, in sixteen Months Time from her Arrival, attained the English language, to which she was an utter Stranger before, to such a degree, as to read any, the most difficult Parts of the Sacred Writings, to the great Astonishment of all who heard her.

As to her WRITING, her own Curiosity led her to it; and this she learnt in so short a Time, that in the Year 1765, she wrote a Letter to the Rev. Mr. OCCOM, the Indian Minister, while in England.

She has a great Inclination to learn the Latin Tongue, and has made some Progress in it. This Relation is given by her Master who bought her, and with whom she now lives.

JOHN WHEATLEY.

Boston, Nov. 14, 1772.
To Maecenas.

MAECENAS, you, beneath the myrtle shade,  
Read o’er what poets sung, and shepherds play’d.  
What felt those poets but you feel the same?  
Does not your soul possess the sacred flame?  
Their noble strains your equal genius shares  
In softer language, and diviner airs.  
While Homer paints, lo! circumfus’d in air,  
Celestial Gods in mortal forms appear;  
Swift as they move hear each recess rebound,  
Heav’n quakes, earth trembles, and the shores resound.  
Great Sire of verse, before my mortal eyes,  
The lightnings blaze across the vaulted skies,  
And, as the thunder shakes the heav’nly plains,  
A deep felt horror thrills through all my veins.  
When gentler strains demand thy graceful song,  
The length’ning line moves languishing along.  
When great Patroclus courts Achilles’ aid,  
The grateful tribute of my tears is paid;  
Prone on the shore he feels the pangs of love,  
And stern Pelides tend’rest passions move.  
Great Maro’s strain in heav’nly numbers flows,  
The Nine inspire, and all the bosom glows.  
O could I rival thine and Virgil’s page,  
Or claim the Muses with the Mantuan Sage;  
Soon the same beauties should my mind adorn,  
And the same ardors in my soul should burn:  
Then should my song in bolder notes arise,  
And all my numbers pleasingly surprise;  
But here I sit, and mourn a grov’ling mind,  
That fain would mount, and ride upon the wind.  
Not you, my friend, these plaintive strains become,  
Not you, whose bosom is the Muses home;  
When they from tow’ring Helicon retire,  
They fan in you the bright immortal fire,  
But I less happy, cannot raise the song,  
The fault’ring music dies upon my tongue.  
The happier Terence[1] all the choir inspir’d,  
His soul replenish’d, and his bosom fir’d;  
But say, ye Muses, why this partial grace,  
To one alone of Afric’s sable race;  
From age to age transmitting thus his name  
With the finest glory in the rolls of fame?  
Thy virtues, great Maecenas! shall be sung  
In praise of him, from whom those virtues sprung:  
While blooming wreaths around thy temples spread,  
I’ll snatch a laurel from thine honour’d head,  
While you indulgent smile upon the deed.  
As long as Thames in streams majestic flows,  
Or Naiads in their oozy beds repose  
While Phoebus reigns above the starry train  
While bright Aurora purples o’er the main,  
So long, great Sir, the muse thy praise shall sing,  
So long thy praise shall make Parnassus ring:  
Then grant, Maecenas, thy paternal rays,  
Hear me propitious, and defend my lays.
On Virtue.

O Thou bright jewel in my aim I strive
To comprehend thee. Thine own words declare
Wisdom is higher than a fool can reach.
I cease to wonder, and no more attempt
Thine height t’ explore, or fathom thy profound.
But, O my soul, sink not into despair,
Virtue is near thee, and with gentle hand
Would now embrace thee, hovers o’er thine head.
Fain would the heav’n-born soul with her converse,
Then seek, then court her for her promis’d bliss.
Auspicious queen, thine heav’nly pinions spread,
And lead celestial Chastity along;
Lo! now her sacred retinue descends,
Array’d in glory from the orbs above.
Attend me, Virtue, thro’ my youthful years!
O leave me not to the false joys of time!
But guide my steps to endless life and bliss.
Greatness, or Goodness, say what I shall call thee,
To give me an higher appellation still,
Teach me a better strain, a nobler lay,
O thou, enthron’d with Cherubs in the realms of day.

TO THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, IN NEW-ENGLAND.

WHILE an intrinsic ardor prompts to write,
The muses promise to assist my pen;
’Twas not long since I left my native shore
The land of errors, and Egyptian gloom:
Father of mercy, ’twas thy gracious hand
Brought me in safety from those dark abodes.
Students, to you ‘tis giv’n to scan the heights
Above, to traverse the ethereal space,
And mark the systems of revolving worlds.
Still more, ye sons of science ye receive
The blissful news by messengers from heav’n,
How Jesus’ blood for your redemption flows.
See him with hands out-stretcht upon the cross;
Immense compassion in his bosom glows;
He hears revilers, nor resents their scorn:
What matchless mercy in the Son of God!
When the whole human race by sin had fall’n,
He deign’d to die that they might rise again,
And share with him in the sublimest skies,
Life without death, and glory without end.
Improve your privileges while they stay,
Ye pupils, and each hour redeem, that bears
Or good or bad report of you to heav’n.
Let sin, that baneful evil to the soul,
By you be shun’d, nor once remit your guard;
Suppress the deadly serpent in its egg.
Ye blooming plants of human race divine,
An Ethiop tells you ‘tis your greatest foe;
Its transient sweetness turns to endless pain,
And in immense perdition sinks the soul.
TO THE KING’S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.
1768.

YOUR subjects hope, dread Sire–
The crown upon your brows may flourish long,
And that your arm may in your God be strong!
O may your sceptre num’rous nations sway,
And all with love and readiness obey!
But how shall we the British king reward!
Rule thou in peace, our father, and our lord!
Midst the remembrance of thy favours past,
The meanest peasants most admire the last
May George, beloved by all the nations round,
Live with heav’ns choicest constant blessings crown’d!
Great God, direct, and guard him from on high,
And from his head let ev’ry evil fly!
And may each clime with equal gladness see
A monarch’s smile can set his subjects free!

On being brought from Africa to America.

‘TWAS mercy brought me from my Pagan land,
Taught my benighted soul to understand
That there’s a God, that there’s a Saviour too:
Once I redemption neither fought nor knew,
Some view our sable race with scornful eye,
“Their colour is a diabolic die.”
Remember, Christians, Negroes, black as Cain,
May be refin’d, and join th’ angelic train.

On the Death of the Rev. Dr. SEWELL, 1769.

ERE yet the morn its lovely blushes spread,
See Sewell number’d with the happy dead.
Hail, holy man, arriv’d th’ immortal shore,
Though we shall hear thy warning voice no more.
Come, let us all behold with wishful eyes
The saint ascending to his native skies;
From hence the prophet wing’d his rapt’rous way
To the blest mansions in eternal day.
Then begging for the Spirit of our God,
And panting eager for the same abode,
Come, let us all with the same vigour rise,
And take a prospect of the blissful skies;
While on our minds Christ’s image is imprest,
And the dear Saviour glows in ev’ry breast.
Thrice happy saint! to find thy heav’n at last,
What compensation for the evils past!
Great God, incomprehensible, unknown
By sense, we bow at thine exalted throne.
O, while we beg thine excellence to feel,
Thy sacred Spirit to our hearts reveal,
And give us of that mercy to partake,
Which thou hast promis’d for the Saviour’s sake!
“Sewell is dead.” Swift-pinion’d Fame thus cry’d.
“Is Sewell dead,” my trembling tongue reply’d,
O what a blessing in his flight deny’d!
How oft for us the holy prophet pray’d!
How oft to us the Word of Life convey’d!
By duty urg’d my mournful verse to close,
I for his tomb this epitaph compose.
“Lo, here a man, redeem’d by Jesus’s blood,
“A sinner once, but now a saint with God;
“Behold ye rich, ye poor, ye fools, ye wise,
“Not let his monument your heart surprise;
“Twill tell you what this holy man has done,
“Which gives him brighter lustre than the sun.
“Listen, ye happy, from your seats above.
“Twe speak sincerely, while I speak and love,
“He fought the paths of piety and truth,
“By these made happy from his early youth;
“In blooming years that grace divine he felt,
“Mourn him, ye indigent, whom he has fed,
“And henceforth seek, like him, for living bread;
“Ev’n Christ, the bread descending from above,
“And ask an int’rest in his saving love.
“Mourn him, ye youth, to whom he oft has told
“God’s gracious wonders from the times of old.
“I too have cause this mighty loss to mourn,
“For he my monitor will not return.
“O when shall we to his blest state arrive?
“When the same graces in our bosoms thrive.”

On the Death of the Rev. Mr. GEORGE WHITEFIELD. 1770.

HAIL, happy saint, on thine immortal throne,
Possest of glory, life, and bliss unknown;
We hear no more the music of thy tongue,
Thy wonted auditories cease to throng.
Thy sermons in unequall’d accents flow’d,
And ev’ry bosom with devotion glow’d;
Thou didst in strains of eloquence refin’d
Inflame the heart, and captivate the mind.
Unhappy we the setting sun deplore,
So glorious once, but ah! it shines no more.
Behold the prophet in his tow’ring flight!
He leaves the earth for heav’n’s unmeasur’d height,
And worlds unknown receive him from our sight.
There Whitefield wings with rapid course his way,
And sails to Zion through vast seas of day.
Thy pray’rs, great saint, and thine incessant cries
Have pierc’d the bosom of thy native skies.
Thou moon hast seen, and all the stars of light,
How he has wrestled with his God by night.
He pray’d that grace in ev’ry heart might dwell,
He long’d to see America excell;
He charg’d its youth that ev’ry grace divine
Should with full lustre in their conduct shine;
That Saviour, which his soul did first receive,
The greatest gift that ev’n a God can give,
He freely offer’d to the num’rous throng,  
That on his lips with list’ning pleasure hung.  
“Take him, ye wretched, for your only good,  
“Take him ye starving sinners, for your food;  
“Ye thirsty, come to this life-giving stream,  
“Ye preachers, take him for your joyful theme;  
“Take him my dear Americans, he said,  
“Be your complaints on his kind bosom laid:  
“Take him, ye Africans, he longs for you,  
“Impartial Saviour is his title due:  
“Wash’d in the fountain of redeeming blood,  
“You shall be sons, and kings, and priests to God.”

Great Countess, we Americans revere  
Thy name, and mingle in thy grief sincere;  
New England deeply feels, the Orphans mourn,  
Their more than father will no more return.  
But, though arrested by the hand of death,  
Whitefield no more exerts his lab’ring breath,  
Yet let us view him in th’ eternal skies,  
Let ev’ry heart to this bright vision rise;  
While the tomb safe retains its sacred trust,  
Till life divine re-animates his dust.

On the Death of a young Lady of Five Years of Age.

FROM dark abodes to fair ethereal light  
Th’ enraptur’d innocent has wing’d her flight;  
On the kind bosom of eternal love  
She finds unknown beatitude above.  
This known, ye parents, nor her loss deplore,  
She feels the iron hand of pain no more;  
The dispensations of unerring grace,  
Should turn your sorrows into grateful praise;  
Let then no tears for her henceforward flow,  
No more distress’d in our dark vale below,  
Her morning sun, which rose divinely bright,  
Was quickly mantled with the gloom of night;  
But hear in heav’n’s blest bow’rs your Nancy fair,  
And learn to imitate her language there.  
“Thou, Lord, whom I behold with glory crown’d,  
“By what sweet name, and in what tuneful sound  
“Wilt thou be prais’d? Seraphic pow’rs are faint  
“Infinite love and majesty to paint.  
“To thee let all their graceful voices raise,  
“And saints and angels join their songs of praise.”
Perfect in bliss she from her heav’nly home  
Looks down, and smiling beckons you to come;  
Why then, fond parents, why these fruitless groans?  
Restrain your tears, and cease your plaintive moans.  
Freed from a world of sin, and snares, and pain,  
Why would you wish your daughter back again?  
No–bow resign’d. Let hope your grief control,  
And check the rising tumult of the soul.  
Calm in the prosperous, and adverse day,  
Adore the God who gives and takes away;  
Eye him in all, his holy name revere,  
Upright your actions, and your hearts sincere,
Till having sail’d through life’s tempestuous sea,
And from its rocks, and boist’rous billows free,
Yourselves, safe landed on the blissful shore,
Shall join your happy babe to part no more.

On the Death of a young Gentleman.

WHO taught thee conflict with the pow’rs of night,
To vanquish satan in the fields of light?
Who strung thy feeble arms with might unknown,
How great thy conquest, and how bright thy crown!
War with each princedom, throne, and pow’r is o’er,
The scene is ended to return no more.
O could my muse thy seat on high behold,
How deckt with laurel, how enrich’d with gold!
O could she hear what praise thine harp employs,
How sweet thine anthems, how divine thy joys!
What heav’nly grandeur should exalt her strain!
What holy raptures in her numbers reign!
To soothe the troubles of the mind to peace,
To still the tumult of life’s tossing seas,
To ease the anguish of the parents heart,
What shall my sympathizing verse impart?
Where is the balm to heal so deep a wound?
Where shall a sov’reign remedy be found?
Look, gracious Spirit, from thine heav’nly bow’r,
And thy full joys into their bosoms pour;
The raging tempest of their grief control,
And spread the dawn of glory through the soul,
To eye the path the saint departed trod,
And trace him to the bosom of his God.

To a Lady on the Death of her Husband.

GRIM monarch! see, depriv’d of vital breath,
A young physician in the dust of death:
Dost thou go on incessant to destroy,
Our griefs to double, and lay waste our joy?
Enough thou never yet wast known to say,
Though millions die, the vassals of thy sway:
Nor youth, nor science, not the ties of love,
Nor ought on earth thy flinty heart can move.
The friend, the spouse from his dire dart to save,
In vain we ask the sovereign of the grave.
Fair mourner, there see thy lov’d Leonard laid,
And o’er him spread the deep impervious shade.
Clos’d are his eyes, and heavy fetters keep
His senses bound in never-waking sleep,
Till time shall cease, till many a starry world
Shall fall from heav’n, in dire confusion hurl’d
Till nature in her final wreck shall lie,
And her last groan shall rend the azure sky:
Not, not till then his active soul shall claim
His body, a divine immortal frame.
But see the softly-stealing tears apace
Pursue each other down the mourner’s face;
But cease thy tears, bid ev’ry sigh depart,
And cast the load of anguish from thine heart:
From the cold shell of his great soul arise,
And look beyond, thou native of the skies;
There fix thy view, where fleeter than the wind
Thy Leonard mounts, and leaves the earth behind.
Thyself prepare to pass the vale of night
To join for ever on the hills of light:
To thine embrace this joyful spirit moves
To thee, the partner of his earthly loves;
He welcomes thee to pleasures more refin’d,
And better suited to th’ immortal mind.

Goliath of Gath.

1 SAMUEL, Chap. xvii.

YE martial pow’rs, and all ye tuneful nine,
Inspire my song, and aid my high design.
The dreadful scenes and toils of war I write,
The ardent warriors, and the fields of fight:
You best remember, and you best can sing
The acts of heroes to the vocal string:
Resume the lays with which your sacred lyre,
Did then the poet and the sage inspire.
Now front to front the armies were display’d,
Here Israel rang’d, and there the foes array’d;
The hosts on two opposing mountains stood,
Thick as the foliage of the waving wood;
Between them an extensive valley lay,
O’er which the gleaming armour pour’d the day,
When from the camp of the Philistine foes,
Dreadful to view, a mighty warrior rose;
In the dire deeds of bleeding battle skill’d,
The monster stalks the terror of the field.
From Gath he sprung, Goliath was his name,
Of fierce deportment, and gigantic frame:
A brazen helmet on his head was plac’d,
A coat of mail his form terrific grac’d,
The greaves his legs, the targe his shoulders prest:
Dreadful in arms high-tow’ring o’er the rest
A spear he proudly wav’d, whose iron head,
Strange to relate, six hundred shekels weigh’d;
He strode along, and shook the ample field,
While Phoebus blaz’d refulgent on his shield:
Through Jacob’s race a chilling horror ran,
When thus the huge, enormous chief began:
“Say, what the cause that in this proud array
“You set your battle in the face of day?
“One hero find in all your vaunting train,
“Then see who loses, and who wins the plain;
“For he who wins, in triumph may demand
“Perpetual service from the vanquish’d land:
“Your armies I defy, your force despise,
“By far inferior in Philistia’s eyes:
“Produce a man, and let us try the fight,
“Decide the contest, and the victor’s right.”
Thus challeng’d he: all Israel stood amaz’d,
And ev’ry chief in consternation gaz’d;
But Jesse’s son in youthful bloom appears,
And warlike courage far beyond his years:
He left the folds, he left the flow’ry meads,
And soft recesses of the sylvan shades.
Now Israel’s monarch, and his troops arise,
With peals of shouts ascending to the skies;
In Elah’s vale the scene of combat lies.
When the fair morning blush’d with orient red,
What David’s fire enjoin’d the son obey’d,
And swift of foot towards the trench he came,
He leaves his carriage to another’s care,
And runs to greet his brethren of the war.
While yet they spake the giant-chief arose,
Repeats the challenge, and insults his foes:
Struck with the sound, and trembling at the view,
Affrighted Israel from its post withdrew.
“Observe ye this tremendous foe, they cry’d,
Who in proud vaunts our armies hath defy’d:
Whoever lays him prostrate on the plain,
Freedom in Israel for his house shall gain;
And on him wealth unknown the king will pour,
And give his royal daughter for his dow’r.”
Then Jesse’s youngest hope: “My brethren say,
What shall be done for him who takes away
Reproach from Jacob, who destroys the chief.
And puts a period to his country’s grief.
He vaunts the honours of his arms abroad,
And scorns the armies of the living God.”
Thus spoke the youth, th’ attentive people ey’d
The wond’rous hero, and again reply’d:
“Such the rewards our monarch will bestow,
On him who conquers, and destroys his foe.”
Eliab heard, and kindled into ire
To hear his shepherd brother thus inquire,
And thus begun: “What errand brought thee? say
Who keeps thy flock? or does it go astray?
I know the base ambition of thine heart,
But back in safety from the field depart.”
Eliab thus to Jesse’s youngest heir,
Express’d his wrath in accents most severe.
When to his brother mildly he reply’d.
“What have I done? or what the cause to chide?
The words were told before the king, who sent
For the young hero to his royal tent:
Before the monarch dauntless he began,
“For this Philistine fail no heart of man:
I’ll take the vale, and with the giant fight:
I dread not all his boasts, nor all his might.”
When thus the king: “Dar’st thou a stripling go,
And venture combat with so great a foe?
Who all his days has been inur’d to fight,
And made its deeds his study and delight:
Battles and bloodshed brought the monster forth,
And clouds and whirlwinds usher’d in his birth.”
When David thus: “I kept the fleecy care,
And out there rush’d a lion and a bear;
A tender lamb the hungry lion took,
And with no other weapon than my crook
Bold I pursu’d, and chas’d him o’er the field,
The prey deliver’d, and the felon kill’d:
As thus the lion and the bear I slew,
So shall Goliath fall, and all his crew:
“The God, who saved me from these beasts of prey,
By me this monster in the dust shall lay.”
So David spoke. The wondering king reply’d;
“Go thou with heav’n and victory on thy side:
This coat of mail, this sword gird on,” he said,
And plac’d a mighty helmet on his head:
The coat, the sword, the helm he laid aside,
Nor chose to venture with those arms untried,
Then took his staff, and to the neigh’ring brook
Instant he ran, and thence five pebbles took.
Mean time descended to Philistia’s son
A radiant cherub, and he thus began:
“Goliath, well thou know’st thou hast defy’d
Yon Hebrew armies, and their God deny’d:
Rebellious wretch! audacious worm! forbear,
Nor tempt the vengeance of their God too far:
Them, who with his Omnipotence contend,
No eye shall pity, and no arm defend:
Proud as thou art, in short liv’d glory great,
I come to tell thee thine approaching fate.
“Regard my words. The Judge of all the gods,
Beneath whose steps the tow’ring mountain nods,
Will give thine armies to the savage brood,
That cut the liquid air, or range the wood.
Thee too a well-aim’d pebble shall destroy,
And thou shalt perish by a beardless boy:
Such is the mandate from the realms above,
And should I try the vengeance to remove,
Myself a rebel to my king would prove.
“Goliath say, shall grace to him be shown,
Who dares heav’n’s Monarch, and insults his throne?”
“Your words are lost on me,” the giant cries,
While fear and wrath contended in his eyes,
When thus the messenger from heav’n replies:
“Provok no more Jehovah’s awful hand
To hurl its vengeance on thy guilty land:
He grasps the thunder, and, he wings the storm,
Servants their sov’reign’s orders to perform.”
The angel spoke, and turn’d his eyes away,
Adding new radiance to the rising day.
Now David comes: the fatal stones demand
His left, the staff engag’d his better hand:
The giant mov’d, and from his tow’ring height
Survey’d the stripling, and disdain’d the fight,
And thus began: “Am I a dog with thee?
Bring’st thou no armour, but a staff to me?
The gods on thee their vollied curses pour,
And beasts and birds of prey thy flesh devour.”
David undaunted thus, “Thy spear and shield
Shall no protection to thy body yield:
Jehovah’s name——no other arms I bear,
I ask no other in this glorious war.
To-day the Lord of Hosts to me will give
Vict’ry, to-day thy doom thou shalt receive;
The fate you threaten shall your own become,
And beasts shall be your animated tomb,
That all the earth’s inhabitants may know
That there’s a God, who governs all below;
This great assembly too shall witness stand,
That needs nor sword, nor spear, th’ Almighty’s hand:
The battle his, the conquest he bestows,
“And to our pow’r consigns our hated foes.”
Thus David spoke; Goliath heard and came
To meet the hero in the field of fame.
Ah! fatal meeting to thy troops and thee,
But thou wast deaf to the divine decree;
Young David meets thee, meets thee not in vain;
’Tis thine to perish on th’ ensanguin’d plain.
And now the youth the forceful pebble slung
Philistia trembled as it whizz’d along:
In his dread forehead, where the helmet ends,
Just o’er the brows the well-aim’d stone descends,
It pierc’d the skull, and shatter’d all the brain,
Prone on his face he tumbled to the plain:
Goliath’s fall no smaller terror yields
Than riving thunders in aerial fields:
The soul still ling’red in its lov’d abode,
Till conq’ring David o’er the giant strode:
Goliath’s sword then laid its master dead,
And from the body hew’d the ghastly head;
The blood in gushing torrents drench’d the plains,
The soul found passage through the spouting veins.
And now aloud th’ illustrious victor said,
“Where are your boastings now your champion’s
dead?”
Scarce had he spoke, when the Philistines fled:
But fled in vain; the conqu’ror swift pursu’d:
What scenes of slaughter! and what seas of blood!
There Saul thy thousands grasp’d th’ impurpled sand
In pangs of death the conquest of thine hand;
And David there were thy ten thousands laid:
Thus Israel’s damsels musically play’d.
Near Gath and Edron many an hero lay,
Breath’d out their souls, and curs’d the light of day:
Their fury, quench’d by death, no longer burns,
And David with Goliath’s head returns,
To Salem brought, but in his tent he plac’d
The load of armour which the giant grac’d.
His monarch saw him coming from the war,
And thus demanded of the son of Ner.
“Say, who is this amazing youth?” he cry’d,
When thus the leader of the host reply’d;
“As lives thy soul I know not whence he sprung,
“So great in prowess though in years so young:”
“Inquire whose son is he,” the sov’reign said,
“Before whose conq’ring arm Philistia fled.”
Before the king behold the stripling stand,
Goliath’s head depending from his hand:
To him the king: “Say of what martial line
“Art thou, young hero, and what sire was thine?”
He humbly thus; “The son of Jesse I:
“I came the glories of the field to try.
“Small is my tribe, but valiant in the fight;
“Small is my city, but thy royal right.”
“Then take the promis’d gifts,” the monarch cry’d,
Conferring riches and the royal bride:
“Knit to my soul for ever thou remain
“With me, nor quit my regal roof again.”
A R I S E, my soul, on wings enraptur’d, rise
To praise the monarch of the earth and skies,
Whose goodness and benificence appear
As round its centre moves the rolling year,
Or when the morning glows with rosy charms,
Or the sun slumbers in the ocean’s arms:
Of light divine be a rich portion lent
To guide my soul, and favour my intend.
Celestial muse, my arduous flight sustain
And raise my mind to a seraphic strain!
Ador’d for ever be the God unseen,
Which round the sun revolves this vast machine,
Though to his eye its mass a point appears:
Ador’d the God that whirls surrounding spheres,
Which first ordain’d that mighty Sol should reign
The peerless monarch of th’ ethereal train:
Of miles twice forty millions is his height,
And yet his radiance dazzles mortal sight
So far beneath—from him th’ extended earth
Vigour derives, and ev’ry flow’ry birth:
Vast through her orb she moves with easy grace
Around her Phoebus in unbounded space;
True to her course th’ impetuous storm derides,
Triumphant o’er the winds, and surging tides.
Almighty, in these wond’rous works of thine,
What Pow’r, what Wisdom, and what Goodness shine!
And are thy wonders, Lord, by men explor’d,
And yet creating glory unador’d!
Creation smiles in various beauty gay,
While day to night, and night succeeds to day:
That Wisdom, which attends Jehovah’s ways,
Shines most conspicuous in the solar rays:
Without them, destitute of heat and light,
This world would be the reign of endless night:
In their excess how would our race complain,
Abhorring life! how hate its length’ned chain!
From air adust what num’rous ills would rise?
What dire contagion taint the burning skies?
What pestilential vapours, fraught with death,
Would rise, and overspread the lands beneath?
Hail, smiling morn, that from the orient main
Ascending dost adorn the heav’nly plain!
So rich, so various are thy beauteous dies,
That spread through all the circuit of the skies,
That, full of thee, my soul in rapture soars,
And thy great God, the cause of all adores.
O’er beings infinite his love extends,
His Wisdom rules them, and his Pow’r defends.
When tasks diurnal tire the human frame,
The spirits faint, and dim the vital flame,
Then too that ever active bounty shines,
Which not infinity of space confines.
The sable veil, that Night in silence draws,
Conceals effects, but shows th’ Almighty Cause,
Night seals in sleep the wide creation fair,
And all is peaceful but the brow of care.
Again, gay Phoebus, as the day before,
Wakes ev’ry eye, but what shall wake no more;
Again the face of nature is renew’d,
Which still appears harmonious, fair, and good.
May grateful strains salute the smiling morn,
Before its beams the eastern hills adorn!
Shall day to day, and night to night conspire
To show the goodness of the Almighty Sire?
This mental voice shall man regardless hear,
And never, never raise the filial pray’r?
To-day, O hearken, nor your folly mourn
For time mispent, that never will return.
But see the sons of vegetation rise,
And spread their leafy banners to the skies.
All-wise Almighty Providence we trace
In trees, and plants, and all the flow’ry race;
As clear as in the nobler frame of man,
All lovely copies of the Maker’s plan.
The pow’r the same that forms a ray of light,
That call’d creation from eternal night.
“Let there be light,“ he said: from his profound
Old Chaos heard, and trembled at the sound:
Swift as the word, inspir’d by pow’r divine,
Behold the light around its Maker shine,
The first fair product of th’ omnific God,
And now through all his works diffus’d abroad.
As reason’s pow’rs by day our God disclose,
So we may trace him in the night’s repose:
Say what is sleep? and dreams how passing strange!
When action ceases, and ideas range
Licentious and unbounded o’er the plains,
Where Fancy’s queen in giddy triumph reigns.
Hear in soft strains the dreaming lover sigh
To a kind fair, or rave in jealousy;
On pleasure now, and now on vengeance bent,
The lab’ring passions struggle for a vent.
What pow’r, O man! thy reason then restores,
So long suspended in nocturnal hours?
What secret hand returns the mental train,
And gives improv’d thine active pow’rs again?
From thee, O man, what gratitude should rise!
And, when from balmy sleep thou op’st thine eyes,
Let thy first thoughts be praises to the skies.
How merciful our God who thus imparts
O’erflowing tides of joy to human hearts,
When wants and woes might be our righteous lot,
Our God forgetting, by our God forgot!
Among the mental pow’rs a question rose,
“What most the image of th’ Eternal shows?”
When thus to Reason (so let Fancy rove)
Her great companion spoke immortal Love.
“Say, mighty pow’r, how long shall strife prevail,
“And with its murmurs load the whispering gale?
“Refer the cause to Recollection’s shrine,
“Who loud proclaims my origin divine,
“The cause whence heav’n and earth began to be,
“And is not man immortaliz’d by me?
“Reason let this most causeless strife subside.”
Thus Love pronounc’d, and Reason thus reply’d.
“Thy birth, coelestial queen! ’tis mine to own,
“In thee resplendent is the Godhead shown;
“Thy words persuade, my soul enraptur’d feels
“Resistless beauty which thy smile reveals.”
Ardent she spoke, and, kindling at her charms,
She clasp’d the blooming goddess in her arms.
Infinite Love where’er we turn our eyes
Appears: this ev’ry creature’s wants supplies;
This most is heard in Nature’s constant voice,
This makes the morn, and this the eve rejoice;
This bids the fost’ring rains and dews descend
To nourish all, to serve one gen’ral end,
The good of man: yet man ungrateful pays
But little homage, and but little praise.
To him, whose works arry’d with mercy shine,
What songs should rise, how constant, how divine!

To a Lady on the Death of three Relations.

WE trace the pow’r of Death from tomb to tomb,
And his are all the ages yet to come.
’Tis his to call the planets from on high,
To blacken Phoebus, and dissolve the sky;
His too, when all in his dark realms are hurl’d,
From its firm base to shake the solid world;
His fatal sceptre rules the spacious whole,
And trembling nature rocks from pole to pole.
Awful he moves, and wide his wings are spread:
Behold thy brother number’d with the dead!
From bondage freed, the exulting spirit flies
Beyond Olympus, and these starry skies.
Lost in our woe for thee, blest shade, we mourn
In vain; to earth thou never must return.
Thy sisters too, fair mourner, feel the dart
Of Death, and with fresh torture rend thine heart.
Weep not for them, and leave the world behind.
As a young plant by hurricanes up torn,
So near its parent lies the newly born–
But ’midst the bright ethereal train behold
It shines superior on a throne of gold:
Then, mourner, cease; let hope thy tears restrain,
Smile on the tomb, and soothe the raging pain.
On yon blest regions fix thy longing view,
Mindless of sublunary scenes below;
Ascend the sacred mount, in thought arise,
And seek substantial and immortal joys;
Where hope receives, where faith to vision springs,
And raptur’d seraphs tune th’ immortal strings
To strains extatic. Thou the chorus join,
And to thy father tune the praise divine.

To a Clergyman on the Death of his Lady.

WHERE contemplation finds her sacred spring,
Where heav’nly music makes the arches ring,
Where virtue reigns unsully’d and divine,
Where wisdom thron’d, and all the graces shine,
There sits thy spouse amidst the radiant throng,
While praise eternal warbles from her tongue;
There choirs angelic shout her welcome round,
With perfect bliss, and peerless glory crown’d.
While thy dear mate, to flesh no more confin’d,
Exults a blest, an heav’n-ascended mind,
Say in thy breast shall floods of sorrow rise?
Say shall its torrents overwhelm thine eyes?
Amid the seats of heav’n a place is free,
And angels open their bright ranks for thee;
For thee they wait, and with expectant eye
Thy spouse leans downward from th’ empyreal sky:
“O come away,” her longing spirit cries,
“And share with me the raptures of the skyes.
“Our bliss divine to mortals is unknown;
“Immortal life and glory are our own.
“There too may the dear pledges of our love
“Arrive, and taste with us the joys above;
“Attune the harp to more than mortal lays,
“And join with us the tribute of their praise
“To him, who dy’d stern justice to stone,
“And make eternal glory all our own.
“He in his death slew ours, and, as he rose,
“He crush’d the dire dominion of our foes;
“Vain were their hopes to put the God to flight,
“Chain us to hell, and bar the gates of light.”
She spoke, and turn’d from mortal scenes her eyes,
Which beam’d celestial radiance o’er the skies.
Then thou dear man, no more with grief retire,
Let grief no longer damp devotion’s fire,
But rise sublime, to equal bliss aspire,
Thy sighs no more be wafted by the wind,
No more complain, but be to heav’n resign’d
’Twas thine t’ unfold the oracles divine,
To sooth our woes the task was also thine;
Now sorrow is incumbent on thy heart,
Permit the muse a cordial to impart;
Who can to thee their tend’rest aid refuse?
To dry thy tears how longs the heav’nly muse!

An HYMN to the MORNING

ATTEND my lays, ye ever honour’d nine,
Assist my labours, and my strains refine;
In smoothest numbers pour the notes along,
For bright Aurora now demands my song.
Aurora hail, and all the thousand dies,
Which deck thy progress through the vaulted skyes:
The morn awakes, and wide extends her rays,
On ev’ry leaf the gentle zephyr plays;
Harmonious lays the feather’d race resume,
Dart the bright eye, and shake the painted plume.
Ye shady groves, your verdant gloom display
To shield your poet from the burning day:
Calliope awake the sacred lyre,
While thy fair sisters fan the pleasing fire:
The bow’rs, the gales, the variegated skyes
In all their pleasures in my bosom rise.
See in the east th’ illustrious king of day!
His rising radiance drives the shades away-
But Oh! I feel his fervid beams too strong,
And scarce begun, concludes th’ abortive song.
An HYMN to the EVENING.

SOON as the sun forsook the eastern main
The pealing thunder shook the heav'nly plain;
Majestic grandeur! From the zephyr's wing,
Exhales the incense of the blooming spring,
Soft purl the streams, the birds renew their notes,
And through the air their mingled music floats.
Through all the heav'ns what beauteous dies are spread!
But the west glories in the deepest red:
So may our breasts with ev'ry virtue glow,
The living temples of our God below!
Fill'd with the praise of him who gives the light,
And draws the sable curtains of the night,
Let placid slumbers sooth each weary mind,
At morn to wake more heav'nly, more refin'd;
So shall the labours of the day begin
More pure, more guarded from the snares of sin.
Night's leaden sceptre seals my drowsy eyes,
Then cease, my song, till fair Aurora rise.

ISAIAH lxiii. 1-8.

SAY, heav'nly muse, what king or mighty God,
That moves sublime from Idumea's road?
In Bosrah's dies, with martial glories join'd,
His purple vesture waves upon the wind.
Why thus enrob'd delights he to appear
In the dread image of the Pow'r of war?
Compres'd in wrath the swelling wine-press groan'd,
It bled, and pour'd the gushing purple round.
"Mine was the act," th' Almighty Saviour said,
And shook the dazzling glories of his head,
"When all forsook I trod the press alone,
And conquer'd by omnipotence my own;
"For man's release sustain'd the pond'rous load,
"For man the wrath of an immortal God:
"To execute th' Eternal's dread command
"My soul I sacrific'd with willing hand;
"Sinless I stood before the avenging frown,
"Atoning thus for vices not my own."

His eye the ample field of battle round
Survey'd, but no created succours found;
His own omnipotence sustain'd the right,
His vengeance sunk the haughty foes in night;
Beneath his feet the prostrate troops were spread,
And round him lay the dying, and the dead.
Great God, what light'ning flashes from thine eyes?
What pow'r withstands if thou indignant rise?
Against thy Zion though her foes may rage,
And all their cunning, all their strength engage,
Yet she serenely on thy bosom lies,
Smiles at their arts, and all their force defies.
On RECOLLECTION.

MNEME begin. Inspire, ye sacred nine,
Your vent’rous Afric in her great design.
Mneme, immortal pow’r, I trace thy spring:
Assist my strains, while I thy glories sing:
The acts of long departed years, by thee
Recover’d, in due order rang’d we see:
Thy pow’r the long-forgotten calls from night,
That sweetly plays before the fancy’s sight.
Mneme in our nocturnal visions pours
The ample treasure of her secret stores;
Swift from above the wings her silent flight
Through Phoebe’s realms, fair regent of the night;
And, in her pomp of images display’d,
To the high-raptur’d poet gives her aid,
Through the unbounded regions of the mind,
Diffusing light celestial and refin’d.
The heav’nly phantom paints the actions done
By ev’ry tribe beneath the rolling sun.
Mneme, enthron’d within the human breast,
Has vice condemn’d, and ev’ry virtue blest.
How sweet the sound when we her plaudit hear?
Sweeter than music to the ravish’d ear,
Sweeter than Maro’s entertaining strains
Resounding through the groves, and hills, and plains.
But how is Mneme dreaded by the race,
Who scorn her warnings and despise her grace?
By her unveil’d each horrid crime appears,
Her awful hand a cup of wormwood bears.
Days, years mispent, O what a hell of woe!
Hers the worst tortures that our souls can know.
Now eighteen years their destin’d course have run,
In fast succession round the central sun.
How did the follies of that period pass
Unnotic’d, but behold them writ in brass!
In Recollection see them fresh return,
And sure ’tis mine to be asham’d, and mourn.
O Virtue, smiling in immortal green,
Do thou exert thy pow’r, and change the scene;
Be thine employ to guide my future days,
And mine to pay the tribute of my praise.
Of Recollection such the pow’r enthron’d
In ev’ry breast, and thus her pow’r is own’d.
The wretch, who dar’d the vengeance of the skies,
At last awakes in horror and surprise,
By her alarm’d, he sees impending fate,
He howls in anguish, and repents too late.
But O! what peace, what joys are hers t’ impart
To ev’ry holy, ev’ry upright heart!
Thrice blest the man, who, in her sacred shrine,
Feels himself shelter’d from the wrath divine!

On IMAGINATION.

THY various works, imperial queen, we see,
How bright their forms! how deck’d with pomp
by thee!
Thy wond’rous acts in beauteous order stand,
And all attest how potent is thine hand.
From Helicon’s refulgent heights attend,
Ye sacred choir, and my attempts befriend:
To tell her glories with a faithful tongue,
Ye blooming graces, triumph in my song.
Now here, now there, the roving Fancy flies,
Till some lov’d object strikes her wand’ring eyes,
Whose silken fetters all the senses bind,
And soft captivity involves the mind.
Imagination! who can sing thy force?
Or who describe the swiftness of thy course?
Soaring through air to find the bright abode,
Th’ empyreal palace of the thund’ring God,
We on thy pinions can surpass the wind,
And leave the rolling universe behind:
From star to star the mental optics rove,
Measure the skies, and range the realms above.
There in one view we grasp the mighty whole,
Or with new worlds amaze th’ unbounded soul.
Though Winter frowns to Fancy’s raptur’d eyes
The fields may flourish, and gay scenes arise;
The frozen deeps may break their iron bands,
And bid their waters murmur o’er the sands.
Fair Flora may resume her fragrant reign,
And with her flow’ry riches deck the plain;
Sylvanus may diffuse his honours round,
And all the forest may with leaves be crown’d:
Show’rs may descend, and dews their gems disclose,
And nectar sparkle on the blooming rose.
Such is thy pow’r, nor are thine orders vain,
O thou the leader of the mental train:
In full perfection all thy works are wrought,
And thine the sceptre o’er the realms of thought.
Before thy throne the subject-passions bow,
Of subject-passions sov’reign ruler thou;
At thy command joy rushes on the heart,
And through the glowing veins the spirits dart.
Fancy might now her silken pinions try
To rise from earth, and sweep th’ expanse on high:
From Tithon’s bed now might Aurora rise,
Her cheeks all glowing with celestial dies,
While a pure stream of light o’erflows the skies.
The monarch of the day I might behold,
And all the mountains tipt with radiant gold,
But I reluctant leave the pleasing views,
Which Fancy dresses to delight the Muse;
Winter austere forbids me to aspire,
And northern tempests damp the rising fire;
They chill the tides of Fancy’s flowing sea,
Cease then, my song, cease the unequal lay.

A Funeral POEM on the Death of C. E. an Infant of Twelve Months.

THROUGH airy roads he wings his instant flight
To purer regions of celestial light;
Enlarg’d he sees unnumber’d systems roll,
Beneath him sees the universal whole,
Planets on planets run their destin’d round,
And circling wonders fill the vast profound.
Th’ ethereal now, and now th’ empyreal skies
With growing splendors strike his wond’ring eyes:
The angels view him with delight unknown,
Press his soft hand, and seat him on his throne;
Then smiling thus: “To this divine abode,
“The seat of saints, of seraphs, and of God,
“Thrice welcome thou.” The raptur’d babe replies,
“Thanks to my God, who snatch’d me to the skies,
“E’er vice triumphant had possess’d my heart,
“E’er yet the tempter had beguil’d my heart,
“E’er yet on sin’s base actions I was bent,
“E’er yet I knew temptation’s dire intent;
“E’er yet the lash for horrid crimes I felt,
“E’er vanity had led my way to guilt,
“But, soon arriv’d at my celestial goal,
“Full glories rush on my expanding soul.”
Joyful he spoke: exulting cherubs round
Clapt their glad wings, the heav’nly vaults resound.
Say, parents, why this unavailing moan?
Why heave your pensive bosoms with the groan?
To Charles, the happy subject of my song,
A brighter world, and nobler strains belong.
Say would you tear him from the realms above
By thoughtless wishes, and prepost’rous love?
Doth his felicity increase your pain?
Or could you welcome to this world again
The heir of bliss? with a superior air
Methinks he answers with a smile severe,
“Thrones and dominions cannot tempt me there.”
But still you cry, “Can we the sigh forbear,
“And still and still must we not pour the tear?
“Our only hope, more dear than vital breath,
“Twelve moons revolv’d, becomes the prey of death;
“Delightful infant, nightly visions give
“Thee to our arms, and we with joy receive,
“We fain would clasp the Phantom to our breast,
“The Phantom flies, and leaves the soul unblest.”
To yon bright regions let your faith ascend,
Prepare to join your dearest infant friend
In pleasures without measure, without end.

To Captain H—–D, of the 65th Regiment.

SAY, muse divine, can hostile scenes delight
The warrior’s bosom in the fields of fight?
Lo! here the christian and the hero join
With mutual grace to form the man divine.
In H—–D see with pleasure and surprise,
Where valour kindles, and where virtue lies:
Go, hero brave, still grace the post of fame,
And add new glories to thine honour’d name,
Still to the field, and still to virtue true:
Britannia glories in no son like you.

To the Right Honourable WILLIAM, Earl of DARTMOUTH, His Majesty’s Principal
HAIL, happy day, when, smiling like the morn,
Fair Freedom rose New-England to adorn: 
The northern clime beneath her genial ray,
Dartmouth, congratulates thy blissful sway: 
Elate with hope her race no longer mourns,
Each soul expands, each grateful bosom burns,
While in thine hand with pleasure we behold
The silken reins, and Freedom's charms unfold.
Long lost to realms beneath the northern skies
She shines supreme, while hated faction dies:
Soon as appear'd the Goddess long desir'd,
Sick at the view, she languish'd and expir'd;
Thus from the splendors of the morning light
The owl in sadness seeks the caves of night.
No more, America, in mournful strain
Of wrongs, and grievance unredress'd complain,
No longer shalt thou dread the iron chain,
Which wanton Tyranny with lawless hand
Had made, and with it meant t' enslave the land.
Should you, my lord, while you peruse my song,
Wonder from whence my love of Freedom sprung,
Whence flow these wishes for the common good,
By feeling hearts alone best understood,
I, young in life, by seeming cruel fate
Was snatch'd from Afric's fancy’d happy seat:
What pangs excruciating must molest,
What sorrows labour in my parent's breast?
Steel'd was that soul and by no misery mov'd
That from a father seiz'd his babe belov'd:
Such, such my case. And can I then but pray
Others may never feel tyrannic sway?
For favours past, great Sir, our thanks are due,
And thee we ask thy favours to renew,
Since in thy pow'r, as in thy will before,
To sooth the griefs, which thou did'st once deplore.
May heav'nly grace the sacred sanction give
To all thy works, and thou for ever live
Not only on the wings of fleeting Fame,
Though praise immortal crowns the patriot's name,
But to conduct to heav'n's refulgent fane,
May fiery coursers sweep th' ethereal plain,
And bear thee upwards to that blest abode,
Where, like the prophet, thou shalt find thy God.

Ode on Neptune.

On Mrs. W——'s Voyage to England.

I.

WHILE raging tempests shake the shore,
While AElus' thunders round us roar,
And sweep impetuous o'er the plain
Be still, O tyrant of the main;
Nor let thy brow contracted frowns betray,
While my Susanna skims the wat'ry way.
II.

The Pow’r propitious hears the lay,
The blue-ey’d daughters of the sea
With sweeter cadence glide along,
And Thames responsive joins the song.
Pleas’d with their notes Sol sheds benign his ray,
And double radiance decks the face of day.

III.

To court thee to Britannia’s arms
Serene the climes and mild the sky,
Her region boasts unnumber’d charms,
Thy welcome smiles in ev’ry eye.
Thy promise, Neptune keep, record my pray’r,
Not give my wishes to the empty air.

Boston, October 12, 1772.

To a LADY on her coming to North-America
with her Son, for the Recovery of her Health.

INDULGENT muse! my grov’ling mind inspire,
And fill my bosom with celestial fire.
See from Jamaica’s fervid shore she moves,
Like the fair mother of the blooming loves,
When from above the Goddess with her hand
Fans the soft breeze, and lights upon the land;
Thus she on Neptune’s wat’ry realm reclin’d
Appear’d, and thus invites the ling’ring wind.

“Arise, ye winds, America explore,
“Waft me, ye gales, from this malignant shore;
“The Northern milder climes I long to greet,
“There hope that health will my arrival meet.”

Soon as she spoke in my ideal view
The winds assented, and the vessel flew.
Madam, your spouse bereft of wife and son,
In the grove’s dark recesses pours his moan;
Each branch, wide-spreading to the ambient sky,
Forgets its verdure, and submits to die.
From thence I turn, and leave the sultry plain,
And swift pursue thy passage o’er the main:
The ship arrives before the fav’ring wind,
And makes the Philadelphian port assign’d,
Thence I attend you to Bostonia’s arms,
Where gen’rous friendship ev’ry bosom warms:
Thrice welcome here! may health revive again,
Bloom on thy cheek, and bound in ev’ry vein!
Then back return to gladden ev’ry heart,
And give your spouse his soul’s far dearer part,
Receiv’d again with what a sweet surprise,
The tear in transport starting from his eyes!
While his attendant son with blooming grace
Springs to his father’s ever dear embrace.
With shouts of joy Jamaica’s rocks resound,
With shouts of joy the country rings around.
To a LADY on her remarkable Preservation in an Hurricane in North-Carolina.

THOUGH thou did’st hear the tempest from afar,
And felt’st the horrors of the wat’ry war,
To me unknown, yet on this peaceful shore
Methinks I hear the storm tumultuous roar,
And how stern Boreas with impetuous hand
Compell’d the Nereids to usurp the land.
Reluctant rose the daughters of the main,
And slow ascending glided o’er the plain,
Till AEolus in his rapid chariot drove
In gloomy grandeur from the vault above:
Furious he comes. His winged sons obey
Their frantic sire, and madden all the sea.
The billows rave, the wind’s fierce tyrant roars,
And with his thund’ring terrors shakes the shores:
Broken by waves the vessel’s frame is rent,
And strows with planks the wat’ry element.
But thee, Maria, a kind Nereid’s shield
Preserv’d from sinking, and thy form upheld:
And sure some heav’nly oracle design’d
At that dread crisis to instruct thy mind
Things of eternal consequence to weigh,
And to thine heart just feelings to convey
Of things above, and of the future doom,
From tossing seas I welcome thee to land.
"Resign her, Nereid," ’twas thy God’s command.
Thy spouse late buried, as thy fears conceiv’d,
Again returns, thy fears are all reliev’d:
Thy daughter blooming with superior grace
Again thou see’st, again thine arms embrace;
O come, and joyful show thy spouse his heir,
And what the blessings of maternal care!

To a LADY and her Children, on the Death of her Son and their Brother.

O’ERWHELMING sorrow now demands my song:
From death the overwhelming sorrow sprung.
What flowing tears? What hearts with grief opprest?
What sighs on sighs heave the fond parent’s breast?
The brother weeps, the hapless sisters join
Th’ increasing woe, and swell the crystal brine;
The poor, who once his gen’rous bounty fed,
Droop, and bewail their benefactor dead.
In death the friend, the kind companion lies,
And in one death what various comfort dies!
Th’ unhappy mother sees the sanguine rill
Forget to flow, and nature’s wheels stand still,
But see from earth his spirit far remov’d,
And know no grief recals your best-belov’d:
He, upon pinions swifter than the wind,
Has left mortality’s sad scenes behind
For joys to this terrestrial state unknown,
And glories richer than the monarch’s crown.
Of virtue’s steady course the prize behold!
What blissful wonders to his mind unfold!
But of celestial joys I sing in vain:
Attempt not, muse, the too advent’rous strain.
No more in briny show’rs, ye friends around,
Or bathe his clay, or waste them on the ground:
Still do you weep, still wish for his return?
How cruel thus to wish, and thus to mourn?
No more for him the streams of sorrow pour,
But haste to join him on the heav’nly shore,
On harps of gold to tune immortal lays,
And to your God immortal anthems raise.

To a GENTLEMAN and LADY on the Death of the Lady’s Brother and Sister, and a Child of the Name of Avis, aged one Year.

ON Death’s domain intent I fix my eyes,
Where human nature in vast ruin lies:
With pensive mind I search the drear abode,
Where the great conqu’ror has his spoils bestow’d;
There where the offspring of six thousand years
In endless numbers to my view appears:
Whole kingdoms in his gloomy den are thrust,
And nations mix with their primeval dust:
Insatiate still he gluts the ample tomb;
His is the present, his the age to come.
See here a brother, here a sister spread,
And a sweet daughter mingled with the dead.
But, Madam, let your grief be laid aside,
And let the fountain of your tears be dry’d,
In vain they flow to wet the dusty plain,
Your sighs are wafted to the skies in vain,
Your pains they witness, but they can no more,
While Death reigns tyrant o’er this mortal shore.
The glowing stars and silver queen of light
At last must perish in the gloom of night:
Resign thy friends to that Almighty hand,
Which gave them life, and bow to his command;
Thine Avis give without a murm’ring heart,
Though half thy soul be fated to depart.
To shining guards consign thine infant care
To waft triumphant through the seas of air:
Her soul enlarg’d to heav’nly pleasure springs,
She feeds on truth and uncreated things.
Methinks I hear her in the realms above,
And leaning forward with a filial love,
Invite you there to share immortal bliss
Unknown, untasted in a state like this.
With tow’ring hopes, and growing grace arise,
And seek beatitude beyond the skies.
On the Death of Dr. SAMUEL MARSHALL.
1771.

THROUGH thickest glooms look back, immortal shade,
On that confusion which thy death has made:
Or from Olympus’ height look down, and see
A Town involv’d in grief bereft of thee.
Thy Lucy sees thee mingle with the dead,
And rends the graceful tresses from her head,
Wild in her woe, with grief unknown opprest
Sigh follows sigh deep heaving from her breast.
Too quickly fled, ah! whither art thou gone?
Ah! lost for ever to thy wife and son!
The hapless child, thine only hope and heir,
Clings round his mother’s neck, and weeps his sorrows there.
The loss of thee on Tyler’s soul returns,
And Boston for her dear physician mourns.
When sickness call’d for Marshall’s healing hand,
With what compassion did his soul expand?
In him we found the father and the friend:
In life how lov’d! how honour’d in his end!
And must not then our AEsculapius stay
To bring his ling’ring infant into day?
The babe unborn in the dark womb is tost,
And seems in anguish for its father lost.
Gone is Apollo from his house of earth,
But leaves the sweet memorials of his worth:
The common parent, whom we all deplore,
From yonder world unseen must come no more,
Yet ‘midst our woes immortal hopes attend
The spouse, the sire, the universal friend.

To a GENTLEMAN on his Voyage to Great-Britain for the Recovery of his Health.

WHILE others chant of gay Elysian scenes,
Of balmy zephyrs, and of flow’ry plains,
My song more happy speaks a greater name,
Feels higher motives and a nobler flame.
For thee, O R——, the muse attunes her strings,
And mounts sublime above inferior things.
I sing not now of green embow’ring woods,
I sing not now the daughters of the floods,
I sing not of the storms o’er ocean driv’n,
And how they howl’d along the waste of heav’n.
But I to R—— would paint the British shore,
And vast Atlantic, not untry’d before:
Thy life impair’d commands thee to arise,
Leave these bleak regions and inclement skies,
Where chilling winds return the winter past,
And nature shudders at the furious blast.
O thou stupendous, earth-enclosing main
Exert thy wonders to the world again!
If ere thy pow’r prolong’d the fleeting breath,
Turn’d back the shafts, and mock’d the gates of death,
If ere thine air dispenses’ an healing pow’r,
Or snatch’d the victim from the fatal hour,
This equal case demands thine equal care,
And equal wonders may this patient share.
But unavailing, frantic is the dream
To hope thine aid without the aid of him
Who gave thee birth and taught thee where to flow,
And in thy waves his various blessings show.
May R—— return to view his native shore
Replete with vigour not his own before,
Then shall we see with pleasure and surprise,
And own thy work, great Ruler of the skies!

To the Rev. DR. THOMAS AMORY, on reading
his Sermons on DAILY DEVOTION, in which
that Duty is recommended and
assisted.

TO cultivate in ev’ry noble mind
Habitual grace, and sentiments refin’d,
Thus while you strive to mend the human heart,
Thus while the heav’nly precepts you impart,
O may each bosom catch the sacred fire,
And youthful minds to Virtue’s throne aspire!
When God’s eternal ways you set in sight,
And Virtue shines in all her native light,
In vain would Vice her works in night conceal,
For Wisdom’s eye pervades the sable veil.
Artists may paint the sun’s effulgent rays,
But Amory’s pen the brighter God displays:
While his great works in Amory’s pages shine,
And while he proves his essence all divine,
The Atheist sure no more can boast aloud
Of chance, or nature, and exclude the God;
As if the clay without the potter’s aid
Should rise in various forms, and shapes self-made,
Or worlds above with orb o’er orb profound
Self-mov’d could run the everlasting round.
It cannot be—unerring Wisdom guides
With eye propitious, and o’er all presides.
Still prosper, Amory! still may’st thou receive
The warmest blessings which a muse can give,
And when this transitory state is o’er,
When kingdoms fall, and fleeting Fame’s no more,
May Amory triumph in immortal fame,
A nobler title, and superior name!

On the Death of J. C. an Infant.

NO more the flow’ry scenes of pleasure rife,
Nor charming prospects greet the mental eyes,
No more with joy we view that lovely face
Smiling, disportive, flush’d with ev’ry grace.
The tear of sorrow flows from ev’ry eye,
Groans answer groans, and sighs to sighs reply;
What sudden pangs shot thro’ each aching heart,
When, Death, thy messenger dispatch’d his dart?
Thy dread attendants, all-destroying Pow’r,
Hurried the infant to his mortal hour.
Could’st thou unpitying close those radiant eyes?
Or fail’d his artless beauties to surprise?
Could not his innocence thy stroke controul,
Thy purpose shake, and soften all thy soul?
The blooming babe, with shades of Death o’er-spread,
No more shall smile, no more shall raise its head,
But, like a branch that from the tree is torn,
Falls prostrate, wither’d, languid, and forlorn.
“Where flies my James?” ’tis thus I seem to hear
The parent ask, “Some angel tell me where
“He wings his passage thro’ the yielding air?”
Methinks a cherub bending from the skies
Observes the question, and serene replies,
“In heav’n’s high palaces your babe appears:
“Prepare to meet him, and dismiss your tears.”
Shall not th’ intelligence your grief restrain,
And turn the mournful to the cheerful strain?
Cease your complaints, suspend each rising sigh,
Cease to accuse the Ruler of the sky.
Parents, no more indulge the falling tear:
Let Faith to heav’n’s refulgent domes repair,
There see your infant, like a seraph glow;
What charms celestial in his numbers flow
Melodious, while the foul-enchanting strain
Dwells on his tongue, and fills th’ ethereal plain?
Enough—for ever cease your murm’ring breath;
Not as a foe, but friend converse with Death,
Since to the port of happiness unknown
He brought that treasure which you call your own.
The gift of heav’n intrusted to your hand
Cheerful resign at the divine command:
Not at your bar must sov’reign Wisdom stand.

An H Y M N to H U M A N I T Y.
To S. P. G. Esq;

I.

LO! for this dark terrestrial ball
Forsakes his azure-paved hall
A prince of heav’nly birth!
Divine Humanity behold,
What wonders rise, what charms unfold
At his descent to earth!

II.

The bosoms of the great and good
With wonder and delight he view’d,
And fix’d his empire there:
Him, close compressing to his breast,
The sire of gods and men address’d,
“My son, my heav’nly fair!
III.

“Descend to earth, there place thy throne;
“To succour man’s afflicted son
“Each human heart inspire;
“To act in bounties unconfin’d
“Enlarge the close contracted mind,
“And fill it with thy fire.”

IV.

Quick as the word, with swift career
He wings his course from star to star,
And leaves the bright abode.
The Virtue did his charms impart;
Their G—–! then thy raptur’d heart
Perceiv’d the rushing God:

V.

For when thy pitying eye did see
The languid muse in low degree,
Then, then at thy desire
Descended the celestial nine;
O’er me methought they deign’d to shine,
And deign’d to string my lyre.

VI.

Can Afric’s muse forgetful prove?
Or can such friendship fail to move
A tender human heart?
Immortal Friendship laurel-crown’d
The smiling Graces all surround
With ev’ry heav’nly Art.

To the Honourable T. H. Esq; on the Death of his Daughter.

WHILE deep you mourn beneath the cypress-shade
The hand of Death, and your dear daughter laid
In dust, whose absence gives your tears to flow,
And racks your bosom with incessant woe,
Let Recollection take a tender part,
Assuage the raging tortures of your heart,
Still the wild tempest of tumultuous grief,
And pour the heav’nly nectar of relief:
Suspend the sigh, dear Sir, and check the groan,
Divinely bright your daughter’s Virtues shone:
How free from scornful pride her gentle mind,
Which ne’er its aid to indigence declin’d!
Expanding free, it sought the means to prove
Unfailing charity, unbounded love!
She unreluctant flies to see no more
Her dear-lov’d parents on earth’s dusky shore:
Impatient heav’n’s resplendent goal to gain,
She with swift progress cuts the azure plain,
Where grief subsides, where changes are no more,
And life’s tumultuous billows cease to roar;
She leaves her earthly mansion for the skies,
Where new creations feast her wond’ring eyes.
To heav’n’s high mandate cheerfully resign’d
She mounts, and leaves the rolling globe behind;
She, who late wish’d that Leonard might return,
Has ceas’d to languish, and forgot to mourn;
To the same high empyreal mansions come,
She joins her spouse, and smiles upon the tomb:
And thus I hear her from the realms above:
“Lo! this the kingdom of celestial love!
“Could ye, fond parents, see our present bliss,
“How soon would you each sigh, each fear dismiss?
“Amidst unutter’d pleasures whilst I play
“In the fair sunshine of celestial day,
“As far as grief affects an happy soul
“So far doth grief my better mind controul,
“To see on earth my aged parents mourn,
“And secret wish for T—–! to return:
“Let brighter scenes your ev’ning-hours employ:
“Converse with heav’n, and taste the promis’d joy”

NIOBE in Distress for her Children slain by
APOLLO, from Ovid’s Metamorphoses, Book VI. and from a view of the Painting of Mr. Richard Wilson.

APOLLO’s wrath to man the dreadful spring
Of ills innum’rous, tuneful goddess, sing!
Thou who did’st first th’ ideal pencil give,
And taught’st the painter in his works to live,
Inspire with glowing energy of thought,
What Wilson painted, and what Ovid wrote.
Muse! lend thy aid, nor let me sue in vain,
Tho’ last and meanest of the rhyming train!
O guide my pen in lofty strains to show
The Phrygian queen, all beautiful in woe.
’Twas where Maeonia spreads her wide domain
Niobe dwelt, and held her potent reign:
See in her hand the regal sceptre shine,
The wealthy heir of Tantalus divine,
He most distinguish’d by Dodonean Jove,
To approach the tables of the gods above:
Her grandsire Atlas, who with mighty pains
Th’ ethereal axis on his neck sustains:
Her other grandsire on the throne on high
Rolls the loud-pealing thunder thro’ the sky.
Her spouse, Amphion, who from Jove too springs,
Divinely taught to sweep the sounding strings.
Seven sprightly sons the royal bed adorn,
Seven daughters beauteous as the op’ning morn,
As when Aurora fills the ravish’d sight,
And decks the orient realms with rosy light
From their bright eyes the living splendors play,
Nor can beholders bear the flashing ray.
Wherever, Niobe, thou turn’st thine eyes,
New beauties kindle, and new joys arise!
But thou had’st far the happier mother prov’d,
If this fair offspring had been less belov’d:
What if their charms exceed Aurora’s teint,
No words could tell them, and no pencil paint,
Thy love too vehement hastens to destroy
Each blooming maid, and each celestial boy.
Now Manto comes, endu’d with mighty skill,
The past to explore, the future to reveal.
Thro’ Thebes’ wide streets Tiresia’s daughter came,
Divine Latona’s mandate to proclaim:
The Theban maids to hear the orders ran,
When thus Maeonia’s prophetess began:
“Go, Thebans! great Latona’s will obey,
And pious tribute at her altars pay:
“With rights divine, the goddess be implo’rd,
“Nor be her sacred offspring unador’d."
Thus Manto spoke. The Theban maids obey,
And pious tribute to the goddess pay.
The rich perfumes ascend in waving spires,
And altars blaze with consecrated fires;
The fair assembly moves with graceful air,
And leaves of laurel bind the flowing hair.
Niobe comes with all her royal race,
With charms unnumber’d, and superior grace:
Her Phrygian garments of delightful hue,
Inwove with gold, refulgent to the view,
Beyond description beautiful she moves
Like heav’nly Venus, ‘midst her smiles and loves:
She views around the supplicating train,
And shakes her graceful head with stern disdain,
Proudly she turns around her lofty eyes,
And thus reviles celestial deities:
“What madness drives the Theban ladies fair
“To give their incense to surrounding air?
“Say why this new sprung deity preferr’d?
“Why vainly fancy your petitions heard?
“Or say why Caeus offspring is obey’d,
“While to my goddesship no tribute’s paid?
“For me no altars blaze with living fires,
“No bullock bleeds, no frankincense transpires,
“Tho’ Cadmus’ palace, not unknown to fame,
“And Phrygian nations all revere my name.
“Where’er I turn my eyes vast wealth I find,
“Lo! here an empress with a goddess join’d.
“What, shall a Titaness be deify’d,
“To whom the spacious earth a couch deny’d!
“Nor heav’n, nor earth, nor sea receiv’d your queen,
“Till pitying Delos took the wand’rer in.
“Round me what a large progeny is spread!
“No frowns of fortune has my soul to dread.
“What if indignant she decrease my train
“More than Latona’s number will remain;
“Then hence, ye Theban dames, hence haste away,
“Nor longer off’ring to Latona pay;
“Regard the orders of Amphion’s spouse,
“And take the leaves of laurel from your brows.”
Niobe spoke. The Theban maid’s obey’d,
Their brows unbound, and left the rights unpaid.
The angry goddess heard, then silence broke
On Cynthus’ summit, and indignant spoke;
“Phoebus! behold, thy mother in disgrace,
Who to no goddess yields the prior place
Except to Juno’s self, who reigns above,
The spouse and sister of the thund’ring Jove.
“Niobe, sprung from Tantalus, inspires
No reason her imperious temper quells,
But all her father in her tongue rebels;
Wrap her own sons for her blaspheming breath,
“Apollo! wrap them in the shades of death.”
Latona ceas’d, and ardent thus replies
The God, whose glory decks th’ expanded skies.
“Cease thy complaints, mine be the task assign’d
“To punish pride, and scourge the rebel mind.”
This Phoebe join’d.–They wing their instant flight;
Thebes trembled as th’ immortal pow’rs alight.
With clouds incompass’d glorious Phoebus stands;
The feather’d vengeance quiv’ring in his hands.
Near Cadmus’ walls a plain extended lay,
Where Thebes’ young princes pass’d in sport the day:
There the bold coursers bounded o’er the plains,
While their great masters held the golden reins.
Ismenus first the racing pastime led,
And rul’d the fury of his flying steed.
“Ah me,” he sudden cries, with shrieking breath,
While in his breast he feels the shaft of death;
He drops the bridle on his coursers’ mane,
Before his eyes in shadows swims the plain,
He, the first-born of great Amphion’s bed,
Was struck the first, first mingled with the dead.
Then didst thou, Sipylus, the language hear
Of fate portentous whistling in the air:
As when th’ impending storm the sailor sees
He spreads his canvas to the fav’ring breeze,
So to thine horse thou gav’st the golden reins,
Gav’st him to rush impetuous o’er the plains:
But ah! a fatal shaft from Phoebus’ hand
Smites thro’ thy neck, and sinks thee on the sand.
Two other brothers were at wrestling found,
And in their pastime claspt each other round:
A shaft that instant from Apollo’s hand
Transfixt them both, and stretcht them on the sand:
Together they their cruel fate bemoan’d,
Together languish’d, and together groan’d:
Together too th’ unbodied spirits fled,
And sought the gloomy mansions of the dead.
Alphenor saw, and trembling at the view,
Beat his torn breast, that chang’d its snowy hue.
He flies to raise them in a kind embrace;
A brother’s fondness triumphs in his face:
Alphenor fails in this fraternal deed,
A dart dispatch’d him (so the fates decreed:)  
Soon as the arrow left the deadly wound,
His issuing entrails smoak’d upon the ground.
What woes on blooming Damasichon wait!
His sighs portend his near impending fate.
Just where the well-made leg begins to be,
And the soft sinews form the supple knee,
The youth sore wounded by the Delian god
Attempts t’ extract the crime-avenging rod,
But, whilst he strives the will of fate t’ avert,
Divine Apollo sends a second dart;
Swift thro’ his throat the feather’d mischief flies,
Bereft of sense, he drops his head, and dies.
Young Ilioneus, the last, directs his pray’r,
And cries, “My life, ye gods celestial! spare.”
Apollo heard, and pity touch’d his heart,
But ah! too late, for he had sent the dart:
Thou too, O Ilioneus, art doom’d to fall,
The fates refuse that arrow to recal.
On the swift wings of ever flying Fame
To Cadmus’ palace soon the tidings came:
Niobe heard, and with indignant eyes
She thus express’d her anger and surprise:
“Why is such privilege to them allow’d?
“Why thus insulted by the Delian god?
“Dwell there such mischief in the pow’rs above?
“Why sleeps the vengeance of immortal Jove?”
For now Amphion too, with grief oppress’d,
Had plung’d the deadly dagger in his breast.
Niobe now, less haughty than before,
With lofty head directs her steps no more
She, who late told her pedigree divine,
And drove the Thebans from Latona’s shrine,
How strangely chang’d!—yet beautiful in woe,
She weeps, nor weeps unpity’d by the foe.
On each pale corse the wretched mother spread
Lay overwhelm’d with grief, and kiss’d her dead,
Then rais’d her arms, and thus, in accents slow,
“Be sated cruel Goddess! with my woe;
“If I’ve offended, let these streaming eyes,
“And let this sev’nfold funeral suffice:
“Ah! take this wretched life you deign’d to save,
“With them I too am carried to the grave.
“Rejoice triumphant, my victorious foe,
“But show the cause from whence your triumphs flow?
“Tho’ I unhappy mourn these children slain,
“Yet greater numbers to my lot remain.”
She ceas’d, the bow string twang’d with awful sound,
Which struck with terror all th’ assembly round,
Except the queen, who stood unmov’d alone,
By her distresses more presumptuous grown.
Near the pale corses stood their sisters fair
In sable vestures and dishevell’d hair;
One, while she draws the fatal shaft away,
Faints, falls, and sickens at the light of day.
To soothe her mother, lo! another flies,
And blames the fury of inclement skies,
And, while her words a filial pity show,
Struck dumb—indignant seeks the shades below.
Now from the fatal place another flies,
Falls in her flight, and languishes, and dies.
Another on her sister drops in death;
A fifth in trembling terrors yields her breath;
While the sixth seeks some gloomy cave in vain,
Struck with the rest, and mingled with the slain.
One only daughter lives, and she the least;
The queen close clasp’d the daughter to her breast:
“Ye heav’nly pow’rs, ah spare me one,” she cry’d,
“Ah! spare me one,” the vocal hills reply’d:
In vain she begs, the Fates her suit deny,
In her embrace she sees her daughter die.
[4] The queen of all her family bereft,
"Without or husband, son, or daughter left,
"Grew stupid at the shock. The passing air
"Made no impression on her stiff'ning hair.

"The blood forsook her face: amidst the flood
"Pour'd from her cheeks, quite fix'd her eye-balls
"stood.
"Her tongue, her palate both obdurate grew,
"Her curdled veins no longer motion knew;
"The use of neck, and arms, and feet was gone,
"And ev'n her bowels hard'ned into stone:
"A marble statue now the queen appears,
"But from the marble steal the silent tears."

To S. M. a young African Painter, on seeing his Works.

TO show the lab'ring bosom’s deep intent,  
And thought in living characters to paint,  
When first thy pencil did those beauties give,  
And breathing figures learnt from thee to live,  
How did those prospects give my soul delight,  
A new creation rushing on my sight?  
Still, wond’rous youth! each noble path pursue,  
On deathless glories fix thine ardent view:  
To aid thy pencil, and thy verse conspire!  
And may the charms of each seraphic theme  
Conduct thy footsteps to immortal fame!  
High to the blissful wonders of the skies  
Elate thy soul, and raise thy wishful eyes.  
Thrice happy, when exalted to survey  
That splendid city, crown’d with endless day,  
Whose twice six gates on radiant hinges ring:  
Celestial Salem blooms in endless spring.  
Calm and serene thy moments glide along,  
And may the muse inspire each future song!  
Still, with the sweets of contemplation bless’d,  
May peace with balmy wings your soul invest!  
But when these shades of time are chas’d away,  
And darkness ends in everlasting day,  
On what seraphic pinions shall we move,  
And view the landscapes in the realms above?  
There shall thy tongue in heav’nly murmurs flow,  
And there my muse with heav’nly transport glow:  
No more to tell of Damon’s tender sighs,  
Or rising radiance of Aurora’s eyes,  
For nobler themes demand a nobler strain,  
And purer language on th’ ethereal plain.  
Cease, gentle muse! the solemn gloom from my sight.
To his Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, on the Death of his Lady. March 24, 1773.

ALL-Conquering Death! by thy resistless pow’r,
Hope’s tow’ring plumage falls to rise no more!
Of scenes terrestrial how the glories fly,
Forget their splendors, and submit to die!
Who ere escap’d thee, but the saint[10] of old
Beyond the flood in sacred annals told,
And the great sage, + whom fiery coursers drew
To heav’n’s bright portals from Elisha’s view;
Wond’ring he gaz’d at the refulgent car,
Then snatch’d the mantle floating on the air.
From Death these only could exemption boast,
And without dying gain’d th’ immortal coast.
Not falling millions sate the tyrant’s mind,
Nor can the victor’s progress be confin’d.
But cease thy strife with Death, fond Nature, cease:
He leads the virtuous to the realms of peace;

His to conduct to the immortal plains,
Where heav’n’s Supreme in bliss and glory reigns.
There sits, illustrious Sir, thy beauteous spouse;
A gem-blaz’d circle beaming on her brows.
Hail’d with acclaim among the heav’nly choirs,
Her soul new-kindling with seraphic fires,
To notes divine she tunes the vocal strings,
While heav’n’s high concave with the music rings.
Virtue’s rewards can mortal pencil paint?
No—all descriptive arts, and eloquence are faint;
Nor canst thou, Oliver, assent refuse
To heav’nly tidings from the Afric muse.
As soon may change thy laws, eternal fate,
As the saint miss the glories I relate;
Or her Benevolence forgotten lie,
Which wip’d the trick’ling tear from Misry’s eye.
Whene’er the adverse winds were known to blow,
When loss to loss * ensu’d, and woe to woe,
Calm and serene beneath her father’s hand
She sat resign’d to the divine command.
No longer then, great Sir, her death deplore,
And let us hear the mournful sigh no more,
Restrain the sorrow streaming from thine eye,
Be all thy future moments crown’d with joy!
Nor let thy wishes be to earth confin’d,
But soaring high pursue th’ unbodied mind.
Forgive the muse, forgive th’ advent’rous lays,
That fain thy soul to heav’nly scenes would raise.

A Farewell to AMERICA. To Mrs. S. W.

I.

ADIEU, New-England’s smiling meads,
Adieu the flow’ry plain:
I leave thine op’ning charms, O spring,
And tempt the roaring main.

II.

In vain for me the flow’rets rise,
And boast their gaudy pride,
While here beneath the northern skies
I mourn for health deny’d.

III.

Celestial maid of rosy hue,
O let me feel thy reign!
I languish till thy face I view,
Thy vanish’d joys regain.

IV.

Susanna mourns, nor can I bear
To see the crystal show’r,
Or mark the tender falling tear
At sad departure’s hour;

V.

Not unregarding can I see
Her soul with grief opprest:
But let no sighs, no groans for me,
Steal from her pensive breast.

VI.

In vain the feather’d warblers sing,
In vain the garden blooms,
And on the bosom of the spring
Breathes out her sweet perfumes.

VII.

While for Britannia’s distant shore
We sweep the liquid plain,
And with astonish’d eyes explore
The wide-extended main.

VIII.

Lo! Health appears! celestial dame!
Complacent and serene,
With Hebe’s mantle o’er her Frame,
With soul-delighting mein.

IX.

To mark the vale where London lies
With misty vapours crown’d,
Which cloud Aurora’s thousand dyes,
And veil her charms around.

X.

Why, Phoebus, moves thy car so slow?
So slow thy rising ray?
Give us the famous town to view,
Thou glorious king of day!

XI.

For thee, Britannia, I resign
New-England’s smiling fields;
To view again her charms divine,
What joy the prospect yields!

XII.

But thou! Temptation hence away,
With all thy fatal train,
Nor once seduce my soul away,
By thine enchanting strain.

XIII.

Thrice happy they, whose heav’nly shield
Secures their souls from harms,
And fell Temptation on the field
Of all its pow’r disarms!

Boston, May 7, 1773.

A REBUS, by I. B.

I.

A BIRD delicious to the taste,
On which an army once did feast,
Sent by an hand unseen;
A creature of the horned race,
Which Britain’s royal standards grace;
A gem of vivid green;

II.

A town of gaiety and sport,
Where beaux and beauteous nymphs resort,
And gallantry doth reign;
A Dardan hero fam’d of old
For youth and beauty, as we’re told,
And by a monarch slain;
III.

A peer of popular applause,
Who doth our violated laws,
And grievances proclaim.
Th’ initials show a vanquish’d town,
That adds fresh glory and renown
To old Britannia’s fame.

An ANSWER to the Rebus, by the Author of these POEMS.

THE poet asks, and Phillis can’t refuse
To show th’ obedience of the Infant muse.
She knows the Quail of most inviting taste
Fed Israel’s army in the dreary waste;
And what’s on Britain’s royal standard borne,
But the tall, graceful, rampant Unicorn?
The Emerald with a vivid verdure glows
Among the gems which regal crowns compose;
Boston’s a town, polite and debonair,
To which the beaux and beauteous nymphs repair,
Each Helen strikes the mind with sweet surprise,
While living lightning flashes from her eyes,
See young Euphorbus of the Dardan line
By Manelaus’ hand to death resign:
The well known peer of popular applause
Is C—-m zealous to support our laws.
Quebec now vanquish’d must obey,
She too much annual tribute pay
To Britain of immortal fame.
And add new glory to her name.

F I N I S.

He was an African by birth. ♦
The Repeal of the Stamp Act. ♦
The Countess of Huntingdon, to whom Mr. Whitefield was Chaplain. ♦
This Verse to the End is the Work of another Hand. ♦
Enoch. + Elijah. ♦

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INTRODUCTION

The poet Kabîr, a selection from whose songs is here for the first time offered to English readers, is one of the most interesting personalities in the history of Indian mysticism. Born in or near Benares, of Mohammedan parents, and probably about the year 1440, he became in early life a disciple of the celebrated Hindu ascetic Râmânanda. Râmânanda had brought to Northern India the religious revival which Râmânuja, the great twelfth-century reformer of Brâhmanism, had initiated in the South. This revival was in part a reaction against the increasing formalism of the orthodox cult, in part an assertion of the demands of the heart as against the intense intellectualism of the Vedânta philosophy, the exaggerated monism which that philosophy proclaimed. It took in Râmânuja’s preaching the form of an ardent personal devotion to the God Vishnu, as representing the personal aspect of the Divine Nature: that mystical “religion of love” which everywhere makes its appearance at a certain level of spiritual culture, and which creeds and philosophies are powerless to kill.

Though such a devotion is indigenous in Hinduism, and finds expression in many passages of the Bhagavad Gîtâ, there was in its mediæval revival a large element of syncretism. Râmânanda, through whom its spirit is said to have reached Kabîr, appears to have been a man of wide religious culture, and full of missionary enthusiasm. Living at the moment in which the impassioned poetry and deep philosophy of the great Persian mystics, Attâr, Sâdî, Jalâlu’ddîn Rûmî, and Hâfiz, were exercising a powerful influence on the religious thought of India, he dreamed of reconciling this intense and personal Mohammedan mysticism with the traditional theology of Brâhmanism. Some have regarded both these great religious leaders as influenced also by Christian thought and life: but as this is a point upon which competent authorities hold widely divergent views, its discussion is not attempted here. We may safely assert, however, that in their teachings, two—perhaps three—apparently antagonistic streams of intense spiritual culture met, as Jewish and Hellenistic thought met in the early Christian Church: and it is one of the outstanding characteristics of Kabîr’s genius that he was able in his poems to fuse them into one.

A great religious reformer, the founder of a sect to which nearly a million northern Hindus still belong, it is yet supremely as a mystical poet that Kabîr lives for us. His fate has been that of many revealers of Reality. A hater of religious exclusivism, and seeking above all things to initiate men into the liberty of the children of God, his followers have honoured his memory by re-erecting in a new place the barriers which he laboured to cast down. But his wonderful songs survive, the spontaneous expressions of his vision and his love; and it is by these, not by the didactic teachings associated with his name, that he makes his immortal appeal to the heart. In these poems a wide range of mystical emotion is brought into play: from the loftiest abstractions, the most otherworldly passion for the Infinite, to the most intimate and personal realization of God, expressed in homely metaphors and religious symbols drawn indifferently from Hindu and Mohammedan belief. It is impossible to say of their author that he was Brâhman or Sûfî, Vedântist or Vaishnavite. He is, as he says himself, “at once the child of Allah and of Râm.” That Supreme Spirit Whom he knew and adored, and to Whose joyous friendship he sought to induct the souls of other men, transcended whilst He included all metaphysical categories, all credal definitions; yet each contributed something to the description of that Infinite and Simple Totality Who revealed Himself, according to their measure, to the faithful lovers of all creeds.

Kabîr’s story is surrounded by contradictory legends, on none of which reliance can be placed. Some of these
emanate from a Hindu, some from a Mohammedan source, and claim him by turns as a Sufi and a Brâhman saint. His name, however, is practically a conclusive proof of Moslem ancestry: and the most probable tale is that which represents him as the actual or adopted child of a Mohammedan weaver of Benares, the city in which the chief events of his life took place.

In fifteenth-century Benares the syncretistic tendencies of Bhakti religion had reached full development. Sûfis and Brâhmans appear to have met in disputations: the most spiritual members of both creeds frequenting the teachings of Râmânanda, whose reputation was then at its height. The boy Kabîr, in whom the religious passion was innate, saw in Râmânanda his destined teacher; but knew how slight were the chances that a Hindu guru would accept a Mohammedan as disciple. He therefore hid upon the steps of the river Ganges, where Râmânanda was accustomed to bathe; with the result that the master, coming down to the water, trod upon his body unexpectedly, and exclaimed in his astonishment, "Ram! Ram!"—the name of the incarnation under which he worshipped God. Kabîr then declared that he had received the mantra of initiation from Râmânanda's lips, and was by it admitted to discipleship. In spite of the protests of orthodox Brâhmans and Mohammedans, both equally annoyed by this contempt of theological landmarks, he persisted in his claim; thus exhibiting in action that very principle of religious synthesis which Râmânanda had sought to establish in thought. Râmânanda appears to have accepted him, and though Mohammedan legends speak of the famous Sufi Pîr, Takkî of Jhânsî, as Kabîr's master in later life, the Hindu saint is the only human teacher to whom in his songs he acknowledges indebtedness.

The little that we know of Kabîr's life contradicts many current ideas concerning the Oriental mystic. Of the stages of discipline through which he passed, the manner in which his spiritual genius developed, we are completely ignorant. He seems to have remained for years the disciple of Râmânanda, joining in the theological and philosophical arguments which his master held with all the great Mullahs and Brâhmans of his day; and to this source we may perhaps trace his acquaintance with the terms of Hindu and Sufi philosophy. He may or may not have submitted to the traditional education of the Hindu or the Sufi contemplative: it is clear, at any rate, that he never adopted the life of the professional ascetic, or retired from the world in order to devote himself to bodily mortifications and the exclusive pursuit of the contemplative life. Side by side with his interior life of adoration, its artistic expression in music and words—for he was a skilled musician as well as a poet—he lived the sane and diligent life of the Oriental craftsman. All the legends agree on this point: that Kabîr was a weaver, a simple and unlettered man, who earned his living at the loom. Like Paul the tentmaker, Boehme the cobbler, Bunyan the tinker, Tersteegen the ribbon-maker, he knew how to combine vision and industry; the work of his hands helped rather than hindered the impassioned meditation of his heart. Hating mere bodily austerities, he was no ascetic, but a married man, the father of a family—a circumstance which Hindu legends of the monastic type vainly attempt to conceal or explain—and it was from out of the heart of the common life that he sang his rapturous lyrics of divine love. Here his works corroborate the traditional story of his life. Again and again he extols the life of home, the value and reality of diurnal existence, with its opportunities for love and renunciation; pouring contempt—upon the professional sanctity of the Yogi, who "has a great beard and matted locks, and looks like a goat," and on all who think it necessary to flee a world pervaded by love, joy, and beauty—the proper theatre of man's quest—in order to find that One Reality Who has "spread His form of love throughout all the world." [Footnote: Cf. Poems Nos. XXI, XL, XLIII, LXVI, LXXVI.]

It does not need much experience of ascetic literature to recognize the boldness and originality of this attitude in such a time and place. From the point of view of orthodox sanctity, whether Hindu or Mohammedan, Kabîr was plainly a heretic; and his frank dislike of all institutional religion, all external observance—which was as thorough and as intense as that of the Quakers themselves—completed, so far as ecclesiastical opinion was concerned, his reputation as a dangerous man. The "simple union" with Divine Reality which he perpetually extolled, as alike the duty and the joy of every soul, was independent both of ritual and of bodily austerities; the God whom he proclaimed was "neither in Kaaba nor in Kailâsh." Those who sought Him needed not to go far; for He awaited discovery everywhere, more accessible to "the washerwoman and the carpenter" than to the self—righteous holy man. [Footnote: Poems I, II, XLI.] Therefore the whole apparatus of piety, Hindu and Moslem alike—the temple and mosque, idol and holy water, scriptures and priests—were denounced by this inconveniently clear-sighted poet as mere substitutes for reality; dead things intervening between the soul and its love—

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The images are all lifeless, they cannot speak:
I know, for I have cried aloud to them.
The Purâna and the Koran are mere words:
lifting up the curtain, I have seen.
*/
[Footnote: Poems LXII, LXV, LXVII.]

This sort of thing cannot be tolerated by any organized church; and it is not surprising that Kabîr, having his head-
quarters in Benares, the very centre of priestly influence, was subjected to considerable persecution. The well-known legend of the beautiful courtesan sent by Brâhmans to tempt his virtue, and converted, like the Magdalen, by her sudden encounter with the initiate of a higher love, pre serves the memory of the fear and dislike with which he was regarded by the ecclesiastical powers. Once at least, after the performance of a supposed miracle of healing, he was brought before the Emperor Sikandar Lodi, and charged with claiming the possession of divine powers. But Sikandar Lodi, a ruler of considerable culture, was tolerant of the eccentricities of saintly persons belonging to his own faith. Kabîr, being of Mohammedan birth, was outside the authority of the Brâhmans, and technically classed with the Sûfîs, to whom great theological latitude was allowed. Therefore, though he was banished in the interests of peace from Benares, his life was spared. This seems to have happened in 1495, when he was nearly sixty years of age; it is the last event in his career of which we have definite knowledge. Thenceforth he appears to have moved about amongst various cities of northern India, the centre of a group of disciples; continuing in exile that life of apostle and poet of love to which, as he declares in one of his songs, he was destined “from the beginning of time.” In 1518, an old man, broken in health, and with hands so feeble that he could no longer make the music which he loved, he died at Maghar near Gorakhpur.

A beautiful legend tells us that after his death his Mohammedan and Hindu disciples disputed the possession of his body; which the Mohammedans wished to bury, the Hindus to burn. As they argued together, Kabîr appeared before them, and told them to lift the shroud and look at that which lay beneath. They did so, and found in the place of the corpse a heap of flowers; half of which were buried by the Mohammedans at Maghar, and half carried by the Hindus to the holy city of Benares to be burned—fitting conclusion to a life which had made fragrant the most beautiful doctrines of two great creeds.

II

The poetry of mysticism might be defined on the one hand as a temperamental reaction to the vision of Reality: on the other, as a form of prophecy. As it is the special vocation of the mystical consciousness to mediate between two orders, going out in loving adoration towards God and coming home to tell the secrets of Eternity to other men; so the artistic self-expression of this consciousness has also a double character. It is love-poetry, but love-poetry which is often written with a missionary intention.

Kabîr’s songs are of this kind: out-births at once of rapture and of charity. Written in the popular Hindi, not in the literary tongue, they were deliberately addressed—like the vernacular poetry of Jacopone da Todi and Richard Rolle—to the people rather than to the professionally religious class; and all must be struck by the constant employment in them of imagery drawn from the common life, the universal experience. It is by the simplest metaphors, by constant appeals to needs, passions, relations which all men understand—the bridegroom and bride, the guru and disciple, the pilgrim, the farmer, the migrant bird—that he drives home his intense conviction of the reality of the soul’s intercourse with the Transcendent. There are in his universe no fences between the “natural” and “supernatural” worlds; everything is a part of the creative Play of God, and therefore—even in its humblest details—capable of revealing the Player’s mind.

This willing acceptance of the here-and-now as a means of representing supernal realities is a trait common to the greatest mystics. For them, when they have achieved at last the true theopathic state, all aspects of the universe possess equal authority as sacramental declarations of the Presence of God; and their fearless employment of homely and physical symbols—often STARTLING and even revolting to the unaccustomed taste—is in direct proportion to the exaltation of their spiritual life. The works of the great Sûfîs, and amongst the Christians of Jacopone da Todi, Ruysbroeck, Boëthius, abound in illustrations of this law. Therefore we must not be surprised to find in Kabîr’s songs—his desperate attempts to communicate his ecstasy and persuade other men to share it—a constant juxtaposition of concrete and metaphysical language; swift alternations between the most intensely anthropomorphic, the most subtly philosophical, ways of apprehending man’s communion with the Divine. The need for this alternation, and its entire naturalness for the mind which employs it, is rooted in his concept, or vision, of the Nature of God; and unless we make some attempt to grasp this, we shall not go far in our understanding of his poems.

Kabîr belongs to that small group of supreme mystics—amongst whom St. Augustine, Ruysbroeck, and the Sûfi poet Jalâlu’ddîn Rûmî are perhaps the chief—who have achieved that which we might call the synthetic vision of God. These have resolved the perpetual opposition between the personal and impersonal, the transcendent and immanent, static and dynamic aspects of the Divine Nature; between the Absolute of philosophy and the “sure true Friend” of devotional religion. They have done this, not by taking these apparently incompatible concepts one after the other; but by ascending to a height of spiritual intuition at which they are, as Ruysbroeck said, “melted and merged in the Unity,” and perceived as the completing opposites of a perfect Whole. This proceeding entails for them—and both Kabîr and Ruysbroeck expressly acknowledge it—a universe of three orders: Becoming, Being,
and that which is “More than Being,” i.e., God. [Footnote: Nos. VII and XLIX.] God is here felt to be not the final abstraction, but the one actuality. He inspires, supports, indeed inhabits, both the durational, conditioned, finite world of Becoming and the unconditioned, non-successional, infinite world of Being; yet utterly transcends them both. He is the omnipresent Reality, the “All-pervading” within Whom “the worlds are being told like beads.” In His personal aspect He is the “beloved Fakir,” teaching and companioning each soul. Considered as Immanent Spirit, He is “the Mind within the mind.” But all these are at best partial aspects of His nature, mutually corrective: as the Persons in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity—to which this theological diagram bears a striking resemblance—represent different and compensating experiences of the Divine Unity within which they are resumed. As Ruysbroeck discerned a plane of reality upon which “we can speak no more of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but only of One Being, the very substance of the Divine Persons”; so Kabîr says that “beyond both the limited and the limitless is He, the Pure Being.” [Footnote: No. VII.]

Brahma, then, is the Ineffable Fact compared with which “the distinction of the Conditioned from the Unconditioned is but a word”: at once the utterly transcendent One of Absolutist philosophy, and the personal Lover of the individual soul—“common to all and special to each,” as one Christian mystic has it. The need felt by Kabîr for both these ways of describing Reality is a proof of the richness and balance of his spiritual experience; which neither cosmic nor anthropomorphic symbols, taken alone, could express. More absolute than the Absolute, more personal than the human mind, Brahma therefore exceeds whilst He includes all the concepts of philosophy, all the passionate intuitions of the heart. He is the Great Affirmation, the font of energy, the source of life and love, the unique satisfaction of desire. His creative word is the Om or “Everlasting Yea.” The negative philosophy which strips from the Divine Nature all Its attributes and defining Him only by that which He is not—reduces Him to an “Emptiness,” is abhorrent to this most vital of poets.—Brahma, he says, “may never be found in abstractions.” He is the One Love who Pervades the world, discerned in His fullness only by the eyes of love; and those who know Him thus share, though they may never tell, the joyous and ineffable secret of the universe. [Footnote: Nos. VII, XXVI, LXXVI, XC.]

Now Kabîr, achieving this synthesis between the personal and cosmic aspects of the Divine Nature, eludes the three great dangers which threaten mystical religion.

First, he escapes the excessive emotionalism, the tendency to an exclusively anthropomorphic devotion, which results from an unrestricted cult of Divine Personality, especially under an incarnational form; seen in India in the exaggerations of Krishna worship, in Europe in the sentimental extravagances of certain Christian saints.

Next, he is protected from the soul-destroying conclusions of pure monism, inevitable if its logical implications are pressed home: that is, the identity of substance between God and the soul, with its corollary of the total absorption of that soul in the Being of God as the goal of the spiritual life. For the thorough-going monist the soul, in so far as it is real, is substantially identical with God; and the true object of existence is the making patent of this latent identity, the realization which finds expression in the Vedântist formula “That art thou.” But Kabîr says that Brahma and the creature are “ever distinct, yet ever united”; that the wise man knows the spiritual as well as the material world to “be no more than His footstool.” [Footnote: Nos. VII and IX.] The soul’s union with Him is a love union, a mutual inhabitation; that essentially dualistic relation which all mystical religion expresses, not a self-mergence which leaves no place for personality. This eternal distinction, the mysterious union-in-separateness of God and the soul, is a necessary doctrine of all sane mysticism; for no scheme which fails to find a place for it can represent more than a fragment of that soul’s intercourse with the spiritual world. Its affirmation was one of the distinguishing features of the Vaishnavite reformation preached by Râmânuja; the principle of which had descended through Râmânanda to Kabîr.

Last, the warmly human and direct apprehension of God as the supreme Object of love, the soul’s comrade, teacher, and bridegroom, which is so passionately and frequently expressed in Kabîr’s poems, balances and controls those abstract tendencies which are inherent in the metaphysical side of his vision of Reality: and prevents it from degenerating into that sterile worship of intellectual formulæ which became the curse of the Vedântist school. For the mere intellectualist, as for the mere pietist, he has little approbation. [Footnote: Cf. especially Nos. LIX, LVII, LXXV, XC, XCI.] Love is throughout his “absolute sole Lord”: the unique source of the more abundant life which He enjoys, and the common factor which unites the finite and infinite worlds. All is soaked in love: that love which He described in almost Johannine language as the “Form of God.” The whole of creation is the Play of the Eternal Lover; the living, changing, growing expression of Brahma’s love and joy. As these twin passions preside over the generation of human life, so “beyond the mists of pleasure and pain” Kabîr finds them governing the creative acts of God. His manifestation is love; His activity is joy. Creation springs from one glad act of affirmation: the Everlasting Yea, perpetually uttered within the depths of the Divine Nature. [Footnote: Nos. XVII, XXVI, LXXVI, LXXII.] In accordance with this concept of the universe as a Love-Game which eternally goes forward, a progressive manifestation of Brahma—one of the many notions which he adopted from the common stock of Hindu religious ideas, and illuminated by his poetic genius—movement, rhythm,
perpetual change, forms an integral part of Kabîr’s vision of Reality. Though the Eternal and Absolute is ever present to his consciousness, yet his concept of the Divine Nature is essentially dynamic. It is by the symbols of motion that he most often tries to convey it to us: as in his constant reference to dancing, or the strangely modern picture of that Eternal Swing of the Universe which is “held by the cords of love.” [Footnote: No. XVI.]

It is a marked characteristic of mystical literature that the great contemplatives, in their effort to convey to us the nature of their communion with the supersensuous, are inevitably driven to employ some form of sensuous imagery: coarse and inaccurate as they know such imagery to be, even at the best. Our normal human consciousness is so completely committed to dependence on the senses, that the fruits of intuition itself are instinctively referred to them. In that intuition it seems to the mystics that all the dim cravings and partial apprehensions of sense find perfect fulfilment. Hence their constant declaration that they see the uncreated light, they hear the celestial melody, they taste the sweetness of the Lord, they know an ineffable fragrance, they feel the very contact of love. “Him verily seeing and fully feeling, Him spiritually hearing and Him delectably smelling,” as Julian of Norwich has it. In those amongst them who develop psycho-sensorial automatisms, these parallels between sense and spirit may present themselves to consciousness in the form of hallucinations: as the light seen by Suso, the music heard by Rolle, the celestial perfumes which filled St. Catherine of Siena’s cell, the physical wounds felt by St. Francis and St. Teresa. These are excessive dramatizations of the symbolism under which the mystic tends instinctively to represent his spiritual intuition to the surface consciousness. Here, in the special sense-perception which he feels to be most expressive of Reality, his peculiar idiosyncrasies come out.

Now Kabîr, as we might expect in one whose reactions to the spiritual order were so wide and various, uses by turn all the symbols of sense. He tells us that he has “seen without sight” the effulgence of Brahma, tasted the divine nectar, felt the ecstatic contact of Reality, smelt the fragrance of the heavenly flowers. But he was essentially a poet and musician: rhythm and harmony were to him the garments of beauty and truth. Hence in his lyrics he shows himself to be, like Richard Rolle, above all things a musical mystic. Creation, he says again and again, is full of music: it is music. At the heart of the Universe “white music is blossoming”: love weaves the melody, whilst renunciation beats the time. It can be heard in the home as well as in the heavens; discerned by the ears of common men as well as by the trained senses of the ascetic. Moreover, the body of every man is a lyre on which Brahma, “the source of all music,” plays. Everywhere Kabîr discerns the “Unstruck Music of the Infinite”—that celestial melody which the angel played to St. Francis, that ghostly symphony which filled the soul of Rolle with ecstatic joy. [Footnote: Nos. XVII, XVIII, XXXIX, XLI, LIV, LXXVI, LXXXIII, LXXXIX, XCII.] The one figure which he adopts from the Hindu Pantheon and constantly uses, is that of Krishna the Divine Flute Player. [Footnote: Nos. L, LIII, LXVIII.] He sees the supernal music, too, in its visual embodiment, as rhythmic movement: that mysterious dance of the universe before the face of Brahma, which is at once an act of worship and an expression of the infinite rapture of the Immanent God.

Yet in this wide and rapturous vision of the universe Kabîr never loses touch with diurnal existence, never forgets the common life. His feet are firmly planted upon earth; his lofty and passionate apprehensions are perpetually controlled by the activity of a sane and vigorous intellect, by the alert commonsense so often found in persons of real mystical genius. The constant insistence on simplicity and directness, the hatred of all abstractions and philosophizings,[Footnote: Nos. XXVI, XXXII, LXXVI] the ruthless criticism of external religion: these are amongst his most marked characteristics. God is the Root whence all manifestations, “material” and “spiritual,” alike proceed; [Footnote: Nos. LXXV, LXXVIII, LXXX, XC.] and God is the only need of man—“happiness shall be yours when you come to the Root.” [Footnote: No. LXXX.] Hence to those who keep their eye on the “one thing needful,” denominations, creeds, ceremonies, the conclusions of philosophy, the disciplines of asceticism, are matters of comparative indifference. They represent merely the different angles from which the soul may approach that simple union with Brahma which is its goal; and are useful only in so far as they contribute to this consummation. So thorough-going is Kabîr’s eclecticism, that he seems by turns Vedântist and Vaishnavite, Pantheist and Transcendentalist, Brâhman and Sûfî. In the effort to tell the truth about that ineffable apprehension, so vast and yet so near, which controls his life, he seizes and twines together—as he might have woven together contrasting threads upon his loom—symbols and ideas drawn from the most violent and conflicting philosophies and faiths. All are needed, if he is ever to suggest the character of that One whom the Upanishad called “the Sun-coloured Being who is beyond this Darkness”: as all the colours of the spectrum are needed if we would demonstrate the simple richness of white light. In thus adapting traditional materials to his own use he follows a method common amongst the mystics; who seldom exhibit any special love for originality of form. They will pour their wine into almost any vessel that comes to hand: generally using by preference—and lifting to new levels of beauty and significance—the religious or philosophic formulæ current in their own day. Thus we find that some of Kabîr’s finest poems have as their subjects the commonplaces of Hindu philosophy and religion: the Lîlâ or Sport of God, the Ocean of Bliss, the Bird of the Soul, Mâyâ, the Hundred-petalled Lotus, and the “Formless Form.” Many, again, are soaked in Sûfî imagery and feeling. Others use as their material the ordinary surroundings and incidents of Indian life: the temple bells, the ceremony of the lamps, marriage, suttee, pilgrimage, the characters of the seasons; all felt by
him in their mystical aspect, as sacraments of the soul's relation with Brahma. In many of these a particularly beautiful and intimate feeling for Nature is shown. [Footnote: Nos. XV, XXIII, LXXVII, LXXXVII, XCII.]

In the collection of songs here translated there will be found examples which illustrate nearly every aspect of Kabîr’s thought, and all the fluctuations of the mystic’s emotion: the ecstasy, the despair, the still beatitude, the eager self-devotion, the flashes of wide illumination, the moments of intimate love. His wide and deep vision of the universe, the “Eternal Sport” of creation (LXXXII), the worlds being “told like beads” within the Being of God (XIV, XVI, XVII, LXXVI), is here seen balanced by his lovely and delicate sense of intimate communion with the Divine Friend, Lover, Teacher of the soul (X, XI, XXIII, XXXV, LI, LXXV, LXXVI, LXXXVII, XCII, XCIII; above all, the beautiful poem XXXIV). As these apparently paradoxical views of Reality are resolved in Brâhma, so all other opposites are reconciled in Him: bondage and liberty, love and renunciation, pleasure and pain (XVII, XXV, XL, LXXIX). Union with Him is the one thing that matters to the soul, its destiny and its need (LI, I, II, LIV, LXX, LXXIV, XCIII, XCVI); and this union, this discovery of God, is the simplest and most natural of all things, if we would but grasp it (XLI, XLVI, LXX, LXXVI, LXXVII, LXXVIII, XVII). The union, however, is brought about by love, not by knowledge or ceremonial observances (XXXVIII, LIV, LX, CXI); and the apprehension which that union confers is ineffable—“neither This nor That,” as Ruysbroeck has it (IX, XLVI, LXXVI). Real worship and communion is in Spirit and in Truth (XL, XI, LVI, LXXIII, LXV, LXX), therefore idolatry is an insult to the Divine Lover (XLII, LXIX) and the devices of professional sanctity are useless apart from charity and purity of soul (LIV, LXV, LXVI). Since all things, and especially the heart of man, are God-inhabited, God-possessed (XXVI, LVI, LXVII, LXXVI, LXXXIX, XVII), He may best be found in the here-and-now: in the normal, human, bodily existence, the “mud” of material life (III, IV, XXI, XXXIX, XL, XLIII, XLVIII, LXXII). “We can reach the goal without crossing the road” (LXXVI)—not the cloister but the home is the proper theatre of man’s efforts: and if he cannot find God there, he need not hope for success by going farther afield. “In the home is reality.” There love and detachment, bondage and freedom, joy and pain play by turns upon the soul; and it is from their conflict that the Unstruck Music of the Infinite proceeds. Kabîr says: “None but Brahma can evoke its melodies.”

“This version of Kabîr’s songs is chiefly the work of Mr. Rabîndranâth Tagore, the trend of whose mystical genius makes him—as all who read these poems will see—a peculiarly sympathetic interpreter of Kabîr’s vision and thought. It has been based upon the printed Hindi text with Bengali translation of Mr. Kshiti Mohan Sen; who has gathered from many sources—sometimes from books and manuscripts, sometimes from the lips of wandering ascetics and minstrels—a large collection of poems and hymns to which Kabîr’s name is attached, and carefully sifted the authentic songs from the many spurious works now attributed to him. These painstaking labours alone have made the present undertaking possible.

We have also had before us a manuscript English translation of 116 songs made by Mr. Ajit Kumâr Chakravarty from Mr. Kshiti Mohan Sen’s text, and a prose essay upon Kabîr from the same hand. From these we have derived great assistance. A considerable number of readings from the translation have been adopted by us; whilst several of the facts mentioned in the essay have been incorporated into this introduction. Our most grateful thanks are due to Mr. Ajit Kumar Chakravarty for the extremely generous and unselfish manner in which he has placed his work at our disposal.

E. U.

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KABIR’S POEMS

I

I. 13. mo ko kahân dhûnro bande

O servant, where dost thou seek Me?
Lo! I am beside thee.
I am neither in temple nor in mosque: I am neither in Kaaba nor in Kailash:
Neither am I in rites and ceremonies, nor in Yoga and renunciation.
If thou art a true seeker, thou shalt at once see Me: thou shalt
meet Me in a moment of time.
Kabîr says, “O Sadhu! God is the breath of all breath.”

II

I. 16. Santan jât na pûcho nirguniyân

It is needless to ask of a saint the caste to which he belongs;
For the priest, the warrior, the tradesman, and all the
thirty-six castes, alike are seeking for God.
It is but folly to ask what the caste of a saint may be;
The barber has sought God, the washerwoman, and the carpenter—
Even Raidas was a seeker after God.
The Rishi Swapacha was a tanner by caste.
Hindus and Moslems alike have achieved that End, where remains no
mark of distinction.

III

I. 57. sâdho bhâî, jîval hî karo âs’â

O friend! hope for Him whilst you live, know whilst you live,
understand whilst you live: for in life deliverance abides.
If your bonds be not broken whilst living, what hope of
deliverance in death?
It is but an empty dream, that the soul shall have union with Him
because it has passed from the body:
If He is found now, He is found then,
If not, we do but go to dwell in the City of Death.
If you have union now, you shall have it hereafter.
Bathe in the truth, know the true Guru, have faith in the true
Name!
Kabîr says: “It is the Spirit of the quest which helps; I am the
slave of this Spirit of the quest.”

IV

I. 58. bâgo nâ jâ re nâ jâ

Do not go to the garden of flowers!
O Friend! go not there;
In your body is the garden of flowers.
Take your seat on the thousand petals of the lotus, and there
gaze on the Infinite Beauty.

V

I. 63. avadhû, mâyâ tajî na jây

Tell me, Brother, how can I renounce Maya?
When I gave up the tying of ribbons, still I tied my garment
about me:
When I gave up tying my garment, still I covered my body in its
folds.
So, when I give up passion, I see that anger remains;
And when I renounce anger, greed is with me still;
And when greed is vanquished, pride and vainglory remain;
When the mind is detached and casts Maya away, still it clings to
the letter.
Kabîr says, “Listen to me, dear Sadhu! the true path is rarely found.”

VI

I. 83. candâ jhalkai yahi ghat mâhîn

The moon shines in my body, but my blind eyes cannot see it:
The moon is within me, and so is the sun.
The unstruck drum of Eternity is sounded within me; but my deaf ears cannot hear it.

So long as man clamours for the I and the Mine,
his works are as naught:
When all love of the I and the Mine is dead, then the work of the Lord is done.
For work has no other aim than the getting of knowledge:
When that comes, then work is put away.

The flower blooms for the fruit: when the fruit comes, the flower withers.
The musk is in the deer, but it seeks it not within itself: it wanders in quest of grass.

VII

I. 85. Sâdho, Brahm alakh lakhâyâ

When He Himself reveals Himself, Brahma brings into manifestation That which can never be seen.
As the seed is in the plant, as the shade is in the tree, as the void is in the sky, as infinite forms are in the void—
So from beyond the Infinite, the Infinite comes; and from the Infinite the finite extends.

The creature is in Brahma, and Brahma is in the creature: they are ever distinct, yet ever united.
He Himself is the tree, the seed, and the germ.
He Himself is the flower, the fruit, and the shade.
He Himself is the sun, the light, and the lighted.
He Himself is Brahma, creature, and Maya.
He Himself is the manifold form, the infinite space;
He is the breath, the word, and the meaning.
He Himself is the limit and the limitless: and beyond both the limited and the limitless is He, the Pure Being.
He is the Immanent Mind in Brahma and in the creature.

The Supreme Soul is seen within the soul,
The Point is seen within the Supreme Soul,
And within the Point, the reflection is seen again.
Kabîr is blest because he has this supreme vision!

VIII

I. 101. is ghat antar bâg bagîce

Within this earthen vessel are bowers and groves, and within it is the Creator:
Within this vessel are the seven oceans and the unnumbered stars.
The touchstone and the jewel-appraiser are within;
And within this vessel the Eternal soundeth, and the spring wells up.
Kabîr says: “Listen to me, my Friend! My beloved Lord is within.”

IX

I. 104. aisâ lo nahîn taisâ lo

O How may I ever express that secret word?
O how can I say He is not like this, and He is like that?
If I say that He is within me, the universe is ashamed:
If I say that He is without me, it is falsehood.
He makes the inner and the outer worlds to be indivisibly one;
The conscious and the unconscious, both are His footstools.
He is neither manifest nor hidden, He is neither revealed nor unrevealed:
There are no words to tell that which He is.

X

I. 121. tohi mori lagan lagâye re phakîr wâ

To Thee Thou hast drawn my love, O Fakir!
I was sleeping in my own chamber, and Thou didst awaken me;
striking me with Thy voice, O Fakir!
I was drowning in the deeps of the ocean of this world, and
Thou didst save me: upholding me with Thine arm, O Fakir!
Only one word and no second—and Thou hast made me tear off all
my bonds, O Fakir!
Kabîr says, “Thou hast united Thy heart to my heart, O Fakir!”

XI

I. 131. nis’ din khelat rahi sakhiyân sang

I played day and night with my comrades, and now I am greatly afraid.
So high is my Lord’s palace, my heart trembles to mount its stairs: yet I must not be shy, if I would enjoy His love.
My heart must cleave to my Lover; I must withdraw my veil, and meet Him with all my body:
Mine eyes must perform the ceremony of the lamps of love.
Kabîr says: “Listen to me, friend: he understands who loves. If you feel not love’s longing for your Beloved One, it is vain to adorn your body, vain to put unguent on your eyelids.”

XII

II. 24. hamsâ, kaho purâtan vât

Tell me, O Swan, your ancient tale.
From what land do you come, O Swan? to what shore will you fly?
Where would you take your rest, O Swan, and what do you seek?

Even this morning, O Swan, awake, arise, follow me!
There is a land where no doubt nor sorrow have rule: where the terror of Death is no more.
There the woods of spring are a-bloom, and the fragrant scent “He is I” is borne on the wind:
There the bee of the heart is deeply immersed, and desires no other joy.

XIII

II. 37. angadhiyā devā

O Lord Infinite, who will serve Thee?
Every votary offers his worship to the God of his own creation:
each day he receives service—
None seek Him, the Perfect: Brahma, the Indivisible Lord.
They believe in ten Avatars; but no Avatar can be the Infinite Spirit, for he suffers the results of his deeds:
The Supreme One must be other than this.
The Yogi, the Sanyasi, the Ascetics, are disputing one with another:
Kabir says, “O brother! he who has seen that radiance of love,
he is saved.”

XIV

II. 56. dariyā kī lahar dariyāo hai jī

The river and its waves are one
surf: where is the difference between the river and its waves?
When the wave rises, it is the water; and when it falls, it is
the same water again. Tell me, Sir, where is the distinction?
Because it has been named as wave, shall it no longer be
considered as water?

Within the Supreme Brahma, the worlds are being told like beads:
Look upon that rosary with the eyes of wisdom.

XV

II. 57. jānh khelat vasant riturāj

Where Spring, the lord of the seasons, reigneth, there the
Unstruck Music sounds of itself,
There the streams of light flow in all directions;
Few are the men who can cross to that shore!
There, where millions of Krishnas stand with hands folded,
Where millions of Vishnus bow their heads,
Where millions of Brahmās are reading the Vedas,
Where millions of Shivas are lost in contemplation,
Where millions of Indras dwell in the sky,
Where the demi-gods and the munis are unnumbered,
Where millions of Saraswatis, Goddess of Music, play on the vina—
There is my Lord self-revealed: and the scent of sandal and
flowers dwells in those deeps.

XVI

II. 59. jānh, cet acet khambh dōû

Between the poles of the conscious and the unconscious, there has
the mind made a swing:
Thereon hang all beings and all worlds, and that swing never
ceases its sway.
Millions of beings are there: the sun and the moon in their courses are there:
Millions of ages pass, and the swing goes on.
All swing! the sky and the earth and the air and the water; and the Lord Himself taking form:
And the sight of this has made Kabîr a servant.

XVII

II. 61. *grah candra tapan jot varat hai*

The light of the sun, the moon, and the stars shines bright:
The melody of love swells forth, and the rhythm of love’s detachment beats the time.
Day and night, the chorus of music fills the heavens; and Kabîr says
“My Beloved One gleams like the lightning flash in the sky.”

Do you know how the moments perform their adoration?
Waving its row of lamps, the universe sings in worship day and night,
There are the hidden banner and the secret canopy:
There the sound of the unseen bells is heard.
Kabîr says: “There adoration never ceases; there the Lord of the Universe sitteth on His throne.”
The whole world does its works and commits its errors: but few are the lovers who know the Beloved.
The devout seeker is he who mingles in his heart the double currents of love and detachment, like the mingling of the streams of Ganges and Jumna;
In his heart the sacred water flows day and night; and thus the round of births and deaths is brought to an end.

Behold what wonderful rest is in the Supreme Spirit! and he enjoys it, who makes himself meet for it.
Held by the cords of love, the swing of the Ocean of Joy sways to and fro; and a mighty sound breaks forth in song.
See what a lotus blooms there without water! and Kabîr says “My heart’s bee drinks its nectar.”
What a wonderful lotus it is, that blooms at the heart of the spinning wheel of the universe! Only a few pure souls know of its true delight.
Music is all around it, and there the heart partakes of the joy of the Infinite Sea.
Kabîr says: “Dive thou into that Ocean of sweetness: thus let all errors of life and of death flee away.”

Behold how the thirst of the five senses is quenched there! and the three forms of misery are no more!
Kabîr says: “It is the sport of the Unattainable One: look within, and behold how the moon-beams of that Hidden One shine in you.”
There falls the rhythmic beat of life and death:
Rapture wells forth, and all space is radiant with light.
There the Unstruck Music is sounded; it is the music of the love of the three worlds.
There millions of lamps of sun and of moon are burning;
There the drum beats, and the lover swings in play.
There love-songs resound, and light rains in showers; and the worshipper is entranced in the taste of the heavenly nectar.
Look upon life and death; there is no separation between them,
The right hand and the left hand are one and the same.
Kabîr says: “There the wise man is speechless; for this truth may
never be found in Vadas or in books.”

I have had my Seat on the Self-poised One,
I have drunk of the Cup of the Ineffable,
I have found the Key of the Mystery,
I have reached the Root of Union.
Travelling by no track, I have come to the Sorrowless Land: very
easily has the mercy of the great Lord come upon me.
They have sung of Him as infinite and unattainable: but I in my
meditations have seen Him without sight.
That is indeed the sorrowless land, and none know the path that
leads there:
Only he who is on that path has surely transcended all sorrow.
Wonderful is that land of rest, to which no merit can win;
It is the wise who has seen it, it is the wise who has sung of
it.
This is the Ultimate Word: but can any express its marvellous
savour?
He who has savoured it once, he knows what joy it can give.
Kabîr says: “Knowing it, the ignorant man becomes wise, and the
wise man becomes speechless and silent,
The worshipper is utterly inebriated,
His wisdom and his detachment are made perfect;
He drinks from the cup of the inbreathings and the outbreathings
of love.”

There the whole sky is filled with sound, and there that music is
made without fingers and without strings;
There the game of pleasure and pain does not cease.
Kabîr says: “If you merge your life in the Ocean of Life, you
will find your life in the Supreme Land of Bliss.”

What a frenzy of ecstasy there is in every hour! and the
worshipper is pressing out and drinking the essence of the
hours: he lives in the life of Brahma.
I speak truth, for I have accepted truth in life; I am now
attached to truth, I have swept all tinsel away.
Kabîr says: “Thus is the worshipper set free from fear; thus have
all errors of life and of death left him.”

There the sky is filled with music:
There it rains nectar:
There the harp-strings jingle, and there the drums beat.
What a secret splendour is there, in the mansion of the sky!
There no mention is made of the rising and the setting of the
sun;
In the ocean of manifestation, which is the light of love, day
and night are felt to be one.
Joy for ever, no sorrow,—no struggle!
There have I seen joy filled to the brim, perfection of joy;
No place for error is there.
Kabîr says: “There have I witnessed the sport of One Bliss!”

I have known in my body the sport of the universe: I have escaped
from the error of this world.
The inward and the outward are become as one sky, the Infinite
and the finite are united: I am drunken with the sight of this
All!
This Light of Thine fulfils the universe: the lamp of love that
burns on the salver of knowledge.
Kabir says: “There error cannot enter, and the conflict of life
and death is felt no more.”

XVIII

II. 77. maddh âkas’ âp jahân baithe
The middle region of the sky, wherein the spirit dwelleth, is
radiant with the music of light;
There, where the pure and white music blossoms, my Lord takes His
delight.
In the wondrous effulgence of each hair of His body, the
brightness of millions of suns and of moons is lost.
On that shore there is a city, where the rain of nectar pours and
pours, and never ceases.
Kabir says: “Come, O Dharmadas! and see my great Lord‘s Durbar.”

XIX

II. 20. paramâtam guru nikat virâjatn
O my heart! the Supreme Spirit, the great Master, is near you:
wake, oh wake!
Run to the feet of your Beloved: for your Lord stands near to your
head.
You have slept for unnumbered ages; this morning will you not
wake?

XX

II. 22. man tu pâr utar kânh jaiho
To what shore would you cross, O my heart? there is no traveller
before you, there is no road:
Where is the movement, where is the rest, on that shore?
There is no water; no boat, no boatman, is there;
There is not so much as a rope to tow the boat, nor a man to draw
it.
No earth, no sky, no time, no thing, is there: no shore, no ford!
There, there is neither body nor mind: and where is the place
that shall still the thirst of the soul? You shall find naught
in that emptiness.
Be strong, and enter into your own body: for there your foothold
is firm. Consider it well, O my heart! go not elsewhere,
Kabir says: “Put all imaginations away, and stand fast in that
which you are.”

XXI

II. 33. ghar ghar dîpak barai
Lamps burn in every house, O blind one! and you cannot see them.
One day your eyes shall suddenly be opened, and you shall see:
and the fetters of death will fall from you.
There is nothing to say or to hear, there is nothing to do: it is
he who is living, yet dead, who shall never die again.
Because he lives in solitude, therefore the Yogi says that his
home is far away.
Your Lord is near: yet you are climbing the palm-tree to seek Him.
The Brâhman priest goes from house to house and initiates people into faith:
Alas! the true fountain of life is beside you, and you have set up a stone to worship.
Kabîr says: “I may never express how sweet my Lord is. Yoga and the telling of beads, virtue and vice—these are naught to Him.”

XXII

II. 38. Sâdho, so satgur mohi bhâwai

O brother, my heart yearns for that true Guru, who fills the cup of true love, and drinks of it himself, and offers it then to me.
He removes the veil from the eyes, and gives the true Vision of Brahma:
He reveals the worlds in Him, and makes me to hear the Unstruck Music:
He shows joy and sorrow to be one:
He fills all utterance with love.
Kabîr says: “Verily he has no fear, who has such a Guru to lead him to the shelter of safety!”

XXIII

II. 40. tinwir sâñjh kà gahirâ àwai

The shadows of evening fall thick and deep, and the darkness of love envelops the body and the mind.
Open the window to the west, and be lost in the sky of love;
Drink the sweet honey that steeps the petals of the lotus of the heart.
Receive the waves in your body: what splendour is in the region of the sea!
Hark! the sounds of conches and bells are rising.
Kabîr says: “O brother, behold! the Lord is in this vessel of my body.”

XXIV

II. 48. jis se rahani apâr jagat men

More than all else do I cherish at heart that love which makes me to live a limitless life in this world.
It is like the lotus, which lives in the water and blooms in the water: yet the water cannot touch its petals, they open beyond its reach.
It is like a wife, who enters the fire at the bidding of love.
She burns and lets others grieve, yet never dishonours love.
This ocean of the world is hard to cross: its waters are very deep. Kabîr says: “Listen to me, O Sadhu! few there are who have reached its end.”

XXV

II. 45. Hari ne apnâ āp chipâyâ
My Lord hides Himself, and my Lord wonderfully reveals Himself: 
My Lord has encompassed me with hardness, and my Lord has cast 
down my limitations. 
My Lord brings to me words of sorrow and words of joy, and He 
Himself heals their strife. 
I will offer my body and mind to my Lord: I will give up my life, 
but never can I forget my Lord!

XXVI

II. 75. ônkâr siwae kôî sirjai

All things are created by the Om; 
The love-form is His body. 
He is without form, without quality, without decay: 
Seek thou union with Him! 
But that formless God takes a thousand forms in the eyes of His 
creatures: 
He is pure and indestructible, 
His form is infinite and fathomless, 
He dances in rapture, and waves of form arise from His dance. 
The body and the mind cannot contain themselves, when they are 
touched by His great joy. 
He is immersed in all consciousness, all joys, and all sorrows; 
He has no beginning and no end; 
He holds all within His bliss.

XXVII

II. 81. satgur sôî dayâ kar dînhâ

It is the mercy of my true Guru that has made me to know the 
unknown; 
I have learned from Him how to walk without feet, to see without 
eyes, to hear without ears, to drink without mouth, to fly 
without wings; 
I have brought my love and my meditation into the land where 
there is no sun and moon, nor day and night. 
Without eating, I have tasted of the sweetness of nectar; and 
without water, I have quenched my thirst. 
Where there is the response of delight, there is the fullness of 
joy. Before whom can that joy be uttered? 
Kabîr says: “The Guru is great beyond words, and great is the 
good fortune of the disciple.”

XXVIII

II. 85. nirgun âge sargun nâcai

Before the Unconditioned, the Conditioned dances: “Thou and I are 
one!” this trumpet proclaims. 
The Guru comes, and bows down before the disciple: 
This is the greatest of wonders.

XXIX

II. 87. Kabîr kab se bhaye vairâgi

Gorakhnath asks Kabîr:
“Tell me, O Kabîr, when did your vocation begin? Where did your love have its rise?”

Kabîr answers:

“When He whose forms are manifold had not begun His play: when there was no Guru, and no disciple: when the world was not spread out: when the Supreme One was alone—
Then I became an ascetic; then, O Gorakh, my love was drawn to Brahma.
Brahma did not hold the crown on his head; the god Vishnu was not anointed as king; the power of Shiva was still unborn; when I was instructed in Yoga.

I became suddenly revealed in Benares, and Râmânanda illumined me;
I brought with me the thirst for the Infinite, and I have come for the meeting with Him.
In simplicity will I unite with the Simple One; my love will surge up.
O Gorakh, march thou with His music!”

XXX

II. 95. yâ tarvar men ek pakherù

On this tree is a bird: it dances in the joy of life.
None knows where it is: and who knows what the burden of its music may be?
Where the branches throw a deep shade, there does it have its nest: and it comes in the evening and flies away in the morning, and says not a word of that which it means.
None tell me of this bird that sings within me.
It is neither coloured nor colourless: it has neither form nor outline:
It sits in the shadow of love.
It dwells within the Unattainable, the Infinite, and the Eternal; and no one marks when it comes and goes.
Kabîr says: “O brother Sadhu! deep is the mystery. Let wise men seek to know where rests that bird.”

XXXI

II. 100. nis` din sâtai ghâw

A sore pain troubles me day and night, and I cannot sleep;
I long for the meeting with my Beloved, and my father’s house gives me pleasure no more.
The gates of the sky are opened, the temple is revealed:
I meet my husband, and leave at His feet the offering of my body and my mind.

XXXII

II. 103. náco re mero man, matta hoy

Dance, my heart! dance to-day with joy.
The strains of love fill the days and the nights with music, and the world is listening to its melodies:
Mad with joy, life and death dance to the rhythm of this music.
The hills and the sea and the earth dance. The world of man dances in laughter and tears.
Why put on the robe of the monk, and live aloof from the world in lonely pride?
Behold! my heart dances in the delight of a hundred arts; and the Creator is well pleased.

XXXIII

II. 105. *man mast huâ tab kyon bole*

Where is the need of words, when love has made drunken the heart?
I have wrapped the diamond in my cloak; why open it again and again?
When its load was light, the pan of the balance went up: now it is full, where is the need for weighing?
The swan has taken its flight to the lake beyond the mountains; why should it search for the pools and ditches any more?
Your Lord dwells within you: why need your outward eyes be opened?
Kabîr says: “Listen, my brother! my Lord, who ravishes my eyes, has united Himself with me.”

XXXIV

II. 110. *mohi tohi lâgî kaise chute*

How could the love between Thee and me sever?
As the leaf of the lotus abides on the water: so thou art my Lord, and I am Thy servant.
As the night-bird Chakor gazes all night at the moon: so Thou art my Lord and I am Thy servant.
From the beginning until the ending of time, there is love between Thee and me; and how shall such love be extinguished?
Kabîr says: “As the river enters into the ocean, so my heart touches Thee.”

XXXV

II. 113. *vâlam, âwo hamâre geh re*

My body and my mind are grieved for the want of Thee;
O my Beloved! come to my house.
When people say I am Thy bride, I am ashamed; for I have not touched Thy heart with my heart.
Then what is this love of mine? I have no taste for food, I have no sleep; my heart is ever restless within doors and without.
As water is to the thirsty, so is the lover to the bride. Who is there that will carry my news to my Beloved?
Kabîr is restless: he is dying for sight of Him.

XXXVI

II. 126. *jâg piyârî, ab kân sowai*

O friend, awake, and sleep no more!
The night is over and gone, would you lose your day also?
Others, who have wakened, have received jewels;
O foolish woman! you have lost all whilst you slept.
Your lover is wise, and you are foolish, O woman!
You never prepared the bed of your husband:
O mad one! you passed your time in silly play. 
Your youth was passed in vain, for you did not know your Lord; 
Wake, wake! See! your bed is empty: He left you in the night. 
Kabîr says: “Only she wakes, whose heart is pierced with the 
arrow of His music.”

XXXVII

I. 36. sûr parkâs’, tanh rain kahân pâïye

Where is the night, when the sun is shining? If it is night, 
then the sun withdraws its light. Where knowledge is, can 
ignorance endure?
If there be ignorance, then knowledge must die. 
If there be lust, how can love be there? Where there is love, 
there is no lust.

Lay hold on your sword, and join in the fight. Fight, O my 
brother, as long as life lasts. 
Strike off your enemy’s head, and there make an end of him 
quickly: then come, and bow your head at your King’s Durbar. 
He who is brave, never forsakes the battle: he who flies from it 
is no true fighter. 
In the field of this body a great war goes forward, against passion, anger, pride, and greed: 
It is in the kingdom of truth, contentment and purity, that this battle is raging; and the sword that rings forth most loudly is the sword of His Name. 
Kabîr says: “When a brave knight takes the field, a host of cowards is put to flight. 
It is a hard fight and a weary one, this fight of the truth-seeker: for the vow of the truth-seeker is more hard than that of the warrior, or of the widowed wife who would follow her husband. 
For the warrior fights for a few hours, and the widow’s struggle with death is soon ended: 
But the truth-seeker’s battle goes on day and night, as long as life lasts it never ceases.”

XXXVIII

I. 50. bhram kâ tâlâ lagâ mahal re

The lock of error shuts the gate, open it with the key of love: 
Thus, by opening the door, thou shalt wake the Beloved. 
Kabîr says: “O brother! do not pass by such good fortune as this.”

XXXIX

I. 59. sâdho, yah tan thâth tanvure ka

O friend! this body is His lyre; He tightens its strings, and 
draws from it the melody of Brahma. 
If the strings snap and the keys slacken, then to dust must this instrument of dust return: 
Kabîr says: “None but Brahma can evoke its melodies.”
XL

I. 65. avadhû bhûle ko ghar làwe

He is dear to me indeed who can call back the wanderer to his home. In the home is the true union, in the home is enjoyment of life: why should I forsake my home and wander in the forest? If Brahma helps me to realize truth, verily I will find both bondage and deliverance in home.

He is dear to me indeed who has power to dive deep into Brahma; whose mind loses itself with ease in His contemplation.

He is dear to me who knows Brahma, and can dwell on His supreme truth in meditation; and who can play the melody of the Infinite by uniting love and renunciation in life.

Kabîr says: “The home is the abiding place; in the home is reality; the home helps to attain Him Who is real. So stay where you are, and all things shall come to you in time.”

XLI

I. 76. santo, sahaj samâdh bhali

O sadhu! the simple union is the best. Since the day when I met with my Lord, there has been no end to the sport of our love.

I shut not my eyes, I close not my ears, I do not mortify my body;

I see with eyes open and smile, and behold His beauty everywhere:
I utter His Name, and whatever I see, it reminds me of Him;
whatever I do, it becomes His worship.

The rising and the setting are one to me; all contradictions are solved.

Wherever I go, I move round Him,
All I achieve is His service:
When I lie down, I lie prostrate at His feet.

He is the only adorable one to me: I have none other.

My tongue has left off impure words, it sings His glory day and night:
Whether I rise or sit down, I can never forget Him; for the rhythm of His music beats in my ears.

Kabîr says: “My heart is frenzied, and I disclose in my soul what is hidden. I am immersed in that one great bliss which transcends all pleasure and pain.”

XLII

I. 79. tîrath men to sab pânî hai

There is nothing but water at the holy bathing places; and I know that they are useless, for I have bathed in them.

The images are all lifeless, they cannot speak; I know, for I have cried aloud to them.

The Purana and the Koran are mere words; lifting up the curtain, I have seen.

Kabîr gives utterance to the words of experience; and he knows very well that all other things are untrue.
XLIII

I. 82. pâñî vic mîn piyâsi

I laugh when I hear that the fish in the water is thirsty:
You do not see that the Real is in your home, and you wander from
forest to forest listlessly!
Here is the truth! Go where you will, to Benares or to Mathura;
if you do not find your soul, the world is unreal to you.

XLIV

I. 93. gagan math gaib nisân gade

The Hidden Banner is planted in the temple of the sky; there the
blue canopy decked with the moon and set with bright jewels is
spread.
There the light of the sun and the moon is shining: still your
mind to silence before that splendour.
Kabîr says: “He who has drunk of this nectar, wanders like one
who is mad.”

XLV

I. 97. sâdho, ko hai kânh se âyo

Who are you, and whence do you come?
Where dwells that Supreme Spirit, and how does He have His sport
with all created things?
The fire is in the wood; but who awakens it suddenly? Then it
turns to ashes, and where goes the force of the fire?
The true guru teaches that He has neither limit nor infinitude.
Kabîr says: “Brahma suits His language to the understanding of
His hearer.”

XLVI

I. 98. sâdho, sahajai kâyâ s'odho

O sadhu! purify your body in the simple way.
As the seed is within the banyan tree, and within the seed are
the flowers, the fruits, and the shade:
So the germ is within the body, and within that germ is the body
again.
The fire, the air, the water, the earth, and the aether; you
cannot have these outside of Him.
O, Kazi, O Pundit, consider it well: what is there that is not in
the soul?
The water-filled pitcher is placed upon water, it has water
within and without.
It should not be given a name, lest it call forth the error of
dualism.
Kabîr says: “Listen to the Word, the Truth, which is your
essence. He speaks the Word to Himself; and He Himself is the
Creator.”
XLVII

I. 102. *tarvar ek mûl vin thâdâ*

There is a strange tree, which stands without roots and bears
fruits without blossoming;
It has no branches and no leaves, it is lotus all over.
Two birds sing there; one is the Guru, and the other the
disciple:
The disciple chooses the manifold fruits of life and tastes them,
and the Guru beholds him in joy.
What Kabîr says is hard to understand: “The bird is beyond
seeking, yet it is most clearly visible. The Formless is in
the midst of all forms. I sing the glory of forms.”

XLVIII

I. 107. *calat mansâ acal kînhî*

I have stilled my restless mind, and my heart is radiant: for in
Thatness I have seen beyond That-ness. In company I have seen
the Comrade Himself.
Living in bondage, I have set myself free: I have broken away
from the clutch of all narrowness.
Kabîr says: “I have attained the unattainable, and my heart is
coloured with the colour of love.”

XLIX

I. 105. *jo dîsai, so to hai nâhîn*

That which you see is not: and for that which is, you have no
words.
Unless you see, you believe not: what is told you you cannot
accept.
He who is discerning knows by the word; and the ignorant stands
gaping.
Some contemplate the Formless, and others meditate on form: but
the wise man knows that Brahma is beyond both.
That beauty of His is not seen of the eye: that metre of His is
not heard of the ear.
Kabîr says: “He who has found both love and renunciation never
descends to death.”

L

I. 126. *muralî bajat akhand sadâye*

The flute of the Infinite is played without ceasing, and its
sound is love:
When love renounces all limits, it reaches truth.
How widely the fragrance spreads! It has no end, nothing stands
in its way.
The form of this melody is bright like a million suns:
incomparably sounds the vina, the vina of the notes of truth.
LI

I. 129. sakhiyo, ham hûn bhâî vâlamâs’î

Dear friend, I am eager to meet my Beloved! My youth has flowered, and the pain of separation from Him troubles my breast.
I am wandering yet in the alleys of knowledge without purpose, but I have received His news in these alleys of knowledge.
I have a letter from my Beloved: in this letter is an unutterable message, and now my fear of death is done away.
Kabir says: “O my loving friend! I have got for my gift the Deathless One.”

LII

I. 130. sâîn vin dard kareje hoy

When I am parted from my Beloved, my heart is full of misery: I have no comfort in the day, I have no sleep in the night. To whom shall I tell my sorrow?
The night is dark; the hours slip by. Because my Lord is absent, I start up and tremble with fear.
Kabir says: “Listen, my friend! there is no other satisfaction, save in the encounter with the Beloved.”

LIII

I. 122. kaum muralî s’abd s’un ânand bhayo

What is that flute whose music thrills me with joy?
The flame burns without a lamp;
The lotus blossoms without a root;
Flowers bloom in clusters;
The moon-bird is devoted to the moon;
With all its heart the rain-bird longs for the shower of rain;
But upon whose love does the Lover concentrate His entire life?

LIV

I. 112. s’untâ nahî dhun kî khabar

Have you not heard the tune which the Unstruck Music is playing?
In the midst of the chamber the harp of joy is gently and sweetly played; and where is the need of going without to hear it?
If you have not drunk of the nectar of that One Love, what boots it though you should purge yourself of all stains?
The Kazi is searching the words of the Koran, and instructing others: but if his heart be not steeped in that love, what does it avail, though he be a teacher of men?
The Yogi dyes his garments with red: but if he knows naught of that colour of love, what does it avail though his garments be tinted?
Kabir says: “Whether I be in the temple or the balcony, in the camp or in the flower garden, I tell you truly that every moment my Lord is taking His delight in me.”
I. 73. bhakti kâ mårâg jhîñâ re

Subtle is the path of love!
Therein there is no asking and no not-asking,
There one loses one’s self at His feet,
There one is immersed in the joy of the seeking: plunged in the
deeps of love as the fish in the water.
The lover is never slow in offering his head for his Lord’s
service.
Kabîr declares the secret of this love.

I. 68. bhâi kôî satguru sant kahâwâî

He is the real Sadhu, who can reveal the form of the Formless to
the vision of these eyes:
Who teaches the simple way of attaining Him, that is other than
rites or ceremonies:
Who does not make you close the doors, and hold the breath, and
renounce the world:
Who makes you perceive the Supreme Spirit wherever the mind
attaches itself:
Who teaches you to be still in the midst of all your activities.
Ever immersed in bliss, having no fear in his mind, he keeps the
spirit of union in the midst of all enjoyments.
The infinite dwelling of the Infinite Being is everywhere: in
earth, water, sky, and air:
Firm as the thunderbolt, the seat of the seeker is established
above the void.
He who is within is without: I see Him and none else.

I. 66. sâdho, s’abd sâdhnâ kîjai

Receive that Word from which the Universe springeth!
That word is the Guru; I have heard it, and become the disciple.
How many are there who know the meaning of that word?

O Sadhu! practise that Word!
The Vedas and the Puranas proclaim it,
The world is established in it,
The Rishis and devotees speak of it:
But none knows the mystery of the Word.
The householder leaves his house when he hears it,
The ascetic comes back to love when he hears it,
The Six Philosophies expound it,
The Spirit of Renunciation points to that Word,
From that Word the world-form has sprung,
That Word reveals all.
Kabîr says: “But who knows whence the Word cometh?”

I. 63. pîle pyâlâ, ho matwâlâ
Empty the Cup! O be drunken!
Drink the divine nectar of His Name!
Kabîr says: “Listen to me, dear Sadhu!
From the sole of the foot to the crown of the head this mind is filled with poison.”

**LIX**

I. 52. *khasm na cînhai bâwari*

O man, if thou dost not know thine own Lord, whereof art thou so proud?
Put thy cleverness away: mere words shall never unite thee to Him.
Do not deceive thyself with the witness of the Scriptures:
Love is something other than this, and he who has sought it truly has found it.

**LX**

I. 56. *sukh sindh kî sair kâ*

The savour of wandering in the ocean of deathless life has rid me of all my asking:
As the tree is in the seed, so all diseases are in this asking.

**LXI**

I. 48. *sukh sâgar men âîke*

When at last you are come to the ocean of happiness, do not go back thirsty.
Wake, foolish man! for Death stalks you. Here is pure water before you; drink it at every breath.
Do not follow the mirage on foot, but thirst for the nectar:
Dhruva, Prahlad, and Shukadeva have drunk of it, and also Raidas has tasted it:
The saints are drunk with love, their thirst is for love.
Kabîr says: "Listen to me, brother! The nest of fear is broken.
Not for a moment have you come face to face with the world:
You are weaving your bondage of falsehood, your words are full of deception:
With the load of desires which you hold on your head, how can you be light?"
Kabîr says: "Keep within you truth, detachment, and love."

**LXII**

I. 35. *satî ko kaun s’ikhâwtâ hai*

Who has ever taught the widowed wife to burn herself on the pyre of her dead husband?
And who has ever taught love to find bliss in renunciation?

**LXIII**

I. 39. *are man, dhîraj kâhe na dharai*
Why so impatient, my heart?
He who watches over birds, beasts, and insects,
He who cared for you whilst you were yet in your mother’s womb,
Shall He not care for you now that you are come forth?
Oh my heart, how could you turn from the smile of your Lord and wander so far from Him?
You have left Your Beloved and are thinking of others: and this is why all your work is in vain.

LXIV

I. 117. sâîn se lagan kathîn hai, bhâî

Now hard it is to meet my Lord!
The rain-bird wails in thirst for the rain: almost she dies of her longing, yet she would have none other water than the rain.
Drawn by the love of music, the deer moves forward: she dies as she listens to the music, yet she shrinks not in fear.
The widowed wife sits by the body of her dead husband: she is not afraid of the fire.
Put away all fear for this poor body.

LXV

I. 22. jab main bhûlâ, re bhâî

O brother! when I was forgetful, my true Guru showed me the Way.
Then I left off all rites and ceremonies, I bathed no more in the holy water:
Then I learned that it was I alone who was mad, and the whole world beside me was sane; and I had disturbed these wise people.
From that time forth I knew no more how to roll in the dust in obeisance:
I do not ring the temple bell:
I do not set the idol on its throne:
I do not worship the image with flowers.
It is not the austerities that mortify the flesh which are pleasing to the Lord,
When you leave off your clothes and kill your senses, you do not please the Lord:
The man who is kind and who practises righteousness, who remains passive amidst the affairs of the world, who considers all creatures on earth as his own self,
He attains the Immortal Being, the true God is ever with him.
Kabîr says: “He attains the true Name whose words are pure, and who is free from pride and conceit.”

LXVI

I. 20. man na rangâye

The Yogi dyes his garments, instead of dyeing his mind in the colours of love:
He sits within the temple of the Lord, leaving Brahma to worship a stone.
He pierces holes in his ears, he has a great beard and matted locks, he looks like a goat:
He goes forth into the wilderness, killing all his desires, and turns himself into an eunuch:
He shaves his head and dyes his garments; he reads the Gîtâ and becomes a mighty talker.
Kabîr says: “You are going to the doors of death, bound hand and foot!”

LXVII

I. 9. nā jâne sâhab kaisâ hai

I do not know what manner of God is mine.
The Mullah cries aloud to Him: and why? Is your Lord deaf? The subtle anklets that ring on the feet of an insect when it moves are heard of Him.
Tell your beads, paint your forehead with the mark of your God, and wear matted locks long and showy: but a deadly weapon is in your heart, and how shall you have God?

LXVIII

III. 102. ham se rahâ na jáy

I hear the melody of His flute, and I cannot contain myself:
The flower blooms, though it is not spring; and already the bee has received its invitation.
The sky roars and the lightning flashes, the waves arise in my heart,
The rain falls; and my heart longs for my Lord.
Where the rhythm of the world rises and falls, thither my heart has reached:
There the hidden banners are fluttering in the air.
Kabîr says: “My heart is dying, though it lives.”

LXIX

III. 2. jo khodâ masjid vasat hai

If God be within the mosque, then to whom does this world belong?
If Ram be within the image which you find upon your pilgrimage, then who is there to know what happens without?
Hari is in the East: Allah is in the West. Look within your heart, for there you will find both Karim and Ram;
All the men and women of the world are His living forms.
Kabîr is the child of Allah and of Ram: He is my Guru, He is my Pir.

LXX

III. 9. s’îl santosh sadâ samadrishti

He who is meek and contented., he who has an equal vision, whose mind is filled with the fullness of acceptance and of rest;
He who has seen Him and touched Him, he is freed from all fear and trouble.
To him the perpetual thought of God is like sandal paste smeared on the body, to him nothing else is delight:
His work and his rest are filled with music: he sheds abroad the radiance of love.
Kabîr says: “Touch His feet, who is one and indivisible, immutable and peaceable; who fills all vessels to the brim with
joy, and whose form is love."

LXXI

III. 13. sâdh sangat pîtam

Go thou to the company of the good, where the Beloved One has His dwelling place:
Take all thy thoughts and love and instruction from thence.
Let that assembly be burnt to ashes where His Name is not spoken!
Tell me, how couldst thou hold a wedding-feast, if the bridegroom himself were not there?
Waver no more, think only of the Beloved;
Set not thy heart on the worship of other gods, there is no worth in the worship of other masters.
Kabîr deliberates and says: “Thus thou shalt never find the Beloved!”

LXXII

III. 26. tor hîrâ hirâilwâ kîcad men

The jewel is lost in the mud, and all are seeking for it;
Some look for it in the east, and some in the west; some in the water and some amongst stones.
But the servant Kabîr has appraised it at its true value, and has wrapped it with care in the end of the mantle of his heart.

LXXIII

III. 26. âyau din gaune kâ ho

The palanquin came to take me away to my husband’s home, and it sent through my heart a thrill of joy;
But the bearers have brought me into the lonely forest, where I have no one of my own.
O bearers, I entreat you by your feet, wait but a moment longer: let me go back to my kinsmen and friends, and take my leave of them.
The servant Kabîr sings: “O Sadhu! finish your buying and selling, have done with your good and your bad: for there are no markets and no shops in the land to which you go.”

LXXIV

III. 30. are dil, prem nagar kâ ant na pâyâ

O my heart! you have not known all the secrets of this city of love: in ignorance you came, and in ignorance you return.
O my friend, what have you done with this life? You have taken on your head the burden heavy with stones, and who is to lighten it for you?
Your Friend stands on the other shore, but you never think in your mind how you may meet with Him:
The boat is broken, and yet you sit ever upon the bank; and thus you are beaten to no purpose by the waves.
The servant Kabîr asks you to consider; who is there that shall befriend you at the last?
You are alone, you have no companion: you will suffer the
consequences of your own deeds.

**LXXV**

III. 55. _ved kahe sargun ke âge_

The Vedas say that the Unconditioned stands beyond the world of Conditions.
O woman, what does it avail thee to dispute whether He is beyond all or in all?
See thou everything as thine own dwelling place: the mist of pleasure and pain can never spread there.
There Brahma is revealed day and night: there light is His garment, light is His seat, light rests on thy head.
Kabîr says: “The Master, who is true, He is all light.”

**LXXVI**

III. 48. _tû surat nain nihâr_

Open your eyes of love, and see Him who pervades this world I consider it well, and know that this is your own country.
When you meet the true Guru, He will awaken your heart;
He will tell you the secret of love and detachment, and then you will know indeed that He transcends this universe.
This world is the City of Truth, its maze of paths enchants the heart:
We can reach the goal without crossing the road, such is the sport unending.
Where the ring of manifold joys ever dances about Him, there is the sport of Eternal Bliss.
When we know this, then all our receiving and renouncing is over;
Thenceforth the heat of having shall never scorch us more.

He is the Ultimate Rest unbounded:
He has spread His form of love throughout all the world.
From that Ray which is Truth, streams of new forms are perpetually springing: and He pervades those forms.
All the gardens and groves and bowers are abounding with blossom;
and the air breaks forth into ripples of joy.
There the swan plays a wonderful game,
There the Unstruck Music eddies around the Infinite One;
There in the midst the Throne of the Unheld is shining, whereon the great Being sits—
Millions of suns are shamed by the radiance of a single hair of His body.
On the harp of the road what true melodies are being sounded!
and its notes pierce the heart:
There the Eternal Fountain is playing its endless life-streams of birth and death.
They call Him Emptiness who is the Truth of truths, in Whom all truths are stored!

There within Him creation goes forward, which is beyond all philosophy; for philosophy cannot attain to Him:
There is an endless world, O my Brother! and there is the Nameless Being, of whom naught can be said.
Only he knows it who has reached that region: it is other than all that is heard and said.
No form, no body, no length, no breadth is seen there: how can I
He comes to the Path of the Infinite on whom the grace of the Lord descends: he is freed from births and deaths who attains to Him.

Kabîr says: “It cannot be told by the words of the mouth, it cannot be written on paper: It is like a dumb person who tastes a sweet thing—how shall it be explained?”

LXXVII

III. 60. *cal hamsâ wâ des’ jahân*

O my heart! let us go to that country where dwells the Beloved, the ravisher of my heart!
There Love is filling her pitcher from the well, yet she has no rope wherewith to draw water;
There the clouds do not cover the sky, yet the rain falls down in gentle showers:
O bodiless one! do not sit on your doorstep; go forth and bathe yourself in that rain!
There it is ever moonlight and never dark; and who speaks of one sun only? that land is illuminate with the rays of a million suns.

LXXVIII

III. 63. *kahain Kabîr, s’uno ho sâdho*

Kabîr says: “O Sadhu! hear my deathless words. If you want your own good, examine and consider them well.
You have estranged yourself from the Creator, of whom you have sprung; you have lost your reason, you have bought death.
All doctrines and all teachings are sprung from Him, from Him they grow: know this for certain, and have no fear.
Hear from me the tidings of this great truth!
Whose name do you sing, and on whom do you meditate? O, come forth from this entanglement!
He dwells at the heart of all things, so why take refuge in empty desolation?
If you place the Guru at a distance from you, then it is but the distance that you honour:
If indeed the Master be far away, then who is it else that is creating this world?
When you think that He is not here, then you wander further and further away, and seek Him in vain with tears.
Where He is far off, there He is unattainable: where He is near, He is very bliss.
Kabîr says: “Lest His servant should suffer pain He pervades him through and through.”
Know yourself then, O Kabîr; for He is in you from head to foot.
Sing with gladness, and keep your seat unmoved within your heart.

LXXIX

III. 66. *nâ main dharmî nahîn adharmî*

I am neither pious nor ungodly, I live neither by law nor by sense,
I am neither a speaker nor hearer, I am neither a servant nor
master, I am neither bond nor free, 
I am neither detached nor attached. 
I am far from none: I am near to none. 
I shall go neither to hell nor to heaven. 
I do all works; yet I am apart from all works. 
Few comprehend my meaning: he who can comprehend it, he sits 
unmoved. 
Kabîr seeks neither to establish nor to destroy.

LXXX

III. 69. satta nâm hai sab ten nyârâ

The true Name is like none other name! 
The distinction of the Conditioned from the Unconditioned is but 
a word: 
The Unconditioned is the seed, the Conditioned is the flower and 
the fruit. 
Knowledge is the branch, and the Name is the root. 
Look, and see where the root is: happiness shall be yours when 
you come to the root. 
The root will lead you to the branch, the leaf, the flower, and 
the fruit: 
It is the encounter with the Lord, it is the attainment of bliss, 
it is the reconciliation of the Conditioned and the 
Unconditioned.

LXXXI

III. 74. pratham ek jo âpai âp

In the beginning was He alone, sufficient unto Himself: the 
formless, colourless, and unconditioned Being. 
Then was there neither beginning, middle, nor end; 
Then were no eyes, no darkness, no light; 
Then were no ground, air, nor sky; no fire, water, nor earth; no 
rivers like the Ganges and the Jumna, no seas, oceans, and waves. 
Then was neither vice nor virtue; scriptures there were not, as 
the Vedas and Puranas, nor as the Koran. 
Kabîr ponders in his mind and says, “Then was there no activity: 
the Supreme Being remained merged in the unknown depths of His 
own self.”
The Guru neither eats nor drinks, neither lives nor dies: 
Neither has He form, line, colour, nor vesture. 
He who has neither caste nor clan nor anything else—how may I 
describe His glory? 
He has neither form nor formlessness, 
He has no name, 
He has neither colour nor colourlessness, 
He has no dwelling-place.

LXXXII

III. 76. kahain Kabîr vicâr ke

Kabîr ponders and says: “He who has neither caste nor country, 
who is formless and without quality, fills all space.”
The Creator brought into being the Game of Joy: and from the word 
Om the Creation sprang. 
The earth is His joy; His joy is the sky;
His joy is the flashing of the sun and the moon;
His joy is the beginning, the middle, and the end;
His joy is eyes, darkness, and light.
Oceans and waves are His joy: His joy the Sarasvati, the Jumna, and the Ganges.
The Guru is One: and life and death, union and separation, are all His plays of joy!
His play the land and water, the whole universe!
His play the earth and the sky!
In play is the Creation spread out, in play it is established.
The whole world, says Kabîr, rests in His play, yet still the Player remains unknown.

LXXXIII

III. 84. jhî jhî jantar bâjai

The harp gives forth murmurous music; and the dance goes on without hands and feet.
It is played without fingers, it is heard without ears: for He is the ear, and He is the listener.
The gate is locked, but within there is fragrance: and there the meeting is seen of none.
The wise shall understand it.

LXXXIV

III. 89. mor phakîrwâ mângi jây

The Beggar goes a-begging, but
I could not even catch sight of Him:
And what shall I beg of the Beggar He gives without my asking.
Kabîr says: “I am His own: now let that befall which may befall!”

LXXXV

III. 90. naihar se jiyarâ phât re

My heart cries aloud for the house of my lover; the open road and the shelter of a roof are all one to her who has lost the city of her husband.
My heart finds no joy in anything: my mind and my body are distraught.
His palace has a million gates, but there is a vast ocean between it and me:
How shall I cross it, O friend? for endless is the outstretching of the path.
How wondrously this lyre is wrought! When its strings are rightly strung, it maddens the heart: but when the keys are broken and the strings are loosened, none regard it more.
I tell my parents with laughter that I must go to my Lord in the morning;
They are angry, for they do not want me to go, and they say: “She thinks she has gained such dominion over her husband that she can have whatsoever she wishes; and therefore she is impatient to go to him.”
Dear friend, lift my veil lightly now; for this is the night of love.
Kabîr says: “Listen to me! My heart is eager to meet my lover: I
lie sleepless upon my bed. Remember me early in the morning!"

LXXXVI

III. 96. jîv mahal men S’iv pahunwâ

Serve your God, who has come into this temple of life!
Do not act the part of a madman, for the night is thickening fast.
He has awaited me for countless ages, for love of me He has lost His heart:
Yet I did not know the bliss that was so near to me, for my love was not yet awake.
But now, my Lover has made known to me the meaning of the note that struck my ear:
Now, my good fortune is come.
Kabîr says: “Behold! how great is my good fortune! I have received the unending caress of my Beloved!”

LXXXVII

I. 71. gagan ghatâ ghaharânî, sâdho

Clouds thicken in the sky! O, listen to the deep voice of their roaring;
The rain comes from the east with its monotonous murmur.
Take care of the fences and boundaries of your fields, lest the rains overflow them;
Prepare the soil of deliverance, and let the creepers of love and renunciation be soaked in this shower.
It is the prudent farmer who will bring his harvest home; he shall fill both his vessels, and feed both the wise men and the saints.

LXXXVIII

III. 118. âj din ke main jaun balihârî

This day is dear to me above all other days, for to-day the Beloved Lord is a guest in my house;
My chamber and my courtyard are beautiful with His presence.
My longings sing His Name, and they are become lost in His great beauty:
I wash His feet, and I look upon His Face; and I lay before Him as an offering my body, my mind, and all that I have.
What a day of gladness is that day in which my Beloved, who is my treasure, comes to my house!
All evils fly from my heart when I see my Lord.
“My love has touched Him; my heart is longing for the Name which is Truth.”
Thus sings Kabîr, the servant of all servants.

LXXXIX

I. 100. kôi s’untâ hai jñânî râg gagan men

Is there any wise man who will listen to that solemn music which arises in the sky?
For He, the Source of all music, makes all vessels full fraught,
and rests in fullness Himself.
He who is in the body is ever athirst, for he pursues that which is in part:
But ever there wells forth deeper and deeper the sound “He is this—this is He”; fusing love and renunciation into one.
Kabîr says: “O brother! that is the Primal Word.”

XC

I. 108. main kâ se bûjhaun

To whom shall I go to learn about my Beloved?
Kabîr says: “As you never may find the forest if you ignore the tree, so He may never be found in abstractions.”

XCI

III. 12. samskrit bhâshâ padhi lînhâ

I have learned the Sanskrit language, so let all men call me wise:
But where is the use of this, when I am floating adrift, and parched with thirst, and burning with the heat of desire?
To no purpose do you bear on your head this load of pride and vanity.
Kabîr says: “Lay it down in the dust, and go forth to meet the Beloved. Address Him as your Lord.”

XCII

III. 110. carkhâ calai surat virahin kâ

The woman who is parted from her lover spins at the spinning wheel.
The city of the body arises in its beauty; and within it the palace of the mind has been built.
The wheel of love revolves in the sky, and the seat is made of the jewels of knowledge:
What subtle threads the woman weaves, and makes them fine with love and reverence!
Kabîr says: “I am weaving the garland of day and night. When my Lover comes and touches me with His feet, I shall offer Him my tears.”

XCIII

III. 111. kotîn bhânu candra târâgan

Beneath the great umbrella of my King millions of suns and moons and stars are shining!
He is the Mind within my mind: He is the Eye within mine eye.
Ah, could my mind and eyes be one! Could my love but reach to my Lover! Could but the fiery heat of my heart be cooled!
Kabîr says: “When you unite love with the Lover, then you have love’s perfection.”
XCIV

I. 92. avadhû begam des‘ hamârâ

O sadhu! my land is a sorrowless land.
I cry aloud to all, to the king and the beggar, the emperor and
the fakir—
Whosoever seeks for shelter in the Highest, let all come and
settle in my land!
Let the weary come and lay his burdens here!

So live here, my brother, that you may cross with ease to that
other shore.
It is a land without earth or sky, without moon or stars;
For only the radiance of Truth shines in my Lord’s Durbar.
Kabîr says: “O beloved brother! naught is essential save Truth.”

XCV

I. 109. sâîn ke sangat sâsur âî

Came with my Lord to my Lord’s home: but I lived not with Him and
I tasted Him not, and my youth passed away like a dream.
On my wedding night my women-friends sang in chorus, and I was
anointed with the unguents of pleasure and pain:
But when the ceremony was over, I left my Lord and came away, and
my kinsman tried to console me upon the road.
Kabîr says, “I shall go to my Lord’s house with my love at my
side; then shall I sound the trumpet of triumph!”

XCVI

I. 75. samajh dekh man mît piyarwâ

O friend, dear heart of mine, think well! if you love indeed,
then why do you sleep?
If you have found Him, then give yourself utterly, and take Him
to you.
Why do you loose Him again and again?
If the deep sleep of rest has come to your eyes, why waste your
time making the bed and arranging the pillows?
Kabîr says: “I tell you the ways of love! Even though the head
itself must be given, why should you weep over it?”

XCVII

II. 90. sâhab ham men, sâhab tum men

The Lord is in me, the Lord is in you, as life is in every seed.
O servant! put false pride away, and seek for Him within you.
A million suns are ablaze with light,
The sea of blue spreads in the sky,
The fever of life is stilled, and all stains are washed away;
when I sit in the midst of that world.
Hark to the unstruck bells and drums! Take your delight in love!
Rains pour down without water, and the rivers are streams of
light.
One Love it is that pervades the whole world, few there are who
know it fully:
They are blind who hope to see it by the light of reason, that reason which is the cause of separation—
The House of Reason is very far away!
How blessed is Kabîr, that amidst this great joy he sings within his own vessel.
It is the music of the meeting of soul with soul;
It is the music of the forgetting of sorrows;
It is the music that transcends all coming in and all going forth.

XCVIII

II. 98. *ritu phâgun nîyarânî*

The month of March draws near: ah, who will unite me to my Lover?
How shall I find words for the beauty of my Beloved? For He is merged in all beauty.
His colour is in all the pictures of the world, and it bewitches the body and the mind.
Those who know this, know what is this unutterable play of the Spring.
Kabîr says: “Listen to me, brother’ there are not many who have found this out.”

XCIX

II. 111. *Nârad, pyâr so antar nâhî*

Oh Narad! I know that my Lover cannot be far:
When my Lover wakes, I wake; when He sleeps, I sleep.
He is destroyed at the root who gives pain to my Beloved.
Where they sing His praise, there I live;
When He moves, I walk before Him: my heart yearns for my Beloved.
The infinite pilgrimage lies at His feet, a million devotees are seated there.
Kabîr says: “The Lover Himself reveals the glory of true love.”

C

II. 122. *kôî prem kî peng jhulâo re*

Hang up the swing of love to-day! Hang the body and the mind between the arms of the Beloved, in the ecstasy of love’s joy:
Bring the tearful streams of the rainy clouds to your eyes, and cover your heart with the shadow of darkness:
Bring your face nearer to His ear, and speak of the deepest longings of your heart.
Kabîr says: “Listen to me, brother! bring the vision of the Beloved in your heart.”

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The Poems of Sappho

Sappho’s poetry offers a useful counterpoint to some of the Asian poetry we will be reading in the course.

Access her poems at the Sacred Texts webpage for the poet.

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Background on the Sufis

WLitFrametales has an OER World Literature course with a section on the Sufis. The background terms and reading are useful as we approach Sufi poetry.

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The Persian Mystics: Jalálu'd-dín Rúmí by Frederick Hadland Davis & Rumi

JALÁLU’D-DÍN RÚMÍ

BY

HADLAND DAVIS

AUTHOR OF “IN THE VALLEY OF STARS THERE IS A TOWER OF SILENCE” WISDOM OF THE EAST THE PERSIAN MYSTICS

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

1920

TO

A. T. K.

THIS LITTLE BOOK OF EASTERN WISDOM IS LOVINGLY INSCRIBED

“OUR JOURNEY IS TO THE ROSE-GARDEN OF UNION” JALÁLU’D-DÍN RÚMÍ.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

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Among the Mohammedans Sufism, or Persian mysticism, is known as _tasawwuf_. The word Sidi is derived from _súf_, meaning “wool.” When a little Persian sect at the end of the eighth century A.D. broke away from the orthodox Muslim religion, and struck out on an independent path, they ignored costly robes and worldly ostentation, and clad themselves in a white wool garment. Hence they were known as “wool wearers,” or Súfís.

Prof. Edward G. Browne[1] gives four theories in regard to the origin of Súfism, viz.: (1) _Esoteric Doctrine of the Prophet_. (2) _Reaction of the Aryan mind against a Semitic religion_. (3) _Neo-Platonist influence_. (4) _Independent origin_. Neither of the four theories altogether satisfies the learned professor, and very certain it is that the last-mentioned theory is of very little account. Prof. Browne seems in favour of a “spontaneous growth” existing in various forms, under various names throughout the civilised world; but after all this is not very tangible evidence. Moreover, we must bear in mind that the Neo-Platonist philosophers paid a visit to the Persian court in the sixth century A.D., and founded a school there in the reign of Núshir-wan. It is highly probable, therefore, that these seven philosophers, forced to leave their homes through the tyranny of Justinian, who forbade the teaching of philosophy at Athens, should have had considerable influence upon a few of the more thoughtful Persians. We shall now find that this theory is borne out by internal evidence.

Let us briefly study the tenets of Neo-Platonism. The Neo-Platonists believed in the Supreme Good as the Source of all things. Self-existent, it generated from itself. Creation was the reflection of its own Being. Nature, therefore, was permeated with God. Matter was essentially non-existent, a temporary and ever-moving shadow for the embodiment of the Divine. The Neo-Platonists believed that by ecstasy and contemplation of the All-Good, man would rise to that Source from whence he came. These points bear directly upon the Súfí teaching. They form a broad outline of the tenets of Súfism. The Súfís, from temperamental and other causes, elaborated these ideas, gave them a rich and beautiful setting, and, what is all-important, built about them one of the most interesting phases of mystical poetry the world has ever known, and this particular phase may be said to date from the twelfth century A.D.

“The wise man recognises the idea of the Good within him. This he develops by withdrawal into the Holy Place of his own soul. He who does not understand how the soul contains the Beautiful within itself, seeks to realise beauty without, by laborious production. His aim should rather be to concentrate and simplify, and so to expand his being; instead of going out into the Manifold, to forsake it for the One, and so to float upwards towards the Divine Fount of Being whose stream flows within him.”

This is Súfism in prose. The Súfi turned the same conception into _poetry_.

**THE EARLY SÚFÍS.**

Abú Hashím (ob. 150 A.H.) was the first to bear the name of Súfi, while Dhu'l-Nún-al-Misri (245 A.H.) may be said to have given Súfism its permanent shape. Rábi'a, of Basra, was the first woman to join the sect, and her saintliness and wise sayings have been preserved by Farídu'd-Dín ‘Attár. One day a great sickness fell upon
Rābi’a, and on being asked the reason for it she replied: “I dwelt upon the joys of Paradise and therefore my Beloved has chastened me.”

Rābi’a did not believe in earthly marriage. Her remark on the subject is given as follows: “The bonds of wedlock have descended upon me. I am not my own, but my Lord’s, and must not be unfaithful to Him.” ‘Attār also informs us that when Rābi’a was asked if she hated the devil, she replied: “My love to God leaves me no time to hate him.” Rābi’a was a woman of much independence of thought, ethical rather than metaphysical in her remarks, and strongly opposed to outward ceremonialis. She is said to have died at Jerusalem, 753 A.D. It was at Ramla, in Palestine, that a Christian nobleman built a convent (Khāngāh) for the Sūfís. Thus in the early days the sect defied their Prophet’s condemnation of monkery by building an abode for members of the order. The Sūfís were strongly opposed to the idea of free-will or distinct and self-existent personality apart from the Beloved. The orthodox Muslim’s idea was precisely the reverse. The Sūfís have always made the Koran their text-book. With infinite licence they ingeniously quote therefrom, and still more ingeniously add their own explanations when necessary. No doubt there were political reasons for adopting this method of concealing heterodox ideas under the cloak of orthodoxy. We shall see, however, as the sect grew and still further broadened its views, that these clever compromises did not prevent the appearance of martyrs among their number in the future.

By the end of the second century of the Hijira the Sūfís were a much-respected religious order. In the following century Quietism had not only changed to Pantheism, but Pantheism had kindled a belief that Beloved and lover were identical. The step was inevitable and at this juncture it was that Sūfīism became essentially mystical, and it became more mystical as years advanced. About this time, viz., the beginning of the third century A.H., we come across two interesting Sūfís who seem to have been the prime movers in this new development, by name Bayázíd and Mansur al-Halláj.

III. THE NATURE OF SŪFĪSM

The Sūfís are folk who have preferred God to everything, so that God has preferred them to everything.—DHU’L-NUN.[3]

In the Islám faith there are eight Paradises arranged one within the other in ascending stages. The highest is called “The Garden of Eden.” All are lovely gardens full of luxuriant flowers and trees, amid which gleam the domes and minarets of gorgeous palaces, rich with precious stones, where the departed are feasted and entertained by beautiful houris. All the Paradises are watered by rivers, such as the Kevser, the Tesním, and the Selsebíl. The great Tūba tree grows in the highest Paradise; its branches fall into the seven other gardens.[4] This brief description will be sufficient to show the nature of the Muslim heaven. That it was a glorified creation of the earth in eight degrees is evident. It was sensuous rather than metaphysical. The five worlds of the Sūfís are:

1. The “Plane of the Absolute Invisible.”
2. The “Relatively Invisible.”
3. The “World of Similitudes.”
4. The “Visible World” (or the plane of “Form, Generation and Corruption”).
5. The “World of Man.”

These Five Planes are often regarded as Three: the “Invisible,” the “Intermediate,” and the “Visible,” or yet again as simply the “Visible” and “Invisible.” Above the “Plane of the Absolute Invisible” is an infinity which we might, perhaps, compare with Dante’s “Spaceless Empyrean.” The Sūfís regarded the existence of the soul as pre-natal. Moreover that the full perception of Earthly Beauty was the remembrance of that Supreme Beauty in the Spiritual world. The body was the veil; but by ecstasy (Hāl) the soul could behold the Divine Mysteries. As Avicenna, in his poem on the soul, has written:

**THE INFLUENCE OF SŪFĪSM**

This love here forms the centre which expands on all sides and into all regions.—HEGEL.

Although Jalálu’d-Dín Rúmí lived for fifty years in a Turkish city he scarcely ever used any Turkish words; but nevertheless his influence on Turkish poetry was very considerable. The Turkish poets of that day poured forth innumerable “spiritual couplets” of a mystical nature. Indeed nearly all the Ottoman poets were either Sūfís or men who wrote after the manner of the Persian Sūfís. Jalá’s son, Sultan Valad, wrote in Turkish the following concerning his father:

Wot ye well Mevliáná is of saints the Pole;  
Whatsoever thing he sayeth, do in whole.  
All his words are mercies from the Heavenly King;
Such that blind folks’ eyes were opened, did they sing.

The Súfí influence on Turkish poetry, many years after Jalál’s death, gradually weakened as time went on, and their poetry became less mystical. The French were probably responsible for this change to a certain extent.

Then, again, Súfísm influenced the poetry of India; but in this case there was influence on both sides, and the Súfís probably borrowed some of the Buddhistic ideas, especially in regard to their later conception of Divine absorption. The following remark of Abú Bahu al-Shiblí certainly points to the belief that the Súfís inculcated certain ideas from the Vedanta Philosophy:—“Tasawwuf is control of the faculties and observance of the breaths.”

Súfí poetry has greatly influenced Western thought. Many of the German mystics wrote as the Súfí poets had written before them. Particularly might be mentioned Eckhart, Tauler and Suso. Concerning the last mentioned I may quote the following passage to demonstrate my meaning: “Earthly friends must needs endure to be distinct and separate from those whom they love; but Thou, O fathomless sweetness of all true love, meltest into the heart of Thy beloved, and pourest Thyself fully into the essence of his soul, that nothing of Thee remains outside, but Thou art joined and united most lovingly with Thy beloved.” There was rapturous language both with the Persian and German mystics. The great difference between them was that the German mystics, for the most part, were ascetics, the Persians were not. Then again in the nineteenth century Hegel was loud in his praise of Jalálu’Dín Rúmí, calling him a great thinker as well as a great poet, but somehow he seems to put Jalál’s Pantheism first, his Mysticism second. Surely this was putting the cart before the horse?

To trace the scope of the influence of Súfí thought in England would be extremely interesting, but the limits of this little book will not admit of our doing so. The influence was at first among the few; but optimistic lovers of the East believe that Oriental thought is daily becoming of more interest to Western minds. The student knows that Edward FitzGerald’s rendering of Omar Khayyám, was anything but a faithful translation; that FitzGerald shook up Omar’s words like so many dice and set them to the music of wine, roses, and pessimism. The Omar Khayyám Club read FitzGerald, but not Omar Khayyám, and in consequence they have fallen into the error of associating Omar with Bacchus. But, nevertheless, we must be grateful to FitzGerald. He has given us a great poem, and stirred, let us hope, many of his countless readers to a more faithful study of Persian poetry. The indefatigable Dr. Johnson has written the following on the Persian poet, who is the subject of our present volume: “He makes plain to the Pilgrim the secrets of the Way of Unity, and unveils the Mysteries of the Path of Eternal Truth.” Concerning our modern poets I have quoted elsewhere a few lines of Mr. Arthur Symons on a dancing dervish. Many of the late Thomas Lake Harris’s poems are of a Súfí nature. In Mr. Stephen Phillip’s beautiful poem “Marpessa,” the following lines are full of Sidi mysticism:

For they,
Seeking that perfect face beyond the world,
Approach in vision earthly semblances,
And touch, and at the shadows flee away.

It is interesting to note that at least one celebrated Englishman adopted the Súfí teaching. I refer to Sir Richard Burton.[7] The Súfís believed heart and soul in the beautiful lines of Cameons, the poet for whom Burton had so great an affection:

Do what thy manhood bids thee do, from none but self expect applause.
He noblest lives and noblest dies who makes and keeps his self-made laws.
All other life is living death, a world where none but phantoms dwell;
A breath, a wind, a sound, a voice, a tinkling of the camel-bell.


THE LIFE AND WORK OF JALÁLU’D-DÍN RÚMÍ

LIFE

Jalálu’Dín Rúmí was born at Balkh on September 30th, 1207, A.D., or according to Mohammedan reckoning, in 604 A.H. His father, Bahá’-d-Dín, was a man of much learning, but gave offence to the reigning king by an attack on that monarch’s innovations. Another account disputes this in the place of jealousy on the part of the king. Whatever the cause, however, Bahá’-d-Dín left Balkh, together with his family, and settled at Nishapur. It was here that the celebrated Súfí, Fáriḍu’d-Dín ‘Attár, presented young Jalálu’Dín Rúmí with his Asrarnama,[1] and informed his father that the child would some day become famous throughout the world. After the destruction of Balkh the family went to Qonia,[2] an old Roman province, where the poet acquired his name Rúmí, or “the Roman.” Young Jalál must have been a child prodigy if we are to believe the many wonderful stories of his early days. At six years of age he is said to have seen visions, taught his playmates philosophy, and performed many marvellous feats, such as flying into the celestial regions. On the death of his father Jalál took the professorial chair. He also founded an order of Dervishes known as Maulavis, where he authorised music and religious dance. When asked why he introduced singing and dance at a funeral, such practice being contrary to custom, Jalál replied: “When the human spirit, after years of imprisonment in the cage and dungeon of the body, is at length set free, and wings its flight to the Source whence it came, is not this an occasion for rejoicings, thanks, and dancing?” Jalál was an indomitable optimist. In his sayings, and still more in his poetry, we find an almost untramelled ecstasy. The religious dances, known as Rizā Kulī, may in some way account for Jalál’s occasional lack of care displayed in his poetry, and also for the outbursts not far removed from insanity. We are informed by Daulat Sháh that “There was a pillar in the Maulavi’s house, and when he was drowned in the ocean of Love he used to take hold of that pillar and set himself turning round it.” It was while turning round the pillar that he not infrequently dictated much of his poetry. As Mr. Arthur Symons has sung:

I turn until my sense,
Dizzied with waves of air,
Spins to a point intense,
And spires and centres there.[3]

We can well imagine Jalál writing the following under the conditions just mentioned:

“Come! Come! Thou art the Soul, the Soul so dear, revolving!
Come! Come! Thou art the Cedar, the Cedar’s Spear, revolving!
Oh, come! The well of Light up-bubbling springs;
And Morning Stars exult, in Gladness sheer, revolving!”[4]

In 1226 A.D. Jalál was married at Lerenda to Gevhér (Pearl). She bore two sons and died early in life. Jalál married again and his second wife survived him.

SHAMSI TABRIZ

A word must now be said about Shamsi Tabrīz, an intimate friend of Jalál. We have sufficient evidence to prove that Shams Tabrīz, Jalál’s nom de guerre, was an actual person, and not a mythical creation on the part of the poet. This mysterious being, who flitted across Jalál’s life so tragically, seems to have had great personal influence over the poet, who went with him into solitary places and there discussed profound mysteries. The scholars of Jalál looked upon the whole affair as an unworthy infatuation on the part of their Master, and on the part of Shams a shameful seduction. Their protests brought about the flight of Shams, who fled to Tabrīz. But it was only a momentary separation. Jalál followed this strange figure and brought him back again. Most of his lighter poetry was composed during this separation. Another disturbance, however, caused the departure of Shams to Damascus. We then have no clear record of him. Various legends exist in regard to the death of this mysterious person. It may be safely stated, however, that Shams met with a violent death, the exact nature of which it is impossible to say definitely.

This strange union is by no means unique in the history of the world’s literature. The union, however, in this particular case, is extremely difficult to rightly fathom. We may reasonably infer that Jalál’s intense poetic temperament became fascinated by the dogmatic and powerful Shams. The very treatment of this friendship, both in the Lyrical Poems, and in the Masnavi, is Súfī The two following quotations, from many that might be cited, will prove sufficient to illustrate this point:

The face of Shamsi Din, Tabrīz’s glory, is the sun.
In whose track the cloud-like hearts are moving.

O Shamsi Tabriz, beauty and glory of the horizons,
What king but is a beggar of thee with heart and soul?


The historian al-Aflākī, in his collection of anecdotes called Menaqibu L ‘Arīfin,[6] gives a number of stories relating to the miracles and wise sayings of Jalāl. Many of these miraculous performances were followed by the conversion of those who witnessed them. A marvel or a wise saying of Jalāl was generally accompanied by music and dance, which reminds us of the jubilations of the Indian gods after Rama’s victories over his enemies. These stories, interesting enough in themselves, can scarcely be credited to such a learned man as Jalāl undoubtedly was. According to tradition he spoke to frogs and fishes, raised the dead to life, and at the same time very ignominiously lost his temper when a disciple who said, after having received Jalāl’s instructions: “God willing.” After all, the significance of Jalāl lies not in these rather lamentable fairy tales, but in the fruit of his work. Jalāl, like the Lord Buddha, suffered considerably from the addition of fabulous tales and fancies of no real moment to his teachings.

Al-Aflākī tells a pretty story concerning the tenderness of Jalāl for little children. As the poet passed by some children, they left their play and ran to him and bowed. Jalāl bowed in response. One little boy, some distance off, seeing the honour bestowed upon his playmates, cried to Jalāl: “Wait for me until I come!” And Jalāl waited and bowed to the little child. This story is worth far more than juggler’s tricks.

Jalālu’d-Dīn Rūmī died at Qonia in 1273 A.D., praising God and leaving to the world a vast store of spiritual knowledge and many wise instructions to his son, Baha’-d-Dīn Valad. It is very gratifying to note that at the death of Jalāl his mourners were of all creeds. A Christian was asked why he wept over a Muslim grave, and he replied: “We esteem him as the Moses, the David, the Jesus of our time; and we are his disciples, his adherents.” This was indeed a splendid and worthy tribute to the memory of so great a man.

I hope I have already demonstrated that the very nature of Sūfī poetry is entirely lacking in creed or dogma, and certainly the great singer of the Masnavi has left in his songs a wealth of the wonder of Divine Love.

THE NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF JALĀLU’D-DĪN RŪMĪ’S POETRY

The Lyrical.—We have already noted the acceptance of the Asrarna. Among the other literary influences, according to Mr. Nicholson, we may note the poems of Sana’i, Sa’di, and Nizāmī. The fact that Jalāl’s poetry sometimes faintly resembles Omar Khayyám’s is too slight to be of any value. Mr. Nicholson very ably sums up the nature of the Masnavi and Divan respectively: “The one is a majestic river, calm and deep, meandering through many a rich and varied landscape to the immeasurable ocean; the other a foaming torrent that leaps and plunges in the ethereal solitude of the hills.” The poetry of Jalāl is not of equal merit. His work seldom if ever has the technical polish of Jāmī. There is too much of it; too much produced in the belief that all his poetry was inspired. He is fond of harping on certain words, and as far as the translations are concerned he has little sense of humour.[7] There was certainly room for a touch of humour in the poet’s description of Iblis receiving from God a gift of beautiful women whereby to tempt mankind; but Jalāl entirely ignores it. These weaknesses are almost lost in the strength and purity and lyrical grandeur of many of Jalāl’s poems. He carries us along on a torrent of heavenly music. The rhythmic, swing of his wonderful dance is soul-stirring. We seem to move exultantly, ecstatically, to the sound of the poet’s singing, far behind the silver stars into the Presence of the Beloved. With what reverence, with what a glow of simile and subtle suggestion he describes the Beauty of the Beloved! With what exquisite passion he foretells the Eternal Union! Then there is a lull in this fierce spiritual song, and Jalāl sings, ever so gently and with an infinite tenderness, about human tears being turned into “rain-clouds.” He sings about the meeting of two friends in Paradise, with the oft-repeated refrain, “Thou and I.” There seems in this poem an indescribable and almost pathetic play on the idea of human friendship and the Divine Friendship, a yearning tenderness for that human shadow, passing shadow though it be. Jalāl appears to have the power of producing almost orchestral effects in his music of the Spheres. There is that terrific touch of Wagner about his poetry, and in those suggestive Wagner-pauses there is a tenderness of expression more touching, more truly great than the loud triumphant notes. Jalāl has truly said: “Our journey is to the Rose-Garden of Union.” He sang about, the Divine Rose-Garden; but he did not forget to sing about the roses that fade and the human hearts that ache. We seem to see Jalāl ever bowing to the little child in all his wonderful singing.

The Masnavi.—Jalāl is said to have been forty-three years engaged in writing the Masnavi. Often whole nights were spent in its composition, Jalāl reciting and his friend Hasam copying it down and sometimes singing portions of the verse in his beautiful voice. At the completion of the first book Hasam’s wife died, and two years elapsed before the work was continued. The Masnavi is full of profound mysteries, and is a most important book in the
study of Sūfism—mysteries which must, for the most part, be left to the discernment of the reader. Jalāl himself has said that great Love is silent. It is in Silence that we shall come to understand the supreme Mystery of Love that has no comparison. The key-note to the Masnavi may be found in the Prologue to the first book. The poet here sings of the soul’s longing to be united with the Beloved. The fact that he, and all other Sūfī poets, use as an analogy the love between man and woman renders the spiritual meaning extremely vague. We have, however, already considered this point in the introduction, and it needs no further explanation. The Masnavi has all the pantheistic beauty of the Psalms, the music of the hills, the colour and scent of roses, the swaying of forests; but it has considerably more than that. These things of scent and form and colour are the Mirror of the Beloved; these earthly loves the journey down the valley into the Rose-Garden where the roses never fade, and where Love is.


[7] Prof. C. E. Wilson informs me that Jalāl certainly had a very fair sense of humour, and that in the original there is often a clever and witty play on words.

SELECTIONS FROM THE “DĪVĀNI SHAMSI TABRĪZ”

“I AM SILENT”

I am silent. Speak Thou, O Soul of Soul of Soul,
From desire of whose Face every atom grew articulate.

REMEMBER GOD AND FORGET SELF

O spirit, make thy head in search and seeking like the water of a stream,
And O reason, to gain Eternal Life tread ever-lastingly the way of Death.
Keep God in remembrance till self is forgotten,
That thou may be lost in the Called, without distraction of caller and call.

THE BELOVED THE DIVINE CONSOler

Thou who art my soul’s comfort in the season of sorrow,
Thou who art my spirit’s treasure in the bitterness of dearth!
That which the imagination has not conceived, that which the understanding has not seen,
Visited my soul from Thee; hence in worship I turn toward Thee.
By Thy grace I keep fixed on Eternity my amorous gaze,
Except, O King, the pomps that perish lead me astray.
The favour of that one, who brings glad tidings of Thee,
Even without Thy summons, is sweeter in mine ear than songs.

*
If a never-ceasing bounty should offer kingdoms,
If a hidden treasure should set before me all that is,
I would bend down my soul, I would lay my face in the dust,
I would say, “Of all these the love of such an One for me!”

“THOU ART THE SOUL OF THE WORLD”

Eternal Life, methinks, is the time of Union,
Because Time, for me, hath no place There.
Life is the vessels, Union the clear draught in them;
Without Thee what does the pain of the vessels avail me?
I had twenty thousand desires ere this;
In passion for Him not even (care of) my safety remained.
By the help of His grace I am become safe, because
The unseen King saith to me, “Thou art the soul of the world.”

THE SEA OF LOVE

Mankind, like waterfowl, are sprung from the sea—the Sea of Soul; Risen from that Sea, why should the bird make here his home? Nay, we are pearls in that Sea, therein we all abide; Else, why does wave follow wave from the Sea of Soul? ’Tis the time of Union’s attainment, ’tis the time of Eternity’s beauty, ’Tis the time of favour and largesse, ’tis the Ocean of perfect purity. The billow of largesse hath appeared, the thunder of the Sea hath arrived, The morn of blessedness hath dawned. Morn? No, ’tis the Light of God.

’Twere better that the spirit which wears not true Love as a garment Had not been: its being is but shame.

Without the dealing of Love there is no entrance to the Beloved.

’Tis Love and the Lover that live to all Eternity; Set not thy heart on aught else; ’tis only borrowed, How long wilt thou embrace a dead beloved? Embrace the Soul which is embraced by nothing. What was born of spring dies in autumn, Love’s rose-plot hath no aiding from the early spring.

“THE HOUSE OF LOVE”

This is the Lord of Heaven, who resembles Venus and the moon, This is the House of Love, which has no bound or end. Like a mirror, the soul has received Thy image in its heart; The tip of Thy curl has sunk into my heart like a comb. Forasmuch as the women cut their hands in Joseph’s presence, Come to me, O soul, for the Beloved is in the midst.

THE FINDING OF THE BELOVED

I was on that day when the Names were not, Nor any sign of existence endowed with name, By me Names and Named were brought to view On the day when there was not “I” and “We,” For a sign, the tip of the Beloved’s curl became a centre of revelation; As yet the tip of that curl was not. Cross and Christians, from end to end, I surveyed; He was not on the Cross. I went to the idol-temple, to the ancient pagoda; No trace was visible there. I went to the mountains of Herāt and Candahār; I looked; He was not in that hill-and-dale.

I gazed into my own heart; There I saw Him; He was nowhere else.

THE MOON-SOUL AND THE SEA

At morning-tide a moon appeared in the sky, And descended from the sky and gazed on me. Like a falcon which snatches a bird at the time of hunting, That moon snatched me up and coursed over the sky. When I looked at myself, I saw myself no more, Because in that moon my body became by grace even as soul. When I travelled in soul, I saw naught save the moon, Till the secret of the Eternal Theophany was revealed. The nine spheres of heaven were all merged in that moon,
The vessel of my being was completely hidden in the sea.
The sea broke into waves, and again Wisdom rose
And cast abroad a voice; so it happened and thus it befell.
Foamed the sea, and at every foam-fleck
Something took figure and something was bodied forth.
Every foam-fleck of body, which received a sign from that sea,
Melted straightway and turned to spirit in this Ocean.

LIFE IN DEATH

When my bier moveth on the day of Death,
Think not my heart is in this world.
Do not weep in the devil’s snare: that is woe.
When thou seest my hearse, cry not “Parted, parted!”
Union and meeting are mine in that hour.
If thou commit me to the grave, say not “Farewell, farewell!”
For the grave is a curtain hiding the communion of Paradise,
After beholding descent, consider resurrection;
Why should setting be injurious to the sun and moon?
To thee it seems a setting, but ‘tis a rising;
Tho’ the vault seems a prison, ‘tis the release of the soul.

Shut thy mouth on this side and open it beyond,
For in placeless air will be thy triumphal song.

THE WHOLE AND THE PART

Beware! do not keep, in a circle of reprobates,
Thine eye shut like a bud, thy mouth open like the rose.
The world resembles a mirror: thy Love is the perfect image:
O people, who has ever seen a part greater than the whole?

THE DIVINE FRIEND

Look on me, for thou art my companion in the grave
On the night when thou shalt pass from shop and dwelling.
Thou shalt hear my hail in the hollow of the tomb: it shall become known to thee
That thou wast never concealed from mine eye.
I am as reason and intellect within thy bosom
At the time of joy and gladness, at the time of sorrow and distress.

In the hour when the intellectual lamp is lighted,
What a pear goes up from the dead men in the tombs!

ASPIRATION

Haste, haste! for we too, O soul, are coming
From this world of severance to that world of Union.
O how long shall we, like children, in the earthly sphere
Fill our lap with dust and stones and sherds?
Let us give up the earth and fly heavenwards,
Let us flee from childhood to the banquet of men.
Behold how the earthly frame has entrapped thee!
Rend the sack and raise thy head clear.

“I WELL CHERISH THE SOUL”

“I am a painter, a maker of pictures; every moment I shape a beauteous form,
And then in Thy presence I melt them all away.
I call up a hundred phantoms and indue them with a spirit;
When I behold Thy phantom, I cast them in the fire.”

Lo! I will cherish the soul, because it has a perfume of Thee.
Every drop of blood which proceeds from me is saying to Thy dust:
“I am one colour with Thy love, I am a partner of Thy affection.”
In the house of water and clay this heart is desolate without Thee;
O Beloved, enter the house, or I will leave it.

THE JOURNEY TO THE BELOVED

O lovers, O lovers, it is time to abandon the world:
The drum of departure reaches my spiritual ear from heaven.
Behold, the driver has risen and made ready his files of camels,
And begged us to acquit him of blame: why, O travellers, are you asleep?
These sounds before and behind are the din of departure and of the camel-bells;
With each moment a soul and spirit is setting off into the Void.
From these inverted candles, from these blue awnings
There has come forth a wondrous people, that the mysteries may be revealed.
A heavy slumber fell upon thee from the circling spheres:
Alas, for this life so light, beware of this slumber so heavy!
O soul, seek the Beloved, O friend, seek the Friend,
O watchman, be wakeful: it behoves not a watchman to sleep.

THE DAY OF RESURRECTION

On every side is clamour and tumult, in every street are candles and torches,
For to-night the teeming world gives birth to the World Everlasting.
Thou wert dust and art spirit, thou wert ignorant and art wise.
He who has led thee thus far will lead thee further also.
How pleasant are the pains He makes thee suffer while He gently draws thee to Himself!

THE RETURN OF THE BELOVED

Always at night returns the Beloved: do not eat opium to-night;
Close your mouth against food, that you may taste the sweetness of the mouth.
Lo, the cup-bearer is no tyrant, and in his assembly there is a circle:
Come into the circle, be seated; how long will you regard the revolution (of Time)!

Why, when God’s earth is so wide, have you fallen asleep in a prison?
Avoid entangled thoughts, that you may see the explanation of Paradise.
Refrain from speaking, that you may win speech hereafter.
Abandon life and the world, that you may behold the Life of the world.

THE CALL OF THE BELOVED

Every morning a voice comes to thee from heaven:
“When thou lay’st the dust of the way, thou win’st thy way to the goal.”
On the road to the Ka’ba of Union, lo, in every thorn-bush
Are thousands slain of desire who manfully yielded up their lives.
Thousands sank wounded on this path, to whom there came not
A breath of the fragrance of Union, a token from the neighbourhood of the Friend.

“THE BANQUET OF UNION”

In memory of the banquet of Union, in yearning for His beauty
They are fallen bewildered by the wine Thou knowest.
How sweet, in the hope of Him, on the threshold of His Abode,
For the sake of seeing His face, to bring night round to day!
Illumine thy bodily senses by the Light of the soul:

Look not in the world for bliss and fortune, since thou wilt not find them;
Seek bliss in both worlds by serving Him,
Put away the tale of Love that travellers tell;
Do thou serve God with all thy might.

“THE WORLD GAVE THEE FALSE CLUES”
The world gave thee false clues, like a ghoul:
Thou took’st no heed of the clue, but wentest to that which is without a clue.
Since thou art now the sun, why dost thou wear a tiara?
Why seek a girdle, since thou art gone from the middle?
I have heard that thou art gazing with distorted eyes upon thy soul:
Why dost thou gaze on thy soul, since thou art gone to the Soul of soul?
O heart, what a wondrous bird art thou, that in chase of divine rewards
Thou didst fly with two wings to the spear-point, like a shield!
The rose flees from autumn—O what a fearless rose art thou,
Who didst go loitering along in the presence of the autumn wind!
Falling like rain from heaven upon the roof of the terrestrial world
Thou didst run in every direction till thou didst escape by conduit.
Be silent and free from the pain of speech: do not slumber,
Since thou hast taken refuge with so loving a Friend.

“HE COMES”

He comes, a moon whose like the sky ne’er saw, awake or dreaming,
Crowned with Eternal Flame no flood can lay.
Lo, from the flagon of Thy Love, O Lord, my soul is swimming,
And ruined all my body’s house of clay!
When first the Giver of the grape my lonely heart befriended,
Wine fired my bosom and my veins filled up,
But when His image all mine eye possessed, a voice descended:
“Well done, O sovereign Wine and peerless Cup!”
Love’s mighty arm from roof to base each dark abode is hewing
Where chinks reluctant catch a golden ray.
My heart, when Love’s sea of a sudden burst into its viewing,
Leaped headlong in, with “Find me now who may!”

“I SAW THE WINTER WEAVING”

I saw the winter weaving from flakes a robe of Death;
And the spring found earth in mourning, all naked, lone, and bare.
I heard Time’s loom a-whirring that wove the Sun’s dim Veil;
I saw a worm a-weaving in Life-threads its own lair.
I saw the Great was Smallest, and saw the Smallest Great;
For God had set His likeness on all the things that were.

“LOVE SOUNDS THE MUSIC OF THE SPHERES”

O, soul, if thou, too, wouldst be free,
Then love the Love that shuts thee in.
’Tis Love that twisteth every snare;
’Tis Love that snaps the bond of sin;
Love sounds the Music of the Spheres;
Love echoes through Earth’s harshest din.

* * * * * * * *¨* * * * * * *

The world is God’s pure mirror clear,
To eyes when free from clouds within.
With Love’s own eyes the Mirror view,
And there see God to self akin.

“THE SOULS LOVE-MOVED”

The souls love-moved are circling on,
Like streams to their great Ocean King.
Thou art the Sun of all men’s thoughts;
Thy kisses are the flowers of spring.
The dawn is pale from yearning Love;
The moon in tears is sorrowing.
Thou art the Rose, and deep for Thee,
In sighs, the nightingales still sing.

“THOU AND I”

Happy the moment when we are seated in the Palace, thou and I,
With two forms and with two figures but with one soul, thou and I.
The colours of the grove and the voice of the birds will bestow immortality
At the time when we come into the garden, thou and I.
The stars of heaven will come to gaze upon us;
We shall show them the moon itself, thou and I.
Thou and I, individuals no more, shall be mingled in ecstasy,
Joyful, and secure from foolish babble, thou and I.
All the bright-plumed birds of heaven will devour their hearts with envy
In the place where we shall laugh in such a fashion, thou and I.
This is the greatest wonder, that thou and I, sitting here in the same nook,
Are at this moment both in Irāq and Khorasan, thou and I.


SELECTIONS FROM THE “MASNAVI”

SORROW QUENCHED IN THE BELOVED

Through grief my days are as labour and sorrow,
My days move on, hand in hand with anguish.
Yet, though my days vanish thus, ‘tis no matter,
Do Thou abide, O Incomparable Pure One.

THE MUSIC OF LOVE

Hail to thee, then, O LOVE, sweet madness!
Thou who healest all our infirmities!
Who art the Physician of our pride and self conceit!
Who art our Plato and our Galen!
Love exalts our earthly bodies to heaven,
And makes the very hills to dance with joy!
O lover, ‘twas Love that gave life to Mount Sinai,
When “it quaked, and Moses fell down in a swoon.”
Did my Beloved only touch me with His lips,
I too, like a flute, would burst out into melody.

THE SILENCE OF LOVE

Love is the astrolabe of God’s mysteries.
A lover may hanker after this love or that love,
But at the last he is drawn to the KING of Love.
However much we describe and explain Love,
When we fall in love we are ashamed of our words.
Explanation by the tongue makes most things clear,
But Love unexplained is better.

EARTHLY LOVE ESSENTIAL TO THE LOVE DIVINE

In one ‘twas said, “Leave power and weakness alone;
Whatever withdraws thine eyes from God is an idol.”
In one ‘twas said, “Quench not thy earthy torch,
That it may be a light to lighten mankind.
If thou neglectest regard and care for it,
Thou wilt quench at midnight the lamp of Union.”
WOMAN

Woman is a ray of God, not a mere mistress,  
The Creator's Self, as it were, not a mere creature!

THE DIVINE UNION

Mustafa became beside himself at that sweet call,  
His prayer failed on "the night of the early morning halt."  
He lifted not head from that blissful sleep,[1]  
So that his morning prayer was put off till noon.  
On that, his wedding night, in the presence of his bride,  
His pure soul attained to kiss her hands.  
Love and mistress are both veiled and hidden.  
Impute it not a fault if I call Him "Bride."

"HE KNOWS ABOUT IT ALL"[2]

He who is from head to foot a perfect rose or lily,  
To him spring brings rejoicing.  
The useless thorn desires the autumn,  
That autumn may associate itself with the garden;  
And hide the rose's beauty and the thorn's shame,  
That men may not see the bloom of the one and the other's shame;  
That common stone and pure ruby may appear all as one.  
True, the Gardener knows the difference in the autumn,  
But the sight of One is better than the world's sight.

LOVE THE SOURCE OF LIGHT RATHER THAN VANISHING FORM

Whatsoever is perceived by sense He annuls,  
But He stablishes that which is hidden from the senses.  
The lover's love is visible, his Beloved hidden.  
The Friend is absent, the distraction He causes present.  
Renounce these affections for outward forms,  
Love depends not on outward form or face.  
Whatever is beloved is not a mere empty form,  
Whether your beloved be of the earth or heaven.  
Whatever is the form you have fallen in love with—  
Why do you forsake it the moment life leaves it?  
The form[3] is still there; whence then this disgust at it?  
Ah! lover, consider well what is really your beloved.  
If a thing perceived by outward senses is the beloved,  
Then all who retain their senses must still love it;  
And since Love increases constancy,  
How can constancy fail while form abides?  
But the truth is, the sun's beams strike the wall,  
And the wall only reflects that borrowed light.  
Why give your heart to mere stones, O simpleton?  
Go! Seek the Source of Light which shineth alway!

“PAIN IS A TREASURE!”

Pain is a treasure, for it contains mercies;  
The kernel is soft when the rind is scraped off.  
O brother, the place of darkness and cold  
Is the fountain of Life and the cup of ecstasy.  
So also is endurance of pain and sickness and disease.  
For from abasement proceeds exaltation.  
The spring seasons are hidden in the autumns,  
And the autumns are charged with springs.

THE BELOVED COMPARED TO “A SWEET GARDEN”
“We bow down our heads before His edict and ordinance,
We stake precious life to gain His favour.
While the thought of the Beloved fills our hearts,
All our work is to do Him service and spend life for Him.
Wherever He kindles His destructive torch,
Myriads of lovers’ souls are burnt therewith.
The lovers who dwell within the sanctuary
Are moths burnt with the torch of the Beloved’s face.”
O heart, haste thither, for God will shine upon you,
And seem to you a sweet garden instead of a terror.
He will infuse into your soul a new Soul,
So as to fill you, like a goblet, with wine.
Take up your abode in His Soul!
Take up your abode in heaven, O bright full moon!
Like the heavenly Scribe, He will open your heart’s book
That He may reveal mysteries unto you.

“BEHOLD THE WATER OF WATERS!”

The sea itself is one thing, the foam another;
Neglect the foam, and regard the sea with your eyes.
Waves of foam rise from the sea night and day.
You look at the foam ripples and not at the mighty sea.
We, like boats, are tossed hither and thither,
We are blind though we are on the bright ocean.
Ah! you who are asleep in the boat of the body,
You see the water; behold the Water of waters!
Under the water you see there is another Water moving it.
Within the spirit is a Spirit that calls it.

When you have accepted the Light, O beloved,
When you behold what is veiled without a veil,
Like a star you will walk upon the heavens.

WHERE LOVE IS

A damsel said to her lover, “O fond youth,
You have visited many cities in your travels;
Which of those cities seems most delightful to you?”
He made answer, “The city wherein my love dwells,
In whatever nook my queen alights;
Though it be as the eye of a needle, ‘tis a wide plain;
Wherever her Yusuf-like face shines as a moon,
Though it be the bottom of a well, ‘tis Paradise.
With thee, my love, hell itself were heaven.
With thee a prison would be a rose-garden.
With thee hell would be a mansion of delight,
Without thee lilies and roses would be as flames of fire!”

THE LOVE OF THE BELOVED

No lover ever seeks union with his beloved,
But his beloved is also seeking union with him.
But the lover’s love[5] makes his body lean,
While the Beloved’s love makes her fair and lusty.
When in this heart the lightning spark of love arises,
Be sure this Love is reciprocated in that heart.
When the Love of God arises in thy heart,
Without doubt God also feels love for thee.

“O LOVE, LOVE, AND HEART’S DESIRE OF LOVE!”

Israfil of the resurrection-day of Love!
Love, Love, and heart’s desire of Love!
Let thy first boon to me be this:
To lend thine ear to my orisons,
Though thou knowest my condition clearly,
O protector of slaves, listen to my speech.
A thousand times, O prince incomparable,
Has my reason taken flight in desire to see thee,
And to hear thee and to listen to thy words,
And to behold thy life-giving smiles.
Thy inclining thine ear to my supplications
Is as a caress to my misguided soul.

DESTROY NOT EARTHLY BEAUTY: IT BEAUTIFIES THE SOUL

Tear not thy plumage off, it cannot be replaced;
Disfigure not thy face in wantonness, O fair one!
That face which is bright as the forenoon sun—
To disfigure it were a grievous sin.
‘Twere paganism to mar such a face as thine
The moon itself would weep to lose sight of it!
Knowest thou not the beauty of thine own face?
Quit this temper that leads thee to war with thyself!
It is the claws of thine own foolish thoughts
That in spite wound the face of thy quiet soul.
Know such thoughts to be claws fraught with poison.
Which score deep wounds on the face of thy soul.

“LOVERS AND BELOVED HAVE BOTH PERISHED”

Lovers and beloved have both perished;
And not themselves only, but their love as well.
’Tis God alone who agitates these nonentities,
Making one nonentity fall in love with another.
In the heart that is no heart envy comes to a head,
Thus Being troubles nonentity.[8]

“O ANGELS, BRING HIM BACK TO ME”

“O angels, bring him back to me.
Since the eyes of his heart were set on Hope,
Without care for consequence I set him free,
And draw the pen through the record of his sins!”

“I AM THINE, AND THOU ART MINE!”

Eternal Life is gained by utter abandonment of one’s own life. When God appears to His ardent lover the lover is absorbed in Him, and not so much as a hair of the lover remains. True lovers are as shadows, and when the sun shines in glory the shadows vanish away. He is a true lover to God to whom God says, “I am thine, and thou art Mine!”

LOVE NEEDS NO MEDIATOR

When one has attained Union with God he has no need of intermediaries. Prophets and apostles are needed as links to connect ordinary man with God, but he who hears the “inner voice” within him has no need to listen to outward words, even of apostles. Although that intercession is himself dwelling in God, yet my state is higher and more lovely than his. Though he is God’s agent, yet I desire not his intercession to save me from evil sent me by God, for evil at God’s hand seems to me good. What seems mercy and kindness to the vulgar seems wrath and vengeance to God-intoxicated saints.

HUMANITY THE REFLECTION OF THE BELOVED

Parrots are taught to speak without understanding the words. The method is to place a mirror between the parrot and the trainer. The trainer, hidden by the mirror, utters the words, and the parrot, seeing his own reflection in
the mirror, fancies another parrot is speaking, and imitates all that is said by the trainer behind the mirror. So God uses prophets and saints as mirrors whereby to instruct men, viz., the bodies of these saints and prophets; and men, when they hear the words proceeding from these mirrors, are utterly ignorant that they are really being spoken by “Universal Reason” or the “Word of God” behind the mirror of the saints.

“EARTHLY FORMS”

Earthly forms are only shadows of the Sun of Truth—a cradle for babes, but too small to hold those who have grown to spiritual manhood.

“THE BEATIFIC VISION OF ETERNAL TRUTH”

The end and object of all negation is to attain to subsequent affirmation, as the negation in the creed, “There is no God,” finds its complement and purpose in the affirmation “but God.” Just so the purpose of negation of self is to clear the way for the apprehension of the fact that there is no existence but the One. The intoxication of Life and its pleasures and occupations veils the Truth from men’s eyes, and they ought to pass on to the spiritual intoxication which makes men beside themselves and lifts them to the beatific vision of eternal Truth.

THE WINE EVERLASTING

O babbler, while thy soul is drunk with mere date wine,
Thy spirit hath not tasted the genuine grapes.
For the token of thy having seen that divine Light
Is this, to withdraw thyself from the house of pride.

BE LOST IN THE BEAUTY OF THE BELOVED

When those Egyptian women sacrificed their reason,
They penetrated the mansion of Joseph’s love;
The Cup-bearer of Life bore away their reason,
They were filled with wisdom of the world without end.
Joseph’s beauty was only an offshoot of God’s beauty:
Be lost, then, in God’s beauty more than those women.

“WHAT EAR HAS TOLD YOU FALSELY”

What ear has told you falsely eye will tell truly.
Then ear, too, will acquire the properties of an eye;
Your ears, now worthless as wool, will become gems;
Yea, your whole body will become a mirror,
It will be as an eye of a bright gem in your bosom.
First the hearing of the ear enables you to form ideas,
Then these ideas guide you to the Beloved.
Strive, then, to increase the number of these ideas,
That they may guide you, like Majnun, to the Beloved.

“THERE IS A PLACE OF REFUGE”

Yea, O sleeping heart, know the kingdom that endures not
For ever and ever is only a mere dream.
I marvel how long you will indulge in vain illusion,
Which has seized you by the throat like a heads man.
Know that even in this world there is a place of refuge;
Hearken not to the unbeliever who denies it.
His argument is this: he says again and again,
“If there were aught beyond this life we should see it.”
But if the child see not the state of reason,
Does the man of reason therefore forsake reason?
And if the man of reason sees not the state of Love,
Is the blessed moon of Love thereby eclipsed?

THE LOVER’S CRY TO THE BELOVED
“My back is broken by the conflict of my thoughts;
O Beloved One, come and stroke my head in mercy!
The palm of Thy hand on my head gives me rest,
Thy hand is a sign of Thy bounteous providence.
Remove not Thy shadow from my head,
I am afflicted, afflicted, afflicted!
Sleep has deserted my eyes
Through my longing for Thee, O Envy of cypresses!

O take my life, Thou art the Source of Life!
For apart from Thee I am wearied of my life.
I am a lover well versed in lovers’ madness,
I am weary of learning and sense.”

Sorrow turned to joy

“He who extracts the rose from the thorn
Can also turn this winter into spring.
He who exalts the heads of the cypresses
Is able also out of sadness to bring joy.”

The gifts of the beloved

Where will you find one more liberal than God?
He buys the worthless rubbish which is your wealth,
He pays you the Light that illumines your heart.
He accepts these frozen and lifeless bodies of yours,
And gives you a Kingdom beyond what you dream of,
He takes a few drops of your tears,
And gives you the Divine Fount sweeter than sugar.
He takes your sighs fraught with grief and sadness,
And for each sigh gives rank in heaven as interest.
In return for the sigh-wind that raised tear-clouds,
God gave Abraham the title of “Father of the Faithful.”

“Thou art hidden from us”

Thou art hidden from us, though the heavens are filled
With Thy Light, which is brighter than sun and moon!
Thou art hidden, yet revealest our hidden secrets
Thou art the Source that causes our rivers to flow.
Thou art hidden in Thy essence, but seen by Thy bounties.
Thou art like the water, and we like the mill-stone.
Thou art like the wind, and we like the dust;
The wind is unseen, but the dust is seen by all.
Thou art the Spring, and we the sweet green garden;
Spring is not seen, though its gifts are seen.
Thou art as the Soul, we as hand and foot;
Soul instructs hand and foot to hold and take.
Thou art as Reason, we like the tongue;
’Tis reason that teaches the tongue to speak.
Thou art as Joy, and we are laughing;
The laughter is the consequence of the joy.
Our every motion every moment testifies,
For it proves the presence of the Everlasting God.

’Tis God’s Light that illumines the senses’ light,
That is the meaning of “Light upon light.”
The senses’ light draws us earthwards.
God’s Light calls us heavenwards.

[1] The night of his marriage with Safiyya.

[3] “Form” here is used rather as-soul, the love behind the decaying body.


[7] The meaning of this poem is strictly allegorical. We must not infer that the All-Good would be a party to the evil designs of the Devil. No material gifts, however seductive, could succeed in stamping out the Divine Presence in His Creatures.

[8] At first sight there seems to be Omarian pessimism in this poem. In reality it signifies that all Love is One, which shines through the ever-vanishing lanterns of the world.

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Lao Tzu, Tao te Ching

THE TAO TEH KING,

OR

THE TAO AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

by Lao-Tse

Translated by James Legge

Contents

PART 1.

PART II.

PART 1.

Ch. 1. 1. The Tao that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Tao. The name that can be named is not the enduring and unchanging name.

2. (Conceived of as) having no name, it is the Originator of heaven and earth; (conceived of as) having a name, it is the Mother of all things.

3.

Always without desire we must be found,
If its deep mystery we would sound;
But if desire always within us be,
Its outer fringe is all that we shall see.

4. Under these two aspects, it is really the same; but as development takes place, it receives the different names. Together we call them the Mystery. Where the Mystery is the deepest is the gate of all that is subtle and
wonderful.

2. 1. All in the world know the beauty of the beautiful, and in doing this they have (the idea of) what ugliness is; they all know the skill of the skilful, and in doing this they have (the idea of) what the want of skill is.

2. So it is that existence and non-existence give birth the one to (the idea of) the other; that difficulty and ease produce the one (the idea of) the other; that length and shortness fashion out the one the figure of the other; that (the ideas of) height and lowness arise from the contrast of the one with the other; that the musical notes and tones become harmonious through the relation of one with another; and that being before and behind give the idea of one following another.

3. Therefore the sage manages affairs without doing anything, and conveys his instructions without the use of speech.

4. All things spring up, and there is not one which declines to show itself; they grow, and there is no claim made for their ownership; they go through their processes, and there is no expectation (of a reward for the results). The work is accomplished, and there is no resting in it (as an achievement).

   The work is done, but how no one can see;
   'Tis this that makes the power not cease to be.

3. 1. Not to value and employ men of superior ability is the way to keep the people from rivalry among themselves; not to prize articles which are difficult to procure is the way to keep them from becoming thieves; not to show them what is likely to excite their desires is the way to keep their minds from disorder.

2. Therefore the sage, in the exercise of his government, empties their minds, fills their bellies, weakens their wills, and strengthens their bones.

3. He constantly (tries to) keep them without knowledge and without desire, and where there are those who have knowledge, to keep them from presuming to act (on it). When there is this abstinence from action, good order is universal.

4. 1. The Tao is (like) the emptiness of a vessel; and in our employment of it we must be on our guard against all fulness. How deep and unfathomable it is, as if it were the Honoured Ancestor of all things!

2. We should blunt our sharp points, and unravel the complications of things; we should attemper our brightness, and bring ourselves into agreement with the obscurity of others. How pure and still the Tao is, as if it would ever so continue!

3. I do not know whose son it is. It might appear to have been before God.

5. 1. Heaven and earth do not act from (the impulse of) any wish to be benevolent; they deal with all things as the dogs of grass are dealt with. The sages do not act from (any wish to be) benevolent; they deal with the people as the dogs of grass are dealt with.

2. May not the space between heaven and earth be compared to a bellows?

   'Tis emptied, yet it loses not its power;
   'Tis moved again, and sends forth air the more.
   Much speech to swift exhaustion lead we see;
   Your inner being guard, and keep it free.

6.

   The valley spirit dies not, aye the same;
   The female mystery thus do we name.
   Its gate, from which at first they issued forth,
   Is called the root from which grew heaven and earth.
   Long and unbroken does its power remain,
   Used gently, and without the touch of pain.

7. 1. Heaven is long-enduring and earth continues long. The reason why heaven and earth are able to endure and continue thus long is because they do not live of, or for, themselves. This is how they are able to continue and endure.
2. Therefore the sage puts his own person last, and yet it is found in the foremost place; he treats his person as if it were foreign to him, and yet that person is preserved. Is it not because he has no personal and private ends, that therefore such ends are realised?

8. 1. The highest excellence is like (that of) water. The excellence of water appears in its benefiting all things, and in its occupying, without striving (to the contrary), the low place which all men dislike. Hence (its way) is near to (that of) the Tao.

2. The excellence of a residence is in (the suitability of) the place; that of the mind is in abysmal stillness; that of associations is in their being with the virtuous; that of government is in its securing good order; that of (the conduct of) affairs is in its ability; and that of (the initiation of) any movement is in its timeliness.

3. And when (one with the highest excellence) does not wrangle (about his low position), no one finds fault with him.

9. 1. It is better to leave a vessel unfilled, than to attempt to carry it when it is full. If you keep feeling a point that has been sharpened, the point cannot long preserve its sharpness.

2. When gold and jade fill the hall, their possessor cannot keep them safe. When wealth and honours lead to arrogancy, this brings its evil on itself. When the work is done, and one’s name is becoming distinguished, to withdraw into obscurity is the way of Heaven.

10. 1. When the intelligent and animal souls are held together in one embrace, they can be kept from separating. When one gives undivided attention to the (vital) breath, and brings it to the utmost degree of pliancy, he can become as a (tender) babe. When he has cleansed away the most mysterious sights (of his imagination), he can become without a flaw.

2. In loving the people and ruling the state, cannot he proceed without any (purpose of) action? In the opening and shutting of his gates of heaven, cannot he do so as a female bird? While his intelligence reaches in every direction, cannot he (appear to) be without knowledge?

3. (The Tao) produces (all things) and nourishes them; it produces them and does not claim them as its own; it does all, and yet does not boast of it; it presides over all, and yet does not control them. This is what is called ‘The mysterious Quality’ (of the Tao).

11. The thirty spokes unite in the one nave; but it is on the empty space (for the axle), that the use of the wheel depends. Clay is fashioned into vessels; but it is on their empty hollowness, that their use depends. The door and windows are cut out (from the walls) to form an apartment; but it is on the empty space (within), that its use depends. Therefore, what has a (positive) existence serves for profitable adaptation, and what has not that for (actual) usefulness.

12.

1.

   Colour's five hues from th' eyes their sight will take;
   Music's five notes the ears as deaf can make;
   The flavours five deprive the mouth of taste;
   The chariot course, and the wild hunting waste
   Make mad the mind; and objects rare and strange,
   Sought for, men's conduct will to evil change.

2. Therefore the sage seeks to satisfy (the craving of) the belly, and not the (insatiable longing of the) eyes. He puts from him the latter, and prefers to seek the former.

13. 1. Favour and disgrace would seem equally to be feared; honour and great calamity, to be regarded as personal conditions (of the same kind).

2. What is meant by speaking thus of favour and disgrace? Disgrace is being in a low position (after the enjoyment of favour). The getting that (favour) leads to the apprehension (of losing it), and the losing it leads to the fear of (still greater calamity):—this is what is meant by saying that favour and disgrace would seem equally to be feared.

And what is meant by saying that honour and great calamity are to be (similarly) regarded as personal conditions? What makes me liable to great calamity is my having the body (which I call myself); if I had not the body, what
great calamity could come to me?

3. Therefore he who would administer the kingdom, honouring it as he honours his own person, may be employed to govern it, and he who would administer it with the love which he bears to his own person may be entrusted with it.

14. 1. We look at it, and we do not see it, and we name it ‘the Equable.’ We listen to it, and we do not hear it, and we name it ‘the Inaudible.’ We try to grasp it, and do not get hold of it, and we name it ‘the Subtle.’ With these three qualities, it cannot be made the subject of description; and hence we blend them together and obtain The One.

2. Its upper part is not bright, and its lower part is not obscure. Ceaseless in its action, it yet cannot be named, and then it again returns and becomes nothing. This is called the Form of the Formless, and the Simbance of the Invisible; this is called the Fleeting and Indeterminable.

3. We meet it and do not see its Front; we follow it, and do not see its Back. When we can lay hold of the Tao of old to direct the things of the present day, and are able to know it as it was of old in the beginning, this is called (unwinding) the clue of Tao.

15. 1. The skilful masters (of the Tao) in old times, with a subtle and exquisite penetration, comprehended its mysteries, and were deep (also) so as to elude men’s knowledge. As they were thus beyond men’s knowledge, I will make an effort to describe of what sort they appeared to be.

2. Shrinking looked they like those who wade through a stream in winter; irresolute like those who are afraid of all around them; grave like a guest (in awe of his host); evanescent like ice that is melting away; unpretentious like wood that has not been fashioned into anything; vacant like a valley, and dull like muddy water.

3. Who can (make) the muddy water (clear)? Let it be still, and it will gradually become clear. Who can secure the condition of rest? Let movement go on, and the condition of rest will gradually arise.

4. They who preserve this method of the Tao do not wish to be full (of themselves). It is through their not being full of themselves that they can afford to seem worn and not appear new and complete.

16. 1. The (state of) vacancy should be brought to the utmost degree, and that of stillness guarded with unwearying vigour. All things alike go through their processes of activity, and (then) we see them return (to their original state). When things (in the vegetable world) have displayed their luxuriant growth, we see each of them return to its root. This returning to their root is what we call the state of stillness; and that stillness may be called a reporting that they have fulfilled their appointed end.

2. The report of that fulfilment is the regular, unchanging rule. To know that unchanging rule is to be intelligent; not to know it leads to wild movements and evil issues. The knowledge of that unchanging rule produces a (grand) capacity and forbearance, and that capacity and forbearance lead to a community (of feeling with all things). From this community of feeling comes a kinglyness of character; and he who is king-like goes on to be heaven-like. In that likeness to heaven he possesses the Tao. Possessed of the Tao, he endures long; and to the end of his bodily life, is exempt from all danger of decay.

17. 1. In the highest antiquity, (the people) did not know that there were (their rulers). In the next age they loved them and praised them. In the next they feared them; in the next they despised them. Thus it was that when faith (in the Tao) was deficient (in the rulers) a want of faith in them ensued (in the people).

2. How irresolute did those (earliest rulers) appear, showing (by their reticence) the importance which they set upon their words! Their work was done and their undertakings were successful, while the people all said, ‘We are as we are, of ourselves!’

18. 1. When the Great Tao (Way or Method) ceased to be observed, benevolence and righteousness came into vogue. (Then) appeared wisdom and shrewdness, and there ensued great hypocrisy.

2. When harmony no longer prevailed throughout the six kinships, filial sons found their manifestation; when the states and clans fell into disorder, loyal ministers appeared.

19. 1. If we could renounce our sageness and discard our wisdom, it would be better for the people a hundredfold. If we could renounce our benevolence and discard our righteousness, the people would again become filial and kindly. If we could renounce our artful contrivances and discard our (scheming for) gain, there would be no
thieves nor robbers.

2.

Those three methods (of government)
Thought olden ways in elegance did fail
And made these names their want of worth to veil;
But simple views, and courses plain and true
Would selfish ends and many lusts eschew.

20.

1. When we renounce learning we have no troubles.
The (ready) 'yes,' and (flattering) 'yea;'—
Small is the difference they display.
But mark their issues, good and ill;—
What space the gulf between shall fill?

What all men fear is indeed to be feared; but how wide and without end is the range of questions (asking to be discussed)!

2. The multitude of men look satisfied and pleased; as if enjoying a full banquet, as if mounted on a tower in spring. I alone seem listless and still, my desires having as yet given no indication of their presence. I am like an infant which has not yet smiled. I look dejected and forlorn, as if I had no home to go to. The multitude of men all have enough and to spare. I alone seem to have lost everything. My mind is that of a stupid man; I am in a state of chaos.

Ordinary men look bright and intelligent, while I alone seem to be benighted. They look full of discrimination, while I alone am dull and confused. I seem to be carried about as on the sea, drifting as if I had nowhere to rest. All men have their spheres of action, while I alone seem dull and incapable, like a rude borderer. (Thus) I alone am different from other men, but I value the nursing-mother (the Tao).

21.

The grandest forms of active force
From Tao come, their only source.
Who can of Tao the nature tell?
Our sight it flies, our touch as well.
Eluding sight, eluding touch,
The forms of things all in it crouch;
Eluding touch, eluding sight,
There are their semblances, all right.
Profound it is, dark and obscure;
Things' essences all there endure.
Those essences the truth enfold
Of what, when seen, shall then be told.
Now it is so; 'twas so of old.
Its name—what passes not away;
So, in their beautiful array,
Things form and never know decay.

How know I that it is so with all the beauties of existing things? By this (nature of the Tao).

22. 1. The partial becomes complete; the crooked, straight; the empty, full; the worn out, new. He whose (desires) are few gets them; he whose (desires) are many goes astray.

2. Therefore the sage holds in his embrace the one thing (of humility), and manifests it to all the world. He is free from self-display, and therefore he shines; from self-assertion, and therefore he is distinguished; from self-boasting, and therefore his merit is acknowledged; from self-complacency, and therefore he acquires superiority. It is because he is thus free from striving that therefore no one in the world is able to strive with him.

3. That saying of the ancients that 'the partial becomes complete' was not vainly spoken:—all real completion is
comprehended under it.

23. 1. Abstaining from speech marks him who is obeying the spontaneity of his nature. A violent wind does not last for a whole morning; a sudden rain does not last for the whole day. To whom is it that these (two) things are owing? To Heaven and Earth. If Heaven and Earth cannot make such (spasmodic) actings last long, how much less can man!

2. Therefore when one is making the Tao his business, those who are also pursuing it, agree with him in it, and those who are making the manifestation of its course their object agree with him in that; while even those who are failing in both these things agree with him where they fail.

3. Hence, those with whom he agrees as to the Tao have the happiness of attaining to it; those with whom he agrees as to its manifestation have the happiness of attaining to it; and those with whom he agrees in their failure have also the happiness of attaining (to the Tao). (But) when there is not faith sufficient (on his part), a want of faith (in him) ensues (on the part of the others).

24. He who stands on his tiptoes does not stand firm; he who stretches his legs does not walk (easily). (So), he who displays himself does not shine; he who asserts his own views is not distinguished; he who vaunts himself does not find his merit acknowledged; he who is self-conceited has no superiority allowed to him. Such conditions, viewed from the standpoint of the Tao, are like remnants of food, or a tumour on the body, which all dislike. Hence those who pursue (the course) of the Tao do not adopt and allow them.

25. 1. There was something undefined and complete, coming into existence before Heaven and Earth. How still it was and formless, standing alone, and undergoing no change, reaching everywhere and in no danger (of being exhausted)! It may be regarded as the Mother of all things.

2. I do not know its name, and I give it the designation of the Tao (the Way or Course). Making an effort (further) to give it a name I call it The Great.

3. Great, it passes on (in constant flow). Passing on, it becomes remote. Having become remote, it returns. Therefore the Tao is great; Heaven is great; Earth is great; and the (sage) king is also great. In the universe there are four that are great, and the (sage) king is one of them.

4. Man takes his law from the Earth; the Earth takes its law from Heaven; Heaven takes its law from the Tao. The law of the Tao is its being what it is.

26. 1. Gravity is the root of lightness; stillness, the ruler of movement.

2. Therefore a wise prince, marching the whole day, does not go far from his baggage wagons. Although he may have brilliant prospects to look at, he quietly remains (in his proper place), indifferent to them. How should the lord of a myriad chariots carry himself lightly before the kingdom? If he do act lightly, he has lost his root (of gravity); if he proceed to active movement, he will lose his throne.

27. 1. The skilful traveller leaves no traces of his wheels or footsteps; the skilful speaker says nothing that can be found fault with or blamed; the skilful reckoner uses no tallies; the skilful closer needs no bolts or bars, while to open what he has shut will be impossible; the skilful binder uses no strings or knots, while to unloose what he has bound will be impossible. In the same way the sage is always skilful at saving men, and so he does not cast away any man; he is always skilful at saving things, and so he does not cast away anything. This is called 'Hiding the light of his procedure.'

2. Therefore the man of skill is a master (to be looked up to) by him who has not the skill; and he who has not the skill is the helper of (the reputation of) him who has the skill. If the one did not honour his master, and the other did not rejoice in his helper, an (observer), though intelligent, might greatly err about them. This is called 'The utmost degree of mystery.'

28. 1.

Who knows his manhood's strength,
Yet still his female feebleness maintains;
As to one channel flow the many drains,
All come to him, yea, all beneath the sky.
Thus he the constant excellence retains;
The simple child again, free from all stains.

Who knows how white attracts,
Yet always keeps himself within black's shade,
The pattern of humility displayed,
Displayed in view of all beneath the sky;
He in the unchanging excellence arrayed,
Endless return to man's first state has made.

Who knows how glory shines,
Yet loves disgrace, nor e'er for it is pale;
Behold his presence in a spacious vale,
To which men come from all beneath the sky.
The unchanging excellence completes its tale;
The simple infant man in him we hail.

2. The unwrought material, when divided and distributed, forms vessels. The sage, when employed, becomes the Head of all the Officers (of government): and in his greatest regulations he employs no violent measures.

29. 1. If any one should wish to get the kingdom for himself, and to effect this by what he does, I see that he will not succeed. The kingdom is a spirit-like thing, and cannot be got by active doing. He who would so win it destroys it; he who would hold it in his grasp loses it.

2. The course and nature of things is such that
What was in front is now behind;
What warmed anon we freezing find.
Strength is of weakness oft the spoil;
The store in ruins mocks our toil.

Hence the sage puts away excessive effort, extravagance, and easy indulgence.

30. 1. He who would assist a lord of men in harmony with the Tao will not assert his mastery in the kingdom by force of arms. Such a course is sure to meet with its proper return.

2. Wherever a host is stationed, briars and thorns spring up. In the sequence of great armies there are sure to be bad years.

3. A skilful (commander) strikes a decisive blow, and stops. He does not dare (by continuing his operations) to assert and complete his mastery. He will strike the blow, but will be on his guard against being vain or boastful or arrogant in consequence of it. He strikes it as a matter of necessity; he strikes it, but not from a wish for mastery.

4. When things have attained their strong maturity they become old. This may be said to be not in accordance with the Tao: and what is not in accordance with it soon comes to an end.

31. 1. Now arms, however beautiful, are instruments of evil omen, hateful, it may be said, to all creatures. Therefore they who have the Tao do not like to employ them.

2. The superior man ordinarily considers the left hand the most honourable place, but in time of war the right hand. Those sharp weapons are instruments of evil omen, and not the instruments of the superior man;—he uses them only on the compulsion of necessity. Calm and repose are what he prizes; victory (by force of arms) is to him undesirable. To consider this desirable would be to delight in the slaughter of men; and he who delights in the slaughter of men cannot get his will in the kingdom.

3. On occasions of festivity to be on the left hand is the prized position; on occasions of mourning, the right hand. The second in command of the army has his place on the left; the general commanding in chief has his on the right;—his place, that is, is assigned to him as in the rites of mourning. He who has killed multitudes of men should weep for them with the bitterest grief; and the victor in battle has his place (rightly) according to those rites.

32. 1. The Tao, considered as unchanging, has no name.

2. Though in its primordial simplicity it may be small, the whole world dares not deal with (one embodying) it as a
minister. If a feudal prince or the king could guard and hold it, all would spontaneously submit themselves to him.

3. Heaven and Earth (under its guidance) unite together and send down the sweet dew, which, without the directions of men, reaches equally everywhere as of its own accord.

4. As soon as it proceeds to action, it has a name. When it once has that name, (men) can know to rest in it. When they know to rest in it, they can be free from all risk of failure and error.

5. The relation of the Tao to all the world is like that of the great rivers and seas to the streams from the valleys.

33. 1. He who knows other men is discerning; he who knows himself is intelligent. He who overcomes others is strong; he who overcomes himself is mighty. He who is satisfied with his lot is rich; he who goes on acting with energy has a (firm) will.

2. He who does not fail in the requirements of his position, continues long; he who dies and yet does not perish, has longevity.

34. 1. All-pervading is the Great Tao! It may be found on the left hand and on the right.

2. All things depend on it for their production, which it gives to them, not one refusing obedience to it. When its work is accomplished, it does not claim the name of having done it. It clothes all things as with a garment, and makes no assumption of being their lord;—it may be named in the smallest things. All things return (to their root and disappear), and do not know that it is it which presides over their doing so;—it may be named in the greatest things.

3. Hence the sage is able (in the same way) to accomplish his great achievements. It is through his not making himself great that he can accomplish them.

35. 1. To him who holds in his hands the Great Image (of the invisible Tao), the whole world repairs. Men resort to him, and receive no hurt, but (find) rest, peace, and the feeling of ease.

2. Music and dainties will make the passing guest stop (for a time). But though the Tao as it comes from the mouth, seems insipid and has no flavour, though it seems not worth being looked at or listened to, the use of it is inexhaustible.

36. 1. When one is about to take an inspiration, he is sure to make a (previous) expiration; when he is going to weaken another, he will first strengthen him; when he is going to overthrow another, he will first have raised him up; when he is going to despoil another, he will first have made gifts to him:—this is called ‘Hiding the light (of his procedure).’

2. The soft overcomes the hard; and the weak the strong.

3. Fishes should not be taken from the deep; instruments for the profit of a state should not be shown to the people.

37. 1. The Tao in its regular course does nothing (for the sake of doing it), and so there is nothing which it does not do.

2. If princes and kings were able to maintain it, all things would of themselves be transformed by them.

3. If this transformation became to me an object of desire, I would express the desire by the nameless simplicity.

   Simplicity without a name
   Is free from all external aim.
   With no desire, at rest and still,
   All things go right as of their will.

PART II.

38. 1. (Those who) possessed in highest degree the attributes (of the Tao) did not (seek) to show them, and therefore they possessed them (in fullest measure). (Those who) possessed in a lower degree those attributes
(sought how) not to lose them, and therefore they did not possess them (in fullest measure).

2. (Those who) possessed in the highest degree those attributes did nothing (with a purpose), and had no need to do anything. (Those who) possessed them in a lower degree were (always) doing, and had need to be so doing.

3. (Those who) possessed the highest benevolence were (always seeking) to carry it out, and had no need to be doing so. (Those who) possessed the highest righteousness were (always seeking) to carry it out, and had need to be so doing.

4. (Those who) possessed the highest (sense of) propriety were (always seeking) to show it, and when men did not respond to it, they bared the arm and marched up to them.

5. Thus it was that when the Tao was lost, its attributes appeared; when its attributes were lost, benevolence appeared; when benevolence was lost, righteousness appeared; and when righteousness was lost, the proprieties appeared.

6. Now propriety is the attenuated form of leal-heartedness and good faith, and is also the commencement of disorder; swift apprehension is (only) a flower of the Tao, and is the beginning of stupidity.

7. Thus it is that the Great man abides by what is solid, and eschews what is flimsy; dwells with the fruit and not with the flower. It is thus that he puts away the one and makes choice of the other.

39. 1. The things which from of old have got the One (the Tao) are—

   Heaven which by it is bright and pure;
   Earth rendered thereby firm and sure;
   Spirits with powers by it supplied;
   Valleys kept full throughout their void
   All creatures which through it do live
   Princes and kings who from it get
   The model which to all they give.

All these are the results of the One (Tao).

2.

   If heaven were not thus pure, it soon would rend;
   If earth were not thus sure, 'twould break and bend;
   Without these powers, the spirits soon would fail;
   If not so filled, the drought would parch each vale;
   Without that life, creatures would pass away;
   Princes and kings, without that moral sway,
   However grand and high, would all decay.

3. Thus it is that dignity finds its (firm) root in its (previous) meanness, and what is lofty finds its stability in the lowness (from which it rises). Hence princes and kings call themselves ‘Orphans,’ ‘Men of small virtue,’ and as ‘Carriages without a nave.’ Is not this an acknowledgment that in their considering themselves mean they see the foundation of their dignity? So it is that in the enumeration of the different parts of a carriage we do not come on what makes it answer the ends of a carriage. They do not wish to show themselves elegant-looking as jade, but (prefer) to be coarse-looking as an (ordinary) stone.

40.

1.

   The movement of the Tao
   By contraries proceeds;
   And weakness marks the course
   Of Tao's mighty deeds.

2. All things under heaven sprang from It as existing (and named); that existence sprang from It as non-existent (and not named).

41. 1. Scholars of the highest class, when they hear about the Tao, earnestly carry it into practice. Scholars of the
middle class, when they have heard about it, seem now to keep it and now to lose it. Scholars of the lowest class,
when they have heard about it, laugh greatly at it. If it were not (thus) laughed at, it would not be fit to be the Tao.

2. Therefore the sentence-makers have thus expressed themselves:

'The Tao, when brightest seen, seems light to lack;
Who progress in it makes, seems drawing back;
Its even way is like a rugged track.
Its highest virtue from the vale doth rise;
Its greatest beauty seems to offend the eyes;
And he has most whose lot the least supplies.
Its firmest virtue seems but poor and low;
Its solid truth seems change to undergo;
Its largest square doth yet no corner show
A vessel great, it is the slowest made;
Loud is its sound, but never word it said;
A semblance great, the shadow of a shade.'

3. The Tao is hidden, and has no name; but it is the Tao which is skilful at imparting (to all things what they need)
and making them complete.

42. 1. The Tao produced One; One produced Two; Two produced Three; Three produced All things. All things
leave behind them the Obscurity (out of which they have come), and go forward to embrace the Brightness (into
which they have emerged), while they are harmonised by the Breath of Vacancy.

2. What men dislike is to be orphans, to have little virtue, to be as carriages without naves; and yet these are the
designations which kings and princes use for themselves. So it is that some things are increased by being
diminished, and others are diminished by being increased.

3. What other men (thus) teach, I also teach. The violent and strong do not die their natural death. I will make this
the basis of my teaching.

43. 1. The softest thing in the world dashes against and overcomes the hardest; that which has no (substantial)
existence enters where there is no crevice. I know hereby what advantage belongs to doing nothing (with a
purpose).

2. There are few in the world who attain to the teaching without words, and the advantage arising from non-
action.

44.

1.

Or fame or life,
Which do you hold more dear?
Or life or wealth,
To which would you adhere?
Keep life and lose those other things;
Keep them and lose your life:—which brings
Sorrow and pain more near?

2.

Thus we may see,
Who cleaves to fame
Rejects what is more great;
Who loves large stores
Gives up the richer state.

3.

Who is content
Needs fear no shame.
Who knows to stop
Incurs no blame.
From danger free
Long live shall he.

45.

1.

Who thinks his great achievements poor
Shall find his vigour long endure.
Of greatest fulness, deemed a void,
Exhaustion ne'er shall stem the tide.
Do thou what's straight still crooked deem;
Thy greatest art still stupid seem,
And eloquence a stammering scream.

2. Constant action overcomes cold; being still overcomes heat. Purity and stillness give the correct law to all under heaven.

46. 1. When the Tao prevails in the world, they send back their swift horses to (draw) the dung-carts. When the Tao is disregarded in the world, the war-horses breed in the border lands.

2. There is no guilt greater than to sanction ambition; no calamity greater than to be discontented with one’s lot; no fault greater than the wish to be getting. Therefore the sufficiency of contentment is an enduring and unchanging sufficiency.

47. 1. Without going outside his door, one understands (all that takes place) under the sky; without looking out from his window, one sees the Tao of Heaven. The farther that one goes out (from himself), the less he knows.

2. Therefore the sages got their knowledge without travelling; gave their (right) names to things without seeing them; and accomplished their ends without any purpose of doing so.

48. 1. He who devotes himself to learning (seeks) from day to day to increase (his knowledge); he who devotes himself to the Tao (seeks) from day to day to diminish (his doing).

2. He diminishes it and again diminishes it, till he arrives at doing nothing (on purpose). Having arrived at this point of non-action, there is nothing which he does not do.

3. He who gets as his own all under heaven does so by giving himself no trouble (with that end). If one take trouble (with that end), he is not equal to getting as his own all under heaven.

49. 1. The sage has no invariable mind of his own; he makes the mind of the people his mind.

2. To those who are good (to me), I am good; and to those who are not good (to me), I am also good;—and thus (all) get to be good. To those who are sincere (with me), I am sincere; and to those who are not sincere (with me), I am also sincere;—and thus (all) get to be sincere.

3. The sage has in the world an appearance of indecision, and keeps his mind in a state of indifference to all. The people all keep their eyes and ears directed to him, and he deals with them all as his children.

50. 1. Men come forth and live; they enter (again) and die.

2. Of every ten three are ministers of life (to themselves); and three are ministers of death.

3. There are also three in every ten whose aim is to live, but whose movements tend to the land (or place) of death. And for what reason? Because of their excessive endeavours to perpetuate life.

4. But I have heard that he who is skilful in managing the life entrusted to him for a time travels on the land without having to shun rhinoceros or tiger, and enters a host without having to avoid buff coat or sharp weapon. The rhinoceros finds no place in him into which to thrust its horn, nor the tiger a place in which to fix its claws, nor the weapon a place to admit its point. And for what reason? Because there is in him no place of death.

51. 1. All things are produced by the Tao, and nourished by its outflowing operation. They receive their forms according to the nature of each, and are completed according to the circumstances of their condition. Therefore all things without exception honour the Tao, and exalt its outflowing operation.
2. This honouring of the Tao and exalting of its operation is not the result of any ordination, but always a spontaneous tribute.

3. Thus it is that the Tao produces (all things), nourishes them, brings them to their full growth, nurses them, completes them, matures them, maintains them, and overspreads them.

4. It produces them and makes no claim to the possession of them; it carries them through their processes and does not vaunt its ability in doing so; it brings them to maturity and exercises no control over them;—this is called its mysterious operation.

52. 1. (The Tao) which originated all under the sky is to be considered as the mother of them all.

2. When the mother is found, we know what her children should be. When one knows that he is his mother's child, and proceeds to guard (the qualities of) the mother that belong to him, to the end of his life he will be free from all peril.

3. Let him keep his mouth closed, and shut up the portals (of his nostrils), and all his life he will be exempt from laborious exertion. Let him keep his mouth open, and (spend his breath) in the promotion of his affairs, and all his life there will be no safety for him.

4. The perception of what is small is (the secret of) clear-sightedness; the guarding of what is soft and tender is (the secret of) strength.

5.

Who uses well his light,
Reverting to its (source so) bright,
Will from his body ward all blight,
And hides the unchanging from men's sight.

53. 1. If I were suddenly to become known, and (put into a position to) conduct (a government) according to the Great Tao, what I should be most afraid of would be a boastful display.

2. The great Tao (or way) is very level and easy; but people love the by-ways.

3. Their court(-yards and buildings) shall be well kept, but their fields shall be ill-cultivated, and their granaries very empty. They shall wear elegant and ornamented robes, carry a sharp sword at their girdle, pamper themselves in eating and drinking, and have a superabundance of property and wealth;—such (princes) may be called robbers and boasters. This is contrary to the Tao surely!

54.

1.

What (Tao's) skilful planter plants
   Can never be uptorn;
What his skilful arms enfold,
   From him can ne'er be borne.
Sons shall bring in lengthening line,
Sacrifices to his shrine.

2.

Tao when nursed within one's self,
   His vigour will make true;
And where the family it rules
   What riches will accrue!
The neighbourhood where it prevails
   In thriving will abound;
And when 'tis seen throughout the state,
   Good fortune will be found.
Employ it the kingdom o'er,
And men thrive all around.

3. In this way the effect will be seen in the person, by the observation of different cases; in the family; in the
neighbourhood; in the state; and in the kingdom.

4. How do I know that this effect is sure to hold thus all under the sky? By this (method of observation).

55. 1. He who has in himself abundantly the attributes (of the Tao) is like an infant. Poisonous insects will not sting him; fierce beasts will not seize him; birds of prey will not strike him.

2. (The infant’s) bones are weak and its sinews soft, but yet its grasp is firm. It knows not yet the union of male and female, and yet its virile member may be excited;—showing the perfection of its physical essence. All day long it will cry without its throat becoming hoarse;—showing the harmony (in its constitution).

3.

To him by whom this harmony is known,  
(The secret of) the unchanging (Tao) is shown,  
And in the knowledge wisdom finds its throne.  
All life-increasing arts to evil turn;  
Where the mind makes the vital breath to burn,  
(False) is the strength, (and o'er it we should mourn.)

4. When things have become strong, they (then) become old, which may be said to be contrary to the Tao. Whatever is contrary to the Tao soon ends.

56. 1. He who knows (the Tao) does not (care to) speak (about it); he who is (ever ready to) speak about it does not know it.

2. He (who knows it) will keep his mouth shut and close the portals (of his nostrils). He will blunt his sharp points and unravel the complications of things; he will attemper his brightness, and bring himself into agreement with the obscurity (of others). This is called ‘the Mysterious Agreement.’

3. (Such an one) cannot be treated familiarly or distantly; he is beyond all consideration of profit or injury; of nobility or meanness:—he is the noblest man under heaven.

57. 1. A state may be ruled by (measures of) correction; weapons of war may be used with crafty dexterity; (but) the kingdom is made one’s own (only) by freedom from action and purpose.

2. How do I know that it is so? By these facts:—In the kingdom the multiplication of prohibitive enactments increases the poverty of the people; the more implements to add to their profit that the people have, the greater disorder is there in the state and clan; the more acts of crafty dexterity that men possess, the more do strange contrivances appear; the more display there is of legislation, the more thieves and robbers there are.

3. Therefore a sage has said, ‘I will do nothing (of purpose), and the people will be transformed of themselves; I will be fond of keeping still, and the people will of themselves become correct. I will take no trouble about it, and the people will of themselves become rich; I will manifest no ambition, and the people will of themselves attain to the primitive simplicity.’

58.

1.

The government that seems the most unwise,  
Oft goodness to the people best supplies;  
That which is meddling, touching everything,  
Will work but ill, and disappointment bring.

Misery!—happiness is to be found by its side! Happiness!—misery lurks beneath it! Who knows what either will come to in the end?

2. Shall we then dispense with correction? The (method of) correction shall by a turn become distortion, and the good in it shall by a turn become evil. The delusion of the people (on this point) has indeed subsisted for a long time.

3. Therefore the sage is (like) a square which cuts no one (with its angles); (like) a corner which injures no one (with its sharpness). He is straightforward, but allows himself no license; he is bright, but does not dazzle.
59. 1. For regulating the human (in our constitution) and rendering the (proper) service to the heavenly, there is nothing like moderation.

2. It is only by this moderation that there is effected an early return (to man’s normal state). That early return is what I call the repeated accumulation of the attributes (of the Tao). With that repeated accumulation of those attributes, there comes the subjugation (of every obstacle to such return). Of this subjugation we know not what shall be the limit; and when one knows not what the limit shall be, he may be the ruler of a state.

3. He who possesses the mother of the state may continue long. His case is like that (of the plant) of which we say that its roots are deep and its flower stalks firm,—this is the way to secure that its enduring life shall long be seen.

60. 1. Governing a great state is like cooking small fish.

2. Let the kingdom be governed according to the Tao, and the manes of the departed will not manifest their spiritual energy. It is not that those manes have not that spiritual energy, but it will not be employed to hurt men. It is not that it could not hurt men, but neither does the ruling sage hurt them.

3. When these two do not injuriously affect each other, their good influences converge in the virtue (of the Tao).

61. 1. What makes a great state is its being (like) a low-lying, down-flowing (stream);—it becomes the centre to which tend (all the small states) under heaven.

2. (To illustrate from) the case of all females:—the female always overcomes the male by her stillness. Stillness may be considered (a sort of) abasement.

3. Thus it is that a great state, by condescending to small states, gains them for itself; and that small states, by abasing themselves to a great state, win it over to them. In the one case the abasement leads to gaining adherents, in the other case to procuring favour.

4. The great state only wishes to unite men together and nourish them; a small state only wishes to be received by, and to serve, the other. Each gets what it desires, but the great state must learn to abase itself.

62. 1. Tao has of all things the most honoured place.
   No treasures give good men so rich a grace;
   Bad men it guards, and doth their ill efface.

2. (Its) admirable words can purchase honour; (its) admirable deeds can raise their performer above others. Even men who are not good are not abandoned by it.

3. Therefore when the sovereign occupies his place as the Son of Heaven, and he has appointed his three ducal ministers, though (a prince) were to send in a round symbol-of-rank large enough to fill both the hands, and that as the precursor of the team of horses (in the court-yard), such an offering would not be equal to (a lesson of) this Tao, which one might present on his knees.

4. Why was it that the ancients prized this Tao so much? Was it not because it could be got by seeking for it, and the guilty could escape (from the stain of their guilt) by it? This is the reason why all under heaven consider it the most valuable thing.

63. 1. (It is the way of the Tao) to act without (thinking of) acting; to conduct affairs without (feeling the) trouble of them; to taste without discerning any flavour; to consider what is small as great, and a few as many; and to recompense injury with kindness.

2. (The master of it) anticipates things that are difficult while they are easy, and does things that would become great while they are small. All difficult things in the world are sure to arise from a previous state in which they were easy, and all great things from one in which they were small. Therefore the sage, while he never does what is great, is able on that account to accomplish the greatest things.

3. He who lightly promises is sure to keep but little faith; he who is continually thinking things easy is sure to find them difficult. Therefore the sage sees difficulty even in what seems easy, and so never has any difficulties.
64. 1. That which is at rest is easily kept hold of; before a thing has given indications of its presence, it is easy to take measures against it; that which is brittle is easily broken; that which is very small is easily dispersed. Action should be taken before a thing has made its appearance; order should be secured before disorder has begun.

2. The tree which fills the arms grew from the tiniest sprout; the tower of nine storeys rose from a (small) heap of earth; the journey of a thousand li commenced with a single step.

3. He who acts (with an ulterior purpose) does harm; he who takes hold of a thing (in the same way) loses his hold. The sage does not act (so), and therefore does no harm; he does not lay hold (so), and therefore does not lose his hold. (But) people in their conduct of affairs are constantly ruining them when they are on the eve of success. If they were careful at the end, as (they should be) at the beginning, they would not so ruin them.

4. Therefore the sage desires what (other men) do not desire, and does not prize things difficult to get; he learns what (other men) do not learn, and turns back to what the multitude of men have passed by. Thus he helps the natural development of all things, and does not dare to act (with an ulterior purpose of his own).

65. 1. The ancients who showed their skill in practising the Tao did so, not to enlighten the people, but rather to make them simple and ignorant.

2. The difficulty in governing the people arises from their having much knowledge. He who (tries to) govern a state by his wisdom is a scourge to it; while he who does not (try to) do so is a blessing.

3. He who knows these two things finds in them also his model and rule. Ability to know this model and rule constitutes what we call the mysterious excellence (of a governor). Deep and far-reaching is such mysterious excellence, showing indeed its possessor as opposite to others, but leading them to a great conformity to him.

66. 1. That whereby the rivers and seas are able to receive the homage and tribute of all the valley streams, is their skill in being lower than they;—it is thus that they are the kings of them all. So it is that the sage (ruler), wishing to be above men, puts himself by his words below them, and, wishing to be before them, places his person behind them.

2. In this way though he has his place above them, men do not feel his weight, nor though he has his place before them, do they feel it an injury to them.

3. Therefore all in the world delight to exalt him and do not weary of him. Because he does not strive, no one finds it possible to strive with him.

67. 1. All the world says that, while my Tao is great, it yet appears to be inferior (to other systems of teaching). Now it is just its greatness that makes it seem to be inferior. If it were like any other (system), for long would its smallness have been known!

2. But I have three precious things which I prize and hold fast. The first is gentleness; the second is economy; and the third is shrinking from taking precedence of others.

3. With that gentleness I can be bold; with that economy I can be liberal; shrinking from taking precedence of others, I can become a vessel of the highest honour. Now-a-days they give up gentleness and are all for being bold; economy, and are all for being liberal; the hindmost place, and seek only to be foremost;—(of all which the end is) death.

4. Gentleness is sure to be victorious even in battle, and firmly to maintain its ground. Heaven will save its possessor, by his (very) gentleness protecting him.

68.

He who in (Tao's) wars has skill
Assumes no martial port;
He who fights with most good will
To rage makes no resort.
He who vanquishes yet still
Keeps from his foes apart;
He whose hests men most fulfil
Yet humbly plies his art.

Thus we say, 'He ne'er contends,
69. 1. A master of the art of war has said, 'I do not dare to be the host (to commence the war); I prefer to be the guest (to act on the defensive). I do not dare to advance an inch; I prefer to retire a foot.' This is called marshalling the ranks where there are no ranks; baring the arms (to fight) where there are no arms to bare; grasping the weapon where there is no weapon to grasp; advancing against the enemy where there is no enemy.

2. There is no calamity greater than lightly engaging in war. To do that is near losing (the gentleness) which is so precious. Thus it is that when opposing weapons are (actually) crossed, he who deplores (the situation) conquers.

70. 1. My words are very easy to know, and very easy to practise; but there is no one in the world who is able to know and able to practise them.

2. There is an originating and all-comprehending (principle) in my words, and an authoritative law for the things (which I enforce). It is because they do not know these, that men do not know me.

3. They who know me are few, and I am on that account (the more) to be prized. It is thus that the sage wears (a poor garb of) hair cloth, while he carries his (signet of) jade in his bosom.

71. 1. To know and yet (think) we do not know is the highest (attainment); not to know (and yet think) we do know is a disease.

2. It is simply by being pained at (the thought of) having this disease that we are preserved from it. The sage has not the disease. He knows the pain that would be inseparable from it, and therefore he does not have it.

72. 1. When the people do not fear what they ought to fear, that which is their great dread will come on them.

2. Let them not thoughtlessly indulge themselves in their ordinary life; let them not act as if weary of what that life depends on.

3. It is by avoiding such indulgence that such weariness does not arise.

4. Therefore the sage knows (these things) of himself, but does not parade (his knowledge); loves, but does not (appear to set a) value on, himself. And thus he puts the latter alternative away and makes choice of the former.

73. 1. He whose boldness appears in his daring (to do wrong, in defiance of the laws) is put to death; he whose boldness appears in his not daring (to do so) lives on. Of these two cases the one appears to be advantageous, and the other to be injurious. But

   When Heaven's anger smites a man,
   Who the cause shall truly scan?

On this account the sage feels a difficulty (as to what to do in the former case).

2. It is the way of Heaven not to strive, and yet it skilfully overcomes; not to speak, and yet it is skilful in obtaining a reply; does not call, and yet men come to it of themselves. Its demonstrations are quiet, and yet its plans are skilful and effective. The meshes of the net of Heaven are large; far apart, but letting nothing escape.

74. 1. The people do not fear death; to what purpose is it to (try to) frighten them with death? If the people were always in awe of death, and I could always seize those who do wrong, and put them to death, who would dare to do wrong?

2. There is always One who presides over the infliction of death. He who would inflict death in the room of him who so presides over it may be described as hewing wood instead of a great carpenter. Seldom is it that he who undertakes the hewing, instead of the great carpenter, does not cut his own hands!

75. 1. The people suffer from famine because of the multitude of taxes consumed by their superiors. It is through this that they suffer famine.

2. The people are difficult to govern because of the (excessive) agency of their superiors (in governing them). It is
through this that they are difficult to govern.

3. The people make light of dying because of the greatness of their labours in seeking for the means of living. It is this which makes them think light of dying. Thus it is that to leave the subject of living altogether out of view is better than to set a high value on it.

76. 1. Man at his birth is supple and weak; at his death, firm and strong. (So it is with) all things. Trees and plants, in their early growth, are soft and brittle; at their death, dry and withered.

2. Thus it is that firmness and strength are the concomitants of death; softness and weakness, the concomitants of life.

3. Hence he who (relies on) the strength of his forces does not conquer; and a tree which is strong will fill the outstretched arms, (and thereby invites the feller.)

4. Therefore the place of what is firm and strong is below, and that of what is soft and weak is above.

77. 1. May not the Way (or Tao) of Heaven be compared to the (method of) bending a bow? The (part of the bow) which was high is brought low, and what was low is raised up. (So Heaven) diminishes where there is superabundance, and supplements where there is deficiency.

2. It is the Way of Heaven to diminish superabundance, and to supplement deficiency. It is not so with the way of man. He takes away from those who have not enough to add to his own superabundance.

3. Who can take his own superabundance and therewith serve all under heaven? Only he who is in possession of the Tao!

4. Therefore the (ruling) sage acts without claiming the results as his; he achieves his merit and does not rest (arrogantly) in it:—he does not wish to display his superiority.

78. 1. There is nothing in the world more soft and weak than water, and yet for attacking things that are firm and strong there is nothing that can take precedence of it;—for there is nothing (so effectual) for which it can be changed.

2. Every one in the world knows that the soft overcomes the hard, and the weak the strong, but no one is able to carry it out in practice.

3. Therefore a sage has said,
   "He who accepts his state's reproach,
    Is hailed therefore its altars' lord;
    To him who bears men's direful woes
    They all the name of King accord."

4. Words that are strictly true seem to be paradoxical.

79. 1. When a reconciliation is effected (between two parties) after a great animosity, there is sure to be a grudge remaining (in the mind of the one who was wrong). And how can this be beneficial (to the other)?

2. Therefore (to guard against this), the sage keeps the left-hand portion of the record of the engagement, and does not insist on the (speedy) fulfilment of it by the other party. (So), he who has the attributes (of the Tao) regards (only) the conditions of the engagement, while he who has not those attributes regards only the conditions favourable to himself.

3. In the Way of Heaven, there is no partiality of love; it is always on the side of the good man.

80. 1. In a little state with a small population, I would so order it, that, though there were individuals with the abilities of ten or a hundred men, there should be no employment of them; I would make the people, while looking on death as a grievous thing, yet not remove elsewhere (to avoid it).

2. Though they had boats and carriages, they should have no occasion to ride in them; though they had buff coats and sharp weapons, they should have no occasion to don or use them.
3. I would make the people return to the use of knotted cords (instead of the written characters).

4. They should think their (coarse) food sweet; their (plain) clothes beautiful; their (poor) dwellings places of rest; and their common (simple) ways sources of enjoyment.

5. There should be a neighbouring state within sight, and the voices of the fowls and dogs should be heard all the way from it to us, but I would make the people to old age, even to death, not have any intercourse with it.

81. 1. Sincere words are not fine; fine words are not sincere. Those who are skilled (in the Tao) do not dispute (about it); the disputatious are not skilled in it. Those who know (the Tao) are not extensively learned; the extensively learned do not know it.

2. The sage does not accumulate (for himself). The more that he expends for others, the more does he possess of his own; the more that he gives to others, the more does he have himself.

3. With all the sharpness of the Way of Heaven, it injures not; with all the doing in the way of the sage he does not strive.

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Invocation.1
Praise to Válmiki,2 bird of charming song,3
Who mounts on Poesy’s sublimest spray,
And sweetly sings with accent clear and strong
Ráma, aye Ráma, in his deathless lay.
Where breathes the man can listen to the strain
That flows in music from Válmiki’s tongue,
Nor feel his feet the path of bliss attain
When Ráma’s glory by the saint is sung!
The stream Rámáyan leaves its sacred fount
The whole wide world from sin and stain to free.4
The Prince of Hermits is the parent mount,
The lordly Ráma is the darling sea.
Glory to him whose fame is ever bright!
Glory to him, Prachetas’5 holy son!
Whose pure lips quaff with ever new delight
The nectar-sea of deeds by Ráma done.
Hail, arch-ascetic, pious, good, and kind!
Hail, Saint Válmiki, lord of every lore!
Hail, holy Hermit, calm and pure of mind!
Hail, First of Bards, Válmiki, hail once more!

Book I.6

Canto I. Nárad.7

OM.8
To sainted Nárad, prince of those
Whose lore in words of wisdom flows.
Whose constant care and chief delight
Were Scripture and ascetic rite,
The good Válmíki, first and best

Of hermit saints, these words addressed:

“In all this world, I pray thee, who
Is virtuous, heroic, true?
Firm in his vows, of grateful mind,
To every creature good and kind?
Bounteous, and holy, just, and wise,
Alone most fair to all men’s eyes?
Devoid of envy, firm, and sage,
Whose tranquil soul ne’er yields to rage?
Whom, when his warrior wrath is high,
Do Gods embattled fear and fly?
Whose noble might and gentle skill
The triple world can guard from ill?
Who is the best of princes, he
Who loves his people’s good to see?
The store of bliss, the living mine
Where brightest joys and virtues shine?
Queen Fortune’s best and dearest friend,
Whose steps her choicest gifts attend?
Who may with Sun and Moon compare,
With Indra, Vishṇu, Fire, and Air?
Grant, Saint divine, the boon I ask,
For thee, I ween, an easy task,
To whom the power is given to know
If such a man breathe here below."
Then Nárad, clear before whose eye
The present, past, and future lie,
Made ready answer: “Hermit, where
Are graces found so high and rare?
Yet listen, and my tongue shall tell
In whom alone these virtues dwell.
From old Ikshváku’s line he came,
Known to the world by Ráma’s name:
With soul subdued, a chief of might,
In Scripture versed, in glory bright,
His steps in virtue’s paths are bent,
Obedient, pure, and eloquent.
In each emprise he wins success,
And dying foes his power confess.
Tall and broad-shouldered, strong of limb,
Fortune has set her mark on him.
Graced with a conch-shell’s triple line,
His throat displays the auspicious sign.

High destiny is clear impressed
On massive jaw and ample chest,
His mighty shafts he truly aims,
And foemen in the battle tames.
Deep in the muscle, scarcely shown,
Embedded lies his collar-bone.
His lordly steps are firm and free,
His strong arms reach below his knee;
All fairest graces join to deck
His head, his brow, his stately neck,
And limbs in fair proportion set:
The manliest form e’er fashioned yet.
Graced with each high imperial mark,
His skin is soft and lustrous dark.
Large are his eyes that sweetly shine
With majesty almost divine.
His plighted word he ne’er forgets;
On erring sense a watch he sets.
By nature wise, his teacher’s skill
Has trained him to subdue his will.
Good, resolute and pure, and strong,
He guards mankind from scathe and wrong,
And lends his aid, and ne’er in vain,
The cause of justice to maintain.
Well has he studied o’er and o’er
The Vedas and their kindred lore.
Well skilled is he the bow to draw,
Well trained in arts and versed in law;
High-souled and meet for happy fate,
Most tender and compassionate;
The noblest of all lordly givers,
Whom good men follow, as the rivers
Follow the King of Floods, the sea:
So liberal, so just is he.
The joy of Queen Kauśalyā’s heart,
In every virtue he has part:
Firm as Himálaya’s snowy steep,
Unfathomed like the mighty deep:
The peer of Vishṇu’s power and might,
And lovely as the Lord of Night;
Patient as Earth, but, roused to ire,
Fierce as the world-destroying fire;
In bounty like the Lord of Gold,
And Justice self in human mould.
With him, his best and eldest son,
By all his princely virtues won
King Daśaratha willed to share
His kingdom as the Regent Heir.
But when Kaikeyí, youngest queen,
With eyes of envious hate had seen
The solemn pomp and regal state
Prepared the prince to consecrate,
She bade the hapless king bestow
Two gifts he promised long ago,
That Ráma to the woods should flee,
And that her child the heir should be.
By chains of duty firmly tied,
The wretched king perforce complied.

Ráma, to please Kaikeyí went
Obedient forth to banishment.
Then Lakshman’s truth was nobly shown,
Then were his love and courage known,
When for his brother’s sake he dared
All perils, and his exile shared.
And Sítá, Ráma’s darling wife,
Loved even as he loved his life,
Whom happy marks combined to bless,
A miracle of loveliness,
Of Janak’s royal lineage sprung,
Most excellent of women, clung
To her dear lord, like Rohini
Rejoicing with the Moon to be.25

The King and people, sad of mood,
The hero’s car awhile pursued.
But when Prince Ráma lighted down
At Śringavera’s pleasant town,
Where Gangá’s holy waters flow,
He bade his driver turn and go.
Guha, Nishádas’ king, he met,
And on the farther bank was set.
Then on from wood to wood they strayed,
O’er many a stream, through constant shade,
As Bharadvája bade them, till
They came to Chitrakúta’s hill.
And Ráma there, with Lakshman’s aid,
A pleasant little cottage made,
And spent his days with Sítá, dressed
In coat of bark and deerskin vest.26
And Chitrakūṭa grew to be
As bright with those illustrious three
As Meru’s27 sacred peaks that shine
With glory, when the Gods recline
Beneath them: Śiva’s28 self between
The Lord of Gold and Beauty’s Queen.
The aged king for Ráma pined,
And for the skies the earth resigned.
Bharat, his son, refused to reign,
Though urged by all the twice-born29 train.
Forth to the woods he fared to meet
His brother, fell before his feet,
And cried, “Thy claim all men allow:
O come, our lord and king be thou.”
But Ráma nobly chose to be
Observant of his sire’s decree.
He placed his sandals30 in his hand
A pledge that he would rule the land:
And bade his brother turn again.
Then Bharat, finding prayer was vain,
The sandals took and went away;
Nor in Ayodhyá would he stay.
But turned to Nandigráma, where
He ruled the realm with watchful care,
Still longing eagerly to learn
Tidings of Ráma’s safe return.
Then lest the people should repeat
Their visit to his calm retreat,
Away from Chitrakūṭa’s hill
Fared Ráma ever onward till
Beneath the shady trees he stood
Of Daṇḍaká’s primeval wood,
Virádha, giant fiend, he slew,
And then Agastya’s friendship knew.
Counselled by him he gained the sword
And bow of Indra, heavenly lord:
A pair of quivers too, that bore
Of arrows an exhaustless store.
While there he dwelt in greenwood shade
The trembling hermits sought his aid,
And bade him with his sword and bow
Destroy the fiends who worked them woe:
To come like Indra strong and brave,
A guardian God to help and save.
And Ráma’s falchion left its trace
Deep cut on Śúrpaṇakhá’s face:
A hideous giantess who came
Burning for him with lawless flame.
Their sister’s cries the giants heard.
And vengeance in each bosom stirred:
The monster of the triple head.
And Dúshaṇ to the contest sped.
But they and myriad fiends beside
Beneath the might of Ráma died.
When Rávaṇ, dreaded warrior, knew
The slaughter of his giant crew:
Rávan, the king, whose name of fear
Earth, hell, and heaven all shook to hear:
He bade the fiend Márícha aid
The vengeful plot his fury laid.
In vain the wise Márícha tried
To turn him from his course aside:
Not Rāvaṇ’s self, he said, might hope
With Rāma and his strength to cope.
Impelled by fate and blind with rage
He came to Rāma’s hermitage.
There, by Máricha’s magic art,
He wiled the princely youths apart,
The vulture31 slew, and bore away
The wife of Rāma as his prey.
The son of Raghu32 came and found
Jaṭáyu slain upon the ground.
He rushed within his leafy cot;
He sought his wife, but found her not.
Then, then the hero’s senses failed;
In mad despair he wept and wailed.
Upon the pile that bird he laid,
And still in quest of Sitá strayed.
A hideous giant then he saw,
Kabandha named, a shape of awe.
The monstrous fiend he smote and slew,
And in the flame the body threw;
When straight from out the funeral flame
In lovely form Kabandha came,
And bade him seek in his distress
A wise and holy hermitess.
By counsel of this saintly dame
To Pampá’s pleasant flood he came,
And there the steadfast friendship won
Of Hanumán the Wind-God’s son.
Counselled by him he told his grief
To great Sugríva, Vánar chief,
Who, knowing all the tale, before
The sacred flame alliance swore.
Sugriva to his new-found friend
Told his own story to the end:
His hate of Bálí for the wrong
And insult he had borne so long.
And Ráma lent a willing ear
And promised to allay his fear.
Sugriva warned him of the might
Of Bálí, matchless in the fight,
And, credence for his tale to gain,
Showed the huge fiend by Bálí slain.
The prostrate corse of mountain size
Seemed nothing in the hero’s eyes;
He lightly kicked it, as it lay,
And cast it twenty leagues away.
To prove his might his arrows through
Seven palms in line, uninjured, flew.
He cleft a mighty hill apart,
And down to hell he hurled his dart.
Then high Sugriva’s spirit rose,
Assured of conquest o’er his foes.
With his new champion by his side
To vast Kishkindhá’s cave he hied.
Then, summoned by his awful shout,
King Bálí came in fury out,
First comforted his trembling wife,
Then sought Sugriva in the strife.
One shaft from Ráma’s deadly bow
The monarch in the dust laid low.
Then Ráma bade Sugriva reign
In place of royal Bálí slain.
Then speedy envoys hurried forth
Eastward and westward, south and north,
Commanded by the grateful king.
Tidings of Ráma’s spouse to bring.
Then by Sampáti’s counsel led,
Brave Hanumán, who mocked at dread,
Sprang at one wild tremendous leap
Two hundred leagues across the deep.
To Lanká’s town he urged his way,
Where Rávaṇ held his royal sway.

[pg 006]
There pensive ‘neath Aśoka boughs
He found poor Sítá, Ráma’s spouse.
He gave the hapless girl a ring,
A token from her lord and king.
A pledge from her fair hand he bore;
Then battered down the garden door.
Five captains of the host he slew,
Seven sons of councillors o’erthrew;
Crushed youthful Aksha on the field,
Then to his captors chose to yield.
Soon from their bonds his limbs were free,
But honouring the high decree
Which Brahmá had pronounced of yore,
He calmly all their insults bore.
The town he burnt with hostile flame,
And spoke again with Ráma’s dame,
Then swiftly back to Ráma flew
With tidings of the interview.
Then with Sugríva for his guide,
Came Ráma to the ocean side.
He smote the sea with shafts as bright
As sunbeams in their summer height,
And quick appeared the Rivers’ King
Obedient to the summoning.
A bridge was thrown by Nala o’er
The narrow sea from shore to shore. 39
They crossed to Lanká’s golden town,
Where Ráma’s hand smote Rávaṇ down.
Vibhishan there was left to reign
Over his brother’s wide domain.
To meet her husband Sítá came;
But Ráma, stung with ire and shame,
With bitter words his wife addressed
Before the crowd that round her pressed.
But Sítá, touched with noble ire,
Gave her fair body to the fire.
Then straight the God of Wind appeared,
And words from heaven her honour cleared.
And Ráma clasped his wife again,
Uninjured, pure from spot and stain,
Obedient to the Lord of Fire
And the high mandate of his sire.
Led by the Lord who rules the sky,
The Gods and heavenly saints drew nigh,
And honoured him with worthy meed,
Rejoicing in each glorious deed.
His task achieved, his foe removed,
He triumphed, by the Gods approved.
By grace of Heaven he raised to life
The chieftains slain in mortal strife;
Then in the magic chariot through
The clouds to Nandigráma flew.
Met by his faithful brothers there,
He loosed his votive coil of hair:
Thence fair Ayodhyá’s town he gained,
And o’er his father’s kingdom reigned.
Disease or famine ne’er oppressed
His happy people, richly blest
With all the joys of ample wealth,
Of sweet content and perfect health.
No widow mourned her well-loved mate,
No sire his son’s untimely fate.
They feared not storm or robber’s hand;
No fire or flood laid waste the land:
The Golden Age had come again
To bless the days of Ráma’s reign.
From him, the great and glorious king,
Shall many a princely scion spring.
And he shall rule, beloved by men,
Ten thousand years and hundreds ten, And when his life on earth is past
To Brahmá’s world shall go at last.”
Whoe’er this noble poem reads
That tells the tale of Ráma’s deeds,
Good as the Scriptures, he shall be
From every sin and blemish free.
Whoever reads the saving strain,
With all his kin the heavens shall gain.
Bráhmans who read shall gather hence
The highest praise for eloquence.
The warrior, o’er the land shall reign,
The merchant, luck in trade obtain;
And Śúdras listening ne’er shall fail
To reap advantage from the tale.

Canto II. Brahmá’s Visit
Válmíki, graceful speaker, heard,
To highest admiration stirred.
To him whose fame the tale rehearsed
He paid his mental worship first;
Then with his pupil humbly bent
Before the saint most eloquent.
Thus honoured and dismissed the seer
Departed to his heavenly sphere.
Then from his cot Válmíki hied
To Tamasá’s44 sequestered side,
Not far remote from Gangá’s tide.
He stood and saw the ripples roll
Pellucid o’er a pebbly shoal.
To Bharadvája45 by his side
He turned in ecstasy, and cried:
“See, pupil dear, this lovely sight,
The smooth-floored shallow, pure and bright,
With not a speck or shade to mar,
And clear as good men’s bosoms are.
Here on the brink thy pitcher lay,
And bring my zone of bark, I pray.
Here will I bathe: the rill has not,
To lave the limbs, a fairer spot.
Do quickly as I bid, nor waste
The precious time; away, and haste.”
Obedient to his master’s hest
Quick from the cot he brought the vest;
The hermit took it from his hand,
And tightened round his waist the band;
Then duly dipped and bathed him there,
And muttered low his secret prayer.
To spirits and to Gods he made
Libation of the stream, and strayed
Viewing the forest deep and wide
That spread its shade on every side.
Close by the bank he saw a pair
Of curlews sporting fearless there.
But suddenly with evil mind
An outcast fowler stole behind,
And, with an aim too sure and true,
The male bird near the hermit slew.
The wretched hen in wild despair
With fluttering pinions beat the air,
And shrieked a long and bitter cry
When low on earth she saw him lie,
Her loved companion, quivering, dead,
His dear wings with his lifeblood red;
And for her golden crested mate
She mourned, and was disconsolate.
The hermit saw the slaughtered bird,
And all his heart with ruth was stirred.
The fowler’s impious deed distressed
His gentle sympathetic breast,
And while the curlew’s sad cries rang
Within his ears, the hermit sang:
“No fame be thine for endless time,
Because, base outcast, of thy crime,
Whose cruel hand was fain to slay
One of this gentle pair at play!”
E’en as he spoke his bosom wrought
And laboured with the wondering thought
What was the speech his ready tongue
Had uttered when his heart was wrung.
He pondered long upon the speech,
Recalled the words and measured each,
And thus exclaimed the saintly guide
To Bharadvája by his side:
“With equal lines of even feet,
With rhythm and time and tone complete,
The measured form of words I spoke
In shock of grief be termed a śloke."46
And Bharadvája, nothing slow
His faithful love and zeal to show,
Answered those words of wisdom, “Be
The name, my lord, as pleases thee.”
As rules prescribe the hermit took
Some lustral water from the brook.
But still on this his constant thought
Kept brooding, as his home he sought;
While Bharadvája paced behind,
A pupil sage of lowly mind,
And in his hand a pitcher bore
With pure fresh water brimming o’er.
Soon as they reached their calm retreat
The holy hermit took his seat;
His mind from worldly cares recalled,
And mused in deepest thought enthralled.

Then glorious Brahmá, Lord Most High,
Creator of the earth and sky,

The four-faced God, to meet the sage
Came to Válmíki’s hermitage.
Soon as the mighty God he saw,
Up sprang the saint in wondering awe.
Mute, with clasped hands, his head he bent,
And stood before him reverent.
His honoured guest he greeted well,
Who bade him of his welfare tell;
Gave water for his blessed feet,
Brought offerings, and prepared a seat.
In honoured place the God Most High
Sate down, and bade the saint sit nigh.
There sate before Válmíki’s eyes
The Father of the earth and skies;
But still the hermit’s thoughts were bent
On one thing only, all intent
On that poor curlew’s mournful fate
Lamenting for her slaughtered mate;
And still his lips, in absent mood,
The verse that told his grief, renewed:
“Woe to the fowler’s impious hand
That did the deed that folly planned;
That could to needless death devote
The curlew of the tuneful throat!”
The heavenly Father smiled in glee,
And said, “O best of hermits, see,
A verse, unconscious, thou hast made;
No longer be the task delayed.
Seek not to trace, with labour vain,
The unpremeditated strain.
The tuneful lines thy lips rehearsed
Spontaneous from thy bosom burst.
Then come, O best of seers, relate
The life of Ráma good and great,
The tale that saintly Nárad told,
In all its glorious length unfold.
Of all the deeds his arm has done
Upon this earth, omit not one,
And thus the noble life record
Of that wise, brave, and virtuous lord.
His every act to day displayed,
His secret life to none betrayed:
How Lakshman, how the giants fought;
With high emprise and hidden thought:
And all that Janak’s child befall
Where all could see, where none could tell.
The whole of this shall truly be
Made known, O best of saints, to thee.
In all thy poem, through my grace,
No word of falsehood shall have place.
Begin the story, and rehearse
The tale divine in charming verse.
As long as in this firm-set land
The streams shall flow, the mountains stand,
So long throughout the world, be sure,
The great Rámáyan shall endure.50
While the Rámáyan’s ancient strain
Shall glorious in the earth remain,
To higher spheres shalt thou arise
And dwell with me above the skies.”
He spoke, and vanished into air,
And left Válmíki wondering there.
The pupils of the holy man,
Moved by their love of him, began
To chant that verse, and ever more
They marvelled as they sang it o’er:
“Behold, the four-lined balanced rime,
Repeated over many a time,
In words that from the hermit broke
In shock of grief, becomes a śloke.”
This measure now Válmíki chose
Wherein his story to compose.
In hundreds of such verses, sweet
With equal lines and even feet,
The saintly poet, lofty-souled,
The glorious deeds of Ráma told.

Canto III. The Argument.
The hermit thus with watchful heed
Received the poem’s pregnant seed,
And looked with eager thought around
If fuller knowledge might be found.

[pg 009]

His lips with water first bedewed,\textsuperscript{51}

He sate, in reverent attitude

On holy grass,\textsuperscript{52} the points all bent

Together toward the orient;\textsuperscript{53}

And thus in meditation he

Entered the path of poesy.

Then clearly, through his virtue’s might,

All lay discovered to his sight,

Whate’er befell, through all their life,

Ráma, his brother, and his wife:

And Daśaratha and each queen

At every time, in every scene:

His people too, of every sort;

The nobles of his princely court:

Whate’er was said, whate’er decreed,

Each time they sate each plan and deed:

For holy thought and fervent rite

Had so refined his keener sight

That by his sanctity his view

The present, past, and future knew,

And he with mental eye could grasp,

Like fruit within his fingers clasp,

The life of Ráma, great and good,

Roaming with Sítá in the wood.

He told, with secret-piercing eyes,

The tale of Ráma’s high emprise,

Each listening ear that shall entice,

A sea of pearls of highest price.

Thus good Válmíki, sage divine,

Rehearsed the tale of Raghu’s line,

As Nárad, heavenly saint, before
Had traced the story’s outline o’er.
He sang of Ráma’s princely birth,
His kindness and heroic worth;
His love for all, his patient youth,
His gentleness and constant truth,
And many a tale and legend old
By holy Viśvámitra told.
How Janak’s child he wooed and won,
And broke the bow that bent to none.
How he with every virtue fraught
His namesake Ráma met and fought.
The choice of Ráma for the throne;
The malice by Kaikeyí shown,
Whose evil counsel marred the plan
And drove him forth a banisht man.
How the king grieved and groaned, and cried,
And swooned away and pining died.
The subjects’ woe when thus bereft;
And how the following crowds he left:
With Guha talked, and firmly stern
Ordered his driver to return.
How Gangá’s farther shore he gained;
By Bharadvája entertained,
By whose advice he journeyed still
And came to Chitrakúṭa’s hill.
How there he dwelt and built a cot;
How Bharat journeyed to the spot;
His earnest supplication made;
Drink-offerings to their father paid;
The sandals given by Ráma’s hand,
As emblems of his right, to stand:
How from his presence Bharat went
And years in Nandigráma spent.
How Rāma entered Daṇḍak wood
And in Sutikhṇa’s presence stood.
The favour Anasūyā showed,
The wondrous balsam she bestowed.
How Śarabhanga’s dwelling-place
They sought; saw Indra face to face;
The meeting with Agastya gained;
The heavenly bow from him obtained.
How Rāma with Virādha met;
Their home in Panchavaṭa set.
How Śūrpaṇakhā underwent
The mockery and disfigurement.
Of Triśirā’s and Khara’s fall,
Of Rāvaṇ roused at vengeance call,
Márīcha doomed, without escape;
The fair Videhan lady’s rape.
How Rāma wept and raved in vain,
And how the Vulture-king was slain.
How Rāma fierce Kabandha slew;
Then to the side of Pampā drew,
Met Hanumán, and her whose vows
Were kept beneath the greenwood boughs.
How Raghu’s son, the lofty-souled,
On Pampā’s bank wept uncontrolled,
Then journeyed, Rishyamūk to reach,
And of Sugriva then had speech.
The friendship made, which both had sought:
How Báli and Sugriva fought.
How Báli in the strife was slain,
And how Sugriva came to reign.
The treaty, Tāra’s wild lament;
The rainy nights in watching spent.
The wrath of Raghu’s lion son;

Survey of non-Western Literature
The gathering of the hosts in one.
The sending of the spies about,
And all the regions pointed out.
The ring by Rāma’s hand bestowed;
The cave wherein the bear abode.
The fast proposed, their lives to end;
Sampati gained to be their friend.

[pg 010]
The scaling of the hill, the leap
Of Hanumán across the deep.
Ocean’s command that bade them seek
Maináka of the lofty peak.
The death of Sinhiká, the sight
Of Lanká with her palace bright
How Hanumán stole in at eve;
His plan the giants to deceive.
How through the square he made his way
To chambers where the women lay,
Within the Aśoka garden came
And there found Rāma’s captive dame.
His colloquy with her he sought,
And giving of the ring he brought.
How Sítá gave a gem o’erjoyed;
How Hanumán the grove destroyed.
How giantesses trembling fled,
And servant fiends were smitten dead.
How Hanumán was seized; their ire
When Lanká blazed with hostile fire.
His leap across the sea once more;
The eating of the honey store.
How Ráma he consoled, and how
He showed the gem from Sítá’s brow.
With Ocean, Ráma’s interview;
The bridge that Nala o’er it threw.
The crossing, and the sitting down
At night round Lanká’s royal town.
The treaty with Vibhíshaṇ made:
The plan for Rávaṇ’s slaughter laid.
How Kumbhakarna in his pride
And Meghanáda fought and died.
How Rávaṇ in the fight was slain,
And captive Sítá brought again.
Vibhíshaṇ set upon the throne;
The flying chariot Pushpak shown.
How Brahmá and the Gods appeared,
And Sítá’s doubted honour cleared.
How in the flying car they rode
To Bharadvája’s cabin abode.
The Wind-God’s son sent on afar;
How Bharat met the flying car.
How Ráma then was king ordained;
The legions their discharge obtained.
How Ráma cast his queen away;
How grew the people’s love each day.
Thus did the saint Válmíki tell
Whate’er in Ráma’s life befell,
And in the closing verses all
That yet to come will once befall.

**Canto IV. The Rhapsodists.**

When to the end the tale was brought,
Rose in the sage’s mind the thought;
“How now who throughout this earth will go,
And tell it forth that all may know?”
As thus he mused with anxious breast,
Behold, in hermit’s raiment dressed,
Kuśá and Lava56 came to greet
Their master and embrace his feet.
The twins he saw, that princely pair
Sweet-voiced, who dwelt beside him there
None for the task could be more fit,
For skilled were they in Holy Writ;
And so the great Rámañ, fraught
With lore divine, to these he taught:
The lay whose verses sweet and clear
Take with delight the listening ear,
That tell of Sítá’s noble life
And Rávañ’s fall in battle strife.
Great joy to all who hear they bring,
Sweet to recite and sweet to sing.
For music’s sevenfold notes are there,
And triple measure, wrought with care
With melody and tone and time,
And flavours that enhance the rime;
Heroic might has ample place,
And loathing of the false and base,
With anger, mirth, and terror, blent
With tenderness, surprise, content.
When, half the hermit’s grace to gain,
And half because they loved the strain,
The youth within their hearts had stored
The poem that his lips outpoured,
Válmíki kissed them on the head,
As at his feet they bowed, and said;
“Recite ye this heroic song
In tranquil shades where sages throng:
Recite it where the good resort,
In lowly home and royal court.”
The hermit ceased. The tuneful pair,
Like heavenly minstrels sweet and fair,
In music’s art divinely skilled,
Their saintly master’s word fulfilled.
Like Ráma’s self, from whom they came,
They showed their sire in face and frame,

[pg 011]
As though from some fair sculptured stone
Two selfsame images had grown.
Sometimes the pair rose up to sing,
Surrounded by a holy ring,
Where seated on the grass had met
Full many a musing anchoret.
Then tears bedimmed those gentle eyes,
As transport took them and surprise,
And as they listened every one
Cried in delight, Well done! Well done!
Those sages versed in holy lore
Praised the sweet minstrels more and more:
And wondered at the singers’ skill,
And the bard’s verses sweeter still,
Which laid so clear before the eye
The glorious deeds of days gone by.
Thus by the virtuous hermits praised,
Inspirited their voice they raised.
Pleased with the song this holy man
Would give the youths a water-can;
One gave a fair ascetic dress,
Or sweet fruit from the wilderness.
One saint a black-deer’s hide would bring,
And one a sacrificial string:
One, a clay pitcher from his hoard,
And one, a twisted munja cord.59
One in his joy an axe would find,
One braid, their plaited locks to bind.
One gave a sacrificial cup,
One rope to tie their fagots up;
While fuel at their feet was laid,
Or hermit’s stool of fig-tree made.
All gave, or if they gave not, none
Forgot at least a benison.
Some saints, delighted with their lays,
Would promise health and length of days;
Others with surest words would add
Some boon to make their spirit glad.
In such degree of honour then
That song was held by holy men:
That living song which life can give,
By which shall many a minstrel live.
In seat of kings, in crowded hall,
They sang the poem, praised of all.
And Ráma chanced to hear their lay,
While he the votive steed would slay,
And sent fit messengers to bring
The minstrel pair before the king.
They came, and found the monarch high
Enthroned in gold, his brothers nigh;
While many a minister below,
And noble, sate in lengthened row.
The youthful pair awhile he viewed
Graceful in modest attitude,
And then in words like these addressed
His brother Lakshman and the rest:
“Come, listen to the wondrous strain
Recited by these godlike twain,
Sweet singers of a story fraught
With melody and lofty thought.”
The pair, with voices sweet and strong,
Rolled the full tide of noble song,
With tone and accent deftly blent
To suit the changing argument.
Mid that assembly loud and clear
Rang forth that lay so sweet to hear,
That universal rapture stole
Through each man’s frame and heart and soul.
“These minstrels, blest with every sign
That marks a high and princely line,
In holy shades who dwell,
Enshrined in Saint Válmíki’s lay,
A monument to live for aye,
My deeds in song shall tell.”
Thus Ráma spoke: their breasts were fired,
And the great tale, as if inspired,
The youths began to sing,
While every heart with transport swelled,
And mute and rapt attention held
The concourse and the king.

**Canto V. Ayodhyá.**

“Ikshváku’s sons from days of old
Were ever brave and mighty-souled.
The land their arms had made their own
Was bounded by the sea alone.
Their holy works have won them praise,
Through countless years, from Manu’s days.
Their ancient sire was Sagar, he
Whose high command dug out the sea:61
With sixty thousand sons to throng
Around him as he marched along.
From them this glorious tale proceeds:
The great Rámáyan tells their deeds.
This noble song whose lines contain
Lessons of duty, love, and gain,  
We two will now at length recite,  
While good men listen with delight.  
On Sarjú’s bank, of ample size,  
The happy realm of Košal lies,  
[pg 012]
With fertile length of fair champaign  
And flocks and herds and wealth of grain.
There, famous in her old renown,  
Ayodhyá stands, the royal town,  
In bygone ages built and planned  
By sainted Manu’s princely hand.  
Imperial seat! her walls extend  
Twelve measured leagues from end to end,  
And three in width from side to side,  
With square and palace beautified.  
Her gates at even distance stand;  
Her ample roads are wisely planned.  
Right glorious is her royal street  
Where streams allay the dust and heat.  
On level ground in even row  
Her houses rise in goodly show:  
Terrace and palace, arch and gate  
The queenly city decorate.  
High are her ramparts, strong and vast,  
By ways at even distance passed,  
With circling moat, both deep and wide,  
And store of weapons fortified.  
King Daśaratha, lofty-souled,  
That city guarded and controlled,  
With towering Sál trees belted round,  
And many a grove and pleasure ground,  
As royal Indra, throned on high,
Rules his fair city in the sky. 66
She seems a painted city, fair
With chess-board line and even square. 67
And cool boughs shade the lovely lake
Where weary men their thirst may slake.
There gilded chariots gleam and shine,
And stately piles the Gods enshrine.
There gay sleek people ever throng
To festival and dance and song.
A mine is she of gems and sheen,
The darling home of Fortune’s Queen.
With noblest sort of drink and meat,
The fairest rice and golden wheat,
And fragrant with the chaplet’s scent
With holy oil and incense blent.
With many an elephant and steed,
And wains for draught and cars for speed.
With envoys sent by distant kings,
And merchants with their precious things
With banners o’er her roofs that play,
And weapons that a hundred slay; 68
All warlike engines framed by man,
And every class of artisan.
A city rich beyond compare
With bards and minstrels gathered there,
And men and damsels who entrance
The soul with play and song and dance.
In every street is heard the lute,
The drum, the tabret, and the flute,
The Veda chanted soft and low,
The ringing of the archer’s bow;
With bands of godlike heroes skilled
In every warlike weapon, filled,
And kept by warriors from the foe,
As Nágas guard their home below.69

There wisest Bráhmans evermore
The flame of worship feed,
And versed in all the Vedas’ lore,
Their lives of virtue lead.

Truthful and pure, they freely give;
They keep each sense controlled,
And in their holy fervour live
Like the great saints of old.

Canto VI. The King.

There reigned a king of name revered,
To country and to town endeared,
Great Daśaratha, good and sage,
Well read in Scripture’s holy page:

Upon his kingdom’s weal intent,
Mighty and brave and provident;
The pride of old Ikshváku’s seed
For lofty thought and righteous deed.
Peer of the saints, for virtues famed,
For foes subdued and passions tamed:
A rival in his wealth untold
Of Indra and the Lord of Gold.
Like Manu first of kings, he reigned,
And worthily his state maintained.
For firm and just and ever true
Love, duty, gain he kept in view,
And ruled his city rich and free,
Like Indra’s Amarávatí.
And worthy of so fair a place
There dwelt a just and happy race
With troops of children blest.
Each man contented sought no more,
Nor longed with envy for the store
By richer friends possessed.
For poverty was there unknown,
And each man counted as his own
Kine, steeds, and gold, and grain.
All dressed in raiment bright and clean,
And every townsman might be seen
With earrings, wreath, or chain.
None deigned to feed on broken fare,
And none was false or stingy there.
A piece of gold, the smallest pay,
Was earned by labour for a day.
On every arm were bracelets worn,
And none was faithless or forsworn,
A braggart or unkind.
None lived upon another’s wealth,
None pined with dread or broken health,
Or dark disease of mind.
High-souled were all. The slanderous word,
The boastful lie, were never heard.
Each man was constant to his vows,
And lived devoted to his spouse.
No other love his fancy knew,
And she was tender, kind, and true.
Her dames were fair of form and face,
With charm of wit and gentle grace,
With modest raiment simply neat,
And winning manners soft and sweet.
The twice-born sages, whose delight
Was Scripture’s page and holy rite,
Their calm and settled course pursued,
Nor sought the menial multitude.
In many a Scripture each was versed,
And each the flame of worship nursed,
And gave with lavish hand.
Each paid to Heaven the offerings due,
And none was godless or untrue
In all that holy band.
To Bráhmans, as the laws ordain,
The Warrior caste were ever fain
The reverence due to pay;
And these the Vaiśyas’ peaceful crowd,
Who trade and toil for gain, were proud
To honour and obey;
And all were by the Śúdras served,
Who never from their duty swerved,
Their proper worship all addressed
To Bráhman, spirits, God, and guest.
Pure and unmixt their rites remained,
Their race’s honour ne’er was stained.
Cheered by his grandsons, sons, and wife,
Each passed a long and happy life.
Thus was that famous city held
By one who all his race excelled,
Blest in his gentle reign,
As the whole land aforetime swayed
By Manu, prince of men, obeyed
Her king from main to main.
And heroes kept her, strong and brave,
As lions guard their mountain cave:
Fierce as devouring flame they burned,
And fought till death, but never turned.
Horses had she of noblest breed,
Like Indra’s for their form and speed,
From Váhli’s hills and Sindhu’s sand,
Vanáyu and Kámboja’s land.

[pg 014]

Her noble elephants had strayed
Through Vindhyan and Himálayan shade,
Gigantic in their bulk and height,
Yet gentle in their matchless might.
They rivalled well the world-spread fame
Of the great stock from which they came,
Of Váman, vast of size,
Of Mahápadma’s glorious line,
Thine, Anjan, and, Airávat, thine.

Upholders of the skies.
With those, enrolled in fourfold class,
Who all their mighty kin surpass,
Whom men Matangas name,
And Mrigas spotted black and white,
And Bhadras of unwearied might,
And Mandras hard to tame.

Thus, worthy of the name she bore,Ayodhyá for a league or more
Cast a bright glory round,
Where Daśaratha wise and great
Governed his fair ancestral state,
With every virtue crowned.
Like Indra in the skies he reigned
In that good town whose wall contained
High domes and turrets proud,
With gates and arcs of triumph decked,
And sturdy barriers to protect
Her gay and countless crowd.

Canto VII. The Ministers.

Two sages, holy saints, had he,
His ministers and priests to be:
Vaśishṭha, faithful to advise,
And Vámadeva, Scripture-wise.
Eight other lords around him stood,
All skilled to counsel, wise and good:
Jayanta, Vijay, Dhrishṭi bold
In fight, affairs of war controlled:
Siddhárth and Arthasádhak true
Watched o’er expense and revenue,
And Dharmapál and wise Aśok
Of right and law and justice spoke.
With these the sage Sumantra, skilled
To urge the car, high station filled.
All these in knowledge duly trained
Each passion and each sense restrained:
With modest manners, nobly bred
Each plan and nod and look they read,
Upon their neighbours’ good intent,
Most active and benevolent:
As sit the Vasus79 round their king,
They sate around him counselling.
They ne’er in virtue’s loftier pride
Another’s lowly gifts decried.
In fair and seemly garb arrayed,
No weak uncertain plans they made.
Well skilled in business, fair and just,
They gained the people’s love and trust,
And thus without oppression stored
The swelling treasury of their lord.
Bound in sweet friendship each to each,
They spoke kind thoughts in gentle speech.
They looked alike with equal eye
On every caste, on low and high.
Devoted to their king, they sought,
Ere his tongue spoke, to learn his thought,
And knew, as each occasion rose,
To hide their counsel or disclose.
In foreign lands or in their own
Whatever passed, to them was known.
By secret spies they timely knew
What men were doing or would do.
Skilled in the grounds of war and peace
They saw the monarch's state increase,
Watching his weal with conquering eye
That never let occasion by,
While nature lent her aid to bless
Their labours with unbought success.
Never for anger, lust, or gain,
Would they their lips with falsehood stain.
Inclined to mercy they could scan
The weakness and the strength of man.
They fairly judged both high and low,
And ne'er would wrong a guiltless foe;
Yet if a fault were proved, each one
Would punish e'en his own dear son.
But there and in the kingdom's bound
No thief or man impure was found:
None of loose life or evil fame,
No tempter of another's dame.
Contented with their lot each caste
Calm days in blissful quiet passed;
And, all in fitting tasks employed,
Country and town deep rest enjoyed,
With these wise lords around his throne
The monarch justly reigned,
And making every heart his own
The love of all men gained.
With trusty agents, as beseems,
Each distant realm he scanned,
As the sun visits with his beams
Each corner of the land.
Ne’er would he on a mightier foe
With hostile troops advance,
Nor at an equal strike a blow
In war’s delusive chance.
These lords in council bore their part
With ready brain and faithful heart,
With skill and knowledge, sense and tact,
Good to advise and bold to act.
And high and endless fame he won
With these to guide his schemes,
As, risen in his might, the sun
Wins glory with his beams.

**Canto VIII. Sumantra’s Speech.**

But splendid, just, and great of mind,
The childless king for offspring pined.
No son had he his name to grace,
Transmitter of his royal race.
Long had his anxious bosom wrought,
And as he pondered rose the thought:
“A votive steed ‘twere good to slay,
So might a son the gift repay."
Before his lords his plan he laid,
And bade them with their wisdom aid:
Then with these words Sumantra, best
Of royal counsellors, addressed:
“Hither, Vaśishṭha at their head,
Let all my priestly guides be led.”
To him Sumantra made reply:
“Hear, Sire, a tale of days gone by.

To many a sage in time of old,

Sanatkumár, the saint, foretold

How from thine ancient line, O King,

A son, when years came round, should spring.

“Here dwells,” ’twas thus the seer began,

“Of Kaśyap’s race, a holy man,

Vibhândak named: to him shall spring

A son, the famous Rishyaśring.

Bred with the deer that round him roam,

The wood shall be that hermit’s home.

To him no mortal shall be known

Except his holy sire alone.

Still by those laws shall he abide

Which lives of youthful Brâhmans guide,

Obedient to the strictest rule

That forms the young ascetic’s school:

And all the wondering world shall hear

Of his stern life and penance drear;

His care to nurse the holy fire

And do the bidding of his sire.

Then, seated on the Angas’ throne,

Shall Lomapád to fame be known.

But folly wrought by that great king

A plague upon the land shall bring;

No rain for many a year shall fall

And grievous drought shall ruin all.

The troubled king with many a prayer

Shall bid the priests some cure declare:

“The lore of Heaven ’tis yours to know,

Nor are ye blind to things below:

Declare, O holy men, the way

This plague to expiate and stay.”
Those best of Brāhmans shall reply:
“By every art, O Monarch, try
Hither to bring Vibhāṇḍak’s child,
Persuaded, captured, or beguiled.
And when the boy is hither led
To him thy daughter duly wed.”
But how to bring that wondrous boy
His troubled thoughts will long employ,
And hopeless to achieve the task
He counsel of his lords will ask,
And bid his priests and servants bring
With honour saintly Rishyaśring.
But when they hear the monarch’s speech,
All these their master will beseech,
With trembling hearts and looks of woe,
To spare them, for they fear to go.
And many a plan will they declare
And crafty plots will frame,
And promise fair to show him there,
Unforced, with none to blame.
On every word his lords shall say,
The king will meditate,
And on the third returning day
Recall them to debate.
Then this shall be the plan agreed,
That damsels shall be sent
Attired in holy hermits’ weed,
And skilled in blandishment,
That they the hermit may beguile
With every art and amorous wile
Whose use they know so well,
And by their witcheries seduce
The unsuspecting young recluse
To leave his father’s cell.
Then when the boy with willing feet
Shall wander from his calm retreat
And in that city stand,
The troubles of the king shall end,
And streams of blessed rain descend
Upon the thirsty land.
Thus shall the holy Rishyaśring
To Lomapád, the mighty king,
By wedlock be allied;
For Śántá, fairest of the fair,
In mind and grace beyond compare,
Shall be his royal bride.
He, at the Offering of the Steed,
The flames with holy oil shall feed,
And for King Daśaratha gain
Sons whom his prayers have begged in vain.”
“I have repeated, Sire, thus far,
The words of old Sanatkumár,
In order as he spoke them then
Amid the crowd of holy men.”
Then Daśaratha cried with joy,
“Say how they brought the hermit boy.”

Canto IX. Rishyasring.
The wise Sumantra, thus addressed,
Unfolded at the king’s behest
The plan the lords in council laid
To draw the hermit from the shade:
“The priest, amid the lordly crowd,
To Lomapád thus spoke aloud:
“Hear, King, the plot our thoughts have framed,
A harmless trick by all unblamed.
Far from the world that hermit’s child
Lives lonely in the distant wild:
A stranger to the joys of sense,
His bliss is pain and abstinence;
And all unknown are women yet
To him, a holy anchoret.
The gentle passions we will wake
That with resistless influence shake
The hearts of men; and he
Drawn by enchantment strong and sweet
Shall follow from his lone retreat,
And come and visit thee.
Let ships be formed with utmost care
That artificial trees may bear,
And sweet fruit deftly made;
Let goodly raiment, rich and rare,
And flowers, and many a bird be there
Beneath the leafy shade.
Upon the ships thus decked a band
Of young and lovely girls shall stand,
Rich in each charm that wakes desire,
And eyes that burn with amorous fire;
Well skilled to sing, and play, and dance
And ply their trade with smile and glance
Let these, attired in hermits’ dress,
Betake them to the wilderness,
And bring the boy of life austere
A voluntary captive here.“
He ended; and the king agreed,
By the priest’s counsel won.
And all the ministers took heed
To see his bidding done.
In ships with wondrous art prepared
Away the lovely women fared,
And soon beneath the shade they stood
Of the wild, lonely, dreary wood.
And there the leafy cot they found
Where dwelt the devotee,
And looked with eager eyes around
The hermit’s son to see.
Still, of Vibhāṇḍak sore afraid,
They hid behind the creepers’ shade.
But when by careful watch they knew
The elder saint was far from view,
With bolder steps they ventured nigh
To catch the youthful hermit’s eye.
Then all the damsels, blithe and gay,
At various games began to play.
They tossed the flying ball about
With dance and song and merry shout,
And moved, their scented tresses bound
With wreaths, in mazy motion round.
Some girls as if by love possessed,
Sank to the earth in feigned unrest,
Up starting quickly to pursue
Their intermitted game anew.
It was a lovely sight to see
Those fair ones, as they played,
While fragrant robes were floating free,
And bracelets clashing in their glee
A pleasant tinkling made.
The anklet’s chime, the Koïl’s cry
With music filled the place
As ‘twere some city in the sky
Which heavenly minstrels grace.
With each voluptuous art they strove
To win the tenant of the grove,
And with their graceful forms inspire
His modest soul with soft desire.
With arch of brow, with beck and smile,
With every passion-waking wile
Of glance and lotus hand,
With all enticements that excite
The longing for unknown delight
Which boys in vain withstand.
Forth came the hermit’s son to view
The wondrous sight to him so new,
And gazed in rapt surprise,
For from his natal hour till then
On woman or the sons of men
He ne’er had cast his eyes.
He saw them with their waists so slim,
With fairest shape and faultless limb,
In variegated robes arrayed,
And sweetly singing as they played.
Near and more near the hermit drew,
And watched them at their game,
And stronger still the impulse grew
To question whence they came.
They marked the young ascetic gaze
With curious eye and wild amaze,
And sweet the long-eyed damsels sang,
And shrill their merry laughter rang.
Then came they nearer to his side,
And languishing with passion cried:
“Whose son, O youth, and who art thou,
Come suddenly to join us now?
And why dost thou all lonely dwell
In the wild wood? We pray thee, tell,
We wish to know thee, gentle youth;
Come, tell us, if thou wilt, the truth."
He gazed upon that sight he ne’er
Had seen before, of girls so fair,
And out of love a longing rose
His sire and lineage to disclose:
“My father,” thus he made reply,
“Is Kaśyap’s son, a saint most high,
Vibhāndak styled; from him I came,
And Rishyaśring he calls my name.
Our hermit cot is near this place:
Come thither, O ye fair of face;
There be it mine, with honour due,
Ye gentle youths, to welcome you.”
They heard his speech, and gave consent,
And gladly to his cottage went.
Vibhāndak’s son received them well
Beneath the shelter of his cell
With guest-gift, water for their feet,
And woodland fruit and roots to eat,
They smiled, and spoke sweet words like these,
Delighted with his courtesies:
“We too have goodly fruit in store,
Grown on the trees that shade our door;
Come, if thou wilt, kind Hermit, haste
The produce of our grove to taste;
And let, O good Ascetic, first
This holy water quench thy thirst.”
They spoke, and gave him comfits sweet
Prepared ripe fruits to counterfeit;
And many a dainty cate beside
And luscious mead their stores supplied.
The seeming fruits, in taste and look,
The unsuspecting hermit took,
For, strange to him, their form beguiled
The dweller in the lonely wild.
Then round his neck fair arms were flung,
And there the laughing damsels clung,
And pressing nearer and more near
With sweet lips whispered at his ear;
While rounded limb and swelling breast
The youthful hermit softly pressed.
The pleasing charm of that strange bowl,
The touch of a tender limb,
Over his yielding spirit stole
And sweetly vanquished him.
But vows, they said, must now be paid;
They bade the boy farewell,
And, of the aged saint afraid,
Prepared to leave the dell.
With ready guile they told him where
Their hermit dwelling lay:
Then, lest the sire should find them there,
Sped by wild paths away.
They fled and left him there alone
By longing love possessed;
And with a heart no more his own
He roamed about distressed.
The aged saint came home, to find
The hermit boy distraught,
Revolving in his troubled mind
One solitary thought.
"Why dost thou not, my son," he cried,
"Thy due obeisance pay?
Why do I see thee in the tide
Of whelming thought to-day?
A devotee should never wear
A mien so sad and strange.
Come, quickly, dearest child, declare
The reason of the change.”
And Rishyaśring, when questioned thus,
Made answer in this wise:
“O sire, there came to visit us
Some men with lovely eyes.
About my neck soft arms they wound
And kept me tightly held
To tender breasts so soft and round,
That strangely heaved and swelled.
They sing more sweetly as they dance
Than e’er I heard till now,
And play with many a sidelong glance
And arching of the brow.”
“My son,” said he, “thus giants roam
Where holy hermits are,
And wander round their peaceful home
Their rites austere to mar.
I charge thee, thou must never lay
Thy trust in them, dear boy:
They seek thee only to betray,
And woo but to destroy.”
Thus having warned him of his foes
That night at home he spent.
And when the morrow’s sun arose
Forth to the forest went.
But Rishyaśring with eager pace
Sped forth and hurried to the place
Where he those visitants had seen
Of daintly waist and charming mien.
When from afar they saw the son
Of Saint Vibháṇdak toward them run,
To meet the hermit boy they hied,
And hailed him with a smile, and cried:
"O come, we pray, dear lord, behold
Our lovely home of which we told
Due honour there to thee we'll pay,
And speed thee on thy homeward way."
Pleased with the gracious words they said
He followed where the damsels led.
As with his guides his steps he bent,
That Bráhman high of worth,
A flood of rain from heaven was sent
That gladdened all the earth.
Vibháṇdak took his homeward road,
And wearied by the heavy load
Of roots and woodland fruit he bore
Entered at last his cottage door.
Fain for his son he looked around,
But desolate the cell he found.
He stayed not then to bathe his feet,
Though fainting with the toil and heat,
But hurried forth and roamed about
Calling the boy with cry and shout,
He searched the wood, but all in vain;
Nor tidings of his son could gain.
One day beyond the forest's bound
The wandering saint a village found,
And asked the swains and neatherds there
Who owned the land so rich and fair,
With all the hamlets of the plain,
And herds of kine and fields of grain.
They listened to the hermit’s words,
And all the guardians of the herds,
With suppliant hands together pressed,
This answer to the saint addressed:
“The Angas’ lord who bears the name
Of Lomapád, renowned by fame,
Bestowed these hamlets with their kine
And all their riches, as a sign
Of grace, on Rishyaśring: and he
Vibháṇdak’s son is said to be.”
The hermit with exulting breast
The mighty will of fate confessed,
By meditation’s eye discerned;
And cheerful to his home returned.
A stately ship, at early morn,
The hermit’s son away had borne.
Loud roared the clouds, as on he sped,
The sky grew blacker overhead;
Till, as he reached the royal town,
A mighty flood of rain came down.
By the great rain the monarch’s mind
The coming of his guest divined.
To meet the honoured youth he went,
And low to earth his head he bent.
With his own priest to lead the train,
He gave the gift high guests obtain.
And sought, with all who dwelt within
The city walls, his grace to win.
He fed him with the daintiest fare,
He served him with unceasing care,
And ministered with anxious eyes
Lest anger in his breast should rise;
And gave to be the Bráhman’s bride
His own fair daughter, lotus-eyed.

Thus loved and honoured by the king,

The glorious Bráhman Rishyaśring

Passed in that royal town his life

With Śántá his beloved wife.”

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Drama Readings and Responses
THE MULE-BONE

A COMEDY OF NEGRO LIFE IN

THREE ACTS

BY

LANGSTON HUGHES and ZORA HURSTON

CHARACTERS

JIM WESTON: Guitarist, Methodist, slightly arrogant, agressive, somewhat self-important, ready with his tongue.

DAVE CARTER: Dancer, Baptist, soft, happy-go-lucky character, slightly dumb and unable to talk rapidly and wittily.

DAISY TAYLOR: Methodist, domestic servant, plump, dark and sexy, self-conscious of clothes and appeal, fickle.

JOE CLARK: The Mayor, storekeeper and postmaster, arrogant, ignorant and powerful in a self-assertive way, large, fat man, Methodist.

ELDER SIMMS: Methodist minister, newcomer in town, ambitious, small and fly, but not very intelligent.

ELDER CHILDERS: Big, loose-jointed, slow spoken but not dumb. Long resident in the town, calm and sure of himself.

KATIE CARTER: Dave’s aunt, little old wizened dried-up lady.

MRS. HATTIE CLARK: The Mayor’s wife, fat and flabby mulatto high-pitched voice.

THE MRS. REV. SIMMS: Large and agressive.

THE MRS. REV. Just a wife who thinks of details.

CHILDERS:

LUM BOGER: Young town marshall about twenty, tall, gangly, with big flat feet, liked to show off in public.

TEET MILLER: Village vamp who is jealous of DAISY.
LIGE MOSELY: A village wag.

WALTER THOMAS: Another village wag.

ADA LEWIS: A promiscuous lover.

DELLA LEWIS: Baptist, poor housekeeper, mother of ADA.

BOOTSIE PITTS: A local vamp.

MRS. DILCIE ANDERSON: Village housewife, Methodist.

WILLIE NIXON: Methodist, short runt.

ACT I

SETTING: The raised porch of JOE CLARK’S Store and the street in front. Porch stretches almost completely across the stage, with a plank bench at either end. At the center of the porch three steps leading from street. Rear of porch, center, door to the store. On either side are single windows on which signs, at left, “POST OFFICE”, and at right, “GENERAL STORE” are painted. Soap boxes, axe handles, small kegs, etc., on porch on which townspeople sit and lounge during action. Above the roof of the porch the “false front”, or imitation second story of the shop is seen with large sign painted across it “JOE CLARK’S GENERAL STORE”. Large kerosine street lamp on post at right in front of porch.

Saturday afternoon and the villagers are gathered around the store. Several men sitting on boxes at edge of porch chewing sugar cane, spitting tobacco juice, arguing, some whittling, others eating peanuts. During the act the women all dressed up in starched dresses parade in and out of store. People buying groceries, kids playing in the street, etc. General noise of conversation, laughter and children shouting. But when the curtain rises there is momentary lull for cane-chewing. At left of porch four men are playing cards on a soap box, and seated on the edge of the porch at extreme right two children are engaged in a checker game, with the board on the floor between them.

When the curtain goes up the following characters are discovered on the porch: MAYOR JOE CLARK, the storekeeper; DEACON HAMBO; DEACON GOODWIN; Old Man MATT BRAZZLE; WILL CODY; SYKES JONES; LUM BOGER, the young town marshall; LIGE MOSELY and WALTER THOMAS, two village wags; TOM NIXON and SAM MOSELY, and several others, seated on boxes, kegs, benches and floor of the porch. TONY TAYLOR is sitting on steps of porch with empty basket. MRS. TAYLOR comes out with her arms full of groceries, empties them into basket and goes back in store. All the men are chewing sugar cane earnestly with varying facial expressions. The noise of the breaking and sucking of cane can be clearly heard in the silence. Occasionally the laughter and shouting of children is heard nearby off stage.

HAMBO: (To BRAZZLE) Say, Matt, gimme a jint or two of dat green cane—dis ribbon cane is hard.

LIGE: Yeah, and you ain’t got de chears in yo’ parlor you useter have.

HAMBO: Dat’s all right, Lige, but I betcha right now wid dese few teeth I got I kin eat up more cane’n you kin grow.

LIGE: I know you kin and that’s de reason I ain’t going to tempt you. But youse gettin’ old in lots of ways—look at dat bald-head—just as clean as my hand. (Exposes his palm).

HAMBO: Don’t keer if it tis—I don’t want nothin’—not even hair—between me and God. (General laughter—LIGE joins in as well. Cane chewing keeps up. Silence for a moment.)

(Off stage a high shrill voice can be heard calling:)

VOICE: Sister Mosely, Oh, Sister Mosely! (A pause) Miz Mosely! (Very irritated) Oh, Sister Mattie! You hear me out here—you just won’t answer!

VOICE OF MRS. MOSELY: Whoo-ee ... somebody calling me?
VOICE OF MRS. ROBERTS: (Angrily) Never mind now—you couldn’t come when I called you. I don’t want yo’ lil ole weasley turnip greens. (Silence)

MATT BRAZZLE: Sister Roberts is en town agin! If she was mine, I’ll be hen-fired if I wouldn’t break her down in de lines (loins)—good as dat man is to her!

HAMBO: I wish she was mine jes’ one day—de first time she open her mouf to beg anybody, I’d lam her wid lightning.

JOE CLARK: I God, Jake Roberts buys mo’ rations out dis store than any man in dis town. I don’t see to my Maker whut she do wid it all.... Here she come....

(ENTER MRS. JAKE ROBERTS, a heavy light brown woman with a basket on her arm. A boy about ten walks beside her carrying a small child about a year old straddle of his back. Her skirts are sweeping the ground. She walks up to the step, puts one foot upon the steps and looks forlornly at all the men, then fixes her look on JOE CLARK.)

MRS. ROBERTS: Evenin’, Brother Mayor.

CLARK: Howdy do, Mrs. Roberts. How’s yo’ husband?

MRS. ROBERTS: (Beginning her professional whine): He ain’t much and I ain’t much and my chillun is poly. We ain’t got ‘nough to eat! Lawd, Mr. Clark, gimme a lil piece of side meat to cook us a pot of greens.

CLARK: Aw gwan, Sister Roberts. You got plenty bacon home. Last week Jake bought....

MRS. ROBERTS: (Frantically) Lawd, Mist’ Clark, how long you think dat lil piece of meat last me an’ my chillun? Lawd, me and my chillun is hungry! God knows, Jake don’t fee-eed me!

(MR. CLARK sits unmoved. MRS. ROBERTS advances upon him)

Mist’ Clark!

CLARK: I God, woman, don’t keep on after me! Every time I look, youse round here beggin’ for everything you see.

LIGE: And whut she don’t see she whoops for it just de same.

MRS. ROBERTS: (In dramatic begging pose) Mist’ Clark! Ain’t you boin’ do nuthin’ for me? And you see me and my poor chillun is starvin’....

CLARK: (Exasperated rises) I God, woman, a man can’t git no peace wid somebody like you in town. (He goes angrily into the store followed by MRS. ROBERTS. The boy sits down on the edge of the porch sucking the baby’s thumb.)

VOICE OF MRS. ROBERTS: A piece ’bout dis wide....

VOICE OF CLARK: I God, naw! Yo’ husband done bought you plenty meat, nohow.

VOICE OF MRS. ROBERTS: (In great anguish) Ow! Mist’ Clark! Don’t you cut dat lil tee-ninchy piece of meat for me and my chillun! (Sound of running feet inside the store.) I ain’t a going to tetch it!

VOICE OF CLARK: Well, don’t touch it then. That’s all you’ll git outa me.

VOICE OF MRS. ROBERTS: (Calmer) Well, hand it chear den. Lawd, me and my chillun is so hungry.... Jake don’t fee-eed me. (She re-enters by door of store with the slab of meat in her hand and an outraged look on her face. She gazes all about her for sympathy.) Lawd, me and my poor chillun is so hungry ... and some folks has _every_ thing and they’s so stingy and gripin’.... Lawd knows, Jake don’t fee-eed me! (She exits right on this line followed by the boy with the baby on his back.)

(All the men gaze behind her, then at each other and shake their heads.)

HAMBO: Poor Jak.... I’m really sorry for dat man. If she was mine I’d beat her till her ears hung down like a Georgy mule.
WALTER THOMAS: I’d beat her till she smell like onions.

LIGE: I’d romp on her till she slack like lime.

NIXON: I’d stomp her till she rope like okra.

VOICE OF MRS. ROBERTS: (Off stage right) Lawd, Miz Lewis, you goin’ give me dat lil han’ful of greens for me and my chillun. Why dat ain’t a eye-full. I ought not to take ‘em ... but me and my chillun is so hongry.... Some folks is so stingy and gripin’! Lawd knows, Tony don’t feed me!

(The noise of cane-chewing is heard again. Enter JOE LINDSAY left with a gun over his shoulder and the large leg bone of a mule in the other hand. He approaches the step wearily.)

HAMBO: Well, did you git any partridges, Joe?

JOE: (Resting his gun and seating himself) Nope, but I made de feathers fly.

HAMBO: I don’t see no birds.

JOE: Oh, the feathers flew off on de birds.

LIGE: I don’t see nothin’ but dat bone. Look lak you done kilt a cow and et ‘im raw out in de woods.

JOE: Don’t y’all know dat hock-bone?

WALTER: How you reckon we gointer know every hock-bone in Orange County sight unseen?

JOE: (Standing the bone up on the floor of the porch) Dis is a hock-bone of Brazzle’s ole yaller mule.

(General pleased interest. Everybody wants to touch it.)

BRAZZLE: (Coming forward) Well, sir! (Takes bone in both hands and looks up and down the length of it) If ‘tain’t my ole mule! This sho was one hell of a mule, too. He’d fight every inch in front of de plow ... he’d turn over de mowing machine ... run away wid de wagon ... and you better not look like you wanter ride ‘im!

LINDSAY: (Laughing) Yeah, I ‘member seein’ you comin’ down de road just so ... (He limps wid one hand on his buttocks) one day.

BRAZZLE: Dis mule was so evil he used to try to bite and kick when I’d go in de stable to feed ‘im.

WALTER: He was too mean to git fat. He was so skinny you could do a week’s washing on his ribs for a washboard and hang ‘em up on his hip-bones to dry.

LIGE: I ‘member one day, Brazzle, you sent yo’ boy to Winter Park after some groceries wid a basket. So here he went down de road ridin’ dis mule wid dis basket on his arm.... Whut you reckon dat ole contrary mule done when he got to dat crooked place in de road going round Park Lake? He turnt right round and went through de handle of dat basket ... wid de boy still up on his back. (General laughter)

BRAZZLE: Yeah, he up and died one Sat’day just for spite ... but he was too contrary to lay down on his side like a mule orter and die decent. Naw, he made out to lay down on his narrer contracted back and die wid his feets sticking straight up in de air just so. (He gets down on his back and illustrates.) We drug him out to de swamp wid ‘im dat way, didn’t we, Hambo?

JOE CLARK: I God, Brazzle, we all seen it. Didn’t we all go to de draggin’ out? More folks went to yo’ mule’s draggin’ out than went to last school closing.... Bet there ain’t been a thing right in mule-hell for four years.

HAMBO: Been dat long since he been dead?

CLARK: I God, yes. He died de week after I started to cutting’ dat new ground.

(The bone is passing from hand to hand. At last a boy about twelve takes it. He has just walked up and is proudly handling the bone when a woman’s voice is heard off stage right.)
VOICE: Senator! Senator!! Oh, you Senator?

BOY: (Turning displeased mutters) Aw, shux. (Loudly) Ma’m?

VOICE: If you don’t come here you better!

SENATOR: Yes ma’am. (He drops bone on ground down stage and trots off frowning.) Soon as we men git to doing something dese wimmen… (Exits, right.)

(Enter TEET and BOOTSIE left, clean and primped in voile dresses just alike. They speak diffidently and enter store. The men admire them casually.)

LIGE: Them girls done turned out to be right good-looking.

WALTER: Teet ain’t as pretty now as she was a few years back. She used to be fat as a butter ball wid legs just like two whiskey-kegs. She’s too skinny since she got her growth.

CODY: Ain’t none of ‘em pretty as dat Miss Daisy. God! She’s pretty as a speckled pup.

LIGE: But she was sho nuff ugly when she was little … little ole hard black knot. She sho has changed since she been away up North. If she ain’t pretty now, there ain’t a hound dog in Georgy.

(Re-enter SENATOR BAILEY and stops on the steps. He addresses JOE CLARK.)

SENATOR: Mist’ Clark…

HAMBO: (To Senator) Ain’t you got no manners? We all didn’t sleep wid you last night.

SENATOR: (Embarrassed) Good evening, everybody.

ALL THE MEN: Good evening, son, boy, Senator, etc.

SENATOR: Mist’ Clark, mama said is Daisy been here dis evenin’?

JOE CLARK: Ain’t laid my eyes on her. Ain’t she working over in Maitland?

SENATOR: Yessuh … but she’s off today and mama sent her down here to get de groceries.

JOE CLARK: Well, tell yo’ ma I ain’t seen her.

SENATOR: Well, she say to tell you when she come, to tell her ma say she better git home and dat quick.

JOE CLARK: I will. (Exit BOY right.)

LIGE: Bet she’s off somewhere wid Dave or Jim.

WALTER: I don’t bet it … I know it. She’s got them two in de go-long.

(Re-enter TEET and BOOTSIE from store. TEET has a letter and BOOTSIE two or three small parcels. The men look up with interest as they come out on the porch.)

WALTER: (Winking) Whut’s dat you got, Teet … letter from Dave?

TEET: (Flouncing) Naw indeed! It’s a letter from my B-I-T-sweetie! (Rolls her eyes and hips.)

WALTER: (Winking) Well, ain’t Dave yo’ B-I-T-sweetie? I thought y’all was ‘bout to git married. Everywhere I looked dis summer ’twas you and Dave, Bootsie and Jim. I thought all of y’all would’ve done jumped over de broomstick by now.

TEET: (Flourishing letter) Don’t tell it to me … tell it to the ever-loving Mr. Albert Johnson way over in Apopka.

BOOTSIE: (Rolling her eyes) Oh, tell ’em ‘bout the ever-loving Mr.
Jimmy Cox from Altamont. Oh, I can’t stand to see my baby lose.

HAMBO: It’s lucky y’all girls done got some more fellers, cause look like Daisy done treed both Jim and Dave at once, or they done treed here one.

TEET: Let her have ‘em ... nobody don’t keer. They don’t handle de “In God we trust” lak my Johnson. He’s head bellman at de hotel.

BOOTSIE: Mr. Cox got money’s grandma and old grandpa change. (The girls exit huffily.)

LINDSAY: (To HAMBO, pseudo-seriously) You oughtn’t tease dem gals lak dat.

HAMBO: Oh, I laks to see gals all mad. But dem boys is crazy sho nuff. Before Daisy come back here they both had a good-looking gal a piece. Now they ‘bout to fall out and fight over half a gal a piece. Neither one won’t give over and let de other one have her.

LIGE: And she ain’t thinking too much ‘bout no one man. (Looks off left.) Here she come now. God! She got a mean walk on her!

WALTER: Yeah, man. She handles a lot of traffic! Oh, mama, throw it in de river ... papa’ll come git it!

LINDSAY: Aw, shut up, you married men!

LIGE: Man don’t go blind cause he gits married, do he? (Enter DAISY hurriedly. Stops at step a moment. She is dressed in sheer organdie, white shoes and stockings.)

DAISY: Good evening, everybody. (Walks up on the porch.)

ALL THE MEN: (Very pleasantly) Good evening, Miss Daisy.

DAISY: (To CLARK) Mama sent me after some meal and flour and some bacon and sausage oil.

CLARK: Senator been here long time ago hunting you.

DAISY: (Frightened) Did he? Oo ... Mist’ Clark, hurry up and fix it for me. (She starts on in the store.)

LINDSAY: (Giving her his seat) You better wait here, Daisy.

(WALTER kicks LIGE to call his attention to LINDSAY’S attitude)

It’s powerful hot in dat store. Lemme run fetch ‘em out to you.

LIGE: (To LINDSAY) Run! Joe Lindsay, you ain’t been able to run since de big bell rung. Look at dat gray beard.

LINDSAY: Thank God, I ain’t gray all over. I’m just as good a man right now as any of you young ‘uns. (He hurries on into the store.)

WALTER: Daisy, where’s yo’ two body guards? It don’t look natural to see you thout nary one of ‘em.

DAISY: (Archly) I ain’t got no body guards. I don’t know what you talkin’ about.

LIGE: Aw, don’ try to come dat over us, Daisy. You know who we talkin’ ‘bout all right ... but if you want me to come out flat footed ... where’s Jim and Dave?

DAISY: Ain’t they playin’ somewhere for de white folks?

LIGE: (To WALTER) Will you listen at dis gal, Walter? (To DAISY) When I ain’t been long seen you and Dave going down to de Lake.

DAISY: (Frightened) Don’t y’all run tell mama where I been.

WALTER: Well, you tell us which one you laks de best and we’ll wipe our mouf (Gesture) and say nothin’. Dem boys been de best of friends all they life, till both of ‘em took after you ... then good-bye, Katy bar de door!
DAISY: (Affected innocence) Ain’t they still playin’ and dancin’ together?

LIGE: Yeah, but that’s ’bout all they do ‘gree on these days. That’s de way it is wid men, young and old…. I don’t keer how long they been friends and how thick they been … a woman kin come between ’em. David and Jonather never would have been friends so long if Jonather had of been any great hand wid de wimmen. You ain’t never seen no two roosters that likes one another.

DAISY: I ain’t tried to break ’em up.

WALTER: Course you ain’t. You don’t have to. All two boys need to do is to git stuck on de same girl and they done broke up … right now! Wimmen is something can’t be divided equal.

(Re-enter JOE LINDSAY and CLARK with the groceries. DAISY jumps up and grabs the packages.)

LIGE: (To DAISY) Want some of us … me … to go long and tote yo’ things for you?

DAISY: (Nervously) Naw, mama is riding her high horse today. Long as I been gone it wouldn’t do for me to come walking up wid nobody. (She exits hurriedly right.)

(All the men watch her out of sight in silence.)

CLARK: (Sighing) I God, know whut Daisy puts me in de mind of?

HAMBO: No, what? (They all lean together.)

CLARK: I God, a great big mango … a sweet smell, you know, Th a strong flavor, but not something you could mash up like a strawberry. Something with a body to it.

(General laughter, but not obscene.)

HAMBO: (Admiringly) Joe Clark! I didn’t know you had it in you!

(MRS. CLARK enters from store door and they all straighten up guiltily)

CLARK: (Angrily to his wife) Now whut do you want? I God, the minute I set down, here you come....

MRS. CLARK: Somebody want a stamp, Jody. You know you don’t ‘low me to bove wid de post office. (HE rises sullenly and goes inside the store.)

BRAZZLE: Say, Hambo, I didn’t see you at our Sunday School picnic.

HAMBO: (Slicing some plug-cut tobacco) Nope, wan’t there dis time.

WALTER: Looka here, Hambo. Y’all Baptist carry dis close-communion business too far. If a person ain’t half drownded in de lake and half et up by alligators, y’all think he ain’t baptized, so you can’t take communion wid him. Now I reckon you can’t even drink lemonade and eat chicken perlow wid us.

HAMBO: My Lord, boy, youse just full of words. Now, in de first place, if this year’s picnic was lak de one y’all had last year … you ain’t had no lemonade for us Baptists to turn down. You had a big ole barrel of rain water wid about a pound of sugar in it and one lemon cut up over de top of it.

LIGE: Man, you sho kin mold ’em!

WALTER: Well, I went to de Baptist picnic wid my mouf all set to eat chicken, when lo and behold y’all had chitlings! Do Jesus!

LINDSAY: Hold on there a minute. There was plenty chicken at dat picnic, which I do know is right.

WALTER: Only chicken I seen was half a chicken yo’ pastor musta tried to swaller whole cause he was choked stiff as a board when I come long … wid de whole deacon’s board beating him in de back, trying to knock it out his throat.

LIGE: Say, dat puts me in de mind of a Baptist brother that was crazy ’bout de preachers and de preacher was crazy ’bout feeding his face. So his son got tired of trying to beat dese stump-knockers to de grub on the table, so
one day he throwed out some slams 'bout dese preachers. Dat made his old man mad, so he tole his son to git out. He boy ast him “Where must I go, papa?” He says, “Go on to hell I reckon ... I don’t keer where you go.”

So de boy left and was gone seven years. He come back one cold, windy night and rapped on de door. “Who dat?” de old man ast him “It’s me, Jack.” De old man opened de door, so glad to see his son agin, and tole Jack to come in. He did and looked all round de place. Seven or eight preachers was sitting round de fire eatin’ and drinkin’.

“Where you been all dis time, Jack?” de old man ast him.

“I been to hell,” Jack tole him.

“Tell us how it is down there, Jack.”

“Well,” he says, “It’s just like it is here ... you cain’t git to de fire for de preachers.”

HAMBO: Boy, you kin lie just like de cross-ties from Jacksonville to Key West. De presidin’ elder must come round on his circuit teaching y’all how to tell ‘em, cause you couldn’t lie dat good just natural.

WALTER: Can’t nobody beat Baptist folks lying ... and I ain’t never found out how come you think youse so important.

LINDSAY: Ain’t we got de finest and de biggest church? Macedonia Baptist will hold more folks than any two buildings in town.

LIGE: Thass right, y’all got a heap more church than you got members to go in it.

HAMBO: Thass all right ... y’all ain’t got neither de church nor de members. Everything that’s had in this town got to be held in our church.

(Re-enter JOE CLARK.)

CLARK: What you-all talkin’?

HAMBO: Come on out, Tush Hawg, lemme beat you some checkers. I’m tired of fending and proving wid dese boys ain’t got no hair on they chest yet.

CLARK: I God, you mean you gointer get beat. You can’t handle me ...
I’m a tush hawg.

HAMBO: Well, I’m going to draw dem tushes right now. (To two small boys using checker board on edge of porch.) Here you chilluns, let de Mayor and me have that board. Go on out an’ play an’ give us grown folks a little peace. (The children go down stage and call out:)

SMALL BOY: Hey, Senator. Hey, Marthy. Come on let’s play chick-me, chick-me, cranie-crow.

CHILD’S VOICE: (Off stage) All right! Come on, Jessie! (Enter several children, led by SENATOR, and a game begins in front of the store as JOE CLARK and HAMBO play checkers.)

JOE CLARK: I God! Hambo, you can’t play no checkers.

HAMBO: (As they seat themselves at the check board) Aw, man, if you wasn’t de Mayor I’d beat you all de time.

(The children get louder and louder, drowning out the men’s voices.)

SMALL GIRL: I’m gointer be de hen.

BOY: And I’m gointer be de hawk. Lemme git maself a stick to mark wid.

(The boy who is the hawk squats center stage with a short twig in his hand. The largest girl lines up the other children behind her.)

GIRL: (Mother Hen) (Looking back over her flock): Y’all ketch holt of one ‘Nother’s clothes so de hawk can’t git yuh. (They do.) You all straight now?
CHILDREN: Yeah. (The march around the hawk commences.)

HEN AND CHICKS:
Chick mah chick mah craney crow
Went to de well to wash ma toe
When I come back ma chick was gone
What time, ole witch?

HAWK: (Making a tally on the ground) One!
HEN AND CHICKS: (Repeat song and march.)
HAWK: (Scoring again) Two!

(Can be repeated any number of times.)

HAWK: Four. (He rises and imitates a hawk flying and trying to catch a chicken. Calling in a high voice:) Chickee.
HEN: (Flapping wings to protect her young) My chickens sleep.
HAWK: Chickie. (During all this the hawk is feinting and darting in his efforts to catch a chicken, and the chickens are dancing defensively, the hen trying to protect them.)
HEN: My chicken’s sleep.
HAWK: I shall have a chick.
HEN: You shan’t have a chick.
HAWK: I’m goin’ home. (Flies off)
HEN: Dere’s de road.
HAWK: My pot’s a boilin’.
HEN: Let it boil.
HAWK: My guts a growlin’.
HEN: Let ’em growl.
HAWK: I must have a chick.
HEN: You shan’t have n’airn.
HAWK: My mama’s sick.
HEN: Let her die.
HAWK: Chickie!
HEN: My chicken’s sleep.

(HAWK darts quickly around the hen and grabs a chicken and leads him off and places his captive on his knees at the store porch. After a brief bit of dancing he catches another, then a third, etc.)

HAMBO: (At the checker board, his voice rising above the noise of the playing children, slapping his sides jubilantly) Ha! Ha! I got you now. Go ahead on and move, Joe Clark … jus’ go ahead on and move.

LOUNGERS: (Standing around two checker players) Ol’ Deacon’s got you now.

ANOTHER VOICE: Don’t see how he can beat the Mayor like that.

ANOTHER VOICE: Got him in the Louisville loop. (These remarks are drowned by the laughter of the playing children directly in front of the porch. MAYOR JOE CLARK disturbed in his concentration on the checkers and
peeved at being beaten suddenly turns toward the children, throwing up his hands.)

CLARK: Get on 'way from here, you limbs of Satan, making all that racket so a man can't hear his ears. Go on, go on!

(THE MAYOR looks about excitedly for the town marshall. Seeing him playing cards on the other side of porch, he bellows:)

Lum Boger, whyn't you git these kids away from here! What kind of a marshall is you? All this passle of young'uns around here under grown people's feet, creatin' disorder in front of my store.

(LUM BOGER puts his cards down lazily, comes down stage and scatters the children away. One saucy little girl refuses to move.)

LUM BOGER: Why'nt you go on away from here, Matilda? Didn't you hear me tell you-all to move?

LITTLE MATILDA: (Defiantly) I ain't goin' nowhere. You ain't none of my mama. (Jerking herself free from him as LUM touches her.) My mama in the store and she told me to wait out here. So take that, ol' Lum.

LUM BOGER: You impudent little huzzy, you! You must smell yourself ... youse so fresh.

MATILDA: The wind musta changed and you smell your own top lip.

LUM BOGER: Don't make me have to grab you and take you down a buttonhole lower.

MATILDA: (Switching her little head) Go ahead on and grab me. You sho can't kill me, and if you kill me, you sho can't eat me. (She marches into the store.)

SENATOR: (Derisively from behind stump) Ol' dumb Lum! Hey! Hey!

(LITTLE BOY at edge of stage thumbs his nose at the marshall.)

(LUM lumbers after the small boy. Both exit.)

HAMBO: (To CLARK who has been thinking all this while what move to make) You ain't got but one move ... go ahead on and make it. What's de matter, Mayor?

CLARK: (Moving his checker) Aw, here.

HAMBO: (Triumphant) Now! Look at him, boys. I'm gonna laugh in notes. (Laughing to the scale and jumping a checker each time) Do, sol, fa, me, lo ... one! (Jumping another checker) La, sol, fa, me, do ... two! (Another jump.) Do sol, re, me, lo ... three! (Jumping a third.) Lo sol, fa, me, re ... four! (The crowd begins to roar with laughter. LUM BOGER returns, looking on. Children come drifting back again playing chick-me-chick-me-cranie crow.)

VOICE: Oh, ha! Done got the ol' tush hog.

ANOTHER VOICE: Thought you couldn't be beat, Brother Mayor?

CLARK: (Peeved, gets up and goes into the store mumbling) Oh, I coulda beat you if I didn't have this store on my mind. Saturday afternoon and I got work to do. Lum, ain't I told you to keep them kids from playin' right in front of this store?

(LUM makes a pass at the nearest half-grown boy. The kids dart around him teasingly.)

ANOTHER VOICE: Eh, heh.... Hambo done run him on his store ... done run the ol' coon in his hole.

ANOTHER VOICE: That ain't good politics, Hambo, beatin' the Mayor.

ANOTHER VOICE: Well, Hambo, you don't got to be so hard at checkers, come on let's see what you can do with de cards. Lum Boger there got his hands full nursin' the chilluns.

ANOTHER VOICE: (At the table) We ain't playin' for money, nohow, Deacon. We just playin' a little Florida Flip.
HAMBO: Ya all can’t play no Florida Flip. When I was a sinner there wasn’t a man in this state could beat me playin’ that game. But I’m a deacon in Macedonia Baptist now and I don’t bother with the cards no more.

VOICE AT CARD TABLE: All right, then, come on here Tony (To man with basket on steps.) let me catch your jack.

TAYLOR: (Looking toward door) I don’t reckon I got time. I guess my wife gonna get through buying out that store some time or other and want to go home.

OLD MAN: (On opposite side of porch from card game) I bet my wife would know better than expect me to sit around and wait for her with a basket. Whyn’t you tell her to tote it on home herself?

TAYLOR: (Sighing and shaking his head.) Eh, Lawd!

VOICE AT CARD TABLE: Look like we can’t get nobody to come into this game. Seem like everybody’s scared a us. Come on back here, Lum, and take your hand. (LUM makes a final futile gesture at the children.)

LUM: Ain’t I tol you little haitians to stay away from here?

(CHILDREN scatter teasingly only to return to their play in front of the store later on. LUM comes up on the porch and re-joins the card game. Just as he gets seated, MRS. CLARK comes to the door of the store and calls him.)

MRS. CLARK: (Drawlingly) Columbus!

LUM: (Wearily) Ma’am?

MRS. CLARK: De Mayor say for you to go round in de back yard and tie up old lady Jackson’s mule what’s trampin’ aup all de tomatoes in my garden.

LUM: All right. (Leaving card game.) Wait till I come back, folkses.

LIGE: Oh, hum! (Yawning and putting down the deck of cards) Lum’s sho a busy marshall. Say, ain’t Dave and Jim been round here yet? I feel kinder like hearin’ a little music ’bout now.

BOY: Naw, they ain’t been here today. You-all know they ain’t so thick nohow as they was since Daisy Bailey come back and they started runnin’ after her.

WOMAN: You mean since she started runnin’ after them, the young hussy.

MRS. CLARK: (In doorway) She don’t mean ’em no good.

WALTER: That’s a shame, ain’t it now? (Enter LUM from around back of store. He jumps on the porch and takes his place at the card box.)

LUM: (To the waiting players) All right, boys! Turn it on and let the bad luck happen.

LIGE: My deal. (He begins shuffling the cards with an elaborate fan-shape movement.)

VOICE AT TABLE: Look out there, Lige, you shuffling mighty lot. Don’t carry the cub to us.

LIGE: Aw, we ain’t gonna cheat you ... we gonna beat you. (He slams down the cards for LUM BOGER to cut.) Wanta cut ’em?

LUM: No, ain’t no need of cutting a rabbit out when you can twist him out. Deal ’em. (LIGE deals out the cards.)

CLARK’S VOICE: (Inside the store) You, Mattie! (MRS. CLARK, who has been standing in the DOE, quickly turns and goes inside.)

LIGE: Y-e-e-e! Spades! (The game is started.)

LUM: Didn’t snatch that jack, did you?

LIGE: Aw, no, ain’t snatched no jack. Play.

WALTER: (LUM’S partner) Well, here it is, partner. What you want me to play for you?
LUM: Play jus’ like I’m in New York, partner. But we gotta try to catch that jack.

LIGE: (Threateningly) Stick out your hand and draw back a nub.

(WALTER THOMAS plays.)

WALTER: I’m playin’ a diamond for you, partner.

LUM: I done tole you you ain’t got no partner.

LIGE: Heh, Heh! Partner, we got ’em. Pull off wid your king. Dey got to play ’em. (When that trick is turned, triumphantly:) Didn’t I tell you, partner? (Stands on his feet and slams down with his ace violently) Now, come up under this ace. Aw, hah, look at ol’ low, partner. I knew I was gonna catch ’em. (When LUM plays) Ho, ho, there goes the queen…. Now, the jack’s a gentleman…. Now, I’m playin’ my knots. (Everybody plays and the hand is ended.) Partner, high, low, jack and the game and four.

WALTER: Give me them cards. I believe you-all done give me the cub that time. Look at me … this is Booker T Washington dealing these cards. (Shuffles cards grandly and gives them to LIGE to cut.) Wanta cut ’em?

LIGE: Yeah, cut ’em and shoot ’em. I’d cut behind my ma. (He cuts the cards.)

WALTER: (Turning to player at left, FRANK, LIGE’S partner) What you saying, Frank?

FRANK: I’m beggin’. (LIGE is trying to peep at cards.)

WALTER: (Turning to LIGE) Stop peepin’ at them cards, Lige. (To FRANK) Did you say you was beggin’ or standin’?

FRANK: I’m beggin’.

WALTER: Get up off your knees. Go ahead and tell ’em I sent you.

FRANK: I’m beggin’.

WALTER: Well, that makes us four.

WALTER: I don’t care if you is. (Pulls a quarter out of his pocket and lays it down on the box.) Twenty-five cents says I know the best one. Let’s go. (Everybody puts down a quarter.)

FRANK: What you want me to play for you partner?

LIGE: Play me a club. (The play goes around to dealer, WALTER, who gets up and takes the card off the top of the deck and slams it down on the table.)

WALTER: Get up ol’ deuce of deamonds and gallop off with your load. (TO LUM) Partner, how many times you seen the deck?

LUM: Two times.

WALTER: Well, then I’m gonna pull off, partner. Watch this ol’ queen. (Everyone plays) Ha! Ha! Wash day and no soap. (Takes the jack of diamonds and sticks him up on his forehead. Stands up on his feet.) Partner, I’m dumping to you … play your king. (When it comes to his play LUM, too, stands up. The others get up and they, too, excitedly slam their cards down.) Now, come on in this kitchen and let me splice that cabbage! (He slams down the ace of diamonds. Pats the jack on his for head, sings:) Hey, hey, back up, jenny, get your load. (Talking) Dump to that jack, boys, dump to it. High, low, jack and the game and four. One to go. We’re four wid you, boys.

LIGE: Yeah, but you-all playin’ catch-up.

FRANK: Gimme them cards … lemme deal some.

LIGE: Frank, now you really got responsibility on you. They’s got one game on us.

FRANK: Aw, man, I’m gonna deal ’em up a mess. This deal’s in the White House. (He shuffles and puts the cards down for WALTER to cut.) Cut ’em.

WALTER: Nope, I never cut green timber. (FRANK deals and turns the card up.)
FRANK: Hearts, boys. (He turns up an ace.)

LUM: Aw, you snatched that ace, nigger.

WALTER: Yeah, they done carried the cub to us, partner.

LIGE: Oh, he didn’t do no such a thing. That ace was turned fair. We jus’ too hard for you ... we eats our dinner out a the blacksmith shop.

WALTER: Aw, you all cheatin’. You know it wasn’t fair.

FRANK: Aw, shut up, you all jus’ whoopin’ and hollerin’ for nothin’. Tryin’ to bully the game. (FRANK and LIGE rise and shake hands grandly.)

LIGE: Mr. Hoover, you sho is a noble president. We done stuck these niggers full of cobs. They done got scared to play us.

LIGE (?) Scared to play you? Get back down to this table, let me spread my mess.

LOUNGER: Yonder comes Elder Simms. You all better squat that rabbit. They’ll be having you all up in the church for playin’ cards.

(FRANK grabs up the cards and puts them in his pocket quickly. Everybody picks up the money and looks unconcerned as the preacher enters. Enter ELDER SIMMS with his two prim-looking little children by the hand.)

ELDER SIMMS: How do, children. Right warm for this time in November, ain’t it?

VOICE: Yes sir, Reverend, sho is. How’s Sister Simms?

SIMMS: She’s feelin’ kinda po’ly today. (Goes on in store with his children)

VOICE: (Whispering loudly) Don’t see how that great big ole powerful woman could be sick. Look like she could go bear huntin’ with her fist.

ANOTHER VOICE: She look jus’ as good as you-all’s Baptist pastor’s wife. Pshaw, you ain’t seen no big woman, nohow, man. I seen one once so big she went to whip her little boy and he run up under her belly and hid six months ‘fore she could find him.

ANOTHER VOICE: Well, I knowed a woman so little that she had to get up on a soap box to look over a grain of sand.

(REV. SIMMS comes out of store, each child behind him sucking a stick of candy.)

SIMMS: (To his children) Run on home to your mother and don’t get dirty on the way. (The two children start primly off down the street but just out of sight one of them utters a loud cry.)

SIMMS’ CHILD: (Off stage) Papa, papa. Nunkie’s trying to lick my candy.

SIMMS: I told you to go on and leave them other children alone.

VOICE ON PORCH: (Kidding) Lum, whyn’t you tend to your business.

(TOWN MARSHALL rises and shoos the children off again.)

LUM: You all varmints leave them nice chillun alone.

LIGE: (Continuing the lying on porch) Well, you all done seen so much, but I bet you ain’t never seen a snake as big as the one I saw when I was a boy up in middle Georgia. He was so big couldn’t hardly move his self. He laid in one spot so long he growed moss on him and everybody thought he was a log, till one day I set down on him and went to sleep, and when I woke up that snake done crawled to Florida. (Loud laughter.)

FRANK: (Seriously) Layin’ all jokes aside though now, you all remember that rattlesnake I killed last year was almost as big as that Georgia snake.
VOICE: How big, you say it was, Frank?

FRANK: Maybe not quite as big as that, but jus’ about fourteen feet.

VOICE: (Derisively) Gimme that lyin’ snake. That snake wasn’t but four foot long when you killed him last year and you done growed him ten feet in a year.

ANOTHER VOICE: Well, I don’t know about that. Some of the snakes around here is powerful long. I went out in my front yard yesterday right after the rain and killed a great big ol’ cottonmouth.

SIMMS: This sho is a snake town. I certainly can’t raise no chickens for ‘em. They kill my little biddies jus’ as fast as they hatch out. And yes … if I hadn’t cut them weeds out of the street in front of my parsonage, me or some of my folks woulda been snake-bit right at our front door. (To whole crowd) Whyn’t you all cut down these weeds and clean up these streets?

HAMBO: Well, the Mayor ain’t said nothin’ ’bout it.

SIMMS: When the folks misbehaves in this town I think they oughta lock ‘em up in a jail and make ‘em work their fine out on the streets, then these weeds would be cut down.

VOICE: How we gonna do that when we ain’t got no jail?

SIMMS: Well, you sho needs a jail … you-all needs a whole lot of improvements round this town. I ain’t never pastored no town so way-back as this one here.

CLARK: (Who has lately emerged from the store, fanning himself, overhears this last remark and bristles up) What’s that you say ’bout this town?

SIMMS: I say we needs some improvements here in this town … that’s what.

CLARK: (In a powerful voice) And what improvements you figgers we needs?

SIMMS: A whole heap. Now, for one thing we really does need a jail, Mayor. We oughta stop runnin’ these people out of town that misbehaves, and lock ‘em up. Others towns has jails, everytown I ever pastored had a jail. Don’t see how come we can’t have one.

CLARK: (Towering angrily above the preacher) Now, wait a minute, Simms. Don’t you reckon the man who knows how to start a town knows how to run it? I paid two hundred dollars out of this right hand for this land and walked out here and started this town befo’ you was born. I ain’t like some of you new niggers, come here when grapes’ ripe. I was here to cut new ground, and I been Mayor ever since.

SIMMS: Well, there ain’t no sense in no one man stayin’ Mayor all the time.

CLARK: Well, it’s my town and I can be mayor jus’ as long as I want to. It was me that put this town on the map.

SIMMS: What map you put it on, Joe Clark? I ain’t seen it on no map.

CLARK: (Indignant) I God! Listen here, Elder Simms. If you don’t like the way I run this town, just’ take your flat feets right on out and git yonder crosst the woods. You ain’t been here long enough to say nothin’ nohow.

HAMBO: (From a nail keg) Yeah, you Methodist niggers always telling people how to run things.

TAYLOR: (Practically unheard by the others) We do so know how to run things, don’t we? Ain’t Brother Mayor a Methodist, and ain’t the school-teacher a …? (His remarks are drowned out by the others.)

SIMMS: No, we don’t like the way you’re runnin’ things. Now looka here, (Pointing at the Marshall) You got that lazy Lum Boger here for marshall and he ain’t old enough to be dry behind his ears yet … and all these able-bodied means in this town! You won’t ‘low nobody else to run a store ‘ceptin’ you. And looka yonder (happening to notice the street light) only street lamp in town, you got in front of your place. (Indignantly) We pay the taxes and you got the lamp.

VILLAGER: Don’t you-all fuss now. How come you two always yam-yamming at each other?

CLARK: How come this fly-by-night Methodist preacher over here … ain’t been here three months … tries to stand
up on my store porch and tries to tell me how to run my town? (MATTIE CLARK, the Mayor’s wife, comes timidly to the door, wiping her hands on her apron.) Ain’t no man gonna tell me how to run my town. I God, I ’lected myself in and I’m gonna run it. (Turns and sees wife standing in door. Commandingly.) I God, Mattie, git on back in there and wait on that store!

MATTIE: (Timidly) Jody, somebody else wantin’ stamps.

CLARK: I God, woman, what good is you? Gwan, git in. Look like between women and preachers a man can’t have no peace. (Exit CLARK.)

SIMMS: (Continuing his argument) Now, when I pastored in Jacksonville you oughta see what kinda jails they got there....

LOUNGER: White folks needs jails. We colored folks don’t need no jail.

ANOTHER VILLAGER: Yes, we do, too. Elder Simms is right....

(The argument becomes a hubbub of voices.)

TAYLOR: (Putting down his basket) Now, I tell you a jail....

MRS. TAYLOR: (Emerging from the store door, arms full of groceries, looking at her husband) Yeah, and if you don’t shut up and git these rations home I’m gonna be worse on you than a jail and six judges. Pickup that basket and let’s go. (TONY meekly picks up the basket and he and his wife exit as the sound of an approaching guitar is heard off stage.)

(Two carelessly dressed, happy-go-lucky fellows enter together. One is fingering a guitar without playing any particular tune, and the other has his hat cocked over his eyes in a burlesque, dude-like manner. There are casual greetings.)

WALTER: Hey, there, bums, how’s tricks?

LIGE: What yo’ sayin’, boys?

HAMBO: Good evenin’ sons.

LIGE: How did you-all make out this evenin’, boys?

JIM: Oh, them white folks at the party shelled out right well. Kept Dave busy pickin’ it up. How much did we make today, Dave?

DAVE: (Striking his pocket) I don’t know, boy, but feels right heavy here. Kept me pickin’ up money just like this.... (As JIM picks a few dance chords, Dave gives a dance imitation of how he picked up the coins from the ground as the white folks threw them.) We count it after while. Woulda divided up with you already if you hadn’t left me when you seen Daisy comin’ by. Let’s sit down on the porch and rest now.

LIGE: She sho is lookin’ stylish and pretty since she come back with her white folks from up North. Wearin’ the swellest clothes. And that coal-black hair of hers jus’ won’t quit.

MATTIE CLARK: (In doorway) I don’t see what the mens always hanging after Daisy Taylor for.

CLARK: (Turning around on the porch) I God, you back here again. Who’s tendin’ that store? (MATTIE disappears inside.)

DAVE: Well, she always did look like new money to me when she was here before.

JIM: Well, that’s all you ever did get was a look.

DAVE: That’s all you know! I bet I get more than that now.

JIM: You might git it but I’m the man to use it. I’m a bottom fish.

DAVE: Aw, man. You musta been walking round here fast asleep when
Daisy was in this county last. You ain’t seen de go I had with her.

JIM: No, I ain’t seen it. Bet you didn’t have no letter from her while she been away.

DAVE: Bet you didn’t neither.

JIM: Well, it’s just cause she can’t write. If she knew how to scratch with a pencil I’d had a ton of ‘em.

DAVE: Shaw, man! I’d had a post office full of ‘em.

OLD WOMAN: You-all ought to be shame, carrying on over a brazen heifer like Daisy Taylor. Jus’ cause she’s been up North and come back, I reckon you cutting de fool sho ‘nough now. She ain’t studying none of you-all nohow. All she wants is what you got in your pocket.

JIM: I likes her but she won’t git nothin’ outa me. She never did. I wouldn’t give a poor consumpted cripple crab a crutch to cross the River Jurdon.

DAVE: I know I ain’t gonna give no woman nothin’. I wouldn’t give a dog a doughnut if he treed a terrapin.

LIGE: Youse a cottontail dispute ... both of you. You’d give her anything you got. You’d give her Georgia with a fence ‘round it.

OLD MAN: Yeah, and she’d take it, too.

LINDSAY: Don’t distriminate the woman like that. That ain’t nothing but hogism. Ain’t nothin’ the matter with Daisy, she’s all right.

(Enter TEETS and BOOTSIE tittering coyly and switching themselves.)

BOOTIE: Is you seen my mama?

OLD WOMAN: You know you ain’t lookin’ for no mama. Jus’ come back down here to show your shape and fan around awhile. (BOOTIE and TEETS going into the store.)

BOOTIE & TEETS: No, we ain’t. We’se come to get our mail.

OLD WOMAN: (After girls enter store) Why don’t you all keep up some attention to these nice girls here, Bootsie and Teets. They wants to marry.

DAVE: Aw, who thinkin’ ‘bout marryin’ now? They better stay home and eat their own pa’s rations. I gotta buy myself some shoes.

JIM: The woman I’m gonna marry ain’t born yet and her maw is dead.

(GIRLS come out giggling and exit.) (JIM begins to strum his guitar lightly at first as the talk goes on.)

CLARK: (To DAVE and JIM) Two of the finest gals that ever lived and friendly jus’ like you-all is. You two boys better take ‘em back and stop them shiftless ways.

HAMBO: Yeah, hurry up and do somethin’! I wants to taste a piece yo’ weddin’ cake.

JIM: (Embarrassed but trying to be jocular) Whut you trying to rush me up so fast?... Look at Will Cody here (Pointing to little man on porch) he been promising to bring his already wife down for two months ... and nair one of us ain’t seen her yet.

DAVE: Yeah, how you speck me to haul in a brand new wife when he can’t lead a wagon-broke wife eighteen miles? Me, I’m going git one soon’s Cody show me his’n. (General sly laughter at CODY’S expense.)

WALTER: (Snaps his fingers and pretends to remember something) Thass right, Cody. I been intending to tell you.... I know where you kin buy a ready-built house for you and yo’ wife. (Calls into the store.) Hey, Clark, cime on out here and tell Cody ‘bout dat Bradley house. (To CODY.) I know you wants to git a place of yo’ own so you kin settle down.

HAMBO: He done moved so much since he been here till every time he walk out in his back yeard his chickens lay
down and cross they legs.

LINDSAY: Cody, I thought you tole us you was going up to Sanford to bring dat ‘oman down here last Sat’day.

LIGE: That ain’t de way he tole me ‘bout it. Look, fellers, (Getting up and putting one hand on his hips and one finger of the other hand against his chin coquettishly) Where you reckon I’ll be next Sat’day night?... Sittin’ up side of Miz Cody. (Great burst of laughter.)

SYKES JONES: (Laughing) Know what de folks tole me in Sanford? Dat was another man’s wife. (Guffaws.)

CODY: (Feebly) Aw, you don’t know what you talkin’bout.

JONES: Naw, I don’t know, but de folks in Sanford does. (Laughing) Dey tell me when dat lady’s husband come home Sat’day night, ole Cody jumped out de window. De man grabbed his old repeater and run out in de yard to head him off. When Cody seen him come round de corner de house (Gesture) he flopped his wings and flew up on de fence. De man thowed dat shotgun dead on him. (Laughs) Den, man! Cody flopped his wings lak a buzzard (Gesture) and sailed on off. De man dropped to his knees lak dis (Gesture of kneeling on one knee and taking aim) Die! die! die! (Supposedly sound of shots as the gun is moved in a circle following the course of Cody’s supposed flight) Cody just flew right on off and lit on a hill two miles off. Then, man! (Gesture of swift flight) In ten minutes he was back here in Eatonville and in he bed.

WALTER: I passed there and seen his house shakin’, but I didn’t know how come.

HAMBO: Aw, leave de boy alone.... If you don’t look out some of y’all going to have to break his record.

LIGE: I’m prepared to break it now. (General laughter.)

JIM: Well, anyhow, I don’t want to marry and leave Dave ... yet awhile. (Picking a chord.)

DAVE: And I ain’t gonna leave Jim. We been palling around together ever since we hollered titty mama, ain’t we, boy?

JIM: Sho is. (Music of the guitar increases in volume. DAVE shuffles a few steps and the two begin to sing.)

JIM:
Rabbit on the log.
I ain’t got no dog.
How am I gonna git him?
God knows.

DAVE:
Rabbit on the log.
Ain’t got no dog.
Shoot him with my rifle
Bam! Bam!

(Some of the villagers join in song and others get up and march around the porch in time with the music. BOOTSIE and TEETS re-enter, TEETS sticking her letter down the neck of her blouse. JOE LINDSAY grabs TEETS and WALTER THOMAS grabs BOOTSIE. There is dancing, treating and general jollification. Little children dance the parse-me-la. The music fills the air just as the sun begins to go down. Enter DAISY TAYLOR coming down the road toward the store.)

CLARK: (Bawls out from the store porch) I God, there’s Daisy again.

(Most of the dancing stops, the music slows down and then stops completely. DAVE and JIM greet DAISY casually as she approaches the porch.)

JIM: Well, Daisy, we knows you, too.

DAVE: Gal, youse jus’ as pretty as a speckled pup.

DAISY: (Giggling) I see you two boys always playin’ and singin’ together. That music sounded right good floating down the road.
JIM: Yeah, child, we’se been playin’ for the white folks all week. We’se playin’ for the colored now.

DAVE: (Showing off, twirling his dancing feet) Yeah, we’re standin’ on our abstract and livin’ on our income.

OLD MAN: Um-ump, but they ain’t never workin’. Just round here playing as usual.

JIM: Some folks think you ain’t workin’ lessen you smellin’ a mule. (He sits back down on box and picks at his guitar.) Think you gotta be beatin’ a man to his barn every mornin’.

VOICE: Glad to be round home with we-all again, ain’t you Daisy?

DAISY: Is I glad? I jus’ got off special early this evenin’ to come over here and see everybody. I was kinda ‘fraid sundown would catch me ’fore I got round that lake. Don’t know how I’m gonna walk back to my workin’ place in the dark by muself.

DAVE: Don’t no girl as good-lookin’ as you is have to go home by herself tonight.

JIM: No, cause I’m here.

DAVE: (To DAISY) Don’t you trust yourself round that like wid all them ‘gators and moccasins with that nigger there, Daisy (Pointing at JIM) He’s jus’ full of rabbit blood. What you need is a real man … with good feet. (Cutting a dance step.)

DAISY: I ain’t thinking ‘bout goin’ home yet. I’m goin’ in the store.

JIM: What you want in the store?

DAISY: I want some gum.

DAVE: (Starting toward door) Girl, you don’t have to go in there to git no gum. I’ll go in there and buy you a carload of gum. What kind you want?

DAISY: Bubble gum. (DAVE goes in the store with his hand in his pocket. The sun is setting and the twilight deepens.)

JIM: (Pulling package out of his pocket and laughing) Here your gum, baby. What it takes to please the ladies, I totes it. I don’t have to go get it, like Dave. What you gimme for it?

DAISY: A bushel and a peck, and a hug around the neck. (She embraces JIM playfully. He hands her the gum, patting his shoulder as he sits on box.) Oh, thank you. Youse a ready man.

JIM: Yeah, there’s a lot of good parts to me. You can have West Tampa if you want it.

DAISY: You always was a nice quiet boy, Jim.

DAVE: (Emerging from the store with a package of gum) Here’s your gum, Daisy.

JIM: Oh, youse late. She’s done got gum now. Chaw that yourself.

DAVE: (Slightly peeved and surprised) Hunh, you mighty fast here now with Daisy but you wasn’t that fast gettin’ out of that white man’s chicken house last week.

JIM: Who you talkin’ ‘bout?

DAVE: Hoo-oo? (Facetiously) You ain’t no owl. Your feet don’t fit no limb.

JIM: Aw, nigger, hush.

DAVE: Aw, hush, yourself. (He walks away for a minute as DAISY turns to meet some newcomers. DAVE throws his package of gum down on the ground. It breaks and several children scramble for the pieces. An old man, ‘very drunk, carrying an empty jug enters on left and staggers tipsily across stage.) (MAYOR JOE CLARK emerges from the store and looks about for his marshall.)
CLARK: (Bellowing) Lum Boger!

LUM BOGER: (Eating a stalk of cane) Yessir!

CLARK: I God, Lum, take your lazy self off that keg and go light that town lamp. All summer long you eatin’ up my melon, and all winter long you chawin’ up my cane. What you think this town is payin’ you for? Laying round here doin’ nothin’? Can’t you see it’s gettin’ dark?

(LUM BOGER rises lazily and takes the soap box down stage, stands on it to light the lamp, discovers no oil in it and goes in store. In a few moments he comes out of store, fills the lamp and lights it.)

DAISY: (Coming back toward JIM) Ain’t you all gonna play and sing a little somethin’ for me? I ain’t heard your all’s music much for so long.

JIM: Play anything you want, Daisy. Don’t make no difference what ‘tis I can pick it. Where’s that old coon, Dave? (Looking around for his partner.)

LIGE: (Calling Dave, who is leaning against post at opposite end of porch) Come here, an’ get warmed up for Daisy.

DAVE: Aw, ma throat’s tired.

JIM: Leave the baby be.

DAISY: Come on, sing a little, Dave.

DAVE: (Going back toward Jim) Well, seeing who’s asking ... all right. What song yo like, Daisy?

DAISY: Um-m. Lemme think.

VOICE ON PORCH: “Got on the train, didn’t have no fare”.

DAISY: (Gaily) Yes, that one. That’s a good one.

JIM: (Begins to tune up. DAVE touches Daisy’s hand.)

VOICE: (In fun) Hunh, you all wouldn’t play at the hall last week when we asked you.

VOICE OF SPITEFUL OLD WOMAN: Daisy wasn’t here then.

ANOTHER VOICE: (Teasingly) All you got to do to some men is to shake a skirt tail in their face and they goes off their head.

DAVE: (To JIM who is still tuning up) Come if you’re comin’ boy, let’s go if you gwine. (The full melody of the guitar comes out in a lively, old-fashioned tune.)

VOICE: All right now, boys, do it for Daisy jus’ as good as you do for dem white folks over in Maitland.

DAVE & JIM: (Beginning to sing)
Got on the train,
Didn’t have no fare,
But I rode some,
I rode some.
Got on the train,
Didn’t have no fare,
But I rode some,
But I rode some.
Got on the train,
Didn’t have no fare,
Conductor asked me what I’m doin’ there,
But I rode some!

Grabbed me by the neck
And led me to the door.
But I rode some,
But I rode some.
Grabbed me by the neck
And led me to the door.
But I rode some,
But I rode some.
Grabbed me by the neck,
And led me to the door.
Rapped me cross the head with a forty-four,
But I rode some.

First thing I saw in jail
Was a pot of peas.
But I rode some,
But I rode some.
First thing I saw in jail
Was a pot of peas.
But I rode some,
But I rode some.
The peas was good,
The meat was fat,
Fell in love with the chain gang jus’ for that,
But I rode some.

(DAVE acts out the song in dancing pantomime and when it ends there are shouts and general exclamations of approval from the crowd.)

VOICES: I don’t blame them white folks for goin’ crazy ‘bout that....

OLD MAN: Oh, when I was a young boy I used to swing the gals round on that piece.

DAISY: (TO JIM) Seem like your playin’ gits better and better.

DAVE: (Quickly) And how ‘bout my singin’? (Everybody laughs.)

VOICES IN THE CROWD: Ha! Ha! Ol’ Dave’s gittin’ jealous when she speaks o’ Jim.

JIM: (To DAVE, in fun) Ain’t nothin’ to it but my playin’. You ain’t got no singin’ voice. If that’s singin’, God’s a gopher.

DAVE: (Half-seriously) My singin’ is a whole lot better’n your playin’. You jus’ go along and fram. The reason why the white folks gives us money is cause I’m singin’.

JIM: Yeah?

DAVE: And you can’t dance.

VOICE IN THE CROWD: You oughta dance. Big as your feet is, Dave.

DAISY: (Diplomatically) Both of you all is wonderful and I would like to see Dave dance a little.

DAVE: There now, I told you. What did I tell you. (To JIM) Stop woofing and pick a little tune there so that I can show Daisy somethin’.

JIM: Pick a tune? I bet if you fool with me I’ll pick your bones jus’ like a buzzard did the rabbit. You can’t sing and now you wants to dance.

DAVE: Yeah, and I’ll lam your head. Come on and play, good-for-nothing.

JIM: All right, then. You say you can dance ... show these people what you can do. But don’t bring that little stuff I been seen’ you doin’ all these years. (JIM plays and DAVE dances, various members of the crowd keep time with their hands and feet, DAISY looks on enjoying herself immensely.)
DAISY: (As DAVE cuts a very fancy step) I ain’t seen nothin’ like this up North. Dave you sho hot.

(As DAVE cuts a more complicated step the crowd applauds, but just as the show begins to get good, suddenly JIM stops playing.)

DAVE: (Surprised) What’s the matter, buddy?

JIM: (Envious of the attention DAVE has been getting from DAISY, disgustedly) Oh, nigger, I’m tired of seein’ you cut the fool. ‘Sides that, I been playin’ all afternoon for the white folks.

DAISY: But I though you was playin’ for me now, Jim.

JIM: Yeah, I’d play all night long for you, but I’m gettin’ sick of Dave round here showin’ off. Let him git somethin’ and play for himself if he can. (An OLD MAN with a lighted lantern enters.)

DAISY: (Coyly) Well, honey, play some more for me, then, and don’t mind Dave. I reckon he done danced enough. Play me “Shake That Thing”.

OLD MAN WITH LANTERN: Sho, you ain’t stopped, is you, boy? Music sound mighty good floatin’ down that dark road.

OLD WOMAN: Yeah, Jim, go on play a little more. Don’t get to acting so niggerish this evening.

DAVE: Aw, let the ol’ darky alone. Nobody don’t want to hear him play, nohow. I know I don’t.

JIM: Well, I’m gonna play. (And he begins to pick “Shake That Thing”.

TEETS and BOOTSIE begin to dance with LIGE MOSELY and FRANK WARRICK.

As the tune gets good, DAVE cannot resist the music either.)

DAVE: Old nigger’s eveil but he sho can play. (He begins to do a few steps by himself, then twirls around in front of DAISY and approaches her. DAISY, overcome by the music, begins to step rhythmically toward DAVE and together they dance unobserved by JIM, absorbed in picking his guitar.)

DAISY: Look here, baby, at this new step I learned up North.

DAVE: You can show me anything, sugar lump.

DAISY: Hold me tight now. (But just as they begin the new movement JIM notices DAISY and DAVE. He stops playing again and lays his guitar down.)

VOICES IN THE CROWD: (Disgustedly) Aw, come on, Jim.... You must be jealous....

JIM: No, I ain’t jealous. I jus’ get tired of seein’ that ol’ nigger clownin’ all the time.

DAVE: (Laughing and pointing to JIM on porch) Look at that mad baby. Take that lip up off the ground. Got your mouth stuck out jus’ because some one is enjoying themselves. (He comes up and pushes JIM playfully.)

JIM: You better go head and let me alone. (TO DAISY) Come here, Daisy!

LIGE: That’s just what I say. Niggers can’t have no fun without someone getting mad ... specially over a woman.

JIM: I ain’t mad.... Daisy, ‘scuse me, honey, but that fool, Dave....

DAVE: I ain’t mad neither.... Jim always tryin’ to throw off on me. But you can’t joke him.

DAISY: (Soothingly) Aw, now, now!

JIM: You ain’t jokin’. You means that, nigger. And if you tryin’ to get hot, first thing, you can pull of my blue shirt you put on this morning.

DAVE: Youse a got that wrong. I ain’t got on no shirt of yours.
JIM: Yes, you is got on my shirt, too. Don’t tell me you ain’t got on my shirt.

DAVE: Well, even if I is, you can just lift your big plantations out of my shoes. You can just foot it home barefooted.

JIM: You try to take any shoes offa me!

LIGE: (Pacifying them) Aw, there ain’t no use of all that. What you all want to start this quarreling for over a little jokin’.

JIM: Nobody’s quarreling…. I’m just playin’ a little for Daisy and Dave’s out there clownin’ with her.

CLARK: (In doorway) I ain’t gonna have no fussin’ round my store, no way. Shut up, you all.

JIM: Well, Mayor Clark, I ain’t mad with him. We’se been friends all our lives. He’s slept in my bed and wore my clothes and et my grub....

DAVE: I et your grub? And many time as you done laid down with your belly full of my grandma’s collard greens. You done et my meat and bread a whole lot more times than I et your stewed fish-heads.

JIM: I’d rather eat stewed fish-heads than steal out of other folkses houses so much till you went to sleep on the roost and fell down one night and broke up the settin’ hen. (Loud laughter from the crowd)

DAVE: Youse a liar if you say I stole anybody’s chickens. I didn’t have to. But you ... ‘fore you started goin’ around with me, playin’ that little box of yours, you was so hungry you had the white mouth. If it wasn’t for these white folks throwin’ me money for my dancin’, you would be thin as a whisper right now.

JIM: (Laughing sarcastically) Your dancin’! You been leapin’ around here like a tailless monkey in a wash pot for a long time and nobody was payin’ no ‘tention to you, till I come along playing.

LINDSAY: Boys, boys, that ain’t no way for friends to carry on.

DAISY: Well, if you all gonna keep up this quarrelin’ and carryin’ on I’m goin’ home. ‘Bout time for me to be gittin’ back to my white folks anyhow. It’s dark now. I’m goin’, even if I have to go by myself. I shouldn’t a stopped by here nohow.

JIM: (Stopping his quarrel) You ain’t gonna go home by yourself. I’m goin’ with you.

DAVE: (Singing softly)
It may be so,
I don’t know.
But it sounds to me
Like a lie.

WALTER: Dave ain’t’ got as much rabbit blood as folks thought.

DAVE: Tell ‘em ‘bout me. (Turns to DAISY) Won’t you choose a treat on me, Miss Daisy, ‘fore we go?

DAISY: (Coyly) Yessir, thank you. I wants a drink of soda water.

(DAVE pulls his hat down over his eyes, whirls around and offers his arm to DAISY. They strut into the store, DAVE gazing contemptuously at JIM as he passes. Crowd roars with laughter, much to the embarrassment of JIM.)

LIGE: Ol’ fast Dave jus’ runnin’ the hog right over you, Jim.

WALTER: Thought you was such a hot man.

LUM BOGER: Want me to go in there and put Daisy under arrest and bring her to you?

JIM: (Sitting down on the edge of porch with one foot on the step and lights a cigarette pretending not to be bothered.) Aw, I’ll get her when I want her. Let him treat her, but see who struts around that lake and down the railroad with her by and by.

(DAVE and DAISY emerge from the store, each holding a bottle of red soda pop and laughing together. As they
start down the steps DAVE accidentally steps on JIM's outstretched foot. JIM jumps up and pushes DAVE back, causing him to spill the red soda all over his white shirt front.)

JIM: Stay off my foot, you big ox.

DAVE: Well, you don't have to wet me all up, do you, and me in company? Why don't you put your damn foot in your pocket?

DAISY: (Wiping DAVE'S shirt front with her handkerchief) Aw, ain't that too bad.

JIM: (To DAVE) Well, who's shirt did I wet? It's mine, anyhow, ain't it?

DAVE: (Belligerently) Well, if it's your shirt, then you come take it off me. I'm tired of your lip.

JIM: Well, I will.

DAVE: Well, put your fist where you lip is. (Pushing DAISY aside.)

DAISY: (Frightened) I want to go home. Now, don't you all boys fight.

(JIM attempts to come up the steps. DAVE pushes him back and he stumbles and falls in the dust. General excitement as the crowd senses a fight.)

LITTLE BOY: (On the edge of crowd) Fight, fight, you're no kin. Kill one another, won't be no sin. Fight, fight, you're no kin.

(JIM jumps up and rushes for DAVE as the latter starts down the steps. DAVE meets him with his fist squarely in the face and causes him to step backward, confused.)

DAISY: (Still on porch, half crying) Aw, my Lawd! I want to go home.

(General hubbub, women's cries of "Don't let 'em fight." "Why don't somebody stop 'em?" "What kind of men is you all, sit there and let them boys fight like that." Men's voices urging the fight: "Aw, let 'em fight." "Go for him, Dave." "Slug him, Jim."

JIM makes another rush toward the steps. He staggers DAVE. DAVE knocks JIM sprawling once more. This time JIM grabs the mule bone as he rises, rushes DAVE, strikes DAVE over the head with it and knocks him out. DAVE falls prone on his back. There is great excitement.)

OLD WOMAN: (Screams) Lawdy, is he kilt? (Several men rush to the fallen man.)

VOICE: Run down to the pump and get a dipper o' water.

CLARK: (To his wife in door) Mattie, come out of that store with a bottle of witch hazely oil quick as you can. Jim Weston, I'm gonna arrest you for this. You Lum Boger. Where is that marshall? Lum Boger! (LUM BOGER detaches himself from the crowd.) Arrest Jim.

LUM: (Grabs JIM'S arm, relieves him of the mule bone and looks helplessly at the Mayor.) Now I got him arrested, what's I going to do with him?

CLARK: Lock him up back yonder in my barn till Monday when we'll have the trial in de Baptist Church.

LINDSAY: Yeah, just like all the rest of them Methodists ... always tryin' to take undercurrents on people.

WALTER: Ain't no worse then some of you Baptists, nohow. You all don't run this town. We got jus' as much to say as you have.

CLARK: (Angrily to both men) Shut up! Done had enough arguing in front of my place. (To LUM BOGER) Take that boy on and lock him up in my barn. And save that mule bone for evidence.

(LUM BOGER leads JIM off toward the back of the store. A crowd follows him. Other men and women are busy applying restoratives to DAVE. DAISY stands alone, unnoticed in the center of the stage.)

DAISY: (Worriedly) Now, who's gonna take me home?
ACT TWO

SCENE I

SETTING: Village street scene; huge oak tree upstage center; a house or two on back drop. When curtain goes up, Sister LUCY TAYLOR is seen standing under the tree. She is painfully spellin' it out.

(Enter SISTER THOMAS, a younger woman (In her thirties) at left.)

SISTER THOMAS: Evenin', Sis Taylor.

SISTER TAYLOR: Evenin'. (Returns to the notice)

SISTER THOMAS: Whut you doin'? Readin' dat notice Joe Clark put up 'bout de meeting? (Approaches tree)

SISTER TAYLOR: Is dat whut it says? I ain't much on readin' since I had my teeth pulled out. You know if you pull out dem eye teeth you ruins' yo' eye sight. (Turns back to notice) Whut it say?

SISTER THOMAS: (Reading notice) “The trial of Jim Weston for assault and battery on Dave Carter wid a dangerous weapon will be held at Macedonia Baptist Church on Monday, November 10, at three o'clock. All are welcome. By order of J. Clark, Mayor of Eatonville, Florida.” (Turning to SISTER TAYLOR) Hit's makin' on to three now.

SISTER TAYLOR: You mean it's right now. (Looks up at sun to tell time) Lemme go git ready to be at de trial 'cause I'm sho goin' to be there an' I ain't goin' to bite my tongue neither.

SISTER THOMAS: I done went an' cramped a mess of collard greens for supper. I better go put 'em on 'cause Lawd knows when we goin' to git outa there an' my husband is one of them dat's gointer eat don't keer whut happen. I bet if judgment day was to happen tomorrow he'd speck I orter fix him a bucket to carry long. (She moves to exit, right)

SISTER TAYLOR: All men favors they guts, chile. But what you think of all dis mess they got goin' on round here?

SISTER THOMAS: I just think it's a sin an' a shame befo' de livin' justice de way dese Baptis' niggers is runnin' round here carryin' on.

SISTER TAYLOR: Oh, they been puttin' out de brags ever since Sat'day night 'bout whut they gointer do to Jim. They thinks they runs this town. They tell me Rev. CHILDERS preached a sermon on it yistiddy.

SISTER THOMAS: Lawd help us! He can't preach an' he look like 10 cents worth of have-mercy let lone gittin' up dere tryin' to throw slams at us. Now all Elder Simms done wuz to explain to us our rights ... whut you think 'bout Joe Clarke runnin' round here takin' up for these ole Baptist niggers?

SISTER TAYLOR: De puzzle-gut rascal ... we oughter have him up in conference an' put him out de Methdis' faith. He don't b'long in there—wanter tun dat boy outa town for nothin'.

SISTER THOMAS: But we all know how come he so hot to law Jim outa town—hit's to dig de foundation out from under Elder Simms.

SISTER TAYLOR: Whut he wants do dat for?

SISTER THOMAS: ‘Cause he wants to be a God-know-it-all an' a God-do-it-all an' Simms is de onliest one in this town whut will buck up to him.

(Enter SISTER JONES, walking leisurely)

SISTER JONES: Hello, Hoyt, hello, Lucy.

SISTER TAYLOR: Goin’ to de meetin’?
SISTER JONES: Done got my clothes on de line an’ I’m bound to be dere.

SISTER THOMAS: Gointer testify for Jim?

SISTER JONES: Naw, I reckon—don’t make such difference to me which way de drop fall…. ’Tain’t neither one of ’em much good.

SISTER TAYLOR: I know it. I know it, Ida. But dat ain’t de point. De crow we wants to pick is: Is we gointer set still an’ let dese Baptist tell us when to plant an’ when to pluck up?

SISTER JONES: Dat is something to think about when you come to think ’bout it. (Starts to move on) Guess I better go ahead—see y’all later an tell you straighter.

(Enter ELDER SIMMS, right, walking fast, Bible under his arm, almost collides with SISTER JONES as she exits.)

SIMMS: Oh, ’scuse me, Sister Jones. (She nods and smiles and exits.)


BOTH: Good evenin’, Elder.

SIMMS: Sho is a hot day.

SISTER TAYLOR: Yeah, de bear is walkin’ de earth lak a natural man.

SISTER THOMAS: Reverend, look like you headed de wrong way. It’s almost time for de trial an’ youse all de dependence we got.

SIMMS: I know it. I’m tryin’ to find de marshall so we kin go after Jim. I wants a chance to talk wid him a minute before court sets.

SISTER TAYLOR: Y’think he’ll come clear?

SIMMS: (Proudly) I know it! (Shakes the Bible) I’m goin’ to law ’em from Genesis to Revelation.

SISTER THOMAS: Give it to ’em, Elder. Wear ’em out!

SIMMS: We’se liable to havea new Mayor when all dis dust settle. Well, I better scuffle on down de road. (Exits, left.)

SISTER THOMAS: Lord, lemme gwan home an’ put dese greens on. (Looks off stage left) Here come Mayor Clark now, wid his belly settin’ out in front of him like a cow catcher! His name oughter be Mayor Belly.

SISTER TAYLOR: (Arms akimbo) Jus’ look at him! Tryin’ to look like a jigadier Breneral.

(Enter CLARK hot and perspiring. They look at him coldly.)

CLARK: I God, de bear got me! (Silence for a moment) How y’all feelin’, ladies?

SISTER TAYLOR: Brother Mayor, I ain’t one of these folks dat bite my tongue an’ bust my gall—whut’s inside got to come out! I can’t see to my rest why you cloakin’ in wid dese Baptist buzzards ’ginst yo’ own church.

MAYOR CLARK: I ain’t cloakin’ in wid none. I’m de Mayor of dis whole town I stands for de right an’ ginst de wrong—I don’t keer who it kill or cure.

SISTER THOMAS: You think it’s right to be runnin’ dat boy off for nothin’?

CLARK: I God! You call knockin’ a man in de head wid a mule bone nothin’? ’Nother thin; I done missed nine of my best-layin’ hens. I ain’t sayin’ Jim got ‘em, but different people has tole me he burries a powerful lot of feathers in his back yard. I God, I’m a ruint man! (He starts towards the right exit, but LUM BOGER enters right.) I God, Lum, I been lookin’ for you all day. It’s almost three o’clock. (Hands him a key from his ring) Take dis key an’ go fetch Jim Weston on to de church.

LUM: Have you got yo’ gavel from de lodge-room?
CLARK: I God, that’s right, Lum. I’ll go get it from de lodge room whilst you go git de bone an’ de prisoner. Hurry up! You walk like dead lice droppin’ off you. (He exits right while LUM crosses stage towards left.)

SISTER TAYLOR: Lum, Elder Simms been huntin’ you—he’s gone on down ‘bout de barn. (She gestures)

LUM BOGER: I reckon I’ll overtake him. (Exit left.)

SISTER THOMAS: I better go put dese greens on. My husband will kill me if he don’t find no supper ready. Here come Mrs. Blunt. She oughter feel like a penny’s worth of have-mercy wid all dis stink behind her daughter.

SISTER TAYLOR: Chile, some folks don’t keer. They don’t raise they chillun; they drags ‘em up. God knows if dat Daisy wuz mine, I’d throw her down an’ put a hundred lashes on her back wid a plow-line. Here she come in de store Sat’day night (Acts coy and coquettish, burlesques DAISY’S walk) a wringing and a twisting!

(Enter MRS. BLUNT, left.)

MRS. BLUNT: How y’all sisters?

SISTER THOMAS: Very well, Miz Blunt, how you?

MRS. BLUNT: Oh, so-so.

MRS. TAYLOR: I’m kickin’, but not high.

MRS. BLUNT: Well, thank God you still on prayin’ ground an’ in a Bible country. Me, I ain’t so many today. De niggers got my Daisy’s name all mixed up in dis mess.

MRS. TAYLOR: You musn’t mind dat, Sister Blunt. People jus’ will talk. They’s talkin’ in New York an’ they’s talkin’ in Georgy an’ they’s talkin’ in Italy.

SISTER THOMAS: Chile, if you talk folkses talk, they’ll have you in de graveyard or in Chattahoochee one. You can’t pay no ‘tention to talk.

MRS. BLUNT: Well, I know one thing. De man or women, chick or child, grizzly or gray, that tells me to my face anything wrong ‘bout my chile, I’m goin’ to take my fist (Rolls up right sleeve and gestures with right fist) and knock they teeth down they throat. (She looks ferocious) ‘Case y’all know I raised my Daisy right round my feet till I let her go up north last year wid them white folks. I’d ruther her to be in de white folks’ kitchen than walkin’ de streets like some of dese girls round here. If I do say so, I done raised a lady. She can’t help it if all dese mens get stuck on her.

MRS. TAYLOR: You’se tellin’ de truth, Sister Blunt. That’s whut I always say: Don’t confidence dese niggers. Do, they’ll sho put you in de street.

MRS. THOMAS: Naw indeed, never syndicate wid niggers. Do, they’ll sho put you in de street.

MRS. THOMAS: Naw indeed, never syndicate wid niggers. Do, they will discriminitate you. They’ll be an anybody. You goin’ to de trial, ain’t you?

MRS. BLUNT: Just as sho as you snore. An’ they better leave Daisy’s name outa dis, too. I done told her and told her to come straight home from her work. Naw, she had to stop by dat store and skin her gums back wid dem trashy niggers. She better not leave them white folks today to come traipsin’ over here scornin’ her name all up wid dis nigger mess. Do, I’ll kill her. No daughter of mine ain’t goin’ to do as she please, long as she live under de sound of my voice. (She crosses to right.)

MRS. THOMAS: That’s right, Sister Blunt. I glory in yo’ spunk. Lord, I better go put on my supper.

(As MRS. BLUNT exits, right, REV. CHILDERS enters left with DAVE and DEACON LINDSAY and SISTER LEWIS. Very hostile glances from SISTERS THOMAS and TAYLOR toward the others.)

CHILDERS: Good evenin’, folks.

(SISTERS THOMAS and TAYLOR just grunt. MRS. THOMAS moves a step or two towards exit. Flirts her skirts and exits.)

LINDSAY: (Angrily) Whut’s de matter, y’all? Cat got yo’ tongue?
MRS. TAYLOR: More matter than you kin scatter all over Cincinnatti.

LINDSAY: Go ‘head on, Lucy Taylor. Go ‘head on. You know a very little of yo’ sugar sweetens my coffee. Go ‘head on. Everytime you lift yo’ arm you smell like a nest of yellow hammers.

MRS. TAYLOR: Go ‘head on yo’self. Yo’ head look like it done wore out three bodies. Talkin’ ‘bout me smellin’—you smell lak a nest of grand daddies yo’self.

LINDSAY: Aw rock on down de road, ‘oman. Ah, don’t wantuh change words wid yuh. Youse too ugly.

MRS. TAYLOR: You ain’t nobody’s pretty baby, yo’self. You so ugly I betcha yo’ wife have to spread uh sheet over yo’ head tuh let sleep slip up on yuh.

LINDSAY: (Threatening) You better git way from me while you able. I done tole you I don’t wanter break a breath wid you. It’s uh whole heap better tuh walk off on yo’ own legs than it is to be toted off. I’m tired of yo’ achin’ round here. You fool wid me now an’ I’ll knock you into doll rags, Tony or no Tony.

MRS. TAYLOR: (Jumping up in his face) Hit me? Hit me! I dare you tuh hit me. If you take dat dare, you’ll steal uh hawg an’ eat his hair.

LINDSAY: Lemme gwan down to dat church befo’ you make me stomp you. (He exits, right.)

MRS. TAYLOR: You mean you’ll git stomped. Ah’m goin’ to de trial, too. De nex trial gointer be me for kickin’ some uh you Baptist niggers around.

(A great noise is heard off stage left. The angry and jeering voices of children. MRS. TAYLOR looks off left and takes a step or two towards left exit as the noise comes nearer.)

VOICE OF ONE CHILD: Tell her! Tell her! Turn her up and smell her. Yo’ mama ain’t got nothin’ to do wid me.

MRS. TAYLOR: (Hollering off left) You lil Baptis’ haitians leave them chillun alone. If you don’t, you better!

(Enter about ten children struggling and wrestling in a bunch. MRS. TAYLOR looks about on the ground for a stick to strike the children with.)

VOICE OF CHILD: Hey! Hey! He’s skeered tuh knock it off. Coward!

SASSY LITTLE GIRL: (Standing akimbo) I know you better not touch me, do my mama will ‘tend to you.

MRS. TAYLOR: (Making as if to strike her.) Shet up you nasty lil heifer, sassin’ me! You ain’t half raised.

(The little girl shakes herself at MRS. TAYLOR and is joined by two or three others.)

MRS. TAYLOR: (Walkin’ towards right exit.) I’m goin’ on down to de church an’ tell yo’ mammy. But she ain’t been half raised herself. (She exits right with several children making faces behind her.)

ONE BOY: (To sassy GIRL) Aw, haw! Y’all ol’ Baptis’ ain’t got no bookcase in yo’ chuch. We went there one day an’ I saw uh soda cracker box settin’ up in de corner so I set down on it. (Pointing at sassy GIRL) Know what ole Mary Ella say? (Jeering laughter) Willie, you git up off our library! Haw! Haw!

MARY ELLA: Y’all ole Meth’dis’ ain’t got no window panes in yo’ ole church.

ANOTHER GIRL: (Takes center of stand, hands akimbo and shakes her hips) I don’t keer whut y’all say, I’m a Meth’dis’ bred an’ uh Meth’dis’ born an’ when I’m dead there’ll be uh Meth’dis’ gone.

MARY ELLA: (Snaps fingers under other girl’s nose and starts singing. Several join her.)

Oh Baptis’, Baptis’ is my name
My name’s written on high
I got my lick in de Baptis’ church
Gointer eat up de Meth’dis’ pie.

(The Methodist children jeer and make faces. The Baptist camp make faces back; for a full minute there is silence while each camp tries to outdo the other in face making. The Baptist makes the last face.)

METHODIST BOY: Come on, less us don’t notice ‘em. Less gwan down to de church an’ hear de trial.

MARY ELLA: Y’all ain’t de onliest ones kin go. We goin’, too.

WILLIE: Aw, haw! Copy cats! (Makes face) Dat’s right. Follow on behind us lak uh puppy dog tail. (They start walking toward right exit, switching their clothes behind.) Dat’s right. Follow on behind us lak uh puppy dog tail. (They start walking toward right exit, switching their clothes behind.)

(Baptist children stage a rush and struggle to get in front of the Methodists. They finally succeed in flinging some of the Methodist children to the ground and some behind them and walk towards right exit haughtily switching their clothes.)

WILLIE: (Whispers to his crowd) Less go round by Mosely’s lot an’ beat ‘em there!

OTHERS: All right!

WILLIE: (Yellin’ to Baptists) We wouldn’t walk behind no ole Baptists!

(The Methodists turn and walk off towards left exit, switching their clothes as the Baptists are doing.)

SLOW CURTAIN

Zora Neale Hurston (January 7, 1891– January 28, 1960) was an American novelist, short story writer, folklorist, and anthropologist. Of Hurston’s four novels and more than 50 published short stories, plays, and essays, she is best known for her 1937 novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

James Mercer Langston Hughes (February 1, 1902 – May 22, 1967) was an American poet, social activist, novelist, playwright, and columnist from Joplin, Missouri. He was one of the earliest innovators of the then-new literary art form called jazz poetry. Hughes is best known as a leader of the Harlem Renaissance in New York City. He famously wrote about the period that “the negro was in vogue,” which was later paraphrased as “when Harlem was in vogue.”

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Nonfiction Readings and Responses
INTRODUCTION.

Of all the works of Plato the Symposium is the most perfect in form, and may be truly thought to contain more than any commentator has ever dreamed of; or, as Goethe said of one of his own writings, more than the author himself knew. For in philosophy as in prophecy glimpses of the future may often be conveyed in words which could hardly have been understood or interpreted at the time when they were uttered (compare Symp.)—which were wiser than the writer of them meant, and could not have been expressed by him if he had been interrogated about them. Yet Plato was not a mystic, nor in any degree affected by the Eastern influences which afterwards overspread the Alexandrian world. He was not an enthusiast or a sentimentalist, but one who aspired only to see reasoned truth, and whose thoughts are clearly explained in his language. There is no foreign element either of Egypt or of Asia to be found in his writings. And more than any other Platonic work the Symposium is Greek both in style and subject, having a beauty ‘as of a statue,’ while the companion Dialogue of the Phaedrus is marked by a sort of Gothic irregularity. More too than in any other of his Dialogues, Plato is emancipated from former philosophies. The genius of Greek art seems to triumph over the traditions of Pythagorean, Eleatic, or Megarian systems, and ‘the old quarrel of poetry and philosophy’ has at least a superficial reconcilement. (Rep.)

An unknown person who had heard of the discourses in praise of love spoken by Socrates and others at the banquet of Agathon is desirous of having an authentic account of them, which he thinks that he can obtain from Apollodorus, the same excitable, or rather ‘mad’ friend of Socrates, who is afterwards introduced in the Phaedo. He had imagined that the discourses were recent. There he is mistaken: but they are still fresh in the memory of his informant, who had just been repeating them to Glaucon, and is quite prepared to have another rehearsal of them in a walk from the Piraeus to Athens. Although he had not been present himself, he had heard them from the best authority. Aristodemus, who is described as having been in past times a humble but inseparable attendant of Socrates, had reported them to him (compare Xen. Mem.).

The narrative which he had heard was as follows:—

Aristodemus meeting Socrates in holiday attire, is invited by him to a banquet at the house of Agathon, who had been sacrificing in thanksgiving for his tragic victory on the day previous. But no sooner has he entered the house than he finds that he is alone; Socrates has stayed behind in a fit of abstraction, and does not appear until the banquet is half over. On his appearing he and the host jest a little; the question is then asked by Pausanias, one of the guests, ‘What shall they do about drinking? as they had been all well drunk on the day before, and drinking on two successive days is such a bad thing.’ This is confirmed by the authority of Eryximachus the physician, who further proposes that instead of listening to the flute-girl and her ‘noise’ they shall make speeches in honour of love, one after another, going from left to right in the order in which they are reclining at the table. All of them agree to this proposal, and Phaedrus, who is the ‘father’ of the idea, which he has previously communicated to Eryximachus, begins as follows:—
He descants first of all upon the antiquity of love, which is proved by the authority of the poets; secondly upon the benefits which love gives to man. The greatest of these is the sense of honour and dishonour. The lover is ashamed to be seen by the beloved doing or suffering any cowardly or mean act. And a state or army which was made up only of lovers and their loves would be invincible. For love will convert the veriest coward into an inspired hero.

And there have been true loves not only of men but of women also. Such was the love of Alcestis, who dared to die for her husband, and in recompense of her virtue was allowed to come again from the dead. But Orpheus, the miserable harper, who went down to Hades alive, that he might bring back his wife, was mocked with an apparition only, and the gods afterwards contrived his death as the punishment of his cowardliness. The love of Achilles, like that of Alcestis, was courageous and true; for he was willing to avenge his lover Patroclus, although he knew that his own death would immediately follow: and the gods, who honour the love of the beloved above that of the lover, rewarded him, and sent him to the islands of the blest.

Pausanias, who was sitting next, then takes up the tale:—He says that Phaedrus should have distinguished the heavenly love from the earthly, before he praised either. For there are two loves, as there are two Aphrodites—one the daughter of Uranus, who has no mother and is the elder and wiser goddess, and the other, the daughter of Zeus and Dione, who is popular and common. The first of the two loves has a noble purpose, and delights only in the intelligent nature of man, and is faithful to the end, and has no shadow of wantonness or lust. The second is the coarser kind of love, which is a love of the body rather than of the soul, and is of women and boys as well as of men. Now the actions of lovers vary, like every other sort of action, according to the manner of their performance. And in different countries there is a difference of opinion about male loves. Some, like the Boeotians, approve of them; others, like the Ionians, and most of the barbarians, disapprove of them; partly because they are aware of the political dangers which ensue from them, as may be seen in the instance of Harmodius and Aristogeiton. At Athens and Sparta there is an apparent contradiction about them. For at times they are encouraged, and then the lover is allowed to play all sorts of fantastic tricks; he may swear and forswear himself (and ‘at lovers’ perjuries they say Jove laughs’); he may be a servant, and lie on a mat at the door of his love, without any loss of character; but there are also times when elders look grave and guard their young relations, and personal remarks are made. The truth is that some of these loves are disgraceful and others honourable. The vulgar love of the body which takes wing and flies away when the bloom of youth is over, is disgraceful, and so is the interested love of power or wealth; but the love of the noble mind is lasting. The lover should be tested, and the beloved should not be too ready to yield. The rule in our country is that the beloved may do the same service to the lover in the way of virtue which the lover may do to him.

A voluntary service to be rendered for the sake of virtue and wisdom is permitted among us; and when these two customs—one the love of youth, the other the practice of virtue and philosophy—meet in one, then the lovers may lawfully unite. Nor is there any disgrace to a disinterested lover in being deceived: but the interested lover is doubly disgraced, for if he loses his love he loses his character; whereas the noble love of the other remains the same, although the object of his love is unworthy: for nothing can be nobler than love for the sake of virtue. This is that love of the heavenly goddess which is of great price to individuals and cities, making them work together for the same, although the object of his love is unworthy: for nothing can be nobler than love for the sake of virtue. This is that love of the heavenly goddess which is of great price to individuals and cities, making them work together for their improvement.

The turn of Aristophanes comes next; but he has the hiccough, and therefore proposes that Eryximachus the physician shall cure him or speak in his turn. Eryximachus is ready to do both, and after prescribing for the hiccough, speaks as follows:—

He agrees with Pausanias in maintaining that there are two kinds of love; but his art has led him to the further conclusion that the empire of this double love extends over all things, and is to be found in animals and plants as well as in man. In the human body also there are two loves; and the art of medicine shows which is the good and which is the bad love, and persuades the body to accept the good and reject the bad, and reconciles conflicting elements and makes them friends. Every art, gymnastic and husbandry as well as medicine, is the reconciliation of opposites; and this is what Heraclitus meant, when he spoke of a harmony of opposites: but in strictness he should rather have spoken of a harmony which succeeds opposites, for an agreement of disagreements there cannot be. Music too is concerned with the principles of love in their application to harmony and rhythm. In the abstract, all is simple, and we are not troubled with the twofold love; but when they are applied in education with their accompaniments of song and metre, then the discord begins. Then the old tale has to be repeated of fair Urania and the coarse Polyhymnia, who must be indulged sparingly, just as in my own art of medicine care must be taken that the taste of the epicure be gratified without inflicting upon him the attendant penalty of disease.

There is a similar harmony or disagreement in the course of the seasons and in the relations of moist and dry, hot and cold, hoar frost and blight; and diseases of all sorts spring from the excesses or disorders of the element of love. The knowledge of these elements of love and discord in the heavenly bodies is termed astronomy, in the relations of men towards gods and parents is called divination. For divination is the peacemaker of gods and men,
and works by a knowledge of the tendencies of merely human loves to piety and impiety. Such is the power of
love; and that love which is just and temperate has the greatest power, and is the source of all our happiness and
friendship with the gods and with one another. I dare say that I have omitted to mention many things which you,
Aristophanes, may supply, as I perceive that you are cured of the hiccough.

Aristophanes is the next speaker:—

He professes to open a new vein of discourse, in which he begins by treating of the origin of human nature. The
sexes were originally three, men, women, and the union of the two; and they were made round—having four
hands, four feet, two faces on a round neck, and the rest to correspond. Terrible was their strength and swiftness;
and they were essaying to scale heaven and attack the gods. Doubt reigned in the celestial councils; the gods were
divided between the desire of quelling the pride of man and the fear of losing the sacrifices. At last Zeus hit upon
an expedient. Let us cut them in two, he said; then they will only have half their strength, and we shall have twice
as many sacrifices. He spake, and split them as you might split an egg with an hair; and when this was done, he
told Apollo to give their faces a twist and re-arrange their persons, taking out the wrinkles and tying the skin in a
knot about the navel. The two halves went about looking for one another, and were ready to die of hunger in one
another’s arms. Then Zeus invented an adjustment of the sexes, which enabled them to marry and go their way to
the business of life. Now the characters of men differ accordingly as they are derived from the original man or the
original woman, or the original man-woman. Those who come from the man-woman are lascivious and adulterous;
those who come from the woman form female attachments; those who are a section of the male follow the male
and embrace him, and in him all their desires centre. The pair are inseparable and live together in pure and manly
affection; yet they cannot tell what they want of one another. But if Hephaestus were to come to them with his
instruments and propose that they should be melted into one and remain one here and hereafter, they would
acknowledge that this was the very expression of their want. For love is the desire of the whole, and the pursuit of
the whole is called love. There was a time when the two sexes were only one, but now God has halved
them,—much as the Lacedaemonians have cut up the Arcadians,—and if they do not behave themselves he will
divide them again, and they will hop about with half a nose and face in basso relievo. Wherefore let us exhort all
men to piety, that we may obtain the goods of which love is the author, and be reconciled to God, and find our own
true loves, which rarely happens in this world. And now I must beg you not to suppose that I am alluding to
Pausanias and Agathon (compare Protag.), for my words refer to all mankind everywhere.

Some raillery ensues first between Aristophanes and Eryximachus, and then between Agathon, who fears a few
select friends more than any number of spectators at the theatre, and Socrates, who is disposed to begin an
argument. This is speedily repressed by Phaedrus, who reminds the disputants of their tribute to the god.
Agathon’s speech follows:—

He will speak of the god first and then of his gifts: He is the fairest and blessedest and best of the gods, and also
the youngest, having had no existence in the old days of Iapetus and Cronos when the gods were at war. The
things that were done then were done of necessity and not of love. For love is young and dwells in soft
places,—not like Ate in Homer, walking on the skulls of men, but in their hearts and souls, which are soft enough.
He is all flexibility and grace, and his habitation is among the flowers, and he cannot do or suffer wrong; for all
men serve and obey him of their own free will, and where there is love there is obedience, and where obedience,
there is justice; for none can be wronged of his own free will. And he is temperate as well as just, for he is the
ruler of the desires, and if he rules them he must be temperate. Also he is courageous, for he is the conqueror of
the lord of war. And he is wise too; for he is a poet, and the author of poesy in others. He created the animals;
he is the inventor of the arts; all the gods are his subjects; he is the fairest and best himself, and the cause of what is
fairest and best in others; he makes men to be of one mind at a banquet, filling them with affection and emptying
them of disaffection; the pilot, helper, defender, saviour of men, in whose footsteps let every man follow, chanting
a strain of love. Such is the discourse, half playful, half serious, which I dedicate to the god.

The turn of Socrates comes next. He begins by remarking satirically that he has not understood the terms of the
original agreement, for he fancied that they meant to speak the true praises of love, but now he finds that they
only say what is good of him, whether true or false. He begs to be absolved from speaking falsely, but he is willing
to speak the truth, and proposes to begin by questioning Agathon. The result of his questions may be summed up
as follows:—

Love is of something, and that which love desires is not that which love is or has; for no man desires that which he
is or has. And love is of the beautiful, and therefore has not the beautiful. And the beautiful is the good, and
therefore, in wanting and desiring the beautiful, love also wants and desires the good. Socrates professes to have
asked the same questions and to have obtained the same answers from Diotima, a wise woman of Mantinea, who,
like Agathon, had spoken first of love and then of his works. Socrates, like Agathon, had told her that Love is a
mighty god and also fair, and she had shown him in return that Love was neither, but in a mean between fair and
foul, good and evil, and not a god at all, but only a great demon or intermediate power (compare the speech of Eryximachus) who conveys to the gods the prayers of men, and to men the commands of the gods.

Socrates asks: Who are his father and mother? To this Diotima replies that he is the son of Plenty and Poverty, and partakes of the nature of both, and is full and starved by turns. Like his mother he is poor and squalid, lying on mats at doors (compare the speech of Pausanias); like his father he is bold and strong, and full of arts and resources. Further, he is in a mean between ignorance and knowledge:—in this he resembles the philosopher who is also in a mean between the wise and the ignorant. Such is the nature of Love, who is not to be confused with the beloved.

But Love desires the beautiful; and then arises the question, What does he desire of the beautiful? He desires, of course, the possession of the beautiful;—but what is given by that? For the beautiful let us substitute the good, and we have no difficulty in seeing the possession of the good to be happiness, and Love to be the desire of happiness, although the meaning of the word has been too often confined to one kind of love. And Love desires not only the good, but the everlasting possession of the good. Why then is there all this flutter and excitement about love? Because all men and women at a certain age are desirous of bringing to the birth. And love is not of beauty only, but of birth in beauty; this is the principle of immortality in a mortal creature. When beauty approaches, then the conceiving power is benign and diffuse; when foulness, she is averted and morose.

But why again does this extend not only to men but also to animals? Because they too have an instinct of immortality. Even in the same individual there is a perpetual succession as well of the parts of the material body as of the thoughts and desires of the mind; nay, even knowledge comes and goes. There is no sameness of existence, but the new mortality is always taking the place of the old. This is the reason why parents love their children—for the sake of immortality; and this is why men love the immortality of fame. For the creative soul creates not children, but conceptions of wisdom and virtue, such as poets and other creators have invented. And the noblest creations of all are those of legislators, in honour of whom temples have been raised. Who would not sooner have these children of the mind than the ordinary human ones? (Compare Bacon's Essays, 8:—'Certainly the best works and of greatest merit for the public have proceeded from the unmarried or childless men; which both in affection and means have married and endowed the public.')

I will now initiate you, she said, into the greater mysteries; for he who would proceed in due course should love first one fair form, and then many, and learn the connexion of them; and from beautiful bodies he should proceed to beautiful minds, and the beauty of laws and institutions, until he perceives that all beauty is of one kindred; and from institutions he should go on to the sciences, until at last the vision is revealed to him of a single science of universal beauty, and then he will behold the everlasting nature which is the cause of all, and will be near the end. In the contemplation of that supreme being of love he will be purified of earthly leaven, and will behold beauty, not with the bodily eye, but with the eye of the mind, and will bring forth true creations of virtue and wisdom, and be the friend of God and heir of immortality.

Such, Phaedrus, is the tale which I heard from the stranger of Mantinea, and which you may call the encomium of love, or what you please.

The company applaud the speech of Socrates, and Aristophanes is about to say something, when suddenly a band of revellers breaks into the court, and the voice of Alcibiades is heard asking for Agathon. He is led in drunk, and welcomed by Agathon, whom he has come to crown with a garland. He is placed on a couch at his side, but suddenly, on recognizing Socrates, he starts up, and a sort of conflict is carried on between them, which Agathon is requested to appease. Alcibiades then insists that they shall drink, and has a large wine-cooler filled, which he first empties himself, and then fills again and passes on to Socrates. He is informed of the nature of the entertainment; and is ready to join, if only in the character of a drunken and disappointed lover he may be allowed to sing the praises of Socrates:—

He begins by comparing Socrates first to the busts of Silenus, which have images of the gods inside them; and, secondly, to Marsyas the flute-player. For Socrates produces the same effect with the voice which Marsyas did with the flute. He is the great speaker and enchanter who ravishes the souls of men; the convencer of hearts too, as he has convinced Alcibiades, and made him ashamed of his mean and miserable life. Socrates at one time seemed about to fall in love with him; and he thought that he would thereby gain a wonderful opportunity of receiving lessons of wisdom. He narrates the failure of his design. He has suffered agonies from him, and is at his wit's end. He then proceeds to mention some other particulars of the life of Socrates; how they were at Potidaea together, where Socrates showed his superior powers of enduring cold and fatigue; how on one occasion he had stood for an entire day and night absorbed in reflection amid the wonder of the spectators; how on another occasion he had saved Alcibiades' life; how at the battle of Delium, after the defeat, he might be seen stalking about like a pelican, rolling his eyes as Aristophanes had described him in the Clouds. He is the most wonderful of human beings, and absolutely unlike anyone but a satyr. Like the satyr in his language too; for he uses the
commonest words as the outward mask of the divinest truths.

When Alcibiades has done speaking, a dispute begins between him and Agathon and Socrates. Socrates piqes Alcibiades by a pretended affection for Agathon. Presently a band of revellers appears, who introduce disorder into the feast; the sober part of the company, Eryximachus, Phaedrus, and others, withdraw; and Aristodemus, the follower of Socrates, sleeps during the whole of a long winter’s night. When he wakes at cockcrow the revellers are nearly all asleep. Only Socrates, Aristophanes, and Agathon hold out; they are drinking from a large goblet, which they pass round, and Socrates is explaining to the two others, who are half-asleep, that the genius of tragedy is the same as that of comedy, and that the writer of tragedy ought to be a writer of comedy also. And first Aristophanes drops, and then, as the day is dawning, Agathon. Socrates, having laid them to rest, takes a bath and goes to his daily avocations until the evening. Aristodemus follows.

If it be true that there are more things in the Symposium of Plato than any commentator has dreamed of, it is also true that many things have been imagined which are not really to be found there. Some writings hardly admit of a more distinct interpretation than a musical composition; and every reader may form his own accompaniment of thought or feeling to the strain which he hears. The Symposium of Plato is a work of this character, and can with difficulty be rendered in any words but the writer’s own. There are so many half-lights and cross-lights, so much of the colour of mythology, and of the manner of sophistry adhering—rhetoric and poetry, the playful and the serious, are so subtly intermingled in it, and vestiges of old philosophy so curiously blend with germs of future knowledge, that agreement among interpreters is not to be expected. The expression ‘poema magis putandum quam comicorum poetarum,’ which has been applied to all the writings of Plato, is especially applicable to the Symposium.

The power of love is represented in the Symposium as running through all nature and all being: at one end descending to animals and plants, and attaining to the highest vision of truth at the other. In an age when man was seeking for an expression of the world around him, the conception of love greatly affected him. One of the first distinctions of language and of mythology was that of gender; and at a later period the ancient physicist, anticipating modern science, saw, or thought that he saw, a sex in plants; there were elective affinities among the elements, marriages of earth and heaven. (Aesch. Frag. Dan.) Love became a mythic personage whom philosophy, borrowing from poetry, converted into an efficient cause of creation. The traces of the existence of love, as of number and figure, were everywhere discerned; and in the Pythagorean list of opposites male and female were ranged side by side with odd and even, finite and infinite.

But Plato seems also to be aware that there is a mystery of love in man as well as in nature, extending beyond the mere immediate relation of the sexes. He is conscious that the highest and noblest things in the world are not easily severed from the sensual desires, or may even be regarded as a spiritualized form of them. We may observe that Socrates himself is not represented as originally unimpassioned, but as one who has overcome his passions; the secret of his power over others partly lies in his passionate but self-controlled nature. In the Phaedrus and Symposium love is not merely the feeling usually so called, but the mystical contemplation of the beautiful and the good. The same passion which may wallow in the mire is capable of rising to the loftiest heights—of penetrating the inmost secret of philosophy. The highest love is the love not of a person, but of the highest and purest abstraction. This abstraction is the far-off heaven on which the eye of the mind is fixed in fond amazement. The unity of truth, the consistency of the warring elements of the world, the enthusiasm for knowledge when first beaming upon mankind, the relativity of ideas to the human mind, and of the human mind to ideas, the faith in the invisible, the adoration of the eternal nature, are all included, consciously or unconsciously, in Plato’s doctrine of love.

The successive speeches in praise of love are characteristic of the speakers, and contribute in various degrees to the final result; they are all designed to prepare the way for Socrates, who gathers up the threads anew, and skims the highest points of each of them. But they are not to be regarded as the stages of an idea, rising above one another to a climax. They are fanciful, partly facetious performances, ‘yet also having a certain measure of seriousness,’ which the successive speakers dedicate to the god. All of them are rhetorical and poetical rather than dialectical, but glimpses of truth appear in them. When Eryximachus says that the principles of music are simple in themselves, but confused in their application, he touches lightly upon a difficulty which has troubled the moderns as well as the ancients in music, and may be extended to the other applied sciences. That confusion begins in the concrete, was the natural feeling of a mind dwelling in the world of ideas. When Pausanias remarks that personal attachments are inimical to despots. The experience of Greek history confirms the truth of his remark. When Aristophanes declares that love is the desire of the whole, he expresses a feeling not unlike that of the German philosopher, who says that ‘philosophy is home sickness.’ When Agathon says that no man ‘can be wronged of his own free will,’ he is alluding playfully to a serious problem of Greek philosophy (compare Arist.
The characters—of Phaedrus, who has been the cause of more philosophical discussions than any other man, with the exception of Simmias the Theban (Phaedrus); of Aristophanes, who disguises under comic imagery a serious purpose; of Agathon, who in later life is satirized by Aristophanes in the Thesmophoriazusae, for his effeminate manners and the feeble rhythms of his verse; of Alcibiades, who is the same strange contrast of great powers and great vices, which meets us in history—are drawn to the life; and we may suppose the less-known characters of Pausanias and Eryximachus to be also true to the traditional recollection of them (compare Phaedr., Protag.; and compare Sympos. with Phaedr.). We may also remark that Aristodemus is called ‘the little’ in Xenophon’s Memorabilia (compare Symp.).

The speeches have been said to follow each other in pairs: Phaedrus and Pausanias being the ethical, Eryximachus and Aristophanes the physical speakers, while in Agathon and Socrates poetry and philosophy blend together. The speech of Phaedrus is also described as the mythological, that of Pausanias as the political, that of Eryximachus as the scientific, that of Aristophanes as the artistic (!), that of Socrates as the philosophical. But these and similar distinctions are not found in Plato;—they are the points of view of his critics, and seem to impede rather than to assist us in understanding him.

When the turn of Socrates comes round he cannot be allowed to disturb the arrangement made at first. With the leave of Phaedrus he asks a few questions, and then he throws his argument into the form of a speech (compare Gorg., Protag.). But his speech is really the narrative of a dialogue between himself and Diotima. And as at a banquet good manners would not allow him to win a victory either over his host or any of the guests, the superiority which he gains over Agathon is ingeniously represented as having been already gained over himself by her. The artifice has the further advantage of maintaining his accustomed profession of ignorance (compare Menex.). Even his knowledge of the mysteries of love, to which he lays claim here and elsewhere (Lys.), is given by Diotima.

The speeches are attested to us by the very best authority. The madman Apollodorus, who for three years past has made a daily study of the actions of Socrates—to whom the world is summed up in the words ‘Great is Socrates’—he has heard them from another ‘madman,’ Aristodemus, who was the ‘shadow’ of Socrates in days of old, like him going about barefooted, and who had been present at the time. ‘Would you desire better witness?’ The extraordinary narrative of Alcibiades is ingeniously represented as admitted by Socrates, whose silence when he is invited to contradict gives consent to the narrator. We may observe, by the way, (1) how the very appearance of Aristodemus by himself is a sufficient indication to Agathon that Socrates has been left behind; also, (2) how the courtesy of Agathon anticipates the excuse which Socrates was to have made on Aristodemus’ behalf for coming uninvited; (3) how the story of the fit or trance of Socrates is confirmed by the mention which Alcibiades makes of a similar fit of abstraction occurring when he was serving with the army at Potidaea; like (4) the drinking powers of Socrates and his love of the fair, which receive a similar attestation in the concluding scene; or the attachment of Aristodemus, who is not forgotten when Socrates takes his departure. (5) We may notice the manner in which Socrates himself regards the first five speeches, not as true, but as fanciful and exaggerated encomiums of the god Love; (6) the satirical character of them, shown especially in the appeals to mythology, in the reasons which are given by Zeus for reconstructing the frame of man, or by the Boeotians and Eleans for encouraging male loves; (7) the ruling passion of Socrates for dialectics, who will argue with Agathon instead of making a speech, and will only speak at all upon the condition that he is allowed to speak the truth. We may note also the touch of Socratic irony, (8) which admits of a wide application and reveals a deep insight into the world:—that in speaking of holy things and persons there is a general understanding that you should praise them, not that you should speak the truth about them—this is the sort of praise which Socrates is unable to give. Lastly, (9) we may remark that the banquet is a real banquet after all, at which love is the theme of discourse, and huge quantities of wine are drunk.

The discourse of Phaedrus is half-mythical, half-ethical; and he himself, true to the character which is given him in the Dialogue bearing his name, is half-sophist, half-enthusiast. He is the critic of poetry also, who compares Homer and Aeschylus in the insipid and irrational manner of the schools of the day, characteristically reasoning about the probability of matters which do not admit of reasoning. He starts from a noble text: ‘That without the sense of honour and dishonour neither states nor individuals ever do any good or great work.’ But he soon passes on to more common-place topics. The antiquity of love, the blessing of having a lover, the incentive which love offers to daring deeds, the examples of Alcestis and Achilles, are the chief themes of his discourse. The love of women is regarded by him as almost on an equality with that of men; and he makes the singular remark that the gods favour the return of love which is made by the beloved more than the original sentiment, because the lover is of a nobler and diviner nature.

There is something of a sophistical ring in the speech of Phaedrus, which recalls the first speech in imitation of Lysias, occurring in the Dialogue called the Phaedrus. This is still more marked in the speech of Pausanias which
follows; and which is at once hyperlogical in form and also extremely confused and pedantic. Plato is attacking the logical feebleness of the sophists and rhetoricians, through their pupils, not forgetting by the way to satirize the monotonous and unmeaning rhythms which Prodicus and others were introducing into Attic prose (compare Protag.). Of course, he is ‘playing both sides of the game,’ as in the Gorgias and Phaedrus; but it is not necessary in order to understand him that we should discuss the fairness of his mode of proceeding. The love of Pausanias for Agathon has already been touched upon in the Protagoras, and is alluded to by Aristophanes. Hence he is naturally the upholder of male loves, which, like all the other affections or actions of men, he regards as varying according to the manner of their performance. Like the sophists and like Plato himself, though in a different sense, he begins his discussion by an appeal to mythology, and distinguishes between the elder and younger love. The value which he attributes to such loves as motives to virtue and philosophy is at variance with modern and Christian notions, but is in accordance with Hellenic sentiment. The opinion of Christendom has not altogether condemned passionate friendships between persons of the same sex, but has certainly not encouraged them, because though innocent in themselves in a few temperaments they are liable to degenerate into fearful evil. Pausanias is very earnest in the defence of such loves; and he speaks of them as generally approved among Hellenes and disapproved by barbarians. His speech is ‘more words than matter,’ and might have been composed by a pupil of Lysias or of Prodicus, although there is no hint given that Plato is specially referring to them. As Eryximachus says, ‘he makes a fair beginning, but a lame ending.’

Plato transposes the two next speeches, as in the Republic he would transpose the virtues and the mathematical sciences. This is done partly to avoid monotony, partly for the sake of making Aristophanes ‘the cause of wit in others,’ and also in order to bring the comic and tragic poet into juxtaposition, as if by accident. A suitable ‘expectation’ of Aristophanes is raised by the ludicrous circumstance of his having the hiccough, which is appropriately cured by his substitute, the physician Eryximachus. To Eryximachus Love is the good physician; he sees everything as an intelligent physicist, and, like many professors of his art in modern times, attempts to reduce the moral to the physical; or recognises one law of love which pervades them both. There are loves and strifes of the body as well as of the mind. Like Hippocrates the Asclepiad, he is a disciple of Heracleitus, whose conception of the harmony of opposites he explains in a new way as the harmony after discord; to his common sense, as to that of many moderns as well as ancients, the identity of contradictories is an absurdity. His notion of love may be summed up as the harmony of man with himself in soul as well as body, and of all things in heaven and earth with one another.

Aristophanes is ready to laugh and make laugh before he opens his mouth, just as Socrates, true to his character, is ready to argue before he begins to speak. He expresses the very genius of the old comedy, its coarse and forcible imagery, and the licence of its language in speaking about the gods. He has no sophistical notions about love, which is brought back by him to its common-sense meaning of love between intelligent beings. His account of the origin of the sexes has the greatest (comic) probability and verisimilitude. Nothing in Aristophanes is more truly Aristophanic than the description of the human monster whirling round on four arms and four legs, eight in all, with incredible rapidity. Yet there is a mixture of earnestness in this jest; three serious principles seem to be insinuated:—first, that man cannot exist in isolation; he must be reunited if he is to be perfected; secondly, that love is the mediator and reconciler of poor, divided human nature: thirdly, that the loves of this world are an indistinct anticipation of an ideal union which is not yet realized.

The speech of Agathon is conceived in a higher strain, and receives the real, if half-ironical, approval of Socrates. It is the speech of the tragic poet and a sort of poem, like tragedy, moving among the gods of Olympus, and not among the elder or Orphic deities. In the idea of the antiquity of love he cannot agree; love is not of the olden time, but present and youthful ever. The speech may be compared with that speech of Socrates in the Phaedrus in which he describes himself as talking dithyrambs. It is at once a preparation for Socrates and a foil to him. The rhetoric of Agathon elevates the soul to ‘sunlit heights,’ but at the same time contrasts with the natural and necessary eloquence of Socrates. Agathon contributes the distinction between love and the works of love, and also hints incidentally that love is always of beauty, which Socrates afterwards raises into a principle. While the consciousness of discord is stronger in the comic poet Aristophanes, Agathon, the tragic poet, has a deeper sense of harmony and reconciliation, and speaks of Love as the creator and artist.

All the earlier speeches embody common opinions coloured with a tinge of philosophy. They furnish the material out of which Socrates proceeds to form his discourse, starting, as in other places, from mythology and the opinions of men. From Phaedrus he takes the thought that love is stronger than death; from Pausanias, that the true love is akin to intellect and political activity; from Eryximachus, that love is a universal phenomenon and the great power of nature; from Aristophanes, that love is the child of want, and is not merely the love of the congenial or of the whole, but (as he adds) of the good; from Agathon, that love is of beauty, not however of beauty only, but of birth in beauty. As it would be out of character for Socrates to make a lengthened harangue, the speech takes the form of a dialogue between Socrates and a mysterious woman of foreign extraction. She elicits the final truth from one who knows nothing, and who, speaking by the lips of another, and himself a
The last of the six discourses begins with a short argument which overthrows not only Agathon but all the preceding speakers by the help of a distinction which has escaped them. Extravagant praises have been ascribed to Love as the author of every good; no sort of encomium was too high for him, whether deserved and true or not. But Socrates has no talent for speaking anything but the truth, and if he is to speak the truth of Love he must honestly confess that he is not a good at all: for love is of the good, and no man can desire that which he has. This piece of dialectics is ascribed to Diotima, who has already urged upon Socrates the argument which he urges against Agathon. That the distinction is a fallacy is obvious; it is almost acknowledged to be so by Socrates himself. For he who has beauty or good may desire more of them; and he who has beauty or good in himself may desire beauty and good in others. The fallacy seems to arise out of a confusion between the abstract ideas of good and beauty, which do not admit of degrees, and their partial realization in individuals.

But Diotima, the prophetess of Mantinea, whose sacred and superhuman character raises her above the ordinary proprieties of women, has taught Socrates far more than this about the art and mystery of love. She has taught him that love is another aspect of philosophy. The same want in the human soul which is satisfied in the vulgar by the procreation of children, may become the highest aspiration of intellectual desire. As the Christian might speak of hungering and thirsting after righteousness; or of divine loves under the figure of human (compare Eph. ‘This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church’); as the mediaeval saint might speak of the ‘fructus Dei;’ as Dante saw all things contained in his love of Beatrice, so Plato would have us absorb all other loves and desires in the love of knowledge. Here is the beginning of Neoplatonism, or rather, perhaps, a proof (of which there are many) that the so-called mysticism of the East was not strange to the Greek of the fifth century before Christ. The first tumult of the affections was not wholly subdued; there were longings of a creature moving about in worlds not realized, which no art could satisfy. To most men reason and passion appear to be antagonistic both in idea and fact. The union of the greatest comprehension of knowledge and the burning intensity of love is a contradiction in nature, which may have existed in a far-off primeval age in the mind of some Hebrew prophet or other Eastern sage, but has now become an imagination only. Yet this ‘passion of the reason’ is the theme of the Symposium of Plato. And as there is no impossibility in supposing that ‘one king, or son of a king, may be a philosopher,’ so also there is a probability that there may be some few—perhaps one or two in a whole generation—in whom the light of truth may not lack the warmth of desire. And if there be such natures, no one will be disposed to deny that ‘from them flow most of the benefits of individuals and states;’ and even from imperfect combinations of the two elements in teachers or statesmen great good may often arise.

Yet there is a higher region in which love is not only felt, but satisfied, in the perfect beauty of eternal knowledge, beginning with the beauty of earthly things, and at last reaching a beauty in which all existence is seen to be harmonious and one. The limited affection is enlarged, and enabled to behold the ideal of all things. And here the highest summit which is reached in the Symposium is seen also to be the highest summit which is attained in the Republic, but approached from another side; and there is ‘a way upwards and downwards,’ which is the same and not the same in both. The ideal beauty of the one is the ideal good of the other; regarded not with the eye of knowledge, but of faith and desire; and they are respectively the source of beauty and the source of good in all other things. And by the steps of a ‘ladder reaching to heaven’ we pass from images of visible beauty (Greek), and from the hypotheses of the Mathematical sciences, which are not yet based upon the idea of good, through the concrete to the abstract, and, by different paths arriving, behold the vision of the eternal (compare Symp. (Greek) Republic (Greek) also Phaedrus). Under one aspect ‘the idea is love’; under another, ‘truth.’ In both the lover of wisdom is the ‘spectator of all time and of all existence.’ This is a ‘mystery’ in which Plato also obscurely intimates the union of the spiritual and fleshly, the interpenetration of the moral and intellectual faculties.

The divine image of beauty which resides within Socrates has been revealed; the Silenus, or outward man, has now to be exhibited. The description of Socrates follows immediately after the speech of Socrates; one is the complement of the other. At the height of divine inspiration, when the force of nature can no further go, by way of contrast to this extreme idealism, Alcibiades, accompanied by a troop of revellers and a flute-girl, staggers in, and being drunk is able to tell of things which he would have been ashamed to make known if he had been sober. The state of his affections towards Socrates, unintelligible to us and perverted as they appear, affords an illustration of the power ascribed to the loves of man in the speech of Pausanias. He does not suppose his feelings to be peculiar to himself: there are several other persons in the company who have been equally in love with Socrates, and like himself have been deceived by him. The singular part of this confession is the combination of the most degrading passion with the desire of virtue and improvement. Such an union is not wholly untrue to human nature, which is capable of combining good and evil in a degree beyond what we can easily conceive. In imaginative persons, especially, the God and beast in man seem to part asunder more than is natural in a well-regulated mind. The Platonic Socrates (for of the real Socrates this may be doubted: compare his public rebuke of Critias for his shameful love of Euthydemos in Xenophon, Memorabilia) does not regard the greatest evil of Greek life as a thing not to be spoken of; but it has a ridiculous element (Plato’s Symp.), and is a subject for irony, no less than for
moral reprobation (compare Plato’s Symp.). It is also used as a figure of speech which no one interpreted literally (compare Xen. Symp.). Nor does Plato feel any repugnance, such as would be felt in modern times, at bringing his great master and hero into connexion with nameless crimes. He is contented with representing him as a saint, who has won ‘the Olympian victory’ over the temptations of human nature. The fault of taste, which to us is so glaring and which was recognized by the Greeks of a later age (Athenaeus), was not perceived by Plato himself.

We are still more surprised to find that the philosopher is incited to take the first step in his upward progress (Symp.) by the beauty of young men and boys, which was alone capable of inspiring the modern feeling of romance in the Greek mind. The passion of love took the spurious form of an enthusiasm for the ideal of beauty—a worship as of some godlike image of an Apollo or Antinous. But the love of youth when not depraved was a love of virtue and modesty as well as of beauty, the one being the expression of the other; and in certain Greek states, especially at Sparta and Thebes, the honourable attachment of a youth to an elder man was a part of his education. The ‘army of lovers and their beloved who would be invincible if they could be united by such a tie’ (Symp.), is not a mere fiction of Plato’s, but seems actually to have existed at Thebes in the days of Epaminondas and Pelopidas, if we may believe writers cited anonymously by Plutarch, Pelop. Vit. It is observable that Plato never in the least degree excuses the depraved love of the body (compare Charm.; Rep.; Laws; Symp.; and once more Xenophon, Mem.), nor is there any Greek writer of mark who condones or approves such connexions. But owing partly to the puzzling nature of the subject these friendships are spoken of by Plato in a manner different from that customary among ourselves. To most of them we should hesitate to ascribe, any more than to the attachment of Achilles and Patroclus in Homer, an immoral or licentious character. There were many, doubtless, to whom the love of the fair mind was the noblest form of friendship (Rep.), and who deemed the friendship of man with man to be higher than the love of woman, because altogether separated from the bodily appetites. The existence of such attachments may be reasonably attributed to the inferiority and exclusion of woman, and the want of a real family or social life and parental influence in Hellenic cities; and they were encouraged by the practice of gymnastic exercises, by the meetings of political clubs, and by the tie of military companionship. They were also an educational institution: a young person was specially entrusted by his parents to some elder friend who was expected by them to train their son in manly exercises and in virtue. It is not likely that a Greek parent committed him to a lover, any more than we should to a schoolmaster, in the expectation that he would be corrupted by him, but rather in the hope that his morals would be better cared for than was possible in a great household of slaves.

It is difficult to adduce the authority of Plato either for or against such practices or customs, because it is not always easy to determine whether he is speaking of ‘the heavenly and philosophical love, or of the coarse Polyhymnia:’ and he often refers to this (e.g. in the Symposium) half in jest, yet ‘with a certain degree of seriousness.’ We observe that they entered into one part of Greek literature, but not into another, and that the larger part is free from such associations. Indecency was an element of the ludicrous in the old Greek Comedy, as it has been in other ages and countries. But effeminate love was always condemned as well as ridiculed by the Comic poets; and in the New Comedy the allusions to such topics have disappeared. They seem to have been no longer tolerated by the greater refinement of the age. False sentiment is found in the Lyric and Elegiac poets; and in mythology ‘the greatest of the Gods’ (Rep.) is not exempt from evil imputations. But the morals of a nation are not to be judged of wholly by its literature. Hellas was not necessarily more corrupted in the days of the Persian and Peloponnesian wars, or of Plato and the Orators, than England in the time of Fielding and Smollett, or France in the nineteenth century. No one supposes certain French novels to be a representation of ordinary French life. And the greater part of Greek literature, beginning with Homer and including the tragedians, philosophers, and, with the exception of the Comic poets (whose business was to raise a laugh by whatever means), all the greater writers of Hellas who have been preserved to us, are free from the taint of indecency.

Some general considerations occur to our mind when we begin to reflect on this subject. (1) That good and evil are linked together in human nature, and have often existed side by side in the world and in man to an extent hardly credible. We cannot distinguish them, and are therefore unable to part them; as in the parable ‘they grow together unto the harvest:’ it is only a rule of external decency by which society can divide them. Nor should we be right in inferring from the prevalence of any one vice or corruption that a state or individual was demoralized in their whole character. Not only has the corruption of the best been sometimes thought to be the worst, but it may be remarked that this very excess of evil has been the stimulus to good (compare Plato, Laws, where he says that in the most corrupt cities individuals are to be found beyond all praise). (2) It may be observed that evils which admit of degrees can seldom be rightly estimated, because under the same name actions of the most different degrees of culpability may be included. No charge is more easily set going than the imputation of secret wickedness (which cannot be either proved or disproved and often cannot be defined) when directed against a person of whom the world, or a section of it, is predisposed to think evil. And it is quite possible that the malignity of Greek scandal, aroused by some personal jealousy or party enmity, may have converted the innocent friendship of a great man for a noble youth into a connexion of another kind. Such accusations were brought against several of the leading men of Hellas, e.g. Cimon, Alcibiades, Critias, Demosthenes, Epaminondas: several of the Roman emperors were assailed by similar weapons which have been used even in our own day against statesmen of the
highest character. (3) While we know that in this matter there is a great gulf fixed between Greek and Christian Ethics, yet, if we would do justice to the Greeks, we must also acknowledge that there was a greater outspokenness among them than among ourselves about the things which nature hides, and that the more frequent mention of such topics is not to be taken as the measure of the prevalence of offences, or as a proof of the general corruption of society. It is likely that every religion in the world has used words or practised rites in one age, which have become distasteful or repugnant to another. We cannot, though for different reasons, trust the representations either of Comedy or Satire; and still less of Christian Apologists. (4) We observe that at Thebes and Lacedemon the attachment of an elder friend to a beloved youth was often deemed to be a part of his education; and was encouraged by his parents—it was only shameful if it degenerated into licentiousness. Such we may believe to have been the tie which united Asophus and Cephisodorus with the great Epaminondas in whose companionship they fell (Plutarch, Amat.; Athenaeus on the authority of Theopompus). (5) A small matter: there appears to be a difference of custom among the Greeks and among ourselves, as between ourselves and continental nations at the present time, in modes of salutation. We must not suspect evil in the hearty kiss or embrace of a male friend ‘returning from the army at Potidaea’ any more than in a similar salutation when practised by members of the same family. But those who make these admissions, and who regard, not without pity, the victims of such illusions in our own day, whose life has been blasted by them, may be none the less resolved that the natural and healthy instincts of mankind shall alone be tolerated (Greek); and that the lesson of manliness which we have inherited from our fathers shall not degenerate into sentimentalism or effeminacy. The possibility of an honourable connexion of this kind seems to have died out with Greek civilization. Among the Romans, and also among barbarians, such as the Celts and Persians, there is no trace of such attachments existing in any noble or virtuous form.

(Compare Hoeck’s Creta and the admirable and exhaustive article of Meier in Ersch and Grueber’s Cyclopaedia on this subject; Plutarch, Amatores; Athenaeus; Lysias contra Simonem; Aesch. c. Timarchum.)

The character of Alcibiades in the Symposium is hardly less remarkable than that of Socrates, and agrees with the picture given of him in the first of the two Dialogues which are called by his name, and also with the slight sketch of him in the Protagoras. He is the impersonation of lawlessness—‘the lion’s whelp, who ought not to be reared in the city,’ yet not without a certain generosity which gained the hearts of men,—strangely fascinated by Socrates, and possessed of a genius which might have been either the destruction or salvation of Athens. The dramatic interest of the character is heightened by the recollection of his after history. He seems to have been present to the mind of Plato in the description of the democratic man of the Republic (compare also Alcibiades 1).

There is no criterion of the date of the Symposium, except that which is furnished by the allusion to the division of Arcadia after the destruction of Mantinea. This took place in the year B.C. 384, which is the forty-fourth year of Plato’s life. The Symposium cannot therefore be regarded as a youthful work. As Mantinea was restored in the year 369, the composition of the Dialogue will probably fall between 384 and 369. Whether the recollection of the event is more likely to have been renewed at the destruction or restoration of the city, rather than at some intermediate period, is a consideration not worth raising.

The Symposium is connected with the Phaedrus both in style and subject; they are the only Dialogues of Plato in which the theme of love is discussed at length. In both of them philosophy is regarded as a sort of enthusiasm or madness; Socrates is himself ‘a prophet new inspired’ with Bacchanalian revelry, which, like his philosophy, he characteristically pretends to have derived not from himself but from others. The Phaedo also presents some points of comparison with the Symposium. For there, too, philosophy might be described as ‘dying for love;’ and there are not wanting many touches of humour and fancy, which remind us of the Symposium. But while the Phaedo and Phaedrus look backwards and forwards to past and future states of existence, in the Symposium there is no break between this world and another; and we rise from one to the other by a regular series of steps or stages, proceeding from the particulars of sense to the universal of reason, and from one universal to many, which are finally reunited in a single science (compare Rep.). At first immortality means only the succession of existences; even knowledge comes and goes. Then follows, in the language of the mysteries, a higher and a higher degree of initiation; at last we arrive at the perfect vision of beauty, not relative or changing, but eternal and absolute; not bounded by this world, or in or out of this world, but an aspect of the divine, extending over all things, and having no limit of space or time: this is the highest knowledge of which the human mind is capable. Plato does not go on to ask whether the individual is absorbed in the sea of light and beauty or retains his personality. Enough for him to have attained the true beauty or good, without enquiring precisely into the relation in which human beings stood to it. That the soul has such a reach of thought, and is capable of partaking of the eternal nature, seems to imply that she too is eternal (compare Phaedrus). But Plato does not distinguish the eternal in man from the eternal in the world or in God. He is willing to rest in the contemplation of the idea, which to him is the cause of all things (Rep.), and has no strength to go further.
difference between sensual and sentimental love, likewise offers several interesting points of comparison. But the suspicion which hangs over other writings of Xenophon, and the numerous minute references to the Phaedrus and Symposium, as well as to some of the other writings of Plato, throw a doubt on the genuineness of the work. The Symposium of Xenophon, if written by him at all, would certainly show that he wrote against Plato, and was acquainted with his works. Of this hostility there is no trace in the Memorabilia. Such a rivalry is more characteristic of an imitator than of an original writer. The (so-called) Symposium of Xenophon may therefore have no more title to be regarded as genuine than the confessedly spurious Apology.

There are no means of determining the relative order in time of the Phaedrus, Symposium, Phaedo. The order which has been adopted in this translation rests on no other principle than the desire to bring together in a series the memorials of the life of Socrates.

SYMPOSIUM

PERSONS OF THE DIALOGUE: Apollodorus, who repeats to his companion the dialogue which he had heard from Aristodemus, and had already once narrated to Glauccon. Phaedrus, Pausanias, Eryximachus, Aristophanes, Agathon, Socrates, Alcibiades, A Troop of Revellers.

SCENE: The House of Agathon.

Concerning the things about which you ask to be informed I believe that I am not ill-prepared with an answer. For the day before yesterday I was coming from my own home at Phalerum to the city, and one of my acquaintance, who had caught a sight of me from behind, calling out playfully in the distance, said: Apollodorus, O thou Phalerian (Probably a play of words on (Greek), 'bald-headed.') man, halt! So I did as I was bid; and then he said, I was looking for you, Apollodorus, only just now, that I might ask you about the speeches in praise of love, which were delivered by Socrates, Alcibiades, and others, at Agathon's supper. Phoenix, the son of Philip, told another person who told me of them; his narrative was very indistinct, but he said that you knew, and I wish that you would give me an account of them. Who, if not you, should be the reporter of the words of your friend? And first tell me, he said, were you present at this meeting?

Your informant, Glauccon, I said, must have been very indistinct indeed, if you imagine that the occasion was recent; or that I could have been of the party.

Why, yes, he replied, I thought so.

Impossible: I said. Are you ignorant that for many years Agathon has not resided at Athens; and not three have elapsed since I became acquainted with Socrates, and have made it my daily business to know all that he says and does. There was a time when I was running about the world, fancying myself to be well employed, but I was really a most wretched being, no better than you are now. I thought that I ought to do anything rather than be a philosopher.

Well, he said, jesting apart, tell me when the meeting occurred.

In our boyhood, I replied, when Agathon won the prize with his first tragedy, on the day after that on which he and his chorus offered the sacrifice of victory.

Then it must have been a long while ago, he said; and who told you—did Socrates?

No indeed, I replied, but the same person who told Phoenix;—he was a little fellow, who never wore any shoes, Aristodemus, of the deme of Cydathenaecum. He had been at Agathon's feast; and I think that in those days there was no one who was a more devoted admirer of Socrates. Moreover, I have asked Socrates about the truth of some parts of his narrative, and he confirmed them. Then, said Glauccon, let us have the tale over again; is not the road to Athens just made for conversation? And so we walked, and talked of the discourses on love; and therefore, as I said at first, I am not ill-prepared to comply with your request, and will have another rehearsal of them if you like. For to speak or to hear others speak of philosophy always gives me the greatest pleasure, to say nothing of the profit. But when I hear another strain, especially that of you rich men and traders, such conversation displeases me; and I pity you who are my companions, because you think that you are doing something when in reality you are doing nothing. And I dare say that you pity me in return, whom you regard as an unhappy creature, and very probably you are right. But I certainly know of you what you only think of me—there is the difference.
COMPANION: I see, Apollodorus, that you are just the same—always speaking evil of yourself, and of others; and I
do believe that you pity all mankind, with the exception of Socrates, yourself first of all, true in this to your old
name, which, however deserved, I know not how you acquired, of Apollodorus the madman; for you are always
raging against yourself and everybody but Socrates.

APOLLODORUS: Yes, friend, and the reason why I am said to be mad, and out of my wits, is just because I have
these notions of myself and you; no other evidence is required.

COMPANION: No more of that, Apollodorus; but let me renew my request that you would repeat the conversation.

APOLLODORUS: Well, the tale of love was on this wise:—But perhaps I had better begin at the beginning, and
endeavour to give you the exact words of Aristodemus:

He said that he met Socrates fresh from the bath and sandalled; and as the sight of the sandals was unusual, he
asked him whither he was going that he had been converted into such a beau:—

To a banquet at Agathon’s, he replied, whose invitation to his sacrifice of victory I refused yesterday, fearing a
crowd, but promising that I would come to-day instead; and so I have put on my finery, because he is such a fine
man. What say you to going with me unasked?

I will do as you bid me, I replied.

Follow then, he said, and let us demolish the proverb:—

‘To the feasts of inferior men the good unbidden go;’

instead of which our proverb will run:—

‘To the feasts of the good the good unbidden go;’

and this alteration may be supported by the authority of Homer himself, who not only demolishes but literally
outrages the proverb. For, after picturing Agamemnon as the most valiant of men, he makes Menelaus, who is but
a fainthearted warrior, come unbidden (Iliad) to the banquet of Agamemnon, who is feasting and offering
sacrifices, not the better to the worse, but the worse to the better.

I rather fear, Socrates, said Aristodemus, lest this may still be my case; and that, like Menelaus in Homer, I shall
be the inferior person, who

‘To the feasts of the wise unbidden goes.’

But I shall say that I was bidden of you, and then you will have to make an excuse.

‘Two going together,’

he replied, in Homeric fashion, one or other of them may invent an excuse by the way (Iliad).

This was the style of their conversation as they went along. Socrates dropped behind in a fit of abstraction, and
desired Aristodemus, who was waiting, to go on before him. When he reached the house of Agathon he found the
doors wide open, and a comical thing happened. A servant coming out met him, and led him at once into the
banqueting-hall in which the guests were reclining, for the banquet was about to begin. Welcome, Aristodemus,
said Agathon, as soon as he appeared—you are just in time to sup with us; if you come on any other matter put it
off, and make one of us, as I was looking for you yesterday and meant to have asked you, if I could have found you.
But what have you done with Socrates?

I turned round, but Socrates was nowhere to be seen; and I had to explain that he had been with me a moment
before, and that I came by his invitation to the supper.

You were quite right in coming, said Agathon; but where is he himself?

He was behind me just now, as I entered, he said, and I cannot think what has become of him.

Go and look for him, boy, said Agathon, and bring him in; and do you, Aristodemus, meanwhile take the place by
Eryximachus.
The servant then assisted him to wash, and he lay down, and presently another servant came in and reported that our friend Socrates had retired into the portico of the neighbouring house. 'There he is fixed,' said he, 'and when I call to him he will not stir.'

How strange, said Agathon; then you must call him again, and keep calling him.

Let him alone, said my informant; he has a way of stopping anywhere and losing himself without any reason. I believe that he will soon appear; do not therefore disturb him.

Well, if you think so, I will leave him, said Agathon. And then, turning to the servants, he added, 'Let us have supper without waiting for him. Serve up whatever you please, for there is no one to give you orders; hitherto I have never left you to yourselves. But on this occasion imagine that you are our hosts, and that I and the company are your guests; treat us well, and then we shall commend you.' After this, supper was served, but still no Socrates; and during the meal Agathon several times expressed a wish to send for him, but Aristodemus objected; and at last when the feast was about half over—for the fit, as usual, was not of long duration—Socrates entered. Agathon, who was reclining alone at the end of the table, begged that he would take the place next to him; that 'I may touch you,' he said, 'and have the benefit of that wise thought which came into your mind in the portico, and is now in your possession; for I am certain that you would not have come away until you had found what you sought.'

How I wish, said Socrates, taking his place as he was desired, that wisdom could be infused by touch, out of the fuller into the emptier man, as water runs through wool out of a fuller cup into an emptier one; if that were so, how greatly should I value the privilege of reclining at your side! For you would have filled me full with a stream of wisdom plenteous and fair; whereas my own is of a very mean and questionable sort, no better than a dream. But yours is bright and full of promise, and was manifested forth in all the splendour of youth the day before yesterday, in the presence of more than thirty thousand Hellenes.

You are mocking, Socrates, said Agathon, and ere long you and I will have to determine who bears off the palm of wisdom—of this Dionysus shall be the judge; but at present you are better occupied with supper.

Socrates took his place on the couch, and supped with the rest; and then libations were offered, and after a hymn had been sung to the god, and there had been the usual ceremonies, they were about to commence drinking, when Pausanias said, And now, my friends, how can we drink with least injury to ourselves? I can assure you that I feel severely the effect of yesterday's potations, and must have time to recover; and I suspect that most of you are in the same predicament, for you were of the party yesterday. Consider then: How can the drinking be made easiest?

I entirely agree, said Aristophanes, that we should, by all means, avoid hard drinking, for I was myself one of those who were yesterday drowned in drink.

I think that you are right, said Eryximachus, the son of Acumenus; but I should still like to hear one other person speak: Is Agathon able to drink hard?

I am not equal to it, said Agathon.

Then, said Eryximachus, the weak heads like myself, Aristodemus, Phaedrus, and others who never can drink, are fortunate in finding that the stronger ones are not in a drinking mood. (I do not include Socrates, who is able either to drink or to abstain, and will not mind, whichever we do.) Well, as of none of the company seem disposed to drink much, I may be forgiven for saying, as a physician, that drinking deep is a bad practice, which I never follow, if I can help, and certainly do not recommend to another, least of all to any one who still feels the effects of yesterday's carouse.

I always do what you advise, and especially what you prescribe as a physician, rejoined Phaedrus the Myrrhinusian, and the rest of the company, if they are wise, will do the same.

It was agreed that drinking was not to be the order of the day, but that they were all to drink only so much as they pleased.

Then, said Eryximachus, as you are all agreed that drinking is to be voluntary, and that there is to be no compulsion, I move, in the next place, that the flute-girl, who has just made her appearance, be told to go away and play to herself, or, if she likes, to the women who are within (compare Prot.). To-day let us have conversation instead; and, if you will allow me, I will tell you what sort of conversation. This proposal having been accepted, Eryximachus proceeded as follows:—
I will begin, he said, after the manner of Melanippe in Euripides,

‘Not mine the word’

which I am about to speak, but that of Phaedrus. For often he says to me in an indignant tone:—‘What a strange thing it is, Eryximachus, that, whereas other gods have poems and hymns made in their honour, the great and glorious god, Love, has no encomiast among all the poets who are so many. There are the worthy sophists too—the excellent Prodicus for example, who have descanted in prose on the virtues of Heracles and other heroes; and, what is still more extraordinary, I have met with a philosophical work in which the utility of salt has been made the theme of an eloquent discourse; and many other like things have had a like honour bestowed upon them. And only to think that there should have been an eager interest created about them, and yet that to this day no one has ever dared worthy to hymn Love’s praises! So entirely has this great deity been neglected.’ Now in this Phaedrus seems to me to be quite right, and therefore I want to offer him a contribution; also I think that at the present moment we who are here assembled cannot do better than honour the god Love. If you agree with me, there will be no lack of conversation; for I mean to propose that each of us in turn, going from left to right, shall make a speech in honour of Love. Let him give us the best which he can; and Phaedrus, because he is sitting first on the left hand, and because he is the father of the thought, shall begin.

No one will vote against you, Eryximachus, said Socrates. How can I oppose your motion, who profess to understand nothing but matters of love; nor, I presume, will Agathon and Pausanias; and there can be no doubt of Aristophanes, whose whole concern is with Dionysus and Aphrodite; nor will any one disagree of those whom I see around me. The proposal, as I am aware, may seem rather hard upon us whose place is last; but we shall be contented if we hear some good speeches first. Let Phaedrus begin the praise of Love, and good luck to him. All the company expressed their assent, and desired him to do as Socrates bade him.

Aristodemus did not recollect all that was said, nor do I recollect all that he related to me; but I will tell you what I thought most worthy of remembrance, and what the chief speakers said.

Phaedrus began by affirming that Love is a mighty god, and wonderful among gods and men, but especially wonderful in his birth. For he is the eldest of the gods, which is an honour to him; and a proof of his claim to this honour is, that of his parents there is no memorial; neither poet nor prose-writer has ever affirmed that he had any. As Hesiod says:—

‘First Chaos came, and then broad-bosomed Earth, The everlasting seat of all that is, And Love.’

In other words, after Chaos, the Earth and Love, these two, came into being. Also Parmenides sings of Generation:

‘First in the train of gods, he fashioned Love.’

And Acusilaus agrees with Hesiod. Thus numerous are the witnesses who acknowledge Love to be the eldest of the gods. And not only is he the eldest, he is also the source of the greatest benefits to us. For I know not any greater blessing to a young man who is beginning life than a virtuous lover, or to the lover than a beloved youth. For the principle which ought to be the guide of men who would nobly live—that principle, I say, neither kindred, nor honour, nor wealth, nor any other motive is able to implant so well as love. Of what am I speaking? Of the sense of honour and dishonour, without which neither states nor individuals ever do any good or great work. And I say that a lover who is detected in doing any dishonourable act, or submitting through cowardice when any dishonour is done to him by another, will be more pained at being detected by his beloved than at being seen by his father, or by his companions, or by any one else. The beloved too, when he is found in any disgraceful situation, has the same feeling about his lover. And if there were only some way of contriving that a state or an army should be made up of lovers and their loves (compare Rep.), they would be the very best governors of their own city, abstaining from all dishonour, and emulating one another in honour; and when fighting at each other’s side, although a mere handful, they would overcome the world. For what lover would not choose rather to be seen by all mankind than by his beloved, either when abandoning his post or throwing away his arms? He would be ready to die a thousand deaths rather than endure this. Or who would desert his beloved or fail him in the hour of danger? The veriest coward would become an inspired hero, equal to the bravest, at such a time; Love would inspire him. That courage which, as Homer says, the god breathes into the souls of some heroes, Love of his own nature infuses into the lover.

Love will make men dare to die for their beloved—love alone; and women as well as men. Of this, Alcestis, the daughter of Pelias, is a monument to all Hellas; for she was willing to lay down her life on behalf of her husband, when no one else would, although he had a father and mother; but the tenderness of her love so far exceeded theirs, that she made them seem to be strangers in blood to their own son, and in name only related to him; and so noble did this action of hers appear to the gods, as well as to men, that among the many who have done virtuously
she is one of the very few to whom, in admiration of her noble action, they have granted the privilege of returning
alive to earth; such exceeding honour is paid by the gods to the devotion and virtue of love. But Orpheus, the son
of Oeagrus, the harper, they sent empty away, and presented to him an apparition only of her whom he sought,
but herself they would not give up, because he showed no spirit; he was only a harp-player, and did not dare like
Alcestis to die for love, but was contriving how he might enter Hades alive; moreover, they afterwards caused him
to suffer death at the hands of women, as the punishment of his cowardliness. Very different was the reward of
the true love of Achilles towards his lover Patroclus—his lover and not his love (the notion that Patroclus was the
beloved one is a foolish error into which Aeschylus has fallen, for Achilles was surely the fairer of the two, fairer
also than all the other heroes; and, as Homer informs us, he was still beardless, and younger far). And greatly as
the gods honour the virtue of love, still the return of love on the part of the beloved to the lover is more admired
and valued and rewarded by them, for the lover is more divine; because he is inspired by God. Now Achilles was
quite aware, for he had been told by his mother, that he might avoid death and return home, and live to a good old
age, if he abstained from slaying Hector. Nevertheless he gave his life to revenge his friend, and dared to die, not
only in his defence, but after he was dead. Wherefore the gods honoured him even above Alcestis, and sent him to
the Islands of the Blest. These are my reasons for affirming that Love is the eldest and noblest and mightiest of the
gods; and the chiefest author and giver of virtue in life, and of happiness after death.

This, or something like this, was the speech of Phaedrus; and some other speeches followed which Aristodemus
did not remember; the next which he repeated was that of Pausanias. Phaedrus, he said, the argument has not
been set before us, I think, quite in the right form;—we should not be called upon to praise Love in such an
indiscriminate manner. If there were only one Love, then what you said would be well enough; but since there are
more Loves than one,—should have begun by determining which of them was to be the theme of our praises. I will
amend this defect; and first of all I will tell you which Love is deserving of praise, and then try to hymn the
praiseworthy one in a manner worthy of him. For we all know that Love is inseparable from Aphrodite, and if there
were only one Aphrodite there would be only one Love; but as there are two goddesses there must be two Loves.
And am I not right in asserting that there are two goddesses? The elder one, having no mother, who is called the
heavenly Aphrodite—she is the daughter of Uranus; the younger, who is the daughter of Zeus and Dione—her we
call common; and the Love who is her fellow-worker is rightly named common, as the other love is called
heavenly. All the gods ought to have praise given to them, but not without distinction of their natures; and
therefore I must try to distinguish the characters of the two Loves. Now actions vary according to the manner of
their performance. Take, for example, that which we are now doing, drinking, singing and talking—these actions
are not in themselves either good or evil, but they turn out in this or that way according to the mode of performing
them; and when well done they are good, and when wrongly done they are evil; and in like manner not every love,
but only that which has a noble purpose, is noble and worthy of praise. The Love who is the offspring of the
common Aphrodite is essentially common, and has no discrimination, being such as the meaner sort of men feel,
and is apt to be of women as well as of youths, and is of the body rather than of the soul—the most foolish beings
are the objects of this love which desires only to gain an end, but never thinks of accomplishing the end nobly, and
therefore does good and evil quite indiscriminately. The goddess who is his mother is far younger than the other,
and she was born of the union of the male and female, and partakes of both. But the offspring of the heavenly
Aphrodite is derived from a mother in whose birth the female has no part,—she is from the male only; this is that
love which is of youths, and the goddess being older, there is nothing of wantonness in her. Those who are
inspired by this love turn to the male, and delight in him who is the more valiant and intelligent nature; any one
may recognise the pure enthusiasts in the very character of their attachments. For they love not boys, but
intelligent beings whose reason is beginning to be developed, much about the time at which their beards begin to
grow. And in choosing young men to be their companions, they mean to be faithful to them, and pass their whole
life in company with them, not to take them in their inexperience, and deceive them, and play the fool with them,
or run away from one to another of them. But the love of young boys should be forbidden by law, because their future
is uncertain; they may turn out good or bad, either in body or soul, and much noble enthusiasm may be thrown away upon them; in this matter the good are a law to themselves, and the coarser sort of lovers ought to be restrained by force; as we restrain or attempt to restrain them from fixing their affections on women of free
birth. These are the persons who bring a reproach on the improperity and evil of them; for surely nothing that is decorously and lawfully done can justly be censured. Now here and in Lacedaemon the rules about love are perplexing, but in most cities they are simple and easily intelligible; in Elis and Boeotia, and in countries having no gifts of eloquence, they are very straightforward; the law is simply for these connexions, and no one, whether young or old, has anything to say to their discredit; the reason being, as I suppose, that they are men of few words in those parts, and therefore the lovers do not like the trouble of pleading their suit. In Ionia and other places, and generally in countries which are subject to the barbarians, the custom is held to be dishonourable; loves of youths share the evil repute in which philosophy and gymnastics are held, because they are inimical to tyranny; for the interests of rulers require that their subjects should be poor in spirit (compare Arist. Politics), and that there should be no strong bond of friendship or society among them, which love, above all other motives, is likely to inspire, as our Athenian tyrants learned by experience; for the love of Aristogeiton and the constancy of Harmodius had a

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strength which undid their power. And, therefore, the ill-repute into which these attachments have fallen is to be
ascribed to the evil condition of those who make them to be ill-reputed; that is to say, to the self-seeking of the
governors and the cowardice of the governed; on the other hand, the indiscriminate honour which is given to them
in some countries is attributable to the laziness of those who hold this opinion of them. In our own country a far
better principle prevails, but, as I was saying, the explanation of it is rather perplexing. For, observe that open
loves are held to be more honourable than secret ones, and that the love of the noblest and highest, even if their
persons are less beautiful than others, is especially honourable. Consider, too, how great is the encouragement
which all the world gives to the lover; neither is he supposed to be doing anything dishonourable; but if he
succeeds he is praised, and if he fail he is blamed. And in the pursuit of his love the custom of mankind allows him
to do many strange things, which philosophy would bitterly censure if they were done from any motive of interest,
or wish for office or power. He may pray, and entreat, and supplicate, and swear, and lie on a mat at the door, and
endure a slavery worse than that of any slave—in any other case friends and enemies would be equally ready to
prevent him, but now there is no friend who will be ashamed of him and admonish him, and no enemy will charge
him with meanness or flattery; the actions of a lover have a grace which ennobles them; and custom has decided that
they are highly commendable and that there is no loss of character in them; and, what is strangest of all, he
only may swear and forswear himself (so men say), and the gods will forgive his transgression, for there is no such
ting as a lover’s oath. Such is the entire liberty which gods and men have allowed the lover, according to the
custom which prevails in our part of the world. From this point of view a man fairly argues that in Athens to love
and to be loved is held to be a very honourable thing. But when parents forbid their sons to talk with their lovers,
and place them under a tutor’s care, who is appointed to see to these things, and their companions and equals
cast in their teeth anything of the sort which they may observe, and their elders refuse to silence the reprovers
and do not rebuke them—any one who reflects on all this will, on the contrary, think that we hold these practices
to be most disgraceful. But, as I was saying at first, the truth as I imagine is, that whether such practices are
honourable or whether they are dishonourable is not a simple question; they are honourable to him who follows
them honourably, dishonourable to him who follows them dishonourably. There is dishonour in yielding to the evil,
or in an evil manner; but there is honour in yielding to the good, or in an honourable manner. Evil is the vulgar
lover who loves the body rather than the soul, inasmuch as he is not even stable, because he loves a thing which is
in itself unstable, and therefore when the bloom of youth which he was desiring is over, he takes wing and flies
away, in spite of all his words and promises; whereas the love of the noble disposition is life-long, for it becomes
one with the everlasting. The custom of our country would have both of them proven well and truly, and would
have us yield to the one sort of lover and avoid the other, and therefore encourages some to pursue, and others to
fly; testing both the lover and beloved in contests and trials, until they show to which of the two classes they
respectively belong. And this is the reason why, in the first place, a hasty attachment is held to be dishonourable,
because time is the true test of this as of most other things; and secondly there is a dishonour in being overcome
by the love of money, or of wealth, or of political power, whether a man is frightened into surrender by the loss of
them, or, having experienced the benefits of money and political corruption, is unable to rise above the seductions
of them. For none of these things are of a permanent or lasting nature; not to mention that no generous friendship
ever sprang from them. There remains, then, only one way of honourable attachment which custom allows in the
beloved, and this is the way of virtue; for as we admitted that any service which the lover does to him is not to be
accounted flattery or a dishonour to himself, so the beloved has one way only of voluntary service which is not
dishonourable, and this is virtuous service.

For we have a custom, and according to our custom any one who does service to another under the idea that he
will be improved by him either in wisdom, or in some other particular of virtue—such a voluntary service, I say, is
not to be regarded as a dishonour, and is not open to the charge of flattery. And these two customs, one the love
of youth, and the other the practice of philosophy and virtue in general, ought to meet in one, and then the
beloved may honourably indulge the lover. For when the lover and beloved come together, having each of them a
law, and the lover thinks that he is right in doing any service which he can to his gracious loving one; and the
other that he is right in showing any kindness which he can to him who is making him wise and good; the one
capable of communicating wisdom and virtue, the other seeking to acquire them with a view to education and
wisdom, when the two laws of love are fulfilled and meet in one—then, and then only, may the beloved yield with
honour to the lover. Nor when love is of this disinterested sort is there any disgrace in being deceived, but in
every other case there is equal disgrace in being or not being deceived. For he who is gracious to his lover under
the impression that he is rich, and is disappointed of his gains because he turns out to be poor, is disgraced all the
same: for he has done his best to show that he would give himself up to any one’s ‘uses base’ for the sake of
money; but this is not honourable. And on the same principle he who gives himself to a lover because he is a good
man, and in the hope that he will be improved by his company, shows himself to be virtuous, even though the
object of his affection turn out to be a villain, and to have no virtue; and if he is deceived he has committed a noble
error. For he has proved that for his part he will do anything for anybody with a view to virtue and improvement,
than which there can be nothing nobler. Thus noble in every case is the acceptance of another for the sake of
virtue. This is that love which is the love of the heavenly goddess, and is heavenly, and of great price to individuals
and cities, making the lover and the beloved alike eager in the work of their own improvement. But all other loves
are the offspring of the other, who is the common goddess. To you, Phaedrus, I offer this my contribution in praise of love, which is as good as I could make extempore.

Pausanias came to a pause—this is the balanced way in which I have been taught by the wise to speak; and Aristodemus said that the turn of Aristophanes was next, but either he had eaten too much, or from some other cause he had the hiccough, and was obliged to change turns with Eryximachus the physician, who was reclining on the couch below him. Eryximachus, he said, you ought either to stop my hiccough, or to speak in my turn until I have left off.

I will do both, said Eryximachus: I will speak in your turn, and do you speak in mine; and while I am speaking let me recommend you to hold your breath, and if after you have done so for some time the hiccough is no better, then gargle with a little water; and if it still continues, tickle your nose with something and sneeze; and if you sneeze once or twice, even the most violent hiccough is sure to go. I will do as you prescribe, said Aristophanes, and now get on.

Eryximachus spoke as follows: Seeing that Pausanias made a fair beginning, and but a lame ending, I must endeavour to supply his deficiency. I think that he has rightly distinguished two kinds of love. But my art further informs me that the double love is not merely an affection of the soul of man towards the fair, or towards anything, but is to be found in the bodies of all animals and in productions of the earth, and I may say in all that is; such is the conclusion which I seem to have gathered from my own art of medicine, whence I learn how great and wonderful and universal is the deity of love, whose empire extends over all things, divine as well as human. And from medicine I will begin that I may do honour to my art. There are in the human body these two kinds of love, which are confessedly different and unlike, and being unlike, they have loves and desires which are unlike; and the desire of the healthy is one, and the desire of the diseased is another; and as Pausanias was just now saying that to indulge good men is honourable, and bad men dishonourable:—so too in the body the good and healthy elements are to be indulged, and the bad elements and the elements of disease are not to be indulged, but discouraged. And this is what the physician has to do, and in this the art of medicine consists: for medicine may be regarded generally as the knowledge of the loves and desires of the body, and how to satisfy them or not; and the best physician is he who is able to separate fair love from foul, or to convert one into the other; and he who knows how to eradicate and how to implant love, whichever is required, and can reconcile the most hostile elements in the constitution and make them loving friends, is a skilful practitioner. Now the most hostile are the most opposite, such as hot and cold, bitter and sweet, moist and dry, and the like. And my ancestor, Asclepius, knowing how to implant friendship and accord in these elements, was the creator of our art, as our friends the poets here tell us, and I believe them; and not only medicine in every branch but the arts of gymnastic and husbandry are under his dominion. Any one who pays the least attention to the subject will also perceive that in music there is the same reconciliation of opposites; and I suppose that this must have been the meaning of Heracleitus, although his words are not accurate; for he says that The One is united by disunion, like the harmony of the bow and the lyre. Now there is an absurdity saying that harmony is discord or is composed of elements which are still in a state of discord. But what he probably meant was, that harmony is composed of differing notes of higher or lower pitch which disagreed once, but are now reconciled by the art of music; for if the higher and lower notes still disagreed, there could be no harmony,—clearly not. For harmony is a symphony, and symphony is an agreement; but an agreement of disagreements while they disagree there cannot be; you cannot harmonize that which disagrees. In like manner rhythm is compounded of elements short and long, once differing and now in accord; which accordance, as in the former instance, medicine, so in all these other cases, music implants, making love and unison to grow up among them; and thus music, too, is concerned with the principles of love in their application to harmony and rhythm. Again, in the essential nature of harmony and rhythm there is no difficulty in discerning love which has not yet become double. But when you want to use them in actual life, either in the composition of songs or in the correct performance of airs or metres composed already, which latter is called education, then the difficulty begins, and the good artist is needed. Then the old tale has to be repeated of fair and heavenly love—the love of Urania the fair and heavenly muse, and of the duty of accepting the temperate, and those who are as yet intemperate only that they may become temperate, and of preserving their love; and again, of the vulgar Polyhymnia, who must be used with circumspection that the pleasure be enjoyed, but may not generate licentiousness; just as in my own art it is a great matter so to regulate the desires of the epicure that he may gratify his tastes without the attendant evil of disease. Whence I infer that in music, in medicine, in all other things human as well as divine, both loves ought to be noted as far as may be, for they are both present.

The course of the seasons is also full of both these principles; and when, as I was saying, the elements of hot and cold, moist and dry, attain the harmonious love of one another and blend in temperance and harmony, they bring to men, animals, and plants health and plenty, and do them no harm; whereas the wanton love, getting the upper hand and affecting the seasons of the year, is very destructive and injurious, being the source of pestilence, and bringing many other kinds of diseases on animals and plants; for hoar-frost and hail and blight spring from the excesses and disorders of these elements of love, which to know in relation to the revolutions of the heavenly
bodies and the seasons of the year is termed astronomy. Furthermore all sacrifices and the whole province of
divination, which is the art of communion between gods and men—these, I say, are concerned only with the
preservation of the good and the cure of the evil love. For all manner of impiety is likely to ensue if, instead of
accepting and honouring and reverencing the harmonious love in all his actions, a man honours the other love,
whether in his feelings towards gods or parents, towards the living or the dead. Wherefore the business of
divination is to see to these loves and to heal them, and divination is the peacemaker of gods and men, working by
a knowledge of the religious or irreligious tendencies which exist in human loves. Such is the great and mighty, or
rather omnipotent force of love in general. And the love, more especially, which is concerned with the good, and
which is perfected in company with temperance and justice, whether among gods or men, has the greatest power,
and is the source of all our happiness and harmony, and makes us friends with the gods who are above us, and
with one another. I dare say that I too have omitted several things which might be said in praise of Love, but this
was not intentional, and you, Aristophanes, may now supply the omission or take some other line of
commendation; for I perceive that you are rid of the hiccough.

Yes, said Aristophanes, who followed, the hiccough is gone; not, however, until I applied the sneezing; and I
wonder whether the harmony of the body has a love of such noises and ticklings, for I no sooner applied the
sneezing than I was cured.

Eryximachus said: Beware, friend Aristophanes, although you are going to speak, you are making fun of me; and I
shall have to watch and see whether I cannot have a laugh at your expense, when you might speak in peace.

You are right, said Aristophanes, laughing. I will unsay my words; but do you please not to watch me, as I fear that
in the speech which I am about to make, instead of others laughing with me, which is to the manner born of our
muse and would be all the better, I shall only be laughed at by them.

Do you expect to shoot your bolt and escape, Aristophanes? Well, perhaps if you are very careful and bear in mind
that you will be called to account, I may be induced to let you off.

Aristophanes professed to open another vein of discourse; he had a mind to praise Love in another way, unlike
that either of Pausanias or Eryximachus. Mankind, he said, judging by their neglect of him, have never, as I think,
at all understood the power of Love. For if they had understood him they would surely have built noble temples
and altars, and offered solemn sacrifices in his honour; but this is not done, and most certainly ought to be done:
since of all the gods he is the best friend of men, the helper and the healer of the ills which are the great
impediment to the happiness of the race. I will try to describe his power to you, and you shall teach the rest of the
world what I am teaching you. In the first place, let me treat of the nature of man and what has happened to it; for
the original human nature was not like the present, but different. The sexes were not two as they are now, but
originally three in number; there was man, woman, and the union of the two, having a name corresponding to this
double nature, which had once a real existence, but is now lost, and the word 'Androgynous' is only preserved as a
term of reproach. In the second place, the primeval man was round, his back and sides forming a circle; and he
had four hands and four feet, one head with two faces, looking opposite ways, set on a round neck and precisely
alike; also four ears, two privy members, and the remainder to correspond. He could walk upright as men now do,
backwards or forwards as he pleased, and he could also roll over and over at a great pace, turning on his four
hands and four feet, eight in all, like tumblers going over and over with their legs in the air; this was when he
wanted to run fast. Now the sexes were three, and such as I have described them; because the sun, moon, and
earth are three; and the man was originally the child of the sun, the woman of the earth, and the man-woman of
the moon, which is made up of sun and earth, and they were all round and moved round and round like their
parents. Terrible was their might and strength, and the thoughts of their hearts were great, and they made an
attack upon the gods; of them is told the tale of Otys and Ephialtes who, as Homer says, dared to scale heaven,
and would have laid hands upon the gods. Doubt reigned in the celestial councils. Should they kill them and
annihilate the race with thunderbolts, as they had done the giants, then there would be an end of the sacrifices
and worship which men offered to them; but, on the other hand, the gods could not suffer their insolence to be
unrestrained. At last, after a good deal of reflection, Zeus discovered a way. He said: 'Methinks I have a plan
which will humble their pride and improve their manners; men shall continue to exist, but I will cut them in two
and then they will be diminished in strength and increased in numbers; this will have the advantage of making
them more profitable to us. They shall walk upright on two legs, and if they continue insolent and will not be quiet,
I will split them again and they shall hop about on a single leg.' He spoke and cut men in two, like a sorb-apple
which is halved for pickling, or as you might divide an egg with a hair; and as he cut them one after another, he
bade Apollo give the face and the half of the neck a turn in order that the man might contemplate the section of
himself: he would thus learn a lesson of humility. Apollo was also bidden to heal their wounds and compose their
forms. So he gave a turn to the face and pulled the skin from the sides all over that which in our language is called
the belly, like the purses which draw in, and he made one mouth at the centre, which he fastened in a knot (the
same which is called the navel); he also moulded the breast and took out most of the wrinkles, much as a
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that Agathon and Socrates are masters in the art of love, I should be really afraid that they would have nothing to

Indeed, I am not going to attack you, said Eryximachus, for I thought your speech charming, and did I not know

that they would have nothing to

Shoemaker might smooth leather upon a last; he left a few, however, in the region of the belly and navel, as a

memorial of the primeval state. After the division the two parts of man, each desiring his other half, came
together, and throwing their arms about one another, entwined in mutual embraces, longing to grow into one,

they were on the point of dying from hunger and self-neglect, because they did not like to do anything apart; and

when one of the halves died and the other survived, the survivor sought another mate, man or woman as we call
them,—being the sections of entire men or women,—and clung to that. They were being destroyed, when Zeus in

pity of them invented a new plan: he turned the parts of generation round to the front, for this had not been

always their position, and they sowed the seed no longer as hitherto like grasshoppers in the ground, but in one

another; and after the transposition the male generated in the female in order that by the mutual embraces of man

and woman they might breed, and the race might continue; or if man came to man they might be satisfied, and

rest, and go their ways to the business of life: so ancient is the desire of one another which is implanted in us,

reuniting our original nature, making one of two, and healing the state of man. Each of us when separated, having

one side only, like a flat fish, is but the indenture of a man, and he is always looking for his other half. Men who

are a section of that double nature which was once called Androgynous are lovers of women; adulterers are

generally of this breed, and also adulterous women who lust after men: the women who are a section of the

woman do not care for men, but have female attachments; the female companions are of this sort. But they who

are a section of the male follow the male, and while they are young, being slices of the original man, they hang

about men and embrace them, and they are themselves the best of boys and youths, because they have the most

manly nature. Some indeed assert that they are shameless, but this is not true; for they do not act thus from any

want of shame, but because they are valiant and manly, and have a manly countenance, and they embrace that

which is like them. And these when they grow up become our statesmen, and these only, which is a great proof of

the truth of what I am saying. When they reach manhood they are lovers of youth, and are not naturally inclined to

marry or beget children,—if at all, they do so only in obedience to the law; but they are satisfied if they may be

allowed to live with one another unwedded; and such a nature is prone to love and ready to return love, always

embracing that which is akin to him. And when one of them meets with his other half, the actual half of himself,

whether he be a lover of youth or a lover of another sort, the pair are lost in an amazement of love and friendship

and intimacy, and one will not be out of the other’s sight, as I may say, even for a moment: these are the people

who pass their whole lives together; yet they could not explain what they desire of one another. For the intense

yearning which each of them has towards the other does not appear to be the desire of lover’s intercourse, but of

something else which the soul of either evidently desires and cannot tell, and of which she has only a dark and
doubtful presentiment. Suppose Hephaestus, with his instruments, to come to the pair who are lying side by side

and to say to them, ‘What do you people want of one another?’ they would be unable to explain. And suppose

further, that when he saw their perplexity he said: ‘Do you desire to be wholly one; always day and night to be in

one another’s company? For if this is what you desire, I am ready to melt you into one and let you grow together,

so that being two you shall become one, and while you live live a common life as if you were a single man, and

after your death in the world below still be one departed soul instead of two—I ask whether this is what you

lovingly desire, and whether you are satisfied to attain this?’—there is not a man of them who when he heard the

proposal would deny or would not acknowledge that this meeting and melting into one another, this becoming one

instead of two, was the very expression of his ancient need (compare Arist. Pol.). And the reason is that human

nature was originally one and we were a whole, and the desire and pursuit of the whole is called love. There was a

time, I say, when we were one, but now because of the wickedness of mankind God has dispersed us, as the

Arcadians were dispersed into villages by the Lacedaemonians (compare Arist. Pol.). And if we are not obedient to

the gods, there is a danger that we shall be split up again and go about in basso-relievo, like the profile figures

having only half a nose which are sculptured on monuments, and that we shall be like tallies. Wherefore let us

exhort all men to piety, that we may avoid evil, and obtain the good, of which Love is to us the lord and minister;

and let no one oppose him—he is the enemy of the gods who opposes him. For if we are friends of the God and at

peace with him we shall find our own true loves, which rarely happens in this world at present. I am serious, and

therefore I must beg Eryximachus not to make fun or to find any allusion in what I am saying to Pausanias and

Agathon, who, as I suspect, are both of the manly nature, and belong to the class which I have been describing.

But my words have a wider application—they include men and women everywhere; and I believe that if our loves

were perfectly accomplished, and each one returning to his primeval nature had his original true love, then our

race would be happy. And if this would be best of all, the best in the next degree and under present circumstances

must be the nearest approach to such an union; and that will be the attainment of a congenial love. Wherefore, if

we would praise him who has given to us the benefit, we must praise the god Love, who is our greatest

benefactor, both leading us in this life back to our own nature, and giving us high hopes for the future, for he

promises that if we are pious, he will restore us to our original state, and heal us and make us happy and blessed.

This, Eryximachus, is my discourse of love, which, although different to yours, I must beg you to leave unassailed

promises that if we are pious, he will restore us to our original state, and heal us and make us happy and blessed.

Indeed, I am not going to attack you, said Eryximachus, for I thought your speech charming, and did I not know

that Agathon and Socrates are masters in the art of love, I should be really afraid that they would have nothing to
say, after the world of things which have been said already. But, for all that, I am not without hopes.

Socrates said: You played your part well, Eryximachus; but if you were as I am now, or rather as I shall be when Agathon has spoken, you would, indeed, be in a great strait.

You want to cast a spell over me, Socrates, said Agathon, in the hope that I may be disconcerted at the expectation raised among the audience that I shall speak well.

I should be strangely forgetful, Agathon replied Socrates, of the courage and magnanimity which you showed when your own compositions were about to be exhibited, and you came upon the stage with the actors and faced the vast theatre altogether undismayed, if I thought that your nerves could be fluttered at a small party of friends.

Do you think, Socrates, said Agathon, that my head is so full of the theatre as not to know how much more formidable to a man of sense a few good judges are than many fools?

Nay, replied Socrates, I should be very wrong in attributing to you, Agathon, that or any other want of refinement. And I am quite aware that if you happened to meet with any whom you thought wise, you would care for their opinion much more than for that of the many. But then we, having been a part of the foolish many in the theatre, cannot be regarded as the select wise; though I know that if you chanced to be in the presence, not of one of ourselves, but of some really wise man, you would be ashamed of disgracing yourself before him—would you not?

Yes, said Agathon.

But before the many you would not be ashamed, if you thought that you were doing something disgraceful in their presence?

Here Phaedrus interrupted them, saying: not answer him, my dear Agathon; for if he can only get a partner with whom he can talk, especially a good-looking one, he will no longer care about the completion of our plan. Now I love to hear him talk; but just at present I must not forget the encomium on Love which I ought to receive from him and from every one. When you and he have paid your tribute to the god, then you may talk.

Very good, Phaedrus, said Agathon; I see no reason why I should not proceed with my speech, as I shall have many other opportunities of conversing with Socrates. Let me say first how I ought to speak, and then speak:—

The previous speakers, instead of praising the god Love, or unfolding his nature, appear to have congratulated mankind on the benefits which he confers upon them. But I would rather praise the god first, and then speak of his gifts; this is always the right way of praising everything. May I say without impiety or offence, that of all the blessed gods he is the most blessed because he is the fairest and best? And he is the fairest: for, in the first place, he is the youngest, and of his youth he is himself the witness, fleeing out of the way of age, who is swift enough, swifter truly than most of us like:—Love hates him and will not come near him; but youth and love live and move together—like to like, as the proverb says. Many things were said by Phaedrus about Love in which I agree with him; but I cannot agree that he is older than Iapetus and Kronos:—not so; I maintain him to be the youngest of the gods, and youthful ever. The ancient doings among the gods of which Hesiod and Parmenides spoke, if the tradition of them be true, were done of Necessity and not of Love; had Love been in those days, there would have been no chaining or mutilation of the gods, or other violence, but peace and sweetness, as there is now in heaven, since the rule of Love began. Love is young and also tender; he ought to have a poet like Homer to describe his tenderness, as Homer says of Ate, that she is a goddess and tender:—

‘Her feet are tender, for she sets her steps, Not on the ground but on the heads of men:’

herein is an excellent proof of her tenderness,—that she walks not upon the hard but upon the soft. Let us adduce a similar proof of the tenderness of Love; for he walks not upon the earth, nor yet upon the skulls of men, which are not so very soft, but in the hearts and souls of both gods and men, which are of all things the softest: in them he walks and dwells and makes his home. Not in every soul without exception, for where there is hardness he departs, where there is softness there he dwells; and nestling always with his feet and in all manner of ways in the softest of soft places, how can he be other than the softest of all things? Of a truth he is the tenderest as well as the youngest, and also he is of flexile form; for if he were hard and without flexure he could not enfold all things, or wind his way into and out of every soul of man undiscovered. And a proof of his flexibility and symmetry of form is his grace, which is universally admitted to be in an especial manner the attribute of Love; ungrace and love are always at war with one another. The fairness of his complexion is revealed by his habitation among the flowers; for he dwells not amid bloomless or fading beauties, whether of body or soul or aught else, but in the place of flowers and scents, there he sits and abides. Concerning the beauty of the god I have said enough; and yet there remains much more which I might say. Of his virtue I have now to speak: his greatest glory is that he can neither
do nor suffer wrong to or from any god or any man; for he suffers not by force if he suffers; force comes not near him, neither when he acts does he act by force. For all men in all things serve him of their own free will, and where there is voluntary agreement, there, as the laws which are the lords of the city say, is justice. And not only is he just but exceedingly temperate, for Temperance is the acknowledged ruler of the pleasures and desires, and no pleasure ever masters Love; he is their master and they are his servants; and if he conquers them he must be temperate indeed. As to courage, even the God of War is no match for him; he is the captive and Love is the lord, for love, the love of Aphrodite, masters him, as the tale runs; and the master is stronger than the servant. And if he conquers the bravest of all others, he must be himself the bravest. Of his courage and justice and temperance I have spoken, but I have yet to speak of his wisdom; and according to the measure of my ability I must try to do my best. In the first place he is a poet (and here, like Eryximachus, I magnify my art), and he is also the source of poesy in others, which he could not be if he were not himself a poet. And at the touch of him every one becomes a poet, even though he had no music in him before (A fragment of the Stenaoaeoa of Euripides; this also is a proof that Love is a good poet and accomplished in all the fine arts; for no one can give to another that which he has not himself, or teach that of which he has no knowledge. Who will deny that the creation of the animals is his doing? Are they not all the works of his wisdom, born and begotten of him? And as to the artists, do we not know that he only of them whom love inspires has the light of fame?—he whom Love touches not walks in darkness. The arts of medicine and archery and divination were discovered by Apollo, under the guidance of love and desire; so that he too is a disciple of Love. Also the melody of the Muses, the metallurgy of Hephaestus, the weaving of Athene, the empire of Zeus over gods and men, are all due to Love, who was the inventor of them. And so Love set in order the empire of the gods—the love of beauty, as is evident, for with deformity Love has no concern. In the days of old, as I began by saying, dreadful deeds were done among the gods, for they were ruled by Necessity; but now since the birth of Love, and from the Love of the beautiful, has sprung every good in heaven and earth. Therefore, Phaedrus, I say of Love that he is the fairest and best in himself, and the cause of what is fairest and best in all other things. And there comes into my mind a line of poetry in which he is said to be the god who

‘Gives peace on earth and calms the stormy deep, Who stills the winds and bids the sufferer sleep.’

This is he who empties men of disaffection and fills them with affection, who makes them to meet together at banquets such as these: in sacrifices, feasts, dances, he is our lord—who sends courtesy and sends away discourtesy, who gives kindness ever and never gives unkindness; the friend of the good, the wonder of the wise, the amazement of the gods; desired by those who have no part in him, and precious to those who have the better part in him; parent of delicacy, luxury, desire, fondness, softness, grace; regardful of the good, regardless of the evil: in every word, work, wish, fear—saviour, pilot, comrade, helper; glory of gods and men, leader best and brightest: in whose footsteps let every man follow, sweetly singing in his honour and joining in that sweet strain with which love charms the souls of gods and men. Such is the speech, Phaedrus, half-playful, yet having a certain measure of seriousness, which, according to my ability, I dedicate to the god.

When Agathon had done speaking, Aristodemus said that there was a general cheer; the young man was thought to have spoken in a manner worthy of himself, and of the god. And Socrates, looking at Eryximachus, said: Tell me, son of Acumenus, was there not reason in my fears? and was I not a true prophet when I said that Agathon would make a wonderful oration, and that I should be in a strait?

The part of the prophecy which concerns Agathon, replied Eryximachus, appears to me to be true; but not the other part—that you will be in a strait.

Why, my dear friend, said Socrates, must not I or any one be in a strait who has to speak after he has heard such a rich and varied discourse? I am especially struck with the beauty of the concluding words—who could listen to them without amazement? When I reflected on the immeasurable inferiority of my own powers, I was ready to run away for shame, if there had been a possibility of escape. For I was reminded of Gorgias, and at the end of his speech I fancied that Agathon was shaking at me the Gorgianian or Gorgonian head of the great master of rhetoric, which was simply to turn me and my speech into stone, as Homer says (Odyssey), and strike me dumb. And then I perceived how foolish I had been in consenting to take my turn with you in praising love, and saying that I too was a master of the art, when I really had no conception how anything ought to be praised. For in my simplicity I imagined that the topics of praise should be true, and that this being presupposed, out of the true the speaker was to choose the best and set them forth in the best manner. And I felt quite proud, thinking that I knew the nature of true praise, and should speak well. Whereas I now see that the intention was to attribute to Love every species of greatness and glory, whether really belonging to him or not, without regard to truth or falsehood—that was no matter; for the original proposal seems to have been not that each of you should really praise Love, but only that you should appear to praise him. And so you attribute to Love every imaginable form of praise which can be gathered anywhere; and you say that ‘he is all this,’ and ‘the cause of all that,’ making him appear the fairest and best of all to those who know him not, for you cannot impose upon those who know him. And a noble and solemn hymn of praise have you rehearsed. But as I misunderstood the nature of the praise when I said that I would take
my turn, I must beg to be absolved from the promise which I made in ignorance, and which (as Euripides would say (Eurip. Hyppolytus)) was a promise of the lips and not of the mind. Farewell then to such a strain: for I do not praise in that way; no, indeed, I cannot. But if you like to hear the truth about love, I am ready to speak in my own manner, though I will not make myself ridiculous by entering into any rivalry with you. Say then, Phaedrus, whether you would like to have the truth about love, spoken in any words and in any order which may happen to come into my mind at the time. Will that be agreeable to you?

Aristodemus said that Phaedrus and the company bid him speak in any manner which he thought best. Then, he added, let me have your permission first to ask Agathon a few more questions, in order that I may take his admissions as the premisses of my discourse.

I grant the permission, said Phaedrus: put your questions. Socrates then proceeded as follows:—

In the magnificent oration which you have just uttered, I think that you were right, my dear Agathon, in proposing to speak of the nature of Love first and afterwards of his works—that is a way of beginning which I very much approve. And as you have spoken so eloquently of his nature, may I ask you further, Whether love is the love of something or of nothing? And here I must explain myself: I do not want you to say that love is the love of a father or the love of a mother—that would be ridiculous; but to answer as you would, if I asked is a father a father of something? to which you would find no difficulty in replying, of a son or daughter: and the answer would be right.

Very true, said Agathon.

And you would say the same of a mother?

He assented.

Yet let me ask you one more question in order to illustrate my meaning: Is not a brother to be regarded essentially as a brother of something?

Certainly, he replied.

That is, of a brother or sister?

Yes, he said.

And now, said Socrates, I will ask about Love:—Is Love of something or of nothing?

Of something, surely, he replied.

Keep in mind what this is, and tell me what I want to know—whether Love desires that of which love is.

Yes, surely.

And does he possess, or does he not possess, that which he loves and desires?

Probably not, I should say.

Nay, replied Socrates, I would have you consider whether ‘necessarily’ is not rather the word. The inference that he who desires something is in want of something, and that he who desires nothing is in want of nothing, is in my judgment, Agathon, absolutely and necessarily true. What do you think?

I agree with you, said Agathon.

Very good. Would he who is great, desire to be great, or he who is strong, desire to be strong?

That would be inconsistent with our previous admissions.

True. For he who is anything cannot want to be that which he is?

Very true.

And yet, added Socrates, if a man being strong desired to be strong, or being swift desired to be swift, or being healthy desired to be healthy, in that case he might be thought to desire something which he already has or is. I give the example in order that we may avoid misconception. For the possessors of these qualities, Agathon, must
be supposed to have their respective advantages at the time, whether they choose or not; and who can desire that which he has? Therefore, when a person says, I am well and wish to be well, or I am rich and wish to be rich, and I desire simply to have what I have—to him we shall reply: ‘You, my friend, having wealth and health and strength, want to have the continuance of them; for at this moment, whether you choose or no, you have them. And when you say, I desire that which I have and nothing else, is not your meaning that you want to have what you now have in the future?’ He must agree with us—must he not?

He must, replied Agathon.

Then, said Socrates, he desires that what he has at present may be preserved to him in the future, which is equivalent to saying that he desires something which is non-existent to him, and which as yet he has not got:

Very true, he said.

Then he and every one who desires, desires that which he has not already, and which is future and not present, and which he has not, and is not, and of which he is in want;—these are the sort of things which love and desire seek?

Very true, he said.

Then now, said Socrates, let us recapitulate the argument. First, is not love of something, and of something too which is wanting to a man?

Yes, he replied.

Remember further what you said in your speech, or if you do not remember I will remind you: you said that the love of the beautiful set in order the empire of the gods, for that of deformed things there is no love—did you not say something of that kind?

Yes, said Agathon.

Yes, my friend, and the remark was a just one. And if this is true, Love is the love of beauty and not of deformity?

He assented.

And the admission has been already made that Love is of something which a man wants and has not?

True, he said.

Then Love wants and has not beauty?

Certainly, he replied.

And would you call that beautiful which wants and does not possess beauty?

Certainly not.

Then would you still say that love is beautiful?

Agathon replied: I fear that I did not understand what I was saying.

You made a very good speech, Agathon, replied Socrates; but there is yet one small question which I would fain ask:—Is not the good also the beautiful?

Yes.

Then in wanting the beautiful, love wants also the good?

I cannot refute you, Socrates, said Agathon:—Let us assume that what you say is true.

Say rather, beloved Agathon, that you cannot refute the truth; for Socrates is easily refuted.

And now, taking my leave of you, I would rehearse a tale of love which I heard from Diotima of Mantineia (compare 1 Alcibiades), a woman wise in this and in many other kinds of knowledge, who in the days of old, when
the Athenians offered sacrifice before the coming of the plague, delayed the disease ten years. She was my instructress in the art of love, and I shall repeat to you what she said to me, beginning with the admissions made by Agathon, which are nearly if not quite the same which I made to the wise woman when she questioned me: I think that this will be the easiest way, and I shall take both parts myself as well as I can (compare Gorgias). As you, Agathon, suggested (supra), I must speak first of the being and nature of Love, and then of his works. First I said to her in nearly the same words which he used to me, that Love was a mighty god, and likewise fair; and she proved to me as I proved to him that, by my own showing, Love was neither fair nor good. 'What do you mean, Diotima,' I said, 'is love then evil and foul?' 'Hush,' she cried; 'must that be foul which is not fair?' 'Certainly,' I said. 'And is that which is not wise, ignorant? do you not see that there is a mean between wisdom and ignorance?' 'And what may that be?' I said. 'Right opinion,' she replied; 'which, as you know, being incapable of giving a reason, is not knowledge (for how can knowledge be devoid of reason? nor again, ignorance, for neither can ignorance attain the truth), but is clearly something which is a mean between ignorance and wisdom.' 'Quite true,' I replied. 'Do not then insist,' she said, 'that what is not fair is of necessity foul, or what is not good evil; or infer that because love is not fair and good he is therefore foul and evil; for he is in a mean between them.' 'Well,' I said, 'Love is surely admitted by all to be a great god.' 'By those who know or by those who do not know?' 'By all.' 'And how, Socrates,' she said with a smile, 'can Love be acknowledged to be a great god by those who say that he is not a god at all?' 'And who are they?' I said. 'You and I are two of them,' she replied. 'How can that be?' I said. 'It is quite intelligible,' she replied; 'for you yourself would acknowledge that the gods are happy and fair—of course you would—would you dare to say that any god was not?' 'Certainly not,' I replied. 'And you mean by the happy, those who are the possessors of things good or fair?' 'Yes,' 'And you admitted that Love, because he was in want, desires those good and fair things of which he is in want?' 'Yes, I did.' 'But how can he be a god who has no portion in what is either good or fair?' 'Impossible.' 'Then you see that you also deny the divinity of Love.'

'What then is Love?' I asked; 'Is he mortal?' 'No.' 'What then?' 'As in the former instance, he is neither mortal nor immortal, but in a mean between the two.' 'What is he, Diotima?' 'He is a great spirit (daimon), and like all spirits he is intermediate between the divine and the mortal.' 'And what?' I said, 'is his power?' 'He interprets,' she replied, 'between gods and men, conveying and taking across to the gods the prayers and sacrifices of men, and to men the commands and replies of the gods; he is the mediator who spans the chasm which divides them, and therefore in him all is bound together, and through him the arts of the prophet and the priest, their sacrifices and mysteries and charms, and all prophecy and incantation, find their way. For God mingles not with man; but through Love all the intercourse and converse of God with man, whether awake or asleep, is carried on. The wisdom which understands this is spiritual; all other wisdom, such as that of arts and handicrafts, is mean and vulgar. Now these spirits or intermediate powers are many and diverse, and one of them is Love.' 'And who,' I said, 'was his father, and who his mother?' 'The tale,' she said, 'will take time; nevertheless I will tell you. On the birthday of Aphrodite there was a feast of the gods, at which the god Poros or Plenty, who is the son of Metis or Discretion, was one of the guests. When the feast was over, Penia or Poverty, as the manner is on such occasions, came about the doors to beg. Now Plenty who was the worse for nectar (there was no wine in those days), went into the garden of Zeus and fell into a heavy sleep, and Poverty considering her own straitened circumstances, plotted to have a child by him, and accordingly she lay down at his side and conceived Love, who partly because he is naturally a lover of the beautiful, and because Aphrodite is herself beautiful, and also because he was born on her birthday, is her follower and attendant. And as his parentage is, so also are his fortunes. In the first place he is always poor, and anything but tender and fair, as the many imagine him; and he is rough and squalid, and has no shoes, nor a house to dwell in; on the bare earth exposed he lies under the open heaven, in the streets, or at the doors of houses, taking his rest; and like his mother he is always in distress. Like his father too, whom he also partly resembles, he is always plotting against the fair and good; he is bold, enterprising, strong, a mighty hunter, always weaving some intrigue or other, keen in the pursuit of wisdom, fertile in resources; a philosopher at all times, terrible as an enchanter, sorcerer, sophist. He is by nature neither mortal nor immortal, but alive and flourishing at one moment when he is in plenty, and dead at another moment, and again alive by reason of his father's nature. But that which is always flowing in is always flowing out, and so he is never in want and never in wealth; and, further, he is in a mean between ignorance and knowledge. The truth of the matter is this: No god is a philosopher or seeker after wisdom, for he is wise already; nor does any man who is wise seek after wisdom. Neither do the ignorant seek after wisdom. For herein is the evil of ignorance, that he who is neither good nor wise is nevertheless satisfied with himself: he has no desire for that of which he feels no want.' 'But who then, Diotima,' I said, 'are the lovers of wisdom, if they are neither the wise nor the foolish?' 'A child may answer that question,' she replied; 'they are those who are in a mean between the two; Love is one of them. For wisdom is a most beautiful thing, and Love is of the beautiful; and therefore Love is also a philosopher or lover of wisdom, and being a lover of wisdom is in a mean between the wise and the ignorant. And of this too his birth is the cause; for his father is wealthy and wise, and his mother poor and foolish. Such, my dear Socrates, is the nature of the spirit Love. The error in your conception of him was very natural, and as I imagine from what you say, has arisen out of a confusion of love and the beloved, which made you think that love was all beautiful. For the beloved is the truly beautiful, and delicate, and perfect, and blessed; but the principle of love is of another nature, and is such as I have described.'
I said, ‘O thou stranger woman, thou sayest well; but, assuming Love to be such as you say, what is the use of him to men?’ ‘That, Socrates,’ she replied, ‘I will attempt to unfold: of his nature and birth I have already spoken; and you acknowledge that love is of the beautiful. But some one will say: Of the beautiful in what, Socrates and Diotima?—or rather let me put the question more clearly, and ask: When a man loves the beautiful, what does he desire?’ I answered her ‘That the beautiful may be his.’ ‘Still,’ she said, ‘the answer suggests a further question: What is given by the possession of beauty?’ ‘To what you have asked,’ I replied, ‘I have no answer ready.’ ‘Then,’ she said, ‘let me put the word “good” in the place of the beautiful, and repeat the question once more: If he who loves the good, what is it then that he loves?’ ‘The possession of the good,’ I said. ‘And what does he gain who possesses the good?’ ‘Happiness,’ I replied; ‘there is less difficulty in answering that question.’ ‘Yes,’ she said, ‘the happy are made happy by the acquisition of good things. Nor is there any need to ask why a man desires happiness; the answer is already final.’ ‘You are right,’ I said. ‘And is this wish and this desire common to all? and do all men always desire their own good, or only some men?—what say you?’ ‘All men,’ I replied; ‘the desire is common to all.’ ‘Why, then,’ she rejoined, ‘are not all men, Socrates, said to love, but only some of them? whereas you say that all men are always loving the same things.’ ‘I myself wonder,’ I said, ‘why this is.’ ‘There is nothing to wonder at,’ she replied; ‘the reason is that one part of love is separated off and receives the name of the whole, but the other parts have other names.’ ‘Give an illustration,’ I said. She answered me as follows: ‘There is poetry, which, as you know, is complex and manifold. All creation or passage of non-being into being is poetry or making, and the processes of all art are creative; and the masters of arts are all poets or makers.’ ‘Very true.’ ‘Still,’ she said, ‘you know that they are not called poets, but have other names; only that portion of the art which is separated off from the rest, and is concerned with music and metre, is termed poetry, and they who possess poetry in this sense of the word are called poets.’ ‘Very true,’ I said. ‘And the same holds of love. For you may say generally that all desire of good and happiness is only the great and subtle power of love; but they who are drawn towards him by any other path, whether the path of money-making or gymnastics or philosophy, are not called lovers—the name of the whole is appropriated to those whose affection takes one form only—they alone are said to love, or to be lovers.’ ‘I dare say,’ I replied, ‘that you are right.’ ‘Yes,’ she added, ‘and you hear people say that lovers are seeking for their other half; but I say that they are seeking neither for the half of themselves, nor for the whole, unless the half or the whole be also a good. And they will cut off their own hands and feet and cast them away, if they are evil; for they love not what is their own, unless perchance there be some one who calls what belongs to him the good, and what belongs to another the evil. For there is nothing which men love but the good. Is there anything?’ ‘Certainly, I should say, that there is nothing.’ ‘Then,’ she said, ‘the simple truth is, that men love the good.’ ‘Yes,’ I said. ‘To which must be added that they love the possession of the good?’ ‘Yes, that must be added.’ ‘And not only the possession, but the everlasting possession of the good?’ ‘That must be added too.’ ‘Then love,’ she said, ‘may be described generally as the love of the everlasting possession of the good?’ ‘That is most true.’

‘Then if this be the nature of love, can you tell me further,’ she said, ‘what is the manner of the pursuit? what are they doing who show all this eagerness and heat which is called love? and what is the object which they have in view? Answer me.’ ‘Nay, Diotima,’ I replied, ‘if I had known, I should not have wondered at your wisdom, neither should I have come to learn from you about this very matter.’ ‘Well,’ she said, ‘I will teach you:—The object which they have in view is birth in beauty, whether of body or soul.’ ‘I do not understand you,’ I said; ‘the oracle requires an explanation.’ ‘I will make my meaning clearer,’ she replied; ‘I mean to say, that all men are bringing to the birth in their bodies and in their souls. There is a certain age at which human nature is desirous of procreation—procreation which must be in beauty and not in deformity; and this procreation is the union of man and woman, and is a divine thing; for conception and generation are an immortal principle in the mortal creature, and in the inharmonious they can never be. But the deformed is always inharmonious with the divine, and the beautiful harmonious. Beauty, then, is the destiny or goddess of parturition who presides at birth, and therefore, when approaching beauty, the conceiving power is propitious, and diffusive, and benign, and begets and bears fruit: at the sight of ugliness she frowns and contracts and has a sense of pain, and turns away, and shrivels up, and not without a pang refrains from conception. And this is the reason why, when the hour of conception arrives, and the teeming nature is full, there is such a flutter and ecstasy about beauty whose approach is the alleviation of the pain of travail. For love, Socrates, is not, as you imagine, the love of the beautiful only.’ ‘What then?’ ‘The love of generation and of birth in beauty.’ ‘Yes,’ I said. ‘Yes, indeed,’ she replied. ‘But why of generation?’ ‘Because to the mortal creature, generation is a sort of eternity and immortality,’ she replied; ‘and if, as has been already admitted, love is of the everlasting possession of the good, all men will necessarily desire immortality together with good: Wherefore love is of immortality.’

All this she taught me at various times when she spoke of love. And I remember her once saying to me, ‘What is the cause, Socrates, of love, and the attendant desire? See you not how all animals, birds, as well as beasts, in their desire of procreation, are in agony when they take the infection of love, which begins with the desire of union; whereto is added the care of offspring, on whose behalf the weakest are ready to battle against the strongest even to the uttermost, and to die for them, and will let themselves be tormented with hunger or suffer anything in order to maintain their young. Man may be supposed to act thus from reason; but why should animals
have these passionate feelings? Can you tell me why?” Again I replied that I did not know. She said to me: ‘And do
you expect ever to become a master in the art of love, if you do not know this?’ ‘But I have told you already,
Diotima, that my ignorance is the reason why I come to you; for I am conscious that I want a teacher; tell me then
the cause of this and of the other mysteries of love.’ ‘Marvel not,’ she said, ‘if you believe that love is of the
immortal, as we have several times acknowledged; for here again, and on the same principle too, the mortal
nature is seeking as far as is possible to be everlasting and immortal; and this is only to be attained by generation,
because generation always leaves behind a new existence in the place of the old. Nay even in the life of the same
individual there is succession and not absolute unity: a man is called the same, and yet in the short interval which
elapses between youth and age, and in which every animal is said to have life and identity, he is undergoing a
perpetual process of loss and reparation—hair, flesh, bones, blood, and the whole body are always changing.
Which is true not only of the body, but also of the soul, whose habits, tempers, opinions, desires, pleasures, pains,
fears, never remain the same in any one of us, but are always coming and going; and equally true of knowledge,
and what is still more surprising to us mortals, not only do the sciences in general spring up and decay, so that in
respect of them we are never the same; but each of them individually experiences a like change. For what is
implied in the word “recollection,” but the departure of knowledge, which is ever being forgotten, and is renewed
and preserved by recollection, and appears to be the same although in reality new, according to that law of
succeision by which all mortal things are preserved, not absolutely the same, but by substitution, the old worn-out
mortality leaving another new and similar existence behind—unlike the divine, which is always the same and not
another? And in this way, Socrates, the mortal body, or mortal anything, partakes of immortality; but the immortal
in another way. Marvel not then at the love which all men have of their offspring; for that universal love and
interest is for the sake of immortality.’

I was astonished at her words, and said: ‘Is this really true, O thou wise Diotima?’ And she answered with all the
authority of an accomplished sophist: ‘Of that, Socrates, you may be assured;—think only of the ambition of men,
and you will wonder at the senselessness of their ways, unless you consider how they are stirred by the love of an
immortality of fame. They are ready to run all risks greater far than they would have run for their children, and to
spend money and undergo any sort of toil, and even to die, for the sake of leaving behind them a name which shall
be eternal. Do you imagine that Alcestis would have died to save Admetus, or Achilles to avenge Patroclus, or your
own Codrus in order to preserve the kingdom for his sons, if they had not imagined that the memory of their
virtues, which still survives among us, would be immortal? Nay,’ she said, ‘I am persuaded that all men do all
things, and the better they are the more they do them, in hope of the glorious fame of immortal virtue; for they
desire the immortal.

‘Those who are pregnant in the body only, betake themselves to women and beget children—this is the character
of their love; their offspring, as they hope, will preserve their memory and giving them the blessedness and
immortality which they desire in the future. But souls which are pregnant—for there certainly are men who are
more creative in their souls than in their bodies—conceive that which is proper for the soul to conceive or contain.
And what are these conceptions?—wisdom and virtue in general. And such creators are poets and all artists who
are deserving of the name inventor. But the greatest and fairest sort of wisdom by far is that which is concerned
with the ordering of states and families, and which is called temperance and justice. And he who in youth has the
seed of these implanted in him and is himself inspired, when he comes to maturity desires to beget and generate.
He wanders about seeking beauty that he may beget offspring—for in deformity he will beget nothing—and
naturally embraces the beautiful rather than the deformed body; above all when he finds a fair and noble and well-
nurtured soul, he embraces the two in one person, and to such an one he is full of speech about virtue and the
nature and pursuits of a good man; and he tries to educate him; and at the touch of the beautiful which is ever
present to his memory, even when absent, he brings forth that which he had conceived long before, and in
company with him tends that which he brings forth; and they are married by a far nearer tie and have a closer
friendship than those who beget mortal children, for the children who are their common offspring are fairer and
more immortal. Who, when he thinks of Homer and Hesiod and other great poets, would not rather have their
children than ordinary human ones? Who would not emulate them in the creation of children such as theirs, which
have preserved their memory and given them everlasting glory? Or who would not have such children as Lycurgus
left behind him to be the saviours, not only of Lacedaemon, but of Hellas, as one may say? There is Solon, too, who
is the revered father of Athenian laws; and many others there are in many other places, both among Hellenes and
barbarians, who have given to the world many noble works, and have been the parents of virtue of every kind; and
many temples have been raised in their honour for the sake of children such as theirs; which were never raised in
honour of any one, for the sake of his mortal children.

‘These are the lesser mysteries of love, into which even you, Socrates, may enter; to the greater and more hidden
ones which are the crown of these, and to which, if you pursue them in a right spirit, they will lead, I know not
whether you will be able to attain. But I will do my utmost to inform you, and do you follow if you can. For he who
would proceed aright in this matter should begin in youth to visit beautiful forms; and first, if he be guided by his
instructor aright, to love one such form only—out of that he should create fair thoughts; and soon he will of
himself perceive that the beauty of one form is akin to the beauty of another; and then if beauty of form in general is his pursuit, how foolish would he be not to recognize that the beauty in every form is and the same! And when he perceives this he will abate his violent love of the one, which he will despise and deem a small thing, and will become a lover of all beautiful forms; in the next stage he will consider that the beauty of the mind is more honourable than the beauty of the outward form. So that if a virtuous soul have but a little comeliness, he will be content to love and tend him, and will search out and bring to the birth thoughts which may improve the young, until he is compelled to contemplate and see the beauty of institutions and laws, and to understand that the beauty of them all is of one family, and that personal beauty is a trifle; and after laws and institutions he will go on to the sciences, that he may see their beauty, being not like a servant in love with the beauty of one youth or man or institution, himself a slave mean and narrow-minded, but drawing towards and contemplating the vast sea of beauty, he will create many fair and noble thoughts and notions in boundless love of wisdom; until on that shore he grows and waxes strong, and at last the vision is revealed to him of a single science, which is the science of beauty everywhere. To this I will proceed; please to give me your very best attention:  

‘He who has been instructed thus far in the things of love, and who has learned to see the beautiful in due order and succession, when he comes toward the end will suddenly perceive a nature of wondrous beauty (and this, Socrates, is the final cause of all our former toils)—a nature which in the first place is everlasting, not growing and decaying, or waxing and waning; secondly, not fair in one point of view and foul in another, or at one time or in one relation or at one place fair, at another time or in another relation or at another place foul, as if fair to some and foul to others, or in the likeness of a face or hands or any other part of the bodily frame, or in any form of speech or knowledge, or existing in any other being, as for example, in an animal, or in heaven, or in earth, or in any other place; but beauty absolute, separate, simple, and everlasting, which without diminution and without increase, or any change, is imparted to the ever-growing and perishing beauties of all other things. He who from these ascending under the influence of true love, begins to perceive that beauty, is not far from the end. And the true order of going, or being led by another, to the things of love, is to begin from the beauties of earth and mount upwards for the sake of that other beauty, using these as steps only, and from one going on to two, and from two to all fair forms, and from fair forms to fair practices, and from fair practices to fair notions, until from fair notions he arrives at the notion of absolute beauty, and at last knows what the essence of beauty is. This, my dear Socrates,’ said the stranger of Mantinea, ‘is that life above all others which man should live, in the contemplation of beauty absolute; a beauty which if you once beheld, you would see not to be after the measure of gold, and garments, and fair boys and youths, whose presence now entrances you; and you and many a one would be content to live seeing them only and conversing with them without meat or drink, if that were possible—you only want to look at them and to be with them. But what if man had eyes to see the true beauty—the divine beauty, I mean, pure and clear and unalloyed, not clogged with the pollutions of mortality and all the colours and vanities of human life—thither looking, and holding converse with the true beauty simple and divine? Remember how in that communion only, beholding beauty with the eye of the mind, he will be enabled to bring forth, not images of beauty, but realities (for he has hold not of an image but of a reality), and bringing forth and nourishing true virtue to become the friend of God and be immortal, if mortal man may. Would that be an ignoble life?’

Such, Phaedrus—and I speak not only to you, but to all of you—were the words of Diotima; and I am persuaded of their truth. And being persuaded of them, I try to persuade others, that in the attainment of this end human nature will not easily find a helper better than love: And therefore, also, I say that every man ought to honour him as I myself honour him, and walk in his ways, and exhort others to do the same, and praise the power and spirit of beauty absolute, separate, simple, and everlasting, which without diminution and without increase, or any change, is imparted to the ever-growing and perishing beauties of all other things. He who from these ascending under the influence of true love, begins to perceive that beauty, is not far from the end. And the true order of going, or being led by another, to the things of love, is to begin from the beauties of earth and mount upwards for the sake of that other beauty, using these as steps only, and from one going on to two, and from two to all fair forms, and from fair forms to fair practices, and from fair practices to fair notions, until from fair notions he arrives at the notion of absolute beauty, and at last knows what the essence of beauty is. This, my dear Socrates,’ said the stranger of Mantinea, ‘is that life above all others which man should live, in the contemplation of beauty absolute; a beauty which if you once beheld, you would see not to be after the measure of gold, and garments, and fair boys and youths, whose presence now entrances you; and you and many a one would be content to live seeing them only and conversing with them without meat or drink, if that were possible—you only want to look at them and to be with them. But what if man had eyes to see the true beauty—the divine beauty, I mean, pure and clear and unalloyed, not clogged with the pollutions of mortality and all the colours and vanities of human life—thither looking, and holding converse with the true beauty simple and divine? Remember how in that communion only, beholding beauty with the eye of the mind, he will be enabled to bring forth, not images of beauty, but realities (for he has hold not of an image but of a reality), and bringing forth and nourishing true virtue to become the friend of God and be immortal, if mortal man may. Would that be an ignoble life?’

The words which I have spoken, you, Phaedrus, may call an encomium of love, or anything else which you please.

When Socrates had done speaking, the company applauded, and Aristophanes was beginning to say something in answer to the allusion which Socrates had made to his own speech, when suddenly there was a great knocking at the door of the house, as of revellers, and the sound of a flute-girl was heard. Agathon told the attendants to go and see who were the intruders. ‘If they are friends of ours,’ he said, ‘invite them in, but if not, say that the drinking is over.’ A little while afterwards they heard the voice of Alcibiades resounding in the court; he was in a great state of intoxication, and kept roaring and shouting ‘Where is Agathon? Lead me to Agathon,’ and at length, supported by the flute-girl and some of his attendants, he found his way to them. ‘Hail, friends,’ he said, appearing at the door crowned with a massive garland of ivy and violets, his head flowing with ribands. ‘Will you have a very drunken man as a companion of your revels? Or shall I crown Agathon, which was my intention in coming, and go away? For I was unable to come yesterday, and therefore I am here to-day, carrying on my head these ribands, that taking them from my own head, I may crown the head of this fairest and wisest of men, as I may be allowed to call him. Will you laugh at me because I am drunk? Yet I know very well that I am speaking the truth, although you may laugh. But first tell me; if I come in shall we have the understanding of which I spoke (supra Will you have a very drunken man? etc.)? Will you drink with me or not?’
The company were vociferous in begging that he would take his place among them, and Agathon specially invited him. Thereupon he was led in by the people who were with him; and as he was being led, intending to crown Agathon, he took the ribands from his own head and held them in front of his eyes; he was thus prevented from seeing Socrates, who made way for him, and Alcibiades took the vacant place between Agathon and Socrates, and in taking the place he embraced Agathon and crowned him. Take off his sandals, said Agathon, and let him make a third on the same couch.

By all means; but who makes the third partner in our revels? said Alcibiades, turning round and starting up as he caught sight of Socrates. By Heracles, he said, what is this? here is Socrates always lying in wait for me, and always, as his way is, coming out at all sorts of unsuspected places: and now, what have you to say for yourself, and why are you lying here, where I perceive that you have contrived to find a place, not by a joker or lover of jokes, like Aristophanes, but by the fairest of the company?

Socrates turned to Agathon and said: I must ask you to protect me, Agathon; for the passion of this man has grown quite a serious matter to me. Since I became his admirer I have never been allowed to speak to any other fair one, or so much as to look at them. If I do, he goes wild with envy and jealousy, and not only abuses me but can hardly keep his hands off me, and at this moment he may do me some harm. Please to see to this, and either reconcile me to him, or, if he attempts violence, protect me, as I am in bodily fear of his mad and passionate attempts.

There can never be reconciliation between you and me, said Alcibiades; but for the present I will defer your chastisement. And I must beg you, Agathon, to give me back some of the ribands that I may crown the marvellous head of this universal despot—I would not have him complain of me for crowning you, and neglecting him, who in conversation is the conqueror of all mankind; and this not only once, as you were the day before yesterday, but always. Whereupon, taking some of the ribands, he crowned Socrates, and again reclined.

Then he said: You seem, my friends, to be sober, which is a thing not to be endured; you must drink—for that was the agreement under which I was admitted—and I elect myself master of the feast until you are well drunk. Let us have a large goblet, Agathon, or rather, he said, addressing the attendant, bring me that wine-cooler. The wine-cooler which had caught his eye was a vessel holding more than two quarts—this he filled and emptied, and bade the attendant fill it again for Socrates. Observe, my friends, said Alcibiades, that this ingenious trick of mine will have no effect on Socrates, for he can drink any quantity of wine and not be at all nearer being drunk. Socrates drank the cup which the attendant filled for him.

Eryximachus said: What is this, Alcibiades? Are we to have neither conversation nor singing over our cups; but simply to drink as if we were thirsty?

Alcibiades replied: Hail, worthy son of a most wise and worthy sire!

The same to you, said Eryximachus; but what shall we do?

That I leave to you, said Alcibiades.

'The wise physician skilled our wounds to heal (from Pope’s Homer, II.)' shall prescribe and we will obey. What do you want?

Well, said Eryximachus, before you appeared we had passed a resolution that each one of us in turn should make a speech in praise of love, and as good a one as he could: the turn was passed round from left to right; and as all of us have spoken, and you have not spoken but have well drunken, you ought to speak, and then impose upon Socrates any task which you please, and he on his right hand neighbour, and so on.

That is good, Eryximachus, said Alcibiades; and yet the comparison of a drunken man’s speech with those of sober men is hardly fair; and I should like to know, sweet friend, whether you really believe what Socrates was just now saying; for I can assure you that the very reverse is the fact, and that if I praise any one but himself in his presence, whether God or man, he will hardly keep his hands off me.

For shame, said Socrates.

Hold your tongue, said Alcibiades, for by Poseidon, there is no one else whom I will praise when you are of the company.

Well then, said Eryximachus, if you like praise Socrates.

What do you think, Eryximachus? said Alcibiades: shall I attack him and inflict the punishment before you all?
Survey of non-Western Literature

What are you about? said Socrates; are you going to raise a laugh at my expense? Is that the meaning of your praise?

I am going to speak the truth, if you will permit me.

I not only permit, but exhort you to speak the truth.

Then I will begin at once, said Alcibiades, and if I say anything which is not true, you may interrupt me if you will, and say ‘that is a lie,’ though my intention is to speak the truth. But you must not wonder if I speak any how as things come into my mind; for the fluent and orderly enumeration of all your singularities is not a task which is easy to a man in my condition.

And now, my boys, I shall praise Socrates in a figure which will appear to him to be a caricature, and yet I speak, not to make fun of him, but only for the truth’s sake. I say, that he is exactly like the busts of Silenus, which are set up in the statues’ shops, holding pipes and flutes in their mouths; and they are made to open in the middle, and have images of gods inside them. I say also that he is like Marsyas the satyr. You yourself will not deny, Socrates, that your face is like that of a satyr. Aye, and there is a resemblance in other points too. For example, you are a bully, as I can prove by witnesses, if you will not confess. And are you not a flute-player? That you are, and a performer far more wonderful than Marsyas. He indeed with instruments used to charm the souls of men by the power of his breath, and the players of his music do so still: for the melodies of Olympus (compare Arist. Pol.) are derived from Marsyas who taught them, and these, whether they are played by a great master or by a miserable flute-girl, have a power which no others have; they alone possess the soul and reveal the wants of those who have need of gods and mysteries, because they are divine. But you produce the same effect with your words only, and do not require the flute: that is the difference between you and him. When we hear any other speaker, even a very good one, he produces absolutely no effect upon us, or not much, whereas the mere fragments of you and your words, even at second-hand, and however imperfectly repeated, amaze and possess the souls of every man, woman, and child who comes within hearing of them. And if we were not afraid that you would think me hopelessly drunk, I would have sworn as well as spoken to the influence which they have always had and still have over me. For my heart leaps within me more than that of any Corybantian reveller, and my eyes rain tears when I hear them. And I observe that many others are affected in the same manner. I have heard Pericles and other great orators, and I thought that they spoke well, but I never had any similar feeling; my soul was not stirred by them, nor was I angry at the thought of my own slavish state. But this Marsyas has often brought me to such a pass, that I have felt as if I could hardly endure the life which I am leading (this, Socrates, you will admit); and I am conscious that if I did not shut my ears against him, and fly as from the voice of the siren, my fate would be like that of others,—he would transfix me, and I should grow old sitting at his feet. For he makes me confess that I ought not to live as I do, neglecting the wants of my own soul, and busying myself with the concerns of the Athenians; therefore I hold my ears and tear myself away from him. And he is the only person who ever made me ashamed, which you might think not to be in my nature, and there is no one else who does the same. For I know that I cannot answer him or say that I ought not to do as he bids, but when I leave his presence the love of popularity gets the better of me. And therefore I run away and fly from him, and when I see him I am ashamed of what I have confessed to him. Many a time have I wished that he were dead, and yet I know that I should be much more sorry than glad, if he were to die: so that I am at my wit’s end.

And this is what I and many others have suffered from the flute-playing of this satyr. Yet hear me once more while I show you how exact the image is, and how marvellous his power. For let me tell you; none of you know him; but I will reveal him to you; having begun, I must go on. See you how fond he is of the fair? He is always with them and is always being smitten by them, and then again he knows nothing and is ignorant of all things—such is the appearance which he puts on. Is he not like a Silenus in this? To be sure he is: his outer mask is the carved head of the Silenus; but, O my companions in drink, when he is opened, what temperance there is residing within! Know you that beauty and wealth and honour, at which the many wonder, are of no account with him, and are utterly despised by him: he regards not at all the persons who are gifted with them; mankind are nothing to him; all his life is spent in mocking and flouting at them. But when I opened him, and looked within at his serious purpose, I saw in him divine and golden images of such fascinating beauty that I was ready to do in a moment whatever Socrates commanded: they may have escaped the observation of others, but I saw them. Now I fancied that he was seriously enamoured of my beauty, and I thought that I should therefore have a grand opportunity of hearing him tell what he knew, for I had a wonderful opinion of the attractions of my youth. In the prosecution of this design, when I next went to him, I sent away the attendant who usually accompanied me (I will confess the whole truth, and beg you to listen; and if I speak falsely, do you, Socrates, expose the falsehood). Well, he and I were alone together, and I thought that when there was nobody with us, I should hear him speak the language which lovers use to their loves when they are by themselves, and I was delighted. Nothing of the sort; he conversed as usual, and spent the day with me and then went away. Afterwards I challenged him to the palaestra; and he wrestled and closed with me several times when there was no one present; I fancied that I might succeed...
in this manner. Not a bit; I made no way with him. Lastly, as I had failed hitherto, I thought that I must take stronger measures and attack him boldly, and, as I had begun, not give him up, but see how matters stood between him and me. So I invited him to sup with me, just as if he were a fair youth, and I a designing lover. He was not easily persuaded to come; he did, however, after a while accept the invitation, and when he came the first time, he wanted to go away at once as soon as supper was over, and I had not the face to detain him. The second time, still in pursuance of my design, after we had supped, I went on conversing far into the night, and when he wanted to go away, I pretended that the hour was late and that he had much better remain. So he lay down on the couch next to me, the same on which he had supped, and there was no one but ourselves sleeping in the apartment. All this may be told without shame to any one. But what follows I could hardly tell you if I were sober. Yet as the proverb says, ‘In vino veritas,’ whether with boys, or without them (In allusion to two proverbs.); and therefore I must speak. Nor, again, should I be justified in concealing the lofty actions of Socrates when I come to praise him. Moreover I have felt the serpent’s sting; and he who has suffered, as they say, is willing to tell his fellow-sufferers only, as they alone will be likely to understand him, and will not be extreme in judging of the sayings or doings which have been wrung from his agony. For I have been bitten by a more than viper’s tooth; I have known in my soul, or in my heart, or in some other part, that worst of pangs, more violent in ingenuous youth than any serpent’s tooth, the pang of philosophy, which will make a man say or do anything. And you whom I see around me, Phaedrus and Agathon and Eryximachus and Pausania and Aristodemus and Aristophanes, all of you, and I need not say Socrates himself, have had experience of the same madness and passion in your longing after wisdom. Therefore listen and excuse my doings then and my sayings now. But let the attendants and other profane and unmannered persons close up the doors of their ears.

When the lamp was put out and the servants had gone away, I thought that I must be plain with him and have no more ambiguity. So I gave him a shake, and I said: ‘Socrates, are you asleep?’ ‘No,’ he said. ‘Do you know what I am meditating?’ ‘What are you meditating?’ he said. ‘I think,’ I replied, ‘that of all the lovers whom I have ever had you are the only one who is worthy of me, and you appear to be too modest to speak. Now I feel that I should be a fool to refuse you this or any other favour, and therefore I come to lay at your feet all that I have and all that my friends have, in the hope that you will assist me in the way of virtue, which I desire above all things, and in which I believe that you can help me better than any one else. And I should certainly have more reason to be ashamed of what wise men would say if I were to refuse a favour to such as you, than of what the world, who are mostly fools, would say of me if I granted it.’ To these words he replied in the ironical manner which is so characteristic of him:—‘Alcibiades, my friend, you have indeed an elevated aim if what you say is true, and if there really is in me any power by which you may become better; truly you must see in me some rare beauty of a kind infinitely higher than any which I see in you. And therefore, if you mean to share with me and to exchange beauty for beauty, you will have greatly the advantage of me; you will gain true beauty in return for appearance—like Diomede, gold in exchange for brass. But look again, sweet friend, and see whether you are not deceived in me. The mind begins to grow critical when the bodily eye fails, and it will be a long time before you get old.’ Hearing this, I said: ‘I have told you my purpose, which is quite serious, and do you consider what you think best for you and me.’ ‘That is good,’ he said; ‘at some other time then we will consider and act as seems best about this and about other matters.’ Whereupon, I fancied that he was smitten, and that the words which I had uttered like arrows had wounded him, and so without waiting to hear more I got up, and throwing my coat about him crept under his threadbare cloak, as the time of year was winter, and there I lay during the whole night having this wonderful monster in my arms. This again, Socrates, will not be denied by you. And yet, notwithstanding all, he was so superior to my solicitations, so contemptuous and derisive and disdainful of my beauty—which really, as I fancied, had some attractions—hear, O judges; for judges you shall be of the haughty virtue of Socrates—nothing more happened, but in the morning when I awoke (let all the gods and goddesses be my witnesses) I arose as from the couch of a father or an elder brother.

What do you suppose must have been my feelings, after this rejection, at the thought of my own dishonour? And yet I could not help wondering at his natural temperance and self-restraint and manliness. I never imagined that I could have met with a man such as he is in wisdom and endurance. And therefore I could not be angry with him or renounce his company, any more than I could hope to win him. For I well knew that if Ajax could not be wounded by steel, much less he by money; and my only chance of captivating him by my personal attractions had failed. So I was at my wit’s end; no one was ever more hopelessly enslaved by another. All this happened before he and I went on the expedition to Potidaea; there we met together, and I had the opportunity of observing his extraordinary power of sustaining fatigue. His endurance was simply marvellous when, being cut off from our supplies, we were compelled to go without food—on such occasions, which often happen in time of war, he was superior not only to me but to everybody; there was no one to be compared to him. Yet at a festival he was the only person who had any real powers of enjoyment; though not willing to drink, he could if compelled beat us all at that,—wonderful to relate! no human being had ever seen Socrates drunk; and his powers, if I am not mistaken, will be tested before long. His fortitude in enduring cold was also surprising. There was a severe frost, for the winter in that region is really tremendous, and everybody else either remained indoors, or if they went out had on an amazing quantity of clothes, and were well shod, and had their feet swathed in felt and fleeces: in the midst of this, Socrates with his
I have told you one tale, and now I must tell you another, which is worth hearing,

‘Of the doings and sufferings of the enduring man’

while he was on the expedition. One morning he was thinking about something which he could not resolve; he would not give it up, but continued thinking from early dawn until noon—there he stood fixed in thought; and at noon attention was drawn to him, and the rumour ran through the wondering crowd that Socrates had been standing and thinking about something ever since the break of day. At last, in the evening after supper, some Ionians out of curiosity (I should explain that this was not in winter but in summer), brought out their mats and slept in the open air that they might watch him and see whether he would stand all night. There he stood until the following morning; and with the return of light he offered up a prayer to the sun, and went his way (compare supra). I will also tell, if you please—and indeed I am bound to tell—of his courage in battle; for who but he saved my life? Now this was the engagement in which I received the prize of valour: for I was wounded and he would not leave me, but he rescued me and my arms; and he ought to have received the prize of valour which the generals wanted to confer on me partly on account of my rank, and I told them so, (this, again, Socrates will not impeach or deny), but he was more eager than the generals that I and not he should have the prize. There was another occasion on which his behaviour was very remarkable—in the flight of the army after the battle of Delium, where he served among the heavy-armed,—I had a better opportunity of seeing him than at Potidaea, for I was myself on horseback, and therefore comparatively out of danger. He and Laches were retreating, for the troops were in flight, and I met them and told them not to be discouraged, and promised to remain with them; and there you might see him, Aristophanes, as you describe (Aristoph. Clouds), just as he is in the streets of Athens, stalking like a pelican, and rolling his eyes, calmly contemplating enemies as well as friends, and making very intelligible to anybody, even from a distance, that whoever attacked him would be likely to meet with a stout resistance; and in this way he and his companion escaped—for this is the sort of man who is never touched in war; those only are pursued who are running away headlong. I particularly observed how superior he was to Laches in presence of mind. Many are the marvels which I might narrate in praise of Socrates; most of his ways might perhaps be paralleled in another man, but his absolute unlikeness to any human being that is or ever has been is perfectly astonishing. You may imagine Brasidas and others to have been like Achilles; or you may imagine Nestor and Antenor to have been like Pericles; and the same may be said of other famous men, but of this strange being you will never be able to find any likeness, however remote, either among men who now are or who ever have been—other than that which I have already suggested of Silenus and the satyrs; and they represent in a figure not only himself, but his words. For, although I forgot to mention this to you before, his words are like the images of Silenus which open; they are ridiculous when you first hear them; he clothes himself in language that is like the skin of the wanton satyr—for his talk is of pack-asses and smiths and cobblers and curriers, and he is always repeating the same things in the same words (compare Gorg.), so that any ignorant or inexperienced person might feel disposed to laugh at him; but he who opens the bust and sees what is within will find that they are the only words which have a meaning in them, and also the most divine, abounding in fair images of virtue, and of the widest comprehension, or rather extending to the whole duty of a good and honourable man.

This, friends, is my praise of Socrates. I have added my blame of him for his ill-treatment of me; and he has ill-treated not only me, but Charmides the son of Glaucon, and Euthydemus the son of Diocles, and many others in the same way—beginning as their lover he has ended by making them pay their addresses to him. Wherefore I say to you, Agathon, ‘Be not deceived by him; learn from me and take warning, and do not be a fool and learn by experience, as the proverb says.’

When Alcibiades had finished, there was a laugh at his outspokenness; for he seemed to be still in love with Socrates. You are sober, Alcibiades, said Socrates, or you would never have gone so far about to hide the purpose of your satyr’s praises, for all this long story is only an ingenious circumlocution, of which the point comes in by the way at the end; you want to get up a quarrel between me and Agathon, and your notion is that I ought to love you and nobody else, and that you and you only ought to love Agathon. But the plot of this Satyr or Silenic drama has been detected, and you must not allow him, Agathon, to set us at variance.

I believe you are right, said Agathon, and I am disposed to think that his intention in placing himself between you and me was only to divide us; but he shall gain nothing by that move; for I will go and lie on the couch next to you.

Yes, yes, replied Socrates, by all means come here and lie on the couch below me.

Alas, said Alcibiades, how I am fooled by this man; he is determined to get the better of me at every turn. I do beseech you, allow Agathon to lie between us.
Certainly not, said Socrates, as you praised me, and I in turn ought to praise my neighbour on the right, he will be
out of order in praising me again when he ought rather to be praised by me, and I must entreat you to consent to
this, and not be jealous, for I have a great desire to praise the youth.

Hurrah! cried Agathon, I will rise instantly, that I may be praised by Socrates.

The usual way, said Alcibiades; where Socrates is, no one else has any chance with the fair; and now how readily
has he invented a specious reason for attracting Agathon to himself.

Agathon arose in order that he might take his place on the couch by Socrates, when suddenly a band of revellers
entered, and spoiled the order of the banquet. Some one who was going out having left the door open, they had
found their way in, and made themselves at home; great confusion ensued, and every one was compelled to drink
large quantities of wine. Aristodemus said that Eryximachus, Phaedrus, and others went away—he himself fell
asleep, and as the nights were long took a good rest: he was awakened towards daybreak by a crowing of cocks,
and when he awoke, the others were either asleep, or had gone away; there remained only Socrates, Aristophanes,
and Agathon, who were drinking out of a large goblet which they passed round, and Socrates was
discouraging to them. Aristodemus was only half awake, and he did not hear the beginning of the discourse; the
chief thing which he remembered was Socrates compelling the other two to acknowledge that the genius of
comedy was the same with that of tragedy, and that the true artist in tragedy was an artist in comedy also. To this
they were constrained to assent, being drowsy, and not quite following the argument. And first of all Aristophanes
dropped off, then, when the day was already dawning, Agathon. Socrates, having laid them to sleep, rose to
depart; Aristodemus, as his manner was, following him. At the Lyceum he took a bath, and passed the day as
usual. In the evening he retired to rest at his own home.

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Sun Tzu, The Art of War

THE MILITARY CLASSIC OF THE FAR EAST

TRANSLATED FROM THE CHINESE BY CAPTAIN E. F. CALTHROP, R.F.A.

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THE BOOK OF WAR INTRODUCTION
Written in the fifth century B.C., Sun Tzu still remains the most celebrated work on war in the literature of China. While the chariot has gone, and weapons have changed, these ancient masters have held their own, since they deal chiefly with the fundamental principles of war, with the influence of politics and human nature on military operations; and they show in a most striking way how unchanging these principles are.

When these books were written, China was a conglomerate of principalities in continual ferment. Personal ambition and intrigue, and not the wishes of the people, were the main factors in these wars. Patriotism, or a popular cause, could not, therefore, be relied on to maintain the moral of the levies. Instead of these, what may be called the force of despair is pointed out as the most powerful agent in giving cohesion and energy to an army. The general is urged to take a vigorous offensive; and to act at a distance from his base, where defeat means disaster, and where desertion is minimised owing to the distance from home. He should, in fact, burn his boats before an action, or, in Chinese phrase, act as one who removes the ladder from under those mounted upon the roof.

On the other hand, every care must be taken not to render the enemy desperate; and, as an instance of this, Sun observes that an opponent should on no account be completely surrounded. A loop-hole of escape weakens the resolution of the general and the energy of his troops.

It is interesting to notice that moral, or the spirit of the troops, is thus considered a determining factor in war. The Chinese are perhaps unusually affected by climatic conditions. As is well known, the umbrella was part of a soldier's equipment; and for the same reasons, the sunny side of high ground is recommended as most suitable for defence, tactical considerations permitting.

The large number of bannermen in the Chinese army was out of all proportion to the service of standards in providing rallying points. The chief use of banners was to maintain the spirit of the troops. A forest of banners, held erect, gave a feeling of liveliness and security to the ranks, in the same way as a military band, and when Sun remarks that the march of an army should be calm like the forest, he is using a simile that is not inappropriate.

Probably owing to the fact that the profession of arms has never been highly regarded in China, we find that the ruler of the state did not usually take the field, but employed a professional to command the army—one of the masters of war who wandered from state to state at that time with the secrets of victory to impart to the highest bidder. The question of political interference with the general in the field naturally arises under these conditions. The two sages point out, that to unite the nation under firm and just government is the business of the ruler and necessary to victory; but that the general is the best judge of the questions that arise on a distant field, and that all interference with him causes delay and disaster.

War meaning ravage, it was essential that the operations should be conducted in the enemy's territory. Once there, however, a vigorous offensive is no longer advised. "At first behave with the discretion of a maiden" is the counsel of Sun. The enemy must be induced to take the initiative, and when he is worn out by marching, or makes a false move, "then," says the master, "dart in like a rabbit."

Unlike the tactics of the Japanese, in whom the spirit of attack burns so strongly, those of Sun Tzu and Wutzu are essentially of the offensive-defensive order—manoeuvre before fighting, and non-committal until the enemy has shown his hand. The business of the general is to avoid encounter in battle until the enemy is no longer capable of offering a successful resistance.

The masters do not make, however, the mistake of advocating a passive defensive. Sun Tzu lays down that the division of the forces which this strategy involves, is to be everywhere weak, rendering the army liable to be taken in detail by the concentrated forces of the enemy. It is rather the defence which avoids battle by mobility and manoeuvre, induces the enemy by stratagem to divide his forces, or act in conformity with our wishes, and then falls upon him.

With regard to the tactics of the battlefield, the pitched battle, or, in other words, the frontal attack, is considered unworthy of the skilful general. The plan of attack should consist, broadly speaking, in the division of the army into two forces. The enemy is "attracted and engaged by one force, and defeated with the other;" and here we have the containing or secondary attack, and the main or reserve force which decides the battle of to-day—a most striking instance of the continuity of military principles.

Considerable space is devoted to the influence of ground on war. The passage of defiles and rivers is still conducted in the same way. The many large rivers of China naturally affected military operations; and, among
other axioms, it is laid down that the passage of a river should not be disputed, as the enemy will probably give up
the attempt, and make the passage untouched at some other point, but that he should be attacked when half his
force is across the stream. Again, an army should not encamp on a river below the enemy, as it is thereby liable to
be inundated, or to have its water poisoned; or the enemy may come down stream and make a sudden attack.

While both writers were professional soldiers, they show a fine disinterestedness by repeatedly pointing out that
even successful war brings evil in its train. Wu remarks that “few are those who have gained power on earth by
many victories,” and he is insistent that war should not be undertaken until a careful comparison of the two sides
shows that victory is certain; and he adds, “The army which conquers makes certain of victory and then attacks,
while the army that is defeated fights in the hope of success.”

Hence the importance they assign to intelligence of the enemy, and to the spy; and as the sages dealt with war
between members of the same race, the work of spies was greatly facilitated. The spy was treated with great
honour by his countrymen, and the fact that many of the national heroes of China were spies, shows that the part
that they played was not forgotten. They frequently toiled for years, and rose to high rank in the enemy’s service;
and thus, by wrong counsel and by spreading mistrust in his ranks, they became a two-edged sword in the hands
of the general. “Wonderful, indeed, is their power,” exclaims Sun; but he also reminds us that their management
is the most difficult and delicate duty of the general.

II

Sun and Wu are perhaps held in even greater reverence in Japan than in China, where war is looked upon as a
troublesome phase in national life, and victory in battle is not considered the greatest achievement of a state. Far
otherwise is it in Japan; and successive generations of her soldiers have been brought up on Sun and Wu. Like
other arts, mystery was formerly supposed to surround the art of war, a belief that was encouraged by the
strategist; and for a considerable time, the few copies of this book, that were brought over from China to Japan,
were jealously guarded by their possessors. Later, as they became known, an army of Japanese commentators
arose—for Chinese literature is thought compressed, to be unfolded in the mind of the reader.

To-day Sun and Wu have given way to the scientific works of European writers, but their sayings have become
proverbs, and their influence undoubtedly helped the Japanese to victory in the late war. Belief in the importance
of a knowledge of the enemy and his resources, of preparation and training, had grown out of a long study of these
ancient masters; and since it was the vital importance of a successful issue to the Japanese which, after all, fired
their resolution and carried them through, they proved the sage’s words that it is the energy, born of despair, that
wins the victory.

THE ARTICLES OF SUNTZU

I

PRELIMINARY RECKONING

The words of Sun the Master:—

To all nations War is a great matter. Upon the army death or life depend: it is the means of the existence or
destruction of the State.

Therefore it must be diligently studied.

Now, in war, besides stratagem and the situation, there are five indispensable matters. The first is called The
Way; the second, Heaven; the third, Earth; the fourth, the Leader; the fifth, Law.

The Way or the proper conduct of man. If the ruling authority be upright, the people are united: fearless of
danger, their lives are at the service of their Lord.

Heaven. Yin and Yang; heat and cold; time and season.

Earth. Distance; nature; extent; strategic position.

The Leader. Intelligence; truth; benevolence; courage and strictness.

Law. Partition and ordering of troops.

These things must be known by the leader: to know them is to conquer; to know them not is to be defeated.
Further, with regard to these and the following seven matters, the condition of the enemy must be compared with our own.

The seven matters are:

The virtue of the prince; the ability of the general; natural advantages; the discipline of the armies; the strength of the soldiers; training of the soldiers; justice both in reward and punishment.

Knowing these things, I can foretell the victor.

If a general under me fight according to my plans, he always conquers, and I continue to employ him; if he differ from my plans, he will be defeated and dismissed from my service.

Wherefore, with regard to the foregoing, considering that with us lies the advantage, and the generals agreeing, we create a situation which promises victory; but as the moment and method cannot be fixed beforehand, the plan must be modified according to circumstances.

War is a thing of pretence: therefore, when capable of action, we pretend disability; when near to the enemy, we pretend to be far; when far away, we pretend to be near.

Allure the enemy by giving him a small advantage. Confuse and capture him. If there be defects, give an appearance of perfection, and awe the enemy. Pretend to be strong, and so cause the enemy to avoid you. Make him angry, and confuse his plans. Pretend to be inferior, and cause him to despise you. If he have superabundance of strength, tire him out; if united, make divisions in his camp. Attack weak points, and appear in unexpected places.

These are the secrets of the successful strategist, therefore they must not be made known beforehand.

At the reckoning in the Sanctuary before fighting, victory is to the side that excels in the foregoing matters. They that have many of these will conquer; they that have few will not conquer; hopeless, indeed, are they that have none.

If the condition of both sides with regard to these matters be known, I can foretell the victor.

II
OPERATIONS OF WAR

Sun the Master said:

Now the requirements of war are such that we need a thousand light chariots with four horses each; a thousand leather-covered chariots, and one hundred thousand armoured men; and we must send supplies to distant fields. Wherefore the cost at home and in the field, the entertainment of guests, glue and lacquer for repairs, and necessities for the upkeep of wagons and armour are such that in one day a thousand pieces of gold are spent. With that amount a force of one hundred thousand men can be raised:—you have the instruments of victory.

But, even if victorious, let the operations long continue, and the soldiers’ ardour decreases, the weapons become worn, and, if a siege be undertaken, strength disappears.

Again, if the war last long, the country’s means do not suffice. Then, when the soldiers are worn out, weapons blunted, strength gone and funds spent, neighbouring princes arise and attack that weakened country. At such a time the wisest man cannot mend the matter.

For, while quick accomplishment has been known to give the victory to the unskilful, the skilful general has never gained advantage from lengthy operations.

In fact, there never has been a country which has benefited from a prolonged war.

He who does not know the evils of war will not reap advantage thereby. He who is skilful in war does not make a second levy, does not load his supply wagons thrice.

War material and arms we obtain from home, but food sufficient for the army’s needs can be taken from the enemy.

The cost of supplying the army in distant fields is the chief drain on the resources of a state: if the war be distant,
the citizens are impoverished.

In the neighbourhood of an army prices are high, and so the money of the soldiers and followers is used up. Likewise the state funds are exhausted, and frequent levies must be made; the strength of the army is dissipated, money is spent, the citizen’s home swept bare: in all, seven-tenths of his income is forfeited. Again, as regards State property, chariots are broken, horses worn out, armour and helmet, arrow and bow, spear, shield, pike and fighting tower, waggon and oxen used and gone, so that six-tenths of the Government’s income is spent.

Therefore the intelligent general strives to feed on the enemy; one bale of the enemy’s rice counts as twenty from our own wagons; one bundle of the enemy’s forage is better than twenty of our own.

Incitement must be given to vanquish the enemy.

They who take advantage of the enemy should be rewarded.

They who are the first to lay their hands on more than ten of the enemy’s chariots should be rewarded; the enemy’s standard on the chariots exchanged for our own; the captured chariots mixed with our own chariots and taken into use.

The accompanying warriors must be treated well, so that, while the enemy is beaten, our side increases in strength.

Now the object of war is victory; not lengthy operations, even skilfully conducted.

The good general is the lord of the people’s lives, the guardian of the country’s welfare.

III
THE ATTACK BY STRATAGEM

Sun the Master said:—

Now by the laws of war, better than defeating a country by fire and the sword, is to take it without strife.

Better to capture the enemy’s army intact than to overcome it after fierce resistance.

Better to capture the “Lu,” the “Tsu” or the “Wu” whole, than to destroy them in battle.

To fight and conquer one hundred times is not the perfection of attainment, for the supreme art is to subdue the enemy without fighting.

Wherefore the most skilful warrior outwits the enemy by superior stratagem; the next in merit prevents the enemy from uniting his forces; next to him is he who engages the enemy’s army; while to besiege his citadel is the worst expedient.

A siege should not be undertaken if it can possibly be avoided. For, before a siege can be commenced, three months are required for the construction of stages, battering-rams and siege engines; then a further three months are required in front of the citadel, in order to make the “Chuyin.”[4] Wherefore the general is angered, his patience exhausted, his men surge like ants against the ramparts before the time is ripe, and one-third of them are killed to no purpose. Such are the misfortunes that sieges entail.

Therefore the master of war causes the enemy’s forces to yield, but without fighting; he captures his fortress, but without besieging it; and without lengthy fighting takes the enemy’s kingdom. Without tarnishing his weapons he gains the complete advantage.

This is the assault by stratagem.

By the rules of war, if ten times as strong as the enemy, surround him; with five times his strength, attack; with double his numbers, divide. If equal in strength, exert to the utmost, and fight; if inferior in numbers, manoeuvre and await the opportunity; if altogether inferior, offer no chance of battle. A determined stand by inferior numbers does but lead to their capture.

The warrior is the country’s support. If his aid be entire, the country is of necessity strong; if it be at all deficient, then is the country weak.
Now a prince may embarrass his army in three ways, namely:—

Ignorant that the army in the field should not advance, to order it to go forward; or, ignorant that the army should not retreat, order it to retire.

This is to tie the army as with a string.

Ignorant of military affairs, to rule the armies in the same way as the state.

This is to perplex the soldiers.

Ignorant of the situation of the army, to settle its dispositions.

This is to fill the soldiers with distrust.

If the army be perplexed and distrustful, then dangers from neighbouring princes arise. The army is confounded, and offered up to the enemy.

There are five occasions when victory can be foretold:—

When the general knows the time to fight and when not to fight; or understands when to employ large or small numbers; when government and people are of one mind; when the state is prepared, and chooses the enemy’s unguarded moment for attack; when the general possesses ability, and is not interfered with by his prince.

These five things are the heralds of victory.

It has been said aforetime that he who knows both sides has nothing to fear in a hundred fights; he who is ignorant of the enemy, and fixes his eyes only on his own side, conquers, and the next time is defeated; he who not only is ignorant of the enemy, but also of his own resources, is invariably defeated.

IV
THE ORDER OF BATTLE

Sun the Master said:—

The ancient masters of war first made their armies invincible, then waited until the adversary could with certainty be defeated.

The causes of defeat come from within; victory is born in the enemy’s camp.

Skilful soldiers make defeat impossible, and further render the enemy incapable of victory.

But, as it is written, the conditions necessary for victory may be present, but they cannot always be obtained.

If victory be unattainable, we stand on the defensive; if victory be sure, we attack.

Deficiency compels defence; super-abundance permits attack.

The skilful in defence crouch, hidden in the deepest shades; the skilful in attack push to the topmost heaven.

If these precepts be observed, victory is certain.

A victory, even if popularly proclaimed as such by the common folk, may not be a true success. To win in fight, and for the kingdom to say, “Well done,” does not mark the summit of attainment. To lift an autumn fleece is no proof of strength; the eyes that only see the sun and moon are not the eagle’s; to hear the thunder is no great thing.

As has been said aforetime, the able warrior gains the victory without desperate and bloody engagements, and wins thereby no reputation for wisdom or brave deeds. To fight is to win, for he attacks only when the enemy has sown the seeds of defeat.

Moreover, the skilful soldier in a secure position does not let pass the moment when the enemy should be attacked.

The army that conquers makes certain of victory, and then seeks battle.
The army destined to defeat, fights, trusting that chance may bring success to its arms.

The skilful leader is steadfast in the “Way”; upholds the Law, and thereby controls the issue.

Touching the laws of war, it is said: first, the rule; second, the measure; third, the tables; fourth, the scales; fifth, the foretelling of victory.

For the rule is the survey of land; the measure tells the amount of that land’s produce; the tables its population; from the scales their weight or quality is made known; and then can we calculate victory or defeat.

The army that conquers as against the army destined to defeat, is as a beam against a feather in the scales. The attack of conquering forces is as the outburst of long-pent-up waters into sunken valleys.

Such are the orders of battle.

V
THE SPIRIT OF THE TROOPS

Sun the Master said:—

The control of large numbers is possible, and like unto that of small numbers, if we subdivide them.

By means of drum, bell and flag, the direction of large forces in battle is possible, and like unto the direction of small forces.

By the skilful interchange of normal and abnormal manœuvres are the armies certainly preserved from defeat.

The enemy is crushed, like the fall of a grindstone upon an egg, by knowledge of his strength and weakness, and by the employment of truth and artifice.

Moreover, in battle the enemy is engaged with the normal and defeated by the abnormal force.

The abnormal force, skilfully handled, is like the heaven and earth, eternal; as the tides and the flow of rivers, unceasing; like the sun and moon, for ever interchanging; coming and passing, as the seasons.

There are five notes; but by combinations, innumerable harmonies are produced. There are but five colours; but if we mix them, the shades are infinite. There are five tastes, but if we mix them there are more flavours than the palate can distinguish.

In war there are but two forces, the normal and the abnormal; but they are capable of infinite variation. Their mutual interchange is like a wheel, having neither beginning or end. They are a mystery that none can penetrate.

As the rush of rock-shouldering torrents, so is the spirit of the troops.

Like the well-judged flight of the falcon, in a flash crushing its quarry, so should the stroke be timed.

Wherefore the spirit of the good fighter is terrifying, his occasions sudden; like the stretched cross-bow, whose string is released at the touch of the trigger.

In the maze and tumult of the battle, there is no confusion; in the thick of action the battle array is impenetrable.

If discipline be perfect, disorder can be simulated; if truly bold, we can feign fear; if really strong, we can feign weakness.

We simulate disorder by subdivision; fear, by spirit; weakness, by battle formation.

We set the enemy in motion by adopting different formations to which he must conform.

If we offer the enemy a point of advantage, he will certainly take it: we give him an advantage, set him in motion and then fall upon him.

Wherefore the good fighter seeks victory from spirit, and does not depend entirely upon the skill of his men. He is careful in his choice, and leaves the rest to battle force; yet, when an opening or advantage shows, he pushes it to its limits.
As a log or rock which, motionless on flat ground, yet moves with ever-increasing force when set on an incline, so await the opportunity, and so act when the opportunity arrives.

If the general be skilful, the spirit of his troops is as the impetus of a round stone rolled from the top of a high mountain.

VI
EMPTINESS AND STRENGTH

Sun the Master said:—

To be the first in the field, and there to await the enemy, is to husband strength.
To be late, and hurrying to advance to meet the foe, is exhausting.

The good fighter contrives to make the enemy approach; he does not allow himself to be beguiled by the enemy.

By offering an apparent advantage, he induces the enemy to take up a position that will cause his defeat; he plants obstructions to dissuade him from acting in such a way as to threaten his own dispositions.

If the enemy be at rest in comfortable quarters, harass him; if he be living in plenty, cut off his supplies; if sitting composedly awaiting attack, cause him to move.

This may be done by appearing where the enemy is not, and assaulting unexpected points.

If we go where the enemy is not, we may go a thousand leagues without exhaustion.

If we attack those positions which the enemy has not defended, we invariably take them: but on the defence we must be strong, even where we are not likely to be attacked.

Against those skilful in attack, the enemy does not know where to defend: against those skilful in defence, the enemy does not know where to attack.

Now the secrets of the art of offence are not to be easily apprehended, as a certain shape or noise can be understood, of the senses; but when these secrets are once learnt, the enemy is mastered.

We attack, and the enemy cannot resist, because we attack his insufficiency; we retire, and the enemy cannot pursue, because we retire too quickly.

Again, when we are anxious to fight, but the enemy is serenely secure behind high walls and deep moats; we attack some such other place that he must certainly come out to relieve.

When we do not want to fight, we occupy an unfortified line; and prevent the enemy from attacking by keeping him in suspense.

By making feints, and causing the enemy to be uncertain as to our movements, we unite, whilst he must divide.

We become one body; the enemy being separated into ten parts. We attack the divided ten with the united one. We are many, the enemy is few, and in superiority of numbers there is economy of strength.

The place selected for attack must be kept secret. If the enemy know not where he will be attacked, he must prepare in every quarter, and so be everywhere weak.

If the enemy strengthen his front, he must weaken his rear; if he strengthen his right, his left is weakened; and if he strengthen his left, his right is weakened.

Everywhere to make preparations, is to be everywhere weak. The enemy is weakened by his extended preparations, and we gain in strength.

Having decided on the place and day of attack, though the enemy be a hundred leagues away, we can defeat him.

If the ground and occasion be not known, the front cannot help the rear; the left cannot support the right, nor the right the left, nor the rear the front. For on occasion, the parts of the army are two score leagues apart, while a distance of four or five leagues is comparatively close.
The soldiers of Wu are less than the soldiers of Yueh; but as superiority in numbers does not of necessity bring victory, I say, then, that we may obtain the victory.

If the enemy be many in number, prevent him from taking advantage of his superiority, and ascertain his plan of operations. Provoke the enemy and discover the state of his troops; feint and discover the strength of his position. Flap the wings, and unmask his sufficiency or insufficiency. By constant feints and excursions, we may produce on the enemy an impression of intangibility, which neither spies nor art can dispel.

The general makes his plans in accordance with the dispositions of the enemy, and puts his hosts in motion; but the multitude cannot appreciate the general’s intention; they see the signs of victory, but they cannot discover the means.

If a victory be gained by a certain stratagem, do not repeat it. Vary the stratagem according to circumstances.

An army may be likened to water.

Water leaves dry the high places, and seeks the hollows. An army turns from strength and attacks emptiness.

The flow of water is regulated by the shape of the ground; victory is gained by acting in accordance with the state of the enemy.

The shape of water is indeterminate; likewise the spirit of war is not fixed.

The leader who changes his tactics in accordance with his adversary, and thereby controls the issue, may be called the God of war.

Among the five elements there is no settled precedence; the four seasons come and go; the days are long and short; and the moon waxes and wanes. So in war there is no fixity.

VII
BATTLE TACTICS

Sun the Master said:—

For the most part, military procedure is as follows:—

The general receives orders from his lord; assembles and settles harmony among the forces, and takes the field.

There is nothing more difficult than Battle Tactics. Their difficulty lies in the calculation of time and distance, and the reversal of misfortune.

To make the enemy take a circuitous route by a show of gain, and then, whilst starting after him, to arrive before him, is to be a master of the art of manœuvre.

The operations of an army may reap advantage; the wrangles of a multitude are fraught with peril.

Employing our whole force at one time in order to gain advantage over the enemy, we may not have time enough to gain our object. If we push on with a portion of the force only, the transport is lost. Discarding helmet and armour; stopping neither day nor night; marching double distance; doing double work; and finally contending with the enemy at a distance of a hundred leagues: results in the loss of the general. Since the strong men arrive first, and the tired drop in rear, only one-tenth of the forces is available.

A forced march of fifty leagues to secure an advantage may result in failure to the leader of the vanguard, for only half his men will arrive.

After a forced march of thirty leagues to secure an advantage, only two-thirds of the army will be available.

Further, a lack of ammunition, of supplies, or of stores, may lead to disaster.

The ruler who is ignorant of the designs of neighbouring princes, cannot treat with them.

He who is ignorant of mountain and forest, defile and marsh, cannot lead an army.

He who does not employ a guide, cannot gain advantage from the ground.
Disguise your movements; await a favourable opportunity; divide or unite according to circumstance.

Let your attack be swift as the wind; your march calm like the forest; your occupation devastating as fire. In defence, as a mountain rest firm; like darkness impenetrable to the enemy. Let your movements be swift as the lightning.

Let as many as possible take part in the plunder; distribute the profit from the captured territory.

So he who understands the crooked and the straight way conquers.

These are the methods of Battle Tactics.

According to the ancient books on war, the drum and bell are used, because the voice does not carry; the flag is used to assist the sight. The use of bell, drum, banner and flag is to attract the united attention of eye and ear.

When all are united, the strong are not left to go forward alone, the cowardly are not free to retreat unrestricted. In this way can a multitude be used.

Therefore in night fighting, beacons and drums are largely used; in day fighting, a great number of banners and flags and the enemy’s eyes and ears are confounded.

We thus awe his army, and defeat his general’s ambition.

In the morning the spirits are keen; at midday there is a laziness; in the evening a desire to return. Wherefore, he who uses his soldiers well, avoids the time when the spirits are keen; but attacks the enemy when he is languid or seeking his camp.

Thus should the nature of energy be turned to account.

To oppose confusion with order, clamour with quiet, is to have the heart under control.

To await an enemy from a distance, to oppose hunger with satiety, rest with fatigue, is the way to husband strength.

Do not attack where lines of banners wave, nor the serried ranks of battle spread, but patiently await your time.

Do not attack an enemy on high ground, nor one who has high ground at his back. Do not pursue an enemy who is imitating flight; do not attack a spirited enemy.

If the enemy offer an allurement, do not take it.

Do not interfere with an enemy who has struck camp, and is about to retire. When surrounding an enemy, allow him an outlet. Do not press a desperate enemy.

These are the methods of employing troops.

VIII
THE NINE CHANGES

Sun the Master said:—

In general, the procedure of war is:—the Leader, having received orders from his lord, assembles the armies.

Do not camp on marshy or low-lying ground; enter into friendly relations with neighbouring states; do not linger in a far country; use stratagem in mountainous and wooded country; on death ground, fight.

There are always roads that must be avoided; forces that must not be attacked; castles that must not be besieged; ground that must not be chosen for encounter; orders from the lord that must not be obeyed.

The general who knows the Nine Changes understands the use of troops; on the contrary, he who does not understand them, can make no use of his topographical knowledge.

In the management of armies, if the art of the Nine Changes be understood, a knowledge of the Five Advantages is of no avail.
The wise man considers well both advantage and disadvantage. He sees a way out of adversity, and on the day of victory to danger is not blind.

In reducing an enemy to submission, inflict all possible damage upon him; make him undertake useless adventures; also make neighbouring rulers move as you would desire them by tempting them with gain.

Wherefore in the conduct of war do not depend on the enemy’s not coming, but rely on your own preparations; do not count on the enemy not attacking your fortress, but leave nothing undefended.

Generals must be on their guard against these five dangerous faults:—
Blind impetuosity, which leads to death.
Over-cautiousness, which leads to capture.
Quick temper, which brings insult.
A too rigid propriety, which invites disgrace.
Over-regard for the troops, which causes inconvenience.

These five faults in the leader are disastrous in war. The overthrow of the army and the slaughter of the general arise from them. Therefore they must be carefully considered.

IX
MOVEMENT OF TROOPS

Sun the Master said:—

Touching the disposal of troops and observation of the enemy in relation to mountain warfare:—
Cross mountains and camp in valleys, selecting positions of safety.
Place the army on high ground, and avoid an enemy in high places.
In relation to water:—
After crossing waters, pass on immediately to a distance. When the enemy is crossing a stream, do not meet and engage him in the waters, but strike when half his force has passed over. Do not advance on an enemy near water, but place the army on high ground, and in safety.
Do not fight when the enemy is between the army and the source of the river.
With regard to marshes:—
Cross salty marshes quickly; do not linger near them.
If by chance compelled to fight in the neighbourhood of a marsh, seek a place where there is water and grass, and trees in plenty in the rear.
In open country place the army in a convenient place with rising ground in the right rear; so that while in front lies death, behind there is safety.
Such is war in flat country.
Huangti, by observing these things, gained the victory over four Princes.
As a rule, the soldiers prefer high ground to low. They prefer sunny places to those the sun does not reach.
If the health of the troops be considered, and they are encamped on high and sunny ground, diseases will be avoided, and victory made certain.
If there be rising ground, encamp on its sunny side and in front of it; for thereby the soldiers are benefited, and the ground used to our advantage.
If, owing to rains in the upper reaches, the river become turbulent, do not cross until the waters have quieted.

Steep and impassable valleys; well-like places; confined places; tangled impenetrable ground; swamps and bogs; narrow passages with pitfalls:—quickly pass from these, and approach them not. Cause the enemy to approach near to them, but keep yourself from these places; face them, so that the enemy has them in his rear.

If there be near to the army, precipices, ponds, meres, reeds and rushes, or thick forests and trees, search them thoroughly. These are places where the enemy is likely to be in ambush.

When the enemy is close, but quiet, he is strong in reliance on natural defences.

If the enemy challenge to fight from afar, he wishes you to advance.

If the enemy be encamped in open country, it is with some special object in view.

Movement among the trees shows that the enemy is advancing. Broken branches and trodden grass, as of the passing of a large host, must be regarded with suspicion.

The rising of birds shows an ambush.

Startled beasts show that the enemy is stealthily approaching from several sides.

High, straight spurts of dust betoken that chariots are coming.

Long, low masses of dust show the coming of infantry.

Here and there, thin and high columns of dust are signs that firewood and fodder are being collected.

Small clouds of dust moving to and fro are signs that the enemy is preparing to encamp for a short time.

Busy preparations and smooth words show that the enemy is about to advance to attack.

Big words, and the spurring forward of horsemen, are signs that the enemy is about to retire.

An advance of the light chariots to the flanks of the camp is a sign that the enemy is coming forth to fight.

Without consultation, suddenly to desire an armistice, is a mark of ulterior design.

The passing to and fro of messengers, and the forming up of troops, show that the enemy has some movement on foot.

An advance, followed by sudden retirement, is a lure to attack.

When the enemy use their weapons to rest upon, they are hungry.

If the drawers of water drink at the river, the enemy is suffering from thirst.

Disregard of booty that lies ready at hand is a sign of exhaustion.

The clustering of birds round a position shows that it is unoccupied.

Voices calling in the night betoken alarm.

Disorder in the army is a sign that the general is disregarded.

A changing about of flags and banners is a sign that the army is unsettled.

If the officers be angry, it is because the soldiers are tired, and slow to obey.

The killing of horses for food shows that the enemy is short of provisions.

When the cooking-pots are hung up on the wall and the soldiers turn not in again, the enemy is at an end of his resources.

Exceeding graciousness and familiarity on the part of the general show that he has lost the confidence of the
soldiers.

Frequent rewards show that discipline is at an end.

Frequent punishments are a sign that the general is in difficulties.

The general who first blusters, and then is obsequious, is without perception.

He who offers apologies and hostages is anxious for a truce.

When both sides, eager for a fight, face each other for a considerable time, neither advancing nor retiring, the occasion requires the utmost vigilance and circumspection.

Numbers are no certain mark of strength.

Even if incapable of a headlong assault, if the forces be united, and the enemy’s condition ascertained, victory is possible.

He who without taking thought makes light of the enemy is certain to be captured.

If a general who is strange to the troops punish them, they cease to obey him. If they are not obedient, they cannot be usefully employed.

If the troops know the general, but are not affected by his punishments, they are useless.

By humane treatment we obtain obedience; authority brings uniformity. Thus we obtain victory.

If the people have been trained in obedience from the beginning, they respect their leader’s commands.

If the people be not early trained to obedience, they do not respect their leader’s commands.

Orders are always obeyed, if general and soldiers are in sympathy.

X

GROUND

Sun the Master said:—

With regard to the different natures of ground there are:—

Open ground; broken ground; suspended ground; defiles; precipices; far countries.

Open ground is that where either side has liberty of movement: be quick to occupy any high ground in the neighbourhood and consider well the line of supplies.

Broken ground. Advance is easy, but retreat from it is difficult. Here, if the enemy be not prepared, we may win: but should he be prepared, and defeat us, and retreat be impossible, then there is disaster.

Suspended ground. The side that takes the initiative is under a disadvantage. Here, if the enemy offer some allurement, we should not advance: but rather, by feigning retreat, wait until he has put forth half his force. Then we may attack him with advantage.

Defiles, make haste to occupy; garrison strongly and await the enemy. Should the enemy be before you, and in strength, do not engage him; but if there be unoccupied points, attack him.

In precipitous ground quickly occupy a position on a sunny height, and await the enemy. If the enemy be before you, withdraw and do not attack him.

If distant from the enemy, and the forces[Pg 55] be equal, to take the initiative is disadvantageous.

Now, these are the six kinds of ground. It is the duty of generals to study them.

Again, there are six calamities among the troops, arising, not from defect of ground, or lack of opportunity, but from the general’s incapacity.
These are: repulse, relaxation, distress, disorganisation, confusion and rout.

If troops be sent to attack an enemy of equal quality, but ten times their number, they retire discomfited.

Strong soldiers with weak officers cause relaxation.

Able officers with feeble soldiers cause distress.

Enraged senior officers, who fall upon the enemy without orders, and obey not the general because he does not recognise their abilities, produce disorganisation.

Weak and amiable generals, whose directions and leadership are vague, whose officers’ and men’s duties are not fixed, and whose dispositions are contradictory, produce confusion.

Generals, who are unable to estimate the enemy, who oppose small numbers to large, weakness to strength, and who do not put picked men in the van of the army, cause it to be routed.

These six things lead to defeat. It is the duty of the general to study them carefully.

Ground is the handmaid of victory.

Ability to estimate the enemy, and plan the victory; an eye for steepness, command and distances: these are the qualities of the good general.

Whosoever knows these things, conquers; he who understands them not, is defeated.

If victory be certain from the military standpoint, fight, even if the lord forbid.

If defeat be certain from the military standpoint, do not fight, even though the lord commands it.

The general who advances, from no thought of his own glory, or retires, regardless of punishment; but only strives for the people’s welfare, and his lord’s advantage, is a treasure to the state.

The good general cares for his soldiers,[Pg 57] and lovingly treats them as his children; as a consequence they follow him through deep valleys, and are beside him in death.

Nevertheless, over-care for the soldiers may cause disobedience; over-attention may make them unserviceable; over-indulgence may produce disorder: they become like spoilt children, and cannot be used.

He who is confident of his own men, but is ignorant that the enemy should not be attacked, has no certainty of victory.

He who knows that the enemy may be attacked with advantage, but knows not his own men, has no certainty of victory.

Confidence in the troops, right judgment when to attack the enemy, but ignorance of the ground, bring uncertain victory.

The wise soldier, once in motion, does not waver, and is never at a loss.

As has been said: “Know thyself; know the enemy; fear not for victory.”

Also, if the season and the opportunity be realised, and the ground known, complete victory is certain.

XI
THE NINE GROUNDS

Sun the Master said:—

In respect to the conduct of war there are:—

Distracting ground; disturbing ground; ground of contention; intersecting ground; path-ridden ground; deeply-involved ground; difficult ground; enclosed ground; death ground.

At all times, when the prince fights in his own territory, it is called distracting[13] ground.
That ground a short way inside the enemy’s border is called disturbing ground.

Ground giving advantage to whichever side is in possession, is called ground of contention.

Ground to which either side has access, is called intersecting ground.

Ground between three provinces first possession of which enables the peoples of the earth to be controlled, is called path-ridden ground.

The interior of the enemy’s country with many of his fortified towns in rear, is called deeply-involved ground.

Mountain and forest, precipices, ravines, marsh and swamp, all places where passage is hard, are called difficult ground.

A narrow entrance and winding outlet, where a small number can oppose a large force, is called enclosed ground.

That ground where delay means disaster, is called death ground.

Wherefore, do not fight on distracting ground; do not linger on disturbing ground.

If the enemy be in possession of disputed ground, do not attack.

In intersecting ground, do not interrupt the highways.

At the crossing of highways, cultivate intercourse.

When deeply involved, levy and store up the enemy’s property.

Quickly depart from difficult ground.

On enclosed ground, use stratagem.

On death ground, fight.

The skilful fighters of old were at pains to disconnect the enemy’s front and rear; they cut asunder small and large forces of the enemy; prevented mutual help between his officers and men; spread mistrust between high and low.

They scattered the enemy, and prevented him from concentrating; if his soldiers were assembled, they were without unity.

If there be a chance of victory, move; if there be no chance of success, stand fast.

If I were asked how a powerful and united force of the enemy should be met, I would say: lay hands on what the enemy cherishes and he will conform to our desires.

In war, above all, speed sustains the spirit of the troops. Strike before the enemy is ready; and attack his unpreparedness from an unexpected quarter.

With regard to war in foreign lands. When strangers in a far country the soldiers are united and are proof against defeat. Plunder fertile plains so that the army is fed; be careful of the health of the soldiers; do not tire them uselessly; unite their minds; store up strength; plan well and secretly. If there be no refuge the soldiers will not fly from death.

If there be no alternative but death, the soldiers exert themselves to the utmost.

In desperate places, soldiers lose the sense of fear.

If there be no place of refuge, there will be no wavering.

If deeply involved in the enemy’s country, there is unity.

If it be unavoidable, the soldiers will fight their hardest. Even without warnings they are vigilant; they comply without insistence; without stipulations they are tractable; without explicit instructions they will trust the general and obey him.

Prohibit the discussion of signs and omens, and remove the soldiers’ doubts; then to the moment of death they will
be undistracted.

Riches are denied the soldiers, not because money is a bad thing; old age is forbidden[Page 62] them, but not because long life is evil. Hardships and danger are the proper lot of the soldier.

When the order for attack is given, the collars of those who are sitting may be wet with tears; tears may roll down the cheeks of those reclining; yet these men, in a desperate place, will fight with the courage of Chu and Kuei.

Soldiers should be used like the snakes on Mt. Chang; which, if you hit on the head, the tail will strike you; if you hit the tail, the head will strike you; if you strike its middle, head and tail will strike you together.

Should any one ask me whether men can be made to move like these snakes, I say, yes. The men of Wu and Yueh hate each other; yet, if they cross a river in the same boat and a storm overtake them, they help each other like the two hands.

The horses may be tied, and the chariot wheels sunk in the mud; but that does not prevent flight.

Universal courage and unity depend on good management.

The best results from both the weak and strong are obtained by a proper use of the ground.

The skilful warrior can lead his army, as a man leads another by the hand, because he places it in a desperate position.

The general should be calm, inscrutable, just and prudent. He should keep his officers and men in ignorance of his plans, and inform no one of any changes or fresh departures. By changing his camps, and taking devious and unexpected routes, his plans cannot be guessed.

As one taking away the ladder from under those mounted upon the roof, so acts the general when his men are assembled to fight. He penetrates into the heart of the enemy’s country and then divulges his plans. He drives the army hither and thither like a flock of sheep, knowing not whither they go.

Therefore the general should assemble the armies, and place them in a desperate position.

The different natures of the Nine Grounds; the suiting of the means to the occasion; the hearts of men: these are things that must be studied.

When deep in the interior of a hostile country, there is cohesion; if only on the borders, there is distraction. To leave home and cross the borders is to be free from interference.

On distracting ground, unite the soldiers’ minds.

On disturbing ground, keep together.

On disputed ground, try to take the enemy in rear.

On intersecting ground, look well to the defences.

On path-ridden ground, cultivate intercourse.

On deeply-involved ground be careful of supplies.

On difficult ground, do not linger.

On enclosed ground, close the path of escape.

On death ground, show the soldiers that there is no chance of survival.

It is the nature of soldiers to defend when surrounded, to fight with energy when compelled thereto, to pursue the enemy if he retreat.

He cannot treat with other rulers who knows not their ambitions.

He who knows not mountain and forest; cliffs; ravines; lakes and marshes; cannot conduct an army.
He who does not use guides, cannot take advantage of the ground.

He who has not a complete knowledge of the Nine Grounds, cannot gain military dominion.

The great general, when attacking a powerful nation, prevents the enemy from concentrating his hosts.

He overawes the enemy so that other states cannot join against him.

He does not struggle for the favour of other states; nor is he careful of their rights. He has confidence in himself, and awes the enemy.

Therefore he easily takes the fortress, or reduces the country to subjection.

In the bestowal of rewards, or in his orders, he is not bound by ancient rule.

He manages his forces as though they were one man.

Orders should direct the soldiers; but while what is advantageous should be made known, what is disadvantageous should be concealed.

If the forces be plunged into danger, there is survival; from death ground there is retrieval; for the force in danger gains the victory.

Discover the enemy’s intentions by conforming to his movements. When these are discovered, then, with one stroke, the general may be killed, even though he be one hundred leagues distant.

When war is declared, close the barriers; destroy passports; prevent the passage of the enemy’s spies; conduct the business of the government with vigilance.

Take immediate advantage of the enemy’s weakness; discover what he most values, and plan to seize it.

Shape your plans according to rule, and the circumstances of the enemy.

At first behave with the discretion of a maiden; then, when the enemy gives an opening, dart in like a rabbit.

The enemy cannot defend himself.

XII
ASSAULT BY FIRE

Sun the Master said:—

There are five ways of attack by fire:

The first is called barrack burning; the second, commissariat burning; the third, equipment burning; the fourth, store burning; the fifth, the company burning.

The moment for the fire assault must be suitable. Further, appliances must always be kept at hand.

There is a time and day proper for the setting and carrying out of the fire assault; namely: such time as the weather is dry; and a day when the moon is in the quarters of the stars Chi, Pi, I, Chen: for these are days of wind.

Regard well the developments that will certainly arise from the fire, and act upon them. When fire breaks out inside the enemy’s camp, thrust upon him with all speed from without; but if his soldiers be quiet, wait, and do not attack.

When the fire is at its height, attack or not, as opportunity may arise.

If the opportunity be favourable, set fire to the enemy’s camp, and do not wait for it to break out from within.

When fire breaks out on the windward side, do not attack from the leeward.

Wind that rises in the day lasts long. Wind that rises in the night time quickly passes away.
The peculiarities of the five burnings must be known, and the calendar studied, and, if the attack is to be assisted, the fire must be unquenchable.

If water is to assist the attack, the flood must be overwhelming.

Water may isolate or divide the enemy; fire may consume his camp; but unless victory or possession be obtained, the enemy quickly recovers, and misfortunes arise. The war drags on, and money is spent.

Let the enlightened lord consider well; and the good general keep the main object in view. If no advantage is to be gained thereby, do not move; without prospect of victory, do not use the soldiers; do not fight unless the state be in danger.

War should not be undertaken because the lord is in a moment of passion. The general must not fight because there is anger in his heart.

Do not make war unless victory may be gained thereby; if there be prospect of victory, move; if there be no prospect, do not move.

For passion may change to gladness, anger passes away; but a country, once overturned, cannot be restored; the dead cannot be brought to life.

Wherefore it is written, the enlightened lord is circumspect, and the good general takes heed; then is the state secure, and the army victorious in battle.

XIII
THE EMPLOYMENT OF SPIES

Sun the Master said:—

Calling 100,000 men to arms, and transporting them a hundred leagues, is such an undertaking that in one day 1,000 taels of the citizens’ and nobles’ money are spent; commotions arise within and without the state; carriers fall down exhausted on the line of march of the army; and the occupations of 700,000 homes are upset.

Again, for years the armies may face each other; yet the issue may depend on a single day’s victory.

Wherefore, by grudging slight expense in titles and salaries to spies, to remain in ignorance of the enemy’s circumstances, is to be without humanity. Such a person is no general; he is no assistance to his lord; he is no master of victory.

The enlightened ruler and the wise general who act, win, and are distinguished beyond the common, are informed beforehand.

This knowledge is not to be got by calling on gods and demons; nor does it come of past experience nor calculation. It is through men that knowledge of the enemy is gained.

Now the five kinds of spies are these: village spies, inner spies, converted spies, death spies, living spies.

If these five means be employed simultaneously, none can discover their working. This is called the Mysterious Thread: it is the Lord’s Treasure.

Village spies are such people of the country as give information.

Inner spies are those of the enemy’s officials employed by us.

Converted spies are those of the enemy’s spies in our pay.

Death spies are sent to misinform the enemy, and to spread false reports through our spies already in the enemy’s lines.

Living spies return to report.

In connection with the armies, spies should be treated with the greatest kindness; and in dealing out reward, they should receive the most generous treatment. All matters relating to spies are secret.
Without infinite capacity in the general, the employment of spies is impossible. Their treatment requires benevolence and uprightness. Except they be observed with the closest attention, the truth will not be obtained from them.

Wonderful indeed is the power of spies.

There is no occasion when they cannot be used.

If a secret matter be spoken of before the time is ripe, the spy who told the matter, and the man who repeated the same, should be put to death.

If desirous of attacking an army; of besieging a fortress; or of killing a certain person; first of all, learn the names of the general in charge; of his right-hand[17] men; of those who introduce visitors to the Presence; of the gate keeper and the sentries. Then set the spies to watch them.

Seek out the enemy’s spies who come to spy on us; give them money; cause them to be lodged and cared for; and convert them to the service. Through them we are enabled to obtain spies among the enemy’s villagers and officials.

By means of the converted spy, we can construct a false story for the death spy to carry to the enemy.

It is through the converted spy that we are able to use the five varieties, to their utmost advantage; therefore he must be liberally treated.

In ancient times the rise to power of the province of Yin was due to Ichih, who was sent to the country of Hsia. Likewise during the foundation of the state of Chu, Luya lived among the people of Shang.

Wherefore, intelligent rulers and wise generals use the cleverest men as spies, and invariably acquire great merit. The spy is a necessity to the army. Upon him the movement of the army depends.
 Izumi Shikubu, et al.  
Diaries of Court Ladies of Old Japan

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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COURT LADY’S FULL DRESS IN THE HEIAN PERIOD — (For explanation see List of Illustrations)

TRANSLATORS’ NOTE

The poems in the text, slight and occasional as they are, depending often for their charm on plays upon words of two meanings, or on the suggestions conveyed to the Japanese mind by a single word, have presented problems of great difficulty to the translators, not perfectly overcome.

Izumi Shikibu’s Diary is written with extreme delicacy of treatment. English words and thought seem too downright a medium into which to render these evanescent, half-expressed sentences and poems—vague as the misty mountain scenery of her country, with no pronouns at all, and without verb inflections. The shy reserve of the lady’s written record has induced the use of the third person as the best means of suggesting it.

Of the “Sarashina Diary” there exist a few manuscript copies, and three or four publications of the text. Some of them are confused and unreadably incoherent. The present translation was done by comparing all the texts accessible, and is especially founded on the connected text by Mr. Sakine, professor of the Girls’ Higher Normal School, Tokio, published by Meiji Shoin, Itchome Nishiki-cho, Kanda-ku, Tokio. As far as possible the exact meaning has been adhered to, and the words chosen to express it have been kept absolutely simple, without complexity of thought, for such is the vocabulary in which it was written. Sometimes the diarist uses the present tense, sometimes the text seems reminiscent. The words in square brackets have been inserted by the translators.
to complete the sense in English of sentences which literally rendered do not carry with them the suggestion of
the Japanese text.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

COURT LADY’S FULL DRESS IN THE HEIAN PERIOD Colored Frontispiece

From Kokushi Daijiten, by kind permission of Mr. H. Yoshikawa. The figure was drawn for the
purpose of showing the details of dress and therefore gives no indication of the grace and elegance of
the costume as worn. It shows the red karaginu, or over-garment; the dark-green robe trimmed with
folds, called the uchigi; the saishi, or head-ornament, in this case of gold but sometimes of silver; the
unlined under-garment of thin silk; the red hakama, or divided skirt; and the train of white silk
painted or stained in colors.

“IT WAS ALL IN FLOWER AND YET NO TIDINGS FROM HER”
KICHŌ: FRONT AND BACK VIEWS
A NOBLEMAN’S HOUSE AND GROUNDS IN THE AZUMAYA STYLE:
PLAN OF BUILDINGS AND GARDEN
THREE KICHŌ PUT TOGETHER
OLD PRINT OF A NOBLEMAN’S DWELLING IN THE AZUMAYA STYLE
From an old book.
COURT DRESS OF MILITARY OFFICIAL (in color)

From Kokushi Daijiten, by kind permission of Mr. H. Yoshikawa. The figure shows the zui, or
ornament of the head-strap holding the head-dress in place; also the method of rolling up the gauze
flap of the head-dress. Tucked into the red state coat appear a half-spread fan and some folded
sheets of paper, and at the back is seen a quiver made of lacquered wood. Underneath the red coat
the hakama is shown. The shoes are of Chinese pattern.

ROYAL DAIS AND KICHŌ, SUDARÉ, ETC.
From old prints.
A NOBLEMAN’S CARRIAGE
SCREENED DAIS PREPARED FOR ROYALTY
From a print in an old book.
“HIS HIGHNESS CAME IN A HUMBLE PALANQUIN”
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“IN THE DAYTIME COURTIERS CAME TO SEE HIM”

INTRODUCTION

BY AMY LOWELL

The Japanese have a convenient method of calling their historical periods by the names of the places which were
the seats of government while they lasted. The first of these epochs of real importance is the Nara Period, which began A.D. 710 and endured until 794; all before that may be classed as archaic. Previous to the Nara Period, the Japanese had been a semi-nomadic race. As each successive Mikado came to the throne, he built himself a new palace, and founded a new capital; there had been more than sixty capitals before the Nara Period. Such shifting was not conducive to the development of literature and the arts, and it was not until a permanent government was established at Nara that these began to flourish. This is scarcely the place to trace the history of Japanese literature, but fully to understand these charming “Diaries of Court Ladies of Old Japan,” it is necessary to know a little of the world they lived in, to be able to feel their atmosphere and recognize their allusions.

We know a good deal about Japan to-day, but the Japan with which we are familiar only slightly resembles that of the Diaries. Centuries of feudalism, of “Dark Ages,” have come between. We must go behind all this and begin again. We have all heard of the “Forty-seven Ronins” and the Nō Drama, of Shōguns, Daimios, and Samuraiis, and many of us live in daily communion with Japanese prints. It gives us pause to reflect that the earliest of these things is almost as many centuries ahead of the Ladies as it is behind us. “Shōgun” means simply “General,” and of course there were always generals, but the power of the Shōguns, and the military feudalism of which the Daimios and their attendant Samuraiis were a part, did not really begin until the middle of the twelfth century and did not reach its full development until the middle of the fourteenth; the Nō Drama started with the ancient religious pantomimic dance, the Kagura, but not until words were added in the fourteenth century did it become the Nō; and block colour printing was first practised in 1695, while such famous print artists as Utamaro, Hokusai, and Hiroshige are all products of the eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries. To find the Ladies behind the dark military ages, we must go back a long way, even to the century before their own, and so gain a sort of perspective for them and their time.

Chinese literature and civilization were introduced into Japan somewhere between 270 and 310 A.D., and Buddhism followed in 552. Of course, all such dates must be taken with a certain degree of latitude; Oriental historians are anything but precise in these matters. Chinese influence and Buddhism are the two enormous facts to be reckoned with in understanding Japan, and considering what an effect they have had, it is not a little singular that Japan has always been able to preserve her native character. To be sure, Shintoism was never displaced by Buddhism, but the latter made a tremendous appeal to the Japanese temperament, as the Diaries show. In fact, it was not until the Meiji Period (1867-1912) that Shintoism was again made the state religion. With the introduction of Chinese civilization came the art of writing, when is not accurately known, but printing from movable blocks followed from Korea in the eighth century. As was inevitable under the circumstances, Chinese came to be considered the language of learning. Japanese scholars wrote in Chinese. All the “serious” books—history, theology, science, law—were written in Chinese as a matter of course. But, in 712, a volume called “Records of Ancient Matters” was compiled in the native tongue. It is the earliest book in Japanese now extant.

If the scholars wrote in a borrowed language, the poets knew better. They wrote in their own, and the poetry of the Nara Period has been preserved for us in an anthology, the “Manyoshu” or “Collection of One Thousand Leaves.” This was followed at the beginning of the tenth century by the “Kokinshu” (“Ancient and Modern Poems”), to which, however, the editor, Tsurayuki, felt obliged to write a Chinese preface. The Ladies of the Diaries were extremely familiar with these volumes, their own writings are full of allusions to poems contained in them; Sei-Shōnagon, writing early in the eleventh century, describes a young lady’s education as consisting of writing, music, and the twenty volumes of the “Kokinshu.” So it came about that while learned gentlemen still continued to write in Chinese, poetry, fiction, diaries, and desultory essays called “Zui-hitsu” (Following the Pen) were written in Japanese.

Now the position of women at this time was very different from what it afterwards became in the feudal period. The Chinese called Japan the “Queen Country,” because of the ascendancy which women enjoyed there. They were educated, they were allowed a share of inheritance, and they had their own houses. It is an extraordinary and important fact that much of the best literature of Japan has been written by women. Three of these most remarkable women are the authors of the Diaries; a fourth to be named with them, Sei-Shōnagon, to whom I have just referred, was a contemporary.

In 794, the capital was moved from Nara to Kiōto, which was given the name of “Heian-jo” or “City of Peace,” and with the removal, a new period, the Heian, began. It lasted until 1186, and our Ladies lived in the very middle of it.

By this time Japan was thoroughly civilized; she was, indeed, a little over-civilized, a little too fined down and delicate. At least this is true of all that life which centred round the court at Kiōto. To historians the Heian Period represents the rise and fall of the Fujiwara family. This powerful family had served the Mikados from time out of mind as heads of the Shinto priests, and after the middle of the seventh century, they became ministers or prime ministers. An immense clan, they gradually absorbed all the civil offices in the Kingdom, while the military offices
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were filled by the Taira and Minamoto families. It was the rise of these last as the Fujiwara declined which eventually led to the rule of the Shoguns and the long centuries of feudalism and civil war. But in the middle of the Heian Period the Fujiwara were very much everywhere. Most of those Court ladies who were the authors of remarkable books were the daughters of governors of provinces, and that meant Fujiwaras to a greater or lesser degree. At that time polygamy flourished in Japan, and the family had grown to a prodigious size. Since a civil office meant a post for a Fujiwara, many of them were happily provided for, but they were so numerous that they outnumbered the legitimate positions and others had to be created to fill the demand. The Court was full of persons of both sexes holding sinecures, with a great deal of time on their hands and nothing to do in it but write poetry, which they did exceedingly well, and attend the various functions prescribed by etiquette. Ceremonials were many and magnificent, and poetry writing became, not only a game, but a natural adjunct to every possible event. The Japanese as a nation are dowered with a rare and exquisite taste, and in the Heian Period taste was cultivated to an amazing degree. Murasaki Shikibu records the astounding pitch to which it had reached in a passage in her diary. Speaking of the Mikado’s ladies at a court festivity, she says of the dress of one of them: “One had a little fault in the colour combination at the wrist opening. When she went before the Royal presence to fetch something, the nobles and high officials noticed it. Afterwards Lady Saisho regretted it deeply. It was not so bad; only one colour was a little too pale.”

That passage needs no comment; it is completely illuminating. It is a paraphrase of the whole era.

Kioto was a little city, long one way by some seventeen thousand odd feet, or about three and a third miles, wide the other by fifteen thousand, or approximately another three miles, and it is doubtful if the space within the city wall was ever entirely covered by houses. The Palace was built in the so-called Azumaya style, a form of architecture which was also followed in noblemen’s houses. The roof, or rather roofs, for there were many buildings, was covered with bark, and, inside, the divisions into rooms were made by different sorts of moving screens. At the period of the Diaries, the reigning Mikado, Ichijo, had two wives: Sadako, the first queen, was the daughter of a previous prime minister, Michitaka, a Fujiwara, of course; the other, Akiko, daughter of Michinaga, the prime minister of the Diaries and a younger brother of Michitaka, was second queen or Chûgû. These queens each occupied a separate house in the Palace. Kokiden was the name of Queen Sadako’s house; Fujitsubu the name of Queen Akiko’s. The rivalry between these ladies was naturally great, and extended even to their entourage. Each strove to surround herself with ladies who were not only beautiful, but learned. The bright star of Queen Sadako’s court was Sei-Shônagon, the author of a remarkable book, the “Makura no Sôshi” or “Pillow Sketches,” while Murasaki Shikibu held the same exalted position in Queen Akiko’s.

We are to imagine a court founded upon the Chinese model, but not nearly so elaborate. A brilliant assemblage of persons all playing about a restricted but very bright centre. From it, the high officials went out to be governors of distant provinces, and the lesser ones followed them to minor posts, but in spite of the distinction of such positions, distance and the inconvenience of travelling made the going a sort of laurelled banishment. These gentlemen left Kioto with regret and returned with satisfaction. But the going, and the years of residence away, was one of the commonplaces of social life. Fujiwara though one might be, one often had to wait and scheme for an office, and the Diaries contain more than one reference to such waiting and the bitter disappointment when the office was not up to expectation.

These functionaries travelled with a large train of soldiers and servants, but, with the best will in the world, these last could not make the journeys other than tedious and uncomfortable. Still there were alleviations, because of the very taste of which I have spoken. The scenery was often beautiful, and whether the traveller were the Governor himself or his daughter, he noticed and delighted in it. The “Sarashina Diary” is full of this appreciation of nature. We are told of “a very beautiful beach with long-drawn white waves,” of a torrent whose water was “white as if thickened with rice flour.” We need only think of the prints with which we are familiar to be convinced of the accuracy of this picture: “The waves of the outer sea were very high, and we could see them through the pine-trees which grew scattered over the sandy point which stretched between us and the sea. They seemed to strike across the ends of the pine branches and shone like jewels.” The diarist goes on to remark that “it was an interesting sight,” which we can very well believe, since certainly she makes us long to see it.

These journeys were mostly made on horseback, but there were other methods of progression, which, however, were probably not always feasible for long distances. The nobles used various kinds of carriages drawn by one bullock, and there were also palanquins carried by bearers.

It was not only the officials who made journeys, all the world made them to temples and shrines for the good of their souls. There are religious yearnings in all the Diaries, and many Mikados and gentlemen entered the priesthood, Michinaga among them. Sutra recitation and incantation were ceaselessly performed at Court. We can gain some idea of the almost fanatical hold which Buddhism had over the educated mind by the fact that the Fujiwara family built such great temples as Gokurakuji, Hosohoji, Hokoin, Jomyoji, Muryoju-in, etc. It is recorded
that Mikado Shirakawa, at a date somewhat subsequent to the Diaries, made pilgrimages four times to Kumano, and during his visits there “worshipped 5470 painted Buddhas, 127 carved Buddhas sixteen feet high, 3150 Buddhas life-sized, 2930 carved Buddhas shorter than three feet, 21 pagodas, 446,630 miniature pagodas.” A busy man truly, but the record does not mention what became of the affairs of state meanwhile. That this worship was by no means lip-devotion merely, any reader of the “Sarashina Diary” can see; that it was mixed with much superstition and a profound belief in dreams is also abundantly evident. But let us, for a moment, recollect the time. It will place the marvel of this old, careful civilization before us as nothing else can.

To be sure, Greece and Rome had been, but they had passed away, or at least their greatness had, gone and apparently left no trace. While these Japanese ladies were writing, Europe was in the full blackness of her darkest ages. Germany was founding the “Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation,” characteristically founding it with the mailed fist; Moorish civilization was at its height in Spain; Robert Capet was king of poor famine-scoured France; Ethelred the Unready was ruling in England and doing his best to keep off the Danes by payment and massacre. Later, while the “Sarashina Diary” was being written, King Canute was sitting in his armchair and giving orders to the sea. Curious, curious world! So far apart from the one of the Diaries. And to think that even five hundred years later Columbus was sending letters into the interior of Cuba, addressed to the Emperor of Japan!

These Diaries show us a world extraordinarily like our own, if very unlike in more than one important particular. The noblemen and women of Mikado Ichijo’s Court were poets and writers of genius, their taste as a whole has never been surpassed by any people at any time, but their scientific knowledge was elementary in the extreme. Diseases and conflagrations were frequent. In a space of fifty-one years, the Royal Palace burnt down eleven times. During the same period, there were four great pestilences, a terrible drought, and an earthquake. Robbers infested many parts of the country, and were a constant fear to travellers and pilgrims. Childbirth was very dangerous. The picture of the birth of a child to Queen Akiko, with which Murasaki Shikibu’s Diary begins, shows us all its bitter horror. From page to page we share the writer’s suspense, and with our greater knowledge, it is with a sense of wonder that we watch the queen’s return to health.

But, after all, diseases and conflagrations are seldom more than episodes in a normal life lived under sane conditions, and it is just because these Diaries reflect the real life of these three ladies that they are important. The world they portray is in most ways quite as advanced as our own, and in some, much more so. Rice was the staple of food, and although Buddhistic sentiment seldom permitted people to eat the flesh of animals, they had an abundance of fish, which was eaten boiled, baked, raw, and pickled, and a quantity of fruits and nuts. There was no sugar, but cakes were made of fruit and nuts, and there was always rice-wine or saké. Gentefolk usually dressed in silk. They wore many layers of coloured garments, and delighted in the harmony produced by the colour combinations of silk over silk, or of a bright lining subdued by the tone of an outer robe. The ladies all painted their faces, and the whole toilet was a matter of sufficient moment to raise it into a fine art. Many of these lovely dresses are described by Murasaki Shikibu, for instance: “The beautiful shape of their hair, tied with bands, was like that of the beauties in Chinese pictures. Lady Saémon held the King’s sword. She wore a blue-green patternless karaginu and shaded train with floating bands and belt of ‘floating thread’ brocade dyed in dull red. Her outer robe was trimmed with five folds and was chrysanthemum coloured. The glosy silk was of crimson; her figure and movement, when we caught a glimpse of it, was flower-like and dignified. Lady Ben-no-Naishi held the box of the King’s seals. Her uchigi was grape-coloured. She is a very small and smile-giving person and seemed shy and I was sorry for her…. Her hair bands were blue-green. Her appearance suggested one of the ancient dream-maidens descended from heaven.” A little later she tells us that “the beaten stuffs were like the mingling of dark and light maple leaves in Autumn”; and, describing in some detail the festivity at which these ladies appeared, she makes the comment that “only the right body-guard wore clothes of shrimp pink.” To one in love with colour, these passages leave a very nostalgia for the bright and sophisticated Court where such things could be.

And everywhere, everywhere, there is poetry. A gentleman hands a lady a poem on the end of his fan and she is expected to reply in kind within the instant. Poems form an important part in the ritual of betrothal. A daughter of good family never allowed herself to be seen by men (a custom which appears to have admitted many exceptions). A man would write a poetical love-letter to the lady of his choice which she must answer amably, even should she have no mind to him. If, however, she were happily inclined, he would visit her secretly at night and leave before daybreak. He would then write again, following which she would give a banquet and introduce him to her family. After this, he could visit her openly, although she would still remain for some time in her father’s house. This custom of love-letter writing and visiting is shown in Izumi Shikibu’s Diary. Obviously the poems were short, and here, in order to understand those in the text, it may be well to consider for a moment in what Japanese poetry consists.

Japanese is a syllabic language like our own, but, unlike our own, it is not accented. Also, every syllable ends with
a restricted rhyme scheme would be unbearably monotonous, the Japanese hit upon the happy idea of counting syllables. Our metrical verse also counts syllables, but we combine them into different kinds of accented feet. Without accent, this was not possible, so the Japanese poet limits their number and uses them in a pattern of alternating lines. His prosody is based upon the numbers five and seven, a five-syllable line alternating with one of seven syllables, with, in some forms, two seven-syllable lines together at the end of a period, in the manner of our couplet. The favourite form, the “naga-uta,” is in thirty-one syllables, and runs five, seven, five, seven, seven. There is a longer form, the “hokku” is an even briefer form. In it, the concluding hemistich of the tanka is left off, and it is just in his hemistich that the meaning of the poem is brought out, so that the hokku is a mere essence, a whiff of an idea to be created in full by the hearer. But the hokku was not invented until the fifteenth century; before that, the tanka, in spite of occasional attempts to vary it by adding more lines, changing their order, using the pattern in combination as a series of stanzas, etc, reigned practically supreme, and it is still the chief classic form for all Japanese poetry.

Having briefly washed in the background of the Diaries, we must notice, for a moment, the three remarkable ladies who are the foreground.

Murasaki Shikibu was the daughter of Fujiwara Tametoki, a scion of a junior branch of the famous family. She was born in 978. Murasaki was not her real name, which was apparently To Shikibu (Shikibu is a title) derived from that of her father. There are two legends about the reason for her receiving the name Murasaki. One is that she was given it in playful allusion to her own heroine in the “Genji Monogatari,” who was called Murasaki. The other legend is more charming. It seems that her mother was one of the nurses of Mikado Ichijo, who was so fond of her that he gave her daughter this name, in reference to a well-known poem:

“When the purple grass (Murasaki) is in full colour, One can scarcely perceive the other plants in the field.”

From the Murasaki grass, the word has come to mean a colour which includes all the shades of purple, violet, and lavender. In 996, or thereabouts, she accompanied her father to the Province of Echizen, of which he had become governor. A year later, she returned to Kiōto, and, within a twelvemonth, married another Fujiwara, Nobutaka. The marriage seems to have been most happy, to judge from the constant expressions of grief in her Diary for her husband’s death, which occurred in 1001, a year in which Japan suffered from a great pestilence. A daughter was born to them in 1000. From her husband’s death, until 1005, she seems to have lived in the country, but in this year she joined the Court as one of Queen Akiko’s ladies; before that, however (and again I must insist that these early dates are far from determined), she had made herself famous, not only for her own time, but for all time, by writing the first realistic novel of Japan. This book is the “Genji Monogatari” or “Narrative of Genji.”

Hitherto, Japanese authors had confined themselves to stories of no great length, and which relied for their interest on a fairy or wonder element. The “Genji Monogatari” struck out an entirely new direction. It depicted real life in Kiōto as a contemporary gentleman might have lived it. It founded its interest on the fact that people like to read about themselves, but this, which seems to us a commonplace, was a glaring innovation when Murasaki Shikibu attempted it; it was, in fact, the flash from a mind of genius. The book follows the life of Prince Genji from his birth to his death at the age of fifty-one, and the concluding books of the series pursue the career of one of his sons. It is an enormous work, comprising no less than fifty-four books and running to over four thousand pages—the genealogical tree of the personages alone is eighty pages long—but no reader of the Diary will need to be convinced that the “Genji” is not merely sprightly and captivating, but powerful as well. The lady was shrewd, and if she were also kindly and very attractive, nevertheless she saw with an uncompromising eye. Her critical faculty never sleeps, and takes in the minutest detail of anything she sees, noting unerringly every little rightness and wrongness connected with it. She watches the approach of the Mikado, and touches the matter so that we get its exact shade: “When the Royal palanquin drew near, the bearers, though they were rather honourable persons, bent their heads in absolute humility as they ascended the steps. Even in the highest society there are grades of courtesy, but these men were too humble.”

No one with such a gift can fail to be lonely, and Murasaki Shikibu seems very lonely, but it is not the passionate rebellion of Izumi Shikibu, nor the abiding melancholy of the author of the “Sarashina Diary”; rather is it the disillusion of one who has seen much of the world, and knows how little companionship she may expect ever to find: “It is useless to talk with those who do not understand one and troublesome to talk with those who criticize from a feeling of superiority. Especially one-sided persons are troublesome. Few are accomplished in many arts and most cling narrowly to their own opinion.”

I have already shown Murasaki Shikibu’s beautiful taste in dress, but indeed it is in everything. When she says
“The garden [on a moonlight night] was admirable,” we know that it must have been of an extraordinary perfection.

The Diary proves her dramatic sense, as the “Genji” would also do could it find so sympathetic a translator. No wonder, then, that it leapt into instant fame. There is a pretty legend of her writing the book at the Temple of Ishiyama at the southern end of Lake Biwa. The tale gains verisimilitude in the eyes of visitors by the fact that they are shown the chamber in the temple in which she wrote and the ink-slab she used, but, alas! it is not true. We do not know where she wrote, nor even exactly when. The “Genji” is supposed to have been begun in 1002, and most commentators believe it to have been finished in 1004. That she should have been called to Court in the following year, seems extremely natural. Queen Akiko must have counted herself most fortunate in having among her ladies so famous a person.

The Diary tells the rest, the Diary which was begun in 1007. We know no more of Murasaki Shikibu except that no shade of scandal ever tinged her name.

One of the strangest and most interesting things about the Diaries is that their authors were such very different kinds of people. Izumi Shikibu is as unlike Murasaki Shikibu as could well happen. As different as the most celebrated poet of her time is likely to be from the most celebrated novelist, for Izumi Shikibu is the greatest woman poet which Japan has had. The author of seven volumes of poems, this Diary is the only prose writing of hers which is known. It is an intimate account of a love affair which seems to have been more than usually passionate and pathetic. Passionate, provocative, enchanting, it is evident that Izumi Shikibu could never have been the discriminating observer, the critic of manners, which Murasaki Shikibu became. Life was powerless to mellow so vivid a personality; but neither could it subdue it. She gives us no suggestion of resignation. She lived intensely, as her Diary shows; she always had done so, and doubtless she always did. We see her as untamable, a genius compelled to follow her inclinations. Difficult to deal with, maybe, like strong wine, but wonderfully stimulating.

Izumi Shikibu was born in 974. She was the eldest daughter of Ōe Masamune, another Governor of Echizen. In 995, she married Tachibana Michisada, Governor of Izumi, hence her name. From this gentleman she was divorced, but just when we do not know, and he died shortly after, probably during the great pestilence which played such havoc throughout Japan and in which Murasaki Shikibu’s husband had also died. Her daughter, who followed in her mother’s footsteps as a poet, had been born in 997. But Izumi Shikibu was too fascinating and too petulant to nurse her disappointment in a chaste seclusion. She became the mistress of Prince Atsumichi, who also died in 1002. It is very soon after this event that the Diary begins. Her new lover was Prince Atsumichi, and the Diary seems to have been written solely to appease her mind, and to record the poems which passed between them and which Izumi Shikibu evidently regarded as the very essence of their souls.

In the beginning, the affair was carried on with the utmost secrecy, but clandestine meetings could not satisfy the lovers, and at last the Prince persuaded her to take up her residence in the South Palace as one of his ladies. Considering the manners of the time, it is a little puzzling to see why there should have been such an outcry at this, but outcry there certainly was. The Princess took violent umbrage at the Prince’s proceeding and left the Palace on a long visit to her relations. So violent grew the protestations in the little world of the Court that, in 1004, Izumi Shikibu left the Palace and separated herself entirely from the Prince. It was probably to emphasize the definiteness of the separation that, immediately after her departure, she married Fujiwara Yasumasa, Governor of Tango, and left with him for that Province in 1005. The facts bear out this supposition, but we do not know it from her own lips, as the Diary breaks off soon after she reaches the South Palace.

In 1008, she was summoned back to Kiōto to serve the Queen in the same Court where Murasaki Shikibu had been since 1005. Whatever effect the scandal may have had four years earlier, her receiving the post of lady-in-waiting proves it to have been worth forgetting in view of her fame, and Queen Akiko must have rejoiced to add this celebrated poet to her already remarkable bevy of ladies. Of course there was jealousy—who can doubt it? No reader of the Diaries can imagine that Izumi Shikibu and Murasaki Shikibu can have been sympathetic, and we must take with a grain of salt the latter’s caustic comment: “Lady Izumi Shikibu corresponds charmingly, but her behavior is improper indeed. She writes with grace and ease and a flashing wit. There is a fragrance even in her smallest words. Her poems are attractive, but they are only improvisations which drop from her mouth spontaneously. Every one of them has some interesting point, and she is acquainted with ancient literature also, but she is not like a true artist who is filled with the genuine spirit of poetry. Yet I think even she cannot presume to pass judgment on the poems of others.” Is it possible that Izumi Shikibu had been so rash as to pass judgment on some of Murasaki Shikibu’s efforts?

Of course it is beyond the power of any translation to preserve the full effect of the original, but even in translation, Izumi Shikibu’s poems are singularly beautiful and appealing. In her own country, they are considered never to have been excelled in freshness and freedom of expression. There is something infinitely sad in this,
which she is said to have written on her death-bed, as the end of a passionate life:

"Out of the dark,
Into a dark path
I now must enter:
Shine [on me] from afar
Moon of the mountain fringe."[1]

In Japanese poetry, Amita-Buddha is often compared to the moon which rises over the mountains and lights the traveller’s path.

Very different again is the lady who wrote the “Sarashina Diary,” and it is a very different kind of record. Murasaki Shikibu’s Diary is concerned with a few years of her life, Izumi Shikibu’s with one episode only of hers, but the “Sarashina Diary” covers a long period in the life of its author. The first part was written when she was twelve years old, the last entry was made when she was past fifty. It begins with a journey from Shimōsa to Kōto by the Tōkaidō in 1021, which is followed by a second journey some years later from Kōto to Sarashina, a place which has never been satisfactorily identified, although some critics have supposed it to have been in the Province of Shinano. The rest of the Diary consists of jottings at various times, accounts of books read, of places seen, of pilgrimages to temples, of records of dreams and portents, of communings with herself on life and death, of expressions of resignation and sorrow.

The book takes its name from the second of the journeys, “Sarashina Nikki,” meaning simply “Sarashina Diary,” for, strangely enough, we do not know the author’s name. We do know, however, that she was the daughter of Fujiwara Takasué, and that she was born in 1009. In 1017, Takasué was appointed governor of a province, and went with his daughter to his new post. It is the return journey, made in 1021, with which the Diary opens.

Takasué’s daughter shared with so many of her contemporaries the deep love of nature and the power to express this love in words. I have already quoted one or two of her entries on this journey. We follow the little company over mountains and across rivers, we camp with them by night, and tremble as they trembled lest robbers should attack them. We see what the little girl saw: “The mountain range called Nishitomi is like folding screens with good pictures,” “people say that purple grass grows in the fields of Mushashi, but it is only a waste of various kinds of reeds, which grow so high that we cannot see the bows of our horsemen who are forcing their way through the tall grass,” and share her disappointment when she says: “We passed a place called ‘Eight Bridges,’ but it was only a name, no bridge and no pretty sight.”

They reach Kōto and a rather dull life begins, enlivened only by the avid reading of romances, among them the “Genji Monogatari.” Then her sister dies giving birth to a child, and the life becomes, not only dull, but sorrowful. After a time, the lady obtains a position at Court, but neither her bringing up nor her disposition had suited her for such a place. She mentions that “Mother was a person of extremely antiquated mind,” and it is evident that she had been taught to look inward rather than outward. An abortive little love affair lightens her dreariness for a moment. Life had dealt hardly with the sensitive girl, from year to year she grows more wistful, but suddenly something happens, a mere hint of a gleam, but opening a possibility of brightness. Who he was, we do not know, but she met him on an evening when “there was no starlight, and a gentle shower fell in the darkness.” They talked and exchanged poems, but she did not meet him again until the next year; then, after an evening entertainment to which she had not gone, “when I looked out, opening the sliding door on the corridor, I saw the morning moon very faint and beautiful,” and he was there. Again they exchanged poems and she believed that happiness had at last arrived. He was to come with his lute and sing to her. “I wanted to hear it,” she writes, “and waited for the fit occasion, but there was none, ever.” A year later she has lost hope, she writes a poem and adds, “So I composed that poem—and there is nothing more to tell.” Nothing more, indeed, but what is told conveys all the misery of her deceived longing.

The last part of the Diary is concerned chiefly with accounts of pilgrimages and dreams. She married, who and when is not recorded, and bore children. Her husband dies, and with his death the spring of her life seems to have run down. Her last entry is very sad: “My people went to live elsewhere and I lived alone in my solitary home.” So we leave her, “a beautiful, shy spirit whose life had known much sorrow.”

I was brought up in a distant province[1] which lies farther than the farthest end of the Eastern Road. I am ashamed to think that inhabitants of the Royal City will think me an uncultured girl.

Somehow I came to know that there are such things as romances in the world and wished to read them. When there was nothing to do by day or at night, one tale or another was told me by my elder sister or stepmother, and I heard several chapters about the shining Prince Genji.[2] My longing for such stories increased, but how could they recite them all from memory? I became very restless and got an image of Yakushi Buddha[3] made as large as myself. When I was alone I washed my hands and went secretly before the altar and prayed to him with all my life, bowing my head down to the floor. “Please let me go to the Royal City. There I can find many tales. Let me read all of them.”

When thirteen years old, I was taken to the Royal City. On the third of the Long-moon month,[4] I removed [from my house] to Imataté, the old house where I had played as a child being broken up. At sunset in the foggy twilight, just as I was getting into the palanquin, I thought of the Buddha before which I had gone secretly to pray—I was sorry and secretly shed tears to leave him behind.

Outside of my new house [a rude temporary, thatched one] there is no fence nor even shutters, but we have hung curtains and sudaré.[5] From that house, standing on a low bluff, a wide plain extends towards the South. On the East and West the sea creeps close, so it is an interesting place. When fogs are falling it is so charming that I rise early every morning to see them. Sorry to leave this place.

On the fifteenth, in heavy dark rain, we crossed the boundary of the Province and lodged at Ikada in the Province of Shimofusa. Our lodging is almost submerged. I am so afraid I cannot sleep. I see only three lone trees standing on a little hill in the waste.

The next day was passed in drying our dripping clothes and waiting for the others to come up.[6]

On the seventeenth, started early in the morning, and crossed a deep river. I heard that in this Province there lived in olden times a chieftain of Mano. He had thousand and ten thousand webs of cloth woven and dipped them [for bleaching] in the river which now flows over the place where his great house stood. Four of the large gate-posts remained standing in the river.

Hearing the people composing poems about this place, I in my mind:

*Had I not seen erect in the river*  
*These solid timbers of the olden time*  
*How could I know, how could I feel*  
*The story of that house?*

That evening we lodged at the beach of Kurodo. The white sand stretched far and wide. The pine-wood was dark—the moon was bright, and the soft blowing of the wind made me lonely. People were pleased and composed poems. My poem:

*For this night only*  
*The autumn moon at Kurodo beach shall shine for me,*  
*For this night only!—I cannot sleep.*

Early in the morning we left this place and came to the Futoi River[7] on the boundary between Shimofusa and
Musashi. We lodged at the ferry of Matsusato[8] near Kagami’s rapids,[9] and all night long our luggage was being carried over.

My nurse had lost her husband and gave birth to her child at the boundary of the Province, so we had to go up to the Royal City separately. I was longing for my nurse and wanted to go to see her, and was brought there by my elder brother in his arms. We, though in a temporary lodging, covered ourselves with warm cotton batting, but my nurse, as there was no man to take care of her, was lying in a wild place [and] covered only with coarse matting. She was in her red dress.

The moon came in, lighting up everything, and in the moonlight she looked transparent. I thought her very white and pure. She wept and caressed me, and I was loath to leave her. Even when I went with lingering heart, her image remained with me, and there was no interest in the changing scenes.

The next morning we crossed the river in a ferry-boat in our palanquins. The persons who had come with us thus far in their own conveyances went back from this place. We, who were going up to the Royal City, stayed here for a while to follow them with our eyes; and as it was a parting for life all wept. Even my childish heart felt sorrow.

Now it is the Province of Musashi. There is no charm in this place. The sand of the beaches is not white, but like mud. People say that purple grass[10] grows in the fields of Musashi, but it is only a waste of various kinds of reeds, which grow so high that we cannot see the bows of our horsemen who are forcing their way through the tall grass. Going through these reeds I saw a ruined temple called Takeshíba-dera. There were also the foundation-stones of a house with corridor.

“What place is it?” I asked; and they answered:

“Once upon a time there lived a reckless adventurer at Takeshiba.[11] He was offered to the King’s palace [by the Governor] as a guard to keep the watch-fire. He was once sweeping the garden in front of a Princess’s room and singing:

Ah, me! Ah, me! My weary doom to labour here in the Palace!
Seven good wine-jars have I—and three in my province.
There where they stand I have hung straight-stemmed gourds of the finest—
They turn to the West when the East wind blows,
They turn to the East when the West wind blows,
They turn to the North when the South wind blows,
They turn to the South when the North wind blows.
And there I sit watching them turning and turning forever—
Oh, my gourds! Oh, my wine-jars!

“He was singing thus alone, but just then a Princess, the King’s favourite daughter, was sitting alone behind the misu.[12] She came forward, and, leaning against the door-post, listened to the man singing. She was very interested to think how gourds were above the wine-jars and how they were turning and wanted to see them. She became very zealous for the gourds, and pushing up the blind called the guard, saying, ‘Man, come here!’ The man heard it very respectfully, and with great reverence drew near the balustrade. ‘Let me hear once more what you have been saying.’ And he sang again about his wine-jars. ‘I must go and see them, I have my own reason for saying so,’ said the Princess.

“He felt great awe, but he made up his mind, and went down towards the Eastern Province. He feared that men would pursue them, and that night, placing the Princess on the Seta Bridge,[13] broke a part of it away, and bounding over with the Princess on his back arrived at his native place after seven days’ and seven nights’ journey.

“The King and Queen were greatly surprised when they found the Princess was lost, and began to search for her. Some one said that a King’s guard from the Province of Musashi, carrying something of exquisite fragrance[14] on his back, had been seen fleeing towards the East. So they sought for that guard, and he was not to be found. They said, ‘Doubtless this man went back home.’ The Royal Government sent messengers to pursue them, but when they got to the Seta Bridge they found it broken, and they could not go farther. In the Third month, however, the messengers arrived at Musashi Province and sought for the man. The Princess gave audience to the messengers and said:

“I, for some reason, yearned for this man’s home and bade him carry me here; so he has carried me. If this man were punished and killed, what should I do? This is a very good place to live in. It must have been settled before I
was born that I should leave my trace [i.e. descendants] in this Province—go back and tell the King so.’ So the messenger could not refuse her, and went back to tell the King about it.

“The King said: ‘It is hopeless. Though I punish the man I cannot bring back the Princess; nor is it meet to bring them back to the Royal City. As long as that man of Takeshiba lives I cannot give Musashi Province to him, but I will entrust it to the Princess.’

“In this way it happened that a palace was built there in the same style as the Royal Palace and the Princess was placed there. When she died they made it into a temple called Takeshiba-dera.[15] The descendants of the Princess received the family name of Musashi. After that the guards of the watch-fire were women.”[16]

We went through a waste of reeds of various kinds, forcing our way through the tall grass. There is the river Asuda along the border of Musashi and Sagami, where at the ferry Arihara Narihira had composed his famous poem.[17] In the book of his poetical works the river is called the river Sumida.

We crossed it in a boat, and it is the Province of Sagami. The mountain range called Nishitomi is like folding screens with good pictures. On the left hand we saw a very beautiful beach with long-drawn curves of white waves. There was a place there called Morokoshi-ga-Hara[18] [Chinese Field] where sands are wonderfully white. Two or three days we journeyed along that shore. A man said: “In Summer pale and deep Japanese pinks bloom there and make the field brocade. As it is Autumn now we cannot see them.” But I saw some pinks scattered about blooming pitiably. They said: “It is funny that Japanese pinks are blooming in the Chinese field.”

There is a mountain called Ashigara [Hakoné] which extends for ten and more miles and is covered with thick woods even to its base. We could have only an occasional glimpse of the sky. We lodged in a hut at the foot of the mountain. It was a dark moonless night. I felt myself swallowed up and lost in the darkness, when three singers came from somewhere. One was about fifty years old, the second twenty, and the third about fourteen or fifteen. We set them down in front of our lodging and a karakasa [large paper umbrella] was spread for them. My servant lighted a fire so that we saw them. They said that they were the descendants of a famous singer called Kobata. They had very long hair which hung over their foreheads; their faces were white and clean, and they seemed rather like maids serving in noblemen’s families. They had clear, sweet voices, and their beautiful singing seemed to reach the heavens. All were charmed, and taking great interest made them come nearer. Some one said, “The singers of the Western Provinces are inferior to them,” and at this the singers closed their song with the words, “if we are compared with those of Naniwa” [Osaka].[19] They were pretty and neatly dressed, with voices of rare beauty, and they were wandering away into this fearful mountain. Even tears came to those eyes which followed them as far as they could be seen; and my childish heart was unwilling to leave this rude shelter frequented by these singers.

Next morning we crossed over the mountain.[20] Words cannot express my fear[21] in the midst of it. Clouds rolled beneath our feet. Halfway over there was an open space with a few trees. Here we saw a few leaves of aoi[22] [Asarum caulescens]. People praised it and thought strange that in this mountain, so far from the human world, was growing such a sacred plant. We met with three rivers in the mountain and crossed them with difficulty. That day we stopped at Sekiyama. Now we are in Suruga Province. We passed a place called Iwatsubo [rock-urn] by the barrier of Yokobashiri. There was an indescribably large square rock through a hole in which very cold water came rushing out.

Mount Fuji is in this Province. In the Province where I was brought up [from which she begins this journey] I saw that mountain far towards the West. It towers up painted with deep blue, and covered with eternal snow. It seems that it wears a dress of deep violet and a white veil over its shoulders. From the little level place of the top smoke was going up. In the evening we even saw burning fires there.[23] The Fuji River comes tumbling down from that mountain. A man of the Province came up to us and told us a story.

“Once I went on an errand. It was a very hot day, and I was resting on the bank of the stream when I saw something yellow come floating down. It came to the bank of the river and stuck there. I picked it up and found it to be a scrap of yellow paper with words elegantly written on it in cinnabar. Wondering much I read it. On the paper was a prophecy of the Governors [of provinces] to be appointed next year. As to this Province there were written the names of two Governors. I wondered more and more, and drying the paper, kept it. When the day of the announcement came, this paper held no mistake, and the man who became the Governor of this Province died after three months, and the other succeeded him.”

There are such things. I think that the gods assemble there on that mountain to settle the affairs of each new year.

At Kiyomigaseki, where we saw the sea on the left, there were many houses for the keepers of the barriers. Some of the palisades went even into the sea.
At Tagonoura waves were high. From there we went along by boat. We went with ease over Numajiri and came to the river Ōi. Such a torrent I have never seen. Water, white as if thickened with rice flour, ran fast.

I became ill, and now it is the Province of Totomi. I had almost lost consciousness when I crossed the mountain pass of Sayo-no-Nakayama [the middle mountain of the little night]. I was quite exhausted, so when we came to the bank of the Tenryu River, we had a temporary dwelling built, and passed several days there, and I got better. As the winter was already advanced, the wind from the river blew hard and it became intolerable. After crossing the river we went towards the bridge at Hamana.

When we had gone down towards the East [four years before when her father had been appointed Governor] there had been a log bridge, but this time we could not find even a trace of it, so we had to cross in a boat. The bridge had been laid across an inland bay. The waves of the outer sea were very high, and we could see them through the thick pine-trees which grew scattered over the sandy point which stretched between us and the sea. They seemed to strike across the ends of the pine branches and shone like jewels. It was an interesting sight.

We went forward and crossed over Inohana—an unspeakably weary ascent it was—and then came to Takashi shore of the Province of Mikawa. We passed a place called “Eight-Bridges,” but it was only a name, no bridge and no pretty sight.

In the mountain of Futamura we made our camp under a big persimmon tree. The fruit fell down during the night over our camps and people picked it up.

We passed Mount Miyaji, where we saw red leaves still, although it was the first day of the Tenth month.

_Furious mountain winds in their passing_
_must spare this spot_
_for red maple leaves are clinging_
_even yet to the branch._

There was a fort of “If-I-can” between Mikawa and Owari. It is amusing to think how difficult the crossing was, indeed. We passed the Narumi [sounding-sea] shore in the Province of Owari. The evening tides were coming in, and we thought if they came higher we could not cross. So in a panic we ran as fast as we could.

At the border of Mino we crossed a ferry called Kuromata, and arrived at Nogami. There singers came again and they sang all night. Lovingly we thought of the singers of Ashigara.

Snow came, and in the storm we passed the barrier at Fuha, and over the Mount Atsumi, having no heart to look at beautiful sights. In the Province of Omi we stayed four or five days in a house at Okina. At the foot of Mitsu-saka Mountain light rain fell night and day mixed with hail. It was so melancholy that we left there and passed by Inugami, Kanzaki, and Yasu without receiving any impressions. The lake stretched far and wide, and we caught occasional glimpses of Nadeshima and Chikubushima [islands]. It was a very pretty sight. We had great difficulty at the bridge of Seta, for it had fallen in. We stopped at Awazu, and arrived at the Royal City after dark on the second day of the Finishing month.

When we were near the barrier I saw the face of a roughly hewn Buddha sixteen feet high which towered over a rude fence. Serene and indifferent to its surroundings it stood unregarded in this deserted place; but I, passing by, received a message from it. Among so many provinces [through which I have passed] the barriers at Kiyomigata and Osaka were far better than the others.

It was dark when I arrived at the residence on the west of the Princess of Sanjo’s mansion.[24] Our garden was very wide and wild with great, fearful trees not inferior to those mountains I had come from. I could not feel at home, or keep a settled mind. Even then I teased mother into giving me books of stories, after which I had been yearning for so many years. Mother sent a messenger with a letter to Emon-no-Myōgu, one of our relatives who served the Princess of Sanjo. She took interest in my strange passion and willingly sent me some excellent manuscripts in the lid of a writing-box,[25] saying that these copies had been given her by the Princess. My joy knew no bounds and I read them day and night; I soon began to wish for more, but as I was an utter stranger to the Royal City, who would get them for me?

My stepmother [meaning one of her father’s wives] had once been a lady-in-waiting at the court, and she seemed to have been disappointed in something. She had been regretting the World [her marriage], and now she was to leave our home. She beckoned her own child, who was five years old, and said, “The time will never come when I shall forget you, dear heart”; and pointing to a huge plum-tree which grew close to the eaves, said, “When it is in flower I shall come back”; and she went away. I felt love and pity for her, and while I was secretly weeping, the
year, too, went away.

“IT WAS ALL IN FLOWER AND YET NO TIDINGS FROM HER”

“When the plum-tree blooms I shall come back”—I pondered over these words and wondered whether it would be so. I waited and waited with my eye hung to the tree. It was all in flower[26] and yet no tidings from her. I became very anxious [and at last] broke a branch and sent it to her [of course with a poem]:

You gave me words of hope, are they not long delayed?  
The plum-tree is remembered by the Spring,  
Though it seemed dead with frost.

She wrote back affectionate words with a poem:

Wait on, never forsake your hope,  
For when the plum-tree is in flower  
Even the unpromised, the unexpected, will come to you.

During the spring [of 1022] the world was disquieted.[27] My nurse, who had filled my heart with pity on that moonlight night at the ford of Matsuzato, died on the moon-birthday of the Ever-growing month [first day of March], I lamented hopelessly without any way to set my mind at ease, and even forgot my passion for romances.

I passed day after day weeping bitterly, and when I first looked out of doors[28] [again] I saw the evening sun on cherry-blossoms all falling in confusion [this would mean four weeks later].

Flowers are falling, yet I may see them again  
when Spring returns.  
But, oh, my longing for the dear person  
who has departed from us forever!

I also heard that the daughter of the First Adviser[29] to the King was lost [dead]. I could sympathize deeply with the sorrow of her lord, the Lieutenant-General, for I still felt my own sorrow.

When I had first arrived at the Capital I had been given a book of the handwriting of this noble lady for my copy-book. In it were written several poems, among them the following:

When you see the smoke floating up the valley of  
Toribe Hill,[30]  
Then you will understand me, who seemed as shadow-like  
even while living.

I looked at these poems which were written in such a beautiful handwriting, and I shed more tears. I sat brooding until mother troubled herself to console me. She searched for romances and gave them to me, and I became consoled unconsciously. I read a few volumes of Genji-monogatari and longed for the rest, but as I was still a stranger here I had no way of finding them. I was all impatience and yearning, and in my mind was always praying that I might read all the books of Genji-monogatari from the very first one.

While my parents were shutting themselves up in Udzu-Masa[31] Temple, I asked them for nothing except this romance, wishing to read it as soon as I could get it, but all in vain. I was inconsolable. One day I visited my aunt, who had recently come up from the country. She showed a tender interest in me and lovingly said I had grown up beautifully. On my return she said: “What shall I give you? You will not be interested in serious things: I will give you what you like best.” And she gave me more than fifty volumes of Genji-monogatari put in a case, as well as Isé-monogatari, Yojimi, Serikawa, Shirara, and Asa-udzu.[32] How happy I was when I came home carrying these books in a bag! Until then I had only read a volume here and there, and was dissatisfied because I could not understand the story.

Now I could be absorbed in these stories, taking them out one by one, shutting myself in behind the kichô.[33] To be a Queen were nothing compared to this!

All day and all night, as late as I could keep my eyes open, I did nothing but look at the books, setting a lamp[34] close beside me.
Soon I learnt by heart all the names in the books, and I thought that a great thing.

Once I dreamt of a holy priest in yellow Buddhist scarf who came to me and said, “Learn the fifth book of the Hokekkyo[35] at once.”

I did not tell any one about this, nor had I any mind to learn it, but continued to bathe in the romances. Although I was still ugly and undeveloped [I thought to myself] the time would come when I should be beautiful beyond compare, with long, long hair. I should be like the Lady Yugao [in the romance] loved by the Shining Prince Genji, or like the Lady Ukifuné, the wife of the General of Uji [a famous beauty]. I indulged in such fancies—shallow-minded I was, indeed!

Could such a man as the Shining Prince be living in this world? How could General Kaoru [literal translation, “Fragrance”] find such a beauty as Lady Ukifuné to conceal in his secret villa at Uji? Oh! I was like a crazy girl.

While I had lived in the country, I had gone to the temple from time to time, but even then I could never pray like others, with a pure heart. In those days people learned to recite sutras and practise austerities of religious observance after the age of seventeen or eighteen, but I could scarcely even think of such matters. The only thing that I could think of was the Shining Prince who would some day come to me, as noble and beautiful as in the romance. If he came only once a year I, being hidden in a mountain villa like Lady Ukifuné, would be content. I could live as heart-dwindlingly as that lady, looking at flowers, or moonlit snowy landscape, occasionally receiving long-expected lovely letters from my Lord! I cherished such fancies and imagined that they might be realized.

On the moon-birth of the Rice-Sprout month I saw the white petals of the Tachibana tree [a kind of orange] near the house covering the ground.

Scarcely had my mind received with wonder;
The thought of newly fallen snow—
Seeing the ground lie white—
When the scent of Tachibana flowers
Arose from fallen blossoms.

In our garden trees grew as thick as in the dark forest of Ashigara, and in the Gods-absent month[36] its red leaves were more beautiful than those of the surrounding mountains. A visitor said, “On my way thither I passed a place where red leaves were beautiful”; and I improvised:

No sight can be more autumnal
than that of my garden
Tenanted by an autumnal person
weary of the world!

I still dwelt in the romances from morning to night, and as long as I was awake.

I had another dream: a man said that he was to make a brook in the garden of the Hexagon Tower to entertain the Empress of the First Rank of Honour. I asked the reason, and the man said, “Pray to the Heaven-illuminating honoured Goddess.” I did not tell any one about this dream or even think of it again. How shallow I was!

In the Spring I enjoyed the Princess’s garden. Cherry-blossoms waited for!—cherry-blossoms lamented over! In Spring I love the flowers whether in her garden or in mine.

On the moon-hidden day of the Ever-growing month [March 30, 1023], I started for a certain person’s house to avoid the evil influence of the earth god.[37] There I saw delightful cherry-blossoms still on the tree and the day after my return I sent this poem:

Alone, without tiring, I gazed at the cherry-blossoms of your garden.
The Spring was closing—they were about to fall—

Always when the flowers came and went, I could think of nothing but those days when my nurse died, and sadness descended upon me, which grew deeper when I studied the handwriting of the Honoured Daughter of the First Adviser.

Once in the Rice-Sprout month, when I was up late reading a romance, I heard a cat mewing with a long-drawn-out cry. I turned, wondering, and saw a very lovely cat. “Whence does it come?” I asked. “Sh,” said my sister, “do
not tell anybody. It is a darling cat and we will keep it."

The cat was very sociable and lay beside us. Some one might be looking for her [we thought], so we kept her secretly. She kept herself aloof from the vulgar servants, always sitting quietly before us. She turned her face away from unclean food, never eating it. She was tenderly cared for and caressed by us.

Once sister was ill, and the family was rather upset. The cat was kept in a room facing the north [i.e. a servant’s room], and never was called. She cried loudly and scoldingly, yet I thought it better to keep her away and did so. Sister, suddenly awakening, said to me, “Where is the cat kept? Bring her here.” I asked why, and sister said: “In my dream the cat came to my side and said, ‘I am the altered form of the late Honoured Daughter of the First Adviser to the King. There was a slight cause [for this]. Your sister has been thinking of me affectionately, so I am here for a while, but now I am among the servants. O how dreary I am!’ So saying she wept bitterly. She appeared to be a noble and beautiful person and then I awoke to hear the cat crying! How pitiful!”

The story moved me deeply and after this I never sent the cat away to the north-facing room, but waited on her lovingly. Once, when I was sitting alone, she came and sat before me, and, stroking her head, I addressed her: “You are the first daughter of the Noble Adviser? I wish to let your father know of it.” The cat watched my face and mewed, lengthening her voice.

It may be my fancy, but as I was watching her she seemed no common cat. She seemed to understand my words, and I pity her.

I had heard that a certain person possessed the Chogonka[38] [Song of the Long Regret] retold from the original of the Chinese poet Li T’ai Po. I longed to borrow it, but was too shy to say so.

On the seventh day of the Seventh month I found a happy means to send my word [the suggestion of my wish]:

This is the night when in the ancient Past,
The Herder Star embarked to meet the Weaving One;
In its sweet remembrance the wave rises high in the River of Heaven.[39]
Even so swells my heart to see the famous book.

The answer was:

The star gods meet on the shore of the Heavenly River,
Like theirs full of ecstasy is my heart
And grave things of daily life are forgotten
On the night your message comes to me.

On the thirteenth day of that month the moon shone very brightly. Darkness was chased away even from every corner of the heavens. It was about midnight and all were asleep.

We were sitting on the veranda. My sister, who was gazing at the sky thoughtfully, said, “If I flew away now, leaving no trace behind, what would you think of it?” She saw that her words shocked me, and she turned the conversation [lightly] to other things, and we laughed.

Then I heard a carriage with a runner before it stop near the house. The man in the carriage called out, “Ogi-no-ha! Ogi-no-ha!” [Reed-leaf, a woman’s name or pet name] twice, but no woman made reply. The man cried in vain until he was tired of it, and played his flute [a reed-pipe] more and more searchingly in a very beautiful rippling melody, and [at last] drove away.

Flute music in the night,
“Autumn Wind”[40] sighing,
Why does the reed-leaf make no reply?

Thus I challenged my sister, and she took it up:

Alas! light of heart
Who could so soon give over playing!
The wind did not wait
For the response of the reed-leaf.

We sat together looking up into the firmament, and went to bed after daybreak.
At midnight of the Deutzia month [April, 1024] a fire broke out, and the cat which had been waited on as a daughter of the First Adviser was burned to death. She had been used to come mewing whenever I called her by the name of that lady, as if she had understood me. My father said that he would tell the matter to the First Adviser, for it is a strange and heartfelt story. I was very, very sorry for her.

Our new temporary shelter was far narrower than the other. I was sad, for we had a very small garden and no trees. I thought with regret of the old spacious garden which was wild as a deep wood, and in time of flowers and red leaves the sight of it was never inferior to the surrounding mountains.

In the garden of the opposite house white and red plum-blossoms grew in confusion and their perfume came on the wind and filled me with thoughts of our old home.

When from the neighbouring garden the perfume-laden air
Saturates my soul with memories,
Rises the thought of the beloved plum-tree
Blooming under the eaves of the house which is gone.

On the moon-birth of the Rice-Sprout month my sister died after giving birth to a child. From childhood, even a stranger’s death had touched my heart deeply. This time I lamented, filled with speechless pity and sorrow.

While mother and the others were with the dead, I lay with the memory-awakening children one on either side of me. The moonlight found its way through the cracks of the roof [perhaps of their temporary dwelling] and illumined the face of the baby. The sight gave my heart so deep a pang that I covered its face with my sleeve, and drew the other child closer to my side, mothering the unfortunate.

After some days one of my relatives sent me a romance entitled “The Prince Yearning after the Buried,” with the following note: “The late lady had asked me to find her this romance. At that time I thought it impossible, but now to add to my sorrow, some one has just sent it to me.”

I answered:

What reason can there be that she
Strangely should seek a romance of the buried?
Buried now is the seeker
Deep under the mosses.

My sister’s nurse said that since she had lost her, she had no reason to stay and went back to her own home weeping.

Thus death or parting separates us each from the other,
Why must we part? Oh, world too sad for me!

“For remembrance of her I wanted to write about her,” began a letter from her nurse—but it stopped short with the words, “Ink seems to have frozen up, I cannot write any more.”[41]

How shall I gather memories of my sister?
The stream of letters is congealed.
No comfort may be found in icicles.

So I wrote, and the answer was:

Like the comfortless plover of the beach
In the sand printing characters soon to be washed away,
Unable to leave a more enduring trace in this fleeting world.

That nurse went to see the grave and returned sobbing, saying:

I seek her in the field, but she is not there,
Nor is she in the smoke of the cremation.
Where is her last dwelling-place?
How can I find it?
The lady who had been my stepmother heard of this [and wrote]:

_When we wander in search of her,_
_Ignorant of her last dwelling-place,_
_Standing before the thought_  
_Tears must be our guide._

The person who had sent “The Prince Yearning after the Buried” wrote:

_How she must have wandered seeking the unfindable_  
_In the unfamiliar fields of bamboo grasses,_  
_Vainly weeping!_

Reading these poems my brother, who had followed the funeral that night, composed a poem:

_Before my vision_  
_The fire and smoke of burning_  
_Arose and died again._  
_To bamboo fields there is no more returning,_  
_Why seek there in vain?_

It snowed for many days, and I thought of the nun who lived on Mount Yoshino, to whom I wrote:

_Snow has fallen_  
_And you cannot have_  
_Even the unusual sight of men_  
_Along the precipitous path of the Peak of Yoshino._

On the Sociable month of the next year father was looking forward with happy expectation to the night when he might expect an appointment as Governor of a Province. He was disappointed, and a person who might have shared our joy wrote to me, saying:

_“I anxiously waited for the dawn with uncertain hope.”_

_The temple bell roused me from dreams_  
_And waiting for the starlit dawn_  
_The night, alas! was long as are_  
_One hundred autumn nights._

I wrote back:

_Long was the night._  
_The bell called from dreams in vain,_  
_For it did not toll our realized hopes._

Towards the moon-hidden days [last days] of the Rice-Sprout month I went for a certain reason to a temple at Higashiyama.[42] On the way the nursery beds for rice-plants were filled with water, and the fields were green all over with the young growing rice. It was a smile-presenting sight. It gave a feeling of loneliness to see the dark shadow of the mountain close before me. In the lovely evenings water-rails chattered in the fields.

_The water-rails cackle as if they were knocking at the gate,_  
_But who would be deceived into opening the door, saying,_  
_Our friend has come along the mountain path in the dark night?_

As the place was near the Reizan Temple I went there to worship. Arriving so far I was fatigued, and drank from a stone-lined well beside the mountain temple, scooping the water into the hollow of my hand. My friend said, “I could never have enough of this water.” “Is it the first time,” I asked, “that you have tasted the satisfying sweetness of a mountain well drunk from the hollow of your hand?” She said, “It is sweeter than to drink from a shallow spring, which becomes muddy even from the drops which fall from the hand which has scooped it up.”[43] We came home from the temple in the full brightness of evening sunshine, and had a clear view of Kioto below us.

My friend, who had said that a spring becomes muddy even with drops falling into it, had to go back to the
I was sorry to part with her and sent word the next morning:

When the evening sun descends behind the mountain peak,
Will you forget that it is I who gaze with longing
Towards the place where you are?

The holy voices of the priests reciting sutras in their morning service could be heard from my house and I opened the door. It was dim early dawn; mist veiled the green forest, which was thicker and darker than in the time of flowers or red leaves. The sky seemed clouded this lovely morning. Cuckoos were singing on the near-by trees.

O for a friend—that we might see and listen together!
O the beautiful dawn in the mountain village!—
The repeated sound of cuckoos near and far away.

On that moon-hidden day cuckoos sung clamorously on trees towards the glen. “In the Royal City poets may be awaiting you, cuckoos, yet you sing here carelessly from morning till night!”

One who sat near me said: “Do you think that there is one person, at least, in the Capital who is listening to cuckoos, and thinking of us at this moment?”—and then:

Many in the Royal City like to gaze on the calm moon.
But is there one who thinks of the deep mountain
Or is reminded of us hidden here?

I replied:

In the dead of night, moon-gazing,
The thought of the deep mountain affrighted,
Yet longings for the mountain village
At all other moments filled my heart.

Once, towards dawn, I heard footsteps which seemed to be those of many persons coming down the mountain. I wondered and looked out. It was a herd of deer which came close to our dwelling. They cried out. It was not pleasant to hear them near by.

It is sweet to hear the love-call of a deer to its mate,
In Autumn nights, upon the distant hills.

I heard that an acquaintance had come near my residence and gone back without calling on me. So I wrote:

Even this wandering wind among the pines of the mountain—
I’ve heard that it departs with murmuring sound.

[That is, you are not like it. You do not speak when going away.]

In the Leaf-Falling month [September] I saw the moon more than twenty days old. It was towards dawn; the mountain-side was gloomy and the sound of the waterfall was all [I heard]. I wish that lovers [of nature] may see the after-dawn-waning moon in a mountain village at the close of an autumn night.

I went back to Kioto when the rice-fields, which had been filled with water when I came, were dried up, the rice being harvested. The young plants in their bed of water—the plants harvested—the fields dried up—so long I remained away from home.

’T was the moon-hidden of the Gods-absent month when I went there again for temporary residence. The thick grown leaves which had cast a dark shade were all fallen. The sight was heartfelt over all. The sweet, murmuring rivulet was buried under fallen leaves and I could see only the course of it.

Even water could not live on—
So lonesome is the mountain
Of the leaf-scattering stormy wind.

[At about this time the author of this diary seems to have had some family troubles. Her father received no
appointment from the King—they were probably poor, and her gentle, poetic nature did not incline her to seek useful friends at court; therefore many of the best years of her youth were spent in obscurity—a great contrast to the “Shining-Prince” dreams of her childhood.]

I went back to Kioto saying that I should come again the next Spring, could I live so long, and begged the nun to send word when the flowering-time had come.

It was past the nineteenth of the Ever-growing month of the next year [1026], but there were no tidings from her, so I wrote:

No word about the blooming cherry-blossoms,
Has not the Spring come for you yet?
Or does the perfume of flowers not reach you?

I made a journey, and passed many a moonlit night in a house beside a bamboo wood. Wind rustled its leaves and my sleep was disturbed.

Night after night the bamboo leaves sigh,
My dreams are broken and a vague, indefinite sadness fills my heart.

In Autumn [1026] I went to live elsewhere and sent a poem:

I am like dew on the grass—
And pitiable wherever I may be—
But especially am I oppressed with sadness
In a field with a thin growth of reeds.

After that time I was somehow restless and forgot about the romances. My mind became more sober and I passed many years without doing any remarkable thing. I neglected religious services and temple observances. Those fantastic ideas [of the romances] can they be realized in this world? If father could win some good position I also might enter into a much nobler life. Such unreliable hopes then occupied my daily thoughts.

At last[44] father was appointed Governor of a Province very far in the East.

[Here the diary skips six years. The following is reminiscent.]

He [father] said: “I was always thinking that if I could win a position as Governor in the neighbourhood of the Capital I could take care of you to my heart’s desire. I would wish to bring you down to see beautiful scenery of sea and mountain. Moreover, I wished that you could live attended beyond [the possibilities] of our [present] position. Our Karma relation from our former world must have been bad. Now I have to go to so distant a country after waiting so long! When I brought you, who were a little child, to the Eastern Province [at his former appointment], even a slight illness caused me much trouble of mind in thinking that should I die, you would wander helpless in that far country. There were many fears in a stranger’s country, and I should have lived with an easier mind had I been alone. As I was then accompanied by all my family, I could not say or do what I wanted to say or do, and I was ashamed of it. Now you are grown up [she was twenty-five years old] and I am not sure that I can live long.

It is not so unusual a fate to be helpless in the Capital, but the saddest thing of all would be to wander in the Eastern Province like any country-woman.[45] There are no relatives in the Capital upon whom we could rely to foster you, yet I cannot refuse the appointment which has been made after such long waiting. So you must remain here, and I must depart for Eternity.—Oh, in what way may I provide a way for you to live in the Capital decently!”

Night and day he lamented, saying these things, and I forgot all about flowers or maple leaves, grieving sadly, but there was no help for it.

He went down[46] on the thirteenth of the Seventh month, 1032.

For several days before that I could not remain still in my own room, for I thought it difficult to see him again.

On that day [the 13th] after restless hours, when the [time for] parting came, I had lifted the blind and my eye met his, from which tears dropped down. Soon he had passed by.[47] My eyes were dim with tears and soon I concealed myself in bed [tears were bad manners]. A man who had gone to see him off returned with a poem written on a bit of pocket paper.
A message from her father:

If I could do as I wish
I could acknowledge more profoundly
The sorrow of departing in Autumn.

[The last line has, of course, reference to his age and the probability of never returning.]

I could not read the poem to the end.

In the happier time I had often tried to compose halting poems [literally, of broken loins], but at present I had no word to say.

—never began to think in this world even for
a moment from you to part. Alas!

No person came to my side and I was very lonely and forlorn musing and guessing where he would be at every moment. As I knew the road he was taking [the same which is described in this journal], I thought of him the more longingly and with greater heart-shrinking. Morning and evening I looked towards the sky-line of the eastern mountains.

_Bushes bury the hut_
_Where lives the world-deserted one,

[1] Her father Takasué was appointed Governor of Kazusa in 1017, and the authoress, who was then nine years old, was brought from Kiōto to the Province.


[5] Ancient ladies avoided men’s eyes and always sat behind sudaré (finely split bamboo curtain) through which they could look out without being seen.

[6] High personages, Governors of Provinces or other nobles, travelled with a great retinue, consisting of armed horsemen, foot-soldiers, and attendants of all sorts both high and low, together with the luggage necessary for prolonged existence in the wilderness. From Tokyo to Kiōto nowadays the journey is about twelve hours. It took about three months in the year 1017.

[7] Futoi River is called the River Edo at present.


[10] Common gromwell, _Lithospermum_.

[11] Takeshiba: Now called Shibaura, place-name in Tokyo near Shinagawa. Another manuscript reads: “This was the manor house of Takeshiba.”


[13] Seta Bridge is across the river from Lake Biwa, some seven or eight miles from Kioto.

[14] In those days noblemen’s and ladies’ dresses were perfumed.


[16] The original text may also be understood as follows: “After that the guards of the watch-fire were allowed to live with their wives in the palace.”
In the *Isé-monogatari* (a book of Narihira’s poetical works) the Sumida River is said to be on the boundary between Musashi and Shimofusa. So the italicized words seem to be the authoress’s mistake, or more probably an insertion by a later smatterer of literary knowledge who inherited the manuscript.

Narihira’s poem is addressed to a sea-gull called *Miyakodori*, which literally means *bird of the capital*. Narihira had abandoned Kioto and was wandering towards the East. Just then his heart had been yearning after the Royal City and also after his wife, and that feeling must have been intensified by the name of the bird. (Cf. The *Isé-monogatari*, Section 9.)

*Miyakodori! alas, that word
Fills my heart again with longing,
Even you I ask, O bird,
Does she still live, my beloved?*

According to “Sagami-Fūdoki,” or “The Natural Features of Sagami Province,” this district was in ancient times inhabited by Koreans. The natives could not distinguish a Korean from a Chinese, hence the name of *Chinese Field*. A temple near Oiso still keeps the name of Kōraiji, or the Korean temple.

This seems to be the last line of a kind of song called *Imayo*, perhaps improvised by the singers; its meaning may be as follows: “You compare us with singers of the Western Provinces; we are inferior to those in the Royal City; we may justly be compared with those in Osaka.”

Hakoné Mountain has now become a resort of tourists and a place of summer residence.

Fear of evil spirits which probably lived in the wild, and of robbers who certainly did.

Aoi, or Futaba-aoi. At the great festival of the Kamo shrine in Kioto the processionists crowned their heads with the leaves of this plant, so it must have been well known.

Mount Fuji was then an active volcano.

The Princess was Sadako, daughter of King Sanjo, afterwards Queen of King Goshujaku [1037-104]).

Lacquered boxes, sometimes of great beauty, containing india ink and inkstone, brushes, rolls of paper.

Plum-trees bloom between the first and second months of the old calendar.

By pestilence. People were often attacked by contagious diseases in those days, and they, who did not know about the nature of infection, called it by the name of “world-humor” or “world-disease,” attributing its cause to the ill-humor of some gods or spirits.

In those days windows were covered with silk and could not be seen through.

Fujiwara-no-Yukinari: One of the three famous calligraphers of that time.

Place where cremation was performed.

It is a Buddhist custom to go into retreat from time to time.

Some of these books are not known now.

A kind of screen used in upper-class houses: see illustration.

Her lamp was rather like an Italian one—a shallow cup for oil fixed to a tall metal stem, with a wick projecting to one side.

Sadharmpundarika Sutra, or Sutra of the Lotus, in Sanscrit.

In October it was the custom for all local gods to go for a conference to the residence of the oldest native god, in the Province of Idzumo; hence, *Gods-absent month*. This Province of Idzumo, full of the folklore of old Japan, has become well known to the world through the writings of Lafcadio Hearn.

According to the superstition of those days people believed that every house was presided over by an earth god, which occupied the hearth in Spring, the gate in Summer, the well in Autumn, and the garden in Winter. It
was dangerous to meet him when he changed his abode. So on that day the dwellers went out from their houses.

[38] Readers are urged to read the delightful essay of Lafcadio Hearn called “The Romance of the Milky Way” (Chogonka). Here it must suffice to relate the story of “Tanabata-himé” and the herdsman. Tanabata-tsume was the daughter of the god of the sky. She rejoiced to weave garments for her father and had no greater pleasure than that, until one day Hikiboshi, a young herdsman, leading an ox, passed by her door. Divining her love for him, her father gave his daughter the young herdsman for her husband, and all went well, until the young couple grew too fond of each other and the weaving was neglected. Thereupon the great god was displeased and “they were sentenced to live apart with the Celestial River between them,” but in pity of their love they were permitted to meet one night a year, on the seventh day of the Seventh month. On that night the herdsman crosses the River of Heaven where Tanabata-tsume is waiting for him on the other side, but woe betide if the night is cloudy or rainy! Then the waters of the River of Heaven rise, and the lovers must wait full another year before the boat can cross.

Many of our beautiful poems have been written on this legend; sometimes it is Tanabata-himé who is waiting for her lord, sometimes it is Hikiboshi who speaks. The festival has been celebrated for 1100 years in Japan, and there is no country village which does not sing these songs on the seventh night of the Seventh month, and make offerings to the star gods of little poems tied to the freshly cut bamboo branches.


[40] Name of an old song.

[41] The continuous writing of the cursive Japanese characters is often compared to a meandering river. “Ink seems to have frozen up” means that her eyes are dim with tears, and no more she can write continuously and flowingly.


[43] This conversation in the original is a play upon words which cannot be translated.

[44] In an old chronicle of the times one reads that it was on February 8, 1032.

[45] The country people of the Eastern Provinces beyond Tokyo were then called “Eastern barbarians.”

[46] Away from the Capital where the King resides is always down; towards the capital is always up.

[47] This scene will be better understood by the reader if he remembers that her father was in the street in the midst of his train of attendants—an imposing cavalcade of bow-men, warriors, and attendants of all sorts, with palanquins and luggage, prepared to make a two or three months’ journey through the wilderness to the Province of Hitachi, far in the East. She, as a Japanese lady could not go out to speak to him, but unconventionally she had drawn up the blind and “her eye met his.”

[48] To translate: As there are a thousand kinds of flowers in the autumn fields, so there are a thousand reasons for going to the fields.


[50] Name of mountain in eastern part of Japan.

[51] In the eastern part of Kioto, now a famous spot.

[52] The Isé shrine was first built in the year 5 B.C. See note on Isé shrine in Murasaki Shikibu Diary.


[54] The custom of the Court obliged the court ladies to lead a life of almost no privacy—sleeping at night together in the presence of the Queen, and sharing their apartments with each other.

[55] Some words are lost from this sentence.


[57] Asakura is a place-name in Kyushu. There was a song entitled “Asakura” which seems to have been popular in those days and was sung in the Court.
[58] Hakasé is LL.D., so she might have been daughter of a scholar.

[59] Special house devoted to use of a King’s wife.

[60] The Princess, whom our lady served, was the daughter of King Goshijaku’s Queen. The Queen died 1039. After this the Royal Consort Umetsubo won the King’s favour.

[61] Some words lost.


[63] A pipe made of seven reeds having a very clear, piercing sound.

[64] Famous period in Chinese history.

[65] This gentleman’s name is known.

[66] He ruled from 970 to 984. It was now 1045.

[67] Something seems to have occurred which may have been her marriage to a noble of lower rank or inferior family than her own, but one can only infer this, she does not tell it.

[68] There is an old fable about parsley: A country person ate parsley and thought it very fine, so he went up to the Capital to present it to the King, but the King was not so much pleased, for he could not find it good. So “to gather parsley” means to endeavour to win others’ favour by offering something we care for but others do not.

[69] Goreizai, from 1046 to 1068.

[70] This is called the Byōdōin and is one of the famous buildings now existing in Japan (see illustrations in Cram’s Impressions of Japanese Architecture), built upon an exquisite design, and original in character. It had been the villa of the Prime Minister, but was made into a temple in 1051, when the riches of the interior decorations were more like the gorgeousness of Indian temples than the chaster decorations of Japan.

[71] At Nara where the great Buddha, 160 feet high, was already standing.

[72] In those days it was the custom for the person who wished to be favoured by the Inari god to crown his head with a twig of cedar. The Inari god was then the god of the rice-plant. He is now confused with the fox-god whose little shrines, flanked by small stone foxes, are seen everywhere.

[73] A kind of leathern shield made of untanned deerskin worn hanging from the shoulder.

[74] The World: i.e. her husband.

[75] The following poems have been found impossible of literal translation on account of play of words.

[76]

As I slept fondly thinking of him
He appeared to my sight—
Oh, I would I had not wakened
To find it only a dream!

[77] Her brother Sadayoshi was Governor of that Province.


[79] In 1057, as Governor of Shinano Province.

[80] She was thirty-five years old and her husband forty-one years old when they were married. We may suppose that she was his second wife. This daughter must have been borne by the first wife. The cause of starting from his daughter’s house is some superstitious idea, and not the coldness of their relation.

[81] The rank of the person determined the colour of his clothes. Red was worn by nobles of the fifth degree.
The Japanese believed that “human fire” or spirit can be seen leaving the body of one who is soon to die.

Her husband died.

At death the Lord Buddha coming on a cloud appears to the faithful one and accompanies the soul to Heaven.

The point of this is in the name of the place, Obásuté, which may be translated, “Aunt Casting Away,” or “Cast-Away-Aunt.” It is a place famous for the beauty of its scenery in moonlight.

II

THE DIARY OF MURASAKI SHIKIBU[1]

A.D. 1007-1010

As the autumn season approaches the Tsuchimikado[2] becomes inexpressibly smile-giving. The tree-tops near the pond, the bushes near the stream, are dyed in varying tints whose colours grow deeper in the mellow light of evening. The murmuring sound of waters mingles all the night through with the never-ceasing recitation[3] of sutras which appeal more to one’s heart as the breezes grow cooler.

The ladies waiting upon her honoured presence are talking idly. The Queen hears them; she must find them annoying, but she conceals it calmly. Her beauty needs no words of mine to praise it, but I cannot help feeling that to be near so beautiful a queen will be the only relief from my sorrow. So in spite of my better desires [for a religious life] I am here. Nothing else dispels my grief[4]—it is wonderful!

It is still the dead of night, the moon is dim and darkness lies under the trees. We hear an officer call,

“The outer doors of the Queen’s apartment must be opened. The maids-of-honour are not yet come—let the Queen’s secretaries come forward!” While this order is being given the three-o’clock bell resounds, startling the air. Immediately the prayers at the five altars[5] begin. The voices of the priests in loud recitation, vying with each other far and near, are solemn indeed. The Abbot of the Kanon-in Temple, accompanied by twenty priests, comes from the eastern[6] side building to pray. Even their footsteps along the gallery which sound to‘do-ro to‘do-ro are sacred. The head priest of the Hoju Temple goes to the mansion near the race-track, the prior of the Henji Temple goes to the library. I follow with my eyes when the holy figures in pure white robes cross the stately Chinese bridge and walk along the broad path. Even Azaliah Saisa bends the body in reverence before the deity Daitoku. The maids-of-honour arrive at dawn.
I can see the garden from my room beside the entrance to the gallery. The air is misty, the dew is still on the leaves. The Lord Prime Minister is walking there; he orders his men to cleanse the brook. He breaks off a stalk of omenaishi [flower maiden] which is in full bloom by the south end of the bridge. He peeps in over my screen! His noble appearance embarrasses us, and I am ashamed of my morning [not yet painted and powdered] face. He says, “Your poem on this! If you delay so much the fun is gone!” and I seize the chance to run away to the writing-box, hiding my face—

*Flower-maiden in bloom—*

*Even more beautiful for the bright dew,*  
*Which is partial, and never favors me.*

“So prompt!” said he, smiling, and ordered a writing-box to be brought [for himself].

His answer:

*The silver dew is never partial.*  
*From her heart*  
*The flower-maiden’s beauty.*

One wet and calm evening I was talking with Lady Saisho. The young Lord[7] of the Third Rank sat with the misu[8] partly rolled up. He seemed maturer than his age and was very graceful. Even in light conversation such expressions as “Fair soul is rarer than fair face” come gently to his lips, covering us with confusion. It is a mistake to treat him like a young boy. He keeps his dignity among ladies, and I saw in him a much-sought-after romantic hero when once he walked off reciting to himself:

*Linger in the field where flower-maidens are blooming*
And your name will be tarnished with tales of gallantry.

Some such trifle as that sometimes lingers in my mind when really interesting things are soon forgotten—why?

Nowadays people are carrying pretty folding fans.

Since the twentieth of the Eighth month, the more favoured court nobles and officers have been on night duty, passing the nights in the corridor, or on the mats of the veranda idly amusing themselves. Young men who are unskilled in koto or fué [harp or flute] amuse themselves with tonearasoi[9] and imayo,[10] and at such a time this is entertaining. Narinobu, the Queen’s Grand Chamberlain, Tsunefusa, the Lieutenant-General of the Left Bodyguard and State Councillor, and Narimasa, the Major-General of the Bodyguard and Governor of Mino, passed the night in diversions. The Lord Prime Minister must have been apprehensive, for he has forbidden all public entertainment. Those who have long retired from the court have come in crowds to ask after the Queen’s welfare, so we have had no peace.

Twenty-sixth day. We finished the preparation of perfume[11] and distributed it to all. A number of us who had been making it into balls assembled together. On my way from Her Majesty’s chamber I peeped into Ben Saisho’s room. She was sleeping. She wore garments of hagi[12] and shion[12] over which she had put a strongly perfumed lustrous robe. Her face was hidden behind the cloth,[13] her head rested on a writing-case of gold lacquer. Her forehead was beautiful and fascinating. She seemed like a princess in a picture. I took off the cloth which hid her mouth and said, “You are just like the heroine of a romance!” She blushed, half rising; she was beauty itself. She is always beautiful, but on this occasion her charm was wonderfully heightened.

Dear Lady Hyoé brought me some floss[14] silk for chrysanthemums. “The wife of the Prime Minister favours you with this present to drive away age,[14] carefully use it and then throw it away.”

May that lady live one thousand years who guards the flowers!
My sleeves are wet with thankful tears
As though I had been walking
In a garden of dewy chrysanthemums.

I wanted to send it, but as I heard that she had gone away I kept it.

The evening I went to the Queen’s chamber. As the moon was beautiful, skirts overflowed from beneath the misu.[15] By and by there came Lady Koshosho and Lady Dainagon. Her Majesty took out some of the perfume made the other day and put it into an incense burner to try it. The garden was admirable—“When the ivy leaves become red!“ they were saying—but our Lady seemed less tranquil than usual. The priests came for prayers, and I went into the inside room but was called away and finally went to my own chamber. I wanted only to rest a few minutes, but fell asleep. By midnight everybody was in great excitement.

Tenth day of the Long-moon month.

When day began to dawn the decorations[16] of the Queen’s chamber were changed and she removed to a white bed. The Prime Minister, his sons, and other noblemen made haste to change the curtains of the screens, the bed cover, and other things.[16] All day long she lay ill at ease. Men cried at the top of their voices to scare away evil spirits. There assembled not only the priests who had been summoned here for these months, but also itinerant monks who were brought from every mountain and temple. Their prayers would reach to the Buddhas of the three worlds. All the soothsayers in the world were summoned. Eight million gods seemed to be listening with ears erect for their Shinto prayers. Messengers ran off to order sutra-reciting at various temples; thus the night was passed. On the east side of the screen [placed around the Queen’s bed] there assembled the ladies of the Court. On the west side there were lying the Queen’s substitutes possessed with [or who were enticing] the evil spirits.[17] Each was lying surrounded by a pair of folding screens. The joints of the screens were curtained and priests were appointed to cry sutras there. On the south side there sat in many rows abbots and other dignitaries of the priesthood, who prayed and swore till their voices grew hoarse, as if they were bringing down the living form of Fudo.[18] The space between the north room and the dais [on which was the Queen’s bed] was very narrow, yet when I thought of it afterwards I counted more than forty persons who were standing there. They could not move at all, and grew so dizzy that they could remember nothing. The people [i.e. the ladies-in-waiting and maids-of-honour] now coming from home could not enter the main apartment at all. There was no place for their flowing robes and long sleeves. Certain older women wept secretly.

Eleventh day. At dawn the north sliding doors were taken away to throw the two rooms together. The Queen was moved towards the veranda. As there was no time to hang misu, she was surrounded by kichō. The Reverend Gyoko and the other priests performed incantations. The Reverend Ingen recited the prayer written by the Lord
Prime Minister on the previous day adding some grave vows of his own. His words were infinitely august and hopeful. The Prime Minister joining in the prayer, we felt more assured of a fortunate delivery. Yet there was still lingering anxiety which made us very sad, and many eyes were filled with tears. We said, “Tears are not suitable to this occasion,” but we could not help crying. They said that Her Majesty suffered more because the rooms were too crowded, so the people were ordered to the south and east rooms. After this there remained in the Royal Apartment only the more important personages. The Prime Minister, Lady Sanuki, and Lady Saisho were within the [Royal] screen. The honoured priest of Ninna Temple and the court priest of Mii Temple were summoned within. The Prime Minister gave various commands, and his voice overpowered those of the priests. There were also Ladies Dainagon, Koshosho, Miya-no-Naishi, Nakatsukasa-no-Kimi, Tayu-no-Myobu, Daishikibu-no-Omoto, Tono-no-Senji—these last were venerable ladies of experience, but even they were bewildered with good reason. I am yet a novice, and I felt with all my heart that the occasion was serious. Also, in the place a little behind, outside the curtain, there were the nurses of the Princesses Naishi-no-Kami and Nakatsukasa, of the Queen’s sister Shōnagon, and of her younger sister Koshikibu. These nurses forced their way into the narrow passage behind the two screens and there did not walk back and forth, so that none could pass that way. There were many other persons bustling about, but I could not distinguish them. The Prime Minister’s son, Lieutenant-General Saisho, Major-General Masamichi of the Fourth Rank, not to speak of Lieutenant-General Tsunefusa, of the Left Bodyguard, and Miya-no-Tayu, who had not known Her Majesty familiarly, all looked over her screen for some time. They showed eyes swollen up with weeping [over her sufferings], forgetting the shame of it. On their heads rice[19] was scattered white as snow. Their rumpled clothes must have been unseemly, but we could only think of those things afterward. A part of the Queen’s head was shaved.[20] I was greatly astonished and very sorry to see it, but she was delivered peacefully. The after-birth was delayed, and all priests crowded to the south balcony, under the eaves of the magnificent main building, while those on the bridge recited sutras more passionately, often kneeling.

Among the ladies-in-waiting on the east side were seen some of the courtiers.[21] Lady Kochujo’s eye met that of the Lieutenant-General. People afterwards laughed over her astonished expression. She is a very fascinating and elegant person, and is always very careful to adorn her face. This morning she had done so, but her eyes were red, and her rouge was spoiled by tears. She was disfigured, and hardly seemed the same person. The imperfectly made-up face of Lady Saisho was a rare sight, but what about my own? It is lucky for me that people cannot notice such things at such a time.

As the after-birth came, it was fearful to hear the jealously swearing voices of the evil spirits. Shinzo-Azari took charge of Lady Ben-no-Kurodo; Sōyo took charge of Hyōe-no-Kurodo; a priest Hojuji took charge of Ukon-no-Kurodo;[22] Chiso Azari took charge of Lady Miya-no-Naishi. This last priest was overpowered with the evil spirit, and as he was in a too pitiable state Ninkaku Azari went to help him. It was not because his prayer had little virtue, but the [evil] spirit was too strong. Priest Eiko was in charge of Lady Saisho’s supplicator of the spirit [i.e. Queen’s substitute]. This priest swore all night till his voice became hoarse. Most ladies who were summoned in order that the spirits might enter into them remained safe, and they were much troubled [thinking that it would be to the Queen’s advantage were they attacked]. At noon we felt that the sun came out at last. The Queen was at ease!

She is now at peace. Incomparable joy! Moreover, it is a prince, so the joy cannot be oblique. The court ladies who had passed the previous day in anxiety, not knowing what to do, as if they were lost in the mist of the early morning, went one by one to rest in their own rooms, so that before the Queen there remained only some elderly persons proper for such occasions. The Lord Prime Minister and his Lady went away to give offerings to the priest who had read sutras and performed religious austerities during the past months, and to those doctors who were recently summoned. The doctors and soothsayers, who had invented special forms of efficacy, were given pensions. Within the house they were perhaps preparing for the ceremony of bathing the child.

Large packages [of ceremonial clothes] [23] were carried to the apartments of the ladies-in-waiting. Karaginu[24] trains were worn. Some wore dazzlingly brilliant trains embroidered and ornamented with mother-of-pearl. Some lamented that the fans which had been ordered had not come. They all painted and powdered. When I looked from the bridge I saw Her Majesty’s first officials, and the highest officers of His Highness the Crown Prince [the newborn child] and other court nobles. The Prime Minister went out to have the brook, which had been choked with mud, cleaned[25] out.

All the people seem happy. Even those who have some cause for melancholy are overtaken by the general joy. The First Official of our Queen has naturally seemed happier than anybody, though he does not show special smiles of self-satisfaction and pride.

The Lieutenant-General of the Light Bodyguard has been joking with the King’s Adviser of the Middle Rank, sitting on a mat on the balcony of the side building. The sword of His Highness the young Prince has been brought from the Imperial Court. The Lieutenant-General, and First Secretary Yori-sada, on his way home from the shrine at
The navel cord was cut by the Prime Minister’s Lady. Lady Tachibana of the Third Rank gave the breast for the first time [ceremonial]. For the wet-nurse Daisaémon-no-Omoto was chosen, for she has been in the Court a long time and is very familiar with it; the daughter of Munetoki, courtier and Governor of Bitchu, and the nurse of Kurodo-no-Ben were also chosen as nurses.

The ceremony of bathing was performed at six o’clock in the evening. The bath was lighted [by torches]. The Queen’s maid in white over green prepared the hot water. The stand for the bathtub was covered with white cloth.

Chikamitsu, Governor of Owari [Province], and Nakanobu, the Head Officer attached to the Queen, presented themselves before the misu.

There were two stands for kettles.

Lady Kyoiko and Lady Harima poured the cold water. Two ladies, Omoku and Uma, selected sixteen jars from among those into which the hot water was poured [choosing the purest]. These ladies wore gauze outer garments, fine silk trains, karaginu, and saishi.[29] Their hair was tied by white cords which gave the head a very fair look. In the bath Lady Saisho became the partner of bathing [i.e. entered the bath with the royal infant]. Lady Dainagon in her bathing-dress—she was especially beautiful in this rare costume. The Lord Prime Minister took the August Prince in his arms; Lady Koshosho held the sword, and Lady Miya-no-Naishi held up a tiger’s head before the Prince.[30] Lady Miya-no-Naishi wore karaginu with a pattern of pine cones. Her train was woven in a marine design of sea-weeds, waves, etc.; on the belt a vine-pattern was embroidered. Lady Koshosho wore an embroidered belt with a pattern of autumn leaves, butterflies, and birds, which was bright with silver thread. Brocade was forbidden except for persons of high rank and they used it only for the belt. Two sons of the Prime Minister and Major-General Minamoto Masamichi were scattering rice in great excitement.[31] “I will make the most noise,” each shouted to the other. The priest of Henchi Temple presented himself to protect the August Child. The rice hit him on his eyes and ears so he held out his fan and the young people laughed at him. The Doctor of Literature, Kurodo Ben-no-Hironari, stood at the foot of the high corridor and read the first book of Sikki [historical records]. Twenty bow-string men twanged the bow-string to scare away evil spirits, they were ten men of the fifth, and ten men of the sixth degree [of rank] arranged in two rows. The same ceremonies of bathing were repeated in the evening. Only the Doctor of Literature was changed. Doctor Munetoki, Governor of Isé, read the Kokyo [book on filial piety], and Takachika read a chapter of Buntei [in the Historical Records of Chinese Kings].

For seven nights every ceremony was performed cloudlessly. Before the Queen in white the styles and colours of other people’s dresses appeared in sharp contrast.[32] I felt much dazzled and abashed, and did not present myself in the daytime, so I passed my days in tranquillity and watched persons going up from the eastern side building across the bridge. Those who were permitted to wear the honourable colours[33] put on brocaded karaginu,[34] and also brocaded uchigi. This was the conventionally beautiful dress, not showing individual taste. The elderly ladies who could not wear the honourable colours avoided anything dazzling, but took only exquisite uchigi[35] trimmed with three or five folds, and for karaginu brocade either of one colour or of a simple design. For their inner kimonos they used figured stuffs or gauzes. Their fans, though not at first glance brilliant or attractive, had some written phrases or sentiments in good taste, but almost exactly alike, as if they had compared notes beforehand. In point of fact the resemblance came from their similarity of age, and they were individual efforts. Even in those fans were revealed their minds which are in jealous rivalry. The younger ladies wore much-embroidered clothes; even their sleeve openings were embroidered. The pleats of their trains were ornamented with thick silver thread and they put gold foil on the brocaded figures of the silk. Their fans were like a snow-covered mountain in bright moonlight; they sparkled and could not be looked at steadily. They were like hanging mirrors [in those days made of polished metal].

On the third night Her Majesty’s major-domo gave an entertainment. He served the Queen himself. The dining-table of aloe wood, the silver dishes, and other things I saw hurriedly. Minamoto Chunagon and Saisho presented the Queen with some baby clothes and diapers, a stand for a clothes chest, and cloth for wrapping up clothes and furniture. They were white in colour, and all of the same shape, yet they were carefully chosen, showing the artist mind. The Governor of Omi Province was busy with the general management of the banquet. On the western balcony of the East building there sat court nobles in two rows, the north being the more honourable place. On the southern balcony were court officials, the west being the most honourable seat. Outside the doors of the principal building [where the Queen was] white figured-silk screens were put.

On the fifth night the Lord Prime Minister celebrated the birth. The full moon on the fifteenth day was clear and beautiful. Torches were lighted under the trees and tables were put there with rice-balls on them. Even the uncouth humble servants who were walking about chattering seemed to enhance the joyful scene. All minor
officials were there burning torches, making it as bright as day. Even the attendants of the nobles, who gathered behind the rocks and under the trees, talked of nothing but the new light which had come into the world, and were smiling and seemed happy as if their own private wishes had been fulfilled. Happier still seemed those in the Audience Chamber, from the highest nobles even to men of the fifth rank, who, scarcely to be counted among the nobility, met the joyful time going about idly, and bending their bodies busily [i.e. obsequiously].

To serve at the Queen’s dinner eight ladies tied their hair with white cords, and in that dress brought in Her Majesty’s dining-table. The chief lady-in-waiting for that night was Miya-no-Naishi. She was brilliantly dressed with great formality, and her hair was made more charming by the white cords which enhanced her beauty. I got a side glance of her when her face was not screened by her fan. She wore a look of extreme purity.

The following are the maids-of-honour who tied their hair; Minamoto Shikibu, daughter of the Governor of Kaga Province; Kozaémon, daughter of the late Michitoki, Governor of Bitchu; Kohyoé, daughter of Akimasa, Governor of the Left Capital; Osuké, daughter of Sukechika, the head priest of the Isé shrine; O Uma, daughter of Yorinobu, an officer of the Right Bodyguard; Ko Uma, daughter of Michinobu, an officer of the Left Bodyguard; Kohyoé, daughter of Nari-taka, Recorder of the Capital; Komoku [or Dakumi], daughter of Nobuyoshi. These were all young and pretty. It was a sight worth seeing. This time, as they chose only the best-looking young ladies, the rest who used to tie their hair on ordinary occasions to serve the Queen’s dinner wept bitterly; it was shocking to see them.

More than thirty ladies were sitting in the two rooms east of the Queen’s canopy, a magnificent sight. The august dinner trays were carried by unemé.[37] Near the entrance of the great chamber folding screens surrounded a pair of tables on which these dining-trays had been placed. As the night advanced the moon shone brightly. There were unemé, mohitori,[38] migusiagé,[39] tonomori,[40] kanmori-no-nyokwan,[41]—some with whose faces I was not familiar. There were also doorkkeepers, carelessly dressed and with hairpins falling out, crowded together towards the eastern corridor of the principal building as if it were a public holiday. There were so many people there was no getting through them. After dinner the maids-of-honour came outside the misu and could be plainly seen by the light of the torches. The train and karaginu of Lady Oshikibu was embroidered to represent the dwarf pine-wood at Mount Oshio. As she is the wife of Michinoku, Governor of the eastern extremity of the island, she serves now in the Prime Minister’s household. Dayu-no-Miyobu neglected the ornamentation of her karaginu, but she adorned her train with silver dust representing sea-waves. It was pleasing to the eye, though not dazzling. Ben-no-Naishi showed her train a beach with cranes on it painted in silver. It was something new. She had also embroidered pine branches; she is clever, for all these things are emblematic of a long life. The device of Lady Shosho was inferior to these—many laughed at her silver foil. She was sister to Sukemitsu, the Governor of Shinano, and has lived at the court a long time. People wanted to see this entertainment. A priest was there who used to attend the court to beguile the night with religious and other stories. I said to him, “You cannot see such a lovely thing every day.” “Indeed! indeed!” said he, neglecting his Buddha and clapping his hands for joy. The court nobles rose from their seats and went to the steps [descending from the balcony]. His Lordship the Prime Minister and others cast da.[42] It was shocking to see them quarrelling about paper. Some [others] composed poems. A lady said, “What response shall we make if some one offers to drink saké with us?” We tried to think of something.[43]

Shijo-no-Dainagon is a man of varied accomplishments. No ladies can rival him in repartee, much less compete with him in poetry, so they were all afraid of him, but [this evening] he did not give a cup to any particular lady to make her compose poems. Perhaps that was because he had many things to do and it was getting late. At this ceremony the ladies of high rank are given robes, together with babies’ dresses presented by the Queen. The ladies of the fourth rank were each given a lined kimono, and those of the sixth rank were given hakama.[44] So much I saw.

The next night the moon was very beautiful. As it is the delightful season, young people went boating. They were all dressed uniformly in white and their hair showed better than when they wear coloured clothes. Kotaibu, Minamoto Shikibu, Miyaki-no-Jiju, Gosetchi-no-Ben, Ukon, Kohyoé, Koemon, Uma, Yasurahi, Isebito—these were on the veranda when the Lieutenant-General of the Left Bodyguard, and the Lieutenant-General, the Prime Minister’s son, came to take them out in the boat punted by Lieutenant-General Kanetaka of the Right Bodyguard. The rest of the ladies were neglected and followed them with their eyes. They seemed to be jealous in spite of themselves. Into the very white garden[45] the moon shone down and added to the beauty of the maids-of-honour in their white dresses. There were many palaquins waiting at the shelter [for conveyances] near the north entrance. They were those of the ladies-in-waiting of His Majesty’s court, Tosaumi, Koshosho, Uma, Ukon, Chikuzen, Omi—so far I have heard, but as I don’t know them well there may be some mistakes. The people in the boat came in in confusion [hearing that visitors from the King’s Court had arrived]. The Lord Prime Minister came out to welcome them and put them in good humour. He seemed to be perfectly happy. Gifts were made to them according to their rank.
On the seventh day His Majesty celebrated the birth. His secretary and Major-General, Michimasa, came as King's Messenger with a long list [of the presents] put into a wicker box. A letter was immediately sent from the Queen to the King. The students from the Kangakuin[46] came keeping step. The list of visitors’ names was presented to Her Majesty. Some may perhaps receive gifts.

The ceremony of the evening was noisier than ever. I peeped under the Queen’s canopy. She who is esteemed by the people as the mother of the nation did not seem to be in good spirits. She appeared a little weary. She had grown thinner, and her appearance in bed was slenderer, younger, and gracefuller. A little lantern was hung under the canopy which chased the darkness away even from the corners. Her fair complexion was pale and transparently pure. I thought her abundant hair would be better tied up. There is great impropriety in writing about her at all, so I will stop here.

The general ceremonies were the same as the other day. The gifts to the courtiers were bestowed from within the misu. The women’s dresses and the Queen’s dress [perhaps from the Queen’s wardrobe] were added to them. The chief of the King’s secretaries and court nobles received them, approaching the misu.

His Majesty’s gifts were uchigi, and kimonos, and rolls of silk in the usual court fashion.[47] The gifts to Tachibana-no-Sanmi [who offered the breast to the young Prince for the first time] were a set of women’s clothes and rolls of brocade, a silver clothes chest, and wrappings for clothes [which perhaps were white]. I have heard that something wrapped up was added also, though I could not see it in detail.
On the eighth day all changed their dress [which had been white, the colour of purification]. On the ninth evening the Vice-Governor[48] of the August Crown Prince’s retinue celebrated the birth. The present was put on a white cabinet. The ceremony was quite in the new style. On the silver clothes a raised ornament was carved, and the island of Horai[49] was also represented as usual, but in finer and newer fashion. I am sorry I cannot describe it all exactly. This evening the winter screens were used, and the ladies wore richly coloured dresses. They seemed all the more charming as it was the first time after the birth [to see them]. The rich and brilliant colours shone through the karaginu. The women’s figures also showed more distinctly and that enhanced their beauty. This was the night that Lady Komano-no-Omoto was put to shame.

It was after the tenth day of the Gods-absent month, but the Queen could not leave her bed. So night and day ladies attended her in her apartment towards the West. The Lord Prime Minister visited her both during the night and at dawn. He examined the breasts of the wet-nurses. Those nurses who were in a sound sleep were much startled and got up while still asleep; it was quite a pity to see them. He very naturally devoted himself with the utmost care, while there was anxiety about the August Child. Sometimes the Honourable Infant did a very unreasonable thing and wet the Lord Prime Minister's clothes. He, loosening his sash, dried his dress behind the screen. He said: “Ah! it is a very happy thing to be wet by the Prince. When I am drying my clothes is my most comfortable moment!” So he said rejoicing. He especially favoured Prince Murakami, and as he thinks I am related to that Prince he talked to me very familiarly. I know many things which may be expected to happen![50]

The day of the King’s visit was approaching, and the Lord’s mansion was improved and adorned. Beautiful chrysanthemums were sought for everywhere, to plant in the garden. Some were already fading, others in yellow were especially lovely. When they were planted and I saw them through the shifting morning mists, they seemed indeed to drive away old age.

I wish I could be more adaptable and live more gaily in the present world—had I not an extraordinary sorrow—but whenever I hear delightful or interesting things my yearning for a religious life grows stronger. I become melancholy and lament. I try to forget, for sorrow is vain. Am I too sinful? So I was musing one morning when I saw waterfowl playing heedlessly in the pond.[51]

Waterfowl floating on the water—
They seem so gay,
But in truth
It is not gay to live anxiously seeking means of existence.

I sympathized with them who outwardly have no other thought but amusement, yet in reality are seeking a livelihood in great anxiety.

[1] This diary seems to have been jotted down in disconnected paragraphs and the editors have preserved that form.


[3] Priests are praying for the easy delivery of the Queen, who has gone to her parents’ house before the birth, in accordance with old Japanese custom.


[6] See the plan of a great house of those days.

[7] Yorimichi, the Prime Minister Fujiwara Michinaga’s son, who was then sixteen years old.

[8] Misu: a thin finely woven bamboo curtain, behind which one may see but not be seen, hung before great personages and women’s apartments.


[10] Imayo, or “new style,” a kind of song in vogue in those days. The verse consists of eight or ten alternating seven-and five-syllable lines.

[11] This perfume was composed of purified Borneo camphor, aloe wood and musk, and was used to perfume
clothing, etc.

[12] Hagi: violet-coloured dress with blue lining, the violet dye taken from sapan-wood; Shion: pale purple dress with blue lining.


[14] Floss silk was used to protect chrysanthemum flowers from frost. The flower itself was believed to have the virtue of lengthening life. The Imperial garden party undoubtedly originated from a belief in this virtue in the flower.

[15] Ladies were crowded close behind the misu looking at the moon.

[16] Hangings, screens, and clothes of attendants were all white at the time of a birth.

[17] Which would otherwise have attacked the Queen. Some of the ladies-in-waiting undertook this duty. There is a difference of opinion between the translators as to whether this was done with the intention of deceiving the evil spirits into attacking the wrong person (by introducing into her neighbourhood other women surrounded with screens and attendants) or by transmitting the supposed evil spirits out of the Queen into her ladies by a sort of mesmerization.

[18] Fudo: a terrible-looking Buddhist idol who was thought to have the power to subdue all evil spirits.


[20] So that she might be ordained as a priestess and insured a good reception in the next world, only done when the sick person is in great danger.

[21] This was contrary to etiquette and shows the extreme excitement of the moment. Ladies and gentlemen of the court remained in separate rooms on social occasions.


[23] Everybody was still wearing white, colour of purification.


[25] Every Japanese family does this to-day, for almost all gardens have artificial brooks or ponds.

[26] Imperial shrine at Isé: the oldest shrine, built 5 B.C., dedicated to the Heaven Shining Goddess, ancestor of the Imperial family. This shrine is rebuilt every twenty years on the same model. It is the most sacred spot in Japan, and all serious events pertaining to the Empire or Imperial Household are announced there to the Goddess-Ancestor by Imperial Messenger.

[27] Nusa: rolls of silk or paper offered by a worshipper.

[28] Because a birth in a house was defilement, while a messenger to or from a god was holy.

[29] Saishi: a kind of gold ornament with five radiating points worn on the forehead and tied on around the head. (See frontispiece.)

[30] This was to frighten away evil spirits.

[31] Rice-scattering; for good luck.

[32] Here occurs an untranslatable sentence. Literally it would seem to be: *It seems hair growing in good monochromatic picture*. That might mean that the Queen seemed like a beauty in a picture drawn with ink and brush (see some illustrations in this book).

[33] Purple and scarlet.

[34] Karaginu: a short garment with long sleeves and worn of a different colour from the uchigi. (See frontispiece.)
[35] Uchigi: long unconfined flowing robe put on over the dress. It was made of elegant material and lined with another colour and was the distinctive and beautiful part of the court dress of that day. Under it were worn two or more other silk robes of different colours, one often intended to show through and modify the colour of the other. They were fastened in front by a belt like the present-day kimono, and over them was hung at the back the long and elaborate train of heavy white silk on which the last word of elegance in embroidery or painting was placed. In the presence of Royalty the ladies knelt in rows one behind the other, and doubtless these trains made a great display spread out before those sitting behind. (See frontispiece.)


[37] Unemé: beautiful women, selected from various provinces for their beauty, especially to wait on the Royal table.

[38] Mohitori: officials who had charge of wells, shoyu (Japanese sauce) and ice-houses.

[39] Migusiagé: attendants whose hair was done up with hairpins.

[40] King’s housekeepers.

[41] Cleaners.

[42] Da: a gambling game now not known. It was played with dice.

[43] (The following poem, then composed, is made with words of two meanings. It is impossible to arrange it in poetic form in English, but we present the two meanings in separate phrases, which the reader may combine for himself.)

Japanese words with their meanings:

Mezurashiki hikari = uncommon light.

Sashi sou = { added.
{ pour more saké into.

Sakazuki wa = { waxing moon.
{ a cup.

Chiyomo = four a thousand ages.

{ circulate, O moon never waning!
Megurame = circulate { circulate the cup to all persons
{ countless times.

Poem.

First meaning:

We pray that the waxing moon [i.e., the young Prince] may never wane, but shine for a thousand ages without change!

Second meaning:

May this cup [of joy] be full as soon as emptied and circulate freely to all!

[44] A pleated divided skirt worn by both men and women.

[45] In Kioto it used to be the custom to cover the earth of the gardens with very white fine sand.

[46] A school created in 825 A.D. by the Prime Minister Fujiwara Fuyutsugu to educate the younger members of the Fujiwara family.

[47] This “court fashion” of sending rolls of silk as presents from the Emperor or Empress prevails to-day, one thousand years later.
This person was the second son of the Prime Minister; therefore the Queen’s brother or half-brother and uncle of the Crown Prince.

The island of Horai; Japanese Elysium, a crystal island of eternal youth and felicity, supposed to exist in mid-ocean. A miniature presentation of this island is used on festal occasions as the emblem of eternity, or unchangeableness.

The Prime Minister wished to arrange a marriage between his eldest son and the Prince’s daughter. The authoress's cousin had adopted the Prince’s son.

This incident has for some reason become very famous and artists have used it as a subject for pictures. One of these is now hanging in the Imperial Museum in Tokyo.
Jonathan Swift, "A Modest Proposal"

For preventing the children of poor people in Ireland, from being a burden on their parents or country, and for making them beneficial to the publick.

by Dr. Jonathan Swift

1729

It is a melancholy object to those, who walk through this great town, or travel in the country, when they see the streets, the roads and cabbin-doors crowded with beggars of the female sex, followed by three, four, or six children, all in rags, and importuning every passenger for an alms. These mothers instead of being able to work for their honest livelihood, are forced to employ all their time in stroling to beg sustenance for their helpless infants who, as they grow up, either turn thieves for want of work, or leave their dear native country, to fight for the Pretender in Spain, or sell themselves to the Barbadoes.

I think it is agreed by all parties, that this prodigious number of children in the arms, or on the backs, or at the heels of their mothers, and frequently of their fathers, is in the present deplorable state of the kingdom, a very great additional grievance; and therefore whoever could find out a fair, cheap and easy method of making these children sound and useful members of the common-wealth, would deserve so well of the publick, as to have his statue set up for a preserver of the nation.

But my intention is very far from being confined to provide only for the children of professed beggars: it is of a much greater extent, and shall take in the whole number of infants at a certain age, who are born of parents in effect as little able to support them, as those who demand our charity in the streets.

As to my own part, having turned my thoughts for many years, upon this important subject, and maturely weighed the several schemes of our projectors, I have always found them grossly mistaken in their computation. It is true, a child just dropt from its dam, may be supported by her milk, for a solar year, with little other nourishment: at most not above the value of two shillings, which the mother may certainly get, or the value in scraps, by her lawful occupation of begging; and it is exactly at one year old that I propose to provide for them in such a manner, as, instead of being a charge upon their parents, or the parish, or wanting food and raiment for the rest of their lives, they shall, on the contrary, contribute to the feeding, and partly to the cloathing of many thousands.

There is likewise another great advantage in my scheme, that it will prevent those voluntary abortions, and that horrid practice of women murdering their bastard children, alas! too frequent among us, sacrificing the poor innocent babes, I doubt, more to avoid the expence than the shame, which would move tears and pity in the most savage and inhuman breast.

The number of souls in this kingdom being usually reckoned one million and a half, of these I calculate there may
be about two hundred thousand couple whose wives are breeders; from which number I subtract thirty thousand couple, who are able to maintain their own children, (although I apprehend there cannot be so many, under the present distresses of the kingdom) but this being granted, there will remain an hundred and seventy thousand breeders. I again subtract fifty thousand, for those women who miscarry, or whose children die by accident or disease within the year. There only remain an hundred and twenty thousand children of poor parents annually born. The question therefore is, How this number shall be reared, and provided for? which, as I have already said, under the present situation of affairs, is utterly impossible by all the methods hitherto proposed. For we can neither employ them in handicraft or agriculture; they neither build houses, (I mean in the country) nor cultivate land: they can very seldom pick up a livelihood by stealing till they arrive at six years old; except where they are of towardly parts, although I confess they learn the rudiments much earlier; during which time they can however be properly looked upon only as probationers: As I have been informed by a principal gentleman in the county of Cavan, who protested to me, that he never knew above one or two instances under the age of six, even in a part of the kingdom so renowned for the quickest proficiency in that art.

I am assured by our merchants, that a boy or a girl before twelve years old, is no saleable commodity, and even when they come to this age, they will not yield above three pounds, or three pounds and half a crown at most, on the exchange; which cannot turn to account either to the parents or kingdom, the charge of nutriments and rags having been at least four times that value.

I shall now therefore humbly propose my own thoughts, which I hope will not be liable to the least objection. I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed, is, at a year old, a most delicious nourishing and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricasie, or a ragoust.

I do therefore humbly offer it to publick consideration, that of the hundred and twenty thousand children, already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for breed, whereof only one fourth part to be males; which is more than we allow to sheep, black cattle, or swine, and my reason is, that these children are seldom the fruits of marriage, a circumstance not much regarded by our savages, therefore, one male will be sufficient to serve four females. That the remaining hundred thousand may, at a year old, be offered in sale to the persons of quality and fortune, through the kingdom, always advising the mother to let them suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render them plump, and fat for a good table. A child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends, and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish, and seasoned with a little pepper or salt, will be very good boiled on the fourth day, especially in winter.

I have reckoned upon a medium, that a child just born will weigh 12 pounds, and in a solar year, if tolerably nursed, encreaseth to 28 pounds.

I grant this food will be somewhat dear, and therefore very proper for landlords, who, as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children.

Infant’s flesh will be in season throughout the year, but more plentiful in March, and a little before and after; for we are told by a grave author, an eminent French physician, that fish being a prolifick dyet, there are more children born in Roman Catholick countries about nine months after Lent, the markets will be more glutted than usual, because the number of Popish infants, is at least three to one in this kingdom, and therefore it will have one other collateral advantage, by lessening the number of Papists among us.

I have already computed the charge of nursing a beggar’s child (in which list I reckon all cottagers, labourers, and four-fifths of the farmers) to be about two shillings per annum, rags included; and I believe no gentleman would repine to give ten shillings for the carcass of a good fat child, which, as I have said, will make four dishes of excellent nutritive meat, when he hath only some particular friend, or his own family to dine with him. Thus the squire will learn to be a good landlord, and grow popular among his tenants, the mother will have eight shillings neat profit, and be fit for work till she produces another child.

Those who are more thrifty (as I must confess the times require) may flea the carcass; the skin of which, artificially dressed, will make admirable gloves for ladies, and summer boots for fine gentlemen.

As to our City of Dublin, shambles may be appointed for this purpose, in the most convenient parts of it, and butchers we may be assured will not be wanting; although I rather recommend buying the children alive, and dressing them hot from the knife, as we do roasting pigs.

A very worthy person, a true lover of his country, and whose virtues I highly esteem, was lately pleased, in discoursing on this matter, to offer a refinement upon my scheme. He said, that many gentlemen of this kingdom,
having of late destroyed their deer, he conceived that the want of venison might be well supply’d by the bodies of young lads and maidens, not exceeding fourteen years of age, nor under twelve; so great a number of both sexes in every country being now ready to starve for want of work and service: And these to be disposed of by their parents if alive, or otherwise by their nearest relations. But with due deference to so excellent a friend, and so deserving a patriot, I cannot be altogether in his sentiments; for as to the males, my American acquaintance assured me from frequent experience, that their flesh was generally tough and lean, like that of our school-boys, by continual exercise, and their taste disagreeable, and to fatten them would not answer the charge. Then as to the females, it would, I think, with humble submission, be a loss to the publick, because they soon would become breeders themselves: And besides, it is not improbable that some scrupulous people might be apt to censure such a practice, (although indeed very unjustly) as a little bordering upon cruelty, which, I confess, hath always been with me the strongest objection against any project, how well soever intended.

But in order to justify my friend, he confessed, that this expedient was put into his head by the famous Salmanaazor, a native of the island Formosa, who came from thence to London, above twenty years ago, and in conversation told my friend, that in his country, when any young person happened to be put to death, the executioner sold the carcass to persons of quality, as a prime dainty; and that, in his time, the body of a plump girl of fifteen, who was crucified for an attempt to poison the Emperor, was sold to his imperial majesty’s prime minister of state, and other great mandarins of the court in joints from the gibbet, at four hundred crowns. Neither indeed can I deny, that if the same use were made of several plump young girls in this town, who without one single groat to their fortunes, cannot stir abroad without a chair, and appear at a play-house and assemblies in foreign fineries which they never will pay for; the kingdom would not be the worse.

Some persons of a desponding spirit are in great concern about that vast number of poor people, who are aged, diseased, or maimed; and I have been desired to employ my thoughts what course may be taken, to ease the nation of so grievous an incumbrance. But I am not in the least pain upon that matter, because it is very well known, that they are every day dying, and rotting, by cold and famine, and filth, and vermin, as fast as can be reasonably expected. And as to the young labourers, they are now in almost as hopeful a condition. They cannot get work, and consequently pine away from want of nourishment, to a degree, that if at any time they are accidentally hired to common labour, they have not strength to perform it, and thus the country and themselves are hourly delivered from the evils to come.

I have too long digressed, and therefore shall return to my subject. I think the advantages by the proposal which I have made are obvious and many, as well as of the highest importance.

For first, as I have already observed, it would greatly lessen the number of Papists, with whom we are yearly overrun, being the principal breeders of the nation, as well as our most dangerous enemies, and who stay at home on purpose with a design to deliver the kingdom to the Pretender, hoping to take their advantage by the absence of so many good Protestants, who have chosen rather to leave their country, than stay at home and pay tithes against their conscience to an episcopal curate.

Secondly, The poorer tenants will have something valuable of their own, which by law may be made liable to a distress, and help to pay their landlord’s rent, their corn and cattle being already seized, and money a thing unknown.

Thirdly, Whereas the maintainance of an hundred thousand children, from two years old, and upwards, cannot be computed at less than ten shillings a piece per annum, the nation’s stock will be thereby increased fifty thousand pounds per annum, besides the profit of a new dish, introduced to the tables of all gentlemen of fortune in the kingdom, who have any refinement in taste. And the money will circulate among our selves, the goods being entirely of our own growth and manufacture.

Fourthly, The constant breeders, besides the gain of eight shillings sterling per annum by the sale of their children, will be rid of the charge of maintaining them after the first year.

Fifthly, This food would likewise bring great custom to taverns, where the vintners will certainly be so prudent as to procure the best receipts for dressing it to perfection; and consequently have their houses frequented by all the fine gentlemen, who justly value themselves upon their knowledge in good eating; and a skilful cook, who understands how to oblige his guests, will contrive to make it as expensive as they please.

Sixthly, This would be a great inducement to marriage, which all wise nations have either encouraged by rewards, or enforced by laws and penalties. It would encrease the care and tenderness of mothers towards their children, when they were sure of a settlement for life to the poor babes, provided in some sort by the publick, to their annual profit instead of expence. We should soon see an honest emulation among the married women, which of them could bring the fattest child to the market. Men would become as fond of their wives, during the time of
their pregnancy, as they are now of their mares in foal, their cows in calf, or sow when they are ready to farrow; nor offer to beat or kick them (as is too frequent a practice) for fear of a miscarriage.

Many other advantages might be enumerated. For instance, the addition of some thousand carcasses in our exportation of barrel’d beef; the propagation of swine’s flesh, and improvement in the art of making good bacon, so much wanted among us by the great destruction of pigs, too frequent at our tables; which are no way comparable in taste or magnificence to a well grown, fat yearly child, which roasted whole will make a considerable figure at a Lord Mayor’s feast, or any other publick entertainment. But this, and many others, I omit, being studious of brevity.

Supposing that one thousand families in this city, would be constant customers for infants flesh, besides others who might have it at merry meetings, particularly at weddings and christenings, I compute that Dublin would take off annually about twenty thousand carcasses; and the rest of the kingdom (where probably they will be sold somewhat cheaper) the remaining eighty thousand.

I can think of no one objection, that will possibly be raised against this proposal, unless it should be urged, that the number of people will be thereby much lessened in the kingdom. This I freely own, and ’twas indeed one principal design in offering it to the world. I desire the reader will observe, that I calculate my remedy for this one individual Kingdom of Ireland, and for no other that ever was, is, or, I think, ever can be upon Earth. Therefore let no man talk to me of other expedients: Of taxing our absenteees at five shillings a pound: Of using neither cloaths, nor household furniture, except what is of our own growth and manufacture: Of utterly rejecting the materials and instruments that promote foreign luxury: Of curing the expensiveness of pride, vanity, idleness, and gaming in our women: Of introducing a vein of parsimony, prudence and temperance: Of learning to love our country, wherein we differ even from Laplanders, and the inhabitants of Topinamboo: Of quitting our animosities and factions, nor acting any longer like the Jews, who were murdering one another at the very moment their city was taken: Of being a little cautious not to sell our country and consciences for nothing: Of teaching landlords to have at least one degree of mercy towards their tenants. Lastly, of putting a spirit of honesty, industry, and skill into our shop-keepers, who, if a resolution could now be taken to buy only our native goods, would immediately unite to cheat and exact upon us in the price, the measure, and the goodness, nor could ever yet be brought to make one fair proposal of just dealing, though often and earnestly invited to it.

Therefore I repeat, let no man talk to me of these and the like expedients, ’till he hath at least some glimpse of hope, that there will ever be some hearty and sincere attempt to put them into practice.

But, as to my self, having been wearied out for many years with offering vain, idle, visionary thoughts, and at length utterly despairing of success, I fortunately fell upon this proposal, which, as it is wholly new, so it hath something solid and real, of no expence and little trouble, full in our own power, and whereby we can incur no danger in disobliging England. For this kind of commodity will not bear exportation, and flesh being of too tender a consistence, to admit a long continuance in salt, although perhaps I could name a country, which would be glad to buy it.

After all, I am not so violently bent upon my own opinion, as to reject any offer, proposed by wise men, which shall be found equally innocent, cheap, easy, and effectual. But before something of that kind shall be advanced in contradiction to my scheme, and offering a better, I desire the author or authors will be pleased maturely to consider two points. First, As things now stand, how they will be able to find food and raiment for a hundred thousand useless mouths and backs. And secondly, There being a round million of creatures in humane figure throughout this kingdom, whose whole subsistence put into a common stock, would leave them in debt two million of pounds sterling, adding those who are beggars by profession, to the bulk of farmers, cottagers and labourers, with their wives and children, who are beggars in effect; I desire those politicians who dislike my overture, and may perhaps be so bold to attempt an answer, that they will first ask the parents of these mortals, whether they would not at this day think it a great happiness to have been sold for food at a year old, in the manner I prescribe, somewhat cheaper) the remaining eighty thousand.

I profess, in the sincerity of my heart, that I have not the least personal interest in endeavouring to promote this necessary work, having no other motive than the publick good of my country, by advancing our trade, providing for infants, relieving the poor, and giving some pleasure to the rich. I have no children, by which I can propose to get a single penny; the youngest being nine years old, and my wife past child-bearing.

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I. THE LAND OF RED APPLES.

There were eight in our party of bronzed children who were going East with the missionaries. Among us were three young braves, two tall girls, and we three little ones, Judéwin, Thowin, and I.

We had been very impatient to start on our journey to the Red Apple Country, which, we were told, lay a little beyond the great circular horizon of the Western prairie. Under a sky of rosy apples we dreamt of roaming as freely and happily as we had chased the cloud shadows on the Dakota plains. We had anticipated much pleasure from a ride on the iron horse, but the throngs of staring palefaces disturbed and troubled us.

On the train, fair women, with tottering babies on each arm, stopped their haste and scrutinized the children of absent mothers. Large men, with heavy bundles in their hands, halted near by, and riveted their glassy blue eyes upon us.

I sank deep into the corner of my seat, for I resented being watched. Directly in front of me, children who were no larger than I hung themselves upon the backs of their seats, with their bold white faces toward me. Sometimes they took their forefingers out of their mouths and pointed at my moccasined feet. Their mothers, instead of reproving such rude curiosity, looked closely at me, and attracted their children’s further notice to my blanket. This embarrassed me, and kept me constantly on the verge of tears.

I sat perfectly still, with my eyes downcast, daring only now and then to shoot long glances around me. Chancing to turn to the window at my side, I was quite breathless upon seeing one familiar object. It was the telegraph pole which strode by at short paces. Very near my mother’s dwelling, along the edge of a road thickly bordered with wild sunflowers, some poles like these had been planted by white men. Often I had stopped, on my way down the road, to hold my ear against the pole, and, hearing its low moaning, I used to wonder what the paleface had done to hurt it. Now I sat watching for each pole that glided by to be the last one.

In this way I had forgotten my uncomfortable surroundings, when I heard one of my comrades call out my name. I saw the missionary standing very near, tossing candies and gums into our midst. This amused us all, and we tried to see who could catch the most of the sweetmeats.

Though we rode several days inside of the iron horse, I do not recall a single thing about our luncheons.

It was night when we reached the school grounds. The lights from the windows of the large buildings fell upon some of the icicled trees that stood beneath them. We were led toward an open door, where the brightness of the lights within flooded out over the heads of the excited palefaces who blocked our way. My body trembled more from fear than from the snow I trod upon.

Entering the house, I stood close against the wall. The strong glaring light in the large whitewashed room dazzled my eyes. The noisy hurrying of hard shoes upon a bare wooden floor increased the whirring in my ears. My only safety seemed to be in keeping next to the wall. As I was wondering in which direction to escape from all this confusion, two warm hands grasped me firmly, and in the same moment I was tossed high in midair. A rosy-cheeked paleface woman caught me in her arms. I was both frightened and insulted by such trifling. I stared into
her eyes, wishing her to let me stand on my own feet, but she jumped me up and down with increasing enthusiasm. My mother had never made a plaything of her wee daughter. Remembering this I began to cry aloud.

They misunderstood the cause of my tears, and placed me at a white table loaded with food. There our party were united again. As I did not hush my crying, one of the older ones whispered to me, “Wait until you are alone in the night.”

It was very little I could swallow besides my sobs, that evening.

“Oh, I want my mother and my brother Dawée! I want to go to my aunt!” I pleaded; but the ears of the palefaces could not hear me.

From the table we were taken along an upward incline of wooden boxes, which I learned afterward to call a stairway. At the top was a quiet hall, dimly lighted. Many narrow beds were in one straight line down the entire length of the wall. In them lay sleeping brown faces, which peeped just out of the coverings. I was tucked into bed with one of the tall girls, because she talked to me in my mother tongue and seemed to soothe me.

I had arrived in the wonderful land of rosy skies, but I was not happy, as I had thought I should be. My long travel and the bewildering sights had exhausted me. I fell asleep, heaving deep, tired sobs. My tears were left to dry themselves in streaks, because neither my aunt nor my mother was near to wipe them away.

II. THE CUTTING OF MY LONG HAIR.

The first day in the land of apples was a bitter-cold one; for the snow still covered the ground, and the trees were bare. A large bell rang for breakfast, its loud metallic voice crashing through the belfry overhead and into our sensitive ears. The annoying clatter of shoes on bare floors gave us no peace. The constant clash of harsh noises, with an undercurrent of many voices murmuring an unknown tongue, made a bedlam within which I was securely tied. And though my spirit tore itself in struggling for its lost freedom, all was useless.

A paleface woman, with white hair, came up after us. We were placed in a line of girls who were marching into the dining room. These were Indian girls, in stiff shoes and closely clinging dresses. The small girls wore sleeved aprons and shingled hair. As I walked noiselessly in my soft moccasins, I felt like sinking to the floor, for my blanket had been stripped from my shoulders. I looked hard at the Indian girls, who seemed not to care that they were even more immodestly dressed than I, in their tightly fitting clothes. While we marched in, the boys entered at an opposite door. I watched for the three young braves who came in our party. I spied them in the rear ranks, looking as uncomfortable as I felt. A small bell was tapped, and each of the pupils drew a chair from under the table. Supposing this act meant they were to be seated, I pulled out mine and at once slipped into it from one side. But when I turned my head, I saw that I was the only one seated, and all the rest at our table remained standing. Just as I began to rise, looking shyly around to see how chairs were to be used, a second bell was sounded. All were seated at last, and I had to crawl back into my chair again. I heard a man’s voice at one end of the hall, and I looked around to see him. But all the others hung their heads over their plates. As I glanced at the long chain of tables, I caught the eyes of a paleface woman upon me. Immediately I dropped my eyes, wondering why I was so keenly watched by the strange woman. The man ceased his mutterings, and then a third bell was tapped. Every one picked up his knife and fork and began eating. I began crying instead, for by this time I was afraid to venture anything more.

But this eating by formula was not the hardest trial in that first day. Late in the morning, my friend Judéwin gave me a terrible warning. Judéwin knew a few words of English; and she had overheard the paleface woman talk about cutting our long, heavy hair. Our mothers had taught us that only unskilled warriors who were captured had their hair shingled by the enemy. Among our people, short hair was worn by mourners, and shingled hair by cowards!

We discussed our fate some moments, and when Judéwin said, “We have to submit, because they are strong,” I rebelled.

“No, I will not submit! I will struggle first!” I answered.

I watched my chance, and when no one noticed, I disappeared. I crept up the stairs as quietly as I could in my squeaking shoes,—my moccasins had been exchanged for shoes. Along the hall I passed, without knowing whither I was going. Turning aside to an open door, I found a large room with three white beds in it. The windows were covered with dark green curtains, which made the room very dim. Thankful that no one was there, I directed my
steps toward the corner farthest from the door. On my hands and knees I crawled under the bed, and cuddled myself in the dark corner.

From my hiding place I peered out, shuddering with fear whenever I heard footsteps near by. Though in the hall loud voices were calling my name, and I knew that even Judéwin was searching for me, I did not open my mouth to answer. Then the steps were quickened and the voices became excited. The sounds came nearer and nearer. Women and girls entered the room. I held my breath and watched them open closet doors and peep behind large trunks. Some one threw up the curtains, and the room was filled with sudden light. What caused them to stoop and look under the bed I do not know. I remember being dragged out, though I resisted by kicking and scratching wildly. In spite of myself, I was carried downstairs and tied fast in a chair.

I cried aloud, shaking my head all the while until I felt the cold blades of the scissors against my neck, and heard them gnaw off one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit. Since the day I was taken from my mother I had suffered extreme indignities. People had stared at me. I had been tossed about in the air like a wooden puppet. And now my long hair was shingled like a coward's! In my anguish I moaned for my mother, but no one came to comfort me. Not a soul reasoned quietly with me, as my own mother used to do; for now I was only one of many little animals driven by a herder.

III. THE SNOW EPISODE.

A short time after our arrival we three Dakotas were playing in the snowdrift. We were all still deaf to the English language, excepting Judéwin, who always heard such puzzling things. One morning we learned through her ears that we were forbidden to fall lengthwise in the snow, as we had been doing, to see our own impressions. However, before many hours we had forgotten the order, and were having great sport in the snow, when a shrill voice called us. Looking up, we saw an imperative hand beckoning us into the house. We shook the snow off ourselves, and started toward the woman as slowly as we dared.

Judéwin said: "Now the paleface is angry with us. She is going to punish us for falling into the snow. If she looks straight into your eyes and talks loudly, you must wait until she stops. Then, after a tiny pause, say, 'No.'" The rest of the way we practiced upon the little word "no."

As it happened, Thowin was summoned to judgment first. The door shut behind her with a click.

Judéwin and I stood silently listening at the keyhole. The paleface woman talked in very severe tones. Her words fell from her lips like crackling embers, and her inflection ran up like the small end of a switch. I understood her voice better than the things she was saying. I was certain we had made her very impatient with us. Judéwin heard enough of the words to realize all too late that she had taught us the wrong reply.

“Oh, poor Thowin!” she gasped, as she put both hands over her ears.

Just then I heard Thowin's tremulous answer, “No.”

With an angry exclamation, the woman gave her a hard spanking. Then she stopped to say something. Judéwin said it was this: “Are you going to obey my word the next time?”

Thowin answered again with the only word at her command, “No.”

This time the woman meant her blows to smart, for the poor frightened girl shrieked at the top of her voice. In the midst of the whipping the blows ceased abruptly, and the woman asked another question: “Are you going to fall in the snow again?”

Thowin gave her bad passwood another trial. We heard her say feebly, “No! No!”

With this the woman hid away her half-worn slipper, and led the child out, stroking her black shorn head. Perhaps it occurred to her that brute force is not the solution for such a problem. She did nothing to Judéwin nor to me. She only returned to us our unhappy comrade, and left us alone in the room.

During the first two or three seasons misunderstandings as ridiculous as this one of the snow episode frequently took place, bringing unjustifiable frights and punishments into our little lives.
Within a year I was able to express myself somewhat in broken English. As soon as I comprehended a part of what was said and done, a mischievous spirit of revenge possessed me. One day I was called in from my play for some misconduct. I had disregarded a rule which seemed to me very needlessly binding. I was sent into the kitchen to mash the turnips for dinner. It was noon, and steaming dishes were hastily carried into the dining-room. I hated turnips, and their odor which came from the brown jar was offensive to me. With fire in my heart, I took the wooden tool that the paleface woman held out to me. I stood upon a step, and, grasping the handle with both hands, I bent in hot rage over the turnips. I worked my vengeance upon them. All were so busily occupied that no one noticed me. I saw that the turnips were in a pulp, and that further beating could not improve them; but the order was, “Mash these turnips,” and mash them I would! I renewed my energy; and as I sent the masher into the bottom of the jar, I felt a satisfying sensation that the weight of my body had gone into it.

Just here a paleface woman came up to my table. As she looked into the jar, she shoved my hands roughly aside. I stood fearless and angry. She placed her red hands upon the rim of the jar. Then she gave one lift and stride away from the table. But lo! the pulpy contents fell through the crumbled bottom to the floor I She spared me no scolding phrases that I had earned. I did not heed them. I felt triumphant in my revenge, though deep within me I was a wee bit sorry to have broken the jar.

As I sat eating my dinner, and saw that no turnips were served, I whooped in my heart for having once asserted the rebellion within me.

IV. THE DEVIL.

Among the legends the old warriors used to tell me were many stories of evil spirits. But I was taught to fear them no more than those who stalked about in material guise. I never knew there was an insolent chieftain among the bad spirits, who dared to array his forces against the Great Spirit, until I heard this white man’s legend from a paleface woman.

Out of a large book she showed me a picture of the white man’s devil. I looked in horror upon the strong claws that grew out of his fur-covered fingers. His feet were like his hands. Trailing at his heels was a scaly tail tipped with a serpent’s open jaws. His face was a patchwork: he had bearded cheeks, like some I had seen palefaces wear; his nose was an eagle’s bill, and his sharp-pointed ears were pricked up like those of a sly fox. Above them a pair of cow’s horns curved upward. I trembled with awe, and my heart throbbed in my throat, as I looked at the king of evil spirits. Then I heard the paleface woman say that this terrible creature roamed loose in the world, and that little girls who disobeyed school regulations were to be tortured by him.

That night I dreamt about this evil divinity. Once again I seemed to be in my mother’s cottage. An Indian woman had come to visit my mother. On opposite sides of the kitchen stove, which stood in the center of the small house, my mother and her guest were seated in straight-backed chairs. I played with a train of empty spools hitched together on a string. It was night, and the wick burned feebly. Suddenly I heard some one turn our door-knob from without.

My mother and the woman hushed their talk, and both looked toward the door. It opened gradually. I waited behind the stove. The hinges squeaked as the door was slowly, very slowly pushed inward.

Then in rushed the devil! He was tall! He looked exactly like the picture I had seen of him in the white man’s papers. He did not speak to my mother, because he did not know the Indian language, but his glittering yellow eyes were fastened upon me. He took long strides around the stove, passing behind the woman’s chair. I threw down my spools, and ran to my mother. He did not fear her, but followed closely after me. Then I ran round and round the stove, crying aloud for help. But my mother and the woman seemed not to know my danger. They sat still, looking quietly upon the devil’s chase after me. At last I grew dizzy. My head revolved as on a hidden pivot. My knees became numb, and doubled under my weight like a pair of knife blades without a spring. Beside my mother’s chair I fell in a heap. Just as the devil stooped over me with outstretched claws my mother awoke from her quiet indifference, and lifted me on her lap. Whereupon the devil vanished, and I was awake.

On the following morning I took my revenge upon the devil. Stealing into the room where a wall of shelves was filled with books, I drew forth The Stories of the Bible. With a broken slate pencil I carried in my apron pocket, I began by scratching out his wicked eyes. A few moments later, when I was ready to leave the room, there was a ragged hole in the page where the picture of the devil had once been.
V. IRON ROUTINE

A loud-clamoring bell awakened us at half-past six in the cold winter mornings. From happy dreams of Western rolling lands and unlassoed freedom we tumbled out upon chilly bare floors back again into a paleface day. We had short time to jump into our shoes and clothes, and wet our eyes with icy water, before a small hand bell was vigorously rung for roll call.

There were too many drowsy children and too numerous orders for the day to waste a moment in any apology to nature for giving her children such a shock in the early morning. We rushed downstairs, bounding over two high steps at a time, to land in the assembly room.

A paleface woman, with a yellow-covered roll book open on her arm and a gnawed pencil in her hand, appeared at the door. Her small, tired face was coldly lighted with a pair of large gray eyes.

She stood still in a halo of authority, while over the rim of her spectacles her eyes pried nervously about the room. Having glanced at her long list of names and called out the first one, she tossed up her chin and peered through the crystals of her spectacles to make sure of the answer “Here.”

Relentlessly her pencil black-marked our daily records if we were not present to respond to our names, and no chum of ours had done it successfully for us. No matter if a dull headache or the painful cough of slow consumption had delayed the absentee, there was only time enough to mark the tardiness. It was next to impossible to leave the iron routine after the civilizing machine had once begun its day’s buzzing; and as it was inbred in me to suffer in silence rather than to appeal to the ears of one whose open eyes could not see my pain, I have many times trudged in the day’s harness heavy-footed, like a dumb sick brute.

Once I lost a dear classmate. I remember well how she used to mope along at my side, until one morning she could not raise her head from her pillow. At her deathbed I stood weeping, as the paleface woman sat near her moistening the dry lips. Among the folds of the bedclothes I saw the open pages of the white man’s Bible. The dying Indian girl talked disconnectedly of Jesus the Christ and the paleface who was cooling her swollen hands and feet.

I grew bitter, and censured the woman for cruel neglect of our physical ills. I despised the pencils that moved automatically, and the one teaspoon which dealt out, from a large bottle, healing to a row of variously ailing Indian children. I blamed the hard-working, well-meaning, ignorant woman who was inculcating in our hearts her superstitious ideas. Though I was sullen in all my little troubles, as soon as I felt better I was ready again to smile upon the cruel woman. Within a week I was again actively testing the chains which tightly bound my individuality like a mummy for burial.

The melancholy of those black days has left so long a shadow that it darkens the path of years that have since gone by. These sad memories rise above those of smoothly grinding school days. Perhaps my Indian nature is the moaning wind which stirs them now for their present record. But, however tempestuous this is within me, it comes out as the low voice of a curiously colored seashell, which is only for those ears that are bent with compassion to hear it.

VI. FOUR STRANGE SUMMERS.

After my first three years of school, I roamed again in the Western country through four strange summers.

During this time I seemed to hang in the heart of chaos, beyond the touch or voice of human aid. My brother, being almost ten years my senior, did not quite understand my feelings. My mother had never gone inside of a schoolhouse, and so she was not capable of comforting her daughter who could read and write. Even nature seemed to have no place for me. I was neither a wee girl nor a tall one; neither a wild Indian nor a tame one. This deplorable situation was the effect of my brief course in the East, and the unsatisfactory “teenth” in a girl’s years.

It was under these trying conditions that, one bright afternoon, as I sat restless and unhappy in my mother’s cabin, I caught the sound of the spirited step of my brother’s pony on the road which passed by our dwelling. Soon I heard the wheels of a light buckboard, and Dawée’s familiar “Ho!” to his pony. He alighted upon the bare ground in front of our house. Tying his pony to one of the projecting corner logs of the low-roofed cottage, he stepped upon the wooden doorstep.
I met him there with a hurried greeting, and, as I passed by, he looked a quiet “What?” into my eyes.

When he began talking with my mother, I slipped the rope from the pony’s bridle. Seizing the reins and bracing my feet against the dashboard, I wheeled around in an instant. The pony was ever ready to try his speed. Looking backward, I saw Dawée waving his hand to me. I turned with the curve in the road and disappeared. I followed the winding road which crawled upward between the bases of little hillocks. Deep water-worn ditches ran parallel on either side. A strong wind blew against my cheeks and fluttered my sleeves. The pony reached the top of the highest hill, and began an even race on the level lands. There was nothing moving within that great circular horizon of the Dakota prairies save the tall grasses, over which the wind blew and rolled off in long, shadowy waves.

Within this vast wigwam of blue and green I rode reckless and insignificant. It satisfied my small consciousness to see the white foam fly from the pony’s mouth.

Suddenly, out of the earth a coyote came forth at a swinging trot that was taking the cunning thief toward the hills and the village beyond. Upon the moment’s impulse, I gave him a long chase and a wholesome fright. As I turned away to go back to the village, the wolf sank down upon his haunches for rest, for it was a hot summer day; and as I drove slowly homeward, I saw his sharp nose still pointed at me, until I vanished below the margin of the hilltops.

In a little while I came in sight of my mother’s house. Dawée stood in the yard, laughing at an old warrior who was pointing his forefinger, and again waving his whole hand, toward the hills. With his blanket drawn over one shoulder, he talked and motioned excitedly. Dawée turned the old man by the shoulder and pointed me out to him.

“Oh, han!” (Oh, yes) the warrior muttered, and went his way. He had climbed the top of his favorite barren hill to survey the surrounding prairies, when he spied my chase after the coyote. His keen eyes recognized the pony and driver. At once uneasy for my safety, he had come running to my mother’s cabin to give her warning. I did not appreciate his kindly interest, for there was an unrest gnawing at my heart.

As soon as he went away, I asked Dawée about something else.

“No, my baby sister, I cannot take you with me to the party tonight,” he replied. Though I was not far from fifteen, and I felt that before long I should enjoy all the privileges of my tall cousin, Dawée persisted in calling me his baby sister.

That moonlight night, I cried in my mother’s presence when I heard the jolly young people pass by our cottage. They were no more young braves in blankets and eagle plumes, nor Indian maids with prettily painted cheeks. They had gone three years to school in the East, and had become civilized. The young men wore the white man’s coat and trousers, with bright neckties. The girls wore tight muslin dresses, with ribbons at neck and waist. At these gatherings they talked English. I could speak English almost as well as my brother, but I was not properly dressed to be taken along. I had no hat, no ribbons, and no close-fitting gown. Since my return from school I had thrown away my shoes, and wore again the soft moccasins.

While Dawée was busily preparing to go I controlled my tears. But when I heard him bounding away on his pony, I buried my face in my arms and cried hot tears.

My mother was troubled by my unhappiness. Coming to my side, she offered me the only printed matter we had in our home. It was an Indian Bible, given her some years ago by a missionary. She tried to console me. “Here, my child, are the white man’s papers. Read a little from them,” she said most piously.

I took it from her hand, for her sake; but my enraged spirit felt more like burning the book, which afforded me no help, and was a perfect delusion to my mother. I did not read it, but laid it unopened on the floor, where I sat on my feet. The dim yellow light of the braided muslin burning in a small vessel of oil flickered and sizzled in the awful silent storm which followed my rejection of the Bible.

Now my wrath against the fates consumed my tears before they reached my eyes. I sat stony, with a bowed head. My mother threw a shawl over her head and shoulders, and stepped out into the night.

After an uncertain solitude, I was suddenly aroused by a loud cry piercing the night. It was my mother’s voice wailing among the barren hills which held the bones of buried warriors. She called aloud for her brothers’ spirits to support her in her helpless misery. My fingers grey icy cold, as I realized that my unrestrained tears had betrayed my suffering to her, and she was grieving for me.
Before she returned, though I knew she was on her way, for she had ceased her weeping, I extinguished the light, and leaned my head on the window sill.

Many schemes of running away from my surroundings hovered about in my mind. A few more moons of such a turmoil drove me away to the eastern school. I rode on the white man’s iron steed, thinking it would bring me back to my mother in a few winters, when I should be grown tall, and there would be congenial friends awaiting me.

VII. INCURRING MY MOTHER’S DISPLEASURE.

In the second journey to the East I had not come without some precautions. I had a secret interview with one of our best medicine men, and when I left his wigwam I carried securely in my sleeve a tiny bunch of magic roots. This possession assured me of friends wherever I should go. So absolutely did I believe in its charms that I wore it through all the school routine for more than a year. Then, before I lost my faith in the dead roots, I lost the little buckskin bag containing all my good luck.

At the close of this second term of three years I was the proud owner of my first diploma. The following autumn I ventured upon a college career against my mother’s will.

I had written for her approval, but in her reply I found no encouragement. She called my notice to her neighbors’ children, who had completed their education in three years. They had returned to their homes, and were then talking English with the frontier settlers. Her few words hinted that I had better give up my slow attempt to learn the white man’s ways, and be content to roam over the prairies and find my living upon wild roots. I silenced her by deliberate disobedience.

Thus, homeless and heavy-hearted, I began anew my life among strangers.

As I hid myself in my little room in the college dormitory, away from the scornful and yet curious eyes of the students, I pined for sympathy. Often I wept in secret, wishing I had gone West, to be nourished by my mother’s love, instead of remaining among a cold race whose hearts were frozen hard with prejudice.

During the fall and winter seasons I scarcely had a real friend, though by that time several of my classmates were courteous to me at a safe distance.

My mother had not yet forgiven my rudeness to her, and I had no moment for letter-writing. By daylight and lamplight, I spun with reeds and thistles, until my hands were tired from their weaving, the magic design which promised me the white man’s respect.

At length, in the spring term, I entered an oratorical contest among the various classes. As the day of competition approached, it did not seem possible that the event was so near at hand, but it came. In the chapel the classes assembled together, with their invited guests. The high platform was carpeted, and gaily festooned with college colors. A bright white light illumined the room, and outlined clearly the great polished beams that arched the domed ceiling. The assembled crowds filled the air with pulsating murmurs. When the hour for speaking arrived all were hushed. But on the wall the old clock which pointed out the trying moment ticked calmly on.

One after another I saw and heard the orators. Still, I could not realize that they longed for the favorable decision of the judges as much as I did. Each contestant received a loud burst of applause, and some were cheered heartily. Too soon my turn came, and I paused a moment behind the curtains for a deep breath. After my concluding words, I heard the same applause that the others had called out.

Upon my retreating steps, I was astounded to receive from my fellow-students a large bouquet of roses tied with flowing ribbons. With the lovely flowers I fled from the stage. This friendly token was a rebuke to me for the hard feelings I had borne them.

Later, the decision of the judges awarded me the first place. Then there was a mad uproar in the hall, where my classmates sang and shouted my name at the top of their lungs; and the disappointed students howled and brayed in fearfully dissonant tin trumpets. In this excitement, happy students rushed forward to offer their congratulations. And I could not conceal a smile when they wished to escort me in a procession to the students’ parlor, where all were going to calm themselves. Thanking them for the kind spirit which prompted them to make such a proposition, I walked alone with the night to my own little room.
A few weeks afterward, I appeared as the college representative in another contest. This time the competition was among orators from different colleges in our State. It was held at the State capital, in one of the largest opera houses.

Here again was a strong prejudice against my people. In the evening, as the great audience filled the house, the student bodies began warring among themselves. Fortunately, I was spared witnessing any of the noisy wrangling before the contest began. The slurs against the Indian that stained the lips of our opponents were already burning like a dry fever within my breast.

But after the orations were delivered a deeper burn awaited me. There, before that vast ocean of eyes, some college rowdies threw out a large white flag, with a drawing of a most forlorn Indian girl on it. Under this they had printed in bold black letters words that ridiculed the college which was represented by a “squaw.” Such worse than barbarian rudeness embittered me. While we waited for the verdict of the judges, I gleamed fiercely upon the throngs of palefaces. My teeth were hard set, as I saw the white flag still floating insolently in the air.

Then anxiously we watched the man carry toward the stage the envelope containing the final decision.

There were two prizes given, that night, and one of them was mine!

The evil spirit laughed within me when the white flag dropped out of sight, and the hands which hurled it hung limp in defeat.

Leaving the crowd as quickly as possible, I was soon in my room. The rest of the night I sat in an armchair and gazed into the crackling fire. I laughed no more in triumph when thus alone. The little taste of victory did not satisfy a hunger in my heart. In my mind I saw my mother far away on the Western plains, and she was holding a charge against me.

Zitkala-Ša (1876–1938) (Dakota: pronounced zitkála-šá, which translates to “Red Bird”), also known by the missionary-given name Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, was a Sioux (Yankton Dakota) writer, editor, musician, teacher and political activist. She wrote several works chronicling her youthful struggles with identity and pulls between the majority culture and her Native American heritage. Her later books in English were among the first works to bring traditional Native American stories to a widespread white readership.

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About the Author

OER books are usually blends of different texts, so I cannot speak to the original Lumen authors’ backgrounds.

Here is a little bit of background about myself, though (written in that third person that is always a warning sign for individuals, as *Seinfeld* episodes show us).

Josh Dickinson is an Associate Professor of English at Jefferson Community College in Watertown, NY. He teaches English and Education courses with a focus upon American Literature 1 and 2, Native American Literature, and non-Western Literature. Josh attended SUNY Jefferson, SUNY Potsdam, Syracuse University, and Colgate University.

Josh also supervises Jefferson’s EDGE (concurrent enrollment) English offerings at over a dozen local high school and BOCES sites.

He enjoys participating in the National Novel Writing Month contest, having completed seven novels so far each November.

Josh has officiated high school soccer matches for 25 years and supports pro teams Tottenham Hotspur, FC Barcelona, and Borussia Dortmund.

At the Canadian Museum of History, Ottawa: Go Habs, Go!

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