

P L
2999
A1
B42
1911
MAIN

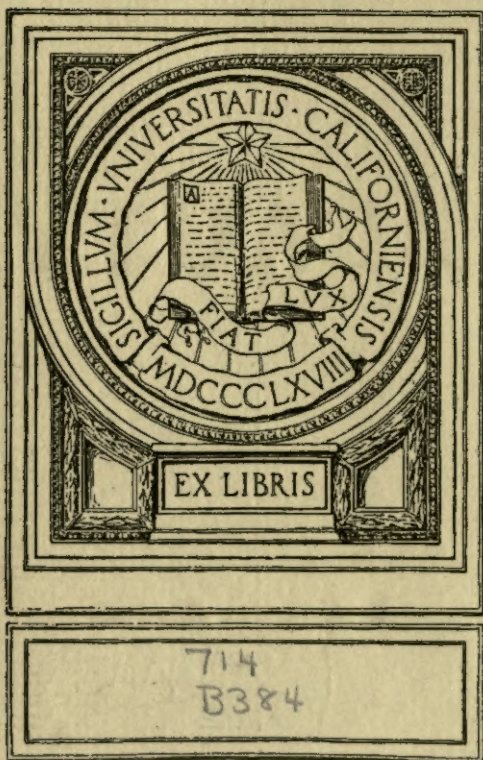
UC-NRLF



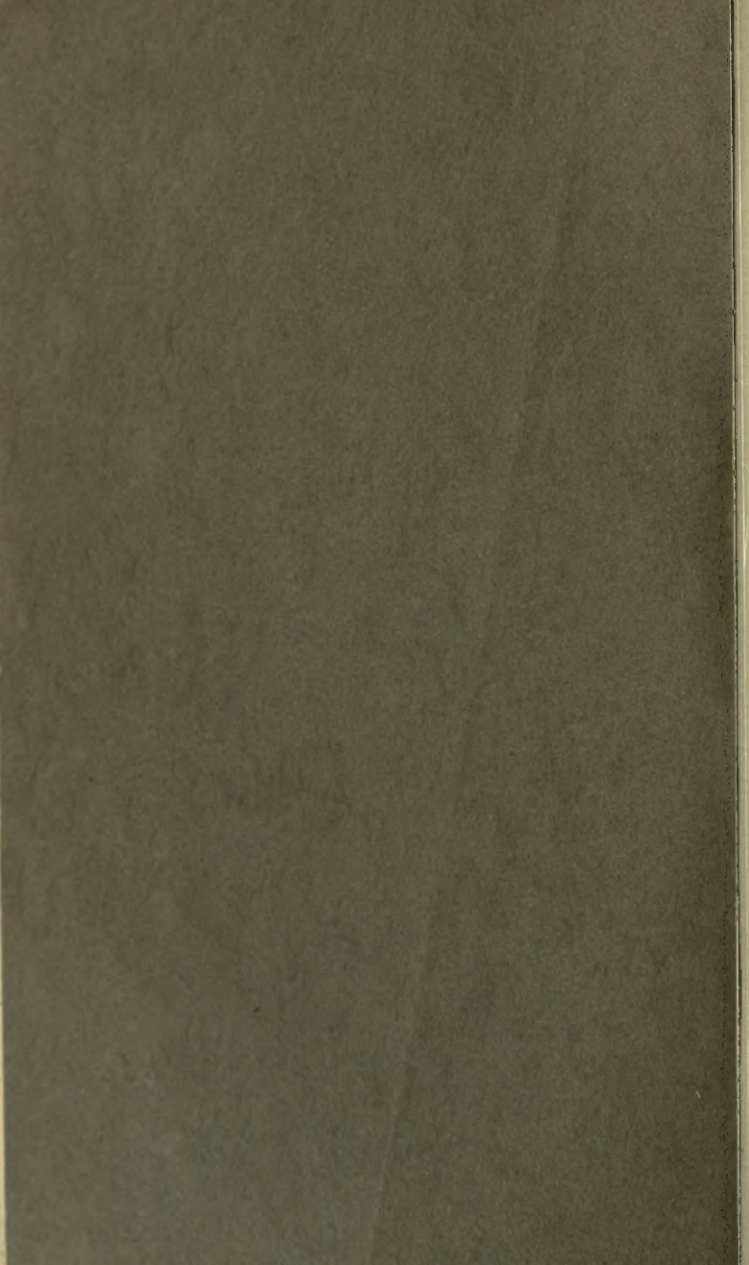
\$B 650 868

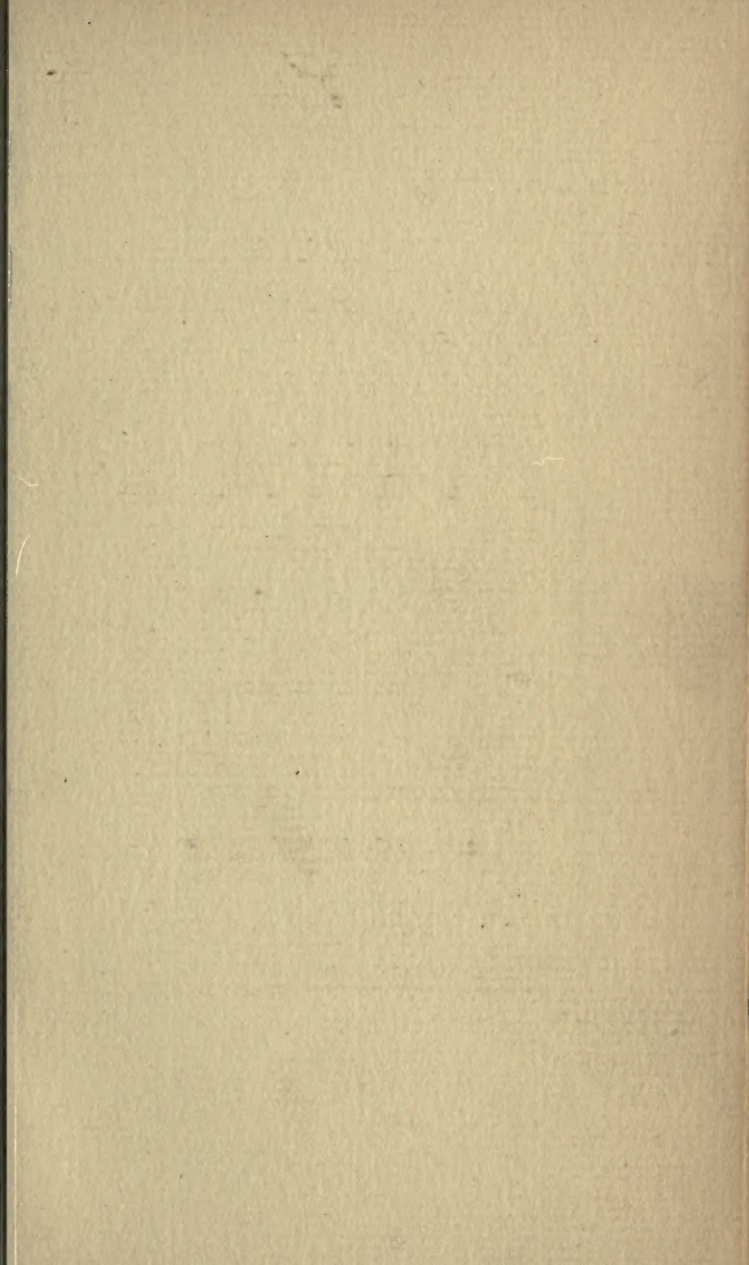
BEAUTY

A Chinese Drama



714
B384

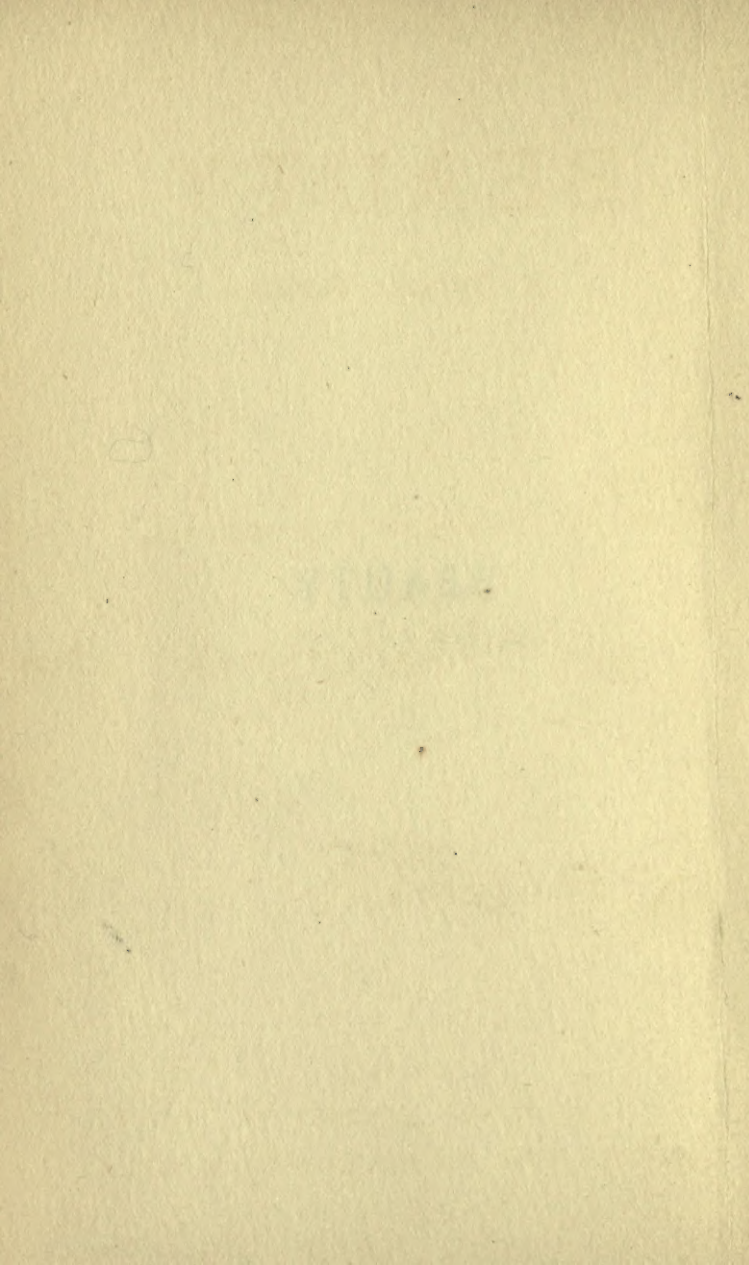






Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

BEAUTY



BEAUTY

A Chinese Drama

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL

BY

REV. J. MACGOWAN



LONDON

E. L. MORICE

9 CECIL COURT, CHARING CROSS ROAD, W.C.

1911

replacing
260939 lost

714
B 384

NO. 1000
APR 11 1900

PL 2999
A1
B42
1911

THE heroine of this beautiful fairy story lived during the later Han Dynasty (A.D. 25-190).

China in those early ages was often terribly harassed by the wild and barbarous tribes that lived beyond its northern boundaries, and Mongols and Kins and Tartars, lured by the wealth of the Flowery Kingdom, used to make savage incursions into it, and when they retired they carried with them not only the plunder of the ravaged districts, but also many of their inhabitants as well.

Even royal personages were not safe from these nomadic marauders, some of whom died in exile amongst their captors.

The supreme devotion of Beauty to her country, and her great sufferings and tragic death, have so appealed to the romance and loyalty of the Chinese, that her story has been dramatized, and no play is to-day more popular, wherever it is performed, than it.

ACT I

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA
SCENE I.

In the Capital, in the Reception Hall of the Palace.

Enter EMPEROR, YEN-SHANG the PRIME MINISTER, a number of High Mandarins, and an Interpreter of Dreams.

EMPEROR

My Lords, I have this day in sudden haste
Called you together to advise with me
Upon a subject of vast importance,
And one that fills my mind with weighty thoughts,
Such as no power of mine can ever drive
From out the deep recesses of my soul,
And leave me free to think as once I used
To do. Last night I had a dream that took
Possession of my slumbering brain, and played
Such tricks with my imagination, that
I still seem to be under the potent
Spell of some fairy wizard, who has charmed
My senses by the visions he has flashed
Before me, and made me believe, that what
I saw was no mere shadowy thing, that
With the coming of the dawn would vanish
With the first touch of morning light. But I
Must tell you of my dream. Whilst sleep still held
Me bound, a maiden fair appeared to me,
Whose face was so divine that I was spell
Bound, and, in an instant, love, such as I
Ne'er have felt before, seized hold upon me
And keeps me willing captive. With beating
Heart and steps unsteady, I approached her
And asked her who she was, what was her name,
And where she lived, and if perchance she were
Betrothed.

With modest looks and downcast eyes
The maid replied that she was seventeen,
That Wat-Chow was her home, and that Beauty
Was the name that had been given her by her
Parents, "And as to my betrothal, no
Such thing," she said, "exists, for this I know,
That my dear mother dreads the day when I
Shall have to leave her roof, and so she has
Refused the many offers that have come
To her for me."

With gladsome heart I heard
The news that she was free, and with throbbing
Pulse and tones, so low that I could scarcely
Hear myself, I asked her was she willing
That she should be engaged to me. With smiles
And joyous looks, and accents full of love,
She did declare that I had but to send
My royal orders to her parents, when,
Full of joy, all preparations should be
Made to hasten to the Capital with all
The speed that Couriers in the Service
Of the King were wont to move when some great
Duty to the State demanded a more
Than urgent diligence to meet the needs
That were required of them.

Just then, when most
I wished to hear the tones of Beauty's voice,
I woke from sleep, and her beauteous form
Vanished from my sight, and nought was left me
But the image of the maid that has been
So impressed upon my heart that it shall
Never die from out my thoughts.

But now I
Would demand from him that claims the power
To know the fate that lies in dreams, to tell
Me what he thinks the vision that I saw
Last night portends, and what the course

I ought to take, now that Heaven seems to have
Sent to me a maiden whose heart is moved
By love for me alone.

INTERPRETER OF DREAMS

I am convinced the vision that you saw
Whilst midnight darkness brooded o'er the earth,
Was no such common one as does appear,
When, in the shades of night, reason leaves her
Throne, and Fancy, in her gaudy robes, plays
Her tricks and acts the Conjuror with men's
Brains.

This dream, I do now perceive, has depths
Of mystery that touches, with mystic
Finger, the person of your Majesty,
And will in time affect the happiness
And welfare of the empire. I strongly
Urge that some distinguished noble shall be
Commanded by our Sovereign Lord to go
To Wat-Chow, where Beauty said she lived,
And there make strict enquiry whether she
Is a myth or not, and if she lives, let
Her be brought with all due honour to be
The bride of our august and noble King.

EMPEROR

And which of all the Lords and Dukes that grace
My court, would you suggest should be the man
To find the maiden that has won my heart?

YEN-SHANG

I fear I may be deemed presumptuous,
In offering to my Lord my humble
Services, and yet I fain would hope that
He would overlook the meanness of my
Gifts, and take my willing zeal as worthy
Of his notice, and so commission me
To go in quest of Beauty, and I do

Declare that if she lives she shall be found,
And within the compass of a few short
Months, her smile shall chase away the shadows
That have gathered round the heart of him we
Honour as our Lord and Master.

EMPEROR

My Lord,

Your zeal delights me greatly, and to show
How deeply moved I am by loyalty
So deep and true, I now appoint you my
Commissioner, with full and ample powers
As though you were the King himself, to find
That beauteous maid and bring her to my
Capital. Should you succeed in finding
Beauty, the highest honours that the State
Can give shall be bestowed on you, and gifts
That shall enrich you shall be yours. One word
Of warning that I deem it right that I
Should give you. In this momentous matter
In which my honour and my heart are linked,
Be careful lest your conduct should be stained
By any thoughts of self, or that the pure
Fountain of a blameless life should be fouled
By taking bribes that worthless men will tempt
You with ; by this the purposes of Heaven
Would be frustrated, and vengeance such as
Never cursed a worthless life would end your
Own in hopeless misery and despair.

SCENE 2.

A Government Inn at Wat-Chow.

Enter YEN-SHANG and the PREFECT of the City.

YEN-SHANG

What mean you, sir, by this contempt with which
You treat an Envoy from your Sovereign ?
When I arrived to-day, I thought that you,
At least, would stand awaiting me in full
Official robes, and by your side would be
Arrayed the forces of the garrison,
Both horse and foot, to pay the honour
That is due to one of such exalted
Rank as I possess, but nought by you was
Done, not e'en a dog, moved by the sudden
Influx of my retinue, cared to show
Surprise by barking at me ; the beggars,
Too, blear-eyed, unkempt, eyed me with scanty
Glance, and shuffled on their way, not holding
Out their filthy hands to beg the cash that
Men with rude contempt are wont to fling at
Them. This failure of the courtesies, that
I might claim, is solely and entirely
Due to you, and were my mind vindictive,
I would command my Braves to drag you out
And strike your head from off your shoulders.

PREFECT

Pray, my Lord, have mercy on me, for this
I do most solemnly assure you that
Any show of disrespect that caused your wrath,
Was purely accidental. No thought of mine
Had aught to do with this. Had notice due
Been sent me of your coming, I then had

Planned that every honour due to your
Distinguished rank and high renown should have
Been paid to you on your arrival here.
I therefore humbly pray, your Highness,
That you will condescend to overlook
The lack of courtesy with which you have
Been treated.

YEN-SHANG

Well, let the matter pass. I
Would discuss with you the purpose that has
Brought me to this town of Wat-Chow. One week
Ago, the Son of Heaven dreamed a most
Enchanting dream, in which he saw a girl
Of such surpassing loveliness, that love
For her captured his heart, and made him her
Thrall for ever. She told him that she lived
In Wat-Chow, and that she would, with right good
Will, become betrothed to him if he could
Gain her parents' acquiescence. Her name,
She said, was Beauty, and my commission
Is to find her, and conduct her with all
Due ceremony to the Capital
Where the King, with anxious and impatient
Heart, awaits her coming. Now let me urge
That you do show the utmost diligence
To find this self-same Beauty, and who
Her parents are, so that arrangements may be
Made to satisfy the ardent wishes
Of our Royal Master, whose heart has come
Within the spell of Beauty's wondrous charm.

PREFECT

Your Excellency may fully trust me,
That I shall use all diligence to find
This charming maid, who said she lived in this
Our town. No moment shall be lost, and I,

With your permission, shall hasten to my
Yamen, and Runners shall be called, and heads
Of Wards, and Elders of the streets, to whom
Most urgent orders shall be given to search
And see if any home within the town
And suburbs does contain a girl whose name
Is Beauty, and by to-morrow I shall
Report to you, my Lord, if such a girl
Exists within my jurisdiction.

(Exit.)

SCENE 3.

A private apartment of the PREFECT of Wat-Chow.

Enter PREFECT and his WIFE.

WIFE

I do perceive with great concern that some
Profound and subtle grief has laid its hand
Upon your heart, and shadows cloud your face.
Tell me, I do beseech you, the reason
Why such gloom should drive away your smiles
And fill your countenance with sadness. I
Fain would share the sorrow that I now do
See oppresses you.

PREFECT

I am indeed in
Sore perplexity of mind, and truly
All the consolation you can give me
I do most earnestly desire. To-day,
As you must know, a special Envoy has
Arrived straight from the Capital, to find
If in this town of Wat-Chow, a maiden
Of the name of Beauty lives. Yuan-ti,
It seems, has had a dream, and there he saw
A girl of passing loveliness, who said
Her home was in this city, that she was
Seventeen, and so attractive was she,
That in an instant the King did love her
With a mad devotion, and nought will suit
But she become his concubine and so
A member of his Western Palace. You
Know full well that Beauty is our daughter,
That she is seventeen and that she is
The loveliest girl that ever man looked

On. It must be she has won the Royal
Heart, and so I'm full of pain and sorrow
Lest Fate unkind should snatch the one we love
From out our home, and we should never see
Her more.

WIFE

Alas! alas! I do me dread,
It is our own sweet girl that in some strange
And magic way appeared in vision fair
And caught the heart of majesty. My mind
Is full of fears, and I do seem to see
Some figure from the Land of Shades striding
With hasty footsteps to cast grim shadows
On our lives. But stay! Outside our house no
One knows aught of Beauty. Let silence guard
Our lips, and let us warn our household that
No word escape from them to let men know
That she exists, and so she shall be kept
From this rapacious Minister of State.

PREFECT

Your plan is excellent, and if it but be
Wisely carried out it must result that
Beauty never shall be found or carried
Off to be the slave of an abandoned
Court. To-morrow when I make report, I
Shall in strongest language inform Yen-Shang
That after earnest search no trace in all
The city could be found of Beauty.

SCENE 4.

The Government Inn.

Enter YEN-SHANG, PREFECT, and attendant soldiers.

PREFECT

My Lord, I'm sorry to report that, spite
Of every effort I have made, no
Clue can be discovered, in any house,
That any girl named Beauty has ever
Lived. My officers and Runners all are
Sure that no such maiden with face so fair
And beauty so distinguished could hide her
Presence, so that she should conceal herself
From all around and be unknown.

YEN-SHANG

I must

Express the anger I do feel at this
Report that you have dared to make to me.
You think to cheat me by this statement you
Have made that no such girl as Beauty can
Be found within the bounds of Wat-Chow. It
Seems to me your folly is so great that
I do marvel greatly how by any
Chance you were appointed Prefect of this
City. But now to teach you common-sense,
I must apply a rough and wholesome plan
By which you may be taught the peril you
Incur since you oppose the royal will.
Here, soldiers ! bring out your rods and use them
On this man, who has presumed to set his
Will against the Emperor. Flay his flesh
And let him learn through tears of blood how great
His crime has been.

[Here the soldiers fling him to the ground and proceed to beat him most unmercifully.]

PREFECT

My Lord, I do beseech you, let your Braves
Withhold the strokes that rend and tear my flesh
As though some tiger held me in its grip.
Spare me these awful tortures, and give me
But three short days of grace, and hereby I
Do promise that extra diligence shall
Be used to find if Beauty lives or not.

YEN-SHANG

Ho! Soldiers, stay your blows and let me speak
With this unhappy wretch, who now begins
To see that setting up his will against
His Sovereign brings punishment so severe
That life becomes so great a burden that
Even death itself seems a boon that men
Prefer instead. Prefect, I now do grant
Your prayer, and give you three days more, wherein
To find the maiden who has won the heart
Of Yuan-ti. I trust the lesson you
Have learned will be impressed upon your heart
That ne'er so long as life shall last it shall
Require to be repeated, for this I
Do declare that when the appointed time
Has run its course, and you have failed to find
This famous Beauty, no mercy shall be
Shown you, but on the execution ground
Your head shall fall beneath the headman's axe.

SCENE 5.

A private apartment in the PREFECT'S Yamen.

Enter PREFECT and WIFE, both weeping.

PREFECT

Alas! alas! Unhappy me! This day
Has been a most unlucky one for me,
And such disgrace has covered me with shame
As ne'er in all my life has fallen to my lot.
To think that I, a mandarin of such
High rank as I possess, should have been scourged
Like any common criminal, and that too
In sight of all my underlings and those
Who hitherto have been accustomed to look
Upon me with awe and trembling, fills me
With shame unutterable. But even yet
I have but touched upon the fringe of my
Disasters. Because I failed to bribe this
Haughty avaricious envoy, he has
Conceived a deadly hatred, and plans my
Utter ruin, and he has threatened that
Three days hence, if I have failed to tell him
Where our daughter can be found, he
Then will have me executed, and I
Do believe with all my heart that he would
Welcome any chance that would provide him
With a reason for putting me to death.

WIFE

My heart is sore with grief, and sad I am
That on our natal day, unlucky stars
Did both shine out with fierce malignant light
When we were born. I cannot bear to think
That you should die, and so to save your life,

I would advise that you reveal to this
Cruel and revengeful man that Beauty
Is your daughter. Only by this your fate
May be avoided, and in the future
It may be so ordained of Heaven that pain
And retribution shall be meted out
To this imperious noble.

SCENE 6.

The bedroom of BEAUTY, who is seen rising from a couch on which she has been sleeping.

BEAUTY

I've been asleep, and whilst I slept I've had
A dream most passing strange, and filled with scenes
That only the highest flights of fancy
Could have conjured up within the brain, and
Now that I am awake I can scarcely
Bring myself to own that what I saw had
In any sense a real existence.

In my dream I saw the Son of Heaven,
Of most noble and engaging mien, who
Suddenly appeared, and, drawing near, asked
Me my name, where I lived, and if I were
Betrothed, and when he found that I was fancy
Free, he spoke to me in words that breathed of love.
Never before had any man ventured
To speak to me in language of devotion,
For that in China would be deemed an insult
And it would ill become my modesty
To have listened to him, but Yuan-ti whom
I know to be the Emperor caught my
Heart with tender loving vows that sank deep
Into my soul, that when he pled with me
To become his wife I gladly gave him
My love, and now the one great passion of
My heart is that Heaven may grant to me
That I one day be wedded to this Prince,
For I do declare that should my dream be
Unfulfilled I ne'er shall mate with any
Other, but shall remain a maiden all
My life.

[*At this point BEAUTY hears the sound of weeping and lamentations, and, rushing into her parents' room, she finds them both in dire distress, pouring out their sorrow in loud complaints at the evil fate that has befallen them.*]

BEAUTY

What is the meaning of this great distress
That fills your eyes with tears and hearts with sighs?
What great and overmastering sorrow has
Fallen like a thunderbolt and turned your
Smiles and laughter into woeful sounds that
Crowd my heart with pains unutterable?
And why this secrecy that would exclude
Your own loved child from bearing with you both
The grief that has come into your lives. I whom
You ever trusted, and whose joy has been
That no girl in all this Middle Kingdom
Ever lived so near the hearts of those she
Loved as I have done.

FATHER

The only reason why we have refrained
From uttering all our thoughts to you has
Been the deep and earnest love that fills our
Hearts—not that we love you less—nay, even more.
Our only aim has been to hide from you
The knowledge of a future that we fear
Contains within it boundless grief and pain,
For you our dearly loved and only child.
A seal has thus been set upon our lips
That keeps them silent; but now we feel that
Silence must be broken and you must learn
The meaning of our sighs and tears that have
Revealed to you the trouble that would seem
To be about to wreck our lives. Well, you
Must know our Sovereign Lord Yuan-ti

And yet, should I withhold the truth, my life
Would pay the forfeit, and ruin swift would
Then descend on you and your dear Mother.

BEAUTY

My heart within me burns, as you rehearse
The tale of cruel wrongs that have been heaped
Upon you by this noble who has turned
To be your foe. But here I make a vow
That he shall pay you back a hundred-fold
The same that he has dared to make you bear :
For let me tell you, I, too, have had my
Dream, one so strange, so marvellous, and yet
So real, that it has become to me
Part of my very being, from which I
May not be dissevered so long as life
May last. This dream is but a counterpart
Of just the one the royal dreamer dreamt,
And I am the very girl with whom he
Talked and made the promise to become his
Bride, when he should summon me to attend
Him at his palace ; so hasten, father dear,
And let this Yen-Shang know that you have found
The very Beauty that the gods, in some
Mysterious way that mortals know not of,
Caused to appear before the King in visions
Of the night, that I might one day share the
Honours of his throne. Delay not, for he
So pleased will be at my discovery,
That he will at once condone the attempt
You made to cheat him into the thought, that
Heaven would not permit, that I was but
A myth that ne'er existed in this town
Of Wat-chow.

[The PREFECT hastens with all speed to the Inn where YEN-SHANG is staying, and, being ushered into his presence, he kneels before him and confesses the deceit he has practised upon him.]

PREFECT

My Lord, I humbly pray thee to forgive
The wrong that I have done in keeping back
From thee the knowledge that the girl that thou
Art searching for is my only child. My
Sin I do confess, and all the plea that
I can plead before thee is love so deep
And so profound, that to have her leave us,
Even to become an Emperor's bride,
Was something that I shrank from with a dread
That mastered me. She is the only one we
Have, for Heaven thus far, for reasons known
To it, has utterly refused to send
A son into our home, and so we cling
To Beauty as our only hope to fill
Our hearts with love. But now it seems our fate
That we should lose her, and so with willing
Hearts we give her to the King.

YEN-SHANG

The news you

Bring fills me with joy unspeakable. It
Is, indeed, to me a source of gladness
That the maiden has been found, for well I
Know the Son of Heaven has so set his love
On her, with such affection, firm and true,
That nothing else will satisfy him but
Sight of her. I will at once send couriers
That, swifter than the wind, will speed along
The joyful news that will fill the royal
Mind with happiness supreme. And, now, my
Warmest congratulations to you I
Must extend, for the high honours that have
Come upon your house. No longer Prefect
Shall you be called, but Father of the State,
And men from every corner of the Empire
Shall be told your name, and look with envy

On the man who is the father of the
Famous Beauty, who holds our sovereign Lord
In bondage with her love. My heart misgives
Me, though, that I offence have given to you,
That in excess of zeal I used such harsh
And cruel methods to urge to sterner
And more strenuous ways to find where
Beauty lived. I pray thee, therefore, hold not
Against me any evil thoughts for wrongs
That I have done you, but be merciful.
And now, I pray, let Beauty come to me,
That I, with all due reverence, such as
Is due the Emperor's bride, may hasten
With her to the Capital.

SCENE 7.

PREFECT'S *Yamen*.

Enter PREFECT, *his* WIFE, *and* BEAUTY.

PREFECT

I have this moment left Yen-Shang, who has
Become most gracious, and in humble terms
Has begged me to forgive the insults
That he has heaped upon me. He asks
Me, too, to bring my daughter to his inn,
That he may have the proof to satisfy
The King that no mistake is made, but that
She is the very maid, that by her charms
Has so enslaved our Emperor, who, filled
With ardent love, does wish that she should quick
Become his bride.

BEAUTY

What insolence does this
Despotic Minister, who has displayed
Such bitter hatred to my father, show
To me in asking me to attend him
At his inn. If by the will of Heaven
I am to be his Prince's bride, then I
Become his high superior in rank,
And he my slave, to come with suppliant
Looks and wait my bidding, where'er I deem
It best that he should stand. Command him now
Without delay to hurry here, that I
May order him how best the royal will
Regarding me, may be enforced.

[*A despatch is at once sent to YEN-SHANG, who, seeing the master mind he has to deal with, hurries incontinently to the PREFECT'S Yamen to pay his homage to his new mistress.*]

SCENE 8.

A room fitted up in the Yamen for a royal reception. On the main wall there is hung a scroll with the two words "Sacred Will," which represents the Emperor.

Enter BEAUTY, magnificently dressed, with a bevy of young girls, who act as maids of honour, and YEN-SHANG.

CHIEF MAID OF HONOUR

Here in this very room we have the sign
And symbol of His Majesty. The scroll
That hangs with those two sacred words inscribed,
Must be revered and honoured just as much
As though the Son of Heaven were sitting
On his Dragon throne, and we were dazzled
By his presence. We must remember, too,
The future Consort of the King stands now
Before us, and she must have obeisance
Paid her, such as is due to one whose rank
Is so exalted. Let Yen-Shang now kneel
Down and make the eight prostrations before
The Sacred Scroll, to show his loyalty
And his devotion to the Emperor :
And each time that he knocks his head upon
The ground, he shall in tones, both loud and strong,
Cry out, "Long live the King," whilst after that
He shall prostrate himself before our noble
Lady, who now possesses royal rank,
And say, with reverential voice, "God save
The Queen."

[YEN-SHANG *does this.*]

BEAUTY

Now that the Envoy of His Majesty
Has done the honour that is due to him
And me, I give my gracious leave that he
Retire, so that he may without delay
Arrange his plans for hastening on
My early journey to the Capital.

SCENE 9.

Government Inn. Enter PREFECT and YEN-SHANG.

PREFECT

My gracious Lord, I do but humbly wait
Your orders with regard to Beauty, who
Now is all prepared to hurry on her
Journey to the Capital, where she may
Meet the one that in her midnight dreams so
Won her heart, that all her thoughts are taken
Up with him.

YEN-SHANG

My plans are all thought out and well devised,
The fullest preparations have been made,
The carriages are all equipped with care,
And boats are floating on the stream that e'en
A queen might deem them worthy to convey
Her to the royal presence. Nothing has
Been left by me that art or thought of man
Could e'er devise to make her journey full
Of joy and gladsomeness, until her feet
Shall stand within the palace gates, and she
Is ushered into the very presence
Of the Son of Heaven.

But stay, still one thing
There is that in my haste had almost been
Forgotten, but which my Lord, the King, would
Never have forgiven. A portrait must be
Drawn of Beauty, that, when I make report
And tell his Majesty the great success
That I have met in carrying out his
Sacred will, I may present it to him,
And thus secure his favour and earn his

Gratitude for this most signal service
 That in my zeal I have performed for him.
 I may at once inform you that when I
 Started on this great commission which was
 Entrusted to me, I brought a famous
 Artist in my train, to whom the gods have
 Given a facile brush, that with a touch that
 Seems divine, he can produce the very
 Form and image that nature has bestowed
 On any human being. His modest
 Charge is only tael's five hundred. Hasten,
 I pray you, and arrange the time when he
 Shall wait upon your daughter that he may
 Limn her features so true to very life
 That the Son of Heaven may at once
 Acknowledge that the Beauty that I bring
 To him is none other than the maiden
 Who, in his dream, had power to wake his heart
 To love.

*[The PREFECT now hastens home to consult with his wife
 and BEAUTY, and to tell them of the proposal that
 has been made by YEN-SHANG.]*

BEAUTY

How mean a soul and what a grasping mind
 This Yen-Shang does display. How he does
 Play with virtue, and pretend that in his
 Zeal to ease the heart of Yuan-ti, he has
 Come to Wat-Chow to discover humble
 Me, when all the time he has been driven
 By avaricious passions and by hopes
 Most base, to gain from you by bribery,
 Those sums of money that would help to swell
 The fortunes that have grown so vast. But
 You have disappointed him, and so his
 Hatred he has shown so plainly. I, too,

Have made him wroth and caused him to lose face
By forcing him to kneel on bended knees
And worship me as though I'd been his queen.
And now to add to all his meanness, he
Does demand five hundred taels, pretending
This to be the sum that shall be given
To pay the artist for his labour, whilst
Nothing more is certain, but that all these
Taels shall find their way, by devious secret
Routes, into the coffers of this sordid
Noble. But I shall once more thwart his schemes,
For here I hold a portrait of myself
That my own brush has drawn, with features so
Exact and true to very life, that when
The Emperor gazes on it, no doubt
Shall cloud his mind about the person whom
It represents.

PREFECT

How true this likeness is of you, my child !
So true, indeed, that nature's hand could ne'er
Have drawn a picture that would image forth
The lines and features that we love to look
Upon, so sweet as this. I much do fear
That this will but increase the bitter hate
That Yen-Shang feels for you and me. The gains
He counted his are lost, and now his mind
Will turn to vengeful schemes that may involve
Us both in sorrow. I would that I were
Rich, that I might have the gold to lavish
On him and stay his plots that now he's sure
To weave to bring destruction on our home.
But I have here two hundred taels that I
Have got by sale of trinkets that were your
Mother's. These I will take to him and make
A present to him, though much I dread that
They will seem so small to one whose fortune

Is so large, that he will hate and scorn us
All the more.

[*The PREFECT hurries to the Inn where YEN-SHANG is staying and sends into him a present of the money he has brought with him, and also the portrait of BEAUTY.*]

YEN-SHANG [*Alone in his private room.*]

This business has indeed thus far turned out
An utter failure. I had thought to make
From such a high commission as the King
Entrusted to me, thousands of taels that
Would have gone to swell the store that I have
Gathered in from all my various debtors
On whom I have bestowed my favours.
And now all that I am to glean are these
Beggary two hundred taels that hardly
Would suffice to buy me relish for my
Rice. And as for Beauty, of whom the Prince
Is so enamoured, I hate her with a
Perfect hatred. That she dislikes me I
Know well, for she has demeaned me in the
Presence of my officers, and made me
Kneel and knock my head eight times before her
As though I were her humble slave, but I
Shall show her that I have still the power
To thwart her high ambition and to cause
That she shall never see the Emperor,
For I can keep this portrait in my own
Possession and so pervert it that he
Shall never want to look upon it. And now
I must devise some wealthy scheme by which
My coffers may be filled to overflowing.

[*Enter two officials who come at the call of YEN-SHANG.*]

YEN-SHANG

I have selected you because I have
The fullest faith that both of you have brains
Enough to carry out a scheme that will
Most certainly enrich both you and me.
There is a wealthy man I hear in this
Same town who has a lovely daughter, who
Is a rival to this famous Beauty
That has treated me so scurvily, that
I have planned to pay her out, and so I
Wish to get another beauty that shall
Supplant her in the favour of our Prince.
Haste ye therefore and confer with this rich
Man, and promise him that if his purse he
Open wide I shall secure that
Beauty ne'er shall be a royal bride, but
His own daughter shall possess the place, which
But for me she would have held.

SCENE 10.

A magnificent mansion on the outskirts of the town.

[Enter the two officials entrusted by YEN-SHANG with the new scheme he has for making money, and LU, the wealthy owner of the house.]

LU

You seem to me to be the officers
Of the famous high official Yen-Shang,
Who, deputed by the King to effect
Some lofty purpose that affects the State,
Has deigned to visit this poor town of ours.
May I ask you, gentlemen, to say why
You have deigned to honour me by coming
To my mean and humble dwelling, where I
Can never entertain as you deserve.

OFFICIAL

We're here upon a secret service that
None may know but we ourselves. The scheme we
Have in view must never be divulged, for
Life would be imperilled should e'er the King
Of China come to hear about our plot.
The story briefly is, Yen-Shang has been
Deputed by His Majesty to find
A certain maid, who in a dream appeared
To him, and, captured by her beauty, he
Desires to marry her. Now Yen-Shang has
Discovered that this maiden fair is no
Other than the daughter of your Prefect,
And that her name is Beauty, but she has
Been so haughty and insulting that
He has planned to make a bad report that
Yuan-ti ne'er will dare to let her share

The throne with him. There is besides a still
More urgent reason why our Lord has come
To this conclusion. The present that her
Father sent him was so mean and paltry
That he was enraged beyond endurance,
And having heard that you have a daughter
As passing fair as Beauty, he has sent
Us to you with full powers to fix with you
The terms for which he undertakes to let
Her take the place of that proud maiden, who
It seems has also had a dream in which
She met the King and promised him to be
His bride.

LU

The news you bring me fills my heart with joy,
So deep and so profound, there are no words
In which I can express myself. I beg
You tell your Lord that I consent to give
The sum that he requires, and when the deed
Is signed and sealed by you on his behalf
The silver ingots shall be sent with due
Despatch to any place he may appoint.
But I must call my daughter, Precious Gold,
To see if she agrees with all that we
Have done.

[*Enter PRECIOUS GOLD, before whom the two retainers
prostrate themselves, with the most profound
reverence as though she were a PRINCESS.*]

LU *speaks to his daughter.*

LU

These men have come to me with plans that do
Surprise me, and that raise within my heart
Most high ambition for your future life.
They now propose that you should be allied
To royalty, and that you become the

Concubine of our Exalted Sovereign.

I now would ask from you, what is your mind
On this momentous scheme, for I would have
You free to settle for yourself what course
You deem the best for you. What you decide
Shall be the thing that pleases me.

PRECIOUS GOLD

I know,
My father, that your love for me is deep,
And what you do desire is that honours
Such as rarely fall to woman's lot
Shall come to me, and though I cling to home,
I feel that in the palace of the King
We still may love each other with just as
Fond affection as in the years gone by.
And so I gladly do consent to waive
My own desires, and shall proceed as soon
As may be deemed expedient to wait
The orders of the Emperor.

Everything having been satisfactorily arranged, Yen-Shang's artist was called in, who drew the portrait of Precious Gold to be given to the Emperor. After this, arrangements were made for the departure of both her and Beauty from Wat-chow for the Capital, where in due course they arrived without any accident.

ACT II

SCENE 1.

The Audience Hall in the Palace.

Enter EMPEROR and YEN-SHANG.

EMPEROR

Right welcome home, my Lord. Well pleased am I
To see you once again within my Court,
And at your post that you so well adorn.
I wish you joy upon your safe return,
And also on the happy way in which
You have achieved the high commission I
Entrusted to your care. The letters that
Have reached me daily by messengers that
Neither day nor night have dallied on their
Way, but on the ill-made roads, with breakneck
Speed, have hurried to the capital. But
Tell me now, I pray, with what consummate
Art you found the woman, who, before I
Saw her in my dream, had no existence.
Where is she now, and when with gladsome eyes
Shall I be able to gaze upon her
Face?

[YEN-SHANG, *with two portraits in his hand, one of which
he specially shows the EMPEROR.*]

YEN-SHANG

Your Majesty speaks most true that I have
Found out Beauty, and, in obedience
To your urgent royal will, have brought her
To the capital, still I would beseech
You, with all the eloquence I possess,
To be on your guard against this famous
Maiden, for much I fear me she will bring
To thee disaster, and wreck and ruin

To the State. In this portrait you will see
That underneath the right eye, on the line
Along which the tears are wont to flow, there is
A mole, which thoughtful men in China have
Ever held to be an omen of some
Great peril that the owner will inflict
On those whose lives run too much in common
With this unlucky one.

[*The EMPEROR, with an anxious look, takes the portrait from his hand. YEN-SHANG had previously painted in a mole in the place he described, in order to carry out his scheme by which he should injure BEAUTY in the estimation of the superstitious monarch.*]

EMPEROR

This is indeed a picture most lifelike
And most true of Beauty, who in my dream
Appeared to me, and so won the deepest
Love my heart e'er felt, that even now whilst
Looking only on the image as it
Stands upon the lifeless paper, my heart
Is conscious of a thrill of passionate
Devotion, such as no human being
Has ever caused before. I am in doubt
What I should do. My inclination leads
Me to select this beauteous maiden
To be my wife, but then you say that this
Might be the cause of ruin to myself
And to the Empire, and so I must hold
Back my own desires, and banish Beauty
From my thoughts.

[*YEN-SHANG at this point offers him the portrait of PRECIOUS GOLD, and takes back that of BEAUTY.*]

YEN-SHANG

The portrait that your Majesty now looks
On is that of Precious Gold, a maiden
None less fair than Beauty. She too belongs
To Wat-Chow, and having heard from public
Rumour the charms for which she was declared
To be possessed, I claimed her from her parents,
Who, being loyal subjects of their King,
Most gladly yielded her, at my request,
To be disposed of, as your Majesty
May deem the best. I commend her to your
Gracious will, and deem that in selecting
Her to be a member of your harem,
You make a choice you never will regret.
And now, with your most gracious leave, I'll see
That, with due ceremony that suits her
Rank, Precious Gold shall be received, as is
The due of one so highly honoured,
Into your Majesty's Western Palace.

[*Exit.*]

Yen-Shang now retires to his home to plan out a scheme of revenge against Beauty, who had so humiliated him in Wat-Chow. The Emperor, in rejecting her, had ordered her to be sent back to her father, whilst Precious Gold was at once to be received into the number of the royal concubines. Yen-Shang determined that he would not carry out the command with regard to Beauty, but would shut her up in a disused and dilapidated building standing within the grounds of the royal park. The Emperor was to know nothing of this, and he would take his time in devising vengeance on the woman that had dared to measure swords with him.

SCENE 2.

A solitary unused building in the Royal Park.

Enter BEAUTY.

BEAUTY

How sad and wretched is my fate ! I thought
That when I left my father's home I should
Attain the happy fortune that Heaven
Had planned for me, and now my hopes are
All frustrated, and feelings of despair
Creep o'er my heart, so that I cannot bear
The hardness of my lot. Oh ! that I had
My mother with me now, then would I be
Comforted. But she is far away, nor
Does she dream but that, ere this, kind fate has
Placed me on the highest pinnacle that
Woman can desire. Would that I had died
When I was born, and thus escaped the pain
And sorrow that do crush me now. I know
To whom I am indebted for all the
Misery that has filled my heart so full
Of anguish, that death would be to me most
Welcome ! Yen-Shang has turned my foe because
I did resent the cruel treatment that
He heaped upon my father. And now I'm
Left alone to bear the vengeance with which
He would repay my scorn of him.

[Here she weeps.]

[Enter one of the Palace eunuchs.]

EUNUCH

It does distress me much to hear such sounds
Of sorrow from one so young as thou, my
Lady, art. Let me entreat you, give not

Way to such excess of grief as that which
Fills thy heart with sobs and eyes with tears. Take
Up, I pray thee, thy guitar, and sing some
Song that shall expel the shadows that do
Cloud thine eyes, and make thee see visions of
Things distorted from their due proportions
Through looking at them through a mist of tears.

Touched by the sympathy of this man, she takes up her guitar and sings an impromptu song which expresses the deep sorrow with which her heart is filled. She then has another fit of weeping, then finally wearied out, she falls asleep on her couch, and has a dream in which the Emperor appears before her. She is filled with gladness and falls down at his feet. He immediately lifts her up and confesses that he has done her a grievous wrong in listening to the words of Yen-Shang. Beauty declares that she shall not be satisfied unless the traitor be put to death. She becomes so excited in her denunciation of the man that has done her so much injury, that she suddenly wakes up and discovers that the whole thing, that seemed so realistic to her, was, after all, only a dream.

SCENE 3.

The Yamen of the PREFECT of Wat-Chow.

[*Enter PREFECT and Imperial Courier from the Capital.*]

COURIER

Your Excellency, I have this moment
Just arrived, with haste so urgent and so
Exact, that night or day my footsteps
Have not lingered, and sleep has fled my eyes,
And even food was taken as I strode,
With anxious heart, along the King's highway.
I bear despatches to you from the King,
And I was warned that utmost speed would be
Demanded, and I was told that, should I
Overpass the time assigned to me, I should
Die the death.

[*This despatch is not really from the EMPEROR, but one written by YEN-SHANG, who would wreak his vengeance on BEAUTY by punishing her father and mother, to whom she is devotedly attached.*]

PREFECT [*opens and reads the despatch.*]

This edict, that I send in urgent haste
By special Courier, who has received
The strictest orders not to dally by
The way, is to inform you of my will
That you should be degraded from your post
As Prefect, and be exiled to the far
Off distant steppes of Manchuland, where you
Shall pay the penalty for bringing up
Your daughter Beauty, in habits such as
Ill-befit the station I have given you.
I had, indeed, designed to honour her

By making her my bride, but such reports
Of her have come to me of such wayward
Insubordination to those in power,
That I have ordered her to be confined
Within a lonely building, until it
Pleases me to issue her release. I
Thus would show my high displeasure against
The father who has trained his child in such
Neglect of those high virtues without which
A State can ne'er be strong.

SCENE 4.

Manchuria.

[*Enter* PREFECT *and* his WIFE, *guarded by soldiers, also Governor of District, an intimate friend of YEN-SHANG.*]

GOVERNOR

What mean you, Sir, by loitering on your Journey from the distant land from whence you Started. For months I've looked in vain for your Arrival, and often wondered whither You had fled, so much you've trespassed on the Time allowed you by His Majesty. His Royal Edict reached me so long since, that I've begun to fancy it must be some Delusion of the brain, but no, the Edict's Here, stamped with the vermillion seal, in which I am directed to place you in some Post, where you shall suffer for the wrongs you Have committed against the State. And now I have attached you and your wife to one Of the soldier camps that has been formed In some remote and savage spot, where you May act as cooks, and where the punishment You both deserve shall come to you in mean And servile occupation. But, lest you Should forget your added crime of daring To delay whilst on your journey here, you Shall be bastinadoed with a hundred Blows, to teach you that you may not lightly Fail to carry out the orders of the King, who did command that you should hurry On with all due speed until your travels Had been ended.

[*This cruel order is carried out, and the unfortunate man, wounded and bleeding from the heavy blows of the bamboo rods, is left bemoaning the misfortunes that an adverse fate has flung upon him and his Wife.*]

SCENE 5.

Royal gardens in the Capital.

[*Enter* EMPEROR and QUEEN LIN.]

QUEEN

It seems to me, my Lord, that you have quite
Forgotten my existence. It is full
Three months since I have seen you. You have been
So enthralled and so bewitched by Precious
Gold, that all excepting her have vanished
From out your mind, and I, your lawful queen,
Exist no longer in your thoughts. Even
The affairs of State have been neglected,
And loyal ministers wait in vain your
Royal summons to discuss the urgent
Matters that are pressing on the Empire
For their solution. Do you not know that
This great land is seething with rebellion,
And that in many a place the rebels
Are in arms, and fain would tear you from your
Throne. All men do now complain that you do
Give your seal of State recklessly to be
Used by one designing traitor, who has,
For meanest purpose of his own, employed
The power you have bestowed on him to place
A woman of mean birth within the Western
Palace, and to confine Beauty that
You saw in visions of the night, in such
A solitude, that she is wearing out
Her heart in grief and bitterness.

EMPEROR

You do
Amaze me with what you say. I never

Gave such power to my Prime Minister
To use my Royal seal as he thought fit.
He brought, indeed, a picture that he said
Was Beauty's, but so marred with spots, that all
The loveliness, which doubtless did exist,
Was shadowed by them : besides, a mole was seen
Most plainly on her cheek, just on the spot
Down which the tears do always fall, and which
Yen-Shang declared was ominous of ill
To me and State. I then, in pity for
The girl that won my love when she appeared
To me in midnight dreams, commanded her
To be returned, with all due reverence
And respect, back to her parents' home.

QUEEN

And were you so unwise to take a piece
Of paper which some designing knave had
Brought you, and believe that such a face as
Beauty's could e'er be limned by any
Mortal hand and do it justice ? That face
I've seen, and I do declare it is
Most beautiful. Were you to journey through
The wide expanse of Heaven, but rarely could
You find a single one to be compared
With it, and none at all on earth. But why
Stand here when we can gaze on Beauty, and
Ourselves behold the loveliness, unmarked
By mole or spot that Yen-Shang showed you
In the picture, but which for purpose of
Deception he had himself put in.

[*They walk along through the park. The moon is shining brightly and casting her silver beams amongst the trees. As they come near the house in which BEAUTY is confined, they hear sounds of weeping and sorrow. They stand outside and listen.*]

BEAUTY

Alas ! how sad my lot ! I am confined
Within this lonely building with none whose
Heart is touched with my misfortunes to bring
Deliverance. The father whom I love
With passionate devotion is banished
To Manchuria's distant wilds because
Of Yen-Shang's hate. The King has lost his love
For me, unmindful of the vows he made
When in our dreams we met. Alas ! then who
Shall save me, for e'en the Queen, in whom I
Trusted, has turned false to every promise
That she made me. I had believed that she
Would be my friend, but she has failed me like
The rest.

[*The EMPEROR sends in one of the Ladies-in-Waiting to
HER MAJESTY, to summon BEAUTY to his presence.
She at once obeys and appears before him.*]

EMPEROR

'Tis with sorrow that no language can
Express, I see you in such misery
As I behold you now. I never knew
That you were here, for I had ordered that
You should be restored with every mark
Of honour to your parents' home. Yen-Shang
Deceived both you and me in causing you
To be detained within this lonely house
Towards which he little dreamed I ever should
My footsteps turn. I am amazed as I
Do think with what consummate guile he caused
Me to believe in him. He turned the love
That I had felt for you into a dread
That evil would descend on me and you
If we should marry : for he declared that
On your face you had a mole that boded

Ill, that one day would be hurled against
Us and destroy us both, but now I see
That what he said was false, for neither mole
Nor spot of any kind is seen upon
Your face. It seems indeed more beautiful
Than on that night in which you promised me
You would become my bride. The fault is mine
That you have borne such cruel ills, and now
I here do promise, on the honour of
A king, that ere to-morrow's sun shall set
Behind the Western hills, your wrongs shall be
Avenged, and Yen-Shang never more shall have
The chance of troubling you.

QUEEN

The air grows chill,
Nor is it safe to loiter in the Park
At this late hour. Come, let us turn our steps
Back to the palace, and Beauty shall go
With us, and we will strive with various
Devices to ease her mind, and make her
Feel that she has got the deepest love that
Dwells in both our hearts.

That same night, so indignant is the Emperor at the fraud that has been perpetrated in his name, that he sends a secret despatch to the Commander of the troops in the capital, with orders to march all the forces at his disposal and surround the dwelling of Yen-Shang, and capture him and every member of his clan within it, and put them all to death. He also informs him that whosoever is the means of seizing this arch-traitor, if he is a mandarin, he shall be raised in honour as much as three ranks of nobility, and that if he is a common person, he and his family shall be ennobled.

SCENE 6.

The dwelling house of Yen-Shang, who is seen sitting in his study, reading. It is getting near the dawn, but the fascination of his books makes him forget that the hour is late. All at once his attention is arrested by sounds that have an ominous accent in them. They are not such as men are accustomed to hear in the early hours of the morning.

He hastily calls a servant and bids him go and find out the meaning of the strange movements, apparently of a considerable body of men, that come to him over the silence of the night. In a few minutes, the man returns with a white face and dazed look, and cries out in terror that the house is being surrounded by the troops of the Emperor.

Yen-Shang, mistrusting that some great calamity is about to fall upon him, rushes out and changes his clothes, and, snatching up the portrait of Beauty, flies out by a back door, and escapes to the neighbouring hills, and hides himself among the trees and brushwood with which they are covered. In a short time he manages to cross the great river and to get into the neighbouring kingdom of Shang Lu. He then proceeds to the court of the King, and offers his services to him, and presents him with the picture of Beauty. He finds his Prime Minister to be an old pupil of his own, who promises to introduce him to the King, and to forward his interests to the utmost of his power.

ACT III

SCENE I.

The Court of the KING OF SHANG LU.

[*Enter the KING, his PRIME MINISTER, a number of nobles, and YEN-SHANG.*]

PRIME MINISTER

My Lord and King, I take the liberty
To introduce to the notice of your
Majesty, a dear and well-known friend of
Mine, who, dazzled by the splendour
Of your name and court, has come from China
To pay his homage and to offer you
His services. In the land from whence he
Comes, his name is known to all, and until
Lately next to the King he stood, above
The highest of the nobles, for he was
Prime Minister to Yuan-ti.

KING

It seems
To me most passing strange your friend should come
To this, my distant Court, from such renowned
A monarch as the Son of Heaven, and be
Content with meaner service, and a role
So much inferior to what he has
Been used to. What cause has brought him to my
Kingdom? I do declare, I fain would know
What it was that caused him flee his native
Land, to wander here in search of honour?

PRIME M.

Oh! great King, one sufficient cause why
Yen-Shang has been led to forfeit all his
Honours, and to pray your Majesty, that,
In your grace, you would bestow some office,

It matters not how low, is easily
Explained. The King of China has become
Depraved, and so enamoured of a girl
Named Beauty, that the business of the State
No longer claims his thought, and loyal men
Are in despair, for treason lifts its head
Throughout the land, and ministers that dare
Remind the Sovereign of his duty are
Put in peril of their lives, and so my
Friend, because too faithful in the service
Of his King, must die or fly the kingdom.
That this is no invented story would be
Proved by one sight of Beauty, who is more
Lovely than all the beauties of the past,
And that the King may be convinced, Yen-Shang
Has brought her portrait, drawn with her own hand,
That will convince your Majesty that what
I say falls far below the truth.

[Here he takes the picture from the hand of YEN-SHANG, who has obliterated the dark spots and the mole on the face which he had put in to deceive the EMPEROR OF CHINA, and hands it to the KING. No sooner does the latter cast his eyes upon it than he is mightily moved and is filled with a passionate love for Beauty.]

KING

This is indeed the rarest beauty that
The world has ever seen, and more befits
My Court than that of the depraved Monarch
That fills the Dragon throne. My heart is moved
Towards her, as never in my life has
Any woman touched me into love. Should
Any one suggest some plan by which she
May become my queen, unstinted honours
Shall be heaped on him, and riches, such as

No one in the past has e'er possessed, shall
Satisfy the highest longings he has
Ever craved for wealth.

YEN-SHANG

Your Majesty has only to declare
That you will go to war with China, and
Such terror will arise that Beauty will
Be handed over to you with but brief
Delay, so desperate is the state which
Now prevails throughout that Empire.

KING

Without sufficient cause that we can state
For making war, I would not dare embroil
My kingdom in a contest with so great
A power as the black-haired race.

PRIME M.

You need not fear that we shall fail to find
Some cogent reason that will justify
The marching of our troops, to demonstrate
To China that in the field our men are
No less brave than hers. I have, indeed, thought
Out a plan, which, if your Majesty be
Pleased to sanction, can be adopted. I
Have prepared a verse in which is wrapped a
Puzzle, which, if the King of China can
But solve, we shall contented be to own
Him as our Lord, and tribute shall be paid
To him, but if he fails, he shall forthwith
Despatch this famous beauty to be the
Partner of our Lord. The puzzle I have
Made runs thus :

A fairy straight from Heaven
Came down to earth.
Unjustly, she's been shut
Within a royal prison.

At sound of mandoline
Outside her door,
She gladly flies and comes
To him that plays.

This ingenious puzzle was rapturously applauded by all present, and a famous general, with three thousand men as an escort, was despatched to the Chinese capital to present it to the Emperor. In due time they reach their destination, and the Ambassador is presented in solemn audience to the Son of Heaven.

SCENE 2.

The Royal Audience Hall.

[*Enter* EMPEROR, a number of nobles, and the ENVOY from SHANG LU.]

ENVOY

My Lord, the King of Shang Lu has despatched
Me to your Court, a puzzle to present
To you, enshrined in verse which, if your statesmen
Solve, my Sovereign does agree that he shall
Own you Overlord, and shall a yearly
Tribute pay to China: but should perchance
The cryptic thought enshrined in song escape
The wisest of your councillors, and you
Should fail to solve the riddle, then Beauty
Shall become the prize that shall be handed
To my King to be for ever his.

[*The* ENVOY *here hands him the document, but as the* EMPEROR *cannot solve the riddle, he calls upon a distinguished scholar to read and explain, if possible, the mystery contained in it. He does so, and being a man of considerable acumen, he soon discovers that the riddle that has been sent from SHANG LU is a gross insult to the* EMPEROR.]

SCHOLAR

My gracious Lord, this puzzle that I hold
Within my hand is one whose meaning I
Have caught. The words seem fair and simple, but
Underneath a gentle guise they carry
Insult so daring and so reckless, that
It makes me blush even to think that men
Should ever dream of speaking with contempt
Of one so great and noble as thou art.

The fairy mentioned in this puzzle is
No other than the famous Beauty,
Whom it is asserted thou didst immure
Within a lonely building, though all men
Know the man who did this act is Yen-Shang,
The traitor who has fled the land, and tries
To hide his crimes by clouding thy fair fame
By wrongs himself has done. But worse must still
Be told. The maker of the riddle dares
To hint that Beauty has no sense of shame
Nor love for thee, but any wandering
Minstrel, straying with lute and song, would find
The capture of her heart an easy thing,
Whilst thou, my Lord, wouldst look in vain for her
To whom thou'st given thy very heart and soul.

EMPEROR

Such insults as this haughty Envoy, sent
From the vassal State of Shang Lu, has dared
To hurl on me, his Sovereign Lord, this day
Can only be atoned for by his death.
The soldiers, too, that have been sent with him
Must be exterminated, not one may
Live, and thus shall Shang Lu learn that China's
Honour and prestige may not be soiled
By any one without the direst pains
And penalties being hurled upon him.
Let instant orders be sent forth that all
The soldiers in my capital at once
Surround and hack to death the force that now
Encamps without our walls that none escape.

LEE, *the Commander-in-Chief*

My Sovereign Lord, on bended knees, I knock
My head upon the ground, and do beseech
That thou wouldst forgive the liberty I take.
To kill this Envoy and the men that are
His guard would bring dishonour on our flag,

For by the law of nations, their persons
Are immune, and none may hurt them whilst on
The service of their King. The insult you
Have had to-day comes not from them but him,
And so to punish these who only are
His servants, would be an outrage that all
The world would hasten to condemn. I pray
Thee, in thy gracious condescension, treat
All the strangers that have come to this, thy
Land, as honoured guests, and send them to their
Homes with kindly thoughts about your treatment
Of them, such as will raise thy fame amongst
The people of Shang Lu. But to their King
Himself, send word that due contrition must
Be shown, or else your armies will invade his
Land, when vengeance will be taken, such as will
Blot out in blood his kingdom from the earth.

SCENE 3.

The Audience Hall in the Capital of SHANG LU.

[*Enter KING, the ENVOY TO CHINA, YEN-SHANG, and PRIME MINISTER.*]

ENVOY

My Lord and King, I do report myself,
Having just fulfilled the mission thou didst
Entrust to me. The riddle thou didst send
By me was solved by some great scholar that
The Emperor had at court, and so full
Of anger was the Son of Heaven that had
Not some one interposed, both I and all
My men would have been slain, so great was deemed
The insult that your Majesty had shown
To Yuan-ti and the famous Beauty.
My life was spared, and I was told to tell
Thee that unless submission soon were made
And tribute paid, the soldiers of the Han
Would fill your kingdom and destroy both man
And maid, and every living thing, and not
A blade of grass be left to show where life
Did once exist.

YEN-SHANG

Let not the message that
This envoy brings distress my Lord. If you
Desire to have this Beauty still for wife,
The way before you is a simple one,
Which you, a King with all your power, may
Easily accomplish. Send orders out
That all your forces do assemble, and
Then with swift precision hurl them against
The land where Beauty is detained and set

Her free. The vices of the Son of Heaven
Are now so great, that loyalty is strained
To such extent that men will not respond
To such a tyrant, and battles gained will
Give you great renown, and Shang Lu then
Need no more dread that she will be absorbed
By this great power of China.

The arguments presented by Yen-Shang proved so convincing to the King that an army of one hundred thousand men was silently but speedily collected, and whilst China was dreaming, they were marching to attack the Empire. The news threw the whole country into a state of consternation. Troops were hastily collected and hurried forward to the frontiers to defend the passes through which the foe alone could enter the country.

Desultory fighting went on for over two years, and great battles were fought, but victory finally decided in favour of the soldiers of Shang Lu, who carried everything before them, and their large army at last encamped around the Chinese capital and closely besieged it. In this desperate condition negotiations were opened with the Commander of the enemy's forces, and an agreement was drawn up that he was to withdraw his troops for a distance of twenty miles, and that in ten days Beauty should be surrendered to him.

ACT IV

SCENE I.

A room in the Palace.

[*Enter* EMPEROR OF CHINA *and* BEAUTY.]

EMPEROR

My heart is sorely grieved and language fails
Me when I think, with sad and weary soul,
Upon the evils that have come on this
Our land, and, sorest thought of all that breaks
My very heart, is, that unless I do
Surrender you to this victorious force
Outside our gates, death stares us in
The face, both you and me, and all confined
Within our walls, for we can never hope
That help, in this great distress, can reach
Us, so that the cruel foe that seeks our
Lives may fly discomfited before us.
I now propose, that we consent in this
Our season of perplexity, when Heaven
Has left us to our fate, to yield you to
The foe, who will at once give up the siege,
But when you reach the Frontier Pass, you must
Contrive so to delay that you shall stay
Fully half a moon there, whilst I shall strive,
With might and main, to enlist a rescue
Force that shall snatch you rudely from the grasp
Of this rapacious foe.

BEAUTY

It seems to me
Most passing strange that I, a woman, weak
And feeble, should be sacrificed to save
The Empire. Why should I be called upon
To give my honour and my life to cause

The foes that are besieging you to fly
Apace? You are a man, the ruler of
A royal race. Why not assert yourself,
And speak in stirring tones that shall arouse
The passion that lies slumbering, and that
Needs only a master voice to call it
Into life, to drive the foe for ever
From our land? I fear, alas! my fate is
Sealed, and I must save the nation by the
Sacrifice of self. But I will do your
Bidding, and shall contrive to dally at
The Pass, the time you name, and if you are
A man, you will be there with horse and foot,
In force so strong that I shall rescued be,
And be brought back again to this dear home
Of mine.

The General in command of the enemy's forces, according to agreement, at once raised the siege and retreated to the specified distance and awaited the coming of Beauty. On her arrival the army commenced its march back to Shang-Lu. When they reached the great Frontier Pass, she carried out her promise to the Emperor, and managed to induce the General to delay his departure from it for more than the time that had been agreed upon. Every day she looked with longing eyes for the Chinese army that was to bring her deliverance, but in vain. At length, hopeless and despairing of any effective measures being adopted for her rescue, she allowed the army to continue on its homeward march.

One evening, after they had left Chinese territory for some days, the army was encamped for the night, and Beauty had been given rooms in an idol temple. As she was feeling considerably distressed in mind, she took up a guitar, and sang a song that she composed impromptu, in which she gave expression to the doleful thoughts with which her mind was oppressed.

When she had finished, she laid her head down on the table near which she had been sitting, when she seems to have fallen into a kind of trance, during which she had a vision, in which two young girls, dressed in white, suddenly appeared before her. One of them in a clear distinct voice called out, "Queen! Queen! follow us to where we shall lead you."

Beauty seemed constrained by a force that she could not withstand to get up and go in the direction in which they walked. As if led by an invisible guide she threaded her way amidst the tents of the soldiers, until she found herself in the open country outside the encampment of the army.

Very soon she came to a large pagoda, and, ascending several storeys, she was ushered, by her guides, into a large room, where a brilliant assemblage seemed to have been awaiting her coming.

SCENE 2.

A large room in a pagoda.

[*Enter the FAIRY QUEEN, with a crown upon her head and dressed in most magnificent apparel, also a great crowd of fairy attendants.*]

FAIRY QUEEN

This day I've summoned you to let you know
With what concern and admiration we
Have looked upon the pain and sorrow that
Have marked your life, and with what a noble
Mind you've borne the ills that adverse fate has,
With such insistent force, obscured your joys.
The story of your life is known to us
In Western Heaven, and many a heart has
Thrilled with deep emotion as we've watched the
Noble and heroic stand you took, and
Through the cunning and deceit of one, who,
Full of hate, has marred your life, you have been
Brought to dire distress. We would have you
Understand that, in the stress and conflict
That will dog your steps for many a year
To come, you're not alone. We fairies will
Stand by you, and when some deadly force would
Launch its shaft against your life, then we shall
Intervene, and make it glance away from
Thee, unscathed by harm. In all your troubles
Ne'er forget the hearts of fairies ever
Beat in warmest sympathy and love
For suffering men and women, and false and
Recreant would they be that would in time
Of human need abstain from succouring
Those that might in peril be, by night or
Day.

The words your Gracious Majesty has
Uttered have filled my heart with joy and hope.
I thought myself alone with none to care,
In this wide world, for me! Exiled from home
And country, and my very husband that
I think of with a love so deep and so
Profound that language has no words in which
I may express my thoughts, has cast me off,
And so the very thought of life had turned
Distasteful to me. But now new hopes spring
Up within my breast, and since I know that
Fairyland will me protect, the purpose
That my mind had formed, but feared, lest I might
Fail, shall henceforth be the moving force that
Shall direct me in the days to come. My
Royal husband, who professed such love, has
Cruelly abandoned me, and recks not
That another King of savage race should
Seize by force of arms and add me to his
Harem, to be his slave for life. But this
Shall never be. The Son of Heaven is my
Lord, and I am bound to him by honour
And by love, and e'en to save my life, I
May not break the bond that Heaven has woven
Around my heart and life; that shall be broken
Only when death has closed my eyes. But now,
I have but one great quest to make to you.
I know the future, that does lie concealed
Before the gaze of man, is open as
The noonday, when shines the sun with greatest
Light to all the fairy host, and so I
Pray thee, tell me, if ever in the days
To come, I shall retrace my steps across
These weary wastes, back to the land I love,
And to the man, though faithless he has been,
That holds my heart in bondage still.

I fear

That you may never hope to see again
The kingdom you have left behind. I look
Along the vista of the future, just
As it lies revealed before me, and I
Can see no sign of you amongst the years
That crowd in front of me. I know, indeed,
That fate with cruel hand has written in
The book of destiny, that you shall spend
Your life in banishment from all you love
And all that you hold dear, but let not this
Too much distress your soul, for Fate again,
With kindly thought, has written down with pen
Of iron, that you shall do heroic
Service, that shall place you high in China's
Roll of men and women, whose virtues have
Combined to make the Flowery Land the first
Amongst the countries of the world. Now let
Me urge upon you to be brave, and let
There be conspicuous in your life that
Modesty and virtue, which all men deem
To be the crowning glories that adorn
A noble woman's life. From this moment,
In the mighty struggle that awaits you,
You will have the loving care of every
Fairy, who, with all the subtle forces
They possess, will never see you worsted
In the fight. And now, to let you know that
These are not mere words that I have lightly
Uttered, I give you here this magic robe,
Which fairy hands have woven, and bind it
Round you. Engirt in this, the noble aim
Of chastity that you have set before
You may never fail, for should any man
Attempt to injure you, the slightest touch
Will cause his blood to flow from every pore,

And should he not desist, he will ere long
Have ceased to live.

As the Queen stopped speaking, two of the fairies standing by, gently led her from the room and conducted her across the moon-lit road back again to where the army lay encamped. Suddenly, as though awaking from a trance, she found herself in her room in the temple. Perplexed and puzzled, she first of all imagined she had been dreaming, and that the wonderful sight she had seen in the pagoda was one that sleep had conjured up. The magic garment, however, dispelled this idea, and she realised that invisible forces had pledged themselves to stand by her in the struggle that she knew awaited her.

SCENE 3.

The Palace of the KING OF SHANG LU.

Enter KING, nobles, YEN-SHANG, and BEAUTY.

YEN-SHANG is called upon by the KING to produce his picture of BEAUTY, in order to see whether she is the celebrated Beauty for which he had been fighting with China. Finding by a careful examination that it is really she, he is delighted beyond measure. He had already been powerfully attracted by her, and was filled with a most passionate and most devoted love for her.

In his desire to make her feel that she is welcome, he takes her by the hand to lead her into her new home, when suddenly the blood begins to ooze from every pore in his body. Alarmed beyond measure, he suddenly drops her hand, when the bleeding instantly stops.

KING

What means this strange and marvellous attack
That has come o'er me? No sooner did I
Touch your hand than every vein within my
Body seemed, by one consent, to send its
Crimson tide in one mad rush, to leave its
Ancient channel. And then, most marvellous
To tell, the outward flow is stopped at once,
So soon as I have snatched away my hand
From touching yours.

BEAUTY

My Lord, the King, 'tis well
That you should know that I can never be
Your bride, until three vows, that I have made,
Be fully carried out. And should you think
Of using force to make me stoop to do
Your will, then from your body there shall start

The crimson flood that shall not cease till you
Desist. This is no idle story as
To-day has proved to you, and till my vows
Are paid, I pray you treat me as a guest,
For never dream that I, till then, shall be
Content to wed with you.

KING

I pray you, let
Me know the nature of these vows, for I
Am anxious to discover how great may
Be the hindrance that severs you from me.

BEAUTY

The first and foremost of the vows is that
Yen Shang shall suffer death, for traitor he
Has been, and so by law deserves to die.
He is, besides, the hater of my house,
And, through his cunning and deceit,
Has brought upon me sorrow infinite.
I ne'er shall be content until the axe
Of justice has laid low this crafty and
Ambitious noble, who, moved by passion
And his lust for gold and power, has sent
Two nations to the battlefield, where men
Innumerable have been slain in mortal
Combat with each other. The bitterest
Death the law metes out should be the doom that
He deserves.

The second vow that I have
Made, and called high Heaven to witness, is that
I never shall be Queen of Shang Lu till
You have made submission to the Son of
Heaven, and sent your tribute to the Dragon
Throne as evidence that you acknowledge
Him to be your Overlord.

The third is
One that will demand long years of painful

Sacrifice from you and all your subjects.
I wish you to consent to make a bridge
Across the river in your territory,
That flows towards the sea, until it bathes
The shores of China. When thou hast granted
These three things that I have vowed, and when each
Has been fulfilled, the time will then have come
For me to be your consort on the throne,
But not before.

KING

I am indeed distressed
To hear the terms on which alone you do
Consent to share the crown with me. The first,
Indeed, is easy of accomplishment,
And, though Yen-Shang has proved his loyalty
To me and mine, the sorrows he has brought
On you have been so great that he deserves
To die, and die he shall before the sun
Shall once more gild the Eastern hills, and flash
His rays across the land.

The second one
Will test the temper of my people, who,
Since the many victories they have gained
In numerous well-fought fields, have now begun
To look upon themselves as quite a match
For any forces that the Son of Heaven
Could bring to face our armies, but still my
Love for you is so profound and deep, that
I shall be content to risk the anger
That will fill men's hearts, when I, their King,
Shall offer homage to a power that they
Have learned to scorn. So then, without delay,
I shall appoint an embassy, who shall
My tribute carry to your native land,
In token of the allegiance to the Lord
That rules the kingdom you have left.

The third

Request, most difficult of all, since it
For many years to come will drain the wealth
And task the strength of all within this land,
I herewith promise shall be carried out.

The King of Shang Lu, in compliance with his promises now made to Beauty, proceeded to carry them out. Yen-Shang, at dawn next morning, was led out to the execution ground, where he was subjected to the most cruel tortures that soon resulted in his death.

A number of high officials was then appointed to proceed to China, bearing with them valuable presents to the Emperor. Arriving at the capital, they made submission to Yuan-ti, and formally, in the name of their King, prayed that Shang Lu should be allowed to come within the category of the countries that were tributary to him.

Preparations, too, were at once commenced for the building of the bridge across the "White Sea River." This taxed the resources of the country to their extreme limit, for the enterprise was such a one as the people of Shang Lu had been little accustomed to. The expense of providing materials for its construction and for paying the host of workmen of all descriptions that laboured on it was very great, and was a burden upon all classes of society. At last, after sixteen years it was completed, and a day was appointed for the formal opening of it, by special offerings being made to the Spirit of the river.

SCENE 4.

The centre of the new bridge, where a table is set out with suitable offerings to be made to the God of the river.

[*Enter the KING, accompanied by BEAUTY, together with a magnificent retinue. BEAUTY steps out from the party and kneels in front of the altar, where, in a low voice, inaudible to all about her, she tells her story to the Spirit.*]

BEAUTY

Great Spirit of this flowing river, I
Kneel before thee to beseech thy pity
And thine aid. For many long and weary
Years my heart has waited for this day, when
From the evil state in which I have been
Bound, deliverance might come and free me
From the dire restraints in which my soul has
Been confined so long. For sixteen years, death
Has been to me the kindest vision that
I have seen in all my wildest thoughts, when
Life had turned a burden that had become
Too hard to bear. My fondest dream of all
The years since I was banished from my
Home and country has been to return once
More and be amongst my kindred. Fate had,
Indeed, decreed that I should never be
Allowed to mingle with the friends, or see
The land I loved so much. My only hope
Has been in thee, Great Spirit, that thou wouldst
Take my body and, with gentle hands, bear
It unharmed up to the very city
Where my Lord doth reign.

After she had uttered these words, she rose hurriedly

from her kneeling position, and threw herself headlong into the river. Every effort was made to rescue her, but from the moment that she vanished beneath the surface of the stream, not a trace of her could afterwards be found. This mysterious disappearance was put down to the intervention of the Spirit of the river whose pity had been solicited by Beauty before she flung herself into the swift flowing waters.

SCENE 5.

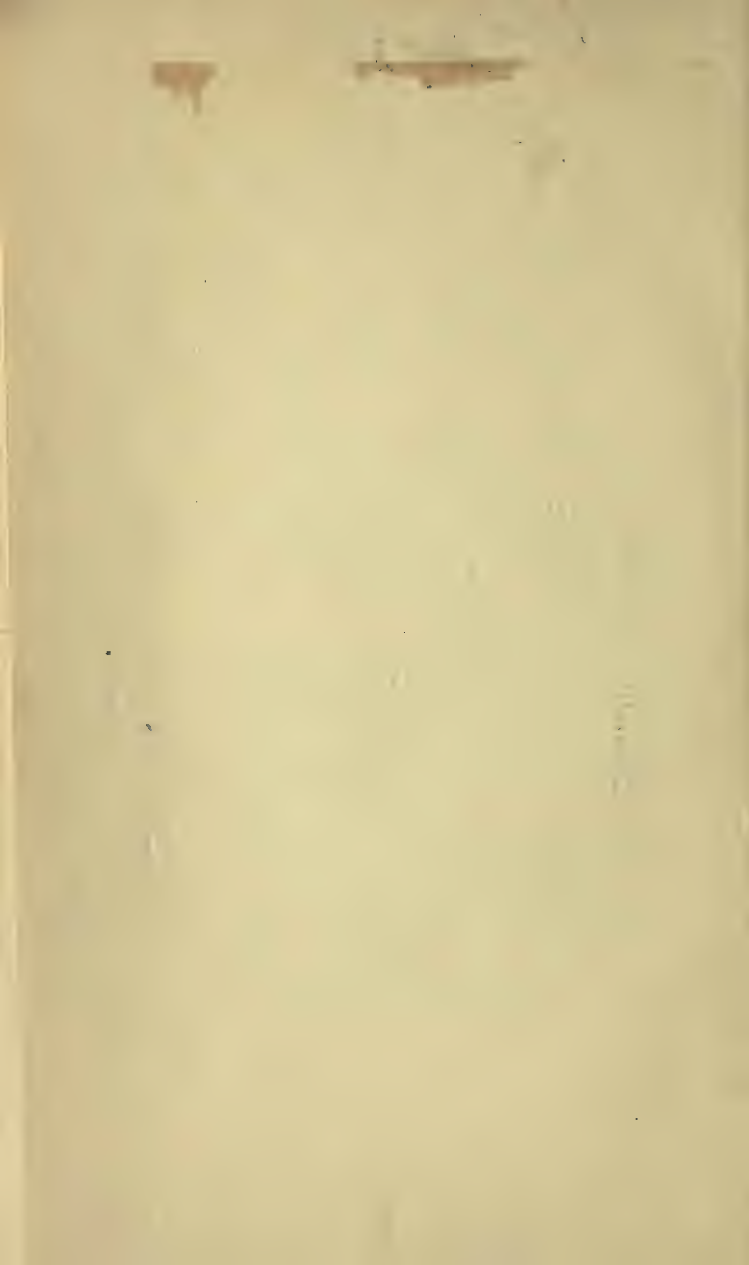
At the mouth of the creek that led up to the Capital.

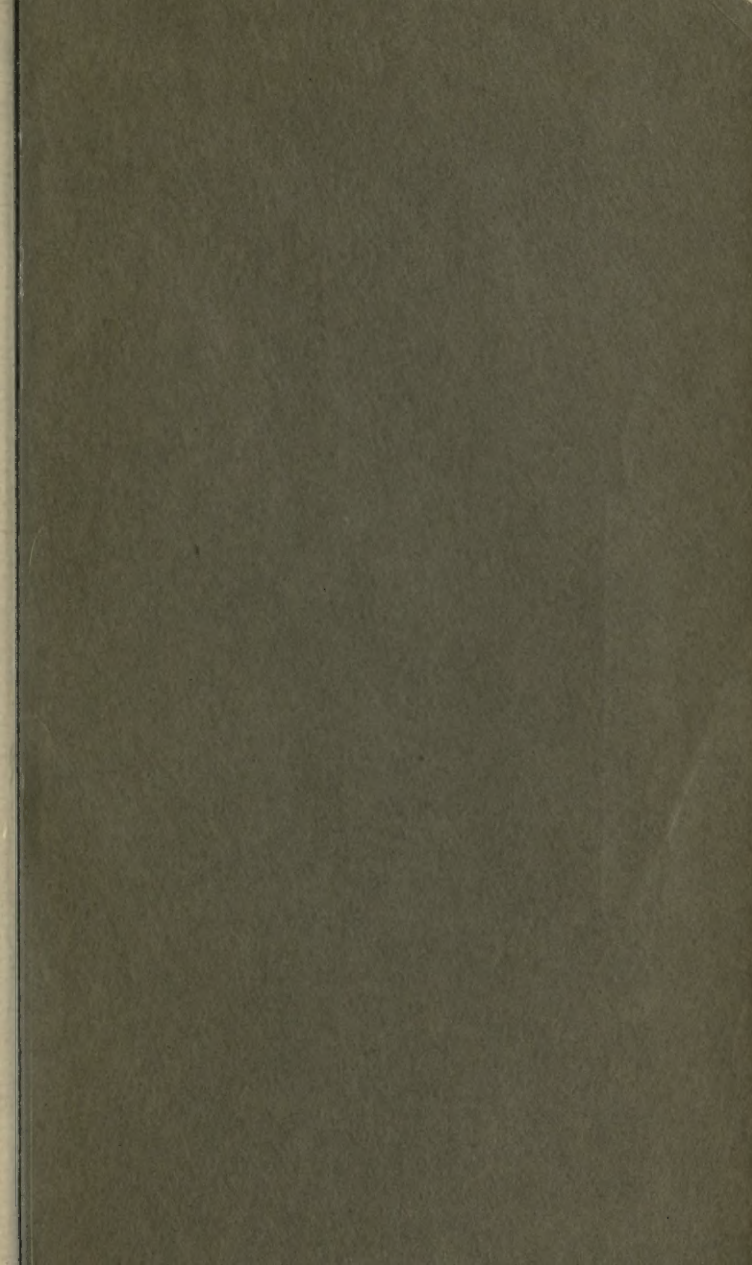
A wonderful sight was seen by those who happened to be on its banks, for out in the open, flocks of all descriptions of birds flying about and careering in the air, with sprays of flowers in their beaks, with which they flew down and dropped them on some object that was floating peacefully in the water.

It was discovered after a time that this was no other than the body of Beauty, which, it was believed, the Spirit of the "White Sea River" had taken charge of, and, out of admiration for her virtue and heroism, had steered it safely in its long and winding journey back to the very place that had been her home sixteen or seventeen years ago.

Whilst great mandarins, who had been sent by the Emperor, were arranging to bring the body to land, suddenly a mysterious-looking figure came with whirlwind speed through the air, and, sweeping over the body of Beauty, carried off the magic garment that the Queen of the Fairies had bestowed upon her.

A Royal funeral was given to the body that had been so miraculously preserved from all the accidents of flood and tide, but the greatest monument to Beauty for her constancy and heroic life has been the affection with which her memory has been kept green in the hearts of the people throughout the Chinese Empire through all the ages since she lived down to the present.





THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST DATE

14 DAY USE
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED
LOAN DEPT.

This book is due on the last date stamped below,
or on the date to which renewed. Renewals only:
Tel. No. 642-3405
Renewals may be made 4 days prior to date due.
Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

Due end of WINTER Quarter

subject to recall after — JAN 25 '72 93

REC'D LD MAR 30 '72 -12 AM 73

LD21A-40m-8,'71
(P6572s10)476-A-32

General Library
University of California
Berkeley

LD 21-100-7'33

LOAN DEPT.

