

CHOON YANG

INTRODUCTION BY BROTHER ANTHONY

CHOON YANG was published in installments in the monthly *Korea Magazine* from September 1917 to July 1918. Although the title stated that it was “translated from the Korean,” there was no translator’s name indicated in the magazine, but it is certain that the translation, like all the anonymous translations published in the *Magazine*, was the work of the learned Canadian missionary James Scarth Gale. Gale was the main editor and a major contributor to the short-lived *Magazine*, which ceased publication in April 1919, after the March 1st Korean Independence Uprisings. A note at the start of the January 1918 section specifies: “The Editors have been asked if this is a literal translation of Choon-yang and they answer, Yes! A story like Choon-yang to be added to by a foreigner or subtracted from, would entirely lose its charm. It is given to illustrate to the reader phases of Korean thought; and so a perfectly faithful translation is absolutely required.”

However, no information is given here as to the source text chosen by Gale for translation. It seems clear from recent studies by Korean scholars that the text Gale translated and published was that of the prose “new novel” (*shin-soseol*) *Ok-jung-hwa* (獄中花) “Flower in Prison” by the novelist Yi Hae-jo, which was serialized from January until July 1912 in the *Maeil Shinbo* 每日申報 daily newspaper, then published in the same year as a single volume by the Bogeup Seogwan (普及書館) publishing company. In the following years and into the 1920s multiple other editions of virtually the same text were produced by various publishers, the work was immensely popular and other writers including Lee Gwang-su also produced versions. The faithfulness of the heroine to her true love in the face of the cruel governor’s demands was read as a parable of the attitude of patriotic Koreans toward Japan. Reading the story was already an act of resistance and in the 1930s its popularity led to the erection of a shrine to Chunhyang in Namwon. Yi Hae-jo played a major role in popularizing traditional Korean literature and ‘pansori’ for the modern Korean audience, his novel is said to have been based on the version of *Chun-hyang* performed by the famed pansori singer Park Gi-hong (朴起弘).

The Korean-language article “Gale’s Translation of Old Korean Fictions and Its Trans-National Context” by Lee Sang-Hyun (*Comparative Korean Studies* Vol. 22 No. 1, April 2014, 11-53) goes into considerable detail

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about the translations of Korean literature preserved in the archive of Gale's papers in the Thomas Fischer rare book library, Toronto University, Canada. It seems clear that Gale had been interested in translating traditional Korean tales since early in his years in Korea. The article notes that Gale produced initial hand-written drafts of his translations and then prepared typed revised versions with a view to publication. The main titles he worked on in this way were *Woonyeong-jeon*, *Choonhyang-jeon*, *Shimchung-jeon* and *Tosaeing-jeon*. It seems likely that he would have published more of these stories if the *Korea Magazine* had continued beyond April 1919. One unexplained mystery is why Gale chose to spell the heroine's name without an 'h,' Choon-yang rather than the usual Chun-hyang.

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PREFACE.

The story of Choonyang, one of the most famous in Korea, dates from the reign of Injo, who was king from 1623 to 1649. The heroine was true to her principles in the midst of difficulties and dangers such as the West knows nothing of. Many, like her, rather than yield the right, have died pitifully, unrecorded and forgotten. In the *Yo-ji Seung-nam*, the Official Geographical Records of Korea, we find, however, that in county after county, shrines with red gates have been erected to her honorable memory,—to the woman who fought this battle and won. May this ideal of the Orient, dearer to so many than life itself, help us to a higher appreciation of the East with its throbbing masses or humanity.

A year and more ago on the occasion of a concert given in behalf of Belgium at the Chosen Hotel, three Korean singers won the special commendation of all those assembled, and were given the heartiest applause. Their song was the story of Choonyang.

I. RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS.

When specially beautiful women are born into the world, it is due to influence of the mountains and streams. Sosee¹, the loveliest woman of ancient China, sprung from the banks of the Yakya River at the foot of the Chosa Mountain; Wang Sogun², another great marvel, grew up where the waters rush by and the hills circle round; and because the Keum torrent

¹ Sosee, who lived about 450 B. C., was born of humbler parents, but by her beauty advanced step by step till she gained complete control of the Empire, and finally wrought its ruin. She is the ne plus ultra of Beautiful Chinese women.

² Wang Sogun. This marvellous woman by her beauty brought on a war between the fierce barbarian Huns of the north and China Proper in 33 B. C. She was finally captured and carried away, but rather than yield herself to her savage conqueror, she plunged into the Amur River and was drowned. Her tomb on the bank is said to be marked by undying verdure. The history of Wang Sogun forms the basis of a drama translated by Sir Joh Davis and entitled the "Sorrows of Han."

was clear and sweet, and the Amee hills were unsurpassed, Soldo³ and Tak Mugun⁴ came into being.

Namwun District of East Chulla, Chosen, lies to the west of the Chiri Mountains, and to the east of the Red City River. The spirits of the hills and streams meet there, and on that spot Choonyang was born.

Choonyang's mother was a retired dancing-girl, who, after thirty years of age, gave birth to this only daughter. In a dream, one night, there came to her a beautiful angel from heaven, bearing in her hand a plum and peach-blossom flower. She gave the peach-blossom, saying, "Care gently for this, and later, if you graft it to plum, gladness and joy will follow. I must hasten," said she, "to carry this plum-blossom to its destined place." So saying she withdrew.

When she had awakened from her dream, and time had passed, she bore a daughter, and as the peach-blossom is a bud of springtime, she called her Spring Fragrance or Choonyang.

Although the daughter of a dancing-girl, yet, because her father was of the gentry class, she was taught Chinese from her seventh year. In this she greatly excelled, as also in sewing, embroidery and in music. She was kept pure from every touch of the stranger, and grew flawless as the jewel.

Now there was living at this time in the department of Three Rivers, Seoul, a graduate named Yi whose family and home were widely noted for-faithful sons and pure and beautiful women. His Majesty, in his appointments, had selected Yi for District Magistrate of Namwon County. A month or so after his entrance upon office, the people unanimously proclaimed his virtues, and the streets and by-ways of the place were posted with notice boards of his righteous and illustrious rule. The governor's unmarried son was with him, whose name was Dream-Dragon. He was eighteen years of age and handsome as China's Toomokchee.⁵

His face was comely as the polished marble, and in ability he was mature and well advanced. Poetry and music were known to him, and for a life of gaiety he led the way. In the night he hailed the moon over the eastern ridges; and during the day he loved to go on excursions to greet

³ Soldo: A famous woman of China who lived about 900 A. D. Excelling as a wit and verse writer, her name was given by her admirers to the paper on which the productions of her pen were inscribed, till at last it became a synonym for superior notepaper.

⁴ Tak Mugun. A Chinese lady of the 2nd century B. C. famed in verse and story and associated with the charms and delights of sweet music.

⁵ Toomokchee. A famous Chinese poet who lived from 803 to 852 B. C.

the flowers and willows of the springtime, or to speak his condolences to the tinted leaves and chrysanthemums of autumn. He was a brave and gifted lad.

On a certain day the young master, unable to resist the wooings of the springtime, called a *yamen* attendant and asked,

“Where are the best views in this country of yours?”

“What does the Young Master want with pretty views in the midst of his laborious studies?” inquired the Boy.

“But,” replied Dream-Dragon, “in every place of natural beauty, there are also to be found verses and poems corresponding. Listen till I tell you. In the wonderful world of the Keui Mountain and the Yong River, where Soboo⁶ and Hoyoo⁷ played together they are seen; and where So Jachum⁸ passed his happy days, and autumn moonlight nights on the banks of the Chokpyok River you will find them posted up. Also in the Yellow Stork Pavilion, in the Koso Outlook, in the Phoenix Tower, there are footprints of the Sages and the writers of the past. I, too, am one of these. As the fleeting hours of springtime trip by, and plum and peach blossoms beckon to me, shall I let them pass unnoticed?” The Boy said again, “In our poor country there are but few places of interest. Shall I tell you of them one by one? Outside the North Gate there is the mountain city of Chojong, very good; beyond the West Gate there is the Temple of the God of War, where the view is wide and imposing; outside the South Gate there is the Moonlight Pavilion, which is well worth seeing; then there is the Crow and Magpie Bridge and the Fairy Temple of Yongkak, all of which are rated among the finest views of South Chulla.”

“Let’s saddle the ass,” said Dream-Dragon, “and go see the Moonlight Pavilion.”

“All right, sir,” said the Boy, and in a little he came forth with his well brushed Chinese donkey, and made tight the saddle girth. He had put in order the red tassles and purple reins, the embroidered blanket, the

⁶ Soboo. (Nest-Father) He is a legendary being said to have lived B. C.2357, and to have made his home in a tree, hence his name. He was a man of singular uprightness who greatly influenced his age for good. Once when offered the rule of the empire by the great Yo, he went and washed his ears in the brook to rid them from the taint of worldly ambition.

⁷ Hoyoo. He was a friend of “Nest-Father” and equally an apostle of self-renunciation.

⁸ So Jachum. (1036-1101) A. D. He was a statesman and poet of China, who, when banished to Hainan, spent his days in diffusing a knowledge and love of literature.

gilded bridle, the blue and red plaited halter, and the other head ornaments. He carried also the coral whip with which he gave a sharp blow to bring the creature to attention.

He called, "I have done as Your Excellency has ordered."

Behold him go forth on his way. Well dressed he sits straight in the saddle, handsome and high-born. So he prances forth skirting the mountain spurs, and spiriting up the dust as he sails away on the favouring breeze. At every step, as he passes the blossoms, fragrance is wafted to him. Rapidly he rides till he reaches the Moonlight Pavilion, where he dismounts, ascends the steps, and looks forth upon the scene. Off to the south is the Red City plain, where the early sun is brushing aside the light cover of mist. The sweet flavour of springtime, with its flowers and willow catkins, is borne to him on the breath of the morning. The polished floors and ornamented walls call his attention to the pavilion. The view from this kiosk is beyond compare. From it the Magpie Bridge is visible, the Magpie Bridge which calls up the story of the Milky Way and the Celestial Lovers⁹. "How can they be absent from the scene?" thought he. "I surely am the Herdsman Star, but where is the Weaving Maiden for my companion? In this vale of flowers if I could only meet with her, the choice of all my revolving existences, how happy I should be."

"Boy, bring the glass, let's see who is the oldest among us here."

The Boy replied, "Yonder fellow to the rear with his dwarfish build and yellow face, he is over forty I know."

"He's away beyond me," said the Young Master, "let him be placed number one among us, and you too, Boy, while we refresh ourselves, come up and take your place."

"I am afraid to," said the Boy, "it isn't good form."

"Afraid of what?" asked the Master, "Nonsense!"

The table was brought in and the rear servant took the first sip of the glass; the Boy shared as well, and when the Young Master had taken his turn he addressed them saying, "When one is out for a good lime, informally, it does not do to make too much of ceremony. If we do so there is an end to good fellowship and the interest is gone. In the country, age takes precedence. We've had our glass, now for a smoke."

The Young Master, carried away with the joy of the occasion, got

⁹ Celestial lovers. The Herdsman, supposed to be the star β in Aquila, and the Weaving Damsel the star α Lyra, are lovers, who by the abyss of the Milky Way, separated all the year round, till the 7th night of the 7th Moon, when the magpies of the earth assemble and form a bridge over the chasm, and enable them to meet. This is one of the Orient's most famous legends.

up and sat down, turned this way and that, looking here and there. Off to the south he saw the Jewel Curtain Outlook rising skyward with its bright and shimmering windows, also the Fairies' Pavilion; to the rear was the Garden of the Immortals, with its ideographic flowers of white, and red, and green, and yellow. In fluttered heaps they lay scattered about dotting the landscape. The call of the oriole from the willow canopy added to the scene's delight. White butterflies in pairs flitted by on tiny wing dodging among the branches. The world was full of sweet fragrance bursting forth, white and red, from all the variegated bowers, like fairies and angel messengers.

II. THE VISION OF CHOONYANG.

Lo, we see Choonyang. From the circle of her retired enclosure she appears, swinging free and artlessly by a high-hung rope of colored strands. Firmly she holds by each hand as she rises deftly and smoothly. Again away to the rear she goes, then forward like a kite-bird that sails low, now high, touching with outstretched wings the timid wavering tree-tops. Flowers fall at the impact of her soft embroidered toe. Back and forth, all unconscious, she swings while the Young Master, lost in wonder, peers before him, his soul tingling with inexpressible astonishment

“Boy!” called he, “look yonder.”

The startled Boy gave a jump, more astonished if possible than even his master. “Yes, sir!”

“What is that that I see swinging there?”

“Nothing is visible, Your Excellency, to my vision,” said the Boy.

“See, where my fan is pointing, look now,” said the Young Master.

“Fan or fairy wand, I see nothing.”

“What do you mean, you idiot? Do you tell me that low-caste eyes are not the same as the eye of a gentleman? What golden vision of delight can that be?”

“Golden,” said the Boy, “Shall I tell you about gold? In the days of ancient Han of China, one high lord in his attempt to usurp the power and privileges of another, scattered forty thousand golden dollars among the troops of Cho. What gold can you expect to talk about after that?”

“Then, ‘tis marble I see,” said the Young Master.

“I’ll tell you about marble, too. In ancient days at the Goose Gate Festival, you remember that Pum Jing smashed the imperial block of marble till it became white flakes of snow, and a fire arose and licked up the remnants. When such as this has happened, what marble can you expect to find here?”

“Then it’s the spirit of the fairies I see.”

“But,” said the Boy in reply, “in broad day-light, under a shining sun do fairies ever wander forth?”

“Then,” said the Young Master, “if it is not gold, and not marble, and not a fairy, what can it be? Tell me Boy!”

The Boy then replied, “Oh, yonder, now I see what you mean. That’s the daughter of Moon Plum, a former dancing-girl of this county . She is called Choonyang.”

The Young Master on learning that it was Choonyang, gave a ringing outburst of surprise like the laugh of a king’s guards-man.

“Tell me, Boy,” said he, “is that really Choonyang? I have seen thousands of pretty girls but never one such as she. My spirit is dazzled, and my soul has shot half way up to heaven. My eyes are filmed over so that I cannot see. Not another word, Boy, but go and call her at once.”

The Boy replied, “Choonyang, Your Excellency, is known through all this south country. From Governor to pettiest magistrate, everyone has tried to win her. The beauty and fidelity of China’s most famous women surely never surpassed her. She is in heart a princess, though born of a dancing-girl. Her mother’s family, too, was originally of gentle origin. You cannot call her thus.”

The Young Master laughed, “You ignoramus, you, what do you mean? Every bit of marble from the Hong Mountain, and all the yellow gold from the waters of the Yaw, have each their master and owner . Go and call her.”

There being no help for it, the Boy went to call Choon-yang. Away like a butterfly he flew on the back of the summer breeze, over the ridge and underneath the trees, lost to sight, now seen, now gone again till he gave a loud call, “Choon-yang!”

Choonyang, startled, slipped in a frightened way from her perch in the swing. “What is it?” she asked in alarm. “You almost made me fall.”

The Boy grinned and said, “A young lady like you surely runs the risk of falling badly, swinging thus within sight of the king’s highway, especially when the passers lose their hearts in inexpressible wonder. Do you think it wise? Our Young Master, son of the governor, has come out just now to Moon-light Pavilion, and his eyes have fallen on you. I told him two or three times not to do so, and yet he insists on asking you to come to him. It is no wish of mine, I am compelled to give the message, please accede to it, won’t you.”

Choonyang said in reply, “I cannot go.”

“What do you mean by ‘cannot go?’ When a gentleman calls a country girl, does she say ‘I cannot go?’”

“Is your master, pray, the only one of the gentry? I also am

freeborn as well as he.”

“You may be of the gentry, but it is a lame kind you are. Never mind any more talk, please just come.”

“I cannot,” said Choonyang.

“Tell me why you cannot!”

“I’ll tell you. Your Young Master should be at his studies instead of wasting time here. Even though he does see fit to go picknicking, he has no claim to call a girl like me to him in any such rude way. It is not becoming that I should answer.”

The Boy turned his back on the roses in the shade and laughed to himself. Said he, “The Governor’s son, the Young Master, is very handsome indeed, better looking than all his companions. As a scholar too, he is unequalled. Born of a family noted for its filial piety and loyalty, he is, in goods and property, rich as Yonan. His mother’s family too, is honorable to the first degree. If you ever do really choose a husband could you expect to find one like him in this country place?” “What do you mean by husband, you impudent fellow? Is a city husband necessarily better than a country husband?” said she, “Away you go.”

“That’s just it,” said the boy, “the hills of Seoul and the hills of the country differ. Shall I tell you? The hills of Kyungsang Province are rough and jagged, and so the people born there are bull-headed and obstinate; the Chulla mountains are gentle and softly inclining, and so the people born there are smooth tongued and cunning; the hills of Choongchung are lofty, and those born under them are gifted. Now in Kyong-ke Province, where the Surak mountain falls away, we have the Tobong peak; and where Tobong falls away we have Chongnam Mountain ending in the Blue Dragon Ridge of Wang-simnee. Then there is the White Tiger of Mallijai, which falls into the sands of the Han River. There the tides from the sea roll up and Tongjak circles them round gathering the waters together and making the place supremely rich and strongly prosperous. Thus it is that in Seoul the good are very very good, and the bad are very very bad.

“The Young Master has for maternal uncle Prince Puwon, and for grandfather the Chief of the Administration Bureau, while his father is chief of this district. If you do not come as he calls you I am afraid your mother may be arrested and locked up in the *yamen* enclosure. How would you like that? Would you be happy then, or would I? If you want to go, why go; but if you don’t want to go, why don’t go. I am going, that’s all.”

Choonyang, in her innocence, beguiled by the words of the Boy, said, “What shall I do? Listen to me please. Does the flower follow every

butterfly that lights upon it? Since your noble master has ordered me, his humble servant to come, I'd like to, but, I'm ashamed. Please say to him 'An soo hai; chup soo wha; hai soo hyol.'

The Boy left and Choonyang went quickly into her house. The Young Master ceased his impatient walking back and forth, and turned to see if Choonyang were coming, but he saw that she had disappeared, and that the Boy was returning alone. Then he repeated to himself this line of poetry.

When the fairy flits off to her butterfly home,
In the shade of the willows I winglessly roam,
And list to the clack of the jay-bird

III THE LIMITATIONS OF HOME.

When the Boy came back the Young Master glanced fire at him and said "I sent you to bring Choonyang, where is she?"

The Boy replied, "She just covered me with insult, that's what she did."

"What do you mean by insult?" inquired he.

"Why she said to me, 'An soo hai; chup soo wha; hai soo hyol'¹⁰."

When the master heard this, he sat silent for a moment thinking, then he said, "That's all right, excellent. You ignoramus, you are wrong altogether. *An soo hai* means *an* for *wild-goose*, *soo* for *follow*, and *hai* for *sea*, *the wild goose follows the sea*; *chup soo wha* means *chup* for *butterfly*, *soo* for *follow*, and *wha* for *flower*, *the butterfly follows the flower*. As for *hai soo hyol*, *hai* means *crayfish*, *soo* means *follow*, and *hyol* means *rock crevice*, *the sea-shell seeks the rock-crevice*. These forms trebled thus mean evidently the third watch of the night, and I am to call at her house at that hour. That's what she would say and this is her invitation to me."

He mounted his donkey and rode hurriedly back to his study, but all other thoughts were absent from him in a thousand imaginings concerning Choonyang. All the questions of the *yamen* seemed to centre about her. He went into the inner quarters, and there too everything reminded him of Choon-yang. So metamorphosed had his sight become that she and she only occupied all his thoughts.

"Ah ya! I am to see her, Choonyang, Choonyang."

This he sang out without thinking. The Prefect, wearied with the

¹⁰ An-soo-hai etc. These nine syllables are given according to the sound of the Chinese ideographs composing them; and while correct as poetic composition they could not be understood by an uneducated person, though a good scholar would soon unravel their mystery.

affairs of state, was snoozing in the upper room, when suddenly the noise awakened him. He gave a start and shouted,

“Boy.”

“Yes, sir!”

“Did some one in the study prick himself with a needle just now to make such an unearthly noise? Go and see!”

The messenger went “Hush Young-Master,” said he, “His Excellency, your father, has been startled out of his wits by the noise you made a moment ago and told me to find out what it meant.”

The Young Master laughed and said, “If the Governor gets a start is that my affair? When the murmurings of the people fail to reach his sensitive ears, I don’t see how a gentle word of mine should shake him up so. This is all a joke, say thus: ‘We are greatly distressed to hear of Your Excellency’s getting a start, but it was in reading the Chinese Classics and studying aloud that the uproar came about.’”

The messenger presented himself and gave his message. The Prefect laughed, “Ha! Ha!” said he, “Dragons beget dragons, and phoenixes beget phoenixes. The son is like his father,” and so he laughed again. He called the messenger once more, gave him two candles from his room, and told him to give them to the Young Master and tell him to study all night long till these candles were burned out, and to study .out loud so that everyone could hear him. The messenger gave the candles and the message but the Young Master threw them down indignantly. Then again he thought for a moment and said, “Boy, bring all my books here, every one of them.” He brought the Four Classics¹¹, the Three Sacred Books, and all the rest, and then in a loud voice he went reading them out, skipping sections as follows: “Mencius met king Yanghay, when the king, said to him ‘You have come a long distance haven’t you’”

“The Great Learning is intended to demonstrate Virtue, and to encourage the people to the attainment of perfection . . . From the Book of Poetry “The cooing pigeon on the waters of the river reminds one of the perfect lady, a mate indeed for the Superior Man.” “Namchang was an ancient county; Hodong was a new district under the Constellation The Worm, and its boundary line was Hyongyo. But away with all this uninteresting rubbish,” said Dream-Dragon, “and bring me the Book of Changes.” The Boy brought the famous classic, when he threw it open at

¹¹ The Four Classics. These are the Great Learning; the Doctrine of the Mean; the Conversation of Confucius; and the Sayings of Mencius.

The Three Sacred Books. The Books of History; the Book of Poetry and the Books of Changes.

the first page and began "The great Kon is primal, forceful, profitable, loveable, tractable, beautiful, good-luckable but Choonyang is unmatched."

The Boy standing by in astonishment, said, "Where does the Young Master get all his 'ables' from?"

"What does an ignoramus like you know about 'able,' or any other literary ending?"

Then he opens the Thousand Character Classic¹² † and shouts out "Heaven Ch'on; Earth-Chi."

"I say," says the Boy, "Is the Young Master only three years old that he works over the a. b. c's of hanal-ch'on thus?"

"What? You haven't the first idea of the inner meaning of the Thousand Character Book. If I were to read it off to you, one by one, your ignorant locks would stand on end. Let me tell you how to read and understand it. It reads on the surface thus: Heaven, earth, black, yellow, universe, expanse. etc, etc. Now about Heaven, you know it was born at one o'clock in the morning, saying nothing, but stretching over all the four corners of the earth, blue in the distance, that's what Heaven is. Earth appears at three o'clock, and by means of the Five Elements, bears all living things upon it; that's what the Earth does. Black stands for mysterious, hidden, colorless. The God of the North is black, that's what Black is. Yellow rules the Five Notes of Music, and is the color of the earth, that's what Yellow is. The Universe, how wide it is, unlimited is the Universe. The Expanse is what has ruled through all the world's history the dynasties that rise and fall upon it, that's what the Expanse is."

"The time for lights out is a long way off yet," says the Boy.

"Go and see again, said the Young Master.

"Oh but it's hours yet," said the Boy.

"Whether it's my old pater familias," said the young man, "or any body else's, when he has too much white in his eyes, it shows that his disposition is bad."

At last the long delayed call of 'Lights Out' was heard, to the great satisfaction of the Young Master. "Boy," said he, "out with the lights."

IV. LOVE'S VENTURE

The green gauze lantern was lighted, and with this in hand the Boy led the way to seek Choonyang's house. They passed Sleep Gate and Bell Road, and beyond the great South Entry out to where the rising moon greeted the

¹² The Thousand Character. This is the first book from which Oriental boys learn their first lesson in the ideograph.

birds in the hills, and the voices of the running streams told of springtime. The passing clouds played hide-and-seek with the moonlight across the narrow way. But why did it seem so long?

At last they reached Choonyang's house, enwrapped as it was in a moonlight scene, where pines and bamboos formed a circling hedge, within which were white cranes keeping watch, and stately geese from the Tang's of China. Gold fish too, with their tinted and gilded bodies played in the miniature lake. The winding trailers of the grape clasped the pines and the bamboos, and tossed their leaflets at every stirring breeze. Looking from the enclosing wall there were winter and spring pines, red peonies, roses, orchids, everlastings, broad leafed bananas, the gardenia rubra, the white plum, white and red chrysanthemums (though of course not in bloom) orange and grapefruit trees, apples, peaches and apricots.

The dog sleeping under the lee of the wall, startled by the steps, awoke with a growl, and grumblingly barked out his suspicions, while the Young Master called to the Boy "Say, Boy!"

"Yes, sir!"

"How can we get over this obstruction?"

"Really I don't quite know," said the Boy. "By a running jump you might make it, sir, and after you had vaulted over you could then pay your respects to Miss Choonyang,"

"You idiot, your words indicate that you are a fool. No one should attempt to get acquainted with a daughter without first knowing the mother. I must see her."

Just when he had finished saying this Choonyang's mother came out of the room, and gazed forth. She threw back the silken shutter with a rattling noise, but only the moonlight and the vacant court greeted her.

"Dog," said she, "stop that noise. Is it the moon over the mountains that you are barking at? The old saying that 'the dog barks at the moon' evidently meant you."

She moved cautiously back and then returned to the inner quarters where Choonyang was sitting reading. The mother said, "It's late, child, and are you still at your books?"

Choonyang came hastily to her mother's side, who sighed and said, "But I did have a strange dream!"

"What was your dream, mother?" asked the daughter. "The light was burning low in my room," said she, "bright as day it was, and I was leaning on the arm-rest and reading the Sosang Book, when suddenly I dropped off to sleep and had a dream. From over your cot a luminous cloud seemed to rise, and then suddenly a great blue dragon took you in its mouth and flew off with you toward heaven. I caught the beast around

the waist and held on with all my might; and thus went bounding through the firmament, up and down, till all of a sudden I awoke with a start. The cold sweat came out on my back and my heart beat thumping noises; my spirit was in a state of terror. I could not sleep any more and hearing you reading, I came in to see how you were. I wonder what such a dream can possibly mean? If you were a son I would conclude from it that you were to win some great honour at the Examination.”

While the two talked together, Choonyang’s mother cast her eyes along the hedge wall, and there she saw a boy trying to hide himself.

“Are you a spirit?” called she “or are you a mortal? Are you one of the genii that dig elixir on the Pongnai Hill¹³? Who are you, I pray, that dares to go dodging about my house thus at midnight? I reckon you are some thief or other.”

The Boy, ashamed, jumped down from the wall saying, “It is the son of the Governor, Master Toryong who has come.”

The mother gave a pretended start of amazement saying, “Who are you, are you not Pangja? Why didn’t you say so? Really I’ve been very rude,” said she, as she stepped toward the hedge-wall, and greeted the Young Master, taking him by the hand, “Don’t be displeased at an old woman like me, whose eyes are dim and who talks without knowing what she is saying.”

“At such an hour as this,” replied he, “your words are the more grateful.”

“Really you let me off too easily,” said the mother. “Had I known it I should have given you a little more of my mind.” The Young Master laughed and she went on, “I never, never dreamed of your making a call at my home. Come in and refresh yourself before you go.”

“Thank you,” said he. “If you were a lady of my own age I might, but I am specially set against old people.”

The mother laughed and said, “Yes, we old people ought to die and go away. You are set against Choonyang also, I suppose?”

“Ha, ha,” responded he, “that’s what I wanted to say.” The mother then led the way and with her left hand partially pushed aside the silken blinds of the room, saying, “Choonyang Master Toryong, the Governor’s son, has heard of your proficiency in the Classics, and has come to call on

¹³ Pongnai Hills. One of the fabled abodes of the genii, supposed to belong to some celestial island in the Eastern Sea. The story of it dates from 250 before Christ. The fairy inhabitants of the place are said to live on the gems found on the sea-shore. The elixir of life is also dug from its enchanted slopes.

you.”

Choonyang stepped to the door, her pretty form and face looking like a rose in a palace courtyard, or like the blossom-lily of the lotus. She met him in a respectful manner, and after he was seated in her room the mother said, “Choonyang, the Young Master has come to see you, now say your word of greeting to him.”

She did as directed and said, “Young Master, *allyung hassio!*” (Peace).

“Thanks,” said he, “Peace to you!”

The mother then filled the pipe and gave it to him. He himself took a survey of the room, and while there was no special display of ornaments he saw, to his surprise, copies of several famous pictures. Here was King Tang, who offered himself a sacrifice for rain, and who, after trimming his nails and cutting his hair, carried out the required ceremonies so perfectly, that he brought on a great downpour that covered several thousand *lee*, and sent him flying back to the palace with his imperial robes drenched.

On the south wall he saw the Four noted Old Men of the Immortals. They had a Chinese checker-board before them, at which they sat and moved piece after piece. One old man with a bird-tailed overcoat on, and a gauze head-band held a white piece in his fingers, while another wearing a grass-cloth head-gear held a black piece, and conned out the plan of the Lo River. A third old man with a staff in his hand, was prompting them as he looked over their shoulders. The fourth old man had taken off his head-band and had put on a wreath of pine and bamboo instead, and with a harp across his knees, was playing lightly and sweetly the Feather Mantle Tune, while the white storks about danced with delight at the music.

Looking at the north wall, he saw the thousand year peach that grows by the Lake of Gems, where the Royal Mother, So Wangmoo, has her pigeon-birds for messengers.

Beneath these sat Choonyang, more entrancing than the pictures, and fairer than any flower. There were besides in the room, an ornamental book-case, a willow letter folder, a green ink-stand, a coral pen-case, a stone water-bottle, a phoenix-pen and rolls of letter-paper. The Young Master was a scholar himself, but had never seen anything so neat and charming as this. His heart beat (luckily so that he could scarcely speak.

At last the mother said, “There was no call for you to come to my humble home and condescend to visit me. May I ask what is the object of your coming?”

Dream-Dragon, in his perturbation at being so questioned, could scarcely find utterance. “Don’t mention it,” said he, “my call to-night is

due to the fact that the moonlight is so splendid, and I wanted specially to see your daughter Choonyang. I want to say something to you too but do not know how to say it, how you will take it, or whether you will grant my request or not. How would you view it if your daughter and I should make an endless contract and be married?"

V. AN ORIENTAL WEDDING.

The mother heard this without changing color but very naturally said, "My daughter, Choonyang, is not of the lower classes. His Excellency Saw of Hoidong, came here years ago on office, at which time he put away all others and took me. We were married, but after only a few months, he left for the capital to fill a place in the cabinet, and my father being old I was unable to leave him. When my little child was born I wrote to say that I would bring her as soon as possible. But my poor fortunes are ill-adjusted, and His Excellency died ere I could go, and so I have been left alone to bring up my daughter by myself. At seven she read the 'Lesser Learning,' studied house-keeping and morals; and because she is of an old and talented family she made great advancement in what she gave her mind to. She acquired a knowledge of the Three Relations ¹⁴, of Love, Truth and Wisdom, so that I hardly dared call her my daughter. As my station in life was so humble I could not seek marriage for her with the gentry, and the lower classes were too low. I therefore sought in vain for a place for her future, and wearied my soul over it day and night, till now Your Excellency has come. As a butterfly scents the flower, you have evidently come, but if you should not mean it sincerely, or should prove faithless, or should leave her later to wear out her years forsaken, would it not be a grievous wrong? Think well over it first before you decide; better never venture than venture and fail. Let us not enter upon it unless you mean it truly."

The Young Master replied "Choonyang is not yet married. I too, am not married, and with this thought only in mind have I come. I am in earnest, let's not deal with it flippantly, or make light of it. If you but give permission, though we cannot have the marriage by all the Six Forms of ceremony, still as I am a gentleman whose word is his honour, let us swear the oath and write out the contract, and as sure as loyalty and filial faith hold good let me never waver. If I do may I become a dog. Grant me your permission."

The mother thought of the dream that she had had, and finding that

¹⁴ The Three Relations. The subject's duty to his sovereign; the son's duty to his father; the wife's duty to her husband.

his name was *Mongyong*, or Dream-Dragon, her mind was greatly moved, so that she made no light remarks but with an earnest countenance gave consent. Said she “Even though the whole Six Forms of ceremony cannot be observed in a private wedding such as this, still we can have the regular certificated form made out and the witness sealed.”

“Let’s do so,” said the Young Master.

The ink-stone was therewith brought, water from the coral bottle, and a weasel tailed pen, soft kneaded into shape, and then on white sky-paper the regular form was made out signed and sealed, and given to the mother. At the foot was this statement, “As wide as the heaven is wide, and as long as the earth endures, till the sea dries up and the rocks are worn away, may the Guardian Spirits of Creation bear witness to this our marriage.” Then according to the custom of the locality, a lacquered table was brought in with pickle on it, some dried fish, clams, and a plate of fruit.

The mother said, “Young Master, I have no sweets on hand, which is a bad omen for a mother-in-law to begin with, forgive me won’t you. Please now help yourself. Choonyang, don’t be ashamed but serve your husband gracefully.”

She poured out the dainty glass that served for cheer. This the Young Master took and said to her—

“Like sweet sleep and yet not sleep, like a lovely dream yet not a dream. All the graduation charms in the world could not make me so happy as to-night. What cheering drink is this? There is virtue in it, in the first glass virtue for the father; in the second, virtue for the mother. The two united, mean virtue for the family and the home. The Celestial Emperor¹⁵’s virtue was a Wooden virtue, and the Terrestrial Emperor’s virtue was a Fire virtue; Han¹⁶’s was Water virtue. We have met by virtue of the Sages who have long preceded us, and have made a hundred year contract, due also to the virtue of our good and true-hearted mother. Choonyang’s virtue and mine united asks that she drink and be cheered.”

Choonyang then passed the glass to her. She took it, gave a sigh, dropped a tear, cleared her voice and said “A happy day this surely, never was there a happier. A fatherless home was mine but God has had mercy and sent this son of an illustrious family, and we have made a hundred

¹⁵ Celestial Emperor, Terrestrial Emperor. These two belong to the legendary period or prehistoric age of China. It is interesting to note that this Celestial Emperor’s name is composed of the same characters “Tenno” the high title of His Imperial Majesty to-day.

¹⁶ Han. He was the founder of the Ha Dynasty of China 2205 B. C.

year contract. What a boundlessly happy day! I long for my departed husband that he might have seen it with his eyes. I am dizzy at the thought."

Choonyang too, was rendered tearful like the rosebud in the morning with its drops of dew, but the Young Master comforted the mother saying, "To-day is a happy day, don't bother about the past, please, but have some refreshment."

She helped herself to a glass or two, and laughed and joked, and then sent away the table by the hand of the Boy, who did not fail to help himself liberally. He said to his master by way of congratulation "Please sir, peace to you on this happy occasion."

"Yes, yes," said the Master in reply, "but you keep your wits about you and do your work."

When the Boy had gone away the mother continued to talk to them in an aimless way and by an endless succession of haverings, till the Young Master wished her gone. He yawned and pretended all kinds of wearinesses. At last she laid the comforts for the night and took her departure. The two then remained alone, diffident somewhat and bashful before each other, till Choonyang took down a harp that she had, and played to him in a way that broke all the restraint. "That's lovely," said he, "better than the flute or the Yellow Crane Pavilion¹⁷ so long ago; prettier than the mid-night bell-calls of the Hansan Monastery." Delighted at the music, he took her in his arms and told how his thoughts found their fulfilment of joy in her as in no other.

VI. IT NEVER DID RUN SMOOTH.

Days passed, one, two, five, ten. How they loved and delighted in each other, One day in his light-hearted joy toward her he sang this love song.

"In the craggy clefts of his castle height
 The old streaked tiger holds his prey,
 But his teeth are dull and the deadly bite
 That he once possessed has passed away.
 "The blue scaled dragon of the north
 Holds in his maw the jewel bright,
 He rides the clouds as he sallies forth,
 And sails through the air on the wings of night.

¹⁷ The Yellow Crane Pavilion. This is a famous ode written about 705 A. D. by a Chinese poet called Choi Kyong. So beautiful it was it expressed, that when Yee Taipaik, the greatest writer of the Middle Kingdom, saw it he said "I will indite no more."

“The phoenix of the purple hills,
Has found the bamboo’s fabled child,
Its charming flavor cools his ills
And fills his soul with raptures wild,”

“Oh how happy,” said he, “so happy. Yongchuk¹⁸ rode the ox, Maing Hoyon rode the donkey, Yee Taipaik rode the whale, and Chuk Songja rode the crane, while the fishermen on the long stretch of river rode their leaf-like slender shallop. Creakety-creak, creakety-creak went the long propeller thrusts that sent the waters skurrying by. But Dream-Dragon has no wish to ride abroad, and doesn’t wish to go away. My pretty one, my love, if you should die, what would I do? I shouldn’t wish to live; and if I died what then for you? Ah, ha, how lovely, she, my pretty sweetheart, how I love her. When we die we’ll make an endless contract that will bind us ever and forever. When you die what will you be? and when I die what will I be? If you become a river, let it not be the river of the sky the Milky Way, nor the river of the mighty ocean, but the great and marvelous Eum-Yang river, that dries not up in hopeless years of famine. I, when I die, will be a bird, not a rock-pigeon, nor an oriole, nor a talking-bird, nor a peacock with a wavy tail, but the Woonang bird¹⁹ I’ll be, and on the smoky wavelets of thy blue limpid waters, touched with the white wings of the summer, I’ll sport my days and nights and you’ll know me, won’t you, my pretty one, my sweetest love.”

“When you die if you should be a flower, be not the peach which lines the river bank, where fishers follow in the wake of the beckoning waters; nor the willow catkins bedewed with the light morning rain that shades the dusty ways; nor the lotus; nor the azalea; nor the chrysanthemum, yellow or white; but the loveliest peony, and I, a butterfly, would in the soft spring breezes light upon your bosom, and waving in the sunshine, spread my wings and flutter here and there, and you would know me, wouldn’t you? My love, my love, my pretty love.

The world’s song’s of love were marred by many uncomely words and references, such that a true and virtuous girl like Choonyang might not hear, and so he sang only selected ones. “My pretty love,” sang he, “If I look here I see my love; if I look there I see my love, companion of my future; my queen of virtue, I can see her one marked in history, I can see

¹⁸ Yongchuk, Maing Hoyon, Yee Taipaik, Chok Songja are all famous Chinamen renowned in history.

¹⁹ Woonang Bird. This is the mandarin duck, which in the Orient is the emblem of conjugal fidelity.

her; equal to Sawsee, I can see her; like to Yang Kwipee²⁰, I can see her; better than Suk Yangja I find her. My love, my pretty love! What would she like? What can I find to please her? A round cash piece for a present?"

"No," she says, "I have no use for money."

"Then what?" says he, "Round drops of mountain honey tipped on a silver spoon?"

"No," she say , "I want not honey."

"Then what?" says he again, "Sweet apricots, if not gold or silver money?"

He requested her to sing him a love-song and she at last consented. "My love, my love, my gallant love! If I look here I see my love; if I look there I see my love. I see him a future candidate with honours; I see a master crowned with laurel; I see the chief of all the literati; I see him as a minister renowned; I see him great in counsels of the state; I see him chief among the senate, my love. My true love, loftier he than all the mountains; deeper than the deepest sea; I see him fairer than the moon across the Musan hill tops; sweeter than the pipes that play for love's first dances; handsomer than peach and plum blossoms that show through the hanging shades at the close of the day. My love, my handsome love!"

Thus as they sang and addressed each other the cock crew. On this the Young Master thought of his father and mother and hurriedly started for the *yamen*. Choonyang remarked, "It's an old saying that all begins well but little ends well. I think of our agreement of a hundred years. May we have no tears and sorrow through it." The Young Master heard this and came back once again to tell her how he loved her, saying "Let's not say, Good bye."

A day or so later, however, there came a despatch from the palace, saying that the governor was promoted to be Secretary of a Board, and that he was to return at once to Seoul. He called his head-runner and his head-bearer, and had his official palanquin put in order; called his captain of the guard, and arranged his baggage, summoned the heads of the six offices and took account of their work, made note of expenditure and receipts, and then, sent for an office-boy to call the Young Master.

²⁰ Yang Kwipee. She was one of the most famous of China's beautiful women and lived about 750 A. D.. The Emperor by an utter abandonment to her fascinations spent his time and squandered the nation's resources to please her. At last the advance of the northern hordes awoke him from his dream but it was too late, for at Ma-kwei Pass he was massacred and the famous Yang Kwipee was strangled by one of her own eunuchs in order to save her from the hands of the savage conqueror.

At this very moment he had just come in, and the Governor said to him "Look here youngster, where have you been?" "I have been to the Moonlight Pavilion," answered Dream-Dragon.

"What have you been to the Moonlight Pavilion for?"

"I went there," said he, "because I heard that there were many famous inscriptions posted up that I wanted to read."

"I have heard a lot of ugly rumors about you," said the Governor. "The son of a gentleman, nearing twenty years of age, who cares nothing about a matter of promotion in his own family, but goes aimlessly about here and there is a pretty hopeless case."

"What matter of promotion?" asked Dream-Dragon. "Why, I have been made Secretary of a Board and am to return to Seoul. Get your accounts straightened out at once and be ready to start to-morrow. You must leave in the morning early with your mother."

When Dream-Dragon heard this he was simply dumb-founded. Tears blinded his eyes. If he had dared to wink they would have fallen over his face like rain, so he held them open and gazed.

Said he, "Father, if you go first, I'll put my affairs in order and follow."

"What do you mean? Nothing of the kind, you must go at once.

The Young Master turned him about.

"You'll make a proper fool or yourself some day yet," said the father.

Since there was no help for it, he came forth wilted down like a bedraggled flag-cloth. Formerly when he had looked toward Choonyang's home the world had all been sunshine, now his eyes were beclouded and his eyes and his thoughts were misty and confused. He said to himself in his perplexity, "Shall I leave her and go, or take her and go? I am afraid I cannot take her, and yet I cannot leave her. What shall I do? My heart is in agony. Shall I laugh, or shall I cry? If I propose to take her my father's fierce and awful resentment will fall upon me. I cannot take her. If I say I'll leave her, she is the kind to break her heart and die over it. What shall I do?"

VII. PARTINGS ARE SAD.

Thus were his prospects as he made his way slowly to Choonyang's home. At this moment Choonyang was working at an embroidered purse that she intended giving to Dream-Dragon; so she met him with a delighted expression saying, "I'm so glad to see you, but why have you come so late today? What is all the commotion about at the *yamen*? Have guests come? I see anxiety written between your eyes. There are marks of tears on your

face too. Are you ill, or were you scolded? Tell me please, what is it? Has your father heard of you and me and stormed about it?"

"Stormed? What do I care for a scolding or a beating either compared with this?"

"What does your trouble mean, my love?" asked Choonyang. "They say letters have come from your home in Seoul. Has word come that some of your relatives are dead?"

"Dead? If ten thousand of such relatives as mine should die my eye wouldn't moisten a wink."

"Then what is it? Tell me, I am anxious."

"The Governor has tumbled out of his place," said Dream-Dragon. Choonyang gave a start. "What, has His Excellency slipped and fallen?"

"Pshaw!" said he, "Why do you take me so? If he should fall and hurt himself all he would have to do would be to put on a plaster and get well; but to be required in Seoul as a Board Secretary, that's what I mean, and he has to leave to-morrow."

Choonyang heard this and said, "Oh that's just what I've always wished. I shall go to Seoul. Truly I always wanted to. Is it really so that you are going?"

The Young Master was speechless.

"I hate the sound of it, I shall die," said he.

Choonyang again, in wonder, said to him, "What do you mean? Tell me. His Excellency has been promoted. Is it because you are so happy and glad that you cry? Or do you fear that I will not be willing to accompany you? The wife must follow the husband, that's the law of God you know. Of course I'll follow, why be anxious?"

The young man said, "Please listen to me. If I could take you with me I should be so glad and you would be glad, we both would be glad, but the Governor's ideas are that if a son of the aristocracy, before his regular marriage, takes a concubine from the country, and it gets noised abroad, his name will be cut out from the family register, and he'll not be able to share in the household sacrifices. That's my difficulty."

When Choonyang heard this her pretty face became scarlet, then pale, and her eyebrows unbended into a line of deadly consternation. Her foot caught in the edge of her skirt and it tore. She tossed away her handmirror, dropped upon her knees and began to cry. "Is this what I am, a cast-off bride, what use has she for mirrors? Alas, alas, am I thus, what use now to dress and be neat?" Then she drew close up to Dream-Dragon and said, "What do you mean? What have you said? A concubine? Why such terrible words to me? When you sat there and I here what was the promise you made me? 'Till the trackless sea become a mulberry field,

and the mulberry field become a sea, let us swear never to part. Was it not so? Now you will go to Seoul and marry again with some wife prettier than the pitiful one you left. You will study and after graduation ride on the high wave of popularity. Not even in a dream will I be thought of, and our decision to live and die together will have faded away forever. So it comes that I am not to go and you are to leave me. I must not live out the watches of this night. I must die. If you are to leave me please take my life before you go, or if you let me live let me accompany you. Please let me go too, please let me go too.”

The Young Master was speechless.

“Don’t cry,” said he “don’t cry. Even though I go I am not going forever, and while away I shall never, never forget you. Let not the fire of even this brazier melt your determined purpose to wait, till we meet again.”

All this time the mother-in-law, like a monastery cat doubled up was sleeping comfortably on the warm floor of the inner room, when she heard a commotion of words and a sound of crying from the room opposite. She got up and said laughingly to herself. “They are having a lovers’ quarrel yonder.” She arose in a loosely dressed and dishevelled way and forcing open the door came out on tip-toe, and listened at Choonyang’s window. To her amazement they were saying good-bye to each other, at which she gave a sudden start of alarm. “It is parting from each other that they evidently mean,” said she to herself.

She hurried back, finished dressing, and then opened the shutter with a bang, and with a loud cough said, “Ha, ha, what are these tears about? I couldn’t sleep for your noise. The folks in the village will be kept awake. Why are you crying? Think of it, a girl of your age at midnight making a row like this! No thought of your mother or of outside people! Are you possessed, what is it? You have no father but do you want to kill your mother too, that you act so? What kind of behaviour is it after all the classics and teachings of the Sages that you have read and studied? What are you crying about?”

Choonyang had gathered her skirt over her face and was choked and speechless, while tears rained from her eyes.

“The Young Master says he is going away,” said she. “Going where?” inquired the mother.

“His Excellency has been promoted and ordered back to Seoul, and so he is leaving.”

Choonyang’s mother gave a wild laugh and said, “Child, the opportunity of a lifetime! If the Young Master is lucky it means distinction for you and for me, so why cry? If he leaves right away, I shall not be able to follow at once, but you can go with him. In going you need not go

ahead but keep behind five *lee* or so, meeting at night but journeying separate during the day. Is it because that you are not to be with him during the day as well that you upset the hours of this night? When I was young I was separated from my husband as much as fifty days at a time. Why cry? I'll sell the things little by little and follow you."

Choonyang replied, "The Young Master doesn't intend to take me."

"Why won't he take you?" demanded she, "Did he really say so?"

"I did say so," said he.

"What do you mean?" demanded she, "Did you say you wouldn't take her?" she screamed.

"But really now mother, just listen! When a son of the aristocracy, while his hair is still plaited down the back, takes a concubine from the country, the rumor of it endangers his reputation, and he cannot share in the sacrificial ceremonies. So while we regret it for the present, we shall just have to stand by our agreement for the future."

When the mother heard this her black face grew fiercely red and pale by turns; she caught her skirts about her and jumped up and down, while she said to Choonyang, "If Dream-Dragon goes whose affection will you work for next? Die, you wretched creature!" She gave a leap forward, took her seat square in front of Dream-Dragon and said, "You son of a rascal, you, I've got a word to say to you. Have you found any fault in the conduct of my daughter that you treat her thus? Has she grown ugly? Is she refractory or disobedient? Is she loose in life or impure? What is there about her at which you find fault? A gentleman never puts away a faithful woman except for one or the Seven Reasons²¹. Don't you know this? You have gone here and there on the still hunt until you found my daughter, and then without cessation, day and night, you professed your delight in her. Now, behold you want to throw her away. After the gossamer webs of springtime have been swept aside by your ruthless hand, and the flowers and leaves have fallen, what butterfly ever returns to visit the faded remains? My daughter's pretty face, once that the day of youth has been marred, will grow old and white hairs will follow. One's day never comes twice. Do you not think of this, you wretch!"

She gave a wild spring, and took a grip of him with her teeth. Fortunately, for him, she had lost her front incisors early in life, so that her bite was but a savage pinch, and did no special harm.

The young man was scared clear out of his wits. "Look here,

²¹ Seven Reasons. These grounds for divorce in the Orient are--Childlessness; 2. Wonton Conduct 3. Neglect toward Husband's Parents; 4. Shrewishness; 5. Robbery or Thievishness; 6. Jealousy; 7. Malignant Disease.

mother,” said he, “I’ll take her, I’ll take her. I’ve thought of a way. I just now remember that I have a tablet-chair that goes along, immediately ahead of me. I’ll put the tablet in my sleeve-pocket, and Choonyang inside the chair. Others seeing it will think it is the tablet, they will never think of Choonyang. I know of no other way.”

Choonyang heard this and said, “Mother, please go to your room. He has his reputation to uphold and is in difficulties. Please think of that and do not speak so. Go to your room, won’t you.”

VIII. RESIGNATION.

After sending her mother away she turned to him and said, “So you are going. Over your long journey of a thousand *lee* I shall think lovingly of you still. Through the dust and the rain and the falling of the night how tired you will be. You may be ill too, but cease to think of me please and go in peace. When you reach the capital the pretty dancing-girls of all the happy homes of Seoul will play to you and you’ll soon forget a poor little creature like Choonyang, whose fortunes forsook her and who was left to die. What is she to do I wonder?”

Thus she sat and cried bitterly till Dream-Dragon was struck blind and speechless. “Don’t cry, don’t cry,” said he, “I am not going away for long. I’ll not forget you. Don’t you know the line from the Classics that reads. ‘My husband went to far-off Sokwao, on duty, while I stayed in the Oh kingdom.’ The husband in Sokwao and the wife in distant Oh, thought of and loved each other till they grew old in years.

‘And how far was the way to Kwans for the distant pilgrims, while the faithful women dug lotus roots in the grim days of cold and loneliness waiting for them.’ They dug the roots and thought thereon. After I have gone to Seoul, when the moon shines through the silken window do not think of the thousand *lee* that lie between us, or that I shall find other attractions, for I shall be thinking of you only. Do not cry, do not cry. In the haste of the journey I go, but I shall soon return.”

The Young Master then set out for the *yamen* and after salutations had been made to his father, he was hastily ordered to saddle his donkey. He rode out to the Five Mile Pavilion, said good-bye to all the servants and retainers, and rode quickly away. Again he reached Choonyang’s house, which he once more entered. Her tears were like the dew-drops on the petal, and her accents like the calling of the nightingale among the shadowy branches. He rushed in and put his arms about her.

“Don’t cry my love, don’t cry,” said he.

But she withdrew from him saying, “Let me go, please. You sit yonder. I don’t wish it, let me go.”

There being no help for it he gradually released her, and so they sat apart, opposite to each other. Choonyang, realizing that it was in all probability a final parting, spoke thus: "Through tears are eyes of tears; broken hearts greet broken hearts. The willow catkins by the river have no power to bind my husband to me. After the short sweet days of springtime, the glory of the season goes its way, and my husband with it. Partings, partings, alas for partings! When once spring is over there is an end to bloom and blossom. The distant trees and river absorb all one's store of love and bear it to forgetfulness. A thousand miles into the distance, so he recedes from me and is gone. The fleeting glories of the three moons of springtime accelerate his parting. In the rain and winds of Makweiyok the King of Tang bade good-bye to Kweepee. Great ones of earth have had to say farewell, and hopes have dissipated like sunshine before the clouds and wind. The wild geese of springtime have to say farewell. All these are sad but was there ever so sad a one as mine? Parting seems to say 'Let us die' and yet the bright sunshine says 'Let us live.' What shall I do? What shall I do?"

"Don't cry," said Dream-Dragon, "I'm going to Seoul just now, and when I pass my examination I'll come and get you, So don't cry, but be happy."

He took from his silken pocket a little mirror and gave it to Choonyang, saying, "A gentleman's heart is honest as a mirror, in a thousand years it can never change."

Choonyang took it, then slipped a ring from her finger and gave it to him saying, "A little crystal ring, a plaything of my girlhood; please wear it at your belt for me. Let its unchanging nature, and its enclosing circle stand for a husband's faithful and enduring love."

The Young Master said, "Yes, yes, now don't be troubled, keep well and strong and I'll come back to get you next spring."

At this moment Choonyang's mother, thinking of the parting, dazed and stupefied came in. She refused to eat and like a cow-beast afflicted with distemper thought only of her misery. Helpless to do anything she came in and said quietly, "Please, Young Master, I am fifty years old and more, and I bore that girl when I was well on in life. I reared her as though she had been a jewelled treasure. I prayed to God about her, prayed to the Seven Stars²² about her; prayed to the Nahan²³; prayed to

²² The Seven Stars. The Big Dipper, a special object of worship in the East. Connected with most of the Buddhist Temples will be found a little shrine to this divinity.

²³ Nahan. These are the canonized disciples of Buddha.

the Three Spirits²⁴; prayed to the Merciful Buddha²⁵; sacrificed to the Dragon King²⁶; sacrificed to the Mountain Spirits with all my heart even till to-day. Thus she grew and thus we won our place in life. I longed for a fitting companion for her and home's joys and happiness, when beyond all my dreams and expectations came the Young Master and prayed me earnestly for this union. My mind was dazed and my sight turned from me, so that I gave permission, and now my precious child meets with this awful fate. Better out with her eyes and her tongue and cast her to the dogs. Like a fallen gate will she be; like a shot arrow spent and done for. There is no use in getting angry or fighting the fates I suppose. A fallen woman of earth, a fallen woman of hell, old and wrinkled shall she grow. Her fate is sealed at such a parting as this, at the sight of it my soul would yield up the ghost. Who can stop the endless waters of the river, or make to halt the sun that falls behind the Oxen Hills? What kind of heart could let you go so coldly, or what love could ever thole to cast her off? Don't think of mother or wife, but go peacefully. One thing I want to charge you with. I am now in age half a hundred and to-day or to-morrow, I don't know when, I shall die and pass away. Please don't forget Choonyang. If you'll stand by her and your hundred year agreement, in the Yellow Shades²⁷ of the world to come I'll 'bind the grass'²⁸ in grateful favour for your kindness."

Thus she wept though the Young Master ordered refreshments brought, but she refused to eat. She stifled the mighty sobbing of her soul which moved her spirit almost unto bursting. Choonyang too wept, but quietly, while the servant girl Hyangtanee covered her face with her frock and cried with all her might.

The Boy hearing this and panting for breath said, "Look here,

²⁴ Three Spirits. These are the three supreme deities supposed to preside over childbirth.

²⁵ The Merciful Buddha (Amida). This is thought by many to be the Orient's interpretation of Christ.

²⁶ The Dragon King. The God of rain and water.

²⁷ The Yellow Shades. One of the names for Hades or the next world.

²⁸ "Tie the grass." Wi Kwa, a Chinese general of the 6th century B. C., was asked by his father when dying to take to wife the father's favorite concubine, a most unusual request and yet one that he carried out in order to prove himself a filial son. Later on in a campaign he defeated his enemy, and when the commander tried to escape, a spirit suddenly appeared and tied the long coarse grass so firmly in front of him that he was tripped up and captured. At night the spirit appeared to him and said, "I am the father of the woman whom you faithfully married, and so have tied the grass to reward you."

master, this is a bad affair. Why do you part in this long drawn out fashion? Just say Good-bye and Good luck to you, give a smile and be done with it. What sort of parting is this any how when all one's bones are melted. Her Ladyship, your Mother, has already got far ahead on the road."

The Young Master then awakened to consciousness embraced his mother-in-law and said, "Mother, I'm going, don't cry but keep up heart. Choonyang, I'm going, don't cry, stay by your mother, and keep well. Hyangtanee, good-bye to you."

Then he mounted his horse, "Good-bye Choonyang!"

With one hand Choonyang held the gate and with one held to him. "My dear Young Master, on the long dusty road and through the weariness of the way close your eyes early for sleep and wake refreshed in the morning."

"Yes, yes" said he "I'll do so. I Good-bye."

The Boy ran forward, gave the horse a stroke and said "Get up." Away it went like a flying leopard, round one spur of the hills and then another till off into the distance like the mandarin duck-bird that has lost its mate and skims along the river or like the white gull over the wrinkled waves of the sea, on he went past the winding at the foot of the receding hill, and then lost he was to view and gone.

Now Choonyang watched till he had faded in the distance and then all hope departed from her life.

"Hyangtanee!" she called. "Yes!"

"Watch and see if you can tell how far the Young Master has gone."

Hyangtanee said in reply, "One stroke of the whip and the miles grow apace, four strokes and he is lost."

Choonyang's senses depart and she sits dazed upon the matting. "Now I am hopeless, we are parted. He for whom I cried and who cried with me is gone. His last good-bye rings discordant in my ears. A twice eight year pitiful girl bereft of husband, how can she live?"

Choonyang's mother dazed and speechless bewailed their lot, but Choonyang is a faithful daughter. She gradually stifled her own grief and comforted the maternal sorrows. The mother seeing the daughter's actions ceased crying herself and made a return of kind words to comfort Choonyang. By such unselfish actions as this it was that she had won the happy name of Moon Plum.

When night came the Young Master stopped at Ohsoo Post Station, unrolled his coverlets and pillow and slept alone. Then his thoughts were all with Choonyang, for whom he longed till the tears came! He lay and thought of her; he sat up and thought of her, and as he thought and thought he longed and longed to see her till his brain seemed going wild.

“However shall I live when I want to see her so?” Hangoo’s²⁹ song for his distant mate, and Myongwhang’s burden of a thousand *lee* are nothing compared to mine. He sighed sore and deeply and when the day broke he had his breakfast, and at last reached Seoul.

Later his Excellency and her Ladyship hearing of what had taken place, talked matters over, and while they thought first of sending for Choonyang, they feared that it might become an embarrassment to their son, so they sent a servant with three hundred *yang* instead saying, “Give this to Choonyang’s mother and say that though it is so little, still it may help out in the expenses of the home. After the Young Master has graduated he’ll come and get your daughter, so don’t be anxious.”

Her Ladyship called for a secretary, and ordered a number of bags of rice, some rich material for clothing, and three ounces of gold to be given to Choonyang saying, “Take these things and give them to Choonyang along with this pocket ornament which I have worn. Ask her to wear it, and tell her that we’ll soon come to bring her, so not to worry.”

The secretary got his orders, called the Boy and sent him with the money, rice, clothes and ornaments, with the message from His Excellency and Her Ladyship.

Choonyang’s mother thanked them and put the things carefully away, thinking of Dream-Dragon with more of longing than ever.

IX. THE GLORIES OF OFFICE

Time runs his rapid course. The former governor had gone and a new one had been appointed in his place. Months had flown by, and Choonyang had lost heart and fallen ill. Her doors were closed and she was shut away alone with her broken-hearted thoughts dreaming of the distant husband.

“My husband, handsome as polished marble, I long to see thee. The soft breezes rise and awaken my longings. How sweet is spring time, when the happy flowers break forth with smiling faces. But dearer than the flowers I long to see him. Whom can I tell my sorrows to? Only those who know it, know it. God cares not for me. My tears would cause the Yellow River to o’er flow its banks. My anxieties would flatten out the horned peaks of yonder mountains. No one can surpass parents in worth

²⁹ Hangoo. He was a great giant who appeared in China about 200 B. C. between the kingdoms of China and Han. He fought many battles but at last was defeated by the founder of Han. Seeing that the end had come he sang the song referred to and then committed suicide.

Myongwhang. Died A.D. 762. The unfortunate husband of Yang Kweepee. (See Note page 418).

and dearness, and yet the longing for a lover, who can fathom it? In my sleep the tears cease not to flow. One grain of heart's love makes a thousand sacks of sorrow. If we could but meet again my griefs would all assuage, but when will that be, and when shall we clasp hands and tell our love together? I suppose some would not mind it, hut I shall die to see my love. Still I must not die. As the gods have decreed so let me live. Some time, some day, we shall meet, my love and I, and we'll tell over all our pent up sorrows of the past."

A new official had entered upon office, had spent a year and then had been removed to Najoo, and now another new one was to come, a man of some repute from the west ward of Seoul by name Pyon, son of the gentry, a very handsome man and highly gifted in music and singing. A master hand he was in all the ways of a fast and dissolute life, lavish with money and fond of drink. He had one great defect, namely a stubborn and stupid nature. He doubted what was true and faithful, and readily believed what was false. When it came to excess and riot he was ever in favour of it as a man carelessly rushes into the flames with bags of gunpowder on his back. He was like a bad egg with a heart mouldy and ill of flavour. However, by virtue of his ancestors, he had secured the place of governor of Namwon and now the various office-bearers had gone up to the capital to meet him, and were having their audiences one by one.

"This is the first secretary of ceremonies; this the head office-boy; this the chief runner; this the crier; this the number one attendant; chief beaters, body-servants, etc."

The governor interposed,

"So you are here! All safe are you? Nothing special in your district?"

"All well, sir," said the chief secretary.

"Is it true, as I have heard, that there are a lot of pretty girls in your town?"

"The prettiest girls in the world," said the secretary.

"Does a famous beauty, named Choonyang, live near you?" asked the governor.

"Yes, sir, the greatest wonder since ancient times," was the answer.

The governor hearing the word 'greatest wonder' gave an appreciative shrug of the shoulders.

"Is Choonyang well?" asked he.

"Yes, she's fine," answered the head secretary.

"How far is it from here to Namwon anyway?" asked the governor.

"About six hundred and ten *lee*," was the answer.

"With a good horse could a man make it in a day?"

“Why, yes, though it takes five or six days usually, still if Your Excellency says ‘one day’ we’ll make it one day; or if it be ten days distant and you say one day, sir, we’ll make it one day.”

“Your way of putting it just suits me,” said the governor. “You have a great future before you my good fellow.”

On the following day immediately the first streak of dawn the new official made preparations for his journey. After bowing before His Majesty and thanking him, he called at the various government offices to say good -bye. He recited his prayers and prostrated himself before the family tables, and then like a glorious summer cloud he set forth in a horse palanquin to travel to Chulla Province. Beautiful as a cluster of peonies was it. There were the swastika designs in the windows; the four bird wing shades out over the sides; a beautiful horse between the shafts; and tall chair bearers in swallowtail coats holding to the rear. Thus equipped away they went through the South Gate, passing the Spring Flower City, and all the sights of the season, with the gently waving willows by the roadside, on over the sands of the Han River, over the South Pass, heralded by out-runners ahead, soldiers, secretaries, drummers, flag-bearers, messengers, hangers-on, sweeping gaily and easily onward, in step, while the ringing calls of the company made the hills to echo. There were on horseback as well, soldiers, umbrella bearers, retainers, stretching out into a procession of three miles or more.

“Look here mapoo, keep your eyes on the horse will you, and see that the chair does not swing to one side,” calls the leader.

“Look out for stones!” shout the bearers.

Thus they go lightly onward. The chief secretary, dressed in silken coat and trousers and grass cloth flying duster, sitting high upon his pack, keeps close behind the palanquin. A special secretary also, in quilted trousers, and outer coat of Chinese silk, decorated with perfumed pockets, crane-jointed spectacles and felt hat, sits mounted on his charger.

Here, too, is the chief crier, tall in stature and graceful in swinging motion, handsome and highly gifted at repartee, with headband ornaments, tortoise-shell buttons, well twisted top-knot, and coral pin stuck firmly in it. His amber wind-catcher shines from underneath his head gear with wondrous colour, and he wears a hat with two hundred strands in its widely reaching brim, and dons it straight as the horizon line across his head. His trousers are of white corded silk, and he has a Hansan outer overall, gathered at the waist and tied behind with grass-cloth fastenings. He wears also a Chinese silken vest and carries a silver mounted knife attached to a belt of sky blue. Hanging from his waist are figured silk pockets, pocket strings, and tobacco pouch. He wears grass shoes of four

strands each for sole, fastened across the instep with things made of old examination paper.

On they go.

“Look here mapoo don’t watch your own feet, watch the horse’s feet. Take care of those stones! Keep a sharp look out! Hold the chair even!”

“All right, here’s another stone,” comes the reply.

Behold now the chief of the beaters. He has a ‘wild beast’ felt hat on, with red lining underneath the brim and the letter for ‘Brave’ printed square in the middle. His outfit includes a suit of Chinese silk, a wide red belt, short wristlets, a silver knife, a handkerchief of many colours, a blue fancy girdle, silk pockets, several of them tied to his girdle string. With wild fierce eyes he glances here and there. “Clear the way, clear the way, out of the road with you,” shouts he.

Here is the soldier man too. He has a Tongyung hat on, with a long feather in it, yellow beads for hat-string, wide sleeves, and long divided outer coat. He carries a willow paddle over his shoulder, and a bell attached that clatters as he jogs along.

“Out of the way there, you beast you, clear the track.”

Into the Provincial Governor’s town of Chunjoo they stream and await orders from His Excellency. Then they pass Grandmother Rock, hasten on away beyond Imseel and sleep at Ohsoo Post Station. Then again at break of day they ride on over Paksook till they meet outrunners from their own town, with the various secretaries in charge of office, the deputies, marshals, orderlies. Like a flock of wild geese they come. The head steward with a Tongyung hat on his head, amber beads beneath his chin, and a gay sky blue outer coat, sits majestically on his horse holding to his wand baton. By twos and twos come the captains, sergeants, corporals and other military men dressed in yellow plate armor, on fine horses looking like the “braves” of China’s ancient kingdoms; centurions, chiefs, headmen, leaders in full uniform and horse-tail hats.

The commander in chief gives his orders in stentorian voice, and they all deploy outward into lines of stately attention, with drum fore and aft, gongs to right and left, flutes in pairs, trumpets, cymbals, bugles, staff flags. Pretty girls burst into view, like the fairies, gracefully capped and dressed to do honour to the occasion.

“*Kwang!*” go the drums.

“*T’ong*” the guns.

“*Choi-roo-roo!*” say the cymbals.,

“*Doo-oo!*” blare the bugles.

X. THE WORLD OF THE DANCING GIRL.

When the drums sounded the convoy got into motion, and at the piping calls of the runners the way opened to proceed, At this time the governor, seated in a chair, held a fan before his face and shouted

“Call the head *Keesang*³⁰ will you!”

“Yes, sir!” someone answers.

“Are all those girls yonder *Keesang*?” asks he.

The head *Keesang*, in amazement at such a question replies “Yes, sir, they are all *Keesang*.”

Then the governor, with evident delight, says “I’ve met my fate surely with all these pretty girls.”

He goes first to bow in the tablet house of His Majesty the King; then enters his office and takes his seat. According to good form he should wait three days before running over the list of office holders, but his impatience fairly grinds its teeth at the delay. In the shortest possible time after inspecting the list of those attached to the six departments, he summoned the head steward, saying,

“Let’s make haste and run over the list of *Keesang*.”

The head steward, thus directed, opened the record of names and called them out in order. He did it in a fantastic and extravagant manner as follows: “Far to the south, where the sailor boys bend at the oar, rides the cinnamon mast and silken sail of the ORCHID BOAT.”

The chief *Keesang* thus named, answered the call and stepped out gracefully in her silken skirt, that she caught in folds and held before her. “I am here, sir,” she answered.

“Looking over the hills where the great writer So Tongpa dipped his pen and cheered his friends, are you there RISING MOON?”

‘RISING MOON’ entered dressed in a red. skirt, that she gathered before her, and stood in a sweet and pretty manner, expectant like the willow leaf before the breeze.

“I am here, sir,” said she.

Then the governor remonstrated, “If you call them over in that long-winded fashion, you’ll never get through in a hundred years. I can’t stand that. Call them off quickly.”

³⁰ *Keesang*. These were the dancing-girls attached, one of the recognized classes of women slaves attached to public offices in old Korea. They were frequently well educated, gifted in music and singing, and were entirely at the service of their masters. They were obviously of the lower class but no special disgrace or degradation attached to them as it would to a daughter of the people who had departed from the way of virtue.

The head steward thus admonished, began calling them off in verse couplets of fives,

“The morning rain has laid the dust,
And brightened up the WILLOW GREEN.”

“Here!” answers Willow Green.

“Aslant behind the silken blind,
The shadow greets the SILVER MOON.”

“Here!” says Silver Moon.

“Chittering in the gentle breeze,
Pass and repass the SUMMER SWALLOW.”

“Here!” says Swallow.

“Off on the winds to far Kangneung,
Goes the soft-footed, TINTED CLOUD.”

“Here!” says Tinted Cloud.

“Transplanted from the fairies’ dell,
Queen of all sprites the LOTUS BUD.”

“Here!” says the Lotus.

“Among the spirits of the shade.
Stealing so softly, PLUM FAIRY.”

“Here!” says the Fairy.

“SILKEN FRAGRANCE!” “ORCHID SWEETNESS!”

“MOONLIGHT PERFUME!”

“Look here steward,” said the governor.

“Yes sir,” answered he.

“You said that Choonyang lived here but you have not called off her name from the list. What is the meaning of this?”

The steward replied, “Choonyang is not a *Keesang*, sir. She is the daughter of a retired *Keesang*, however, but her name is not on the list. She grew up in the village near here, and has had her hair done up (been married), by the son of the former governor.”

“The son of the former governor did her hair up did he? Did he take her with him?”

“He did not take her with him, she is at her former home.”

“I have heard,” said the governor, “that she is the child of a *keesang*, and that she is a matchless beauty. Write her name down in the list and have her report to me at once.”

The head steward hearing this order politely bowed, and while making a pretence to carry it out, and thinking of his own safety in the matter called the head dancing-girl (*Keesang*) saying, “His Excellency has ordered that Choonyang’s name be placed on the list, so I want you to go to her house, see her mother, and ask that she come at once and make her

obeisance.”

The head *keesang* received this order and set out to summon Choonyang. She hastened by the Moonlight Pavilion, crossed the Maggie Bridge, entered Choonyang’s house and laughed saying, “I say, Miss Choonyang, Her Ladyship from Seoul and the Governor ask that you make haste and come.”

Choonyang colored slightly and replied, “Does the Governor really call me? He is the father of his people and has a right to call anyone, but if he calls me as a dancing-girl, I cannot go. I have been unwell now for several months and should not really go out. Please, sister, if you return answer that I am very ill, I think he will excuse me. Do your best for me won’t you?”

The head *keesang* replied, “The new governor’s disposition is a very overbearing and masterful one, and there’s no playing tricks with him, but I’ll do my best to arrange it so that you’ll not be called:”

She said this and then returned to the *yamen*, where she reported to the head steward, but she did not report at all what Choonyang had said, jealously desiring to get her fangs into her as a great saw devours wood, “Choonyang says that if she dies she will not come.”

“What does she mean by that?” inquired the steward.

“She made answer, ‘If His Excellency calls me, why do you come to give the order?’ and I replied that the head steward had directed me to do so, but she made answer, ‘If the fool head steward should order me himself I would not go.’”

The head steward, however, knew Choonyang better than this and thought to himself, “She would not say a thing like that, she is not that kind of person.” Guessing the real character of what had taken place, he went in and reported to the governor “Your humble servant went to call Choonyang, but she has fallen ill from anxiety over her husband, and so cannot come. What does your Excellency command?”

XI. THE MAN-EATER.

The governor heard this and replied furiously, “I order her to come! What do I care for her notions? Chastity! Whew! If they should hear of that in my women’s quarters, my wife would have a fit. A common dancing-girl talking about virtue! Go and call her at once.”

The office bell sounds “*Tullung*,” and the chief runner answers.

“Yea-a-a! Yes sir!”

“Go at once and bring Choonyang.”

“Yea-a-a!”

So the chief runner goes. At the top of his voice he shouts,

“Kim Number-one!”

“What is it?”

“Pak Number-one!”

“What are you calling me for!”

“She’s caught, caught for sure.”

“Who’s caught, you idiot?”

“The woman Choonyang is caught. She’s under the paddle now all right. Too proud altogether, she and her husband of the gentry. It doesn’t do for one to show off over much. We who have to carry the message to her, however, are dogs, both of us, you are a dog and so am I. But it’s all right.”

They had their wild-hair felt hats on, with red linings and the character for “Brave” pasted on the front. They wore soldier’s uniforms and red belts, and so they started forth, fluttering in the wind like evil birds of prey, or hungry tigers glaring through the brushwood. They reached her place and then gave a great shout,

“Choonyang...!”

Just when they called her she was engaged in reading a letter from her husband that she had spread out before her. It ran thus:

“A thousand *lee* of separation and endless thoughts of thee day and night! Are you well, I wonder, and your mother? I am as ever, without special cause to murmur. My father and mother, as you asked, are well. In my heart too, I’m so glad. You know my heart and I know your heart. What more can I say? I have no eight wings or I would fly to you. A single hour seems like a long season but how can it be helped? What I have in mind are just two characters, one, *chol*, meaning a noble woman’s virtue, and the other, *soo*, *to guard, keep or hold to*. Hold fast to your faithfulness just as we swore in our contract. Under the good guidance of Heaven will not the day come when we can meet? Rest in peace and wait. I cannot say the thousand and one things I would like to. All that confronts me fills me with unrest. That’s all, my love, just now.

Year___; moon___; day___, Yee Dream-Dragon.

P. S. Is Hyangtanee well?”

Said Choonyang “This letter comes, but why does not my love come too? Why may I not go?”

At the bamboo gate the dog began to bark and on opening it, there were two of the *yamen* floggers seen. Choonyang stepped out softly toward them saying, “Kim Number-one, is it you? and Pak Number-one have you come as well? Were you not tired with your long journey to Seoul and back? Your coming thus kindly to call on me is certainly

beyond all my expectation.”

She invited them in much deference. “Please come in,” said she, “come in.”

These two rough fellows, in all their lives, had never before been treated so by a lady. When she spoke so sweetly to them the goose-flesh came out over their astonished bodies

“But,” said they, “Young Mistress, why have you come out, when you are not well? You will be the worse for it, go inside please.”

They entered the room and sat down. The two *yamen* floggers’ hearts beat a tattoo inside their breasts, and for once the daylight before them seemed turned to darkness. Just then Choonyang’s mother came in.

“Well, boys,” said she, “are you not footsore in coming so far to my house? You meant to call on an old wife like me too, didn’t you? Hyangtane...! There are no special dainties on hand but bring some sool, plenty of it.”

The sool-table was brought in and they were urged to drink. After they had tasted, they said “Let’s speak the truth now. The governor wants you for his concubine, and has sent us on this errand with no end of haste; but still, if we have anything to do with it, we’ll see that you get off.”

Choonyang replied, “ ‘Metal makes the best sound,’ they say. I trust you two good men to stand by me.”

“You may be sure of that,” replied they, “no need to say it twice, lady.”

An extra runner now came hurrying after to hasten them.

“Are you coming?” he shouted.

“Keep quiet will you,” replied Kim and Pak.

“Are you not coming?”

“You beast you, stop the row. We know all about it, come in here and have a drink.”

So the three sat all together and drank till the sky-line narrowed down to a ten-penny piece, and all the world turned yellow.

Choonyang gave them three *yang* of money besides, saying, “On your way in get some refreshments for yourselves.”

“What do you mean by this?” they inquired. “Iron eats iron, and flesh eats flesh, what right have we to receive money from you?”

Still they fastened the string of it securely to their belts, remarking meanwhile, “I wonder if all the pieces are correctly counted out and none lacking. Let’s go.”

Choonyang said good-bye and waited at the gate, while the three hand in hand started on their way. “Let’s sing a song.”

“Good! Let’s.”

And so they sing :

“Never mind my sea-gull, so don’t be frightened now.

“I’ve left the service of the king and come to make my bow.

“All you brave chaps that ride white steeds,

“With golden whips in hand,

“And pass my willow silken blinds,

“Across the tipsy sand,

“Is it because you play the harp

“That you are feeling glad?

“Or is it when one really knows,

“The Soul is rendered sad?

“If you don’t know, come list to me,

“I’ll teach you how to play,

“With *koong* and *sang* and *kak* and *chee*,

“And all the gamut gay,

“Until your notes will rise up high,

“And move the clouds to tears,

“And shake the heaven, and thrill the earth,

“And hush the demon spheres.”

“You go in first,” says one to the other when they reached the *yamen*.

“You go first yourself,” is the reply.

“Let’s do it this way,” said the third, “We’ll hold hands and go in together.”

“That’s the way,” say they all.

The three of them went, each holding to the other’s topknot, dancing in to the governor.

They shouted, “Choonyang has captured the floggers and brings them to your Excellency.”

The governor was at his wits’ end to know what this meant.

“You rascals, you,” roared he, “what have you done with Choonyang? What do you mean by Choonyang’s arresting you? To the rope with every one of you.”

Then one of them explained, “Choonyang is very ill, at the point of death, sir, and she earnestly made request of us. She filled our hungry souls, too, with good drink and savoury sweets till we are most ready to yield up the ghost. She gave us a *yang* of money as well, and so, according to the law of human kindness, we had no heart to arrest her; but if Your Excellency says we have to, even though I have to fetch my mother in her place, I’ll do it. By the way my mother is a beauty who far

surpasses Choonyang.”

“If your mother is such a beauty,” asks the governor “how old is she, pray?”

“Why she’s just ninety nine come this year, sir.”

“You impudent idiot,” replied the governor, “go now at once and if I hear of any loitering on the way, your death warrant will be written out and executed. Bring her now without delay.”

The floggers heard the order. “Precious,” said they, “as a thousand gold pieces is one’s own body, and beyond this body what is there? Even though we would like to spare Choon-yang, still, since it is death under the paddle for us otherwise, we’ll fetch her.”

XII. INTO THE JAWS OF DEATH.

They arrived once more at Choonyang’s house, pushed inside the gate and called, “Look here missus, never mind about your Seoul connection, but come along with us. The governor says we’ve disobeyed him, and he’s had the head-steward put under the paddle, and the head-beater and head-constable are handcuffed and locked up. We can’t help the matter, come along with us, come now.”

There being no help for it, she started for the *yamen*. Her hair was somewhat in disorder, and with her trailing skirt gathered up, she went like a storm-tossed swallow, sadly step by step, but prettier far than Wang Sogun of ancient China ever was.

Into the *yamen* enclosure with its ornamented walls and shady groups of willows she was pushed, and there she waited.

The head-crier came out and shouted,

“Choonyang, appear at once before His Excellency.”

The governor looked upon her and said, “Surely the most beautiful woman of all the ages! Come up here.”

Choonyang dared not refuse, but went up, scenting the anxious atmosphere as a frightened kitten does the smoke. She stepped modestly inside and trembled. The governor looked with greedy eyes upon her helpless form.

“Pretty she truly is! Sure as you live! She’d make the fishes to sink and the wild-geese to drop from the sky. I thought they had over praised you, my lady, but now that I see you, the moon may well hide her face and the flowers drop their heads for shame. I have never seen your equal. I left all the better salaries of Milyang and Sohung, and made application for Namwon in order to see you. I am somewhat late, I understand, but never mind that, I’m in time enough still. I hear that the student son of a former governor had your hair done up for you. Is that so? Since he left I don’t

expect that you have been quite alone, you no doubt have some lover or other. Does he belong to the *yamen* here, or is he some rake about town? Now don't be ashamed, but tell me the truth."

She replied firmly but modestly, "I truly am the child of a dancing-girl, but I have never had my name on the roll of the *keesang*. I grew up here in the village. The former governor's son out of love for me came to my house and earnestly sought me by a marriage contract. My mother consented and so I am forever his, and in the contract that we made I took a faithful oath. The spirits of evil have separated us, and I have lived alone dreaming and thinking of him night and day, and waiting till he comes to take me. Please do not say 'a *yamen* lover.' I have never had such."

The governor heard this and gave a great laugh and applauded.

"When I see your words. I find you are equally remarkable inside as well as out. But since ancient times outward beauty means some defect somewhere. Women with pretty faces have little virtue. To have a flawless face and a flawless heart is indeed impossible. I recognize your purpose, but when young Yee really gets married and passes his exams, will he ever think again of a nameless girl, a thousand *lee* off in the distant country, who constituted for him a moment's delight? It seems hard, I know, for your lot is like that of the plucked flower, and your ridiculous contract is worthless. They say you are educated. Let me remind you of some of those from history. Yee Yang, you remember, was the second wife of Cho and yet her chastity is renowned the world over. If you are virtuous in my behalf you will be just like Yee Yang. I'll dress you out well and give you no end of delights, so you will begin by taking charge of this office of mine to-day."

Choonyang replied, "My purpose in this matter differs from that of Your Excellency. Even though the young master should prove faithless and never come to take me, my model would still be Pan Chopyo³¹, and I would rather watch through all my life the fireflies go by my window, than be faithless. When I die I shall seek the resting place of Yo Yong and Ah Whang³², and dwell with them among the shaded bamboos of the

³¹ Pan Chop-yo. A famous keesang who lived about 20 B. C., and who was faithful in her remonstrances to the Emperor against a life of ease and pleasure.

³² Yo Yung and Ah Wang. These were two sisters, daughters of the Emperor Yo, (2238 B. C.) who like Leah and Rachel were given to his successor as his faithful wives. Tradition relates that they journeyed south with him till he reached Chang-oa where he died. They wept and their tears falling on the leaves caused to come into being the spotted bamboo.

nether world. To marry a second time is something to which I can never consent.”

The governor when he began his interview did not know definitely what kind of person he had to deal with, and so had addressed her lightly; now, however, that he had met and seen her, he recognized that she could not be won thus. If he had said to her, “Well done,” had commended, and sent her safely home, all sorts of good will would have resulted from it, and his praises would have been sung throughout the land; but his determination was fixed and he thought to terrify her into yielding, so he used her virtue as a catch-word of contempt and roared at her. “What times we’ve landed on! When *keesangs* talk of virtue, my virtuous sides will split with virtuous laughter. Your virtuous desires to see your paramour make you virtuously break my orders do they? Your virtue lands you under the paddle where you may virtuously taste of death for it.”

Choonyang in a sudden rush of anger, caring not whether she lived or died, said, “Your Excellency is a gentleman, and you know what you ought to do. To take a helpless woman by force, is that the part of the governor of his people? Those who destroy virtue, man or woman, I despise and abhor.”

XIII UNDER THE PADDLE.

When the Governor heard this defiant speech, his two eyes grew dim, his nostrils closed with smothering tightness, his head-band cracked from pressure, and his topknot stood sharp on end while his chin quivered.

“Here!” shouted he.

“Yea-a-a, Yes sir,” answered the Boy.

“Haul this wench out.”

“Where’s the crier?” called the Boy.

“Here!” answered the crier.

“Have Choonyang out.”

“You runners, haul Choonyang out of this.”

“Out with her,” roared the governor.

The runners rushed in, caught her queue, twisted it round and round the hand, gave her a jerk, dragged her forth and fastened her securely into the torture chair.

“Director of Torture are you there?” shouted the Governor.

“Yes I am here,” was the response.

“This wench is to be beaten to death, write out a statement of her offence.”

“All right, sir.”

He wrote it out and thus it ran:

“You, an insignificant *keesang*, dare to disobey the strict orders of your governor, pretending that your wretched self is exercised over the virtues of womanhood. For this a thousand deaths would not suffice. You shall be beaten till you die, that your punishment may be a warning to all others. Die, you wretch, as you deserve, and no complaint about it.”

The Director of Torture, having written this out, went to Choonyang and told her to affix her signature to it, which she did without in the least showing any signs of submission. With a soul like iron she wrote the character ONE, and beneath it the character for HEART or MIND. “Of one and the same mind am I” is what it said. With that she threw down the pen and remained silently waiting.

The rough head-beater, with an arm like an arrow quiver, bared from the shoulder, brought in a bundle of bastinados, which he threw down with a clatter at Choonyang’s feet so that even a heart of stone would have quailed before it. He then selected from their number this one and that. Any that had a flaw, or was weak in the back, he cast aside, and thus he made ready.

The Governor called out, “You may beat this creature to the breaking of her bones, but if you beat her lightly you will pay for it with your own life.”

The beater bowed low and said, “Shall I look with any favour on such a wretch as she? I’ll see that she gets a breaking in.”

When the command came “Beat her,” he jumped well back, came to attention, and then sprang forward giving a fierce blow on the front of the legs just below the knee. With a sharp snap like the crack of a rifle the broken paddle went spinning off through the air. Dull and dead, and yet fiery as the acupuncture needle was the effect on Choonyang, so that a great trembling came over her as if her soul would melt. To support her self-control she counted off the blows, one by one, as one might dictate sentences in the Examination arena.

“.....one long departure separates me from my husband;... one hour seems like three autumn seasons;....one master only shall I love and serve;...one hour’s beating I shall laugh to scorn;one thousand times though I die...one jot or tittle change I never shall.”

A second blow! Two!

“.....second moon with its soft plum blossoms and our sweet contract;.....two names united; two thousand *lee* divides us....two minds never, never shall I have;...twice eight green summers have I seen;.....two, God and the King, will surely avenge my wrongs.”

A third blow! Three!

“...three chances of life to nine of death;....three bonds I hold to

like the.....three great lights of heaven;.....three relationships of home hold fast;.....three existences of my soul are bound in our happy contract.”

A fourth blow! Four!

“...four years old when I first began to study; four Classics and three Sacred Books all teach the same;....four Virtues and.....four Deeds of Worth such as a good governor would long for in his people;....four seasons with their never failing virtues.”

A fifth blow! Five!

“...five ranks that wait upon His Excellency;....five virtues that he should show forth;.....five punishments that he will not escape;.....five and fifty counties, and yet the worst of all is he.”

“Does not this woman know something of the Great Law?”

Choonyang replied “What is the Great Law, please I wish to know?”

The Governor then called to the Director of Torture to bring the Great Law, and to read out to her her sins.

The Director bows and says, “Yes, sir.”

“Choonyang, listen, the Great Law reads, ‘Rebellion is a sin for which men are beheaded and quartered. Disobedience is a sin for which exile is fitting. Don’t bemoan your lot, you simply get according to the law.’”

Choonyang replied, “I know it reads thus, but what does it say, please, in regard to those who force their way between husband and wife?”

The governor gave a great start.

“Be quick with your paddle and lay it on to this impudent creature.”

A sixth blow! Six!

“...six kings who did evil and were remonstrated with, so reads the story; Six Boards³³ lock up the helpless Choonyang, and lay on torture;....six portions of her body torn in agony.”

A seventh blow! Seven!

“...seventh evening the Herdsman and the Damsel meet year by year;...seven hundred *lee*, when will he come to me?.... seven years, how can I pass them?...seven feet long, the keen headsman’s knife will be my lot;....seven chances to ten and I shall be among disembodied spirits.”

An eighth blow! Eight!

“...eight tens of years great Kang Takong had lived when his good word of warning saved the king;...eight deformed monsters of all antiquity,

³³ The Six Boards. Civil Office, Revenue, Ceremonies, War, Punishments, and Works.

none ever equalled this.”

A ninth blow! Nine!

“...ninth heaven is where the fairies live. Could I become a heron bird I'd sail off through the....nine reaches of the sky, and tell my nine woes in the palace of the king.”

A tenth blow! Ten!

“...ten births and nine deaths could not make my soul forget its woes;.... ten times have they tried to beat down my spirit;....ten and eight years cannot long withstand this agony, but must go soon into the shadows of forgetfulness.”

Fifteen and more they beat her.

A twentieth blow!

“Oh that the Young Master could come to me and help me bear my pains.”

A thirtieth blow was given with a stinging force that seemed to break its way through the tender flesh and bone.

The Governor in disgust said, “Who could dream of the determination of this wretch? Like a poisonous viper she is, sharper than pepper-sauce. Put a *cangue*³⁴ on her neck, her feet in the stocks, and lock her up in prison.”

“Yea-a-a, Yes, sir,” replied the beater.

XIV. IN THE SHADES.

They dragged her out and threw her underneath the terrace. She was unable to get her breath and seemed all but dead. The prison guard, cried over her as he fastened the *cangue* upon her tender neck, calling the governor a hundred evil names, whistling out his horror with wild glaring eye; grumbling to himself. He put a seal upon the *cangue*, and bore her gently out beyond the *yamen* gates.

At this Choonyang's mother came rushing forward and taking her daughter in her arms, cried, “Oh dear me, he has killed my daughter.”

She put her arms around her neck and fondled and caressed her.

“Oh, God,” cried she, “Who seest and knowest everything, my daughter is dying. Save her, save her! Alas! she is dying, what use for me to live?”

She jumped up and down, and fell over gasping for breath, and gurgling like imprisoned water.

“I say, Governor,” continued she wildly, “why have you killed my

³⁴ *Cangue*. A wooden collar of great weight that is locked on to the neck of the prisoner.

daughter? You put no store on her being a faithful and virtuous woman, but in a brutal and horrible way attempted to destroy her. You have beaten her to pieces under your frightful paddle. In the face of death I thought her spirit might have given way. God seems to have no mercy and the Buddha is soulless. Hyangtanee! Go at once to the drug-store and get me a restorative.”

The medicine was brought and after a little Choonyang seemed to revive. The mother wept aloud and Hyangtanee bewailed her lot also. Servants, runners, attendants, crowds of people heard and came in to see. They stamped with their feet, stormed and imprecated, for who could look on unmoved. Had Choonyang really been a dancing-girl, the ordinary *keesang* would have called to condole with her at such a time as this, but because she was not, there were no such callers.

In pain and suffering she lifted the *cangue* while Hyangtanee helped her. The old people of Namwon and the widows wept for her, as they said to each other, “Noble girl! Wonderful!”

Thus they extolled her virtues as they helped to bear her gently to the prison. The jailer went ahead and the Director of Torture walked behind. When they reached the entrance, the great gates, like the barriers of a city, opened with a creaking, grinding noise, and she was taken in and the place locked. Then the mother fell in a faint, and Hyangtanee beat the ground with her little fists.

“Oh, my dear mistress,” said she, “what shall I do? What shall I do?”

The crying of the women that followed made such an uproar, that the jailer stamped with his foot, and said to the Director, “Shameful! Pitiful! Stocked, and locked, and *cangued*! The thing will die yonder if left so.”

He heaved a sigh, and went in where Choonyang had recovered her consciousness somewhat.

“Don’t cry, mother,” said she. “Be careful of yourself. I am innocent, I shall not die. Water, fire, swords and spears cannot kill me. Don’t be anxious. Please go back home. If you stay here and cry so, (it’s an unfilial thing to say,) but I shall surely die. So, please go home. I cannot bear to see you so.”

There being no help for it, Choonyang’s mother left her daughter in the prison, made her exit, and staggered away, while the women who had followed her, helped her to her home.

Choonyang, thus left, moaned to herself, “Alas, my mother, who brought me up without help from my father. How many kindnesses have entered into your faithful years.

So tenderly you regard me, finding no enjoyment for yourself but giving up everything for me. I can never repay it even though I die. What a wretched creature I am!”

“Hyangtanee!”

“Yes I am here,” said Hyangtanee.

“Don’t be anxious for me but hurry home and ask the friends that they help to comfort mother. Have something specially nice prepared for her in the way of food. In my jewel letter case you’ll find some ginseng, have it steeped and give her some morning and night. Tell her not to worry. If you do this I’ll not die but shall get well and reward you. I know you will. I cannot stand the crying, it will break my heart, so dry your tears now and go.”

After she had sent Hyangtanee away Choonyang was left alone. She looked about the prison. There were noly slats in the front door, and only the outside part of the rear wall remained, so that the cold wind came searchingly through like pointed arrows, blowing up the dust from the old matting.

“What is my sin?” said she. “Have I robbed someone that I am here? Have I counselled murder? Why am I fast with neck pinioned and feet in the stocks? A mad world surely! But what is the use of complaining or crying?”

Wishing for death and hopelessly confused, she beat her head on the wooden block and cried.

In his dreams Changja³⁵ became a butterfly, and again the butterfly became Changja. While his soul was thus transformed, it rode away on a breath of air and on a cloud till he reached a region where the heaven was void, and earth had passed away. Into the mountains and valleys of mystery he went, and there found in a fairy bamboo grove a Picture Palace on which the night rain was falling. This is the manner in which a spirit travels about on the wind and through the air, mounting

³⁵ Changja. A great teacher of Taoism who flourished about 300 B. C. He wrote many things about elves, fairies and the genii. One of his verses runs thus :

There is a fish in the great North Sea Whose name is Cone,
His size is a bit unknown to me.
Though it stretches a good ten thousand *lee*,
Till his wings are grown,
With an endless back and a ten-mile tail
And he covers the heavens with one great veil,
When he flies off home.

high up into heaven or going deep down into the earth. Thus the spirit of Choonyang in the flash of a moment, had gone thousands of *lee* to the Sosang River³⁶. She dreamed not where she was, but went on and on, till she was met by angels dressed in beautiful white garments, who came up to her and bowed courteously, saying, "Our Lady Superior invites you, please follow."

They trimmed their lights and led the way, while Choonyang accompanied. Arriving at a raised terrace with an inscription on it in large gilded letters, she read "The Whang-neung Temple of Faithful Women." Her soul was filled with dazzled wonder as she looked about her. Upon a raised dais she saw two queenly ladies, holding in their hands, each, a jewelled sceptre. They invited her up but Choonyang being a cultured woman, and acquainted with the proper forms of approach and salutation said, "I am a humble dweller in the dusty world, I dare not mount to the place of honour to which you invite me."

The ladies hearing this replied, "Wonderful! Beautiful! We always said from ancient times that Chosen was a land of courtesy and faithfulness. The teachings of Keeja³⁷ remain still with you, so that even one born of a dancing-girl is chaste and true in life. The other day when I entered the glorious portals of heaven, I heard your praises being sung filling the celestial spheres with music. I longed to see your face and could not further resist, so I have called you all this distance to the Sosang River. I am greatly anxious, too, for having given one so good and dear so great a trouble. Since the beginning of time glory ever follows in the wake of the bitter pains and crosses of this life. The same pertains to women as to men."

Choonyang bowed twice before the dais and said, "Though I am untaught, I have read in the ancient books the story of Your Ladyships³⁸, and my wish was ever to remember it waking and sleeping. I had even wished to die so that I might look upon your faces. To-day I now meet and see you in this temple of the Yellow Shades. So let me die and I shall have no murmurings any more to offer."

The Ladies hearing this said in reply, "You say you know us. Come up here and sit beside us."

The waiting women saw her up and when they had seated her, one

³⁶ Sosang River. The place where the Emperor Soon died and where the two faithful wives Yo Yong and Ah Whang were left to mourn.

³⁷ Keeja. The first civilizer of Korea who arrived in this country 1122 B. C. bringing the literature and the laws of China.

³⁸ Your Ladyships. Ah Whang and Yo Yong referred to above.

said, "You say you know me, let me tell you now: The Great Emperor Soon went on a tour through the south lands, till he reached Chango mountains where he died. We two, his consorts, having no longer hope in life, went into the bamboo grove hard by, and wept tears of blood. To-day still you will see on each branch and leaf the marks of our sorrowing souls. Till the Chango Mountains fair and the Sosang River dries away, the marks of our tears on the bamboo will never cease to show. For a thousand years we have had no place to tell our sorrow, till at last we meet with you, and our souls find companionship."

She had scarcely finished speaking when her sister broke out into tears, and all the ladies to right and left were greatly moved. Then the lady lifted her hand and said, "Choonyang, you will know all those who are here, this is "Tai-im; this is Tai-sa; this is Tai-gang; this is Maingkaing³⁹."

Again a spirit was heard sobbing by the south wall, and at last a lady came forth, who stroked Choonyang lovingly on the back and said, "Are you Choonyang? Noble, beautiful! You will not know me. I am Nangok⁴⁰ who played on the flute in the ancient Chin Kingdom, and became an immortal; the wife of Sosa I was. We bade each other goodbye in the Flowery Mountains, and he became a dragon and I a flying phoenix. I played out my sorrow on my flute hoping for his return, but have never learned where he has gone. Spring comes back and the plum blossoms bloom but he returns no more."

Before she had done speaking, from the east side there came in a very beautiful woman, neatly dressed who took Choonyang by the hand, "You are Choonyang, I know, but how could you know who I am. I am Nokjoo, wife of Sok-sung, for whom he gave ten grain-measures of jewels. The awful Chowang-yoon, out of hatred toward me, threw me out of the pavilion into the trampled snow. But flowers have their time to fall, and jewels their time to crumble into dust, so beautiful women, too, who have lived and died for virtue, fade and disappear."

When she had finished speaking an uncanny wind suddenly rustled through the place, and a chilling air settled down; clouds gathered over; the lights burned low, gave sputtering gasps, and then went out. Then something came creeping forward through the shadows. It was not a

³⁹ Tai-im, Tai-sa, Tai-gang, Maing-kang are all famous Chinese women mentioned in history.

⁴⁰ Nangok. (6th century B. C. China). She was the wife of Sosa the most renowned of all China's flutists. She learned from him and when they played together it is said that they brought down angel-birds (phoenixes) from the sky to hear them.

human being, nor did it seem a spirit either. Dimly it appeared and then a great outburst of demon crying followed, "Look here Choonyang, you will not know who I am. I am the wife of the founder of the great Han Dynasty. After my lord was dead, Queen Yaw poisoned my son and severed me member from member, dug out my two eyes, called me a swine and threw me into a cesspool. For a thousand years I have had no place to tell my woes, till I found you and my soul is rested."

Before she had finished this, the two wives of Soon called Choonyang saying, "The place where you now are is the place of the dead. Its ways are different from those of the living, and so we must part, you must not stay longer."

They called the attendants, had her say a hasty goodbye, and urged her to be gone quickly. When Choonyang had taken one or two steps toward the east side of the room, the crickets were heard chirping in the prison of Namwon, and it was a dream from which she awoke with a start. The distant village cock crowed and the bell in the watch-tower beat *Deng, deng!*

XV. HONOURS OF THE KWAGO (Examination).

Cold sweats broke out upon her body, and her mind seemed all confused. It was the fifth watch of the night and the moon was setting over the western horizon; wild geese, too, were flying toward the south. They were in a flock with outstretching flanks calling to their mates as they went clamoring by.

"Whither ye wild geese? Are ye those messengers who carried letters from Somoo⁴¹ when he was taken prisoner by the northern hordes? Are you the geese who left the tender grass, the blue waters and the white sands of the Sesang River from fear of the crying spirits? Listen till I speak to you and give you a message for my master."

When she looked, however, the geese were already gone, and were lost in the distant clouds, among the stars and moon and once more she

⁴¹ Somoo. A faithful courtier of the the founder of the Han 100 B. C. He went as an envoy to the Tartar Huns, and while there tried to kill a renegade Chinaman who was in league with barbarians. For this he was arrested and exiled for nineteen years to tend the Tartar flocks in the wilderness. He carried along with him his wand of office and used it as a shepherd's staff thus signifying that he was a sever faithful to his rightful king. In his efforts to get into communication with his own state he caught a wild goose and tied a letter to it. As chance would have it, it was shot by the Emperor of Han himself and thus he discovered where his faithful courtier was.

turned stunned and dazed to the actualities of the prison. She wept afresh and so passed the time till the day began to break.

The moon had set and the sun had risen. The gate-keeper of the prison came briskly out.

“Jailer!” shouted he.

“What do you want?” asked the jailer.

“To-morrow after salutation you are to have Choonyang out, and she is to be killed, the Governor says. Make ready the paddle bastinados. What a pitiful, poor thing! She will die under it. Tell her to write to Seoul.”

The gate-keeper returned and the jailer said to Choon-yang, “Write a letter to Seoul, why don’t you? If they know of this in Seoul, will they not do something?”

Choonyang replied, “That’s so, get me a messenger.”

He called the Young Master’s former Boy, whose name was *Bolljacksay*, Halfwit, and Choonyang spoke to him.

“I’ll give you,” said she “ten *yang* now, and when you come back from Seoul I’ll give you a suit of white clothes.”

Halfwit replied, “Never mind about what you’ll give me, write the letter please, Miss. I’ll go double distances night and day.”

As Choonyang wrote the letter the borders of her dress-skirt were wet with tears. The paper, too, was marked and the writing blurred. A heart of stone would have melted to read it. To conclude it she bit the third finger of her left hand, and let her blood mark the page drop by drop, and then she sealed and addressed it. A hundred times she counselled and warned Halfwit, “Hasten, hasten on your way; but while the Master writes his reply do not hurry him. Go and come quickly.”

After despatching him, she drew a long, painful sigh and said, “The letter goes, but why not I? How far Seoul seems away. What a lot of hills to climb and how many streams to cross! If I could only be a heron with its graceful wings, I would rise and speed through space, till I could look my loved one in the eyes and tell him my sorrows o’er and o’er, but I am not. If I were dead and in the quiet mountains, I’d become a Tookyon bird⁴², and flit among the flowers and shadows neath the silvery moon, and I’d whisper my callings into my master’s ear, and he’d know me I am sure.

While she laboured through her sorrows thus, the young Master had meanwhile gone to Seoul, and had set diligently to work at his studies, waiting impatiently for the Examination came at last and he entered the arena for the *Alsongkwa* (Special Examination). His entry was worthy of

⁴² Tookyon bird. The whip-poor-will.

note. He had his book of selected Korean sayings, his dictionary, his tent, an awning, a lampstand, an umbrella, a felt carpet, pickets wrapped in bundles and carried before him by his servants. On entering the ground he saw the notice place for subject erected under the lamp-stand, and as he looked he descried underneath the main pavilion, the snow white royal dais, high perched, with waving awnings reaching out like clouds. He lifted his eyes toward the Royal Presence, and the sight was thrilling and inspiring. The canopy, the embroidered umbrellas, the green and red coats, the banners, the fans, the dragon and phoenix flags, the tiger-tailed spears and ornamented battle-axes, the three-pronged tridents and curved sabres, were all at the service of the Minister of War. A great sight!

Officers, police, officials had fallen in order. In shining caps and ceremonial robes, they stood in splendid array, wearing horn-belts and belts of tortoise-shell. The special head-gear they wore indicated their rank as did also the embroidered breast-plates of double stork designs and whiskered tigers. Numerous underlings were about in felt-hats and green coats, carrying quivers full of arrows. Palace stewards, too, were in evidence through the crowd. In front was the general of the vanguard; midway the lieutenant-general of the mid corps; and behind, the general of the rear. Subordinate officers, detectives and police were present everywhere. A hundred palace guards had charge of the Examination. Around the outside were mounted soldiers, ordered there by the Six Departments. Following these were paddle-bearers, runners, etc., each in his place, and so the Examination was proclaimed opened.

“Attention!” was the call.

The officials prostrated themselves before His Majesty and then the deputy-herald posted up the notice which ran as follows:

“The Sun all Bright; the Moon all Clear.”

“The Stars all Brilliant; the Sea all Calm.”

Two or three times was this called forth, to the immense excitement of the crowd and the commotion and confusion of the palace.

A beautiful form and handsome as the gods was Dream-Dragon. Especially when dressed afresh in ceremonial robes, and as he stepped forth with the government runners escorting him on each side. He was the winner of the contest, whose praises were now to be specially celebrated by the King's own hand; and who had been appointed by His Majesty to the office of Deputy-Guardian of Literature. He comes forth from the Hong-wha Gate wearing the champion's wreath of flowers and the blue robes of honour; carrying the silver wand and shaded by the green umbrella. Silk coated flower-children lead the way, playing on jade pipes of which the music rings out delightfully. Crowds dance to do him honour,

and thousands of the literati push and tug to get a glimpse of him, falling and tumbling over each other. Hearing his praise who would not envy him? Prizeman Yee however had his disappointments. He was not yet made a member of the Hallim, not being of the 5th Degree, but said he, "What can we say about it, when it is all through the favor of the King?"

Just then the palace steward, who introduces guests, came with orders that Yee Dream-Dragon, Deputy-Guardian Of Literature, champion of the Kwago should enter at once the Royal Presence, such being the King's command.

He entered. Said His Majesty to him, "The Palace is deep and shut away. The Four Seas⁴³ are far, far off and the people greatly to be pitied, so I am sending you as my secret Commissioner to the eight provinces. Evil influences are abroad among official classes. Seeing you and what you have written, I take it as a gift from the gods, and a blessing to my nation that you are at my service. You are young and can, therefore, enter more readily into the sorrows and joys of the common people by this office to which I appoint you. I want you to go to the south as my special commissioner, in behalf of my subjects, to see how magistrates and governors rule, to take impartial notes of who are faithful sons, and who are chaste and loyal women, to write me out a report and send it. So take care of yourself and return in safety.

His Majesty gave him the "Horse" seal, and his wand, the insignia of office. This appointment to the Hallim and the high honours of Commissioner, overpowered Dream-Dragon. He prostrated himself in gratitude before His Majesty and said, "I am so young and have no ability. I cannot do as did Pompang, who took command and made a clear sweep of it. Still I shall follow in his faithful steps in seeing that the wicked are punished and the faithful rewarded. With all my might I shall try to repay the gracious favor of Your Majesty."

He said good-bye and made his kowtow, and departed bearing the mandate of the king. He left the city with all speed, passing the South Gate by fast post-horses, by ferry over the river, and then by climbing the shoulder of the hill, past Kwachon where he took his mid-day rest and changed horses. On he went past this town and that, leaving behind him Buddha Hall and Devil-Height Pavilion. Into the North Gate of Soowon he dashed, crossing the city, and spending his night outside the south wall. Passing countless post stations, he reached Chinwee, where the noon-day repast was taken. Here he again changed horses, and crossing the broad

⁴³ Four Seas. A synonym for the Chinese Empire, used also for the Kingdom of Korea.

plain of Pyongwon, on and on and on he went till he arrived at Pyongmyong. Here he did away with post-horses, changed his dress, called his servants and attendants to him and made a special agreement with them giving to each his separate orders saying, "You will go by way of Yawsan, Iksan and such and such places, and on the 15th of the present month, meet me at noon at the Moonlight Pavilion in Namwon District."

"Yes, sir!" answered the soldier.

"You, too, will leave here and go by way of Impee, Okkoo, and such and such places and meet me this month, 15th day, at noon at the Moonlight Pavilion. I, myself, shall go by way of Chunjoo, Imsil, Moojoo, through such and such places, shall inspect, one by one, the various townships of Namwon District, noting this and that, and shall finally arrive at the county-seat. You hurry along to meet me, always remembering that one seeing is worth ten hearings. Don't trust to what others say. Official avarice, maltreatment of the people, lawless acts, disloyalty, lack of filial piety, take note of these. Take note, too, of those who wrong others, of drunkards, of those who do murder and hide away the dead, of those who are disrespectful to their seniors, of those who steal from government supplies, of those who separate husband from wife, of those who steal grave-sites, of those who disgrace their home by unfaithful living, of those who beg while having enough to live on, of those who lose everything by drink and gambling, of those who set fire to other's houses. Make notes of all such things and meet me, every one of you, on the 15th day at noon in the Moonlight Pavilion."

"Yea-a-a!" answered they all.

XVI. INCOGNITO.

Thus having instructed them he sent them off. He himself, dressed in the garb of a common tramp, went first to Yusan District, and from there on he took note, section by section, ward by ward, village by village. The various officials got wind of the fact that a secret commissioner was on the way, and hastily took cognisance as to whether all was right regarding government accounts, etc.

And now the Commissioner has dismissed his post-horses, post-servants, secretaries, attendants, and is wholly alone, making his way through a narrow defile, when he meets an uncouth countryman coming toward him, a rough dishevelled fellow with hempen garters tied about his legs, and his feet in wraps instead of stockings. He has around his waist a long pocket of white cloth, and in his hand a hard-wood gad, trimmed at the ends, with which he goes swinging along, singing a sad kind of refrain

that agreed with his non-mirthful cogitations.

“How shall I go? Alas, alas, how shall I go?”

“A thousand *lee* to Hanyang (Seoul), how shall I go?”

“The road is long, so deadly long, how shall I make it, tell me, pray,

“With stones, and streams, and mud, and miles, where is this Hanyang anyway?”

“Some kinds of luck are great and good, glory and riches, drink and food,

“But this chap’s luck is beastly mean and so he’s tired and poor and lean,

“And goes by day a long stage pull, to get his hungry stomach full.

“My luck and Choonyang’s, what’s the cause? Most desperate luck that ever was:

“This new born Governor is most inhuman, and doesn’t prize an honest woman.

“But wants by everything that’s coarse, to down her with his brutal force.

“While she has stood her ground sublime, just like the bamboo and the pine.

“How shall I go, how shall I go? For me it’s pain, for her it’s woe.”

The Commissioner resting under a tree listened to the song of the lad. On hearing it his eyes started from their sockets, and his heart beat a scared tattoo, his spirit melted and his senses well nigh took their departure. When the boy came opposite to him he said, “Youngster, look here.”

The boy, however, was a country lad with a stiff neck and stubborn disposition.

“Why do you call for me?” asked he, “Who are you, you callow kid, to call a man of my age ‘Youngster’?”

“Oh I beg your pardon, I made a mistake. Don’t be angry please, but where do you live, anyway?”

“Where do I live? Why I live in our town.”

“I don’t mean that, I told you before that I had made a mistake. Don’t be cross now! Where do you live?”

“I live in Namwon.”

“And where are you going?”

“I am taking a letter to the home of the former governor.” “Let me see the letter, will you?”

“See the letter? Would you ask to see someone else’s correspondence, and that from the woman’s quarters, too?”

“Right you are,” said Dream-Dragon, “and yet you display your ignorance of literature in saying so. Have you never read the saying, ‘The man on the road meets us and opens our letters?’ It’ll be all right I am sure.”

The Boy laughed, “Ha! ha!”

“The saying runs that important information may be found in a hempen pocket,” says he to himself. “His looks are not up to much, but nevertheless, let him read it.”

He gives the letter.

Dream-Dragon takes it, breaks the seal, and sees to his amazement that it is in the hand of Choonyang. It reads :

“Since your departure three years have already gone and letters have ceased to come. No little azure birds⁴⁴ bear me messages over the thousand *lee*, and the wild-goose carrier has failed me. I look longingly toward heaven, but my waiting eyes find nought to see; the haloed mountains have moved off into the distance, and my spirit is breaking. The tookyon bird cries in the plum forest, while the midnight rain falls on the odong trees. I sit alone and think, and think, while the earth seems lost and empty, and the heavens old and gray. This sorrow is too hard to bear. In the butterfly-dream one goes a thousand *lee*, and yet never breaks away from love. I dare not think of my lot. I pass the flowery mornings and the moonlight nights in tears and sighing. The new governor on taking office ordered me to be his concubine, and this has brought me very low even to the gates of death. I have been tortured but my soul refused to die. Still under the paddle my spirit will shortly take its flight. I pray that my dear husband may live long and enjoy health and blessing. In the eternal future ages, when this poor life is over, and a thousand years have borne away its memory, may we meet again and never, never part.”

Like the wild-goose foot-prints upon the silvery sand, there were blood marks, drop, drop, drop, upon the letter. Dream-Dragon read it in bewilderment, fell forward on his face, and cried, “Alas! Alas!” while the carrier looked at him in speechless amazement.

“I say, Boss,” said he, “your cryings have soiled the letter. If in

⁴⁴ Azure birds. The great Mother of Taoism Queen Su-wang-mo is supposed to have dwelt on Mount Kwenlun at the head of the troops of genii. For hundreds of years she has been regarded as one of the greatest divinities. She abides on the Lake of Gems near whose border grow the peach trees of the fairies. Anyone eating of its fruit will live forever. The gentle messengers that carry her royal despatches are the azure pigeons mentioned here.

reading this woman's epistle, you take on as one would at the three great sacrifices. for the dead, what would you have done had you read of her death? Pulled down your hair I suppose. Are you some relation of hers?"

Dream-Dragon said, "What do you mean? As I read her letter her case is pitiful and her sentences are marked with blood. Wood or stone itself would be moved by it, wouldn't it?"

Now the carrier lad, Halfwit, was the same boy who had acted the part of messenger for Dream-Dragon when he was in Namwon, and had gone and come with letters to Choonyang's house. After a little inspection there was no mistaking in his mind as to who this stranger was, but still he acted his part for a time, and then at last he made a rush toward his former master, bowed very low and inquired as to his honourable health. He once more gave the letter from his pocket, told all about Choonyang and what had befallen her, till Dream-Dragon ground his teeth with rage, and forgetting that Half-wit overhead him declared what he would do, "I shall dismiss this rascal from his office and send him flying."

The Boy had drunk *yamen* waters for twenty years or so and was not slow to guess what such a speech could mean. When this was said, he himself chimed in, "If I could only be the attendant soldier-guard to Your Excellency, just as soon as we get into Namwon I'd help to break his bull-beast head."

"What do you mean?" asked Dream-Dragon, "If I were the King's Commissioner I said I would do so and so, but how could I ever expect to be that?"

The Boy laughed a broad grin, saying, "I know this, and I know that, please don't deceive your humble servant, sir!"

XVII. BEFORE THE BUDDHA.

Now that the Commissioner had disclosed himself thus to Halfwit, he took him with him to a neighbouring monastery, which was called the Temple of a Thousand Blessings. It was to this same temple that Choonyang's mother had come, years ago, in her desire for a child. She had made no end of contributions, rice fields and the like, and had asked earnest prayers, so that in the course of time Choonyang was born. Now again that Choonyang had fallen under the bastinado, and was nearing death's border-line, she had engaged all the Priests to offer sacrifice in the main temple and to pray to the Buddha. Thus they were rigged out in all their paint and feathers. Some were braided, some had on headcaps; some wore cassocks; some held gongs, some cymbals, some gong-bells; some wooden rattleclaps, while little boys held drums and red-wood drum sticks.

The drums went, "*Too-ree toong-toong!*" the cymbals "*kwang-*

kwang;" the wooden rattle claps "*do-doo-rak*;" "*do-doo-rack*;" the gong-bells "*chal-chal*;" the gongs "*jang-jang*;" the pipes "*chew-roo-roo*."

The prayer was: "O, Amida Buddha! O, Buddha who rulest in the four quarters of Nirvana with its endless heights and illimitable distances: Have mercy, O, Amida Buddha! O, Sokka Yurai⁴⁵! O, Merciful Buddha! O, Saviour Buddha! O, *Posal*⁴⁶ of the Earth, and thou five hundred *Nahans*, and you guardian of the eight regions of the gods, hear our prayers in behalf of the unfortunate Choonyang, whose family name is Song, who was born in the year *Imja*⁴⁷, in the village of the Descent of the Fairies, in Namwon county, east Chulla, in the Kingdom of Chosen. She is now in prison, and her frail life hangs by a thread, under the awful menace of the paddle. Cause thou that Yee Dream-Dragon, who lives in Seoul, in Three Stream Town, come south to Chulla as governor, or secret Commissioner of His Majesty, so that she may not die. This is our prayer."

While the pipes went, "*Chew-roo-roo!*"

The cymbals,

"*Kwang-kwang!*"

The drums,

"*Soo-ree toong-toong!*"

The rattle-claps,

"*Do-doo-rak!*"

With their wide-sleeved coats the priests waved their arms, and beat a tattoo this way and that, like the fluttering moths of the summer time, moving back and forth in Buddhist order.

The Commissioner beheld it all in wonder.

"I thought it was by virtue of my ancestors," said he, "that I am coming south in this capacity, but I find that it is due to the Buddha."

On the following day he called the priests together, presented them with a thousand *yang*, then hurriedly wrote a letter and gave it to Halfwit, saying, "I shall wait here for a time. Take the letter and give it to the captain of the guard at Oonbong. He'll give you something for it in return, so deliver it carefully, and wait for me tomorrow morning."

"Yes, sir," answered Halfwit.

He took it and went with all speed to Captain Oonbong. Oonbong read it and then suddenly called a soldier saying, "Lock this chap up in

⁴⁵ Sokka Yurai. The highest title of the Buddha, meaning without origin or end.

⁴⁶ *Posal*. Buddhist divinity one step below the great Divinity.

⁴⁷ *Imja*. This is one of the names of the years of the cycle, of which there are sixty. *Imja* might mean 1552, 1612, 1672, etc: *Eulchook* is another of the names that make up the sixty.

prison, will you. See that he's well fed and cared for, and await my order."

"Yes, sir," said the soldier, and so they locked up Halfwit.

XVIII. THE BLIND SORCERER.

When the Commissioner had despatched Halfwit to Oonbong he made all haste to leave. At this same time Choonyang had fallen asleep and had a dream. She dreamt that the apricot and plum blossoms before the window had fallen; that the looking glass that she used to dress by had been broken in two; that a scarecrow image was hanging over the door; and that the crows outside on the wall were calling "*ga-ook ga-ook, ga-ook.*"

She sat now wondering whether it were a bad or good-omened dream, her thoughts troubling her. At this moment she heard going by the prison the blind sorcerer Haw, who read prayers and cast horoscopes for the town folk, so she summoned the keeper and asked him to call fortune-teller Haw to her.

He came in forthwith and sat down.

"Please excuse my not calling and making inquiry for you before," said the blind man. "You have had a hard time under the rod. Let me massage you, will you? Though I cannot see, yet my fingers are medicinal fingers. I can dispel pain from the body as one would scatter a thousand troops: Let me see. Let me see."

He began in a rude and immodest way to handle her, but she, instead of pushing him off with a stroke of the hand, being anxious to get his interpretation of her dream, influenced him thus: "Blind Master, I want To tell you something. My mother has always said to me that Master Haw, who lives outside the West Gate, although blind, is really at heart a gentleman; that his behaviour is always of the highest order; and that every-body speaks well of him. 'When you were a little girl,' said she to me, 'he frequently saw you, and used to take you on his knee like a father, saying 'My little daughter, My little daughter!' He would shake you and pat your check.' I often wished after growing up to go and see you. It is as if it were but yesterday that I heard all these good things."

The fortune-teller, hearing this, changed his touch to the gentlest, kindest and most reserved.

"Yes, that's so, but what wretch ever beat you thus?"

"The beater 'Big-bell' did it," said Choonyang.

"He is a brute," said Haw. "If he calls me to read prayers for him at the month end, I'll set him a day that will play havoc with his full stomach. But what was your dream?"

When Choonyang told all her dream, Haw cast lots with his silver mounted divining-box. He put in the dice, held it high in the air, and then

called out his prayer thus:

“Heaven do you say nothing? and Earth do you say nothing too? And yet you will be moved to give me what I ask, I know. For a good man’s virtue is one with Heaven and Earth, and its glory is like the Sun and Moon, and its comeliness is like the order of the Four Seasons, and its luck is like that of the gods. In this year Eulchok, in the 5th moon on the 20th day, in the land of Chosen, in East Chulla province, in the county of Namwon, in the township of Phoenix-bamboo, in the village of the Descent of the Fairies, we make our petition. There was born in the year Inja, one whose family name is Song, and whose given name is Choonyang. She is just now locked up in prison and has suffered pain for many days. Tell when she will be set free, I pray; when she will meet Yee Dream-Dragon, of Three Streams in Seoul, and what her fortune will be. As you revealed secrets to the ancients so now reveal this to me.”

He compared the dice and gave a great laugh, “A good throw indeed! The ‘official-devil’ meets a ‘blank.’ When the ‘official-devil’ meets a ‘blank’ it means that the case is off. You’ll be free to-day or tomorrow. Next, the ‘green-dragon,’ the official-devil,’ and the ‘posthorse!’ Ha, ha! That means official promotion. Sure! We have here the highest official office in the land. The ‘tiger’ comes forth in the night from ‘Inwang Mountain’ and crosses the ‘Han River.’ He’s coming; my casts are casts of the gods. You’ll see. Tie a knot on your apron string and lay a wager.”

Choonyang; replied, “Your words alone give me courage, now tell me my dream.”

Haw made answer, “I’ll do so. The *falling blossoms* indicate that the time of fruit has come. The *broken glass* indicates a sound, a report, a ringing noise. The *scare-crow* over the door means that all the people will look up to see as they pass by; and the crow on the prison wall who went ‘*ga-ook, ga-ook,*’ means the *Ga* of Beautiful, and the *Ook* of Mansion. You are to meet with great fortune. When you meet a gentleman at the 5th watch of the night there will be no end of gladness this kapin day. At the tenth hour of pyongjin day, you will ride in a gorgeous palanquin, and if you don’t, may I die and be confounded. Be not afraid,”

“If it comes thus as you say,” said Choonyang, “I’ll surely reward you.”

“I say,” said the blind Master, “there are lots of folks, now-a-days, wearing headcaps of rank, even though they have no rank. Give me a headcap will you. It will all come about in a day or so. Mind I tell you.”

He said good-bye and left.

XIX. AT THE HAND OF FARMERS.

At this time the Commissioner, thinking of Choonyang, made all the speed he could, his heart in a state of trepidation. The time of year was when the farmers were out transplanting their rice seedlings. People in hundreds were busy in the fields, in reed hats and grass rain-coats, making their plantings, While they worked they sang so that the hills re-echoed :

“Too-ree toong-toong, kwang, sang-sa twee-o.”

“To start schools, and learn the sacred teachings, is the calling of the Superior Man,

“Oh yo-yo sang-sa twee-o;

“To live luxuriously in the mansions of the blessed, is the fortune of high ministers of state.

“Oh yo-yo sang-sa twee-o;

“To go horse-back riding and cock-fighting in the flowery hills is the delightful calling of the sportive youth,

“Oh yo-yo sang-sa twee-o ;

“There are lots of callings in the world of the gentry, but we poor farmers only work, and eat, and drink, and sleep,

“Oh yo-yo sang-sa twee-o ;

“Listen to me you lads. Let’s go abroad in ships upon the big blue sea, travel far and view the world, learn this and that, and prove ourselves first dwellers in the land,

“Oh yo-yo sang-sa twee-o.

One farmer would pipe out in a loud voice the leading couplet, while others came in on the chorus.

“Oh yo-yo sang-sa twee-o ;

“The Superior Man puts away the drinkings and immoralities of the world, and with high and noble purpose meets his fellow; treats him honestly and well in all his acts and words,

This is the manner of the Superior Man,

“Oh lol-lol sang-sa twee-o ;

“To ride on a fine horse, with a wide and liberal spirit inside of one, and a mind stored with the sacred teachings of the Sages, and to shake the world with skill and knowledge, this is the part of the Superior Man’

“Oh lol-lol sang-sa twee-o.;

“He who gathers the young under his kindly sway, and sees that they are taught the sacred writings, assisting each in the direction of his particular talent, and aiding them to become strong and good men, does the part of the Superior Man,

“Oh lol-lol sang-sa twee-o ;

“Not sparing his thousands of gold, but giving liberally to aid all

sections of society; with Heaven's love of life and prosperity emanating from him, so that he becomes a living Buddha, this is the work of the Superior Man,

“Oh lol-lol sang-so twee-o;

“Looking into the ways and means of government, so as to help the poor; keeping the national treasury well filled so that the merchants' prices may rise and fall at pleasure, this too is the calling of the Superior Man:

“Oh lol-lol sang-sa twee-o;

“He who in his dealings with public affairs, when he finds a difficulty, never retreats, but moves forward so that with due patience and gentleness, all come right, he is the Superior Man,

“Oh lol-lol sang-sa twee-o ;

“We are singing now of the Superior Man whose thought is deep, and who in heart out distances the world. We are borne down by the thought of him and our throats are dry,

“Oh lol-lol sang-sa twee-o ;

“From the icy caverns, where the cold streams run ceaselessly, drink deep, and then work as no man on earth ever worked before,

“Oh lol-lol sang-sa twee-o.”

After a season spent thus at transplanting, they all came out of the paddy field to have a taste of native whiskey. At one side or the crock stood a farmer who had his hoe over his shoulder, and a straw umbrella hat on his head. His grass rain-coat was stuffed through his belt, and he stood before a brazier warming his hands. He took from his dog skin tobacco pouch some tobacco, emptied it into his left hand, wet it with his breath, spat on it, ground it fine with his thumb, and then drew his pipe from under his top-knot where it had been transfixed, filled it and took a long deep puff from the ash fire, drawing with a bellows strength.

The Commissioner watched him from the side.

“Ha, ha,” said he, “he's a strong mouthed chap yon.”

The farmer looked up at him and said, “Now that they say that there's a Secret Commissioner abroad, such creatures as this one are all about us, on the go.”

The Commissioner then ventured to inquire, “Say, friend, What about your governor's conduct, anyway?”

The farmer laughed. “This fellow makes pretence that he is a Commissioner, and inquires for the governor's acts. How does he do his work? Why he cats well, and drinks well. and hoes well, and spades well, and even rakes well. Nobody does better than he, and to-morrow after a

big feast that is to be held in the *yamen*, he is going to beat to death an honest woman by the name of Choonyang. This rascal is only going to kill her, that's all; but he'll ride out yet one of these days on a hangman's chair."

"Look here Myongsamee."

"Well?"

"Did you see that round-robin?"

"I saw it."

"There were a thousand names from our forty-eight town-ships alone written on it weren't there?"

"Shut up, don't talk like that."

The Commissioner pretended that he did not know what they said.

"Look here," said he, "did this Choonyang really go off with another man and disobey what the governor said?"

The farmer suddenly glared fierce anger at him, shut his two fists and like a wild tiger sprang forward and gave him a fierce blow across the cheek. "You low born runt you, will you dare to accuse a good woman like Choonyang, and dishonor her name? Have you seen it? Have you heard it? If you have seen it, then out with your eyes; or if you have heard it, off with your ears. Tell the truth now."

Then he gave him another blow.

"Say you there (speaking to a comrade) bring that shovel here, and we'll dig a hole and bury this creature." He gave him such a wrench by the scruff of the neck that Dream-Dragon thought his last hour had come.

"Please," said he, "don't kill me. I did wrong. You know it is a saying that men born of the military class make slips of the tongue. I did not know and so said what I ought not to have said. Please pardon me."

Then an old farmer came out and said, "There now, that will do. Let him alone. He is young and has no sense. Let him go. I tell you."

At which all the farmers raised a laugh.

"If you say such things again," said they, "you are a dead man. Mind what we tell you, now go."

Dream-Dragon, scared almost out of his wits, was glad to leave.

"All you farmer gentlemen, fare ye well and rest in peace."

He said his good bye thus and took his departure.

XX. THE MOTHER-IN-LAW

He had met with insult and yet there was an interesting side to it, which he greatly enjoyed. He slept at Osoo Post-house, crossed Hard Stone Hill, there rested his tired legs on a rock under a pine tree, where he nodded off

to sleep for a little and had a dream. In it he saw a beautiful woman fallen in the long grass, that was on fire. She rolled and tossed in helplessness, and then called "Commissioner Yee won't you help me?" He rushed into the fire in great excitement, took her in his arms and carried her safe outside, and then with a start awoke to find that it was a passing dream. But his heart was disturbed by it, and he hurried along on his way, till he reached Namwon, saying to himself, "Is poor imprisoned Choonyang dead, or is she alive? Does she think of me and break her heart? If she knew I were coming she'd dance to meet me, and laugh to greet me, but she does not know, and all is yet uncertain."

He saw once more the old sights that he had lived among and known, "The hills are the same hills; the streams are the same streams, and the green trees line the same pleasant pathways that I journeyed over years ago. I see again the mountain city of Choryong. Is it you, too, Fairy Monastery, that I behold? And are you well Moonlight Pavilion? I am so glad, old Magpie Bridge!"

He climbed up once more into the pavilion, and looked down toward Choonyang's house. The gate-quarters were leaning sideways and there was nothing left worth seeing.

"It's not quite three years since I left Namwon, why does the place look so deserted?"

He went here and there slowly, stepping softly, and at last reached Choonyang's house that nestled among the trees. The whitened wall at the front and to the rear was broken down in places, and wild grass grew upon the terrace tops. There were few traces of people anywhere. The hungry dog before the twig gate did not know him, and so barked snarlingly. But the trees under the windows were the same green bamboos and ever verdant pines. Soon the day would fall, and the moon would rise over the eastern hills. His heart was full of crowding thoughts, while the calling of the birds filled him with intense sadness. He heard a low moaning sound toward which he looked here and there among the evergreens, where they grew thickest together, and just where he could dimly distinguish, there was seen Choonyang's mother before a little shrine built to the Seven Stars (Big Dipper). She had brought a basin of holy water and was burning incense and bowing, as she prayed, "Oh thou spirit of Heaven and Earth, thou spirit of the Stars, thou Saviour Buddha, and thou five hundred Nahan, thou Dragon King of the Seas, thou kings of the Eight Regions of the Dead, thou Lord of the city before whom I pray, please send Dream-Dragon Yee of Hanyang (Seoul) as governor, or as Commissioner, so that my child may be saved from death and prison. Thou Spirit of the Heaven and Earth, be moved by my prayer and save her!"

She prayed for a time, and then half fainting away, said, "My child Choonyang, thou precious twig, thou priceless leaf, I brought thee up without help of father or husband, why have we come to such a pass as this? Is it on account of the miserable mother from whom you are born, whose sins of past existences have to be atoned for, that you die? My child, my child, alas! alas!"

She cried so bitterly that Dream-Dragon was almost overcome. He drew a long sigh and went step by step quietly to the gate, and there coughed a loud cough.

"Come here-e-e!" he called (their way of knocking).

When he had so sung out two or three times, Choonyang's mother slopped her crying.

"Hyangtanee!" said she, "go and see who is calling at the gate." Hyangtanee went step by step, wiping her tearful face with her frock.

"Who is it?" she asked.

"It is I."

"I? Who is I?" asked she again.

"Don't you know me?" inquired the voice.

Hyangtanee looked carefully and then shouted for joy "Oh, who is this?"

She threw her arms about Dream-Dragon, and cried for delight, while Choonyang's mother gave a great start of surprise, and came bounding out.

"Who is it that is beating this child?"

But Hyangtanee replied, "Madame, the Master has come from Seoul."

Choonyang's mother, like a person struggling for life in deep water gave a plunge of amazement saying, "Oh, my! Oh, my!" She flung her arms about his neck. "Who is this?" said she, "Who is this? Can it be he? be he? God has heard. The Buddha has been moved. Did you fall from heaven or come forth from the ground, or ride in on the winds? Do you look just the same as you did? Let me see you, come in quickly, come, come."

She drew him by the hand and when they were seated in the room, she hastened out of the door once more calling.

"Hyangtanee, make a fire in the next room; call Disorder's mother and tell her to prepare a meal; call Hook-prong also, and get him to buy some meat at the *yamen*, and you, yourself catch a chicken and make ready."

After she had given these orders, and returned to the room, she took her son-in-law by the hand and looked him well over. General

stupefaction added to her already beclouded vision, and a dim uncertain light, rendered him difficult to see, so she got up, opened the wall-box, took out a candle case, and had four or five of them trimmed and lit in the room, till the place was illuminated like the sun. She sat down opposite and inspected Dream-Dragon through her filmy eyes, and truly his face was as the gods, but his clothes were dirty and ragged, and of the appearance of desperate poverty. Suddenly her vitals grew cold within her and everything went black before her eyes. As if she had been struck, she gave a scream.

“What do you propose by this appearance, and what’s the meaning of it.?”

“Listen mother to what I say,” was his answer. “I worked at my books diligently, and yet for the thousand I read I got nothing. I failed the exams. The promotion that I had hoped for has faded away, and the means is cut off for my advancement in life. What can one do against the eternal fates? Since I am so disgraced, I have decided to go here and there and beg my living, and give the village dogs something to snap at. Naturally in my plight I thought of my relations, that they would help me out, and I specially thought of you, mother. I have overcome all feelings of shame, and with that my old love for you has returned, so that I have longed to see you every day and every hour. I have no clothes or baggage to bother with, and so I came lightly and easily, and have been a month, or so, on the way, stopping in this guest room and that, wanting to see you all the time, you understand, and here I am. Like frost on top of a fall of snow, I am surprised to find Choonyang’s plight, which adds to my misery. My throat is dry trying to spell out the meaning of these things, and I am ashamed and don’t wish to see her.”

The mother hearing this, gave a bound into mid-air and fell prone.

“She is dead, she is dead. We are both dead, mother and child,” screamed she. “Ya! Is God as mean as this? He has no love. The spirit of the Stars too, and the Buddha, and the five hundred Nahan, and all the rest are good for nothing. Hyangtanee! Go into the rear garden and destroy that shrine that I built there, clean it all out. I have built a good-for-nothing altar and worn my hands thin in prayer. Oh my poor child, how pitiful thou art! My child, my child, or twice eight sunny summers, my precious child, doomed to die, away from all the joys of life. You were unblessed in your mother and are to die thus hopelessly. How can I bear to see you, I shall die myself first”

Her throat grew hoarse, and her heart beat a wild rattle. She raged about deciding to take her own life, till Dream-Dragon was really anxious about her, and put his arms round her saying, “Look here mother, calm

yourself, please.”

“Let me go,” said she, “I hate the sight of you. Get away from me, you thief. Taking advantage of your social standing You came like a robber to my home. You tramp from Seoul! Since I see what you look like I wonder that you have escaped arrest. You will surely be taken yet.”

Dream-Dragon replied, “I say, mother, don’t talk like this. I know my appearance is against me, and that I make no show outwardly, and yet who can tell how it may turn out. Although the heavens fall, there will be some manner of escape I reckon; and though the mulberry fields become blue sea we’ll overcome it in some way or other. Don’t cry, please calm yourself.”

“What way out, pray?” demanded the mother. “Become an *Osa* (Commissioner), or a *Kamsa* (Governor) and you might; but there is no *Osa* or *Kamsa* for the like of you, nothing but a *kaiksa* (a dead beggar), I imagine.”

. “Never mind,” was the reply, “any kind of sa at all would improve matters. I am hungry, give me a spoonful or two of rice will you.”

“I have no rice,” was the emphatic reply.

Hyangtanee came in crying to say, “Mistress don’t take on so, please. If the young mistress should know of this she would throw her life away. What is the use of adding distress and misery to our troubles? It will do no good. Please calm yourself. It’s not late yet so rest a little, and then we’ll go and see the young mistress.”

Hyangtanee went out and hastily prepared the meal, brought it into Dream-Dragon, who knelt down before it and ordered a glass of wine.

“Please, Young Master, dine liberally,” said she.

“Sure,” was the reply, “I’ll devour every bit.”

Dream-Dragon, though a Royal Commissioner, had already been insulted by his mother-in-law, and looked at with the wildest of contempt, so to make himself, if possible, more hateful than ever, he pulled the table greedily up toward him, and ate every scrap of side-dish there was, drank a great bowl of water on top of it, and called,

“Hyangtanee!”

“Yes, sir.”

“Bring any cold rice that you have laid by will you!”

The mother’s soul was furious. “Look at the greedy parasite. He’s full up now to distension. Really he has become a ‘rice-bug,’ and when he’s old he’ll die a beggar.”

He sent away the table and filled his pipe, while the water clock struck “Dang, dang.”

Hyangtanee lit the dragon-lantern and said, “The water-clock has

struck the hour, let's go now and see the young mistress."

XXI THE PRISONER

Hyangtanee took the lantern and led the way for the mother, while the son-in-law followed behind, and they wended their desolate procession to the prison. It had come on to blow and to rain, while the wind moaned "*oo-roo, oo-roo,*" and gusts sent the showers scattering here and there. The thunder roared "*wa-roo, wa-roo,*" and the lightning flashed. The spirits of the dead wailed and cried from the prison enclosure "*too-run, too-run.*" There were ghosts of those who had died under the paddle; of those who had died under the bastinado, those who had died in the torture-chair, those who had died by rods, those who had been hanged dangling from the beams. In pairs and trios they whistled and whined,

"*Whee-whee, ho-ho, ay-eh, ay-eh.*"

The lightning flashed and the rain scurried by; the wind whirled and tossed; and the loose paper on the doors flapped and sang. The gates rattled, and the drip from the eave went "*dook-dook.*" The distant crow of the cock was heard from the neighbouring village while Choonyang lay helpless and desolate.

"How hard and cold seems my Young Master. We said farewell and he seems to have forgotten me. Not even in my dreams does he come any more. Bring him to me, oh ye dreams! Let me meet him. In my twice eight summers what sins have I committed that I should be an orphaned spirit shut up here within the prison? Even though you are not moved by me, think kindly of my whitehaired mother. When shall I see my husband?"

So she lay upon the unyielding pillow and slept, and in her troubled dreams the Young Master came and sat silently beside her. Looking carefully at him she saw a golden crown upon his head, and a girdle of honour about his waist, while his appearance was like the gods. So awe-inspiring was his presence, that she was amazed and took him reverently by the hand, and then with a sudden start she awoke and he was gone. But the *cangue* remained fastened about her neck, and the husband whom she loved and wept for, and whom she had met for just the moment, had not waited long enough to have her tell him anything. She wept to think of this, when at that moment her mother arrived outside the gate.

"Choonyang!" she called, "Are you there?"

When she heard the voice she gave a start, "Who is it calling me?" asked she. "Is it the shades of Soboo and Hawyoo who dwelt near the Key Mountains and the Yong River? Is it the Four Ancients of Shang-san seeking me? Is it Paikée and Sookjay, who dug weeds on the Soyaw Mountains who seek me? Is it the Seven Righteous Men of the Bamboo

Forest, who left the glories of the Chin Kingdom to seek me? Are You Paik Mangho who went to Turkestan to seek the married lovers of the Milky Way, and was taken prisoner who comes asking that I go with him? Are you Paik Nakchon who loved music and the wine cup who comes seeking me? Tis only the wind and the rain, nobody seeks for me, but who is it that called?"

"Call louder," said the son-in-law.

"Don't you make a row here," retorted the Mother-in-law, "If the Governor were to hear of it you would lose your liberty and your bones would be properly broken up."

Then Dream-Dragon gave a great yell,

"Choonyang!"

When thus called Choonyang gave a start,

"Who arc you?" she asked.

"It is I," replied the mother.

"Is it you, mother? How did you come?"

"I just came."

"Why have you come? Is there any news from Seoul? Has someone come to take me? Who did you say had come?"

"It's turned out fine," said the mother, "just as you would wish, never saw the like, would delight your soul, beautiful, pitiful, wretched, a nice beggar indeed has come."

"But who has come, mother?"

"Your beloved, your long thought of Yee Sobang, Worm Sobang, has come."

Choonyang on hearing this replied, "He whom I saw for a moment in my dream shall I actually see alive?"

She gathered her dark tresses about her neck, and turned the heavy *cangue* about and about to get rest from it. "Oh, my back, my knees!" said she. Having turned the *cangue* she stooped down, and came on all fours toward the door.

"Where is my husband? If you are here please let me hear you speak?"

The mother clipped despairingly with her tongue.

"Look at that, she is crazy, poor thing."

But Choonyang said in reply, "Even though he's in misfortune he's my husband. High officialdom and nobility I have no desire for. I want no high pay. Why talk of good or bad about the one my mother chose for me? Why treat so unkindly him who has come so far to see me?"

The mother thus rendered speechless, looked on while the son drew near.

“Choonyang,” said he, “You’ve had a hard time, and it’s not your fault; a thousand things have contributed toward it.”

“Put your hand in through the chink of the door, please, and help me up,” said she.

The son in his haste pushed forward his hand to reach her but they were still too far apart and could not touch.

“Stoop down here, mother,” said he.

“You wretch, why ask me to stoop down?”

“I wanted to rest my foot on you, so as to be able to reach in my hands to Choonyang.”

“Contemptible creature, more contemptible than ever,” was the only reply.

Choonyang with great difficulty reached forward her hand and trembled as she rose.

“Where have you been so long?” she asked. “Have you been to see the pure waters of the Sosang; or did you go to visit Soboo, who washed his ears to rinse away the hateful Word of favor; or have you been lost in some butterfly dream with a new love? You have not loved me, you have not loved me.”

Dream-Dragon with her hand in his laughed at times, and cried at times.

“God has had pity,” said she, “and I have not died but lived. Who would have thought that we would ever meet? Have you married again?”

“Married again? What do you mean? I haven’t even managed to make a decent way. I, when I left you, went up to Seoul, and, absorbed so deeply in you, failed in my studies, and my father sent me off so that I have gone about in the guest-rooms of my friends, getting a little here and there to eat, not hearing anything of you but wanting to see you so I have walked the thousand *lee*; but you have had it harder even than I. The world is all confused and my heart is distressed so that I shall die.”

Choonyang replied, “Mother, please hear me. When the day is light, in the room where we two were united, make a fire, spread out the mattress smoothly and attractively. From the three storey chest in the room opposite, take some of the rolls of cloth, and make inner and outer clothes for the Young Master. Get a good hat and headband that fit him. The extras you will find in the tortoise shell box. Get the thousand *yang* from deputy Song, that I left with him, and use it as is necessary. See that he is well cared for with good things to eat, and also see to yourself, my mother dear. If, when I am away you are in a state of fever and anxiety, how it will disturb my husband who has come so far. He knows your disposition, but if you treat him with contempt, not only will I be a

disobedient daughter to you, but it will hasten my death. Please help me.”

The mother heard this and was silent, but under her breath she spoke resentful remonstrances, “The beggarly creature has taken these fits now!”

“Are you there Hyangtanee!” asked Choonyang.

“Yes!” answered Hyangtanee.

“Will you see to Master’s sleeping and eating. His being well cared for and comfortable rests with you. See to his meals with every attention. If required get medicine from Yee Cho-boo outside the East Gate, and serve him just as though I were with him. You know my mind and I know yours so why should I tell you?”

“My husband!”

“Yes, what is it?”

“They say that to-morrow there is to be a birthday feast, and that at the end of the feast I am to be taken and killed, and that the keeper of the prison has orders to make many rods and bastinados. Please do not leave me, keep just outside the prisoner just before the *yamen* and wait. When the order comes to bring me out, help me with the *cangue*, and when they have killed me and cast me aside, let no one else put hands upon me but just you. Come in quickly and take my body and carry me home and after putting me to rest call out for my spirit. Take the coat that I have worn in prison, and that has been wet with my tears and shake it toward heaven and say, ‘In this east land of Chosen, east Chulla, in the county of Namwon, in the town of the Descent of the Fairies, whose birth year was Imja, Song Choonyang, Pok, Pok, Pok!’ tossing it upon top of the house. Make no special shroud for me, but take something from what I have already made, and dress me in it. Do not put me in a coffin but let my young Master take me in his arms and go to some quiet resting place, dig deeply and wrap me in your own great coat, bury me and put a stone in front of my grave with this inscription, ‘This is the grave of Choonyang who died to save her honour.’ Write it in large characters so that it can be seen and read, and I’ll not mind then even though you say that it is the grave of your dead concubine.

“My poor mother, who will care for her when I am dead and turned to dust. She has been so distressed and like to die. If she dies unsheltered and uncared for, she will be at the mercy of crows and kites. Who will drive them off, alas! alas!” and the tears flowed from her eyes and wet all her worn and trampled skirts.

She asked “My husband!”

“What is it?”

“If I had attended my Master, and we had grown old together, I

might have asked a favour of him, but to have never served him at all, and to die so pitifully, what could I dare to ask? But still I must, and it is about my mother. By Your good will, which is broad and deep as the river, please take my mother under your care, as tenderly as you would me, and when you come to meet me in the Yellow Shades, I'll reward you with the 'tied grass.' All we have failed of in this life we will make up in the world to come and never part again. I could talk forever to thee, but the day dawns, so I speak only this one wish. But you will be wearied, go quickly, sleep and rest."

"Yes!" said he, "Don't be anxious. I'll wait for the day to dawn and then I'll know how it goes as to death or life. Let us think only of meeting again."

"Where are you going?" asked the mother.

"Where am I going? Going to your house of course."

"Go somewhere else, hadn't you better, to a bigger and greater house than mine. Go to the Guest Hall (where beggars congregate), and act as judge among your own kind."

"Yes," said he "what you say is true after all. How did you know about it? Wherever I go in any District, I have a big guest house all my own awaiting me. Hurry home, I'm going to the Guest Hall."

Hyangtanee came running along and took hold of Dream-Dragon by the hand to compel him to come.

"Don't be offended," said she, "at the mistress' words; let's go home."

"Yes, but I've got something special to see to. Get my rice ready and I'll be there in a little."

The mother and Hyangtanee went home, while the Commissioner took his way to the Moonlight Pavilion. Hither and thither he walked, thinking over how he was to act: and now from the Sa hour the head secretaries, middle men, post servants and others, began to gather, making their salutations before him.

"To-day," said he, "you must all be present at the feast to be given at the *yamen*; and you will act so and so. Wait quietly, on hand and take the signal when I give it."

"All right, sir," answered they.

When the secretaries, middle-men, attendants, and soldiers had received their instructions, they scattered again in different directions; while the Commissioner himself went to the gate-quarters of the *yamen* just as the various District Governors were coming in, in full regalia.

"Imsil," shouted the servants, meaning the governor of that district.

"Koksang," is the echo.

“Yea-a-a-a!” is the response.

In the noise and shouting it is learned that the Governor of Tamyang District has arrived, of Sonchang also, and Koon-soo, etc., while the trumpets blow “*Da-a-ah!* Clear the way.” Now the captain of the guard Oonbong has come. The host of the day has given orders strictly to the different attendants to have oxen killed; he has called his house-servants and has had tables made ready; called the kitchen women and given orders regarding the kinds of food; has commanded the heads of departments to see that dainties are prepared. He has called the stewards and given them directions for the band and music; has called the head *keesang* and given her her orders about the dancing-girls; has had all the visitors appointed to their proper places.

The distinguished guests in silk, come in, in streams. The playing of the band was equal to the fairy music of Lake Yojee in ancient China. Every few seconds the big drum would come rolling in like the sound of spring thunder. The high notes of the flutes were like the calls of the phoenix, while the whistling of the spotted bamboo from the Sosang River awakened all one’s sense of pain and sorrow. Through the thrummings of the harp were heard echoes of the year of plenty. The five-stringed viol gave a flavour of the Namhoon Palace. The smaller harps touched the chords of pity. The voices of the men were deep and strong, and those of the women soft and clear. Though one loves the old times, still the new ones may often awaken the envy of Paika the great musician of China. The Commissioner with his sense of delight all aroused, went, in his beggar garb, straight to the feast.

“I say, you runners you, and you Boys look yonder,” shouted the host, “see that tramp coming in, he evidently wants to pilfer something.”

The noise of it made such a report and commotion, that the host grew very angry and said, “Look you, kick that creature out, will you!”

But the Commissioner held fast to a pillar near by, and was not to be dislodged. Said he, “The man who said ‘Kick me out’ is fit to be my son, but the man who lets himself be kicked out is no man at all.”

The beggar shouted at the soldiers so that Oonbong looked at him with surprise and inquiry in his eye, for in spite of his ragged clothes and damaged hat, he was evidently some peculiar personage or other.

Oonbong called the Boy and said, “Yonder fellow is a gentleman evidently, give him a place at the foot, spread a mat and treat him well.”

“Yea-a-a!” answered the Boy as out he went.

“You runner, yonder!”

“What is it?”

“Call that gentleman to come up here.”

The Commissioner laughed and said to himself, "He knows, he knows, Oonbong knows. Oonbong has reached his final term of office, but he is in for promotion of three years more." With a bound, up he came and sat down by Oonbong, bowing, simply.

Oonbong spoke thus: "I have something to say to you guests."

"What is it?"

"The gentleman sitting on the last mat is a beggar, but still I propose that we recognize him as a gentleman of honor, and treat him accordingly. What do you say to it?"

The host screwed up his face and made answer, "When creatures like that come near, look out for your fans and pipes, or they'll be stolen. Why treat him in any such way?"

When he had so spoken well laid tables were brought in, but the beggar was given no fruit or dainties, so that Oonbong grew anxious about it.

"Boy!" said he, "Come here!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Bring in a proper table for that gentleman also."

"Yes, sir!"

They brought it in but it was an old table, from which the lacquer and tortoise-shell veneering had fallen off, and its legs were crooked like dogs' legs. A rib of beef too, on the table was only bone. Some sprouted beans there were, and a plate of chaff like leavings. Fish tails and a cup of mouldy spirit constituted the rest. Dream-Dragon looked at it and then with the handle-end of his fan, he gave it a poke and kicked it over, nudging Oonbong meanwhile in the side.

"I say, Oonbong!"

Oonbong gave a jump. "Look here, what do you mean by that?" asked he.

"Give me a cutlet, will you?"

"Hold up friend, if you want a rib take it, or do you want one of my ribs that you poke me so?"

Oonbong again called the Boy, "Take this cutlet and give it to that gentleman."

"No, no," said the Commissioner, "a beggar is never served by other people in that way, he always helps himself." So he moved round among the tables, picked up this dainty morsel and that, carried them back to his dog-legged table with a dancing tipsy motion, and piled up a perfect mountain of good things. He gave Oonbong a second poke with his fan.

"I say, fellow, are you crazy?" asked Oonbong.

"No, I'm not crazy, but since we have these dancing-girls let's

have them give a song first before we drink.”

Oonbong called a *keesang* saying, “Sing a song for this gentleman will you?”

In ancient times, as now, there was no difference, dancing-girls were dancing-girls and had to do as ordered.

One girl says, “Look at that creature, does he want me to sing? What crazy thing is he? Why did you call me?”

Oonbong shouted, “None of that now, whoever calls you, it’s no business of yours, do as you are told.”

“Come here,” said the Commissioner, “and sit by me.”

“I don’t want to.” said the *keesang*.

“Do as you are bid,” said Oonbong.

She then sat down on the mat by the beggar and he handed her a bone that he had been eating from and told her to share it.

“I don’t want it,” she said, “it’s dirty.”

“What, you a *keesang*, and you don’t like me?” asked the Commissioner.

“What do you mean anyway? I don’t like you, you are nasty.”

“Do you say ‘nasty’?”

“Take it and eat it,” said Oonbong, “do you hear?”

Then the *keesang* did take it and touched it to her lips.

“That’ll do,” said the Commissioner, “now you may go. Pour out a glass and sing to us.”

“I can’t sing,” said the girl.

“You a *keesang* and can’t sing, what do you mean?”

Then she poured it out and began.

“Chapjee keuryo, chapjee keuryo (a low form of expression meaning Take the glass).

Let this glass stand for woe and tears

When this you drink,

Just let me think,

Yes, be a beggar for ten thousand years.”

“Your song is evidently a new one, improvised, eh? Great you are.”

He did not drink anything, however, but poured out the sool on the matting.

“Pshaw! I’ve spoiled a nice mat.”

He got his sleeves wet, too, and then sprinkled the guests with his flourishing movements, so that they were all disturbed and agitated.

Oonbong ordered this and that ridiculous thing, so that the place was turned up side down.

The host thought, “This creature is surely a son of the gentry. No

ordinary young man would ever act like that. He must be some reprobate of the better class, uneducated, evidently. Let's set him a subject to write a poem on and get rid of him in that way; so, said he, "Good friends, lead me your ears. Let's write a verse each, and the one who does the worst, let him bear the brunt of it and be ejected from our midst"

He gave as rhyme characters "sweet" and "strain," at which the beggar also came in and sat down, saying, "I, too, by the goodness of my father and mother learned to write verses a bit, shall I try my hand?"

Oonbong heard this with delight and gave him pen, ink and paper. He took them and wrote rapidly, and when he had finished he pushed it under the mat where he sat, and said to the host, "A beggar from far away has had a fine meal, thanks a thousand times, au revoir!"

He then arose and left, to the great relief of the master of the occasion.

"Go in peace, sir," said the host, "when shall we meet again?"

"Oh, we'll meet in a little," said the beggar.

When he had gone, Oonbong extracted the paper from underneath the matting and it read thus:

"Golden cups of perfumed wine!

'Tis the blood of human swine.

Jewelled fare and dainties sweet,

Wear the smell of swollen feet.

Candle lights and laughing glee,

Mixed with sweat and tears I see.

Songs and music's lofty strain,

Rest on inward moans and pain."

When Oonbong read it he trembled from head to foot. "Gentle host," said he, "have a good time. I have something to see to and must go."

Imsil, too, likewise stunned, got up. "I also must go at once," said he.

"What have you to go for?" asked the host.

"My mother has fallen and hurt herself."

"Pshaw! Your mother, nonsense!" said the host.

XXIII. JUDGEMENT.

The Commissioner's servant hearing Oonbong read this verse from behind the screen, came forward and gave orders, "Call the three office chiefs," said he; "call the heads of departments; the chief writers, and proceed accordingly; call the guards of the treasury; call the chief of works; call the head of the rites office and see how the prison is; call the steward, the

head runners, the head beaters, flagbearers, workers, and see how matters stand with them; call the jailor and inquire as to punishments; call the butcher and see how the candle lights are; summon the head soldiers and the head slaves; call 'Big-bell' the flogger and the executioners, and have them fall in in order, slaves, *keesang*, runners, waiters, soldiers, etc."

Such wild confusion you never saw, people running here and there, there and here.

"Look out what are you doing!" some one shouts. "Don't you know that a lot of you'll get killed?" says another.

The Commissioner waited for the noon hour just outside the *yamen*, The secretary, by the raised hand gave the signal "Boots and saddles" and ordered that they should all make ready.

"Steward take these orders!" shouts some one, "On with outer coats, red shoulder sashes and leggings.

"Saddle the horses; fasten the reins; bring the large horse for His Excellency; shorten the girths; tack on the outer reins; on with your felt hats, girdles, sticks and swords."

Like tigers they rushed to make all ready, and with their six sided batons held aloft they came sweeping in. They beat loudly on the outer gate with noisy thumping .

"The Commissioner of His Majesty! The Commissioner of His Majesty!" shouted they.

Two or three such calls in front of the *yamen* rendered the place electrified.

"Hither the Three Counsellors!"

"Yea-a-a!" responded they.

The Commissioner then gave this order, "Ask the officers of the Six Boards and others who were in the service of my father to stand by out of the way," then to the soldiers he said, "You soldiers, forward!"

The soldiers heard this order and went in, smashing up the remnants of the feast. Silken and embroidered screens went careening over the banister. All the fancy tables, dishes, spittoons, platters, plates, wine bottles, went crashing and splintering before this onset of clubs and batons. Harps and fiddles, flutes and pipes, drums and gongs went kicking and scattering their remains all over the place. The frightened guests fled for their lives. Oonbong lost his seal and found he had in hand a gourd instead; the governor of Tamyang, in place of his hat had carried off a reed basket; the chief of Sunchang lost his big divided coat, and escaped in a mongdoree, while the host in craven fear made his exit and hid in the women's quarters.

It was a time indeed for fear for here was His Majesty's Commissioner with all his powers. Such noises and confusion and reversing of commands and orders were never heard. Horses refused to go but backed up into the face of His Excellency. The ground seemed to roll up in front of his fiery chariot. One set of servants seemed to have lost their heads; others went shouting and crying about like maniacs.

At a given signal an agile attendant bounded into the place of office.

"Steward!" shouted he.

"Here!" answered the steward.

"Stop the noise will you, and get these people quiet"

"Yes, sir."

"What is it?"

"Get these people quiet will you!"

"All you runners fall in," said the steward.

"Yea-a-a!" was the answer.

Then suddenly every thing fell into a great calm. Those who had played in the band ceased playing; the dogs who had barked themselves hoarse, fell silent; the birds refused to fly and all the noises of the hills and streams, in the fear that fell on them were quiet

The Royal Commissioner then took his seat in the place of office, and after making preliminary arrangements, spent his first hour in running over the list of prisoners, a hundred or more. He called them one by one, spoke kindly to them and let them go, so that a prisoners' dance resulted and praises were sung to the glory of his name. He then called the Chief of Torture and inquired particularly for Choonyang, and when the Chief had told him all carefully and explicitly, he suddenly ordered Choonyang to be brought in.

The warden called the jailer and they went together to the prison. They summoned the attendants of the Six Bureaus and conferred thus, "He is an enlightened Commissioner. If he lets Choonyang go free he will be renowned for a hundred years; and yet we do not know just what he will really do." They reached the prison and found its locked gates standing like a city wall. These opened with a great creaking, groaning noise. They took a saw with them, went in and set to, kokak, kokak, sawing off the *cangue* from poor Choonyang's neck.

"Take courage, little woman," said they. "The Commissioner orders that you be sent to Seoul, and though we do not know definitely his commands, we are sure that he will set you free. Just gather your wits about you and answer him clearly. God knows your faithfulness which is like the eternal green of the bamboo and the pine. How can it be

otherwise?”

But Choonyang's mind was all confused. "Hyangtanee!" she called.

"Yes."

"Look and see who is outside the prison."

"There is nobody," answered Hyangtanee.

"Look again."

"There is nobody."

"The hardest master in all the world is surely he. When he came I charged him earnestly, and now noon is past and he doesn't come, and no message either. Where has he gone that he does not wish to see me die? Is he tired and has he fallen asleep I wonder? Hard and cruel master, he does not come to see me even once before I die. Why does he not come? My tears like blood fall on my bedraggled clothing."

Choonyang's mother stamped. her feet and beat her breast

"What shall we do?"

Hyangtanee cried as well. The warden and the jailer were both in tears but they said, "Don't cry, don't cry. Even among the confusion of horses and spears there are unexpected ways of escape; and though the heavens fall there are corners and holes into which one can fly."

The 'Whip' of the *yamen* comes with a roar that fairly upsets the universe, calling "Hurry up, you!"

In the haste of it Choonyang is conducted to the *yamen*, Hyangtanee helping her along while her mother follows hard behind. Just at this time all the widows of the town have come in a group to save Choonyang if possible. They present a petition. One beautiful old lady with a white dress on was there. The younger women, shamefacedly, and in comely manner have coats over their heads. The one who spoke was tall and neat and eloquently gifted. There were poor widows too with hoe and spade in hand fresh from the field, also wood-cutter's old wives from the hillsides, several hundred of them so that the court was filled with women, and the Commissioner said,

"Who are all these women folk? What do you want here?"

Then one stepped forward and said, "Our coming is because we have a petition to present to your enlightened Excellency."

He again asked, "What is it you want? Tell me now exactly."

The widow replied, "A woman's faithfulness to her husband is the first of queenly virtues. All know of this Your Excellency, lords and governors as well as common folk. Now Moonplum's daughter Choonyang, though born of a *keesang* has gentle blood in her veins, for her father was a Minister of State. The son of a former governor, Master

Yee, took Choonyang by a sworn marriage contract, but alas there are so many devils on earth who seek woe and misery for people, she was compelled to say goodbye to him, she has been faithful. The present occupant of office had this good woman arrested and tortured in order to force her name into the register of the *keesang*, and to compel her to a life of dishonour. But she has held out so that he has beaten her nearly to death. This may be the way, however, that God wants to show forth her faithfulness. Her wavering thread of life hangs in the balance, and we have come hoping as from God, that you will see how true she is and let her go.”

The Commissioner made reply, ”Choonyang is a dancing-girl who has been disrespectful and disobedient to the Governor, she cannot, therefore, be forgiven.”

On this statement, there came bundling forth, from among the widows, a woman of well nigh a hundred years, with well favoured face still, hearing and eyesight intact, strength unimpaired, having a soul gifted with a fierce and implacable flavour, and a tongue skilled at invective. She was indeed a woman to be feared. She came forth, bobbing her head, With her eyebrows fiercely poised across her face, and her jaw set for immediate action.

“What do you mean by such a decision?” said she. “Because she was faithful to her husband is that her crime? To give up her virtue and save her life she refused; and because she refused will this man who put her under the paddle go unpunished? You say that her sin is one of disobedience, a ridiculous decision! And now that Your Excellency has the power, why don’t you send soldiers to Seoul and arrest a rascal there called Dream-Dragon or whatever his name is. A thief and a robber assuredly, who ought to be gagged and manacled and put into the torture chair.”

The soldiers on hearing this said “Sh-h-h!”

“Sh-h-h! What do you mean by Sh-h-h? Is there a snake going by that says Sh-h-h? What are you anyway you craven creatures you? If I were once in the place of this mock Commissioner I’d make it lively for some of you folk.”

The Commissioner, delighted with all this, shook inwardly with laughter. He said, “It will all turn out right, ladies, don’t get yourselves worked up. Thanks, you may go now.”

As they went out the old woman said farther, “Your Excellency, don’t you dare to do as you said, or you’ll meet with a catastrophe that will be something awful.”

And now they all retired outside the *yamen* to await the decision

regarding Choonyang.

The Commissioner gave orders to bring her in.

She was helped in as one nearly dead. Her pitiful condition was such that no one could see it without being moved to tears, so to hide his feelings and to disguise himself he shouted loudly.

“Listen now to what I say, you, a *keesang* of the common order, have disobeyed the commands of your superior officer, and have made a disturbance in the courtyard of the *yamen*.

Is that not so? You therefore deserve a thousand times to die. You were ordered to be the servant of the Governor but you refused. I would ask, will you be a servant to me now, the Commissioner?”

He shouted so loudly that the place echoed. She replied, “Similar trees are all of a similar colour; crabs and crayfish are the same in kind. All the gentry are of like mind it seems, in their view of a low woman’s faithfulness. I am the daughter of a *keesang* but am not a *keesang* myself. Can Your Excellency not see that I am innocent? In ancient times a faithful *keesang* served the learned Doctor Tai; and the woman Hong-bul followed Yee Chong. Cannot low women of the *keesang* class even be faithful? While they may or not believe me, the sharpest knife may kill me, the deepest sea may drown me, the fiercest fire may burn my soul, still I must be faithful. Do what may be best, but know that I cannot do other wise. If I be destined to death let me die, or if to live please let me live!”

The Commissioner after another question or two, took from his pocket the ring that she had given him on his departure, and called the head *keesang*, saying, “Take this ring and give it to her, will you.”

The head *keesang* took the ring and placed it before Choonyang; but she was so dazed and stupefied, that she simply saw that it was a ring, but never recognizing for a moment that it was the one that she had given to him so long ago.

Then he said, “Look up, won’t you?”

After repeating this order two or three times, Choonyang looked up, and lo it was her husband, who had visited her in the prison the night before. She might have bounded forward at once, put her arms around him and wept and danced for joy. But did she? No. One kind of human nature is such, that when it lights upon unspeakable joy it cries out its soul in tears of tenderest emotion. The crowd of onlookers saw falling from her eyes upon her dress skirt tears like pearls. There were tears not from the ordinary affections, nor from the six thousand joints and ligaments of the body, but tears from the heart of hearts, the inmost of the very being. “Oh my husband is it you? Am I dead or am I dreaming? You came last night to the prison and saw my plight. You said to me a hundred times, ‘Let

your spirit be at peace, rest and wait,' but I did not understand you."

She buried her poor bruised heart in the folds of his Royal Commissionership and wept at last her inarticulate feelings of relief from pain, of safety, and of her entrance into bliss and joy.

XXIV. THE LAUREL WREATH.

The Commissioner then had a four-man chair brought and had her sent to her home. On account of the recognized prohibition to enter the *yamen* without permission, her mother had been all this time outside, going through stages of excitement. On seeing her daughter come forth thus she simply went mad with delight, sent her on ahead while she stayed for a time to talk it over with the women,

Said she, "*Ul-see-go-na!* My beggar son-in-law, who came last night is a Royal Commissioner! What do you mean? Is it a dream, or am I alive? If it is a dream, may I never wake; and if I am alive, may I live forever. *Chee-hwa-ja, chee-hwa-ja.*"

"Look here, you soldier boys, open that gate, the mother of the Commissioner is going in. She is going in. What shall I do? Buy fields or lands? Such a day as this! All you women don't wish for sons, wish for daughters. This is my daughter's gift to me, this day."

In she went,

"I'm crazy, I insulted you, my son, last night to no end, and treated you disgracefully. You wretched woman, what did you do it for? Bring a knife and make an end of this woman's evil tongue. He is like the gods and yet he was a beggar last night. Why did he deceive me so? This morning at the last cock crow, there were several runners who came in uniform, coats and hats, peeking in at our garden gate and pointing with the finger. Now I know they were his soldiers.

"I hope he'll not be angry with me. However angry he may be, what can he do with me his mother-in-law? After my son went up to Seoul, this old woman built a shrine in the rear garden, and prayed to the Seven Stars and lit the lights; prayed day and night that our son-in-law might fare him well and prosper, and God heard it and made him to become a Royal Commissioner. But I have something to tell him, please hear it, it is this. Don't be hard on the present Governor. He is old and yet is greedy and revengeful. Hearing that Choonyang was beautiful beyond all others, he called her and attempted to compel her to become his concubine. He tried to coax her too, in a thousand ways, till at last he took the course of severity, and in fierce anger endeavoured to break her down. If you were like him you would have him killed, but since now by your favour we live, let it be extended to him likewise. If it were not for him we should never

have known of Choonyang's worth.

"Wonderful it is! Last night's beggar, my son-in-law and Royal Commissioner. Wonderful it is! Choonyang who was at the point of death is alive, alive. Wonderful it is! The woman Wolmai is the mother of a Royal Commissioner, wonderful it is! Let's all dance for the joy of it, wonderful indeed! Among all the wonders that be greatest, wonderful, wonderful!"

She and the women, hand in hand, made their way to her home. A beef was killed and all who came were welcomed to a share in the feast.

And now the boy Half-wit who had been locked up in Oonbong's town, hearing that the Royal Commissioner had arrived at Namwon, made his escape and came flying to pay his respects to Dream-Dragon.

The Commissioner said, "You rascal, you were locked up by Oonbong, how did you get out without my orders?"

He replied, "Have I done any wrong to be locked up so? In Your Excellency's letter there was an order to lock me up and that's why I was arrested. Do you treat a chap who has been faithful to you for years in that way?"

The Commissioner laughed. "You had done no wrong, but because you are a half-wit with a long tongue I had you locked up."

At once he wrote out his promotion to a higher office in the district, signed the paper, which appointed him for ten years, and gave it to him.

At this time the Governor, pale as death, brought his seal of office and gave it up to the Commissioner, who called him and spake to him kindly.

"I have heard of your high reputation, but we meet for the first time. Do you know who I am?"

The Governor bowed and said, "Of course I know."

The Commissioner said with a laugh, "Men all like beautiful women; and if we did not have some way to prove it, the pure and beautiful would never be known. If it were not for you no one would ever have guessed the worth of Choonyang. Thanks for what you have disclosed."

The Governor ashamed and abashed, made no reply.

The Commissioner then went on to say, "Namwon is a large District, and in a year of famine would suffer greatly. Do your best to govern well, be a shelter for the people, and make ready to help them in time of need."

When they said goodbye the Governor bowed twice and said, "I am most grateful for your liberal treatment."

It was now the third watch of the night, and all the voices of the

people had ceased. The noisy world had receded into the region of sleep, so he ordered a soldier to conduct him to Choonyang's home. As he went along, the shadows of the trees were just as they used to be, and the moon's soft beams were as of yore. The tookyon bird in the shadowy hills called to him; and there was the cry of the heron who felt his old love return, and shook his wings to say, "Glad to see you, sir." In the lotus pond the gold-fish were sporting in the moonlight, and the geese in the shade of the plants and flowers awoke at the sound of passing feet.

The soldier called, "Swee-e-e."

Choonyang's mother gave a start, "Dear me, has the Commissioner come, I wonder?"

She came out to welcome him, and he went at once into Choonyang's room. She was resting and arose with difficulty and took him by the hand. He wiped away all traces of her tears saying cheerfully, "Of all the heroes of the ages there were none who won the day without trial. You met me by accident but yet you have suffered hard for me. It is all my fault, don't ever cry again my dear."

He comforted and consoled her with a thousand loving words, had all the sweet things known prepared for her and the best medical treatment.

"Now we two are happy to live out our hundred year agreement," said he, "Be quick to return to health. Sell your things here and go first up to Seoul and wait for me. As I am under His Majesty's orders I cannot tarry longer just now. I shall have to leave to-morrow, but shall send you a messenger from every stopping place. You shall hear often. The head of the Board of Rite will go with you and prepare your way. I have written home so that servants will be here soon to meet and escort you with a guard of honour."

He thus gave his orders to the mother and daughter and departed. Once again, but only for a little, they had to say goodbye. He came at break of day, had his baggage set in order, and left.

He went through all the fifty-three Districts of Chulla Province, like a passing cloud, making careful note in every place, and when his records were prepared he went back to Seoul.

He became in time a Royal Secretary, the Guardian of Literature, a Cabinet Minister, a special Adviser to the King. When he reported Choonyang's wonderful behaviour she was decorated by His Majesty and recorded in the state records as one of the Kingdom's "Faithful Women." Her name made all the age in which she lived to resound with her praises.

THE END.