OUR LITTLE CHINESE COUSIN

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created on April 26th, 2004

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CHENCHU

Our Little Chinese Cousin

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" The Chinese Boy and Girl," etc.

Illustrated with reproductions offihotographs and drawings by native artists

Boston
The Page Company
PUBLISHERS

Seventeenth Impression, September, 1
Eighteenth Impression, October, 1927

Made in U. S. A.

THE COLONIAL AL PRESS
C. H. SIMONDS CO., BOSTON, U. S. A.

Foreword

AT the time this edition goes to press, the situation in China is becoming a matter of world interest. The feeling against foreigners has reached a point where practically all representatives of Christian nations have been obliged to seek refuge aboard the English and American naval craft which are patrolling adjacent waters.

Several detachments of United States Marines have started for the Orient via the Pacific, and the Chinese government has received official notification that if peaceful American subjects now in the trouble zone are not adequately protected, the United States will take such steps as become necessary for the preservation of their lives.

While similar situations have arisen from time to time in the past, the present attitude of the Anglo Saxon mind will hardly tolerate a continuance of the vicious conduct that characterizes such affairs. The civilized world is losing patience with fanatical groups whose principal aim seems to be annihilation of law and order.

The missionaries who have devoted their lives to the relief of physical, mental, and spiritual suffering in China, have accomplished so much along educational lines that many students have completed courses in European and American universities, where Chinese students have been able to compete on equal terms with those of any nation. Consequently the old barrier between the Orient and the Occident has been slowly but definitely dissolving, and there has been reason to hope that the constantly broadening horizon of the Oriental mind would eventually put an end to the old conditions.

The present situation would indicate that there is still much left to be desired. China is beset within by civil strife, and without by international complications. Perhaps the outcome will be a long stride in the right direction.

THE PUBLISHERS.
BOSTON, April I, 1927.

INTRODUCTION

ON the other side of the world, live our little Chinese cousins, with their yellow skin and slanting eyes and shiny black hair. They get up in the morning when we go to bed, and they lie down in their hard beds at night when we are going to breakfast, and they have many ways which are opposite to ours, but we should have a great deal of interest in them because in one thing their country is trying to be like ours. China has been struggling for a number of years to make herself into a republic with laws and a president like those of the United States.

China was one of our allies in the World War. Early in the war the Chinese realized that it was a conflict between right and justice on the one side, and force and aggression on the other and China thereupon declared war on Germany.

Of course China was not able to send troops to the various battle fronts, for she had very few men trained in modern warfare; but she sent many thousands of laborers to work behind the lines, in France and elsewhere, thus releasing, for the trenches, men who otherwise could not have been sent. So, you see, China was a real factor in the great victory.

Now, when the war is over, we have been hearing a great deal about Shantung, a province of China which was governed by the Germans before the war, but which is now ruled by Japan. Men in the different countries disagree about what should be done with Shantung, but we cannot believe that China will be long deprived of her province.

List of Illustrations

Our Little Chinese Cousin

" MAMMA, you won't let her do it, will you? Please do not let her do it, mamma! "

These were the words of little Chenchu (Pearl), uttered in tones of supplication that only the pleading voice of a tender-hearted little girl carries with it when she has perfect confidence in the one besought.

She was being held by her mamma to have her feet bound for the first time. Her mother loved her very much, but like many another stylish mamma, she was more or less enslaved by the customs of her country, and as Chenchu was her only little girl, she wanted her to grow up to be the most accomplished lady in her circle of society. She had four brothers older than herself, and as a consequence she was a great pet, for little girls in wealthy families in China are almost as much appreciated as little boys especially if they are in the minority.

When they are in the majority, however, if the family is poor, it is quite a different matter, for whatever she may be in other countries, a girl in China is little more than an expense until she is married, and hence it not infrequently occurs that parents give their daughters to the families to which they are betrothed to be brought up, taking into their own home the girls who are betrothed to their sons. It thus happens that a boy and his future wife grow up together very much as brother and sister until they are of a marriageable age, when they are united as man and wife, to live happily ---or otherwise --- ever after. And so our little Chinese cousins often become better acquainted with their future wife or husband than their antipodal neighbours, with all their boasted freedom.

I wonder how you would like that. Just think of having the little girl you like best living at your home all the time, not living with you, however, for girls live in one part of the house in China, and boys in another, after they have reached the age of seven years, and do not play together very much more than if they were strangers. They have less liberty than their brothers, and on the whole most people prefer a preponderance of boys.

It is often amusing to hear the remarks in a family when a baby comes. If it is a boy, the parents are both congratulated because of the "Great Happiness" that has come to their home; while if it is a girl, and they already have a girl or two without any boys, the old nurse goes about with her head down as if she had stolen it from somewhere, and when congratulated, if congratulated she happens to be, she looks more gloomy than before, and with a long drawn sigh replies in the stereotyped expression of the race: " Only a 'Small Happiness,' but even girls are worth something."

It was not so, however, with Chenchu. Her nurse was very fond of her. When she was little she often took off her shoes --- which were made with nose, ears, and eyes like a pig, and which she called her

" piggy shoes," and taking hold of her toes one by one, she repeated the following Chinese Mother Goose Rhyme, which always amused her as much as "This Little Pig" does her American cousin:

" This little cow eats grass,
This little cow eats hay,
This little cow drinks water,
This little cow runs away,
This little cow does nothing
But just lie down all day,We'll whip her ! "

With which last expression she would playfully slap the bottom of her foot.

Chenchu was a sweet, but I have sometimes thought rather a solemn little girl. She had beautiful black eyes, just a trifle on the bias ; long, straight, black hair, which was kept shaved off about her forehead, parted sometimes in the middle, sometimes on the side, sometimes diagonally, but usually not at all; wrapped at the back of her neck with a red cord, and neatly braided in a queue; a clear, yellowish, alabaster skin, and healthy, ruddy cheeks.

Her clothes were made of silk and were both rich and beautiful. Her skirt reached only to her knees, over which she wore a vest, or sleeveless garment, richly embroidered with butterflies and flowers, while her loose trousers were bound about her ankles with flowered ties, except when she preferred to wear them loose. Of course, she did not wear these silk clothes every day. Her common clothes were made of blue cotton cloth or large print calico, but they were always clean and neat, for Chenchu would never allow herself to be seen with soiled clothes or uncombed hair, much less would she go about with a dirty face.

Her father was a high official and was not able to be at home more than once every two or three years, so that she saw very little of him, but he loved her dearly, and as she was his only little daughter; he was determined that she should be well educated. He was very wealthy, as all great Chinese officials are, so that she never knew what it was to be in want herself, though she was sensitive to the slightest discomforts of her companions, and was always trying to help them.

She lived in a fine house with large, stone lions in front of the gate, that looked as if they wanted to eat every little child that came near them, and she often told her nurse that when she grew up she was going to give her a big house, and not let her live in a small, back room.

" Because, nurse," she used to say in her

kind little way, "you will be old when I get to be a lady, and perhaps stiff; and I will take care of you then as you take care of me now"

"Hey! this little child," the old nurse would say to herself, as only a Chinese nurse can say it, " she is always thinking of others, and never of herself."

She had a kind little heart. She was always trying to do for others regardless of herself. if a little playmate fell and hurt herself and began to cry, Chenchu would run to her, rub the spot that was injured, and say so many kind things that she soon forgot her pain, and so her little playmates were always glad ¢o see her coming. She liked also to run and play with her brothers, but she liked still more to play with her nurse.

" Because," she said to her nurse one day, "you know how to play so many things, Boys only know how to play boys' games, such as 'Strike the Stick,' ` Kick the Marble,' and fly kites; but you know everything. How did you learn to play so many things, nurse ? You must have had a very good nurse when you were a little girl." And then, as she looked the gray hair and wrinkled face of the old nurse, she added, " But perhaps you never never were a little girl."

And the old nurse explained to her for the twentieth time that she did not have a nurse when she was little; that she was poor and had to work very hard, until Chenchu's mamma asked her to come and be her nurse, and then " I studied how to play with children, as all good nurses should; but come, Chenchu, we must go into the house, the wind is rising and it looks like rain."

Chenchu never objected to what the nurse wanted her to do, but rather turned all her duties into a new kind of entertainment, and so, instead of whining to remain outside, she said:
"Nurse, what is that rhyme you told me about Wind and Rain ? " at which the nurse repeated the following:

Old Grandmother Wind has come from the East,

She's ridden a donkey a dear little beast ;
Old Mother-in-law Rain has come back again,
Direct from the North on a horse it is plain;
Old Grandmother Snow is coming, you know,
From the West on a crane --- just see how they go ;
And old Aunty Lightning has come from the South,
On a big yellow dog with a bit in his mouth."

As they were going into the house they heard a rattle at the gate, and Chenchu .exclaimed:

" Oh, nurse, there is 'Punch and Judy', call him in and he can play for us while we are shut up in the house ! "

Punch and Judy, a play which originated in China more than two thousand years ago, was called in, and for an hour Chenchu and her nurse, with other women and servants of the household, listened to the music of the cymbals, the singing of the showman, and the squeaking chatter and never to be forgotten jokes of the facetious Punch and other members of that renowned puppet family, until the audience was satisfied, and the showman congratulated himself that he had spent such a pleasant and profitable hour while the "Heavens were leaking outside."

"How much are you giving him, nurse?

asked Chenchu, as she saw the old woman taking him his pay for the entertainment.

"Ten cents," answered the nurse.

" That is not enough; give him a string of cash," said the child.

"What, sixty cents!" exclaimed the nurse with feigned surprise, looking at the little girl's mother.

The latter said nothing but nodded an assent.

"Yes, give him sixty cents. We can better afford to give him too much than he can afford. to go with too little."

And as she gave him the string of cash, she muttered, "Yes, she thinks of everybody,, even the passing showmen."

" Supper is ready," said one of the servants, stepping inside the door, and standing as straight and stiff as a well-trained footman.

It was only four o'clock in the afternoon, But, although they were rich, they followed the Chinese custom of eating only two meals a day. They drank tea when they got up in she morning, had their breakfast at ten o'clock, and supper at four or five.

It was a very different n ieal from what we usually see. The table was set without knives, forks or plates; but with spoons, bowls, and chop sticks. There was neither table cloth nor napkins, but in place of the latter there were small bits of paper cut in squares, with which they wiped their chop sticks and small side dishes.

Only one dish was brought on the table at a time, from which each was helped by a slave, a servant, or a nurse. They all ate together except the wife of the second brother, who took her food in her own room, because in China a younger brother's wife is never allowed to sit at the table with the eldest brother of her husband.

Chenchu and her brothers treated their mother with the greatest deference, each other with politeness, and the servants and slaves with kindness; said nothing about the food, whether it was good, bad, or indifferent, and in all their conversation acted as if each were the other's guest. One could not but be pleased to see the way in which, when a fresh dish came on the table, each with his own chop sticks tried to select the choicest morsel for their mother or the older members of the family. Deference to their elders was the atmosphere of their home.

I am afraid some of Chenchu's little cousins will be surprised and perhaps offended at the mention of slaves. And perhaps they will be still more surprised when they are told that one of these slave girls was Chenchu's very own.

She was only a little older than Chenchu herself, and had been with her as playmate, nurse, assistant, or slave, --- for she was all of these as occasion demanded, --- ever since Chenchu could remember, and she would not have known very well how to get along without her.

When she was a very little child, many long years ago --- at least four or five years ago --- her mamma had bought this little girl from very poor parents, who said they would have to " throw her away" if they could not sell her, and brought her to their home, where they fed and clothed her very well.

It was only a few days after she had been given to Chenchu that she began to cough., and then to

whoop, and soon Chenchu did the same, and in short they had whooping-cough together. Chenchu did not scold or complain because the little Ya-t'ou, as she called her slave, had brought her this disease. Neither did the old nurse scold or complain, but just took care of the two children as though they had been sisters, always giving the first care, however, to Chenchu.

It was only a year after they had the whooping-cough until Chenchu "came down with the measles," and a few days later the Ya t'ou took them, and they both laughed, and said that "turn about was fair play," and the nurse comforted them by saying that as every one must have these diseases it were better that they have them in their youth.

" I wonder if we will 'flower out' next," said Chenchu to to the nurse after they were over the measles.

"No, indeed," answered the nurse, pulling up the child's sleeve, " I took care that you should not 'flower out' by `planting flowers' in your arms after you had had the whooping-cough."

YÜSHAN

And sure enough the two girls, slave and mistress, had the same kind of marks on the same places on their arms, where they had been vaccinated from the same tube of virus, to keep them from "flowering out" with the smallpox, which a large majority of our little Chinese cousins do very early in life. Indeed, one often sees a child on the street with its nurse or playing with its companions, covered all over with that loathsome disease. And then when they grow up their face as well as their body is covered with the marks, which disfigure them very much, and often injure their prospects for life.

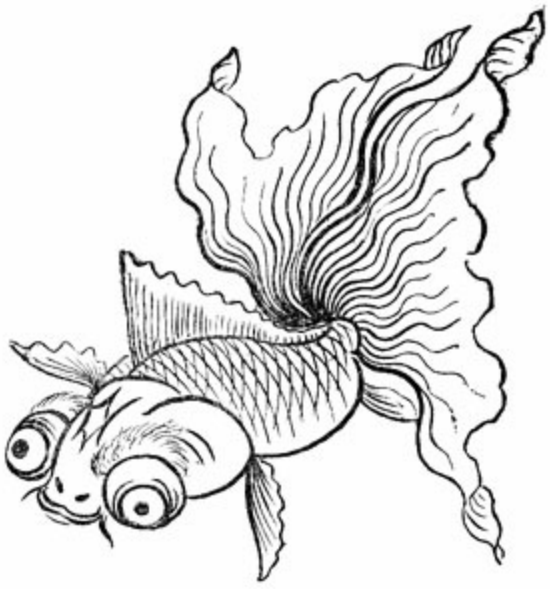
Come, Chenchu," said her youngest brother, Yüshan (or, as we would call him Jade Mountain), after supper was over, "would you not like to go for a walk in the garden? The rain has made everything look clean; let us go out and see the flowers and goldfish, and listen to the birds."

Thank you, brother, yes; the fish will be delighted with the fresh rain water ire the pool, and the birds that all the dust is washed from the trees. Come, mamma; come, nurse, let us go out to the garden; bring your bird with you, brother, and feed him out there."

" Qnite right, Chenchu, birdie will enjoy his food more if he takes it in the garden, and will be better off for the exercise; besides I can practise him a little."

The garden was laid out in all kinds of peculiar patterns, around which were borders made of roofing tiles. There were many kinds of beautiful trees, and it was a very paradise of blooming flowers and blossoming shrubs. But the prettiest part of the garden was a large pool in one corner in which were hundreds of goldfish, of which all Chinese are very fond. They are different from any other fish seen in any other country. They have large tails for such small fish, short, thick bodies, and big lumps like eyebrows above their bulging eyes, which make them look very hideous until you know that this is one of their greatest charms. As soon as you have learned that the price of a fish depends upon the size of its eyebrows, you feel inclined to exclaim, " Oh, what beautiful big eyebrows it has."

Chenchu also kept a crock of fish in her own room which took the place in her play-life that Yüshan's birds took in his. She had a beautifully carved black ebony stand on



which was a *kang* or crock in which she kept a variety of specimens from the pond. There were two black ones with large eyes, which she said would turn into goldfish after they were a little older. Their tails were horizontal and. triple fan-shaped, and were so large that she told her nurse one day that she was " uncertain whether the tail wagged the fish or the fish the tail." Then she had two ordinary goldfish whose tails were perpendicular and double fan-shaped, two brown ones of the same general form, another brown one with a tail like the black ones, and two white ones which she

called her " Albino fish." These she fed well, changing their water every day, and was as careful of them as though they were her children, never allowing them to get too hot in summer nor too cold in winter. Then when they grew large she liberated them by putting them into the pond, taking, as she said, " a new family of little ones raise."

Rising up from one side of the pool was a rockery, built like a mountain full of caves and winding staircases with here and there a bridge over a deep ravine, and beside it a little bamboo grove where Chenchu liked to sit in the shade and watch the goldfish when they were fed. Among the rocks and caves in the cliff were birds and animals, lizards, scorpions, and snakes, painted in their natural colours, with here and there a little temple or shrine. In the trees all about the garden, hundreds of birds were singing their last evening song, while the red sun was setting behind the western mountains, lighting up the clouds with a fiery or purple hue.

Now, birdie," said Yüshan, " we must gave some exercise and get our supper," and with that he tossed a seed into the air which the bird flew up and caught, returning to eat it upon his shoulder, or on the bent perch he held in his hand. Of course, the bird would not do that at first. It had. to go through a process of training. When he first got it, Yüshan carried it about in a cage .until it became accustomed to him; then he tied a string around its neck and let it perch on a stick he held in his hand; then he made the string so long that it could fly for the seeds he threw up in the air; and finally by kind treatment the bird became so tame that it needed no string, for it knew that Yüshan loved it so much that he would not hurt it, and so it would perch on his shoulder, head or arm, and fly up many yards to catch the seeds he tossed into the air.

One of Yüshanrs pleasantest pastimes, after he had his bird well trained, was to take it out on the common where a hundred other boys and men were gathered practising their birds, and compete with them in his bird tricks. And the birds seemed to enjoy it as much as the men. They would fly up high into the air to catch a seed, the while their masters would change their positions, and, after going in a great circle, would return to their masters` shoulders to eat their seed, and to be kindly stroked or petted for their good conduct.

A MAN WITH HIS TAME BIRD

As darkness began to gather over the garden, the old frog of which the children were very fond hopped up on the edge of the pond, and sang his evening song, while Chenchu repeated the follow rhyme:

" Froggie, old froggie, come over to me,
You'll never go back to your home in the sea,
You're an idle old croaker as ever I saw,
And if not calling papa, you're calling mamma,"

pronouncing the words papa and mamma in such a way as to imitate the voice of the frog.

" Come, Chenchu," said her mother, " it is time little girls were in bed; we must not stay out after dark."

Yes, mamma," answered Chenchu, never thinking of remaining outside after her another told her to come in, " nurse and I are going to bed at once."
Chenchu always slept with her nurse, and the bed on which they slept was very different from that of her little American cousin. It was made of brick one half of the room being built up twenty inches above the other, and covered with brick the same as the floor. In winter they built a fire under the bed

until the bricks were warm, over which they spread a thin mattress, and thus instead of having one hot brick in their bed they had twenty.
They folded their bedding up neatly every morning and put it in boxes or piled it up on the end of the bed, and then covered it all over with a spread to keep out the dust. And indeed you would say they ought to do so if you could have seen the dust storm that passed over the city a few days later. The sky became overcast with yellow clouds, the wind blew a gale, and finally the rain began to fall; but not pure, clear drops of water like those you are accustomed to see, but drops of yellow mud, during all which time it was so dark at three o'clock in the afternoon that they had to light the lamps in shops and stores and homes.

You would have been surprised, I am sure, if you could have seen Chenchu's pillow. It was made like a tiger with a head on each end, with large, black glass eyes, a savage mouth,

and leather ears, and filled with sawdust instead of feathers. When not used as a pillow, it was employed as a plaything, and is called the Chinese bogi boo. Strange, isn't it, that children should go to sleep with their head upon the same thing that is used to frighten them ? But so it is with the people on the other side of the earth, who walk with their feet toward our feet and their head pointing in the opposite direction. It was thus Chenchu lay down to sleep on the lower side of the world, like a fly on the ceiling, without falling off.

" Come, Chenchu," said the nurse the next morning, " the boys are already in school ; you will be late with your lessons this morning."

" Oh, dear," said the little girl, awaking with a smile and a little yawn, " I slept so soundly. I did not awake at all during the night."

She never thought of getting up with a frown and a groan, as some lazy children do, because she had to go into school. She spent two hours in study every morning before breakfast. She loved to get her lessons, in spite of the fact that they were sometimes very hard. And well she might, because did her papa not want her to be as well educated as her brothers ? Of course, she would not disappoint her papa.

They did not have a public school to go to,

CHENCHU'S FATHER

nor even a private school like little English and American boys and girls have ; but ever since her oldest brother was seven years old, they had had a teacher who taught them in their own home; and Chenchu studied with her brothers.

Each had his own little rough stool at his own little rough table, for although they were rich, they did not have fine furniture in their schoolroom. You should have heard them when they began to study in the morning. It was like— I was about to say pandemonium let loose,— but I do not want to compare those well-bred children to a lot of demons. But just think of it, they all studied aloud and all at the same time, and the louder they studied the better the teacher liked it. The boys began with a book some-thing like this :

'Men one and all in infancy
Are virtuous at heart ;
Their moral tendencies the same
Their practice wide apart,"

not one word of which they understood until years later, when the teacher went through it with them and explained it. Now all they were expected to do was to commit it to memory, which, of course,

they did.

When they had completed this book, which contained several hundred different characters, like so many A, B, Cs, they took up the " Rules of Behaviour for Boys," which taught them that ---

" When riding or driving, you always descend
From your horse or your cart when you meet with a friend,
Nor remount till your friend has passed by, I should say,
A hundred, or more than that, steps on his way,"

and here again they had several hundred new A, B, Cs which were more difficult than the others. Indeed, American and English boys and girls ought to rejoice that it is English that they are studying, and not Chinese, for every book that these dear little folks pick up is full of nothing but new A, B, Cs from beginning to end.

"And does poor little Chenchu have to learn all this ? " you ask.

No, not just the same, but what she has to learn is not any easier. And if she hopes to make her papa happy, she will have to learn all these and many thousands of others of the same kind.

Chenchu began with the little "Classic for Girls," which was very unlike any of the books we read. It began at the right side instead of the left; it was printed on one side of the paper only, the leaves being cut at the back instead of at the edge ; notes were printed at the top instead of at the bottom of the page ; and she read up and down instead of from left to right. But that is not all. She writes with a brush instead of a pen; on tissue instead of stiff paper ; with a cake, instead of a bottle of ink ; and turns her back to the teacher when she recites. Not very polite, you think ? Yes, indeed, she is a very polite little girl, and never forgets to thank the teacher for hearing her lesson.

To-day the first verse she learned was :

" You should well prepare the cooking,
Be the food however plain,
And be able in receiving
To politely entertain,"

and in order to accomplish this end Chenchu was allowed to have as many tea-parties as she wished, to which she invited her little friends, just as her mamma invited and entertained the ladies of her acquaintance. And you should have seen the dignity with which they were conducted, it was :

"Won't Lilly have another cup of tea?" with a little bow and a rising from her seat.

" No, I thank you, I have had quite enough," with more bows and risings.

"I am afraid my tea is not to your taste to-day ; " more bows.

" Indeed, on the contrary, it is very good I think I have never drunk better tea," etc.

During the afternoon, Chenchu was allowed to remain out of school and play with her pets, of which she had a goodly number. In the first place she had a large, green grasshopper; which she said could "sing with its legs." She had a beautiful little cage made out of a kind of gourd, in which she kept it, and she carried it with her all the time, feeding it as her brother fed his bird, and treating it very kindly.

That afternoon as she was playing with it, and talking to it as if it was one of her little friends, she turned and said to her nurse :

Next to you and mamma and papa and brothers, I love my grasshopper."

Then she looked solemn and thoughtful for a moment, and added :

No, I forgot ; there is grandpa and grandma and aunties and uncles and cousins — and—no, there are a great many people I love better than grasshopper, — of course, one should love one's friends better than one's pets, shouldn't they, nurse ? "

And the nurse told her she thought so.

" But grasshopper is a very good companion, don't you think so ? "

Yes, Chenchu, he is a very good companion, and I am sure he loves the little girl that keeps his cage so neat and clean, as much, at least, as a grasshopper can love. But what about Ruffles ? "

" Oh, Ruffles is a very nice dog, but then, you know, he is such a mischief; he is always biting and tearing things."

CHENCHU'S NURSE

"Yes, of course ; but he will get over that when he gets bigger ; that is the way, you know, with puppies."

" Quite right, nurse, but he is not bigger yet. I suppose I shall love him more when he grows. Just look at him as he sits there, nurse, isn't he cunning and mischievous looking?"

And sure enough, Ruffles looked as if he would like to have had a sawdust doll or a bogi-boo pillow to tear to pieces.

And thus Chenchu continued to talk and play and study in her solemn little way, becoming more and more attractive as the days went by, and the old nurse was heard to utter many, many times :

" Hey, this little child ! "

It was only a few days after this that she came to the nurse with her brow puckered into half-century wrinkles with some problem that had been puzzling her wise little brain. She had been reading her " Classic for Girls,' and had come to that part where it says :

"Have you ever learned the reason
Why your ears should punctured be?

'Tis that you may never listen to the talk of Chang and Li.
True the holes were made for earrings
That your face may be refined,
But the other better reason you should ever keep in mind."

As she repeated these lines, she told the old nurse how it hurt when they made the big holes in her ears for earrings, how they bled, and how sore they were for some days afterward ; and then with a solemn look on her sweet little face, she said :

" Nurse."

" Yes, Chenchu."

" Why are the lower parts of your ears so much torn ? "

" That, my little girl, is because my ear-rings were so heavy that they tore out the first hole, and I had to have another made," said the nurse.

Chenchu hesitated a moment as if in deep thought, and then continued :

" Nurse, if people ought to wear earrings, why are they not born with holes in their ears, so that they would not have to have them bored?"

But the old nurse could not answer her question ; and indeed I doubt if it occurred to her that boring holes in little girls' ears in which to put jewels, is a heathen practice, which, by the way, very many of Chenchu's little Christian cousins have not yet given up.

If you had seen the old nurse's earrings you would not have been surprised that her ears were torn, for they were made of large, heavy pieces of silver in the form of rings, on which were hung other rings made of glass or stone which looked like jade.

Chenchu's, of course, were little as well as light. They were small, gold rings in the shape of dragons, with savage eyes and open mouth; with two little coil wire springs for feelers, on the ends of which were two little pearls ; and Chenchu was very proud of them, for she had not yet learned that it was wrong to bore holes in the perfect little ears nature had given her, in order to make them into a jewel case.

She was very proud also, of course, in an inoffensive way, of her finger nails, and their shields. She had let the nails grow on her little finger and ring-finger, until they became very long, and then wore nail-protectors on the ends of her fingers like thimbles, to keep them from being broken. The protectors were made of silver, plated with gold, with beautiful flowers enamelled all over the back, and were about two and a half inches long.

Every afternoon after her lessons were done, in addition to her play, Chenchu had to spend an hour or two in learning to embroider. Her nurse as well as her mamma was very skilful with the needle, and Chenchu never thought of growing up to be a woman without knowing how to make beautiful shoes for herself as well as her husband, finely embroidered hand-kerchiefs, and all kinds of pretty clothing, besides having an accomplishment which would be a recommendation in the eyes of any mother-in-law. Had she not learned also in her little " Classic for Girls " ?

"If from fancy work and cooking
You can save some precious hours,
You should spend them in embroidering
Ornamental leaves and flowers."

Chenchu's mamma often told her how the Chinese are famed, and have been for centuries, for their beautiful embroidery, and she herself undertook the teaching of her little daughter in this particular art, for her mamma was very skilful with the needle. They not only embroidered "ornamental leaves and flowers," as they were taught in the little classic, but dragons, demons, and children, on all kinds of decorations, from magnificent tapestries and screens, to dolls' clothing and fans. None of them were more skilful than the old nurse, and it was not uncommon to see the mother, the little girl, and the nurse doing the same kind of work, with but little difference in the degrees of perfection except in the case of Chenchu. She was not yet able to ply her needle as well as her elders, but every one said she did very well for a girl of her age.

Mamma," said Chenchu one day as she was embroidering a beautiful little child on a piece of silk, I would like to learn to paint."

Very well, my daughter, just as soon as you learn to write well you may begin to paint. But you can never hope to be a painter unless you are a good writer."

"Why, mamma?"

" Because writing is the A, B, Cs of painting."

For many days thereafter Chenchu spent a large part of her time with her pen (which was a brush) writing or painting out the words she found in her lessons, and she was delighted when, showing it to her mother, it met with her approval, and she was allowed to begin her painting lessons.

Now I have no doubt that most of Chenchu's little English-speaking cousins do not know that all the art of eastern Asia originated in China. They have seen such beautiful things from Japan that they think the Japanese are the artists of the East, but if they will inquire of the Japanese they will find that the highest ambition of a Japanese artist is to do something that will compare favourably with the work of the Chinese master he happens to be imitating. Eight hundred years before Michael Angelo and Raphael were decorating the cathedrals of Rome, and painting pictures of the angels, Wu-tao-tzu and

Yen-li-pen had decorated with Buddhist divinities the temples of the East, and were establishing schools which were to do for Asia what the Italian schools did for Europe.

Of course, Chenchu's papa had a large collection of the paintings of great artists. Every official and scholar, who pretends to be anything, is more or less of a patron of art, for, next to literature, art stands highest in the estimation of the Chinese people. These pictures are very different from those which hang on your parlour walls. They are painted on paper or silk (paper being preferable), mounted on soft paper with silk facing all around the picture, and then put up in the form of a scroll, so that it can be rolled up when not hung on the wall. Some of them are six or seven hundred years old, and have become a deep, rich brown with their advancing years, which gives them a value that only age and a good state of preservation lend to all things human. Many of them are painted by women, and so Chenchu wanted to see if she could not follow in the footsteps of Yün Ping and Chao Menghui, two of the greatest of these female painters, of whose pictures she was especially fond.

The first thing to be done was to find her a teacher who could give her proper instruction ; and the next thing was to purchase books which contained pictures worthy to be copied. To get these she must send a servant or make a trip to Liu-li-ch'ang, the great book street of the city, if not the greatest street in China.

After she had talked the matter over with her nurse, she came to her mamma greatly excited.

"Mamma," she said, " I want you to promise me something, will you do it, mamma ? "

"I can hardly grant my little girl's requests until I know what they are," said her mamma.

" Oh, yes, mamma, you need not be afraid, I will not ask anything wrong."

" I know you would not," said her mamma. " But you know it would be rash for me to grant a thing before I know what it is, and you know what the 'Rules of Behaviour for Boys' says."

" What is that? " asked Chenchu.

" About--

"'A rash promise, if ever you make it,
It's wrong if you keep it, and wrong if you break it,'

answered her mamma."

" Well, it is this," said Chenchu, communicating it as a matter of the greatest importance. " I want you to let nurse and me go with the teacher to Liu-Ii-ch'ang to buy a copy-book."

Consent was given at once, the mule was hitched to the official cart, and it was not long before they had arrived at the east end of the great street.

It is not great like Broadway, because of its length ; nor like Commonwealth Avenue, because of its width ; nor like Wall Street, because it is a great financial centre ; but because it is the centre of literature and art of the oldest, longest-lived, and greatest literature and art-loving nation the world has ever known.

At the east end is a framework which looks like the relic of an ancient gateway. Here Chenchu insisted upon getting out and walking with the nurse that she might get a view of the stores.

Now the side of the stores that faced the street looked very much like broken-down pigstys, but when once you were inside you could find all the treasures of porcelain, jade, pearls, and precious stones, together with curios, that had been sold and resold, and then sold again and yet again for two thousand or more years.

There were book stores, book shops, book stalls, and book peddlers in which or from whom you could get any book that is published or has ever been published in China. There were encyclopaedias that contained as many volumes as there are days in a hundred years ; and there were histories that a two-horse cart would not haul, because, forsooth, you could not pile them on a cart.

About half-way down the street there is a large,— no, we cannot say large, for no building in China is large as we view buildings,—but a very noted candy store. The guide-books say it is the best place in the city to buy candy ; at any rate Chenchu bought some. Then she went into an art store just opposite. There were cases after cases of pictures in a most dilapidated-looking condition — pictures for which they asked three hundred dollars. In a back room they had stacks of books of paintings by famous artists, some of which were only to look at, while others were designed as copies for budding genius to begin by.

Chenchu bought three or four of these at an enormously high price for a copy-book, but a very reasonable rate for a work of art, and then returned home as delighted with what she had seen as any of you would be if you were to visit this great curio centre.

That evening when Chenchu was about to go to bed, feeling tired after her long ride, she said, as she laid her head down on her bogi-boo pillow :

" Nurse, can you tell me a story before I go to sleep ? "

"Yes," answered the nurse, "if you will guess who the story is about."

"Very well," said Chenchu, "if I do not go to sleep."

"Once upon a time," began the nurse. "there was a little boy who lived in a quiet home with his father and mother, and the three were very happy together, for they all loved each other dearly."

"As soon as I know who it is I will tell you," said Chenchu, breaking in at this point.

" But the mother died when the child was only seven years old, leaving him and his father alone together.

" The father was very lonely without his wife, and often his eyes would fill with tears. The child noticed this and wondered what he could do to comfort his papa, for he had a kind heart and thought more of his papa's sorrow than he did of his own.

"What thoughts passed through his mind we cannot tell, but he seemed to have determined to devote himself entirely to the task of making his father happy.

" In summer when it came time to go to bed, the child would fan his father's pillow to make it cool, and in winter he would lie down on his couch to make it warm, and in a hundred little ways like this he manifested his love for—"

Wasn't it Huang Hsiang ? " asked Chenchu, with a little yawn.

" Yes, do you not think he was a good little boy?"

" Very good," said Chenchu, " tell me another."

" Once upon a time," began the old nurse, in the stereotyped way, ready at once with the story, " there were a number of little boys who lived in neighbouring homes, and always played together.

" They were very careful in their play never to hurt each other or to say anything that would hurt any one's feelings. None of them ever thought of using any bad language, or of saying anything that they would be ashamed to have their nurse or their mother hear.

" One of them was especially diligent in his study, and always slept at night on a round pillow, so that when he became restless and moved about, it would slip out from under his head and he would awake and resume his work.

" He was also very careful of his books and would never soil them by wetting his thumb to turn over the leaves, or run the risk of tearing them when turning the leaves by scratching them up with his nails.

"One day when he and a lot of his little companions were playing together, one of them by accident fell into a large crock of water that stood near by.

"While all the others scattered in every direction calling for help, the boy who had spent so much time at his books quietly kept his presence of mind, picked up a large stone, with which he struck the crock such a blow as to make a hole in it so that the water all ran out, and thus he saved the life of the child who must have otherwise been drowned before help could have arrived."

The old nurse had been watching the drooping lids while she related this story, and as she finished, a little start and a catching of the breath told her that Chenchu was in the land of dreams.

"Come, Chenchu," said nurse, about two o'clock in the afternoon, " come and dress ; mamma is going to call on Mrs. Ch'en."

"Oh, goody, goody!" said Chenchu, in childish glee, and ran to be dressed, for Mrs. Ch'en's was one of the most delightful places to go calling.

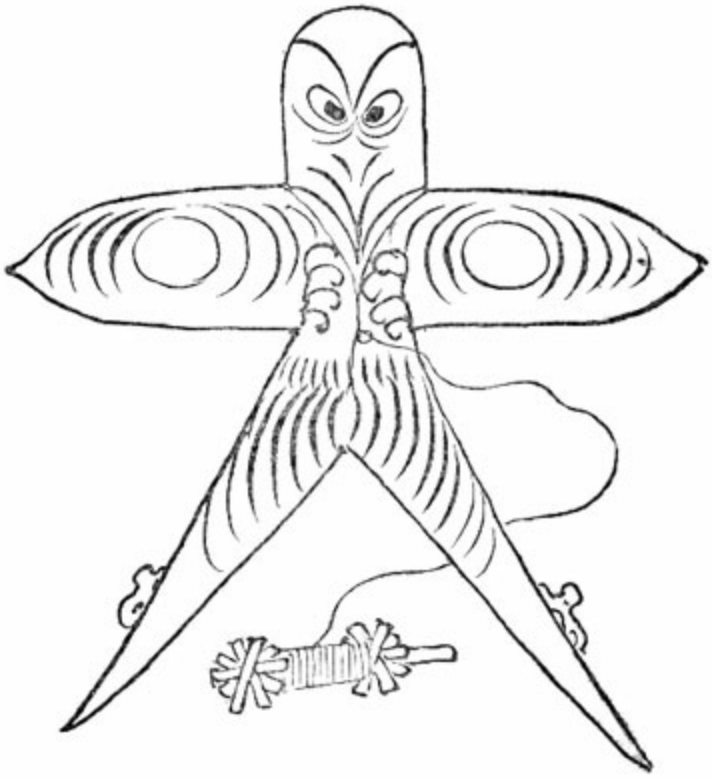
Now when they arrived at Mrs. Ch'en's you would never have thought that this little lady was the one who had so far forgotten her dignity as to have said " Goody, goody." She met Mrs. Ch'en's two little daughters, and they her, with the same dignity and respect shown to each other by their mammas ; but a few moments later when, with their nurses, they were out in the garden, they were again little children, and were down on the ground playing " jackstones " as naturally as any other little folks you ever saw. After a few moments they tired of this, and changed to " Blind Man's Buff," and then " Three-cornered Cat," and a kind of " Hop-scotch," and, would you believe it? they even took off their good, silk garments, and played roly-poly, and tumbled about as boys would have done, even climbing some of the smaller trees, — and their nurses did not scold them.

Then they were called into the house, not to be scolded by their mammas, for had not they done the same when they were little girls ? but to have tea with them. Now again they were little ladies, and drank their tea and ate their cookies and candy with the same quiet dignity as their mammas, only engaging in such part of the conversation as concerned them, for children in China act upon the principle that it is better to be seen than to be heard when mamma has company. As they were going home that afternoon, a little beggar girl, with bound feet and nothing on but a pair of trousers, ran after their cart begging for a cash. Chenchu asked the nurse to stop the cart, and she gave the child a handful of cash, and, after saying a few kind words to her, she told her to come to their house, and she would give her some of her clothing, as she was the same size as Chenchu herself.

" It is very hard," she said to the nurse after they had passed on, "to have to run after a cart and beg when your feet are not bound, but when they are bound it is very much harder."

As they passed on the nurse saw a shoe-maker with his shop slung on the two ends of a stick, and she once more stopped to tell him to bring it around to their house to mend her shoes. Queer, isn't it, that the shoemaker should carry his shop to people's houses to mend their shoes, rather than that they should take their shoes to his shop? But so it is in the land of the Celestials, where not only the shoemaker, but the barber, the blacksmith, and the soup-kitchen are willing to go to the customer, rather than wait for the customer to come to them.

As the spring winds began to blow, Yüshan got out his kite, and he and his grandfather went to fly their kites together, that of his grandfather being a centipede about thirty feet long, while Yüshan's was in the form of a butterfly, painted in the most gorgeous colours. How high they went ! Away up above where the crows fly, and while they, with a hundred others, were flying their kites on the common, thousands of crows came in flocks from the country where they had been feeding, and went to roost in the gates of the palace grounds and other imperial buildings,



for the palace grounds are a rookery to which all the crows of the neighbourhood resort.

Of course, Chenchu could not go out on the common to see the sport, as our little Chinese girl cousins are not allowed to play with the boys, — not even in kite-flying or coasting, but she had just as good a time inside the court, for as soon as they went out she called to a servant to tell the carter to saddle her donkey.

"What are you going to do, Chenchu ? " asked the nurse.

"Going for a ride. You see if I do not exercise Lü'rh, we will not be able to live with him."

Lü'rh was the dearest little donkey you ever saw ; but perhaps you never saw very many donkeys. He was about the colour of a rat, but his hair, or fur, for it was more like fur than hair, stuck out like the bristles on a shoe-brush. He was very, very little even for a donkey, and his ears were almost a foot long. He had the wisest kind of a look on his face when he threw his ears forward, and a very mischievous look when he turned them backward.

CHENCHU'S DONKEY, LÜ'RH

His little tail, which was very much like a cow's, kept going swish-swash, this way and that, to keep off the flies. If a man jumped on his back, even though he was so large that his feet almost dragged on the ground, Lü'rh would trot off with him as though he were no heavier than a Bag of hay for his dinner, so that Yüshan said there was more muscle wrapped up in the same space in a donkey than in anything else in creation," which Chenchu felt was almost the truth.

But you should have seen him when he had Chenchu on his back. He seemed to know that he must be gentle. He would canter off as carefully as though he were carrying eggs, his long ears bent forward, and a look on his face as wise as that of a judge, while he seemed to be saying to himself:

"Now you must be careful, Lü'rh, and not throw Chenchu off; and do not run with a rough gait, for little girls do not like to be jolted when they are riding," and off he ran as fast as he could go, and as gently as any one could wish.

The following day was to be a holiday ; no school, not even in the forenoon. It was the fifth day of the fifth month, and one of the greatest holidays of the year. The children had waited anxiously for its coming, and now it was at hand. It was the Spring Festival, which was ushered in by the beauties of budding and blossoming trees and flowers, and all the promises of summer filled with luscious fruits and rich harvests. There was no "spring fever " feeling as the children arose that morning. Indeed all the children in the city, as well as most of the grown people, were in holiday garb and ready for a picnic. The labourers had all "knocked off" work for the day, and were going to spend as much money in a few hours as they could make in a week.

Each one had made for him, out of silk, a little ornament in which was a mulberry, a cherry, a cucumber, a bean, and a small gourd, all of which were also made of silk, and which for five days he wore suspended from the button of his coat, after which he threw it away, with the belief that he was casting off all ills for at least a year, and any one who picked it up would "take " the diseases which otherwise would have come to him.

When they arose in the morning, each one had powdered "dragon stone" put into his ears and nose to prevent scorpions, snakes, lizards, and hundred or thousand-legged worms from creeping into his head, and a little bunch of fragrant weed tied to the tassel of his queue to ward off disease. They ate three-cornered rice dumplings wrapped up in reed blades, in memory of one of the great poets who gave his life for the sake of his prince, and then if they were convenient to a river or a lake, they went for a ride in a dragon boat all decorated with bright-coloured flags and paper lanterns.

There was a fair at the largest Buddhist temple in the city, and both Chenchu and Yüshan were to be allowed to go. It was almost as important a time as the New Year's festival, and they were very much excited over the prospects.

The large, black mule was hitched to the cart,— the official cart, with red wheels, notched tires, two windows on each side, and a red oilcloth band around the bed. It was like a very large Saratoga trunk on two wheels, and would have been rough to ride in but for the fact that it was well filled with cushions. As it was, the rider was tossed from side to side, his head bumped against the framework, and he was in danger of coming home, after a short ride, with his head a veritable "brain-bag."

Both children and the old nurse were packed in the cart, while one servant walked on each side with one hand on the shaft, and another led the mule. They went just as fast as the legs of the servants could carry them, bumpity bump, bumpity bump, over the rough streets, now through a narrow alley, and now along a broad avenue, with clouds of dust following them all the way, until when they reached the temple you could have written your name with your finger in the dust on their fine silk garments.

But what did they care for dust? Besides, one of the servants soon brushed it all off with a piece of silk tied to the end of a stick with which every cart is provided. There were too many attractions to allow them to think of dust, or of anything else except the many things there were to hear and see and eat and drink. It was like Fourth of July, or Bunker Hill Day on Boston Common, with many other side-shows and entertainments added to the list.

First and foremost, before they entered the gate, was the peanut man, with Chinese peanuts, and American peanuts, and hulled peanuts, and salted peanuts, and sugared peanuts, and peanuts in every form that would attract the attention of the child. There were peanut hulls all about his stand; and little boys and girls, well dressed, medium dressed, poorly dressed, and undressed, on all sides eating peanuts and scattering the hulls in every direction.

Next to him, but just inside the gate, was the toy man, and, as they entered, Chenchu, forgetting for the moment that she was the daughter of a great official, and realizing that she was only a little girl, exclaimed :

"Oh, nurse, just look at the toys ! "

"Yes," said the nurse, would you like to have some?"

But as she spoke the toy-seller turned from a poor little girl who did not have money enough to buy

the doll she wanted, saying :

" No, if you do not have the money, you cannot have the doll. What will the little lady have? " This last to Chenchu.

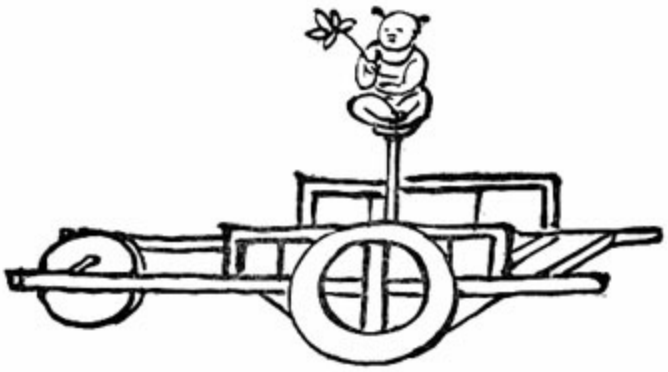
"What does she want?" asked Chenchu, pointing to the poor little girl.

"She wants that large doll, but she does not have the money to buy it."

" How much is it ? " she continued.

" Twelve cents," said he, adding two cents to the price he had just asked the little one.

"Give it to me," she said, and taking it in her arms she placed it gently in the arms of the other, saying :



" Do you like it? Nurse will give him the money. Would you like anything else ? "

"You are very kind," said the little girl, with a polite bow and a thank you, " I would not dare to ask

for anything else."

"Yes, she wanted this cart," said the toy man, with an eye to business, " but if she could not buy the doll, she certainly could not buy both."

" Would the cart make you happy ? " asked Chenchu, " because my papa lets me do whatever I wish that will make any one happy," looking at her nurse.

The nurse paid the money without a word, as though it was something she was accustomed to doing, and purchasing a toy or two for Chenchu, they walked on, leaving the little girl very happy with her doll and cart.

On all sides was everything that could attract, interest, or amuse children of all ages, from fifty down to four. There were curios two thousand years old. There were rich goldand silver ornaments, jades and pearls. There were birds and kites that vied with each other in flying high into the sky, and there was the little clay lady, with skirts loaded at the bottom, and round like the end of an egg, so that she could not be upset. But the thing that was most amusing to the children, was an old man who had married a young wife, whom he was carrying about on his back, watching in all directions lest she should speak to some one else.

There were men and women, boys and girls, who had come in from the country to spend the day, and who could be easily distinguished from their city cousins by their healthy, ruddy faces, their bright green or pink trousers, the open-mouthed wonder with which they gazed at the sights, and the way they ate peanuts and drank *suan-mi-t'ang*, — a drink made of sour plums,— a good substitute for lemonade in hot weather at city or country picnics. Men had brought their kitchens on their shoulders, slung on the two ends of a stick, and were kept busy baking cakes and frying onion and garlic hash for the thousands whose business it was, for the day at least, to eat, drink, and be merry.

The showmen were there too. There was the man with the trained bear which would juggle with the sword, wrestle with the manager, stand on his head, turn somersaults, or sell bean-curd as the spectators might desire. There was the man with the trained mice,
the cunningest little things you ever saw," so he told the children. They would draw water, turn a mill, go through a pagoda, climb a tree, or do whatever the manager indicated with his wand was expected of them. Then there was the man with his

two little boys, one of whom he dressed up like a girl when they played in the " dry-land boat show," and then made them into a lion by covering them with a grass mat, and putting a lion's head on the one in front. There were men sitting on the ground whittling toys out of wood, and others moulding them out of clay, and what was that? a boy with a clay chicken and bellows attached, by the pulling of which he could make it cackle like a real hen. The queer thing about these clay toys was that the rooster crowed, the dog barked, and the baby cried all in the same tone as the hen cackled. Do you ask why ? Because they all had the same kind of a whistle in them, — a whistle made of a reed.

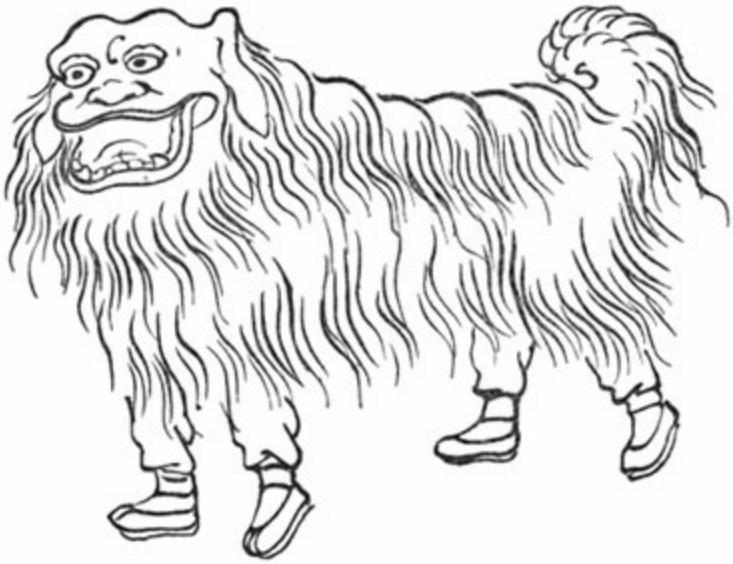
" Oh, look at the jugglers," said Yüshan.

" Where ? " asked Chenchu.

" Under the shade of that big tree. Let us go and see them."

And sure enough, there was a man balancing a table on one leg on his chin, while a small boy, standing on a stool a foot high, was bending backward and picking up a handkerchief from the floor with his teeth. As the boy raised up, the man let the table down, amid the applause of the crowd, and they each took up one new trick after another, the best of which was when the man balanced a pole twenty feet tall on his shoulder with the boy lying on his back on the top.

All day they wandered about among the stalls, watching the hucksters sell their goods, eating cakes hot from the pans of the travelling kitchens, or candies blown into various forms for them by the candy blowers ; talking with friends who had come to enjoy the day as they had done, or watching the sleight-of-hand performer manipulate his little wax balls, or take dinners of ten courses out of an empty cylinder, until they were tired, and as glad to go home as they had been to come in the morning.



On their way home they saw a company of boys playing at " Lame Man." One of them had wrapped his girdle about his legs and had a shoe in his hand with which he was trying to hit one of the other boys. In case he succeeded in doing so, the one hit had to have his legs wrapped and he the catcher. Yüshan would have liked very much to have stopped and taken a part in the game, but, of course, he could not do so, and leave the others in the cart.

Why do you not hit the boy on the right ? " he called out as they passed, but the rattle of the cart drowned his voice, or he did not call loud enough, for the other paid no attention to what he said.

" Let us have a game of 'Magic Blocks,' " said Chenchu to Yüshan after supper.

“ Very well,” answered Yüshan, and away he ran, returning after a moment with two copies of the “Fifteen Magic Blocks.”

Each copy contained two volumes and a piece of paste-board cut into fifteen forms, all of which was wrapped up in a cloth cover. On each page was a picture illustrating some incident in history or poetry, which the children could make out of the blocks, at the same time repeating the poetry or relating the incident.

“ What is that?” asked Yüshan as Chenchu finished making a picture of a man standing by an imaginary pool.

Chenchu answered by repeating the following rhyme:

“The grass is growing on the pond,
while in my books I labour,
And listen to the frogs at night,
Each calling to his neighbour,”

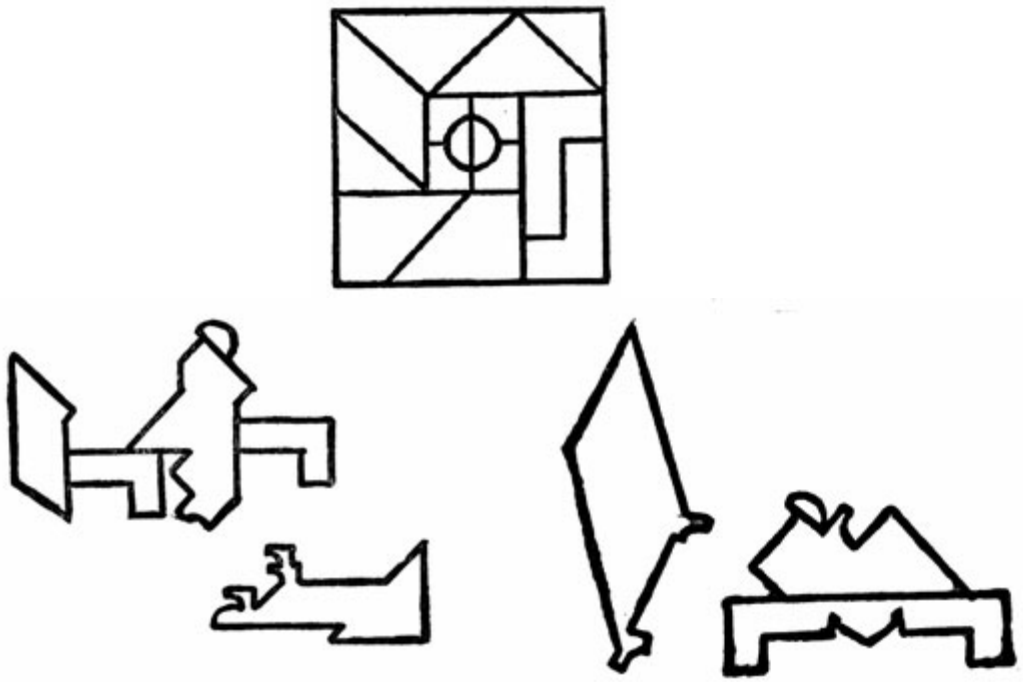
with which she tossed the blocks off into a pile, asking: “What have you made?”

“A stone the student’s pillow,
And his home a paper screen,
He lies upon a bamboo bed,
And dreams a pleasant dream,”

answered Yüshan, tossing his blocks off into a pile as his sister had done.

PLAYING "LAME MAN"

It was only a moment until each had completed another picture, Chenchu's being, as she explained, that of an old woman standing by the side of a furnace in which she was "melting stones to mend the sky;" while Yüshan's was that of the wife of an earl, whose husband being repeatedly insulted by another earl, went into the home of the latter at night and carried away the box in which he kept his most precious jewels. The following day she returned them by her husband with the threat that if he continued his arrogance his head would be taken just as his box had been. And thus they continued to play until they had made a large portion of the two hundred and sixteen pictures the book contains.



The next day, after school, Chenchu had a good romp with Ruffles, then, stopping suddenly, she came to her nurse very much disturbed. She had been learning in her little Classic for Girls " the following

verse :

" Have you ever learned the reason for the binding of your feet ?
'Tis from fear that 'twill be easy to go out upon the street.
It is not that they are handsome when thus like a crooked bow,
That ten thousand wraps and bindings are thus bound around them so,"

and her little face was more solemn looking than ever as she repeated it to the nurse.

" I do not like that, nurse," she said.

" What do you mean ? " asked the nurse.

" I do not like to think of having my feet bound," answered Chenchu ; " I cannot run, I cannot play, I can scarcely walk, — and, nurse, does it not hurt dreadfully ? "

" For every pair of bound feet there is a bed full of tears," said the nurse, repeating a proverb the little girl had often heard before. "You know your little friend Manao (Amethyst). Her feet were not bound until she was eight, at which time they had grown so large that the bones of the instep had to be broken. Her cries could be heard a *li* (one-third of a mile) and her tears flowed like water, but they were all disregarded. Her feet were wrapped up with strips of cloth, and bound around with bands, as all of our feet are, regardless of swelling or pain. They festered and broke and large sores formed, and for weeks the little girl who had listened so joyfully to the singing of the birds, and had run and played as freely as her brothers had done, lay weeping on a hard bed, until she once more fulfilled the proverb that 'For every pair of bound feet there is a bed full of tears.' "

"Chenchu ! "

The call came from one of the servants who had just emerged from the front gate.

"What is it? " inquired the nurse.

" Her mamma wants Chenchu to come in."

The little girl went tripping toward the house much faster than the old nurse could follow, hobbling along as she must on her small feet. When it occurred to Chenchu that the nurse was old, and walking was not an easy matter with her, she turned about, tripped as lightly back as she had gone forward a moment before, and taking hold of her hand, she said :

"You cannot run as I can, can you, nurse? "

"No, Chenchu, an old woman with bound feet cannot run like a little girl whose feet are natural and free."

She entered the house as light-hearted and happy as a lark rising in mid-air with its morning song bursting from its throat, and with her face still aglow with her romp, yet not forgetting to be dignified in the presence of her mother, she made a polite little bow, and asked :

" What is it, mamma ? "

Her mother took her on her knee with as much affection as any mamma could show for her only little daughter, as she said :

"The woman has come to bind my little girl's feet."

" Please, mamma," said the little girl, throwing her arms around her mother's neck, and kissing her again and again, " please, mamma,
don't let her do it, don't let her do it, mamma."

" No, no, my darling, that would never do ; you must have your feet bound, or mamma can never get a husband for you," said her mother, taking off her shoes.

CHENCHU'S MOTHER

I don't want a husband! I don't want a husband ! I'll live with nurse ! " said Chenchu, bursting into tears.

But her mother was a stylish mamma, and could not afford to let her little girl grow up "with feet like a man," and run the risk of not getting her a respectable husband, and so she was forced to disregard her pleadings and her tears ; and the little pink toes were one by one bent in under the foot, and they were just about to apply the bandages, when the servant announced a visitor who requested the privilege of seeing Chenchu's mamma at once.

As the visitor was a woman, she was allowed to enter that the process already undertaken might not be interfered with, but when she saw what was going on, unlike most middlemen, which she happened to be, in spite of the fact that she was a woman, she at once announced the mission on which she had come.

" You know the family of Yuan," she said to Chenchu's mamma, by way of introducing the subject.

"The young Liberal ?" said the latter, interrogatively ; " yes, I know them very well. They are a fine family, and he has prospects of being a great official. Few do not know them, but we have the honour of a pleasant and intimate acquaintance."

" As you know, he has just been made governor, and it is rumoured that he may be a viceroy at an early age."

" My husband has a very high regard for him, and thinks he will be an influential man in a large way, in the near future," said Chenchu's mamma.

" They are very fond of Chenchu," ventured the middleman.

"Indeed ? I am glad to hear it ; we should feel greatly flattered, as indeed we are."

"They have a son who is now just ten, a strong, healthy, good-tempered boy, and very smart," continued the middleman.

"Yes, I have often seen him. He is a boy of whom any parent might well be proud."

" And they would like to know if it would be agreeable to you to give him Chenchu as his wife," she went on.

The mother looked lovingly at the little girl, whose foot she still held in her hand, pressed her to her bosom, and kissed her forehead.

"Would he take me if my feet were not bound ? " asked Chenchu, innocently.

"Yes," answered the middleman, " Mr. Yuan is a member of the Anti-footbinding Society, and I was ordered to say that if the matter be agreeable to you, Chenchu's feet need not be bound."

"Then," said Chenchu, jerking her little, bare foot from her mother's hand, and forgetting for the moment that she was the daughter of a dignified and very stylish mamma, I'll be his wife, may I, mamma ? "

And so the matter was settled, and Chenchu by the same act secured a husband, and was allowed to grow up with natural feet ; and it is difficult to say which was the most happy, the mother who was relieved from such a disagreeable undertaking, the old nurse who had endured it all her life, or the little girl who was thus happily rescued.

THE END.