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The Mystery of the White Snake :

A LEGEND OF THUNDER PEAK TOWER,

FROM THE CHINESE.

BY

SAMUEL I. WOODBRIDGE.

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The Mystery of the White Snake :

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INTRODUCTION.

THE status of the Chinese popular mind in its abnormal cravings, may be compared with the physical condition of a fever patient. Unable, through ignorance, to extend the operations of thought further than the borders of the Inner Land, and requiring something far beyond the resources of China to satisfy the natural and normal desire, it has peopled the earth, the air, and the sea with all sorts of ghosts, hobgoblins, fairies and dragons. For this lamentable fact, the Buddhist doctrine of transmigration is largely responsible. Certain it is, that the people think that animals and reptiles were once men, and men were once animals and reptiles. Such being the case, it is no wonder that the ordinary and commonplace occurrences on this planet seem tame and insipid when put alongside the thrilling adventures of their imaginary heroes. The resources and powers of such men as William the Conqueror, Columbus, Cromwell, Napoleon, and others are but feeble when compared with the Albia and Fahhai of this tale, the one of whom could cause the Yangtze River to overflow by magic, and drown the inhabitants of Chinkiang; and the

other, bend down the Thunder Peak Tower with a word. The *nil admirari* attitude of the Chinese, that is apparent even to the most casual observer, may be partly accounted for by the fact that in every department of thought and action their traditions contain the deeds of demigods more exceedingly wonderful than any actual sublunary character ever produced. The most brilliant exponent of modern surgery, for instance, would never be "able to take the hearts out of two men and change them the one for the other." And yet Pien Ch'iao did this twenty-five centuries ago! No feat of laparotomy could equal that of another Chinese physician who "pierced the chest of a patient and introduced food into the interior." In order to render the native intellect capable of receiving and assimilating true knowledge, the fever above mentioned must first be reduced. We believe that the plain Gospel of Jesus Christ, with its long train of beneficent effects upon the world and mankind, will clarify the mind of the Chinese, as well as accomplish the farther reaching and more enduring result of saving their souls.

CHAPTER I.

THE FATED PAIR.

Many years ago there lived in the city of Hangchow, China, a young scholar named Hanwin. When but five years old his father and mother died, leaving him with a small pittance in care of his married sister Grace, whose husband, Leigh, was employed in the office of the City Magistrate. His salary, while not large, was sufficient to support his family in comfort. Hanwin grew up very handsome; he had beautiful eyes and was graceful in body, and of a happy, cheerful disposition. His sister and her husband loved him devotedly, and lost no opportunity to make him a good and useful man.

One day, when there was a holiday at the office, while Leigh was sitting leisurely in his home, the thought suddenly occurred to him that the boy should be doing something for himself; so he concluded to mention the subject to his wife. That night, when Hanwin came home, the matter was discussed, and to the joy of Grace, it was decided that the boy should be apprenticed to a trade. A friend of the family, named King, kept an apothecary's shop, and if there was a place for him they agreed that he should lose no time in taking it.

The next day Leigh dressed himself in his best and repaired to the friend's house where he was courteously received; and after the usual formalities were over, he stated the object of his visit. "My brother Hanwin is a very promising young man," said he, "and you will find him quite useful if you conclude to try him." "You have come just in time," said his friend, "I am in need of such a young man to attend to the shop, and if he can come at once I will be glad to try him." So it was settled between them that Hanwin should be placed in the shop to learn the business of a chemist. A lucky day was chosen from the Imperial Almanac, and at that propitious time Hanwin was to commence to make his own living.

Thanking Mr. King, the kind-hearted brother departed and was soon home to tell his wife the good news. Arrangements were begun at once and Hanwin

was made ready against the time selected for him to begin his career.

That day dawned clear and bright, and the boy was taken to his employer who was very much pleased with his appearance. Nor did Hanwin belie his looks, for he was so diligent and active in business, and so pleasing withal, that Mr. King soon found him indispensable, and gave the most favourable reports of him to Leigh and his wife who often came to visit him in his new home.

In the province of Szechuan there is a long range of mountains extending many hundreds of miles to the westward. Many of these mountains are very high and among them, in the Prefecture of Chêngtu, there are rugged, precipitous places abounding in deep, dark caverns. Those most celebrated are called the "Heavenly Caves," but there are seventy-two smaller ones, in all corresponding to the constellations, and eight larger ones which match the eight festivals. From olden times these caves have been known to be haunted, for they are the natural abode of spirits and hobgoblins, especially one called the Cavern of the Pure Wind. Here in retirement lived a White Snake who had spent eighteen hundred years in meditation, seeking to attain perfection. Being of the brute creation this perfection could never be reached by her, although she did not know it. One day while gliding along the front of the cave which was overgrown with curious grasses and herbs such as mortals eagerly seek after for medicine, and which possess ghostly charms and healing qualities, the snake ghost thought that it might probably be useless to spend more time in this weird abode seeking for a doubtful benefit. For she had faithfully performed her devotions and carefully refrained from injuring the race of men and all to no effect. Then the prospect of spending more time in the cave was anything but pleasing. While thus reflecting, the beauties of Hangchow which she had once visited sprang into view, and she remembered the surpassing loveliness of the Western Lake, and the verdure and fragrance of the Tiger Mound, with the matchless scenery of the surrounding

hills. The temptation to leave came in an instant, and she yielded at once. With the quickness of thought, she sealed up the mouth of the cave and sprang upon a passing cloud, which rapidly bore her off from the solitude of the cavern towards the more pleasing environments of Chêkiang. Now, unluckily, it happened that this was the very day on which the god of the North Star, who has his temple near Hangchow, ascended to the heavenly portals to make his report to the Pearly Emperor. He had finished his work and was on his return to the temple, riding in his nebulous chariot, when his piercing eye beheld in the distance, a ghostly mist from the west, bearing down upon him. As it drew near, the god recognised the snake at once. "What do you mean, you reprobate brute, by using this thoroughfare when you know your superiors are passing to-day?" he angrily demanded; "And where are you going, anyhow?"

When the snake heard the voice of the god she trembled with fear. Quickly dismounting, she kneeled in front of the chariot and begged forgiveness. "I did not know that your Majesty was using the thoroughfare to-day. I am only a brute, I know, but I am on my way to the Southern Sea to consult the Goddess of Mercy on a subject very important to myself. I tell you the truth when I say that I have desired to attain perfection and so far have failed, although I have been faithful in my devotions for eighteen hundred years. In my zeal I have offended you and I know I ought to die."

The god smiled. "You brute, how do I know you are not lying?" said he. "I will not let you go unless you *swear* that you are on your way to the Southern Sea." The White Snake kneeled low: "I will swear," said she, "and if I am not speaking the truth, let the Thunder Peak Tower crush my body."

"Go then," said the god, impatiently, and turning to his scribe ordered him to record the oath. With that he descended swiftly to his temple on the earth.

The culprit, glad to get off so easily, slowly rose and mounting the cloud that in the meantime had been waiting, she sailed rapidly over the beautiful hills and fields to the city of Hangchow.

Now, this city was the fairest of all cities under heaven. The Emperor of China had erected a palace on the bosom of the Western Lake outside the gate, and there were numerous gardens and pleasure grounds inside the city walls. The place abounded with handsome buildings, both public and private, one of which the snake chose for her abode. This was very spacious and was built by a prince, but for years it had been haunted, and men feared to dwell there. So the snake, thinking that it was tenantless, glided into the large hall and prepared to make herself at home.

She had not reckoned on the establishment containing another occupant; for a Green Snake had for years made her nest in the Summer Pavilion. She had passed eight hundred years among the mountains in meditation and possessed the power of transformation. Seeing the intruder she began to bestir herself to resist.

"Why do you come into my garden and hall without permission?" she angrily called.

"Whom are you addressing?" said White Snake, with a smile.

"I am speaking to you, who seem to be ignorant of the sharpness of my sword."

"Oh," said the other, gently, "I will first tell you who I am, and then we can settle the matter peacefully. I am the White Snake from Pure Winds Cavern in the West, and have spent eighteen hundred years there seeking perfection, and have come to Hangchow for further light. I stopped here to rest and I think the place is large enough for us both especially as we are of the same kind."

"I don't know anything about you," said her opponent, now very wrathful, "but I believe you are a wild spirit. Anyway, you have no right to intrude on my privacy. So leave my fairy gardens, unless you want to get hurt."

With that, she drew a long, glittering sword from its sheath by her side, and flourished it several times in the face of the White Snake—who only smiled. "You would better put that back—ah, would you?" said she, as her antagonist made a furious lunge to thrust her through. "You compel me to defend myself, but I will not kill you." "Come

on," screamed the Green Snake, now furious with rage and excitement, and making the most hostile demonstrations to renew her attack.

The White Snake coolly drew a double edged sword from her side, then, uttering a few magic sentences, she stared straight at her enemy, who, without any intention on her part, dropped her weapon and stood almost petrified by the wonderful charm. Seeing that she was at the mercy of the other, as soon as she could recover, the Green Snake fell at the feet of the White Snake and piteously pleaded for her life. "I did not know who you were," said she, "and, if you will only pardon me, I will be your slave for ever."

"I do not mean to kill you," said the White Snake, sternly, "but if you swear to be my servant and attend to my wants I will let you live here in this palace with me." The vanquished ghost complied. "Then rise from the ground," said the mistress, "and remember that the exhibition of my powers which you have just witnessed is only a fraction of my magical resources. I have not spent eighteen hundred years chanting prayers in vain, and, although I have not attained perfection, I have gained a superhuman power over nature and man."

The snake arose, her pride and arrogance all gone, and, following her mistress, they both disappeared in the recesses of the palace garden.

CHAPTER II. THE MEETING.

Hanwin grew handsomer every day. Mr. King learned to love him in a few months even as a father loves his own son; and no wonder, for he was as efficient as he was beautiful.

The flush of young manhood was just appearing on his cheek, and it was in the Spring time when

"the young man's fancy

Lightly turns to thoughts of love," when one day as he was sitting behind the counter his attention was turned to the number of passers-by. He found out that these were on their way to the hills to worship at the tombs of their ancestors. Then he reflected that the graves of his father and mother had been neglected during the years of his boyhood, and he had never been out once to put them in order, and reproached himself that he had let so many "clear and bright" seasons * go by without any filial recognition on his part.

He was so burdened with the thought that he decided to ask his employer about the matter, and request a couple of days off so that he could manifest

outwardly the loving feelings of his filial heart. He found Mr. King sitting in the inner court of the building. "What is it, my dear nephew?" he kindly enquired. Hanwin told him all that was in his mind about the neglected spirits of his father and mother, and asked whether he could leave the shop to repair to the hills and burn some money and other things before their graves. "Certainly," said his employer, smiling his assent; "I am glad to see you thus disposed and have no objection to your leaving for a couple of days. When would you like to go?"

"As soon as possible," said Hanwin, delighted to see his employer interested in the subject, and thanking Mr. King, he retired to the counter.

It was decided that Hanwin should go to the hills the next day, and the coolie was despatched to buy Spirit offerings to be used, and other preparations were made for an early start on the morrow.

The next day he arose, dressed himself with unusual care, and, having eaten his breakfast, presented himself before Mr. King, who advised that, after performing his duties as a filial son at the graves, he should return straight home. This Hanwin promised he would do. So he left the house, followed by the coolie carrying the things, and, directing his steps towards the Western Custom

* The festival of 清明 Ts'ing Ming, which occurs on the 5th of April, about Easter. On this occasion the hills are covered with people who repair the graves of their ancestors and burn paper money, houses, chests, etc., for the supposed use of the dead.

House outside the City, was soon in sight of the spot where his parents were buried. Arriving there, the coolie put down the offerings, and the filial son reverently knelt before the graves and lifted up his voice in weeping. The paper money and the articles for household use for the dead were then burnt. After some time spent in meditation, the two retraced their steps toward the Custom House. It was at this time that the decision that afterwards affected Hanwin's whole life was made. The temptation came to him to take a walk around the West Lake and view the beauties of the water and hills* about which he had often heard Leigh speak. It was a good bit out of his way, but the freshness of the spring and the promise of strange sights were irresistible. So, bidding the coolie return home and tell his master that he wished to go and visit his sister, but would be home directly, he started off. The coolie demurred: "You promised Mr. King to come straight home, and, if you do not go, I may be held responsible." †

"Never mind that," said Hanwin, "I will make it all right when I get back."

So he quickened his steps and soon left the servant who was puzzled what to do, but as his young master was soon out of sight he quietly gathered up the baskets and returned to the shop.

When he arrived at the Lake, Hanwin thought he had never seen anything so lovely in all his life. The clear water of the Lake reflecting the green hills and the

stately buildings erected upon its bosom, the numerous pleasure boats gliding to and fro upon its shining surface, the gaily attired people laughing and chatting as they walked along the spacious roadway, presented a spectacle to the admiring youth that completely charmed him. Whilst gazing in wonder and unbounded admiration upon the scene, two beautiful girls tripped lightly upon the bridge that spanned a little stream close by, and, standing on this height, began to view the glories of the landscape.

Hanwin forgot the Lake in an instant and gazed intently towards the bridge. A further look settled him. One of these girls who seemed to be the mistress, was surpassingly lovely and the young man's heart beat rapidly. Not only the Lake, but the shop, Mr. King, his sister—everything was forgotten, and Hanwin stood rooted to the spot, his whole being centred on the bridge where the two beauties stood, apparently unconscious of him, studying eagerly the environments of the Western Lake.

Who was this beautiful girl, and her servant, that had captivated the inexperienced and handsome youth? None other than the White Snake and her slave, both now transformed into the shape of lovely women, and come to the Lake on a pleasure trip. To say that Hanwin was captivated would inadequately express the fact: he was completely bewitched. Five hundred years before this in a former existence he had released a snake that a beggar was about to kill. That snake was the beautiful girl before him, fated to meet him and charm him,* and it was inevitable that this meeting should take place.

Hanwin had just made up his mind to go up and courteously request an acquaintance, when at this interesting time it began to rain, and the girls quickly descended the bridge and sought shelter in one of the neighbouring pavilions, leaving

* At the Mandarin Landing, not far from the present site of the Japanese Concession, there is put up over the jetty a handsome board on which is inscribed 湖山有美 "The Lake and Hills are Grand."

† Those who have not lived in China cannot understand fully what responsibility means in this land. From the Emperor down, through all grades of officials, to the meanest coolie, everyone has somebody or something under his charge for which he is responsible. Servants are made to replace all lost or broken articles in the houses where they live. A boat office insures every article the customer carries with him and writes out a ticket to that effect. The Governor of a Province was responsible to the Emperor when the unruly Yellow River left its bed and sought another; and the Emperor is responsible to heaven when great floods or famines come upon the country.

* "Live and let live" is a motto adopted by the people of China. To release fish, snakes, and birds is to accumulate merit. In every city there are many ponds teeming with fish which have been let go. No one is allowed to molest them. About the 5th of the 5th month, the common sight is witnessed of beggars carrying live snakes about to sell for this purpose. The Chinese term this ceremony 放生 "Letting go alive."

ing him standing in the rain. Fortunately, he had his umbrella, so he put it up, and walked slowly and reluctantly away in the direction of the river. "I will cross over and go to my sister's to-night, and to-morrow will make some inquiries about these women," he thought.

Calling a boat, he started across, but had proceeded only a short distance into the stream when he heard a female voice from the shore calling to the boatman. He looked out, and, to his extreme delight, beheld the identical women he had seen on the bridge.

Almost beside himself with joy, he quickly ordered the boatman to row back to take in the other passengers. The boatman, with a smile, turned the boat round and they were soon by the bank. The young mistress, led by the servant, in a most fascinating manner stepped into the boat. Seeing Hanwin, the servant apologised, which gave the enraptured youth the opportunity he craved.

"I am delighted to oblige you," said he "and, if I can be of further service, I shall be glad to help you."

"Thank you very much," said the maid, smiling, "but I think we shall do well enough after we get to the other side."

Hanwin asked the name of the lady. "My young mistress is named Albia, and lives in Fragrant Tea Lane. Her father was the Superintendent of the Border Customs, and she is an only child. My name is Flora."

"And where have you been?" asked Hanwin. "Both the young lady's parents are dead, and we have been to their graves burning incense." "Yes," said Albia, "and we thought it might be pleasant to walk around by the Lake, but this unfortunate rain has spoiled our pleasure, and we have been obliged to take to the boat. But what is your name?" she said sweetly. "My name is Hanwin," said he, "and my parents are dead too;" and having begun, he told them his history. While thus engaged, the boat reached the opposite shore. As there was nothing else to do, they all got out and Hanwin paid the fare, with a liberal fee besides. The boatman, grinning with pleasure, pocketed the money, and, under a few strokes of his oar,

the boat shot down the stream and was soon lost to view among the shadows of the willows, leaving the three standing on the shore. The rain was still falling, and it was discovered that the maid had brought no umbrella. Hanwin courteously offered his, saying that his home was near by, and he could soon run the distance.

"We could not think of depriving you," said Albia. "But you must take it," said the gallant youth, feeling that he would be glad to be almost drowned if it would save them any discomfort. "Your feet are small, and mine large, and I can run very fast."

"Under these circumstance, we will borrow it," said Albia, "but we will send it to your sister to-morrow." "Never mind that, I will come for it myself when it stops raining."

So the umbrella was lent, and Hanwin saw the beautiful girl walk away led by the maid who held it over her.

After standing some time, he remembered that he was getting wet, and that he was some distance from home. He was in no humour to return to the monotonous routine of the shop, so he hurriedly started off in the direction of Leigh's house. When he arrived, his sister was surprised. "Where have you been, Hanwin dear?" she said. "Mr. King gave me a holiday to go to our parents' graves," said he.

"I am glad he was so thoughtful," said Grace, "and have you offered money to our dear ones?" "Yes," said he.

"Come in and get some supper, for you look tired."

Hanwin did as his sister bade him and they were soon in the dining room. Leigh had not come in, and the brother and sister had a good chat on family matters, but he said nothing about Albia and her maid. After eating a hearty supper, Grace led him to his room and bidding him good-night left him to his thoughts. But he could not get to sleep. Although somewhat wearied with the excitement of the day, his thoughts could not be gathered in for repose, and he tossed to and fro on his bed, meditating on the charms of the lovely Albia and her maid, both of whom had returned to the Summer Pavilion of the prince's garden.

When they arrived, Albia said, "Flora, I have met my fate. I feel that I must see that young man again. Do you think he will come to-morrow for the umbrella?"

"Of course, he will," said Flora, "but it will not be for the umbrella only. Did you not see that he fell deeply in love with you? If not, then love certainly is blind."

"Do you really think so?" sighed she. "But he is a poor man, and I have nothing and how could we manage it if he proposed marriage."

"Make him a handsome present," said Flora.

"How?"

"Easily enough; you forget your power obtained in the Pure Winds cavern. Exercise it now, and make your lover believe you are very wealthy," said the

maid. "I had forgotten that," said Albia, brightening; "I now see that I can get money by magic."

That night she arose, went outside and drawing her double-edged sword assumed the attitude of a witch. Then, mumbling a few magical incantations, "Come," she called. Immediately five demons appeared and kneeling at her feet enquired her wishes. "To-night," said she, "you must in some way procure me one thousand ounces of silver."

The demons retired for a short consultation, then returned and giving the witch the assurance that her commands should be obeyed, departed. Before day-break, they came back bringing the required amount which Albia carefully counted, and having secured the silver in a tight box, she waved her permission for the demons to leave, and they immediately vanished.

CHAPTER III.

THE THEFT.

Early in the morning, after a sleepless night, Hanwin arose, dressed, and without letting his sister know, slipped away in the direction of Fragrant Tea Lane, the place said to be the residence of the late Superintendent. On the way, he found a man standing in the street and enquired of him where the house was. "This is Fragrant Tea Lane, but I do not know anything about any Superintendent of Customs," said the man.

Hanwin was at a loss what to do, but he turned up the Lane although very much in doubt, and was on the point of giving up in despair for the time, when he came to a large, beautiful flower garden, all surrounded with pavilions, and very tempting to the eye. What was his surprise and joy when he beheld the maid Flora open a gate on the street and come out. Fearing she would return without seeing him, he quickly called out: "You see, I have come for my umbrella." Flora turned timidly around.

"How you frightened me!" she said. "So you have really come yourself, well, my mistress gave me strict orders to request you to come in, as she wished to thank you in person for your timely assistance."

Hanwin could scarcely believe his senses. To be invited into these magnificent gardens by one he loved and to hear her thank him for a favour! But he entered the grounds although his heart palpitated. Flora led him to the Kingfisher Pavilion, and bidding him be seated, left him to report his arrival to Albia. He had not long to wait. A fragrant breath, the perfume of roses, heralded the approach of his enchantress, who, leaning upon the arm of her maid, came gracefully into the Pavilion. Hanwin rose, and blushing up to his eyes, stammered his errand.

"I am very grateful to you, Mr. Hanwin, for your kindness and consideration yesterday," she sweetly said, although the enraptured youth scarcely heard the words, so delicious was the sensation that came over him.

"And, now, sit down and let my maid Flora bring some sweetmeats and tea for us. I am an orphan like yourself, with nobody to take care of me except Flora," said the hostess. After trying to say that it was a pleasure to give his umbrella to her, and muttering something about his being expected home, Hanwin resealed himself, unable to resist the

magic charms of the witch who appeared to him more lovely than ever. The active Flora soon had the refreshments ready, and Albia seated herself by Hanwin and poured out the tea in a most irresistible manner. "Oh! if she were my little wife," he thought, "I would be willing to give up everything else on earth."

Watching her intently, he imagined that she cared for him, else why should she act in such a way? His feelings made him bolder—he enquired more particularly about her, and she told him in the most fascinating way that she had no brothers, that she was often afraid in the great buildings by herself. He could not tell how it came about, but before long he had declared his passion, and she had promised to be his wife.

Hanwin was in a transport of joy, but he remembered that he was poor, with not enough money to provide an outfit for a bride, much less a house to live in. The observant Albia perceived his dilemma, and quickly said, "I have enough for you to make preparations for our marriages. Flora, go upstairs and open the gold chest and bring me those two fifty-ounce ingots of silver."

Hanwin was astonished, and doubted whether he had heard aright, but Flora soon returned and laid the silver on the table. This was proof enough that the girl was in earnest.

"Do you really give me this?" said he.

"Yes, you must provide my outfit with it," said Albia.

Hanwin eagerly seized the silver. "I will go home to my sister and tell her all about it, and she will arrange matters; so good-bye, I will return soon."

"Don't forget that you have promised to marry me," said she, tenderly.

"That I swear, by heaven and earth," said Hanwin, earnestly. With that, he was gone. When he reached Leigh's house, his cheeks were flushed with happiness and he burst into the room. But all were in tears. An unfortunate event had happened. The office of the City Magistrate had been visited by thieves the night before, and a thousand ounces of silver stolen. Leigh was on guard at the time, and that morning the official had beaten him for his careless-

ness, and dismissed him. If within three days the silver was not found, he was to lose his head. The whole family were in the greatest distress as there was no probability of finding the thieves, and all knew that Leigh had not stolen it.

"Where have you been?" said Grace, weeping, "that you come back so happy when all of us are so grieved?"

Hanwin felt that his appearance was like a discord on some solemn tune; but he told his story, keeping back nothing, and, to prove that his intended was in earnest, he drew forth the two ingots of silver. Grace took the metal in her hands, and called to Leigh to come and see. What was his astonishment and joy when he beheld the Imperial stamp on each package, and he recognised a part of the money that had the night previous been stolen from the Treasury! Repressing an exclamation which rose to his lips he took them in his hands, and telling Hanwin that he would take them to be exchanged, he ran all the way to the magistrate, and without ceremony, knelt down and handed the two ingots to his master.

"Heaven has vindicated an honest man," said he, out of breath, "I have brought two of the ingots back."

"Where did you find these?" said the magistrate, sternly.

Leigh told the whole story, and advised an immediate search. The magistrate called the police, and directed them to proceed to Leigh's house and arrest the brother of Leigh, Hanwin by name. Leigh was kept in custody until his statement should be verified.

Hanwin was quietly sitting in the room, his thoughts divided between the joy he experienced himself and the sorrow of his sister. Just then a loud rap was heard at the door, and, before any one could answer it, in walked a half-dozen men, who seized the astonished youth, handcuffed him, and, without a word, bore him off to the Mayor. In a minute, he was kneeling before that august personage, who, seeing his astonished look, kindly asked his name, and place of abode. "My name is Hanwin, and I am apprenticed to Mr. King. My brother Leigh, whom you see here, will tell you that I speak the truth," said he,

trembling, but somewhat reassured by the magistrate's manner. "Do you know anything about these ingots?" said he holding them up.

"Yes," said Hanwin, "they are mine."

"Where did you get them?" said the magistrate, looking squarely at him for an answer.

"A friend gave them to me."

"What friend?"

Hanwin hesitated. He did not relish the idea of telling the name of his fair Albia, so he replied:

"My friend does not live in Hangchow."

"What is his name?" demanded the magistrate, now losing temper.

"I—I have forgotten," stammered poor Hanwin.

"We will refresh your memory then. Guards, down with this fellow and give him forty blows with the heavy bamboo," roared he.

The unfortunate youth was roughly seised and thrown down. A strong fellow then came in, and beat him so unmercifully, that the flesh stood up in livid bars, and the blood flowed down his tender limbs.

"Oh, sir—please let them stop, and I will try and remember the name," piteously cried he.

"Get up, then."

Hanwin arose, and humbly begged the magistrate to tell him who informed him of the ingots.

"Your brother here, and he has told me all about the women who gave you the Emperor's silver."

Leigh then came forward and explained to his brother the cause he had taken in order to save his life. "If you had only told the truth, you would have saved yourself this disgrace and pain. Now tell the magistrate all about it, so that he may send to the house of this Albia, and recover the other eighteen ingots that she has stolen, and save my life."

Thus pressed, Hanwin recounted the affair from beginning to end. The magistrate quickly dispatched the police to Fragrant Tea Lane with a warrant

to arrest two females named Albia and Flora living in the Prince's garden.

Soon after Hanwin left the house, Albia exclaimed, "Alas! I have brought grief on Hanwin. The silver I gave him has the mark of the Imperial Treasury on it, and he will be detected at once. Besides, he told us his brother was in the magistrate's office. What shall I do?"

"I will follow him," said Flora.

"Go at once," returned the other, "and see that no evil befall the poor boy."

Flora quickly left the house; on the way she changed her shape, and like a breath of wind followed Hanwin. She found him before the magistrate, heard his questions and answers and, seeing the police depart, with the warrant for the arrest of the two, swiftly sped before, and rushed into the palace where Albia was.

"We must leave at once," she said, "Hanwin has been arrested and beaten. He has told all and the police are nearly here to arrest us."

We will not bring ruin upon Leigh and his wife," said Albia. "Bring down the eighteen ingots of silver and put them on the table. Quickly, for I see the police coming down the street."

Hardly was this done, when there was a loud banging at the gate. No answer being received, it was broken down and the officers of the law rushed into the hall. All they saw was the remainder of the stolen silver lying on the table. A ghostly, clammy breath blew past them as they seized it. The witches had vanished.

Returning to their master they brought the eighteen ingots, and reported that the house the prisoner had pointed out was haunted and tenantless. Leigh was reinstated in his place, and allowed to go home. But the miserable Hanwin was retained in custody. Further information being received, the magistrate decided that he had been bewitched by spirits, but, in consideration of his youth and inexperience, he would remit the punishment of death, and banish him from the city of Hangchow.

CHAPTER IV.

UNDER DR. WAY'S PATRONAGE.

Hanwin was to be sent to the city of Soochow, and was given three days to get ready. Leigh and Grace got together his things, and his kind employer came to the house offering his condolence to the unfortunate youth.

"Never mind," said he, "you are a good, useful young man, and it is your fate to live in Soochow. Here is some money for you to use. I have a relative living in that city who is engaged in the same business that I am. His name is Way, and here is a letter of recommendation. Present it on your arrival, and you will find a firm friend in him."

Hanwin gratefully thanked Mr. King, and took the letter and money which Grace carefully put away in his box. While thus engaged, the police from the magistrate arrived to carry the culprit to Soochow. Tearful adieux were made, and Hanwin sorrowfully left his home, under the guard. Leigh accompanied them several miles beyond the city gates, and after a few words of exhortation, he parted from the weeping Hanwin, and returned to his distressed home.

A long day it was for the youth. Nearly heart-broken, tired, and footsore he, with the guards, stopped at night at a tavern. After a coarse supper, he was allowed to go to sleep, but awoke early in the morning, his body aching all over, by the guards roughly ordering him to get up. A cold breakfast was hastily eaten, and they proceeded in the same way as the day before, his companions apparently not noticing his lameness. Thus they went, and in time arrived at their destination, the police going straight to the prison and delivering the culprit, with the despatches, to the City Magistrate. Hanwin was put in with the other criminals, but was so tired that he slept well, and the next morning offered the keeper an ounce of silver if he would let him out for the day. This the keeper agreed to, provided he would find security for his coming back. Hanwin pointed to his box, and said he would leave that in the prison. The keeper assenting to this, Hanwin was

allowed to go. He joyfully left the place, and enquired the direction to Wishing Lane where Dr. Way lived, and was soon knocking at the gate. The letter was put into the hand of the chemist, who invited Hanwin in, and enquired minutely concerning his circumstances. As soon as Dr. Way found that he was in prison, he said, cheerily, "Well, the first thing we will do is to get you out."

Going back into his house the chemist took out ten ounces of pure silver, and telling Hanwin to follow, they came to the magistrate's, where a few words and the money procured a discharge from the prison for the now happy Hanwin, and he was taken back to the shop and provided with a room. After resting a few days, he was taken in as an apprentice and in a short time began to like his new home as much as he did that of Mr. King in Hangchow. As for the two witches, they returned to the Prince's garden as soon as the police had left, and lived in the Pavilion as before. But Albia longed for Hanwin whom she now loved devotedly. Besides, she had promised to marry him, but, instead of benefiting him in the least, she had brought trouble upon his whole family. Her life began to be miserable, and one day she told Flora to go to Soochow and search for the lover. Her maid returned with the news that Hanwin was happy in a new home, and, if let alone, would doubtless marry some nice Soochow girl. This decided Albia, and immediately she sprang upon a cloud, and sailed off, followed by Flora on another. They soared above Wishing Lane, where they beheld Hanwin and his new employer engaged in conversation. Assuming the shapes of young women, they passed by the door. Hanwin, seeing Albia, grew very angry. "What do you come here for, you witch?" he cried. "I have been deceived by you once, and you must not come near me again."

Albia stopped short and, blushing very red, cried, in astonishment: "Is it Hanwin who speaks so cruelly to me?"

"You were cruel to me," said Hanwin ; "have I injured you in a former existence that you seek my ruin?"

"Oh, please do not talk so," pleaded Albia, "we have sought for you many miles, and in many places, and are all tired out and now that we have found you, meet with such a reception! Oh, what has changed you since you left my gardens in Hangchow? If we are witches, as you say, then I fear that under heaven there is no man who can tell what witches are. Look at us!"

While these words were being passed, the neighbours had gathered about the shop, and began to reproach Hanwin for being so rude to the nice-looking young ladies on the street. Hanwin cast a second glance at Albia, and his anger began to abate at once. She was more beautiful than ever. Dr. Way took the part of the women, and remonstrated with his apprentice. "But come in from the street," he said to them in a kindly way, "and do not stand in the public gaze."

So, Albia and Flora were brought into the house, and told their story to Dr. Way. Hanwin's brother Leigh was mistaken about the ingots having been stolen. Her father had been an official, and his salary had been paid in Imperial silver. The money she gave Hanwin was given to him by the Emperor and had his seal upon it. This is what Dr. Way heard, and when he saw the tears of the beautiful girl, and her grief at the injury done her, his heart was melted. "I promised Hanwin that I would marry him, too," she sobbed, "and now what shall I do, for he has changed his mind, and I am here in Soochow without a friend."

Dr. Way was much moved by this touching appeal, and called Hanwin into the house, where he recounted to him the words of Albia, who stood weeping the while. "I have suffered so much for you on account of this dreadful mistake," she said, pathetically, when Dr. Way had finished.

"If you do not explain yourself," said Dr. Way, looking hard at Hanwin, "you must leave my employ, for I will not allow any apprentice of mine to impose upon such a delicate young girl as this."

Hanwin looked at Albia. Her beautiful eyes suffused with tears, and cheeks all pale, her helpless condition, so appealed to him that his love returned in an instant.

"I have been ill-treated," he said bitterly, "but if Albia can love me after to-day's treatment of her, we will fulfil the engagement, if Dr. Way be willing."

"How can you doubt my love," said Albia, "after what I have undergone for you?"

"As for my being willing," the employer said, smiling, "you may be sure I would like to see you get such a lovely lady, although you do not deserve her."

After this, Albia and her maid were taken into Dr. Way's home until the arrangements were made for her marriage. A lucky day was chosen and friends invited. Everything was in readiness when Dr. Way took his apprentice by the hand, and said, kindly: "Hanwin, I have taken a great fancy to you and Albia, and certainly wish you well. After you are married, you will need a home of your own. My advice to you is to set up for yourself. If you have not sufficient capital, I can provide you with enough to begin business."

Hanwin heard these words in a transport of joy. "I will accept your offer, Dr. Way, with pleasure. You are very good to me, and I have received nothing but kindness from you ever since I came to Soochow."

"Don't mention it," returned the other, "you have been very faithful, and if you ever want any advice about your business, come to me."

Then the marriage took place in the house of Dr. Way, and just after the ceremony Hanwin brought his lovely bride to his new home. He opened a chemist's shop bearing the sign, "The Hall of Peace." Of course, Flora went to live with them as maid of all work. A boy was apprenticed, and Hanwin and Albia began life in earnest. But business did not prosper. Few customers came, although "The Hall of Peace" was recommended by the old firm of Way & Co., and Hanwin, after a few months, began to despair; Albia saw his distress and sought to cheer him up.

"You ought to hang out a Doctor's sign, my darling, I have a few old

remedies myself, even if you are not well versed in physic, and I am sure we can make something out of them."

"Where did you get the remedies, my dear Albia?" asked Hanwin.

"Oh," said Albia, blushing, "one day while I was in the flower gardens in Hangchow the old mother fairy of Hainan appeared to me, and gave me some herbs, saying they would cure many diseases."

"Then I will try them," said the husband.

The next day another sign appeared above the door. It read:

"Dr. Hanwin."

"Cure for all complaints guaranteed."

But it hung there for over a month, and nobody seemed to have any complaints to cure. Hanwin grew more and more depressed. One day his wife came to him and said. "Hanwin, I have had a dream. Last night I saw all the people of the city sick with the plague, and I was directed to make medicine to cure them. To-day you must employ all your time putting these herbs together into pills, for I have an omen from heaven that to-morrow you will have business enough. Put a price on each of the pills, sell them for a candarin each."

Hanwin joyfully did as directed, and spent all that day making pills. The shop was stocked with the medicine, and Hanwin retired early, much worn out with the work of the day.

That night Albia commanded her maid to perform a dreadful service. In the dark hour of midnight the witch arose, and, taking a large package of rank poison in her hand, visited every

pool, canal, and well in the city. Not content with this, she flew all over the district stopping at the source of each water supply. When she returned at break of day there was nothing in her hand. The water of the whole country had been poisoned.

The sun shone in unwonted splendour the next day and the unsuspecting people arose from their beds, took their breakfasts as usual, and went about their daily avocations. Hanwin opened the shop early and Albia was particularly bright and happy. But no customer appeared all the morning.

After dinner a friend called in and reported that an epidemic had broken out in the city. While he was speaking several neighbours called for medicine. "Sell the pills you made yesterday," whispered the wife.

Hanwin sold twenty. About an hour afterwards the neighbours came back for more, saying that the twenty pills had cured that many persons.

By night, the epidemic raged all over the city, and there were many cases in the country. The native physicians could do nothing. The Hall of Peace was thronged with customers, for the pills cured every time. The fame of the shop spread as fast as the contagion, and the pills were soon all sold. Hanwin called for more assistance and spent the night making pills. This stock was all sold out the next day, and still the customers swarmed in front of the door. We need not relate that Hanwin grew rich; in a month the plague was abated, and Dr. Hanwin's reputation was established throughout the whole Province.

CHAPTER V.

TROUBLES.

On the first of the fourth month, the Temple of the God of Medicine was crowded with grateful worshippers. Hanwin was still very busy in his shop, and, having business with Dr. Way, he took some money in his girdle and went over to his old friend's. On the road, he noticed a great deal of excitement at the Temple door. Enquiring

the cause, he discovered that a noted exorcist, named Manetho, was in Soochow. Finding that he was at that moment in the temple, Hanwin elbowed his way in, and was soon in front of the sage. When Manetho perceived the husband of the witch, he started back, for a ghostly flush covered his face, and the exorcist detected it at once. Calling

Hanwin to follow him, he led the way into the fane. When the door was shut he said to him,

"I am Manetho, from Mow mountain, and have powerful charms against spirits and demons. I detect at once that you are bewitched and need some powerful remedy."

Hanwin replied that he had not known there were witches in his house, but had often suspected it. If he had a charra, please, could he have it?

"I come to help mankind," said the exorcist, "and you may be sure, I will do all in my power to deliver you from the witches with whom you associate. Take these three slips of paper home with you; at midnight hang one over the front door, one over the kitchen, and burn the other, and the witches will not dare to hurt you. I will be up myself and pray that the god will seize these imps of evil and punish them."

Hanwin thanked Manetho and taking out four ounces of silver offered it.

"Put up your money," said the exorcist, "I do not want to be paid for doing good."

"Then, I cannot take your charm," returned the other, "I am able to pay for what I get."

"On these conditions, I will accept," said Manetho.

The husband returned home, feeling somewhat mean and out of sorts. When he entered the house Albia suddenly felt a sharp pain in her head, and her circulation seemed to freeze. She hastily divined what her husband had done, and, after a few words with Flora, said, softly to Hanwin, "What makes you so late to-night, husband?" "I went to Way's for some herbs but was detained at his house on some other business," said he, evasively.

Just then, Flora came in with the supper. "What is that paper you have in your hand?" she said, laughing, as Hanwin stretched out his arm to take a cup of tea:

"Just a prescription from Way's," said Hanwin, reddening.

"What prescription?" said the maid, still laughing.

"You women are always trying to find out what does not concern you," said he, jokingly.

"I'll see this prescription, any way," said Flora, quietly taking the slips.

"You just hand that back," and Hanwin grabbed her hand.

Albia, hearing the scuffle, called out from her room, "What is the matter, Flora?"

"Oh your husband has got some verses about me and I have been trying to get them," cried Flora. "Ah, Mr. Hanwin," said she, "you cannot have them back." And, running into the next room, she tore the charms to pieces, and returned in great glee. "You are mistaken," said Albia, who came in at this moment, "the papers are charms against witches and you got them from that quack from Mow Mountain. He has cheated you out of your money. What witches did you wish exorcised, dear husband?"

Hanwin said nothing, but soon after went to bed. His wife was very indignant at the trick practised upon her husband, and early the next morning asked Hanwin to go to the Temple with her, and get the silver he had uselessly spent. Hanwin promised to go, and they both started. Soon after they got there, Albia called sternly, "Manetho, you wizard of Mow Mountain, why did you cheat my husband yesterday? Give him back his money at once, or it will be the worse for you!"

The exorcist came out. "You wretched imp, what do you mean by bewitching this good man?" he said, angrily; "if you do not hold your noise, and return at once to your devil den, I will soon show you the penalty I mete out to creatures of your kind."

"Wretch," cried Albia, between her teeth, "do your worst."

She had not long to wait, for Manetho, mumbling a few words of enchantment, seized a pitcher and took a deep draught. Then, raising his head suddenly, he blew a stream of water into the air. Immediately the sky darkened, and sounds of thunder came from the bowels of the earth, while the rain fell.

Albia smiled. "And is this all?" she said, disdainfully; "charm," she called, "break!"

In a twinkling, the rain stopped, the thunder ceased, the clouds scattered, and the bright sun shone out. Manetho

drew his sword: "I have you now, you devil," cried he, enraged beyond measure that his charm was broken. And he raised the glittering weapon on high, ready to strike the beautiful girl who stood undaunted by the exorcist's ferocity. But the sword did not descend. Albia drew from her pocket a mystic veil and spread it over her face. The sword dropped from her antagonist's hand, and, circling about in the air, of its own accord hung suspended over Albia's head. "Yellow Turban, Yellow Turban," she loudly called, "bind this false wretch and hang him up in the air."

When these words were uttered, a strong demon appeared and, to the surprise of all, Manetho was seized, hung up, and flogged so that he howled with pain and resentment. "Now, hold up awhile," said Albia, turning to the crestfallen Manetho. "Go into the temple and give my husband the money he paid you yesterday, and if you are found here by night I will not let you off so easily as I did to-day." Manetho, without a word in reply, brought out the silver, and began at once to make preparations for leaving. By night he was gone. Hanwin returned home with his wife, gratified beyond measure at the recovery of his silver, and at the display of her power at the temple.

After Hanwin had retired, Flora called Albia out. "To-morrow," said she, "is the Feast of Dragon Boats, the Twan Yang,* and on each door is hung that detestable weed which always overpowers me. Everybody will be using that horrible wine which is so deadly to the reptile species. I feel that I cannot stand it but will be retransformed into a snake if I see the stuff."

"Then you had better stay in bed all day, at least till afternoon. It makes no difference with me, I can stand such drugs as the mugwort for one day."

* This feast 端陽 occurs usually about the first of June. It is also called the Dragon Boat Festival. The calamus and mugwort are hung up over the doors of each house to keep out noxious influences, and hartall wine is drunk by the family. The Chinese have a saying: 蛇見雄黃酒如鬼見閻王 "Snakes fear the hartall as the devils fear the King of Hell."

The next day, Albia cooked the breakfast herself, and told Hanwin that Flora had a headache and wished to rest. He said he was very sorry, and would go and prescribe; so, taking some medicine, he went to the room where he found the servant suffering with fever. Her face was flushed and hot, and she apologised for not being able to cook the food, but hoped to be better when the fever broke. After leaving a simple remedy Hanwin returned to his own room, and behold! Albia herself had fallen down on the bed. He tried to waken her but she seemed in a stupor. After repeated efforts, Albia rubbed her eyes, sat up, and looked around in a dazed manner. "Pardon me," said she, faintly "but just after you left I suddenly became very dizzy, and would have fallen to the floor if I had not lain down."

"This is strange," thought Hanwin.

But he gave the matter no serious consideration, and, after setting his shop in order for the day, returned to keep the feast. After dinner, he went up stairs and mixed the hartall wine. Calling his wife, he bade her drink with him.

"Wine has always made me ill," she said, apologetically.

"But just take a sip to see how good it is," persisted he.

"Oh, please don't insist. I do not feel very well to-day, and I know even the least bit will upset me," said Albia.

"But it is feast day, and everybody drinks hartall. Come, take just a little for custom's sake," returned he.

Albia put the cup to her lips, and Hanwin, having already drunk several times, took her by the head and compelled her to drink the whole cup. "Now," said he, laughing, "you will feel better after that."

But seeing the pale look on his wife's face, he said, "I was just in fun, my dear."

"Yes, I know you were, Hanwin, but I feel very ill all the same, and will have to lie down a while. You go out and have a look at the Dragon Boats, or amuse yourself in some way. Don't spend the holiday at home, for both Flora and myself are ill, and it must be

very miserable for you with no one to keep you company."

Hanwin apologised for his rudeness, but she told him it was all right, and that she would be better soon. So he said he would take a ramble on the streets. Albia lay down on the bed and drew the curtains together. Her snake nature could not endure the hartall. Sharp pains shot through her body, her head ached dreadfully, and after an hour of intense suffering slowly her lovely form faded, and she assumed her original shape.

Hanwin, after roaming about the water side for a couple of hours, came home, went up stairs, and asked his

wife how she felt. Receiving no answer, he opened the curtains of the bed when, oh, horror! a large snake with a head like a bushel, and eyes flashing fire was discovered up in the bed. Slowly uncoiling itself, with fangs gleaming, and mouth dripping blood, it moved towards him, hissing as it came!

The horror-struck husband looked a minute, then, uttering a loud scream, drew back and fell headlong down. Flora, hearing the noise, came out and saw the white snake's head protruding several feet from the bed looking intently at Hanwin, who was lying dead upon the floor.

CHAPTER VI.

A JOURNEY TO FAIRY POOL.

Flora stood rooted to the spot. "Albia, Albia, come back, come back;"* she called, "your husband has been frightened to death."

The snake drew back into the bed, and the witch in her dream heard the voice of Flora. In an instant, she changed her form and got out of bed. Seeing Hanwin dead, she began to wring her hands, and wailing her arms about his neck kissed him tenderly. "He did not know what he was doing when he made me drink the hartall," said she.

"I suppose we must leave Soochow and seek other adventures, now that Hanwin is dead. What shall we do with him?" said the unfeeling Flora, in a businesslike way.

"Do with him," repeated Albia, reproachfully, "why I shall go at once to Fairy Pool and get the herb of life."

"Surely you would not risk your life on that," said Flora.

"I would risk my life if there were any chance to bring my dear husband back to life. Oh! if I only had a small piece of the precious herb, how happy I should be," sighed the distressed wife.

"What a foolish Albia you are to talk that way. Let us leave this body

here and go somewhere else," said Flora heartlessly.

"Instead of doing that, I intend to proceed at once to the Fairy Pool and pluck the herb. I shall be obliged to steal it, as I know it is never given to mortals. Of course there is small chance of my ever succeeding, and I stake my existence on the venture, but I must go. My life is bound up in Hanwin. So I command you to remain by the body until I come back, or long enough to know that I have perished. Good-bye, I cannot stay longer."

Off she flew on a cloud, and Flora watched her disappear.

Albia directed her way to the borders of Fairy Land, and the cloud went so rapidly that she arrived in the course of an hour at the entrance. This was a cave and guarded by the white-faced monkey who stood up at her approach. Assuming an important look, she called:

"I am a former pupil of the Old Mother of Hainan, fated to marry Hanwin on earth. He is sick, and I come beseeching the herb of life."

The white-faced monkey opened his wise eyes, and saw before him the disguised witch. So he shouted: "What business have you here on this fairy hill? You are not a pupil of the Old Mother, but a sham. The Old Mother is inside now, and I'll take you to her." Saying which, he seized hold of Albia, and began

* When a child dies, the Chinese mother often calls to the soul that she supposes to be near in the same words, "Come back, come back," thinking that it is possible for it to return and revivify the body.

to drag her into the cave. Albia knew that if once she were taken into the place it would be an end of her. So, seeing him off his guard, she blew a pearl into his face. Swift it flew and struck him fairly on the nose, the bridge of which was broken, and the fresh blood spouted out. "Ai yah!" screamed he, rushing back into the cave. Albia picked up the pearl, and, fearing she should be punished for injuring the guard, flew off. The monkey ran in to where the Old Mother sat and told what had happened, his broken, bleeding nose attesting the fact. The Old Mother arose and rushed to the mouth of the cave. "Where is the witch?" she shouted, excitedly, and, seeing her disappearing in the distance, quickly mounted her chariot and started in hot pursuit. Throwing out her net of heaven and earth to its full length she immeshed the fleeing Albia, who at once became the White Snake. The Old Mother unsheathed her sword, and dragged forward the net. "You reprobate," muttered she, as poor Albia, tumbling over and over was drawn nearer and nearer the irate Mother. "How dare you injure my guard!" With these words, she raised the heavy sword aloft and was about to strike, when a pure fragrant cloud floated by, and the goddess of Mercy seated on high, called, "Harm not the White Snake." The Old Mother paused, and, seeing the goddess, hastily went forward to meet her.

"On what business have you come?" she asked. "Only this," answered the goddess, "you must not injure this snake. She is fated to be the mother of a noted man, the god of Literature, and finally to be crushed by the Thunder Peak Tower on account of a vow she made and broke to the North Star god." "I must do as you say," said the Old Mother, "but she hurt the nose of my monkey, and I will be glad to see her crushed by Thunder Peak." Upon which, she drew in her net and let Albia go free. Kneeling before the two, the beautiful girl who was transformed at once, thanked them for their mercy.

"And now go, poor creature," said the goddess of Mercy to Albia, "you will find what you want at the south side of the Purple Mountain; pluck a

twig and carry it home. It will restore your husband to life."

The distressed wife, glad to get free again, hastily left the presence of these deities, and, following in the direction indicated, presently arrived at the mountain. The whole mountain was redolent of fragrance, and long strange grasses grew luxuriantly on the shady hillside. Albia had no heart to enjoy the beauty of the scene, but proceeded directly to the entrance guarded by deer. To these, she told her pitiful story, and besought them to go inside and request the local deity to give her a twig of the herb of life. "The goddess of Mercy has directed me to apply here," she pleaded.

The deer, hearing her plaintive voice, assented and disappeared. Straight they went to the god and presented the petition. "I know about this from the goddess herself. The woman is fated to be the mother of a man child of great renown, and to be crushed under the Thunder Peak Tower. Go to the cloud storage room, bring out one branch of the tree of life, and give it to the White Snake." The deer obeyed, and, returning to where Albia was, handed it to her. With a scream of joy, the wife seized the precious restorer, and, kneeling before the kind-hearted deer, wept her joyful thanks. Then she arose hastily, mounted her cloud carriage, and flew swiftly away.

But her troubles were not all over. The great Stork, soaring along the blue dome of heaven, spied her spirit chariot, and, seeing who was in it, immediately gave chase. He soon overtook the weary Albia, who was so frightened by his appearance that she lost her balance and fell down to the earth, where, striking a stone, she lay dead, but still grasping the precious branch in her hand. The stork swooped down, and had just opened his capacious mouth to engulf the prostrate body, when the White Eagle called from above:

"Brother, do you not know that is the White Snake, fated to be the mother of the god of Literature? Let her alone, or Buddha will be angry."

The stork raised his head, and, seeing the Eagle, enquired more particularly

about the witch. Finding out that it was really the White Snake, he flew off, and left the Eagle alone with the body.

The Eagle gazed upon the bleeding body of Albia for an instant, then, blowing a breath of enchantment, spoke several magical words, and Albia sat up. Bidding her go quickly home and bring Hanwin back to life, the Eagle soared off, and Albia sped away in the direction of Soochow. Arriving at home, she burst into the room, tears of joy streaming down her face now all pale with fatigue and excitement, "Take the herb, Flora," she said, hastily, "and steep some tea, and let my darling have it at once."

Flora hesitated. "Why do you not obey me?" said Albia, faintly.

"You forget, your husband saw you in your original shape; if he comes back he will drive us both from the house, for he knows we are not mortals by this time," said the frightened maid.

Albia hung her head and thought a moment, then spoke, "You are right, Flora, but I can remedy that. Go up to my room and bring down that white handkerchief in my box."

The handkerchief was brought, and Albia muttered a few words, then blew upon the silk. Immediately the handkerchief was changed into a large white snake, and began crawling and hissing around the room.

"Kill it, and throw it into the court," said the mistress, "then bring the herb tea."

This was done, and Flora soon came back with the tea in her hands. The loving wife raised the body of her husband and poured the liquid into his throat. As the tea gurgled down, the flush of health returned to Hanwin's cheek, he sighed, opened his eyes as if he had been asleep, and sat up. Seeing Albia, he began to chide her for her deception. "I know you are a witch—a terrible witch, and you have come to my house to persecute me. What have I done to you in a former existence, that you come in this life to take vengeance on me?" pleaded he.

Albia burst into tears. "My darling husband, what do you mean by such talk? When I came home, I found you dead on the floor, Flora weeping,

and a large white snake lying dead. She said after I left, the creature came in at the window, she supposed, and crawled into our bed. Hearing you scream and fall, she rushed in, and you were dead and the animal's body was protruding from the bed. She seized a cudgel and killed it. When I came home from the neighbour's where I had gone to get some medicine for the wine you made me swallow, you were dead! Oh, Hanwin, I was so distressed and knew not what to do. At last, I thought of Fairy Pool. You know what dangers surround that place. I risked my life to get the herb of life for you and—oh, Hanwin, I got it, and you are alive, and now you reproach me for being a witch! What shall I do?"

Hanwin knew not what to think. "Where is the snake you speak of?" at last he said.

"Look out into the court."

Sure enough, there was the creature lying full length on the stones, and the blood sprinkled over the court showed signs of a recent slaughter.

"I am very foolish, Albia," he said, after he had taken a look, "you have saved my life, and risked your own. Please forgive my angry words." With that he knelt before Albia.

"Don't do that, Hanwin; if you will only love and trust me always, you will find that I am true to you," said the wife, kneeling by his side.

Hanwin promised Albia that he would never doubt her again and they both arose from their knees their love strengthened by the trouble. Flora took the snake out and buried it on the commons, much pleased herself that the two were once more united.

The following incident occurred soon after.

The Prefect of Soochow at this time was very much beloved by the people, and justly too, for he was eminently fair in all his dealings, and kind to the populace. Unfortunately, his wife fell very ill and nothing would do her good. The native doctors gave up the case, and the distressed husband was in despair. After making a last effort to save his loved one, he had come home to see her die. Worn out with distress, he laid his head on the table, and dropped into a

heavy sleep. He dreamed that a woman dressed in white and holding a plume in her hand appeared before him, "I am the goddess of Mercy," she said, "and pity you exceedingly. I have come to tell you that if you will call the celebrated physician Hanwin, of the Hall of Peace, your wife will recover."

The Prefect awoke with a start and joyfully wrote a letter to the name indicated by the goddess. Calling a servant, he ordered him to run with all speed to the Hall of Peace and bring the physician to the house without delay.

Hanwin was at home, busy with his work, when the messenger arrived. When he read the letter, he took it to his wife. "Of course the Prefect is mistaken. He certainly cannot mean me. If he does wish me to see his lady, I am afraid to undertake the case, for I have never been called to attend to such a patient as the wife of the Prefect of Soochow. So I will answer the letter and say I have no remedy for the case."

"Stay," said Albia, "you forget that I have certain very powerful herbs, and am quite sure that some of these will restore the lady."

"I said I would trust you, and you see I abide by my words," said the husband. So, sitting down, he wrote a respectful letter to the Prefect, and promised to come at once to see the patient. Albia gave him several doses of medicine, with directions for their use, and after dressing up in his best, he ordered a sedan chair and was borne rapidly along the street to the Prefect's mansion.

Here he was met by no less a personage than the Prefect himself who courteously invited him in. Humbly acknowledging the condescension of the great man, Hanwin went in. He was led to the bedside of the sufferer where he felt both her wrists.* Taking the husband aside, he told his diagnosis, and put the medicine in his hand. Then he went home.

That night the messenger from the Prefect came again to the Hall of Peace. He bore a letter to Hanwin with a large fee. The letter stated that his wife was able to sit up and take her usual amount of food, and requested that Dr. Hanwin should call in the morning.

The next day, Dr. Hanwin went to the mansion where he found his patient up and looking as well as ever. The husband was almost beside himself with joy, and praised the skill of the physician in no measured terms. When he left, the Prefect called his official chair and Hanwin was carried through the streets to his home in great pomp. Several men carrying presents of silk followed the chair and a band of music enlivened the parade. The great man himself accompanied him to the door, and handed the bewildered doctor a thousand ounces of silver.

* Feeling the pulse is the extent of Chinese diagnosis. The native doctor is supposed to be able to tell the state of the stomach, temperature of the body, etc., by this means. Taking both the wrists of the patient is very reassuring, and brings the same kind of comfort that the loud snapping of the country doctor's watch does after a satisfactory examination.

CHAPTER VII.

BANISHED AGAIN.

But honour and glory are dangerous playthings, and Hanwin found them so. The disgruntled physicians of Soochow sought revenge, and called a meeting to consider how to accomplish their end. One of their number, more malicious than the rest, suggested that they bring a charge against the upstart of dealing in enchantments. "He comes to Soochow from another place,* and how

dare he ruin our practice in this manner?" said he in closing.

Then the celebrated Dr. Lieu arose. "Brethren," he said, "if we brought

tongue or characteristic. This unfortunate trait effectually estops all combination or unity among the nation as a whole, and renders impracticable the establishment of national institutions, popular railway systems, banks, etc. It was the lack of this unity that lost the contest in the late war with Japan, and unless remedied will ultimately cause defeat, disaster, and ruin to the great country of China.

* There is an unconquerable prejudice among the people of different Provinces in China. A native never changes his provincial

this charge against this young man it would be difficult to prove it, especially as the judge is the Prefect of Soochow, and, of course, will be prejudiced in his favour. I suggest another plan. Tomorrow is the birthday of our tutelary god, and, as is our custom, one of our number must bring the oldest *bric-à-brac* into the temple every year at that time to our feast. This Dr. Hanwin, as he is called, might be invited to take his turn. Of course, being from another Province, he will have brought no ancestral relics with him. If he accepts our invitation and does not conform to our custom, we can close up his shop and drive him from the city."

The assembly clapped their hands. "Good, good," was the cry. A committee was appointed to wait on the intruder at once, and the meeting broke up.

Hanwin was surprised to see several of the leading physicians of Soochow enter his shop.

"What can I do for you, gentlemen?" he said, courteously, after seating them.

The object of the errand was announced. Hanwin smiled and said that he had no ancestral *bric-à-brac* worthy to be compared with any of theirs, and asked if a feast provided by himself at the temple would not answer as well.

"By no means," answered the majestic Dr. Lieu. "We have always brought out our rarest treasures on this occasion, and as you have become famous by your recent cure at the Prefect's mansion and are now one of the school of Soochow physicians, you must conform to our custom." He said this so enviously that Hanwin could hardly understand him, but there was nothing else for him to do, and the delegation were told that he would come to the temple, but doubted whether he could bring any *bric-à-brac*. Hanwin ceremoniously accompanied them to the door, then went in and told his wife. Albia smiled; "Why, I have just what you want," she said, "my father had plenty of old curios. So just make yourself easy, and to-morrow morning you shall see something curious, so rare that these medical gentry will turn green with envy."

Hanwin felt confident that his wife would fulfil her promise, and retired to

rest with a light heart. Next morning, Flora brought out a box in which were a coral tree, a jade image, a unicorn made of the best sandal wood, and an agate peacock, all very wonderfully executed, bearing the stamp of a celebrated artisan of an ancient dynasty, and exceedingly valuable. Hanwin's eyes opened wide with wonder. When the time for the feast came, the shop boy was sent to the temple carrying the things; Hanwin soon after arrived, and the boy was directed to put them on the table. A large number of physicians were present to witness Hanwin's discomfiture. When the *bric-à-brac* were laid out they all examined them carefully, and on its being discovered that they were genuine, they began to leave the temple and Hanwin was soon alone. He heard one of the physicians mutter these words as he went out: "Those things are ten times better than any curios ever brought into this temple. That fellow must be a wizard."

But he was not disconcerted in the least by the rude behaviour of these men, and gathering up the curiosities ordered his servant to carry them home. He and Albia had a good laugh at the expense of the doctors.

Some time after this, he invited Dr. Way to a feast when the wonderful things were exhibited, and the neighbours called in to see them. Hanwin was in high feather, and happy as a king, when a loud knock was heard outside and several constables came in. Carefully examining the *bric-à-brac*, the chief said to Hanwin: "I am sorry, sir, but we must take these things with us, and arrest you in the name of the Emperor."

Hanwin was petrified with astonishment, but had strength to stammer out:

"Arrest me?"

"Yes," said the chief, producing a paper, "these things answer to the description in this document. I hope you can explain yourself, and how you came into possession of these valuables, but they were stolen from the Prince Imperial's chest in Peking lately, and the Governors of every Province have been directed to search every nook and corner in this Empire for them. There is

nothing like them in China. But come along with us."

The stolen goods were packed up, Hanwin was handcuffed and led off to the Prefect. Hearing that the missing articles were found in his Prefecture, he became very angry and promised speedy retribution on the thief.

"Bring him in at once," thundered he.

The surprised doctor was produced.

"Now, sir," said the excited Prefect, "explain to me—" but here he recognised Hanwin.

"Pardon me—but—there must be some mistake, constable," he said.

"If there is, the prisoner can soon rectify it; but we have acted on our orders, sir. Here is the property, and the whole city knows that Dr. Hanwin is the supposed owner," said the officer.

"I have no doubt you can make this matter clear," said the Prefect to Hanwin.

"They are my wife's ancestral possession as she can testify," said Hanwin, regaining confidence.

"Then your wife must be troubled to appear," said the officer.

"The case is in my hands now," said the Prefect, "and you need not interfere; but, Doctor, it will be necessary to call your wife to identify the property, or account for it in some way, so as to satisfy the police."

Hanwin eagerly assented, and a guard was sent to the Hall of Peace for Albia. But after a long time they returned saying they had searched the house everywhere, had enquired of the neighbours and at Dr. Way's, but that, since the arrest of the prisoner, nothing had been seen or heard of Albia or her maid.

There was nothing for the Prefect to do but keep Hanwin in prison until his wife could be produced. As no news was found of her, the constable received the treasures, with the reward for their recovery, and carried them to Peking, where they were identified by the Prince. Doctor Hanwin was sentenced to death for the robbery, and lay languishing in prison, feeling sure now that Albia was a witch, and had wrought this punishment upon him for some sin that he had committed against her in a former life.

The truth must be told. The devoted Albia, wishing to advance her husband's

interest, had appeared to the Prefect as the goddess of Mercy and directed him to the Hall of Peace. The reader already knows the outcome of this deception. Emboldened by her success, she had overstepped the bounds of prudence and committed a crime against the Emperor. When she found that Hanwin was arrested, her heart was burdened with grief for she loved him tenderly. There was nothing she could do; so just before the guard arrived, Flora was called, and a short consultation held, after which the two vanished.

The Prefect was a merciful man as well as a just. He enquired more particularly concerning Hanwin's household, and finally came to the conclusion that the prisoner had been misled by witches. The fact that he had cured his wife after all the other physicians had failed, influenced him considerably, too. The manner and bearing of Hanwin since his incarceration were proof that he was innocent of the theft, although responsible for the curios being found in his possession.

In view of all these circumstances, the Prefect recommended to the Imperial Court that the sentence of death be commuted to banishment to Chinkiang. As the articles were all recovered without loss or damage, the plea was admitted, and the Prefect called Hanwin in and told him the decision. He was allowed several days to settle his affairs, under guard. The unfortunate man joyfully received the intelligence, and kneeling before the Prefect thanked him for saving his life.

"You saved my wife," said he—"and now you are required. But be careful of witches in future and do not get into further trouble."

The guard then received the order to the Chinkiang Prefect, and taking the liberated captive to his old home bade him prepare to leave the city. Hanwin sent for Dr. Way who confessed that he had been mistaken when he received the two witches into his house, and had recommended Albia as a wife.

"I am sorry, and beg your pardon," he said.

"You have treated me very kindly all along, and I do not wish you to beg my pardon," said Hanwin.

"You have been banished to Chinkiang," said Dr. Way, smiling. "Have you ever been there?"

"No."

"Then, I will give you a letter to a kinsman of mine named Kane who lives on Willow Leaf Street inside the East Gate. He is a person of considerable means, and has much influence in official circles. I know he will see that you do not suffer, for he is a fair man and willing to help those who are in distress."

"I will never forget your kindness," said the grateful Doctor.

The next day everything was ready for Hanwin's departure. Dr. Way was at the house early to see him off. He gave the escort a present of money telling them to take good care of his friend, and after a long farewell the two friends separated.

In due time, the party arrived in Chinkiang and Hanwin was delivered to the authorities. He was kept pretty closely confined at first, but after he

showed his letter to Mr. Kane, he was treated with a little more consideration. The keeper had allowed him to carry the letter to Dr. Way's friend although he kept an eye on him all the time.

Mr. Kane received the banished doctor with the greatest cordiality. He took him into the house to tea, and got the whole history of the case in a short time.

"Just wait a bit," said he, cheerily; as he left the room. After an hour he returned beaming, and said, "And, now, Dr. Hanwin, you will not return to the prison. Twenty ounces of silver and a little influence have done the business. You must stop here until we can get something for you to do."

"Why you take my breath away with joy," said the astonished Hanwin. "You must have a great deal of influence to get me out of prison before I knew what you were about."

"Tut, tut!" said Kane. "Money makes the mare go. Now, come into the room we have prepared for you, and refresh yourself."

CHAPTER VIII.

EXPERIENCES IN CHINKIANG.

When the guards had left Hanwin's house in Soochow, the two witches returned. Poor Albia was filled with grief at her husband's misfortunes, and knew not what to do.

During the years she had lived with him, she had saved a considerable amount of money which had been kept by itself in a chest—ready for any unforeseen emergency. With tears in her eyes, she brought out the silver, and showed it to Flora.

"What shall I do with this, now that my dear husband is gone?" she said.

"I should take it to Hanwin's sister in Hangchow, and afterwards follow him to Chinkiang."

"I had thought of that, but what shall we do in Chinkiang?"

"Open a chemist's shop similar to the one we had here," returned Flora.

"Let us go at once to Hangchow with the money, for it is my husband's savings, and I ought not to keep it," said Albia still weeping.

That evening while Leigh was sitting at his door, a finely dressed young man, followed by a servant carrying a box, stopped before him.

"Does a Mr. Leigh live here?" he enquired.

"My name is Leigh; can I do anything for you?"

"Nothing for me," returned the young man "but I have brought a box from your wife's brother in Soochow."

"How is he?" eagerly enquired Leigh.

"Doing very well, as you will see when you open the box. The money is all for you."

"But what is your name, sir," said the astonished Leigh. "King,"* said the

*Chinese are loth to tell strangers their true names. Foreigners are often deceived by servants and others who are afraid to let their surnames be known lest they be bewitched or perhaps transported to some distant land. The *alias* nearly always substituted is King, 王.

young man as the servant brought the box in and put it down.

"Well, I thank you very much indeed, Mr. King, for bringing me the box. You must come in and stop a while," said Leigh.

"Many thanks to you, but we must be going at once," returned the young man, and after answering several questions about Hanwin the two departed, leaving the grateful Leigh alone with the box.

It did not take the witches long to transform themselves into their spirit shapes, for the reader will know who the young men were, and begin their rapid ride to the north. In a few days a newly painted sign was hung up on the Five Streets inside the city of Chinkiang. It read: The Hall of Peace.

Hanwin remained at the house of his kind host for several weeks. But he was very unhappy. Excitement and fatigue had almost used him up, and he took to his bed. In a few days his symptoms became so alarming that a physician was called in and pronounced the disease very dangerous. Another day found the patient delirious, with increasing fever. The doctor gave up all hope, and Hanwin would have been left to his fate had not the gatekeeper casually mentioned to Mr. Kane that two women had recently opened a chemist shop not far from Willow Leaf Street, and the neighbours were full of the praise of their remedies. "Let us try ~~their~~ skill as a last resort," said Mr. Kane.

An order was at once sent to the Hall of Peace at Five Streets for fever medicine. The messenger soon returned and Hanwin was given a dose. When Mr. Kane entered the room soon after, Hanwin's fever had abated, and he spoke rationally to him.

"Where have I been?" said he, looking around.

"Nowhere," answered Mr. Kane joyfully, "but you have been very ill indeed, and I am glad to see you better; I think you will get well soon." "I feel very weak," said the patient, "but very hungry."

More medicine was given, Hanwin recovered rapidly, and was soon able to sit up.

One day he asked Mr. Kane where he got the medicine. He was told, and replied:

"That is the name of my old shop at Soochow. You say it is kept by two women? I should not be surprised if the two witches had come to Chinkiang. You must go with me to see this place."

"With pleasure," returned Mr. Kane, "and if it should happen that witches do not keep the shop, we must make a present to the physician there. You know, their medicine saved your life." Hanwin said nothing, but asking Mr. Kane if he could go at once, and receiving an affirmative reply, the two started in the direction of Five Streets. The Hall of Peace was easily found and Hanwin walked boldly in. It did not surprise him much to find his conclusions verified when he beheld Albia and Flora in the shop.

"You perverse witches," he cried, "I am sure now that you are following me to my ruin. You have driven me away from home in Hangchow, and outlawed me in Soochow by your wicked devices, and now you seek me in Chinkiang. What have I done to you? Leave the place!"

Albia stood trembling and weeping while Hanwin vented his rage in these words. When he had finished she looked up through her tears, and said in a pathetic voice:

"Dear Hanwin, how can I express my great love to you? Can I ever explain the stupid mistake the Prefect of Soochow made when he claimed my dear father's things for the Prince? I assure you, some of the physicians who were so envious of you bribed him to say the curios belonged to the Prince. I knew it would do no good to appear before the court to disgrace you,* so, when we heard the police coming to arrest us, we hid. And when I found afterwards, dear husband, that you had been banished, it grieved me so that I fell sick. With very little money, we had a long, hard time of it, until finally we came here and opened this little shop to make a living. I called it after the name of the place where we lived so

* It is considered unbecoming in China for a woman to appear before a magistrate.

happily in Soochow. Oh, my dear husband, how could you have the heart to call me a witch and speak so harshly to one whose whole life is devoted to you?"

During this conversation Mr. Kane stood astonished. The beauty of Albia, her defenceless position, together with her pitiful tale of woe and her tears, appealed strongly to the kind man's feelings. Finally, he said to Hanwin:

"Young sir, you came to me in distress and I used every means in my power to assist you. When I hear the words of this woman they go to my heart. Are you perfectly sure she deceived you?"

"I thought I was," answered Hanwin, who was much moved by his wife's distress.

"We have sought for you everywhere to prove my innocence," sobbed poor Albia, "please, please, believe me as you once said you would."

"See here, young man," said Mr. Kane, unable to contain his feelings any longer, "I believe you have wronged this girl, unintentionally it may be, but none the less distressing to her. My advice to you both is to settle this matter by yourselves. And, mind you," glancing meaningly at Hanwin, and shaking his head, "you must not believe every idle story you have heard about her."

Saying this, he went out of the shop, leaving the husband alone with Albia and Flora.

About an hour afterwards Hanwin appeared at Mr. Kane's house, saying that his wife had forgiven him for his unkindness, and that he wished to move his things to the Hall of Peace. "Ah, you have settled the matter and apologised," said his friend, smiling. "That's right; now I trust you may be happy again. Your wife is devoted to you, and I hope you will treat her kindly. Any fool can be mean to a woman, and all fools are. If I can help you in any way, you will call on me, I hope."

"Thank you," said Hanwin, very happy, "we know where to apply if we get into difficulty. But I think all will be well now that there is an understanding between my wife and myself. What a fool a man makes of himself sometimes! To tell you the truth, Mr. Kane, I have always loved Albia."

"Well, don't listen to tale-bearers in the future," said Mr. Kane.

So Hanwin left with his belongings and was soon happily settled in the Hall of Peace. Albia had already established a pretty good reputation herself. This was increased when Doctor Hanwin hung up his sign, and it was not long before the home was as happy as could be expected in this world. But grievous misfortunes were in store for Hanwin, and dark clouds of trouble hung heavy over his head.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TRUTH DISCOVERED.

About a year after the events of the last chapter Mr. Kane invited Hanwin to tea. It was a charming day, and while they were chatting pleasantly in the hall, the host proposed that they should take a stroll up to Golden Island. Hanwin assented, and the two were soon on their way to this beautiful spot, laughing and enjoying the scenery as they went.

"Have you ever met the celebrated Fahhai?" enquired Mr. Kane. "He lives on the Island."

"No," returned Hanwin.

"Then I will give you an opportunity of doing so. He is a wonderful man; works magic and is a true prophet.*"

Little expecting what was before him, Hanwin walked along joyfully with his friend until they came to the Island. Eagerly they crossed the stream and ascended the hill on which were built the numerous temples to Buddha. The sullen Yangtze swept slowly past the shady banks, and the trees cast their

* The Chinese for this term in the text is

shadows over the deep river. It was a scene that inspired devotion, and when a priest brought some refreshment for the visitors, Hanwin was wrapt in meditation. Fahhai soon appeared and after asking the elder man's name, turned to Hanwin and said sadly:—

"I know your history already."

"Know my history!" repeated Hanwin, startled by the priest's manner.

"Yes; I am a prophet, you know. Did you not marry a woman called Albia, who lived, with another named Flora, in the Prince's garden in Hangchow?"

"Certainly," said the astonished husband.

"And were you not banished from that place for reasons that you and I know?"

"Say no more," cried Hanwin.

"Only this," solemnly returned Fahhai, "you have married the White Snake of Pure Winds Cavern in the West. Your face is flushed with witchery, and if you do not get rid of this charmer you will be ruined."

"Oh, save me," pleaded the frightened doctor. "I have suspected this all along. I will do anything you say to be delivered, even to becoming a priest myself."

"No need for that just now," said Fahhai, "perhaps it will be necessary in the future. But I advise you to remain here with me and invoke the aid of Buddha in the matter, and perhaps you will be all right yet."

"Can I stay here?"

"We shall be glad to have you, although I know we may suffer for it. The White Snake wields a wonderful power, and will exert it to the utmost to bewitch you and bring you back, because she loves you devotedly, and, were she not of the brute creation, would be a model wife."

It was settled that Hanwin should remain on Golden Island, and every preparation was made for his accommodation by the generous Fahhai. Mr. Kane returned to the city alone, meditating much on what had occurred.

When Hanwin did not return at the appointed time, Albia grew very anxious and sent Flora out to enquire where he was. The maid soon returned with the

answer that he had gone with Mr. Kane to Golden Island. Albia grew pale; "To Golden Island!" she said, faintly, "that is the place where Fahhai lives. He is the powerful priest of Buddha and will tell my husband all about us. What shall I do?"

"Why fear this bald-headed donkey* of Golden Island when you possess such a power? You must have forgotten the drubbing you gave that fellow from Mow Mountain. Why not treat this Fahhai the same way?" said practical Flora.

"Fahhai is not Manetho," returned Albia. "His power of enchantment far exceeds mine. But let us go at once to the Island in search of my dear husband. Oh, Flora" continued the poor brute wife, sobbing, "I love Hanwin, but I fear it is fated that in this life, at least, we shall have no peace. I am not to blame for being a serpent, or for loving my husband. You know, I have always tried to make him happy. I stole the silver in Hangchow and the curios in Peking for him. I did evil only that good might come to him. I am ready to perish for ever for him. Can you not help me?"

"Hush, poor Albia," said Flora, pityingly, "perhaps we can bring him back yet, at any rate, let us try."

An hour after, two women appeared at the door of Golden Island Temple, and announced to the porter that they were seeking for Hanwin who had come to spend the day there. The porter listened attentively, and then went inside to announce the fact to the prior. Without telling Hanwin, Fahhai immediately went to the gate, having first put on his priestly robe and other trappings belonging to his order.

"Has my husband been here to-day?" said Albia, kneeling down before the priest.

"What is his name?" asked Fahhai, sternly.

"Hanwin."

"Begone, you brutes!" cried Fahhai, suddenly. "How dare you pollute

* A term of reproach for Buddhist priests, who because of their shaven heads are dubbed 狀元.

the temple of Buddha by your presence? Do you not fear annihilation?"

"Have pity, sir," pleaded Albia. "If I am a brute, I love my husband, and we are very happy and contented in our home. Will you not let him go back with me? I have never harmed you, and why should you now injure me?"

"I cannot allow you to live any longer with Hanwin," said Fahhai.

"Please do," still pleaded Albia, sobbing as if her heart would break.

Flora, who all this while was looking on, and gradually growing angry at the priest's pitiless demeanour, now interposed:

"Let Hanwin go," she cried, fiercely, "or it will be the worse for you."

"Who are you, that dares to speak to me in this way?" returned the priest.

Flora did not reply but quickly taking out a handkerchief, threw it into the air. Immediately a fiery dragon came swooping down upon the temple, and in an instant flames fanned the head of Fahhai, and licked every crevice of the Temple front.

"Aha! Would you?" laughed the priest, taking out his bowl. Then, glancing upward at the dragon, he waved the magic utensil—once, twice, and the fire was quenched. The dragon flew to the earth and crawled into the bowl that was still in Fahhai's hand.

Seeing Flora's charm broken, Albia, in desperation, arose from her knees and shot a pearl full force into the bonze's face. Fahhai saw it coming and interposed his magic bowl. The pearl returned to Albia at once. Finding that no entreaty could move the priest, the two mounted a cloud and flew off, leaving Fahhai master of the field. But he knew the end was not yet. The snakes were desperate and would doubtless make another attack. Returning to the large hall, he summoned the whole brotherhood of priests and thus addressed them:

"My brothers, a great danger is before us. Two powerful snake spirits, bent on vengeance, are about to attack Golden Island. You must be on your guard and obey implicitly my commands. Here is a charm for each of you. Place it in the palm of the hand and no harm can come to you."

Saying this he took off his surplice and hung it over the temple door.

Albia and Flora returned to the Five Streets. Both were weeping, the one with rage, the other with sorrow for the loss of her husband.

"We must certainly return to-morrow and kill that heartless scoundrel," said Flora.

"Alas! He is stronger than we, as you yourself can testify," returned the other; "his priest's bowl is a powerful charm. So we must not try to compel him by force, unless"—and her eyes shot forth a look of mingled love for her husband, and hate for Fahhai, "unless all other means fail."

The next day both women re-appeared at the Temple door and begged to see Fahhai. He soon came out and Albia pleaded again. But the bonze was inflexible. "Leave Golden Island!" he commanded.

"We go not until you give up my husband," said the devoted wife.

"Then take the consequences," returned Fahhai, raising his staff for a blow on Albia's head. But the staff was caught by an unseen hand. The god of Literature, ruler of the upper border, had witnessed the scene and interposed. "Touch not the White Snake," he called, "she is destined to bear a Senior Wrangler of the Empire."* Fahhai paused, lowered his staff, and looked up. Albia and Flora, cowed for the time by the fierce attitude of the priest, hastened away. By this time they were both desperately angry and planned an attack on the Island.

"Let us drown the whole school of priests, Fahhai and all," said Flora, her brute nature revealing itself.

"That is my intention," said Albia. "Come with me."

Saying this, she flew away to the sea, and, muttering a few words, assembled the dragons of the four seas.

"What are your commands?" they enquired, raising their whiskered faces above the waves. "Mustering your forces up the Yangtze River, heap up the waters, and beat down the great Golden Island into the flood," she sternly answered.

The dragons disappeared to obey the order. The battalions of the sea were marshalled and led to the devoted isle. The sky became inky black, the thunder muttered in the distance, long streaks of forked lightning played hide and seek among the on-rolling cloud mountains. The people of Chinkiang beheld the scene with awe, and fled terror-stricken into their houses.

A vivid flash, followed instantly by a loud report, announced that the storm had burst. The clouds, dark and dense, dashed swiftly over the sky borne along on the wings of the wind. Black rain fell in torrents. The pools and canals were soon filled, and the banks of the great Broad River groaned with the swelling waters.

None knew better than Fahhai the source of this disturbance of the ele-

* The Yangtze. The Chinese name 揚子江 means Broad River.

ments, and the danger to the inhabitants of the Island. In a loud voice, he commanded each priest to stand on the water's edge and wave the charm. At the same time, he muttered an incantation and placed his surplice on the Island gate. The waters round the Island abated at once, and the Temple was saved. Not so the unfortunate inhabitants of the city below. The flood, kept back at the Island by the charm, gathering itself for a spring like an angry tiger, dashed upon Chinkiang. Houses, people, cattle, everything went under in a moment and the flood swept on, triumphantly bearing the wreckage and corpses on, on to the sea.

Albia now realised that she had committed a great crime, and accomplished nothing towards releasing Hanwin. She wrung her hands in despair, hastily dismissed the marine army, and took her flight back to the Cavern of the Pure Winds, followed by her faithful Flora.

CHAPTER X.

RETURN TO HANGCHOW.

After the waters had subsided, Fahhai entered the temple to congratulate the priests on their escape from drowning. Calling Hanwin, he told him of the devastation his wife had wrought. "You once volunteered to become a priest. This great sin committed by the White Snake is partly on your account; to atone for it you should become a priest. My advice to you is this, return to your native city; at the temple of Spiritual Shade I have friends who will receive you into our order," said he.

"I admit the drowning of so many people is a great sin, and I am willing to give up this life if I can find forgiveness," *answered Hanwin.

*Lord Macartney says in his Diary (1792) that this celebrated hill lay about in the middle of the river. When the British fleet visited Nanking (1842) some of the ships sailed between the Island and the Southern shore. Golden Island is now on the mainland, the river having silted up on the south and cut a deep channel on the north.

"Then, leave Golden Island†at once," returned the priest. "I shall write letters to my brothers in Hangchow, and they will receive you kindly and assist you in your devotions."

The next day Hanwin started on his journey. As he passed by the walls of Chinkiang the utter desolation wrought by the flood almost overcame him. The city was a vast wreck, and the bodies of men and animals lay everywhere. Hanwin left the dreadful scene as quickly as he could, and travelled rapidly towards his native city, which place he reached, after several days' fatigue, without mishap to himself. When he was entering the city, to his utter astonishment, Albia and Flora met him!

†The Chinese term is 出家 (leave home). The requirements are to forsake the family, to shave the head, to abstain from matrimony, to chant the Classics, and other similar practices.

It seems that Albia could not rest in her cavern on the hills. One day she sent Flora to Golden Island to discover what had become of her husband. Disguised as a moth, she flew into the temple and soon found out Hanwin's plans. Returning at once to her mistress, she told the result of her expedition. Albia left immediately for Hangchow, just in time to meet Hanwin as described.

Albia cried out with joy, "Where are you going, husband?"

Hanwin looked up, but his heart was so filled with contending emotions that he could not speak. "Alas!", continued the distressed wife, "you have been deceived by the priest of Golden Island. You have not been home for many days, and now our shop has been swept away by the flood. Flora and myself fortunately escaped. We have borne much in the days you have been gone. Tell me truly why you deserted me so cruelly?"

"You must leave me," said Hanwin, hastily, "I have decided to become a Buddhist priest."

"What, forsake me and your little child?" said his wife, her beautiful eyes suffused with tears.

"Yes, I have—" stammered he.

"But have I ever injured you intentionally, dear husband, that you take such a step? Did I not save your life in Chinkiang? How can you think that I am seeking your ruin?"

Hanwin hesitated.

Then Flora spoke. "Now, Hanwin, be sensible. Take your wife into the city, and live happily together again. Listen not to idle tales of priests and busy-bodies. When you were banished from Soochow my mistress sent a box of silver to your brother Leigh to keep. She had saved it up for you. Man, are you blind, or mad?" Hanwin could stand it no longer. The love he had always cherished for his wife, the natural feeling for her distress, and the many proofs of her devotion to him, broke down all his intentions of turning monk.

"My beloved and faithful Albia," he cried, "I have been very foolish. Will you forgive me?"

"Forgive you, my Hanwin, why I love you too dearly to ever think you need forgiveness whatever you do," said Albia.

"I have been deceived by that slick-pated ass of Golden Island," he said, apologetically.

"Never think of him again," said Albia, "let us go to your sister's house in the city."

"Oh, yes," said the delighted Hanwin, "Grace has a good heart and her husband will help us all he can. Let us go at once."

They set out joyfully for Leigh's house which they soon reached. Hanwin walked in first, followed by his wife and Flora. Grace was in the room and was quite startled.

"Why, is this my brother Hanwin?" she cried, joyfully.

"No other," he said, cheerily, "and how are you all since I saw you last?"

"Come, sit down first. Why, Hanwin how handsome you have grown! But who are these?" said his sister, placing chairs.

"This is Albia, my wife, and this is Flora, her maid"—said Hanwin, proudly, as he noticed the look of admiration on his sister's face.

"Well, you are welcome to our home. My husband will be in soon and you must tell us all your adventures since you left. We heard of the troubles you met with in Soochow and Chinkiang, with the witches."

"It was through the stupidity of the Prefect of Soochow and the obstinate priest of Golden Island that my husband got into difficulty," said Albia, blushing.

"But it is all right now, and we have come to Hangchow to live," said Hanwin, smiling.

Leigh came home after a while, and much surprised was he to see Hanwin. He welcomed him cordially, and when they all sat down to supper together that night there was no happier circle in this world. The next day a house was found for Hanwin, and bought with part of the money Albia had saved. In a few weeks a new chemist's shop was established in front, on the street, and a sign

hung out. In the flower garden Albia placed a table on which incense was burnt. Every night she repaired to this place and prayed that her sin of drowning the vast multitude of Chinkiang might be taken away.

Ever after his discomfiture Manetho had meditated revenge on Albia. Since that time he had lived in seclusion among the hills with a centipede ghost for a pupil. It occurred to the exorcist that he might work through him. So, calling the centipede one day, he told him the story and put the question whether he would use some means to poison Albia. The vindictive beast readily assented, and the two set out for Hangchow, where they stopped in the city temple. The centipede crawled to Hanwin's flower garden and secreted himself, waiting for an opportunity. He had not been there long when Albia came out, lighted the incense, and put her head down on the table in meditation. When she looked up, just before her, stretched along his full length, crouched the venomous insect, his fangs all showing ready to strike. Albia screamed in terror, and fell swooning to the ground. The centipede crawled slowly towards her, and was about to strike his poisonous teeth into her white flesh, when the Great White Eagle, who had watched the proceeding from above, darted down, and with his strong beak cut the creature in two. In the meantime, Flora, hearing the scream, came out and, raising her mistress from the ground, bore her tenderly to the room. Returning again to the garden, she beheld the centipede wriggling in agony on the ground. Guessing the cause of Albia's faint, she was about to go back when she heard a chuckle above, and, looking up, saw Manetho standing on a cloud. Flora grew very angry: "My mistress was merciful to you once, and this is the way you reward her," called she.

"I will get my revenge on you snakes some day. Because I have not accomplished my object this time, you need not think I shall stop following you. Failure only adds fuel to my vengeance," returned Manetho.

The faithful maid could endure it no longer. Mounting another cloud she gave pursuit to the exorcist, who had fled, calling "Yellow Turban!" as she went. Manetho was soon caught, the strong demon grasped him firmly in his arms, and with one mighty effort hurled the struggling wretch far out into the Japanese sea. Flora then returned to her mistress whom she found sitting up, but pale and trembling from her recent fright. Flora bade her lie down again. This she did, and when Hanwin found out what had happened, he prepared some soothing medicine for her, and she was made as comfortable as could be. Still Grace and Flora were both anxious for Albia. The former had learned to love her devotedly, and feared the result of the swoon perhaps more than Flora did.

That night a fragrant breath of wind came stealing gently into the room. It was the harbinger of the god of Literature. When Hanwin awoke, he heard the voices of his sister and Flora in the next room where Albia was. What was it all about? He was not long in suspense. Grace came to his door, and gently called: "Come into Albia's room, dear brother, and see your sweet little baby boy!"

There was great rejoicing in Hanwin's house that day. Albia did not even try to keep back her joyful tears. Leigh and Grace spent the day with them and there was a grand feast spread to celebrate the new arrival. By general consent, he was named Dream Dragon, and great plans were formed for the little fellow who lay kicking up his tiny heels on the bed beside his mother.

At nightfall Leigh and his wife left, saying they would come again soon. But how often are promises not kept! The next day a messenger came to say that there was a wee girl in Leigh's house, born the night before, and would Hanwin please come over?

Such congratulations! Never was there such a strange concatenation of events! Leigh and Hanwin were almost beside themselves with happiness.

"We will betroth them as soon as we can," said Hanwin.

"Of course," laughed Leigh.

And it was not long before the babies were actually engaged to be married in

the years to come. Presents were sent to the little girl who had been named Water Lily, an engagement feast was

prepared, and all was as joyous as if the marriage bells were already ringing and the children knew all about it.

CHAPTER XI.

CRUSHED UNDER THE TOWER.

One day a messenger from the west bore a letter to Fahhai, as he sat in the cloud room on Golden Island. It was sent by Buddha, and contained an order for the priest to proceed at once to Hangchow and capture the White Snake in his bowl. He was then to entomb her under the Thunder Peak for twenty years. If in that time the god of Literature, who had become incarnate in the son born to her, should become Senior Wrangler of the Empire, his mother should be taken out and allowed to attain perfection. The order was imperative, as the child was a month old, and the White Snake had brought the punishment on herself by breaking her word to the god of the North Star, when she first came to Hangchow. Such was the decree, and the priest lost no time in its execution. It was just a month since little Dream Dragon was born, and his parents had celebrated the occasion by inviting many friends to a feast* at the house. Everybody was joyful, and congratulations were showered upon the happy father, when Albia took her maid aside, and said: "Flora, I have a presentiment that something dreadful will happen to me to-day. Bring my darling baby into my room, and let me embrace him before the calamity comes." "Have you not been praying for forgiveness all these months?" asked Flora. "Yes, I have," replied Albia, "but I fear that I cannot escape my destiny, even if I have been praying. But, bring the dear baby in."

In the midst of the laughter and noise, while the guests were seated at the table, a priest appeared at the door. Hanwin looked up, and, behold! Fahhai stood before him. "Come in," he stammered; "you see we are having a feast. I have found out that I was not

bewitched by a snake. See, we are celebrating our baby's thirty days."

"Ah, I see," said Fahhai; "please give me a cup of tea. But I am afraid you have no cups in this house clean enough for a Buddhist priest. Take mine and bring the tea."

Hanwin did as the priest bade him, and went back to the room where Albia was.

"What do you want, dear Hanwin?" said his wife.

"Some tea for a priest who has just come."

Albia looked up and, as she did so, the bowl, of its own accord, flew from the astonished husband's hand, and covered hard and fast the head of his wife! Albia knelt on the floor and muttered a prayer, her pearly tears falling thick and fast. Hanwin approached his wife, and tried to detach the bowl from her head, but it could not be removed.

The rest of the family, hearing the confusion, came into the room, leaving the guests at the table; these soon after discreetly took their departure. Nothing can describe the consternation of Leigh and his wife when they beheld poor Albia kneeling on the floor, and Hanwin vainly endeavouring to comfort her.

"Dear people," she said, appealingly, "I must tell you now that I am the White Snake of Pure Winds Cavern. In a former life my husband rescued me from a beggar who was about to kill me, and I have tried to recompense him as well as I could. All my actions towards you, dear husband, have been prompted by love. The money from the Imperial chest, the curios from Peking, and the medicine by which you wrought your wonderful cures, were all fraudulently obtained, but to advance your interests. When you were dead through fright, I risked my life to procure the herb by which you were restored. You can thus see my affection for you. Dear Grace, I am

*Since the people of China were compelled to wear *queues* by the T'sings, the ceremony of a first shave occurs at this feast, when the month old boy is subjected to a capital (not tonsorial) artist.

doomed to a fearful punishment; it is the decree of heaven. When I am gone will you take little Dream Dragon and bring him up for me? Be a mother to him, and let him be called by your name. Flora, you have been very faithful to me. I shall have no further need for you, and you must go at once to the Cavern of the Pure Winds and spend the rest of your life in meditation. You may be able to attain perfection!"

Albia was still kneeling while she uttered these words. When she had ceased, Hanwin cried: "Darling Albia, you have been my faithful wife. You must not leave us!"

"Oh, my husband, I am so glad to hear you speak kindly to me. Would that I could stay with you and our little Dream Dragon! But look into the other room and you will see one who has come to execute the will of heaven. He is waiting, I must go."

She rose from her knees, and walked into the room where Fahhai was waiting, the bowl still upon her head. The rest followed. As they entered the room, a strange scene was enacted. The priest, seeing Albia, waved his staff in the air. Immediately the bowl detached itself from its position and flew back to its owner's hand. A cloud of light hung over it for an instant, then Albia slowly faded from sight.

"Come," said Fahhai to Hanwin, "look into this bowl." Hanwin did as he was directed. What he saw there was a beautiful little white snake vainly struggling to get away by climbing first up one, and then the other, side of the bowl.

"Let her come back to me," cried the agonised husband, falling down on both knees before the priest, and grasping the bowl eagerly.

Fahhai smiled. "It is her destiny, and Buddha has despatched me to execute his commands. But if you will come with me to the West Lake and Thunder Peak Tower, I will let you see your wife for a little while," returned he, taking Hanwin's hands away, and starting for the door. The husband followed, leaving the rest of the family almost petrified with fright. The priest walked rapidly in the direction of the Lake, having reached which he motioned

Hanwin to follow him up the hill. It was not long before they stood before the tall structure.* Here Fahhai stopped and looked at Hanwin. "You wish to see your wife," he said.

"In pity bring her back," returned he. Another wave of the magic staff, an aureole of white light, and Albia, pale and beautiful, stood before them.

Hanwin could repress his emotion no longer. Bursting into tears he besought Fahhai to let his wife go free. The priest paid no attention, but turning to Albia, who by this time was kneeling before him, said sternly, pointing to the base of the Tower:

"White snake, descend!"

Albia weeping, replied, "But I know not when I can get out again. Am I to be entombed for ever? Oh, horrible punishment!"

"On two conditions you may come out," said Fahhai. "The first is that you spend the time of your imprisonment in meditation; the second is that your son becomes the Senior Wrangler of the Empire. Except these conditions be fulfilled may the Lake go dry and the Tower rot before you get out."†

"Then I reverently yield to Buddha's will," said Albia, looking hopefully at her husband. "White Snake, get ready quickly," solemnly said the priest, as he waved his staff. Hanwin looked at the Tower. He could scarcely believe his eyes, but the great mass quivered, and slowly bending down on the nether side, ~~stopped~~ : a great fissure was rent in the earth under the base. He looked in astonishment at the scene. Albia was pale. He heard, but hardly understood, the words: "Quick, leap, White Snake." Like a flash of light, Hanwin saw his

* "This tower. . . . was built about A. D. 950 and is to-day a solid structure, though much ruined. It has now four stories and is about 120 ft. high; something like a regular order is still discernible in the mouldering cornices. The legend of the White Snake is associated with this structure, and people constantly carry away pieces of its bricks as charms."—*Middle Kingdom*, Vol. I, Page 118.

In recent years Dr. D. Duncan Main, the distinguished physician of the Church Missionary Society, in Hangchow, has purchased land for a sanitarium near the foot of Thunder Peak Tower.

† 湖乾塔爛亦不能度你出來了

wife pass through the crevice, and before he realised what had happened, the staff was waved again and Thunder Peak Tower trembled a moment, then steadied itself, and rose majestically from its inclined position until it stood firm and

straight as before. Hanwin looked around for the priest; he had vanished, and the horror-stricken husband was left alone before the Tower that he knew had crushed his wife into a thousand pieces under its mighty base.

CHAPTER XII.

PRIEST AND SCHOLAR.

Hanwin slowly returned home, lost in meditation. By the time he reached Leigh's his mind was made up. He resolved to become a priest and retire from the world, for, although he was a young man, yet he had seen enough of its disappointments to become dissatisfied with life. Still, when he thought of his and Albia's little baby, he recoiled from the thought, though he knew that Grace would nourish the little fellow and see that his education was not neglected.

The matter was broached on his return, and as Hanwin seemed determined to follow this course, Leigh and Grace made no objection. Both promised to use every endeavor to train Dream Dragon in the right way. In a few days Hanwin departed for Golden Island to put himself under the tuition of Fah-hai. Here we will leave him.

Time passed by very quickly, and the child, who took the name of his guardians, grew up well formed, intelligent and active. He loved his books and lost no time in idle play, so that when he was about ten years old he had outstripped all other boys in the school. This excited their envy and strange things began to be heard about Dream Dragon, to all of which he paid no attention, until one day, when the preceptor was out, some of the ruder scholars began to tease him about his mother.

"You are not named Leigh really, you know," sneered they, "but something else. Your mother was a snake." The little fellow looked up quickly. "What's that you say?" he said.

"Ha! Ha!" laughed the unfeeling boys; "your real mother is under Thunder Peak Tower, and your father is a Buddhist Priest. A boy ten years old and not know where his parents are! What a go!"

Dream Dragon was cut to the quick. He said nothing, but gathering up his books left the schoolroom. Soon after, Grace saw him coming home, his face hot and flushed, and the tears streaming down his cheeks.

"Why, what is the matter, child?" asked the sympathetic woman, "that you return home before school is out, and in such a plight?"

"The boys said you are not my mother," cried he, indignantly, "and that my real mother is under the Tower."

"Come into the house, poor boy," said Grace, wiping his eyes, and leading him into her room. "I must tell you all about yourself, for the time, I think, has come. Those boys were very rude and unmannerly, and had no business to speak so to you. But," she continued, kissing him, "much as I love you, I am not your mother; I am your father's sister. Your dear mother is waiting under the Tower until you grow up to bring her out, and you must be very diligent at your books, for unless, dear boy, you study hard, your mother must lie under the Tower for ever."

With that she looked into the eyes of the boy. There was a strange light there. "My poor mother, my poor mother," he cried, in anguish. "Hush, dear," said Grace, soothingly.

But Dream Dragon could say nothing but, "My poor mother my poor mother," and when Leigh came home that night he was lying on the bed, clasping his hands to his head, calling for Albia, while a high fever was burning in his veins, and his mind was wandering off to his mother, who, ten years before, had been entombed beneath the Tower of Thunder Peak. Leigh was in despair. "Woman are always telling things they ought not to. Grace ought not to

have told him about his mother yet," thought he.

Physicians were called, but the boy was in a delirium, and nothing could be done to restore his reason. The devoted guardians did not leave his bedside by night or day, but, as the physicians had given up the case, they determined to stay by him till he died. And they waited for the end.

The merciful Buddha, in the recesses of the Purple Bamboo Grove, looked down on the pitiful scene, and saw the devotion of the pair. He heard the moans of the poor boy, calling for his mother. Quickly disguising himself as a priest, he appeared at the door of Leigh's house, beating his wooden fish drum. Grace went to the door and offered alms. The priest came in, and Leigh courteously invited him to sit awhile and rest himself. "But you have some one sick in the house?" said Buddha.

"Yes, my brother's son is desperately ill," said Leigh, sadly, "and the doctors give us no hope of his recovery." The priest said nothing, but produced some medicine. "Are you a physician?" asked Leigh, joyfully.

"Let the boy take this," returned the other, not noticing the question; saying which, he thanked the worthy couple and retired.*

The medicine was administered at once. Dream Dragon opened his eyes. "Where am I?" he asked, sitting up, and looking curiously around the room.

"Here with us," said Leigh, clasping him in his arms, and weeping for joy. "You have been very ill, and now you are better and are going to get well for us, are you not, dear boy?"

"Oh! yes, I am much better, though I have had such dreams," said the boy.

"But you will have no more now," said Grace, coming to the bed, and tenderly taking Dream Dragon's hands. "We are so glad you are better. Now, I must make you something nice to eat."

In a few days the patient had recovered. But he was sent no more to the school

he had left. A private tutor was engaged and Dream Dragon pursued his studies without the interruption or persecution of other scholars.

It was wonderful how the boy learned! Book after book was mastered. Every available bit of literature was eagerly devoured, until the tutor could take him no farther. He soon won his degree of Master of Arts, and in a year went up to the Provincial Examinations. When the list of successful candidates appeared, Dream Dragon's name stood first.

Leigh and Grace were overjoyed, and when the young man began to prepare for the Imperial Examinations at Peking, their hearts swelled with pride that they should have a relation enter such a contest.

One day Leigh said: "My son, when you were a child your father and mother agreed with us that, if you grew up, you were to marry our Water Lily. You are old enough to be told this now, and I hope you will consider the matter."

"What my father and mother thought best for me to do when grown, I will abide by," said the filial son. "Water Lily will make me a good wife when I have passed my examinations at the capital. So let us say no more about the matter just now, as there is much to do for others before we think of ourselves."

We do not know whether Water Lily overheard this conversation or not, but if she did, her little heart beat high with joy and hope.

And now the time came for the departure of Dream Dragon. Leigh accompanied him a short distance after the farewells were said, and many hopes of a successful issue were expressed. Dream Dragon proceeded directly to the Court and took his place among the many scholars who were to compete for the coveted prize.

He found that the knowledge he had acquired with his tutor in Hangchow was just in the line of the theme given for the essay. He put all his powers into the composition of his paper, handed it in, and quietly awaited the result.

When the lists appeared, Dream Dragon stood at the top! He read the bulletin over and over, yes, there it was—Senior Wrangler of the Empire: Dream Dragon of Chékiang province.—Oh!

* The idea of a possible incarnation in every Buddhist priest causes the Chinese to treat these ignorant fellows very courteously, however dissolute and unclean they may be.

the joy he experienced when he thought of his mother soon to be released!

But he had to attend to other matters just now. A high official had sent for him. He called his chair, and was soon in the presence of the great man who said, ceremoniously:

"Senior Wrangler of the Empire, I congratulate you on your admittance into the Hanlin School, the highest in the Chinese Empire." Dream Dragon bowed and thanked the official. "The Emperor desires to see you, and ask what favour you would receive at his Imperial hands." "I thank His Majesty for the condescension," returned the scholar, "and will reverently ask a few favours from the Emperor."

By this time it was noised abroad throughout the city that he was the successful candidate. A band of music followed Dream Dragon's chair to his place of abode, and the mandarins of the Court visited him to express their congratulations upon his success. The next day Dream Dragon saw the great Emperor of China, who gave a feast to the fortunate graduates.

The Emperor received him with a gracious hearing and enquired about his home lineage. In a short, reverential manner Dream Dragon told about his faithful guardians, who so tenderly nourished him in the place of his mother and father, the latter of whom being wearied with the troubles of this life had become a priest. The Emperor then said approvingly:

"And before you enter into official duties what is your request?"

Dream Dragon, on his knees, bowed his head to the earth, and spoke without looking up:

"Your Majesty is very kind, and your condescension I shall never forget. I should like a year's leave to visit the grave of my mother, to see my kind sister and her husband, and to contract a marriage alliance with my cousin." "The desire is granted," said the Emperor, beckoning to the scribe to make out the reply to the request.

The scholar was then escorted out from the Imperial Presence with the highest honour. As soon as he could leave the capital, he set out for Hangchow, having resolved to stop at Golden

Island in the hope of meeting his father.

He reached Chinkiang in the course of time, and went immediately to the Island. A priest met him at the door, and gave him the incense to burn before the great Buddha. After the ceremony, he enquired the place of residence of his companion. * The priest told his story. He was a resident of Hangchow, and had once enjoyed the things of this world, but disappointment had driven him to become a priest. He was about to continue, when the scholar threw his arms about his neck, exclaiming:

"My dear father, my dear father, I am your son, Dream Dragon!"

"You are mistaken," said the priest, trembling. "No, no, I am not. You were once called Hanwin, and your wife, my mother, is now lying entombed at the foot of Thunder Peak Tower. I was brought up by your sister, who was kind and loving to me and gave me a good education. Oh, father, I have worked hard for my degree and have got it. Yes, I have got it, and am on my way from the Court to bring mother out from her dreadful prison."

The priest grew pale. "My precious son," he exclaimed, returning the scholar's embrace. "So you have done all this! Oh, how proud I am of you, even if I am a priest."

"But where is the old priest who put my mother under the Tower? Only he can bring her back." "I am sorry to say, he is not on Golden Island now," returned Hanwin.

"Let us go on to Hangchow without him, then," said the scholar.

His father assented and the two descended the hill together. Hanwin's mind was filled with conflicting thoughts. The joy of meeting his son, and the prospect of soon seeing Leigh and Grace were most pleasing to the hermit. But oh, the happiness of beholding the lovely face of his dear Albia! Then he remembered that he was now a priest, and

* When a Chinese becomes a priest he drops his family name, so that it is not polite to ask the name of a priest in China. Instead of asking 貴姓, "Your honourable name," is more courteous to use 貴上下, "Your honourable circumstances."

it was not lawful for him to have a wife, and his spirits sank.

They travelled as rapidly as possible, and reached Hangchow in a few days. What words can express the wonder and astonishment of Leigh and Grace when they beheld Hanwin and Dream Dragon! The news of the latter's success had already arrived before them, and the officials of the city had in the meantime called to express their congratulations to the delighted household. But Dream Dragon thought more about his mother, and, as soon as it could be conveniently arranged, he started in company with his father to the Thunder Peak Tower, to behold the place of Albia's incarceration. They proceeded slowly, talking reverently about Albia, until they came to the spot. Hanwin demonstrated to his son the exact manner in which his mother had been entombed, and the two were speaking in awe under their breath, when, suddenly Fahhai stood before them!

"Welcome, Senior Wrangler of the Empire," he said to Dream Dragon, "you have fulfilled the conditions, and I have come to let the White Snake free."

The scholar and his father did not speak.

"Behold!" said Fahhai.

With one wave of his staff, the Tower trembled, and slowly receded. Dream Dragon drew back in fear, but his father caught his arm, and motioned him to be still. Steadily the Tower bent down until a deep cavity was observed at the bottom.

"Albia, come forth," called the magician. As beautiful as a cloudless morning, the lovely woman, clad in white robes, sprang to the top, and, kneeling

before Fahhai, thanked the great Buddha for his grace in setting her free. Fahhai waved his staff again to adjust the Tower, then, turning to Albia, said, "Immortal, behold your son! by his industry you have been liberated." Dream Dragon looked a moment at his mother, then rushed forward, and embracing her, cried: "My darling mother, how I have longed to see you; and now you are really free, and I can clasp you in my arms. The joy of meeting you is worth a thousand times more than all my labour."

The beautiful woman kissed her son, and looked at Hanwin, who stood apart.

"Hanwin and Albia," said the priest, solemnly, "you love each other, but you can never live together in this poor world. You have both reached perfection, and must dwell together in a brighter heaven than ever can be found here." Then, drawing a white veil from his girdle, he spread it on the ground.

"Stand upon it, Albia!" he commanded; she obeyed. Fahhai waved his staff and the veil slowly transforming itself into a white cloud, rose from the earth bearing its lovely burden, and hung over the Tower. Quick as thought, he produced an azure veil and bade Hanwin step upon it. No sooner had he done so, than an azure cloud ascended from the place where they stood, taking Hanwin with it. Reaching the white cloud, it stopped for an instant; then the wonder-stricken scholar beheld the two clouds which carried his beloved parents float slowly away together toward the west, and gradually disappear on the horizon. He turned to Fahhai for a further explanation, but the magician had vanished!

THE END.