

SIDELIGHTS ON PEKING LIFE

BY
ROBERT W. SWALLOW

INTRODUCTION
BY HARDY JOWETT

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INTRODUCTION

By Hardy Jowett.

The reason why so many books of travel and description of the manners and customs of strange people fail is either due to the lack of authoritative information or, even if writers are in possession of such information, a want of ability to express things observed.

Even old residents in alien countries may lose that keen sense of perception which is so essential for receiving impressions. Things become so familiar that they pass through the mind almost unnoticed or if the attention is arrested it is only for a moment and without real understanding. A sort of psychic blindness attacks them. Prejudices and presuppositions tend to distort the angle of vision, things are seen out of focus.

It is difficult to estimate which unfits a man more for writing on a people different from his own, ignorance or prejudice. Both are to a large extent fatal and no amount of literary polish can cancel the ill effects of either.

Books like Doughty's "Arabia Deserta" or Moriers' "Hadji Baba" and Dubois' "Hindu Manners and Customs" owe more to their reliable information than to the charm of their style which in parts rises to almost sublime levels. Work like Burton's lives in spite of a certain roughness of diction by sheer weight of its reliable information. It may seem somewhat strange to compare Mr. Swallow's work with that of the monumental tomes referred to above but while not possessing the exquisite gems of expression of Doughty or the almost uncanny spiritual insight of Dubois, and not nearly on so large a canvas of either, Mr. Swallow expresses himself with an eloquence

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which is inseparable from well informed and authoritative description, and this *is* literature.

Born in China, our author speaks the language with fluency and clarity. He has that Bohemian temperament which puts him at ease with the Chinese and, what is of equal importance, places them at ease with himself. He is perfectly at home with officials of all grades, and having spent many years on the teaching staffs of Chinese Colleges and Universities the modern professorial mind hides few secrets from him. With students of both new and old China he is familiar and can and does accommodate himself to their games and pastimes. The sons of the highest in land have been committed to his care as private tutor and have not forgotten him yet though years have passed since he was their mentor.

No Peking resident is more familiar with the bye ways and alleys of the city. The policeman on his beat and, that mole like burrower who, under cover of a kindly darkness, makes clean the hutungs and the streets, both enjoy a chat with *Yen Lao Yeh*. The beggars miss him during his occasional absences from town and, not without pleasureable expectation, long for his return: it means a possible meal, a certain gossip, in return for which they explain their mode of life and organisation. A jaunt "down and around town" with Swallow is a liberal education even to old Peking residents, for he has eyes that can see, and possesses a fund of accurate knowledge on matters which one should intimately know, but which is apprehended in a general way.

One of the most common and regrettable results of long residence in an alien country, for the average resident, is the loss of that sensitiveness to impressions, and the shedding of that inquisitiveness which are so impelling in the earlier days of residence. This is why a newcomer of a little above the average intelligence can often write a

more vivid book in the country of his sojourn than an old timer. When mature experience is allied to freshness you have a combination capable of yielding intensity and profundity. This is the combination possessed by the author of "Sidelights of Peking Life" and Mr. Swallow has proved himself to be a reliable guide.

The full range of Peking life is dealt with in twelve chapters of which a slight résumé may be useful to the reader :—

Chapter I: "Peking, a City of Pleasure"—shews the wisdom of the choice of the Capital for the purpose of understanding every other big city in the country. While Peking has special features, the fact that its population is drawn from every province in the Empire makes it China in epitome. People from the luxurious tropical South rub shoulders with the nomads of Mongolia. The mountain people of Tibet meet the plainsmen of the mid-section of the country. Camel trains from "away and beyond" look down with contempt on rickshaws and motor cars. A few score dialects clash sounds with languages of continental differences, but there is the common medium of communication the Peking dialect spoken with varying degrees of clarity—the Manchus with their perfect enunciation and the Mongols distinguished by gutturals. This medley of provinces and races all bring with them their own standards of life and pleasure, and Peking, the mother of them all, enfolds them in her voluptuous embrace. Identity and contrast form part of the charm of Peking.

Chapters II and III — The Hutung and Its Inhabitants and Street Vendors — introduce the reader at once straight into the homes of the people. They shew much of the intimate social life of the capital, but hide more. The information packed into these chapters will come as a revelation to many old timers and if carefully studied will illuminate the conditions so familiar to us with a new light. The street criers which break on our early morning slumbers gain a new meaning.

High politics and the vending of food delicacies, highly differentiated aspects of Chinese life and almost childlike aspects throw a flood of light on Chinese mentality and exhibit the paternal nature of government which few realise.

Chapter IV — Flower Streets and Willow Lanes — is a pivotal chapter, essential to the understanding of the social side of Peking life. "The oldest profession in the world" is treated by Mr. Swallow in a natural and unoffending manner, simply because it is natural: The inmates of these streets and lanes, with their charm of manner and exquisite taste in dress and ornament, are an essential part of Peking life. Some of the girls are highly trained; they sing and play, paint and cap verses with educated officials. As they never drink, they preserve their charm and never become soaked in the sordid vulgarity which not seldom characterises their sisters in the West.

The complete absence of club life, and until recently the lack of public places where the sexes could meet and admire, together with the very narrow and flavourless domestic life of the Chinese, demand some outlet for the social instincts. Married life in China very seldom provides as partner a wife in our Western sense. Wives are chosen for husbands by their parents and the marital relation is based on the religious duty to provide continuation of the race. Sentiment and the tender passions of sublimated love are generally mutually absent and the wife generally is no companion for the man. She is so far as his male acquaintances are concerned almost as inaccessible as if she were behind the purdah. All those elements of social intercourse which the sexes crave for are met by the residents of Flower Streets and Willow Lanes. The whole business is carried on with good taste and decorum. Brawls are absent, drunken girls are never seen and few drunken men. The quarters are the best conducted in Peking and fewer policemen are evident than in the more conventional residential places. The whole profession attains a certain sense of dignity from the fact that

in many instances girls adopt the life in order to meet a filial claim for support and there is always the glamour of romance in the possibility of a good marriage. It is largely from their ranks that concubines for the wealthy are recruited and the girls' consciousness of better education and ability to amuse invests them with a sense of dignity and superiority relative to the normally dull and ignorant wives of their patrons.

"Feasts and Restaurants," "Actors and Theatres," are capitally done, and the matter is of real social and personal interest. Restaurants play as important an element in Chinese life as do cafés in Paris. Here you meet your friends, sip your wine and entertain. Official subjects are discussed, the latest gossip considered, and business deals put through, and for light entertainment and to dissipate ennui, singing girls are invited, or charming women whose function is to talk literature or bandy jokes.

A Chinese feast, at the better class restaurants, is a marvel of gastronomic pleasures. The dishes are chosen so as to maintain that succession of pleasant shocks to the palate which encourages consumption and yields delights. As much care is spent over the choice of dishes by the best hosts as is devoted to the choice of works of art or the composition of a Cabinet.

The Theatre in China is one of its most important institutions. It takes the place of novels and by drawing on the lives of heroes of old and patterns of all the virtues demanded by the moral life of the people keeps alive romanticism and hero-worship. It also lifts the people from the sordid struggle for existence, which is so depressingly keen in this country by giving food for the imagination.

Various professions: Chapter VIII, Street Names: Chapter IX, should not be skipped. The obscure and humble professions enter largely into the social life of any country and the naming of streets is always a fascinating study.

To those who can read between the lines, Chapter X on Politicians, etc., indicates some of the causes of China's political ineptitude and failure. It shews too how China has been able to withstand the shocks of modernism. The symbolism which surrounds birthdays and marriages is more than mere externalism. It is woven into the very fibre of the nation and so long as it exists or if it yields only slowly to the insistence of new ideas it will ensure the people from being hustled into excesses which not seldom accompany changes, which, if not retarded by some inhibitions, may lead to a sorry collapse of institutions of proved social value.

Mr. Swallow has made a very valuable contribution to our understanding of the Chinese. He has caught with photographic accuracy those aspects of Chinese life which are bound to pass or be modified by the impact of new ideas. To the new comer his book is invaluable and for old residents it is an excellent aide-memoire. For future students of social and anthropological data he has given permanency to institutions which sooner or later are bound to pass. It is quite possible that in future years his volume may be useful as a text-book on forgotten aspects of life, much in the same way as Dubois' is becoming for India.

The book is sumptuously furnished with original photographs numbering over 100, some of them full page. If such a volume had been placed in the hands of some of us on first arrival in China our interest and knowledge of the people would have been fuller. There is not a dull page in it and some questions generally taboo are treated with a frankness which robs them of all objections.

NOTE ON ROMANIZATION

For readers of Chinese script, no difficulty need arise in the matter of romanization; the characters being given. For non-readers of Chinese, the romanization as given in the book may present some inconsistencies. The author has attempted to make his transliteration of Chinese words represent the dialect as heard by him, and as he has had contacts with various classes of Peking Chinese as well as natives of several provinces, the result shews some irregularities. Generally speaking, Wade's system is the foundation but certain words ending in *o* have had *a* affixed (Mateer's system) so as to emphasise the broad *o* sound represented in Peking. The whole of the romanization has been gone over and made to conform to Wade's system, the one now generally adopted in transliteration of Chinese sounds, but the absence of the author from Peking and the delay and expense which would have been caused if the corrections had been made determined the publishers to let the book stand as it left the author's hand, but with an arrangement that revision would be made in a second edition.

It should be observed, however, that there is no system of romanization yet invented capable of accurately rendering Chinese sounds; the best is only an approximation and every one in use has to be so explained and hedged about by exceptions as to be very cumbersome. As an approximate guide to Mr. Swallow's attempt, it may be said that the consonants have their normal English values and vowels more or less Italian, but that in the book numerous departures from both standards may be discovered by the critical reader.

CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
INTRODUCTION — <i>By Hardy Jowett</i>	V
NOTE ON ROMANIZATION	XI
I. A CITY OF PLEASURE	1
II. THE HUTUNG AND ITS INHABITANTS	13
III. STREETS VENDORS	19
IV. FLOWER STREETS AND WILLOW LANES	35
V. PAWNSHOPS, MIDDLEMEN AND MONEY LENDERS	45
Middlemen	48
Money Lenders	50
VI. FEASTS AND RESTAURANTS	53
VII. ACTORS AND THE THEATRE	61
VIII. VARIOUS PROFESSIONS	77
IX. GATES, STREET NAMES AND VARIOUS PLACES OF INTEREST	91
Street Names	93
Certain Places of Interest	97
X. POLITICIANS, SOME OFFICE HOLDERS AND CERTAIN EDUCATIONALISTS	101
XI. RED CEREMONIALS, MARRIAGES, BIRTHS AND BIRTHDAYS	109
Births	118
Birthdays	121
XII. TALES OF THE SPIRIT WORLD	125
Water Ghosts	127
Wall Building Ghosts	129
Hanging Ghosts	129
Barber Ghosts	129
Idol Ghosts	129
Ghosts connected with Sickness and Death	130
Devil possession	130
T'ou Sheng Kuei	131
Kuei Ch'ai	131
Spirit Foxes and other Strange Phenomena	131
Precautions against evil Influences	134
Ghost Festivals	135
ERRATA	137

ILLUSTRATIONS

<i>Plate</i>	<i>Facing Page</i>
I. THE CHINESE CITY FROM JUST OUTSIDE THE CHIEN MEN	" 8
II. GENERAL CLAD IN GORGEOUS RAIMENT	
III. THE CHIEF TREASURE IN THE T'UAN CHENG—THE KUAN YIN WITH THE MONA LISA SMILE	
IV. THE "MONA LISA" KUAN YIN <i>Photo by Mr. Yung Kwang</i>	" 9
V. CUCUMBERS ARRIVING FROM THE COUNTRY	
<i>Photo by Lemunyon</i>	" 16
MOHAMMEDANS RETAILING CAKES FRIED IN OIL	
<i>Photo by J. Zumbrum</i>	" 16
VI. COBBLER	
<i>Photo by J. Zumbrum</i>	
SELLER OF HUN TUN (dumplings boiled in Soup)	
<i>Photo by H. C. Faxon, Esq.</i>	
VII. SHE OFFERS FACE POWDER AND MATCHES IN EX- CHANGE FOR PAPER AND WASTE MATERIALS	
<i>Photo by H. C. Faxon, Esq.</i>	
BLIND MUSICIAN	
<i>Photo by H. C. Faxon, Esq.</i>	
VIII. "SMOKED FISH"	" 17
<i>Photo by H. C. Faxon, Esq.</i>	
A PERSIMMON STALL	
<i>Photo by J. Zumbrum</i>	" 17
IX. BRINGING IN CHARCOAL	
<i>Photo by Lemunyon</i>	" 24
SELLING PERSIMMONS BY WEIGHT	
<i>Photo by Lemunyon</i>	" 24
FRUIT & SIRUP VENDOR CLANGING HIS TWO BRASS CUPS	
<i>Photo by H. C. Faxon, Esq.</i>	" 24
X. CROCKERY MENDER WITH HIS SWINGING GONG	
<i>Photo by H. C. Faxon, Esq.</i>	
KNIFE GRINDER WITH HIS IRON PLATES	
<i>Photo by H. C. Faxon, Esq.</i>	
XI. CLOTH SELLER HOLDING HIS HAND DRUM	
<i>Photo by H. C. Faxon, Esq.</i>	
FAN SELLER WITH HIS JINGLE OF BELLS	
<i>Photo by H. C. Faxon, Esq.</i>	
XII. TOY PAPER-LANTERNS	" 25
<i>Photo by Lemunyon</i>	
"THE PRICE TO BE PAID DEPENDS UPON THE NUMBER OF THE WOODEN SLIP WHICH THE CUSTOMER DRAWS OUT OF THE BAMBOO HOLDER"	
<i>Photo by J. Zumbrum</i>	" 25

<i>Plate</i>		<i>Facing Page</i>
XIII. A BARBER	<i>Photo by J. Zumbrum</i>	" 32
A BLIND MUSICIAN	<i>Photo by J. Zumbrum</i>	" 32
XIV. SWEETMEATS	<i>Photo by J. Zumbrum</i>	
A SELLER OF NAILS AND BOOT PROTECTORS	<i>Photo by J. Zumbrum</i>	
XV. CAKES FRIED IN OIL	<i>Photo by J. Zumbrum</i>	
SMALL VEGETABLE MARROWS	<i>Photo by J. Zumbrum</i>	
XVI. HOUSE IN RED LIGHT DISTRICT	<i>Photo by J. Zumbrum</i>	" 33
HOUSE IN RED LIGHT DISTRICT	<i>Photo by J. Zumbrum</i>	" 33
XVII. VARIOUS TYPES OF "LADIES"		" 40
XVIII. A GROUP OF "LADIES OF THE SECOND CLASS"		
XIX. VARIOUS TYPES OF "LADIES"		
XX. AN OLD FASHIONED PAWN SHOP	<i>Photo by H. C. Faxon, Esq.</i>	" 41
A NEW STYLE PAWN SHOP	<i>Photo by H. C. Faxon, Esq.</i>	" 41
XXI. THE HUI HSIEN TANG RESTAURANT WHERE IN THE SUMMER THE DINERS CAN GAZE OUT UPON THE LOTUS FLOWERS	<i>Photo by Mr. Yung Kwang</i>	" 48
THE FAMOUS "DUCK RESTAURANT" "THE PIEN I FANG"	<i>Photo by Mr. Chen Chen</i>	" 48
XXII. PUPILS OF FU LEN CHENG SCHOOL OF ACTING	<i>Photo by H. C. Faxon, Esq.</i>	
XXIII. PUPILS OF THE FU LIEN CHENG SCHOOL OF ACTING	<i>Photo by H. C. Faxon, Esq.</i>	
XXIV. PUPILS OF THE FU LIEN CHENG SCHOOL OF ACTING	<i>Photo by H. C. Faxon, Esq.</i>	" 49
THEATRICAL ANNOUNCEMENTS AT ENTRANCE TO THEATRE	<i>Photo by J. Zumbrum</i>	" 49
XXV. MEI LAN FANG	<i>Photo by J. Zumbrum</i>	" 56
AN ACTOR TAKEN IN THE COURTYARD JUST BEFORE GOING ON THE STAGE	<i>Photo by J. Zumbrum</i>	" 56
XXVI. MEI LAN FANG IN ONE OF HIS NEWLY WRITTEN PLAYS, LOA SHEN OR THE DESCENT OF THE GODDESS	<i>Photo by J. Zumbrum</i>	
XXVII. ALTAR IN DRESSING ROOM OF TEMPORARY THEATRE	<i>Photo by H. C. Faxon, Esq.</i>	
ACTORS PRACTISING THEIR VOICES	<i>Photo by H. C. Faxon, Esq.</i>	

<i>Plate</i>	<i>Facing Page</i>
XXVIII. CHEN YEN CH'IU, THE PUPIL OF MEI LAN FANG	" 57
XXIX. CHEN YEN CH'IU	" 64
XXX. TWO STAGE FAVOURITES — HSIAO CHENG LING AND HER SISTER HSIAO YU LING	
EN PEI HSIEN IN THE PLAY "FENG YANG HWA KU"	
XXXI. PI YUN HSIA, A WELL KNOWN ACTRESS	
CHING HSUEH FANG, A GREAT FAVOURITE WITH PEKING AUDIENCES	
XXXII. TWO PORTRAITS OF CHING HSUEH FANG IN T'IENTU SAN HWA	
THE HEAVENLY MAID SCATTERS FLOWERS	" 65
XXXIII. SHIH SAN TAN "LADY No. 13" A FAVOURITE STAGE NAME ADOPTED BY ACTRESSES AND THOSE WHO TAKE FEMALE PARTS	
ANOTHER PICTURE OF PI YUNG HSIA IN PA WANG YUEH CHI	" 68
XXXIV. PI YUN HSIA IN THE PLAY PA WANG PIEH CHI	
XXXV. A MAKER OF SEALS OUTSIDE THE CHIEN MEN POST OFFICE	
SHIELDING THE BIRD FROM THE SUNLIGHT	
	<i>Photo by J. Zumburum</i>
XXXVI. BIRD TRAINER	<i>Photo by H. C. Faxon, Esq.</i>
XXXVII. CRICKETS FOR SALE	<i>Photo by J. Zumburum</i> " 69
FROM THE POLE HANGS A SIGN OF A MIDWIFE	<i>Photo by J. Zumburum</i> " 72
	<i>Photo by H. C. Faxon, Esq.</i> " 72
XXXVIII. A GRAMOPHONE ENTERTAINER	<i>Photo by Lemunyon</i>
A GRAMOPHONE ENTERTAINER	<i>Photo by H. C. Faxon, Esq.</i>
OFFICIAL SERVANTS IN THE TIME OF THE EMPEROR	<i>Photo by Lemunyon</i>
XXXIX. IN SPITE OF THE INTRODUCTION OF THE WATER- WORKS, THE WATER SELLERS STILL DO A CON- SIDERABLE BUSINESS	
XL. THE HATAMEN, THE ONLY GATE WITH A STRAIGHT THROUGH PASSAGE	" 73
THE STONE TURTLE OUTSIDE THE HATAMEN	
	<i>Photo by Mr. Chen Chen</i> " 73

<i>Plate</i>		<i>Facing Page</i>
XL I.	THE THIEVES MARKET OUTSIDE THE HATAMEN	" 80
	THE DOOR OF THE CHIEN MEN THROUGH WHICH ONLY EMPERORS WERE ALLOWED TO PASS	" 80
XLII.	CELEBRATING THE DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL ON THE ERH CHA WHERE THE WATERS MEET JUST OUT- SIDE PEKING	<i>Photo by J. Zumbum</i>
	LEGATION STREET NOW GIVEN OVER TO STRANGERS FROM ACROSS THE SEAS	<i>Photo by J. Zumbum</i>
XLIII.	THE FRAGRANT CONCUBINE	
XLIV.	THE HSI HWA GATE BUILT NEAR THE FORMER SITE OF THE DEMOLISHED WANG CHIA LOU	" 81
XLV.	THE MECCA OF THE MODERN POLITICIAN IN CHINA	" 88
XLVI.	MANCHŪ BRIDE	<i>Photo by J. Zumbum</i>
	THE BRIDE GOING ON HER FIRST VISIT TO HER PARENTS	<i>Photo by J. Zumbum</i>
XLVII.	BRIDAL CHAIRS	<i>Photo by Mr. Chen Chen</i>
	BRIDAL CHAIRS	<i>Photo by Lemunyon</i>
XLVIII.	THE MIRROR OVER THE DOORWAY IS SUPPOSED TO REFLECT BACK THE EVIL INFLUENCE THAT EMA- NATES FROM THE COFFIN SHOP ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROAD	<i>Photo by H. C. Faxon, Esq.</i> " 89
	GOD IN CHENG HWANG TEMPLE IN WHICH A MISCHIE- VOUS SPIRIT DWELT	<i>Photo by J. Zumbum</i> " 89
XLIX.	THE HAO NIEN T'ANG MEDICINE SHOP WHERE THE HEADLESS MAN ONCE APPEARED	<i>Photo by Mr. Chen Chen</i> " 96
L.	THE TOWER OF THE CHI HWA MEN WHERE AT ONE TIME A SPIRIT FOX DISGUISED AS AN OLD MAN USED TO DWELL	" 97
	HAUNTED HOUSE IN FRONT CART HUTUNG	<i>Photo by Mr. Chen Chen</i> " 97
	THE MAP OF PEKING	" 136

SIDELIGHTS ON PEKING LIFE



CHAPTER I A CITY OF PLEASURE.

"Many people live in Peking, but there are few Pekinese," remarked my Chinese teacher, as he helped himself to another cigarette. These words revived our attempts at conversation, which had become rather desultory after we had exhausted the usual topics of the day, namely the political situation and the changes in the personnel of the Cabinet.

"Yes," I said, "you men of Peking are not the same as those who are natives of the provinces. If any one asks you where you come from, you say, 'I am a Peking man,' whereas the others say 'I am a man of such and such a province'."

The old gentleman beamed with pleasure as he added, "We are in the province of Chihli, but we are not under its jurisdiction. During the Ching Dynasty Peking was the real capital of China, but now it is merely the seat of the Government."

After a few more remarks on the fallen greatness of the Empire he excused himself on the plea of visiting a sick friend, but in reality he was going to the house of a new pupil, whom he had taken on, regardless of the fact that our hours overlapped considerably.

For this I am partly to blame, as my efforts at studying the language are spasmodic, and the teacher frequently arrives at my house

only to be informed by the boy that I am not studying that day. However he is not depressed by the news, and usually sits down, drinks a cup of tea and smokes a cigarette before he carries on his rounds.

His words started me thinking about the people of this strange and wonderful city, and how they still go on in their own old way regardless of the inroads of western methods of thought and the changes necessitated by a Republican form of Government.

I have become a lover of Peking and apart from its fame as a tourist city, it is full of interest to one who will peep beneath the surface and search for the things that are hidden from the perspiring globe-trotter and the writer of magazine articles.

In the first place it is the most cosmopolitan city in the Empire, if we restrict the use of the word cosmopolitan to China and her dependencies. Here we meet men from the twenty two provinces and hear every dialect and language from Hakka to Mongolian. In fact it is no uncommon thing for young Chinese to be compelled to converse in English in order to understand one another, for Cantonese and Fukienese are as Dutch to the ordinary resident of the city. Our next door neighbour may have been born in the Strait Settlements and speak Malay better than he speaks Mandarin, while our fellow guests at a dinner party may include a Szechuanese general and a member of Parliament for Heilungchiang.

It is in the places of entertainment and in the parks that this medley of tongues, diversity of types is most apparent and I frequently watch a group of men, who are sitting together, and try to guess what province they come from, first by studying their features and style of dress and then, if possible, by listening to their conversation. It is a harmless and interesting amusement, and though at times one is badly taken in, yet with practice a certain amount of proficiency can be gained.

On that particular afternoon my thoughts were interrupted by the ringing of the telephone bell and I was reminded of an invitation which I had received from some Chinese friends to go to the theatre and, afterwards, to be a guest at a feast, given in honour of one of their number, who had just been appointed to an important post in the province of Shensi.

My hosts thoughtfully sent a servant to wait for me just outside the entrance and I was conducted without delay to their box. The scene inside the theatre was the usual one, everybody talking or exchanging greetings with friends in other parts of the house and taking little or no interest in the performance. The attendants were busy pouring out cups of tea and distributing plates of melon seeds and sugared peanuts, while an insipid looking individual was flinging with unfailing accuracy hot towels to his confreres in various parts of the building and catching the soiled cloths as they were thrown back, preparatory to being rinsed once again in hot water.

The play was of ordinary interest and typical of many I had seen before. Befeathered generals, clad in gorgeous raiment and followed by a host of minions, strutted about the stage and, after going through various evolutions supposed to represent the immortal struggles of the old time heroes, walked off as proudly and sedately as they came on.

The intervals between the exits and entrances of the great men were filled by troops of youths rushing on and doing somersaults and other acrobatic feats, only to disappear without a word as soon as their turn was over. Occasionally one of the warriors would indulge in a long and wearisome song in which he called down the vengeance of heaven upon his enemies and swore that he would never rest until he was victorious.

Very few of the audience were really interested in the play and fewer still could follow with any certainty the words that were uttered,

yet they were perfectly happy, finding their enjoyment in meeting their friends and in passing an afternoon in a free and easy fashion.

Exception must however be made in favour of certain robust and well favoured individuals, seated in the front part of the pit, who followed every note and movement with the keenest interest and who were as critical as a first night audience in London or New York. They were Pekinese, real natives, of the same race as my old teacher, and by their attention and enthusiasm testified to the truth of the phrase, *Pei Ching Jen Hao Hsi* (北京人好戲) which may be translated, "Peking men are infatuated by the theatre."

In the good old days they would shout out *hao, hao*, (好 好) whenever any piece of acting or singing pleased them and strange to say the same words with a different intonation were used to express disapproval.

The scene in our box was an animated one, for many visitors came in to offer congratulations to my friend on his promotion. They generally sat down for a few minutes giving the gossip of the day and relating the goings and comings of themselves and their friends. They all seemed to be busy in a happy go lucky way and to be full of social engagements and obligations.

Gambling parties, feasts, congratulatory visits, the giving and receiving of scrolls, a short trip to Tientsin, marriages and deaths and numerous other events of more or less importance seemed to keep them fully occupied, and from their conversation I learnt that their usual hour of retiring to bed was between 3 and 4 o'clock in the morning. They had got up about noon and were passing an idle afternoon at the theatre preparatory to the serious work of the day.

It is amazing how they are able to carry on night after night almost without intermission and it is no unusual thing for a gentleman of fashion to attend two or three feasts in an evening, to spend an

hour or two in the "flower streets and willow lanes," (花街柳巷), and then end up with a game of sparrow (麻雀), or *pai chiu*, (牌九), lasting until the approach of dawn. I often wish the immortal William Hickey could be with us again and match his wonderful vitality against some of our modern gallants.

My first introduction was to several gentlemen from Yunnan, amongst whom was the representative of a prominent revolutionary leader. After them came the secretary of a Mongol prince, to be followed by a likin official from the Szechuan Marches, who was trying to get a similar post in Shantung, his native province. He had not seen my friends for many years and was full of reminiscences. Several members of parliament, including one from Shensi, gave us the latest news of that province, while a gentleman who was interested in mining in Hunan told us of his experiences with the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce.

I, being a foreigner, received special attention from a man who was trying to get a railway scheme financed and listened with patience to his eulogies of my country and his desire to cooperate with my fellow nationals, as he knew them to be trustworthy and men of their word. I assured him that I would look into the matter, though I was fully aware that the proposition had been offered to and rejected by every bank and firm in the city.

The face of a benevolent looking old gentleman who was calmly smoking a water pipe in one of the side boxes, seemed to remind me of some link of the past and on enquiry I found out that he was no other than a former acquaintance of mine, who had been a Viceroy under the Empress Dowager.

A member of a famous official family, he had been noted for his obstinate temper and drastic methods of dealing with those who displeased him, or who were accused of incompetence or peculation. His

appointment to any post meant many tremors and questionings in the hearts of the local officials and this feeling of uneasiness was increased by the fact that it was never known what form his vagaries would take, though it was certain that many changes would be made and many holders of fat sinecures would be dismissed.

I first met him many years ago just after his arrival in one of the provincial capitals and I remembered how he had already shaken the calm serenity of the local mandarins by his rudeness to those who sought an audience with him and came arrayed in costly furs and beautiful silks. "Where did you get the money for those clothes?" he would ask, and then getting thoroughly angry would shout, "It must have come from the poor people. If you want to see me again, come clad in a manner befitting a scholar and a servant of the Emperor."

Of course the news spread quickly and those who went to see him took care to wear the oldest and most threadbare gowns that they possessed and it was even said that the second hand clothes shops found great difficulty in meeting the demands made upon them.

Many stories were in circulation about him and I hope the reader will pardon me for relating one, which I believe to be authentic. It refers to an old expectant official whose ill luck in the matter of securing appointments had become proverbial. For thirty long years he had struggled without success to gain the favour of his superiors and though several times his prospects had seemed very good, yet some ill luck had always intervened and destroyed his chances.

In due course he, along with many other expectant officials, presented himself for audience with the new Governor and to the surprise of everyone he wore new silk robes of a bright and startling colour. It was thought that his troubles had affected his brain, for such open flaunting of the great man's prejudice would surely bring disaster on

his head, and it seemed probable that a four character phrase in the next memorial to the throne would end his official career for ever. *

As was expected the Governor blurted out: "How is it you can wear such fine clothes? You must have scrapped the ground bare in your last post." *¹

The old man quietly replied: "I have never had my name on the board, *² though I have waited over 30 years and my patrimony is exhausted. Owing to your excellency upbraiding those who appear in costly garments, the price of such articles has fallen greatly. Because of my poverty I sold my old gowns for a higher price than I paid for these new ones."

The Governor mumbled some reply and then signified that the interview was over.

There was much speculation as to what would happen and to the surprise of everyone a few days later the magistrate was posted to one of the best districts. Fortune however was not to be cheated in this fashion, for the excitement proved too much for the old man and in the picturesque Chinese phrase "He crossed over" and so ended all his troubles.

My relations with the former Governor had been fairly pleasant, so I sent over my card and was cordially invited to visit him in the box.

Time and retirement had smoothed down many of the wrinkles in his character and he had become a kind and courteous gentleman of

* In those days memorials to the throne were noted for their literary terseness and except in very important cases, it was not necessary to give definite reasons for apportioning censure or praise. Phrases such as: "*T'an tsang mai fa*," (貪贓賣法), he sold the law through greed, or "*P'u pu yung ming*," (僕不用命), he has no control over his underlings, were quite sufficient to cause the cashiering of the unfortunate officials to whom they were applied.

*¹. *kwa ti pi* (刮地皮), scraping the land, is the term applied to the acts of an extortionate magistrate.

*². *kwa pai* (掛牌) the posting of the appointment on the official notice board.

the old school. The hauteur of office had disappeared and he spoke with a tremor in his voice of the worthy — a great soul, though now, alas, no more — who in the past had frequently run counter to the old autocrat's wishes, and had told him truths that would have caused his downfall had he been other than one of those "devils from across the sea."

He gave me an invitation to call upon him at his home and graciously escorted me to the door of his box when I departed.

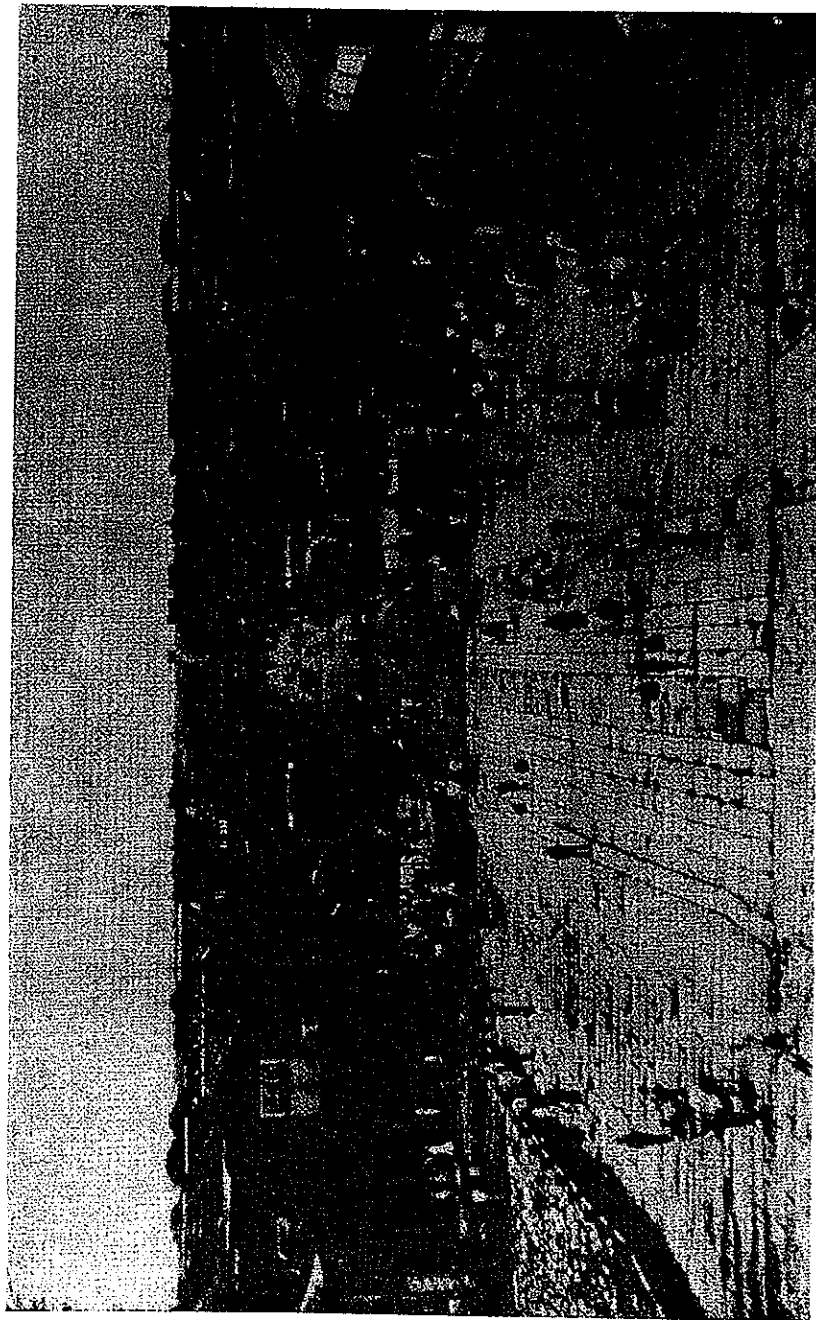
As we left the theatre we saw that wonderful transformation scene which, as soon as the sun goes down, comes over that part of the city known as "outside the Chienmen."

The streets suddenly become crowded and for once the East seems to be in a hurry. Brilliantly lit rickshas flash by and the toot of the motor car is never still. Gorgeously dressed human butterflies are rushed along to the restaurants, where they will flit round the tables, add to the merriment of the feast and then be hurried back to meet the guests who visit them in their places of business.

The traffic is too great for the narrow streets and the overcrowding is aggravated by the fact that numerous motor cars, carriages and rickshas are left standing by the sidewalks, while their lordly occupants go inside the various buildings to enjoy, at their ease, the pleasures of the table.

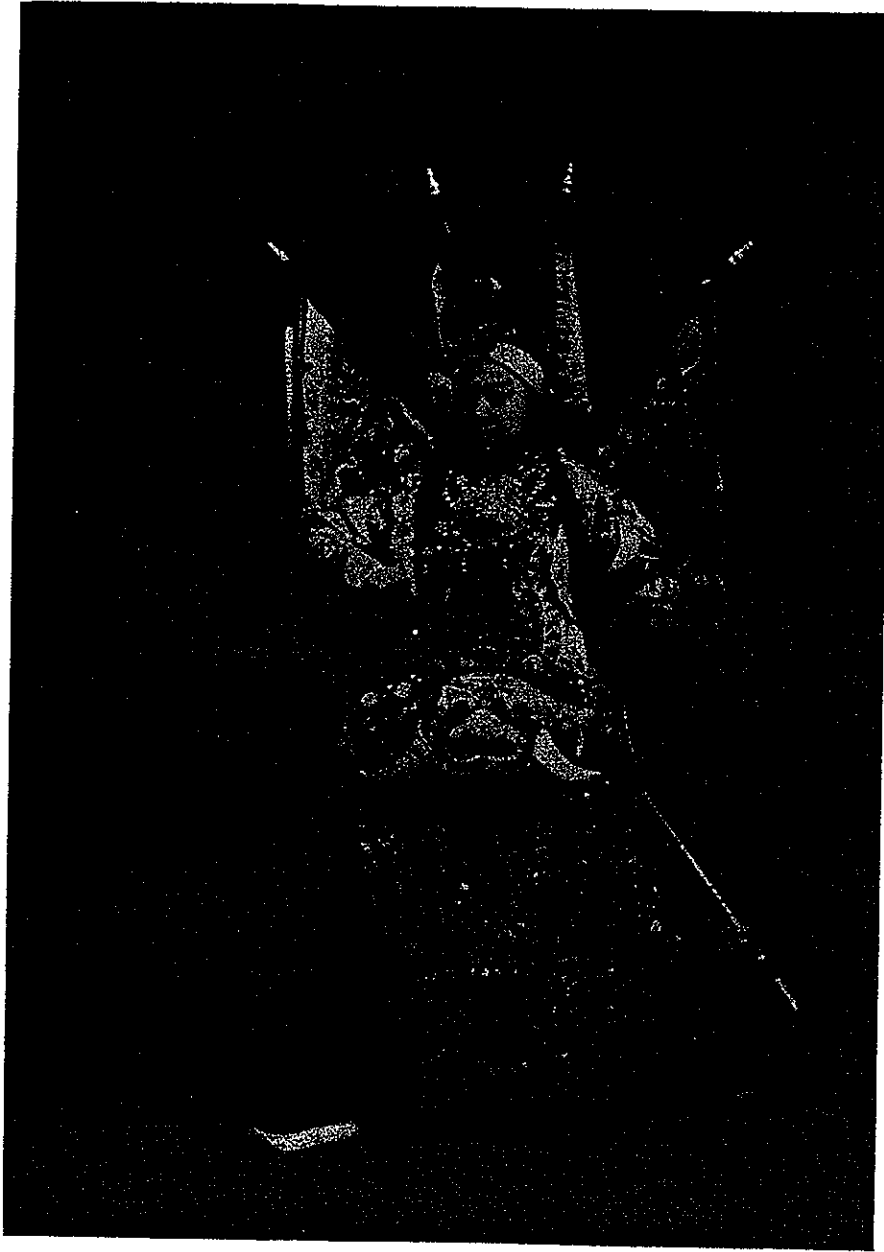
The police do their best, but they dare not order the offending vehicles away, for that would bring down upon them the wrath of powerful officials and the angry censure of members of Parliament. In due time the congestion is relieved and the traffic moves again. Peking at night is truly an animated city and though it is difficult to make comparisons and proof is well high impossible, yet I will solemnly state that in none of the great cities of the world is so much time and attention given to pleasure as in the capital of the Celestial Empire.

PLATE I.



THE CHINESE CITY FROM JUST OUTSIDE THE CHIEN MEN.

PLATE II.



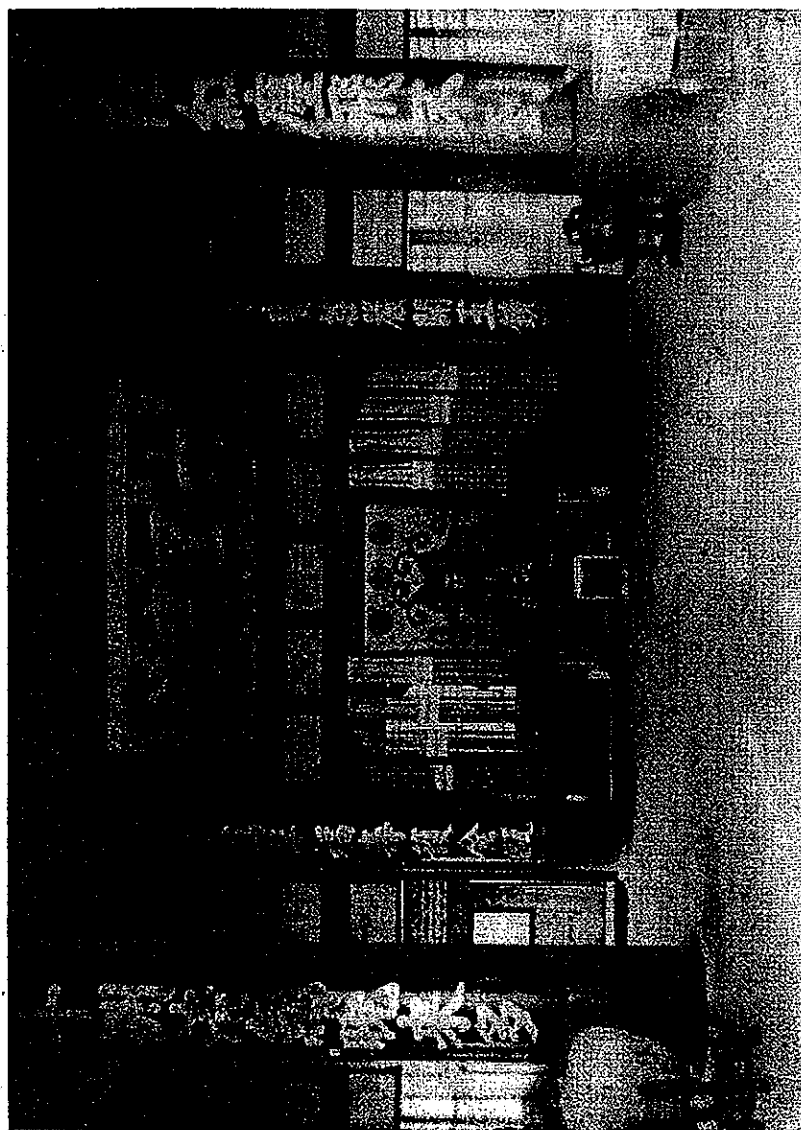
GENERAL CLAD IN GORGEOUS RAIMENT.

PLATE III.



THE CHIEF TREASURE IN THE T'UAN CHENG — THE KUAN YIN
WITH THE MONA LISA SMILE.

PLATE IV.



THE "MONA LISA" KUAN YIN
Photo by Mr. Yung Kwang, Peking.

It is not because the inhabitants care more for the joys of life than those who live in other climes, nor is it because the lotus flower adds so gloriously to the beauties of the Peking summer, but it has been brought about by a number of circumstances, which have slowly but surely created an environment in which the pleasures of life are taken as part of the duties of existence and negligence in fulfilling social obligations and penalties may ruin a man's official career and bring to grief the highest in the land.

In the first place Peking has been for several hundreds of years the capital of a mighty Empire and was the Mecca to which all, who craved for the sweets of office or who desired promotion, made their pilgrimage. No matter where these pilgrims came from, whether from the furthest confines of Kueichow, or Western Kansu, or the steaming Yangtze provinces or the frozen plains of Manchuria, they arrived laden with spoils from the lands from which they had travelled, and not only gave presents to the court, but scattered largesse wherever they hoped for patronage.

These journeys, when made before the age of improved communications, were long and wearisome, and the travellers were in no hurry to start on the return journey or go to their new posts as the case might be. Their business frequently took them longer they expected and much time was spent on visiting and the giving of entertainments to those whose help they solicited.

Then there were many newly created officials who thought that appointments to office could be obtained more quickly by securing friends and patrons at the court than by going through the long and weary task of going to the provincial capitals and waiting their turn amongst the swarms of impecunious office seekers.

Also the high provincial authorities were fully alive to the fact that enemies might intrigue and cause them to lose the favour of the great ones of the land, such as the Grand Councillors, the heads of the

various Boards, and those who surrounded the Imperial throne. So not only did they have representatives of their own living in Peking, but also frequently sent messengers and deputies to look after their interests and to transact any business that required special attention.

There was, and is even to this day, an enormous floating population in this city, whose object is to secure the good will of those who are in power and whose stay is often prolonged indefinitely. They naturally entertain with a lavish hand and seek not only to gain the patronage of the high officials, but also the help of their secretaries and underlings. They do not forget to feather their own nests and manage to find ample time and opportunity for personal enjoyment.

The ranks of the pleasure seekers and genteel idlers are further augmented by the swarms of relatives and dependents, who live upon the officials who hold posts in the various ministries. Some of these relationships seem vague and, to our minds, quite insufficient to substantiate a claim to enjoy the good things of life at someone's else expenses, but the Chinese are very tolerant in such matters, and make little or no effort to rid themselves of these social parasites.

In addition many retired officials and men of wealth make their homes here, some because they have been away so long from their native provinces that they have lost many of their old associations and would rather live amongst the friends made during their official life than go back and be preyed upon by their relatives, while others feel safer in the capital than in the country, where they are subjected to local jealousies, the dangers of civil war and the ravages of bandits.

It is this large exotic population which causes the babel of tongues and dialects one hears in every place in Peking, where the people of leisure congregate, and which gives to the city an air of prosperity and

prodigality regardless of the state of the national exchequer and of the Government's inability to pay its employees.

Since the revolution the glory of the native, the real Peking man, has greatly diminished, for they have been left sadly behind in the mad struggle for wealth and power which so often characterises the period following the overthrow of a dynasty. This is specially true of the Manchus, who can expect nothing from their dethroned Emperor, and who have lost all hope of Government subsidies or help.

Their plight is a sad one and only redeemed by the fact that many of them were small householders and the rise in the value of property has kept them from penury.

The honours of the day, as far as entertainment and ostentatious display are concerned, are monopolised by militarists, bankers and rich provincials, who have made Peking their home.

Without being guilty of the time honoured jibe at those who work in Government departments and offices, I will make one more general assertion and say that there is less work done, that is less actual expenditure of physical effort put forth, in Peking than in any of the large cities of the world.

There is no factory of any size in the district and the only industries of note, the making of carpets and of cloisonné, give employment to a very limited number of people.

The idlers, the retainers, the hangers on and the Micawbers, hoping for office, are as numerous as flies in summer and if they had the franchise would probably outvote the other portions of the populace. Many of their pleasures seem to us to be boresome and long drawn out, but they satisfy the desires of those who partake of them and help to explain the patience and the philosophy of the East.

CHAPTER II

THE HUTUNG AND ITS INHABITANTS.

The characters *hu* (胡) and *tung* (同) are adaptations of the words *hu* (胡) meaning "a Mongolian;" *tung* (同) altogether and refer to certain streets outside the Forbidden City, where Mongolians and other nationalities were allowed to have their residences.

No mention is made of the Chinese, the Manchu conquerors apparently not wishing to openly differentiate against those who, at times not far distant, had been the proud rulers of the land. As far as my information goes, and only those who have been through the ordeal know the difficulty of getting accurate information about things in China, the term Hutung is confined to North China, and is used largely in Peking and Kalgan, probably originating in the latter place, which is so near the Mongolian border.

A Hutung may mean anything from a miserable blind alley, containing a few delapidated hovels, to a broad side street full of beautiful houses and official buildings.

It is distinguishable from the main streets and thoroughfares by the fact that it contains few, if any, shops and is essentially a residential quarter. Formerly life in a hutung was not without its disabilities, for the roadway was a heap of dust in the dry weather and a quagmire in the rainy season, while even the living rooms in the finest houses had brick floors and paper windows.

However that Western innovation at which even the most rabid lover of old China and her ways cannot jibe, namely the making of

good roads and their subsequent maintenance, has improved things greatly, while many of the houses have undergone alteration since enterprising landlords discovered that by the expenditure of a very moderate amount of capital on what are termed modern improvements, they are able to obtain rentals far exceeding their fondest hopes.

During the Manchu Dynasty the home of an official or person of note was designated by the term *Kung Kwan* (公館) and these words, preceded by the name of the occupant, would be painted on the doorway, for instance: *Li Kung Kwan* would mean the home of Mr. Li, *Wang Kung Kwan*, the home of Mr. Wang and so on. Certain people however, chiefly natives of Peking, preferred to use the word *chai* (宅) and the house in question would be known as *Li chai*, or *Wang chai*, of whatever the name of the resident might be.

Since the revolution the term *Kung Kwan* has been entirely superseded by the words *chai* or *yü* (寓), the latter conveying an idea of a temporary residence as contrasted with *chai* meaning a *home*, though in many cases these two words are used indiscriminately. Of far more interest are the characters we often see placed just before the name of the occupier of the house, and indicating his native province though in certain instances the town or district alone are mentioned.

A man from Hangchow is far too proud of that beautiful city to merely state that he is from the province of Chekiang, while even he has to give way before one who can write *Nan P'i Chang*, showing that he is one of the famous family which has sent forth, from the little town, of *Nan P'i* (南皮) in Chihli, so many scholars and officials, the greatest of whom was that literary prodigy, Chang Chih Tung.

An element of romance is sometimes added by the use of the old or historical name of the province or place concerned, and one is surprised to learn that *Yang Ch'eng Chao* (陽城趙) Mr. Chao from the City of Rams, is really a Cantonese, and *Tieh Ch'eng Wu* (鐵城吳),

which is to say Mr. Wu of the Iron City, is in fact no other than Mr. Wu of Hsiang Shan (香山). To quote a few more instances we would say that *Ku Min* (古閔) is used for Foochow, *Chin Ling* (金陵) the golden Mausoleum for Nanking, and *Tung Lu* (東魯), the Eastern State of Lu, for Shantung.

I have lived in a hutung for several years and it is astonishing what little I know about my neighbours. It is said that in London it is not unusual for a person to be ignorant of even the name of the man who lives next door and in Peking this aloofness is often apparent in as far as the officials and better class residents are concerned.

Each household is in reality a world to itself and cares little about what is going on around it. The servants are of course better informed, and the otherwise monotonous existence of the gatekeeper's life has its compensations in listening to and retailing such gossip as may be gleaned from the numerous people who drop in during the day. In the smaller houses however and especially where, from reasons of economy, two or three families share the same premises, such privacy is impossible and everything that goes on is a matter of common knowledge.

I take considerable interest in a large house, with an imposing red door, which is situated not far from me. It is the residence of a prominent politician and ex-cabinet minister, who, every year or so, comes into power during one of the sudden and, to the outsider, absolutely incomprehensible political changes which are always taking place, and which are as the breath of life to the wirepullers who flourish on every side.

When he is in retirement he has few callers and though there are generally half a dozen servants sitting in the doorway, there is little to denote what is going on behind the scenes. Should there be signs however of a political crisis there is a great change and the hutung is crowded with vehicles of every kind. His guests are of all

sorts and conditions, from well known military leaders, who come in motor cars escorted by armed soldiers, to insignificant office seekers who hope to get a few of the crumbs that may fall from the great man's table.

I should like to be an invisible spectator on such occasions and learn something of the ways of those who juggle with the fate of a nation.

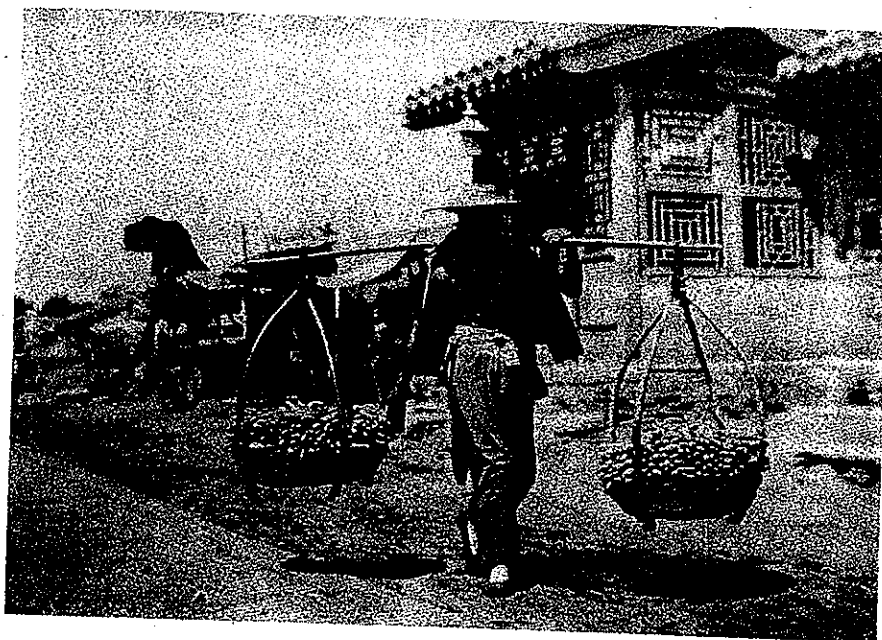
The tide that carries him into office soon ebbs but he seems to make the best of his opportunities and is able during the short time at his disposal not only to appoint a number of his followers to lucrative positions, but also to augment his already ample fortune. When in power he seldom goes to the Ministry before late in the afternoon and then does little beyond signing a few papers. He leaves all matters of routine to the permanent staff, while the real authority is entrusted to a few of his confidential men, who know that as soon as he goes they will have to follow him into retirement. He stands for no policy and has no convictions with regard to law or Government. He is merely the head of a political clique and as such reaps a handsome reward.

A little further away lives a gentleman of quite a different type. He held high office under the Manchus and also during the early days of the Republic, but of late years has lived in retirement. He keeps up a considerable establishment, though his fortune is a modest one when compared with some of those made during the last generation, and is a good example of the best type of old fashioned official who did himself well and yet ruled without oppression.

In his own household he is still treated with the same respect and addressed in the same manner as when he governed a territory larger than Great Britain, for he has kept on a number of his old retainers who still regard him as a kind of feudal chief.

His life is a pleasant one, for many of his contemporaries live in the city, and they find plenty of enjoyment among their old books and

PLATE V.

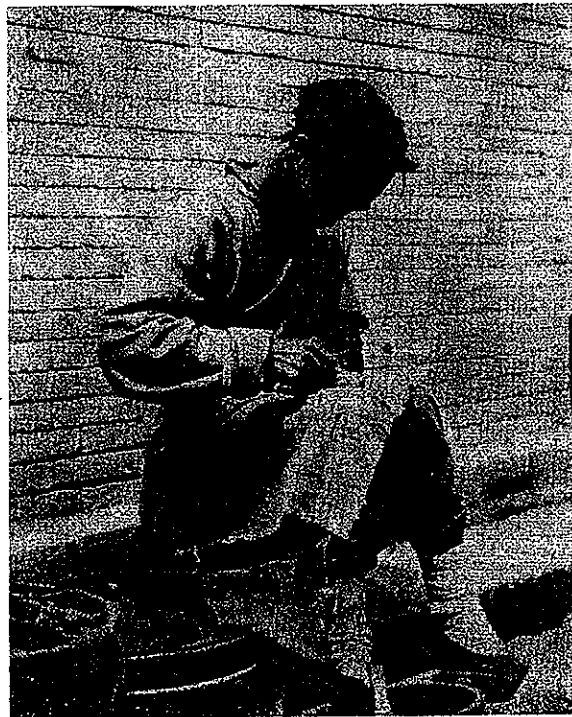


CUCUMBERS ARRIVING FROM THE COUNTRY
Photo by Lemunyon, Peking.



MOHAMMEDANS RETAILING CAKES FRIED IN OIL
Photo by J. Zumbur, Peking.

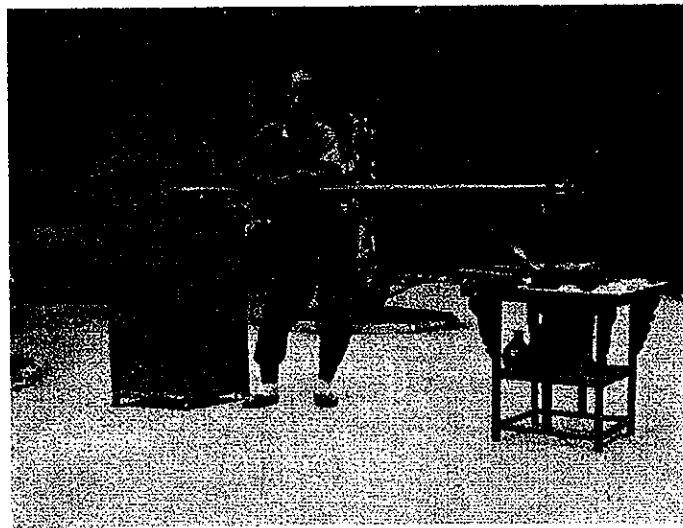
PLATE VI.



COBBLER

Photo by

J. Zumbrum, Peking.



SELLER OF HUN TUN

(dumplings, boiled in soup). Note the travelling stove

Photo by H. C. Faxon, Esq.

PLATE VII.



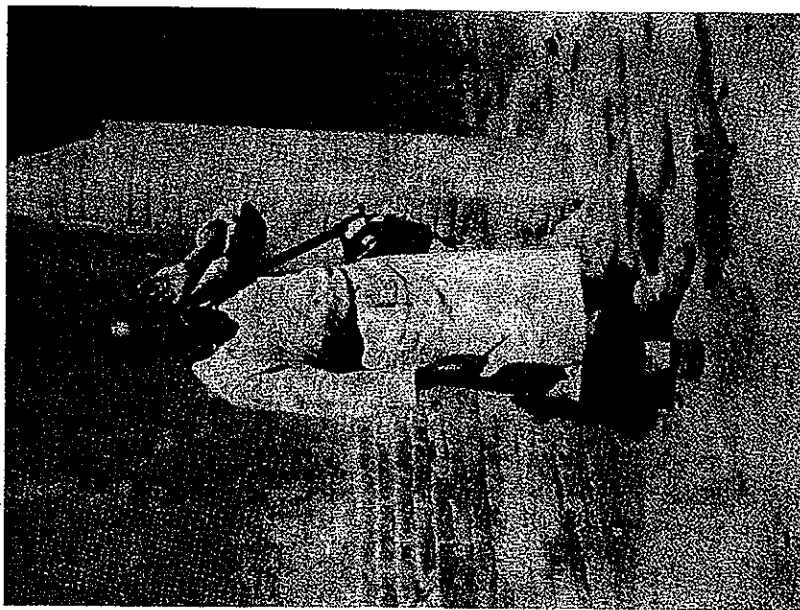
SHE OFFERS FACE
POWDER & MATCHES IN
EXCHANGE FOR PAPER
& WASTE MATERIALS.



BLIND MUSICIAN

Photos by
H. C. Faxon, Esq.

PLATE VIII.



"SMOKED FISH"
Photo by H. C. Faxon, Esq.



A PERSIMMON STALL
Photo by J. Zumbur, Peking.

manuscripts and in their gatherings for the appreciation of poetical and literary efforts. He is a connoisseur of no mean order of Chinese paintings and bronzes, while if I were the possessor of his collection of snuff bottles and his magnificent jade thumb rings I should have visions of the armchairs of a London Club and of a little home in Devonshire. His attitude towards his family is more like that of a schoolmaster than a father and his children have been educated at home under private tutors.

The old regime may have had its sins both of omission and omission, but it certainly did not fail to produce men of courtly manners and high literary attainments.

I see little of my other neighbours and as a rule the only outward signs of life in their houses are a few children playing round the doorway and the sight of an *amah*, or maidservant, bargaining with a peddler.

It is only on certain occasions, such as the passing of a funeral procession, that one becomes aware of the number of people who comprise the household of a well to do Chinese family. It is then that the children, the concubines, the female relatives, the *amahs* and the servants cluster round the gate and watch with absorbing interest the cortege with its long line of hired mourners and white dressed relations.

Even some the more modest establishments show a ration strength of between fifteen and twenty people, while the larger ones must often approach the half century mark.

Owing to the great increase in the value of property and the consequent rise of rents in the East City and the districts surrounding the Legation Quarter, many of the inhabitants of those parts have migrated to the North and West City where things are somewhat cheaper. Those who were tenants found it impossible to pay the rents demanded, while those who lived in their own houses prefer to let them to wealthy

strangers and to move to places where they can live on the money they receive for their old homes.

Here I will pass on to speak of those whom I will describe as the itinerant members of the hutung, a strange and motley crew, whose story demands a separate chapter and is, I think, of more than passing interest.



CHAPTER III STREET VENDORS.

All through the night,
And long after dawn
They shout and they shriek,
While during the morn
They start out again with gongs and with drums,
And so they continue till afternoon comes.
They keep their finest and neatest thrill
For the moment the sun dips over the hill,
But twilight is their special delight
For then they rehearse the songs of the night.

The above lines were sent me by a friend who had taken, on a long lease, what he considered to be a very desirable Chinese house and had overlooked the fact that a side hutung ran behind that part of the premises which he had reserved for his living quarters.

His outburst, though exaggerated and indicative of a nervous temperament, yet brings forcibly to our notice that numerous body of people, whom, for lack of a better word, I have called street vendors, though there are buyers as well as sellers amongst them, and who at all hours of the day and night infest the hutungs and byeways and seek by means of various cries and noises to attract the attention of the residents.

Their success, in fact their very means of existence, depends largely upon the forcefulness of their methods, and as they look upon everyone as a potential customer, they ignore the fact that they may disturb the peace of certain excitable and highly strung foreigners.

They illustrate to a peculiar degree the laws of supply and demand, and it is amazing to see how they cater for every conceivable want and desire, and lose no opportunity of making even a few coppers a day.

Almost everything that the Chinese householder needs may be bought at his door, even to cool drinks in the summer and hot soup in winter, while the early riser is tempted by the offer of a bowl of almond flavoured congee.

The gamblers and the opium smokers are not forgotten, and many of the night cries are from purveyors of certain delicacies that appeal to jaded appetites.

Some make a speciality of supplying food to ricksha coolies, who from the nature of their calling cannot go home for regular meals, while even at executions there are sellers of cakes and other eatables busily engaged in disposing of their wares to the eager and excited crowds.

If it were not for these itinerant merchants the residents in the hutongs would have to make frequent journeys to the shops and markets, which are often a considerable distance away from their homes, while they are an indispensable boon to the womenfolk, who, according to the rigid social laws of the country, are supposed to live a semi-secluded life and not to go out on certain occasions.

Yet all this ingenuity and enterprise brings very little reward and there are few of them who make more than a precarious living; and for this they have, day by day, to make long and wearisome marches, exposed to all kinds of discomforts and ill protected against the vagaries of the weather.

I have talked with many of these people and been impressed by their dullness and narrow outlook. Making the same rounds year in and year out, their movements and cries are almost mechanical and they take little interest in the ordinary affairs of life. They seemed

surprised that anyone, who was not an intending purchaser, should stop and speak to them, though, almost without exception, they willingly answered the questions I put. As a rule they confine themselves to a certain district, but there does not seem to be any unwritten law against encroaching on another's territory, their safeguards being the disinclination of their patrons to deal with strangers, and the fact that their own margin of profit is so low.

It is almost impossible to give a list of the trades and professions involved, or to name more than a small portion of the goods offered for sale but in order to have some method to work upon I will divide them into three categories, namely :—

- 1) The Criers,
- 2) Those who make a noise with an instrument or by means of some device, and
- 3) The Silent ones, who surely are not without merit.

As for the cries themselves, they are of all kinds and descriptions, mostly nerve racking, and I know of none that are pleasant to the ear. Some are long drawn out wails ending with a crescendo roll, a few are short, sharp but not sweet, while others seem to come from the very bowels of the criers.

To the stranger they are quite unintelligible, and there are few Chinese, except those who have lived many years in Peking, who can tell you what they mean. It is even said that the cries used in the East City often differ from those of the West City.

A peculiarity to be noticed is that at the moment of utterance many of the criers put a hand over one ear. This I at first thought was a kind of protective instinct, as though they wished to deaden the effect on their own nerves, but, I am told, it really comes from a custom of putting the hand over one side of the mouth in the desire to concentrate the sound upon a particular house or quarter.

Almost without exception the sellers of food use cries in order to attract their customers. This is necessitated by the fact that the number and variety of the good things offered is legion, and any attempt to indicate what they are by means of artificial sounds would lead to hopeless confusion and also give the vendors no opportunity of extolling the value and quality of their wares.

There are castes and social distinctions even amongst these food sellers, and they vary from a small retailer carrying a few cakes in a basket or box slung over the shoulder, to the proud possessor of a huge wheeled tray covered with sweetmeats and all kinds of appetising dainties. The former is content if he can make a few coppers a day in order to keep himself from starvation, while the latter almost reaches the status of a small shopkeeper.

Some of them sell the same goods all the year round, while others, especially the purveyors of fruit and vegetables, can only offer what is in season.

In those cases, where the food has to be served hot, they use a kind of travelling stove, which is hung to one end of a pole, while at the other end is a box containing various articles such as dishes for the use of the customers and the condiments necessary for flavouring purposes.

At the festivals there is a great sale for certain articles of food and on such occasions the suppliers have no difficulty in disposing of their wares.

For New Year's Eve everyone lays in a stock of *chiao-tsus* (餃子) or "meat dumplings," while during the first moon, and especially on the 15th day, the demand is for *yuan hsiaos* (元宵) or little white balls made of sugar and barley flour, with walnut and red fruit jelly in the centre. They are cooked in boiling water and eaten as soon as they are taken out of the pot.

At the Dragon Boat Festival *tsung-tses* (糉子) are the fashion. They are dumplings made from sugar, glutinous rice and teaosers, a kind of date that comes from the jujube tree, and must be wrapped in the leaves of a certain reed or they lose much of their flavour.

During the Mid-Autumn Festival fruits of all kinds are eaten together with chupatties or unleavened pancakes.

Those who go their rounds at night carry a lantern with glass sides. This not only serves to light the road but is also a protection against counterfeit money, which unscrupulous people try to pass off in the darkness.

Of special interest is the man who carries a small oval tub over his shoulder and shouts: *niu rou hao fei, hai yu erh chin to* (牛肉好肥還有二斤多), which freely translated means, "Beef, how succulent, I still have over two catties." There are several interpretations of the latter part of the phrase, namely that he still has over two catties.

One of these is that the Emperor K'ang Hsi, who, as a devoted follower of Confucious, held the ox in high reverence, decided to arrest all those who sold beef. The accused knelt before the judge and pleaded for mercy, saying that they only sold the flesh of oxen that had died from disease and, as a proof, pointed to the very small quantities of meat they had in their boxes.

Another theory is that in the olden times oxen used to be sacrificed in the streets and when the ceremony was over each of the onlooker was entitled to take away two catties, the poor being permitted to sell their portions.

I am afraid however the true facts of the case are rather prosaic, and the idea is merely to urge the customers to buy before the stock is exhausted. This I think is the real explanation, because beef, mutton and pork are seldom, if ever, sold in the streets and the succulent

morsels offered are really the flesh of some camel that has died from old age or disease and the price at which this is sold is considerably below the market price of beef.

At certain times of the years we may see men walking around with strings of crab-apples round their necks and over their left arms. Their cry is: *ta kwa shan li hung, hai yu liang kwa* (大掛山梨紅還有兩掛), which is to say: "big string of crab-apples, there are still two strings left," thereby urging intending purchasers to buy before the supply is exhausted. They are not regular hawkers, but are from the countryside, where the fruit is collected and strung before it is brought into the city. These crab-apples are supposed to have medicinal properties, and in former times a criminal, as he was going to the execution ground, would be given a string of them to eat, so that during his last journey he might feel cheered and elevated.

The man who calls out *hsun yu* (燻魚) or "smoked fish" is rather an anomaly, since it is only at certain seasons of the year that his box contains smoked fish and what he generally has to offer is really smoked portions of the head and other parts of a pig, yet he never changes his cry of *hsun yu*. He no doubt feels that fish is a greater delicacy than pig's flesh and people are tempted to buy, though they know that they will get something quite different from fish.

There is a story attached to the *yuan hsiaos* (元宵) or "night balls," so called because they are eaten chiefly at night, and especially, as we have mentioned before, during the first moon. In Yuan Shih K'ai's time orders were given that the term *yuan hsiao* must not be used, and that the old Manchu name *t'ang yuan* (糖元) "sugar balls," was to be revived, as the words *yuan hsiao* have the same sound as the characters, (袁消), which mean the ending or dissolution of Yuan.

PLATE IX.



BRINGING IN CHARCOAL



SELLING PERSIMMONS BY WEIGHT

Photos by Lemunyon, Peking.



FRUIT & SYRUP
VENDOR CLANGING
HIS TWO BRASS
CUPS

Photo by
H. C. Faxon, Esq.

PLATE X.



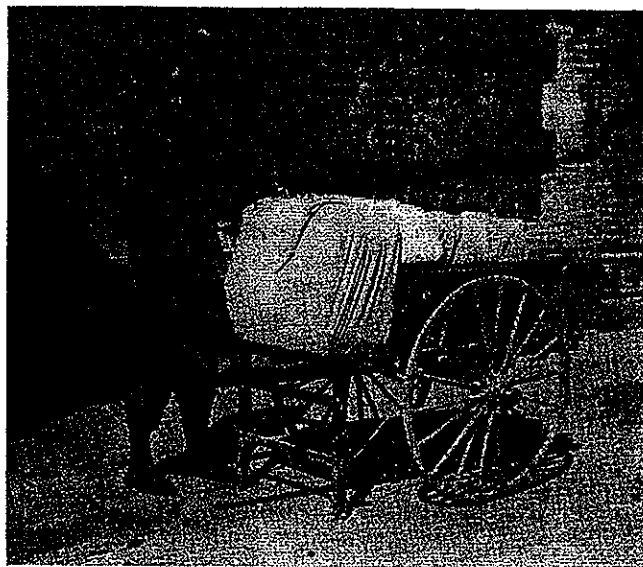
CROCKERY MENDER WITH HIS SWINGING GONG.



KNIFE GRINDER WITH HIS IRON PLATES

Photos by H. C. Faxon, Esq.

PLATE XI.



CLOTH SELLER
HOLDING HIS HAND
DRUM

Photo by
H. C. Faxon, Esq.



FAN SELLER WITH HIS
JINGLE OF BELLS

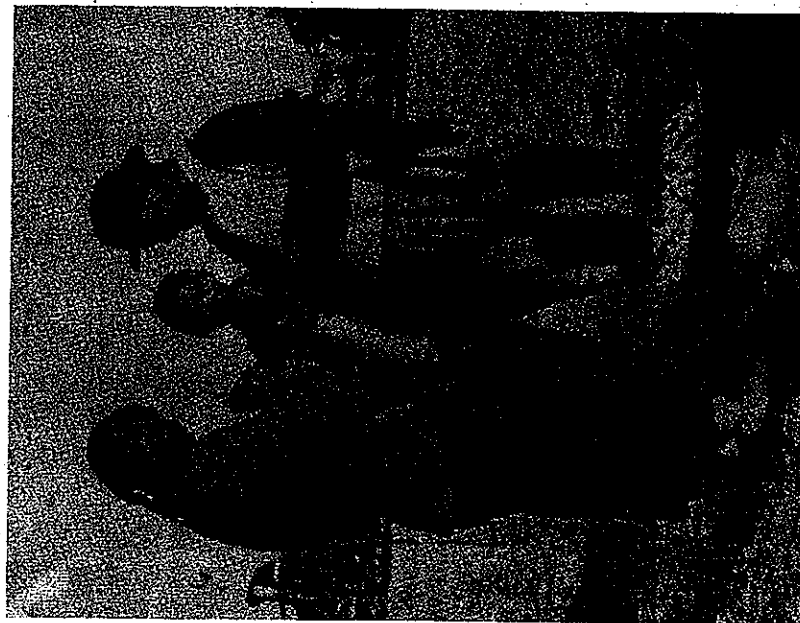
Photo by
H. C. Faxon, Esq.

PLATE XII.



TOY PAPER-LANTERNS

Photo by Lemunyon, Peking.



The price to be paid depends upon the number
on the wooden slip which the Customer draws out
of the bamboo holder.
Photo by J. Zumbur, Peking.

A distinction must also be drawn between those who sell these delicacies in the streets and those who have them for sale in their shops. The former call out *kuei hwa yuan hsiao* (桂花元宵), "rose flavored night balls," while the latter try the old dodge of pretending that the supply is almost exhausted and shout: *hai yu liang pan wan* (還有兩半碗), "there are still two and half bowls (left)."

The making of *ying mien poa poa* (硬麵饅頭), "hard biscuits," is a monopoly of certain Shantung men. As a rule seven or eight of them form a company with a total capital of about 40 dollars. The biscuits are made in the afternoon and are of various shapes and sizes. The street sales begin at nine in the evening and go on until about four in the morning. They are in special request for what are known as *hung pai hsi* (紅白席) "red and white ceremonies," meaning of course weddings and funerals.

This business was stopped for a time by the minions of Yuan Shih K'ai, on the plea that revolutionaries might go round disguised as biscuit sellers and, under cover of darkness, throw bombs into the houses of those they wished to assassinate, while at the present time detectives often pose as these night vendors in order to get information about gamblers and opium smokers.

For some reason or other these biscuits are sold only at night, in the day time their place being taken by various other things such as *t'ang ma hwa* (糖麻花), "sugared horse flowers," which are made of oil, sugar and flour, and plaited in the same fashion as a horse's tail on a gala day.

Mantou, or "steamed bread," is also made and sold by Shangtung men. Four or five men work together on a capital \$ 15 or so, and they expect to clear a daily profit of about 15 per cent. Some of the pieces contain sugar in the centre, and these are distinguished by having a red mark put upon them.

The cry is *mantou* (饅頭), "steamed bread," and it is supposed to be sold by weight, but the men do not carry scales with them and prefer to sell by the piece, which is generally a little lighter than it should be. The bread is carried in a basket slung over a pole, and is covered with a blue cloth. It is primarily a breakfast food, and the chief sales are between 6 and 11 a.m.

In our wanderings in Peking we may come across a dilapidated old shop in which a donkey is turning a stone mill. Upon enquiry we learn that it is a place where the famous *suan la tou cher* (酸辣豆汁), "fomented bean-syrup," is made. The bean flour is boiled in water and run through a rough sieve into a *kang* which is half buried in the ground and which contains some of the fermented syrup.

The street vendor purchases his goods from the shop and carries them round in an iron pot, which is gently heated by a slow burning saw-dust fire. This travelling stove is hung on the one end of a pole, while on the other end is a wooden box containing bowls, cloths, pickles, condiments and other things. The syrup is exclusively made in Peking, and the taste, like that for durians, is an acquired one.

There are many appetising dainties made from beans, and one of these *cha tou fu* (炸豆腐), "fried bean curd," is very popular amongst those who work at night, such as watchmen and ricksha boys.

The beans are crushed, then moulded into big squares and cut up. The pieces are fried in sesamum oil and are then ready to be taken out for sale.

There is the usual travelling stove, the water in the pot being heated by charcoal and pieces of bean curd are thrown in as they are needed.

Various kinds of condiments are carried, and the one in most demand is a sauce made from red chillies.

The amount of capital needed per day is about \$ 2.—, and the poor fellows have to walk the streets until 4 o'clock in the morning for a profit of 30 cents.

Eggs are also cooked in the boiling water, and the sale of these adds a little to the day's takings.

The cry is a simple one, being *cha tou fu* (炸豆腐), "fried bean curd."

We have spoken about *hsing ren cha* (杏仁茶) the so called "almond tea," which is sold in the early morning, but we have said nothing about the hardships of the poor vendors who prepare it in their home in the afternoon, the chief ingredients being ground rice and sugar with a little almond flavouring. They get up at 4 o'clock in the morning and after boiling the tea, put it into the pot of their travelling stoves, where it is kept hot by a charcoal fire, and start out in their rounds, returning shortly after 10 o'clock, having made a profit of about 50 cents.

Their goods and impedimenta are enclosed in cylindrical wooden boxes, decorated with large headed copper nails.

This warm drink in the morning is always in great demand and there is no need for the seller to shout anything more than the words *hsing ren ch'a*. The people who appreciate it most are the actors, who keep their voices in training by going out just after day break and emitting long deep drawn sounds while facing a wall, preferably the city wall.

Another favourite dish is *hun tun*, (餛飩) or "small meat dumplings."

The seller carries his load on a pole, from one side of which hangs a pot of soup boiling over a stove, while on the other side is a small wooden cabinet, containing several drawers, in which are kept the bowls, the condiments, the money which is taken in, and little pieces of flour peaste. On a shelf is a bowl of mincemeat. The

dumplings are made, as they are needed, from the mincemeat and pieces of paste and then thrown into the pot of soup.

The price received for a bowl of soup and dumplings depends entirely upon the kind and quality of the soup. A thin watered concoction made from pork bones may not command more than two coppers a bowl, while that sold at a restaurant, and made from good stock, may fetch as much as ten cents.

The sellers of turnips go outside the city and buy direct from the farmers.

In winter, when the sales are chiefly at night, the goods are carried in a basket slung over the shoulder, but during the spring they are taken round in wooden tubs containing water.

The cry is *loa pei, sai li, la liao huan* (蘿貨賽梨辣了換) "turnips tasting like pears, if they are bitter they may be returned."

The supply of turnips only lasts from the 9th to the 2nd moon, and after that time the men retail peanuts, sweets, melon seeds and other things, until the middle of summer, when they take round the much beloved melons, describing them as: *hao kao yanger hsi kwa i ko ta* (好高牙的西瓜一個大) "good tall water melons, one copper (per slice).

The sellers of early persimmons call out, *shih tsu se liao huan* (柿子澀了換) "persimmons, if they taste bitter they may be returned," while the vendors of charries cry: *ying t'ao, sai li tsu* (櫻桃賽李子) "cherries, they taste like plums." At certain seasons we also hear, *sai t'ang tsaoer* (賽糖棗兒) "jujubes as sweet as sugar," and *yao tien putou, Lang Chia yuan tsaoer* (要甜葡萄郎家園棗兒) "sweet grapes, sold by weight, jujubes from the Lang Family Garden."

The purveyor of an insipid imitation of ice cream known by the poetical name of "fallen snow flowers" *Hsueh Hwa Lao* (雪花酪)

bursts into a kind of chant, and seeks to draw his customers by something like the following :

Hsueh Hwa Lao, kei ti doa, (雪花酪給的多)
Yiu liang yiu t'ien yiu hao ho, (又涼又甜又好喝)
Yiu chieh k'e, yiu pai hwoa (又解渴又敗火)
Ch'ang i chang, kei ti doa, (嘗壹嘗給的多)
Tu hao ch'ih, pu yao chien! (不好吃不要錢)

which may be translated somewhat like the following :

I give big helpings of fallen snow flowers,
 It is cool, it is sweet, it is good to drink,
 It assuages thirst, it puts out fires,
 Taste it, I give big helpings.

If it is not good your money will be returned !

There are various versions of the above, but they all have the same general meaning.

The aristocrat of food vendors is the one who pushes around a kind of hand cart containing all kinds of good things to eat and drink. His stock seems inexhaustible and without making an inventory we may mention :— dried fruits, peanuts, sugared and plain, melon seeds, sun flower seeds, fried beans, crab-apple jelly, various kinds of fruit syrups, *tsaoers* or jujubes, bottles of aerated water, especially sarsaparilla, and cigarettes.

In winter he calls out : *T'ang hu lu* (糖葫蘆) "sugared fruits," but in summer he says :— *Suan mei t'ang, kwo tsu kaer* (酸梅湯果子乾) "sour plum syrup, dried fruits."

He carries in his right hand two brass cups, called *ping tsa* (冰渣), and makes an incessant noise by continually jerking them one into the other.

Were it our intention to attempt to compile a complete list of the vendors of eatables our task would be by no means over, but, as we

merely wish to arouse a general interest in the lives and habits of these people, we think the examples given are sufficient for the purpose, and will proceed to talk about certain men who use special and distinctive cries in order to push the sale of articles other than food.

Charcoal is brought down from the hills to the city, the carriers being met at the gates by certain middlemen, who arrange for the goods to be sold to various depots, from which the hawkers, in their turn, purchase their daily requirements.

The cry is, *t'an tsa, t'an lai* (炭渣炭來) "pieces of charcoal, charcoal is here." The goods are sold by weight and the business is a remunerative one, though in summer the demand is small, the chief sales, of course, being during the cold weather.

The seller of certain kinds of toys especially figures, has a peculiar call, and one which is not without humour, for he says: *mai hsiao ren sai hwea ti, yiu yen ching, yiu ke pa* (買小人賽活的有眼睛有胳膊) "buy small man, they are lifelike, they have eyes and arms."

The one who carries green glazed pots strikes out on a line of his own, for he declares that he is willing to exchange his wares for various articles, the cry being: *huan ta hsiao lü pan* (換大小綠盆) "I offer for exchange big and small green pots." Though he does not say so, he is really after worn shoes and old clothes.

The offer to barter is also made by certain old women, who go round with baskets on their shoulders and deliver their message as follows: *hwan fei chih, hwan ch'ü teng* (換廢紙換取燈), "we have for exchange hair powder and matches." They chiefly collect waste paper and rags, though they are willing to bargain for anything that comes along.

This particular business seems to yield little profit, for the women engaged in it are, as a rule, very dirty, and only just a shade more

respectable looking than beggars. The gruff call *Sha Kuo* (沙鍋) refers to a certain kind of iron pot which comes from Shansi, while the words *ta hsiao hsiao chin yü lai* (大小小金魚來) "big and small, small gold fish," can often be heard in the spring and early summer.

The street buyers are a fairly numerous class and we will first describe the curio and jewel dealers. As a rule two men go out together, one walking behind the other. The front one carries a blue cloth and taps, with a piece of wood, a miniature hard parchment drum, at the same time calling out, *yü ch'i shou shih mai chien* (玉器首飾賣錢), "I will pay money for precious stones and ornaments."

If anything is offered they consult together, and, if they can come to terms with the seller, they put down a certain sum as bargain money, returning later to pay the balance due and to collect the goods.

Their capital seldom exceeds \$ 100.

The next in order are those who carry baskets and also a blue cloth. They tap a small soft parchment drum and shout, *pao t'ung, lan t'ie mai ch'ien* (破銅亂鉄賣錢) "I will give money for pieces of copper and scrap iron." They will however take anything that comes along, but prefer furniture and second hand clothes. They are, as a rule, buying for some shopkeeper.

The third class call out: *yang p'ing tzi mai ch'ien, lan t'ie, poa poa li mai* (洋瓶子賣錢亂鉄破玻璃賣) "I will give money for foreign bottles, I also buy scrap iron and broken glass." They carry baskets, but do not have any blue wrapper with them, while their speciality seems to be glass bottles.

Coming to those who, instead of uttering cries, make a sound with some instrument or other, we must first of all speak of the barber, who, in spite of the evil days which have come upon him, still walks proudly down the hutung, carrying his paraphernalia and twanging a large tuning fork with the help of a short steel rod.

In the early days of the Manchu Dynasty he was a paid employee of the Government, and the little ornamented pole, on which he now hangs his brushes and strop, is a miniature copy of those which used to stand before the gateway of an official's yamen. On this pole were the characters (奉旨剃頭) *feng chih t'i t'ou*, "officially authorized to act as a barber."

He did not charge his customers any fee, though of course he expected a gratuity, and they only used his services because of the severe penalties inflicted upon those who did not cultivate a queue.

Since the Revolution his business has deteriorated for now there are few heads to be shaved, and hair cutting has passed into the hands of another class of men.

Formerly he was not supposed to sound his tuning fork when passing a barber's shop, but this custom is gradually dying out.

It is said that the tuning fork has come from what was originally a large knife, which was used to decapitate those who would not grow queues.

The seller of fans has an ingenious arrangement of bells strung on to a framework of wires, attached to the box he carries. The demand for fans however only lasts during the summer season, and when that is over, he takes round other things, such as hats and articles made of felt.

The man who mends broken porcelain by means of little copper fasteners, is called a *chu wan ti* (鋸碗的). He has a small gong attached to the framework of one of his boxes and this is struck by pellets suspended on strings, which swing as he walks along.

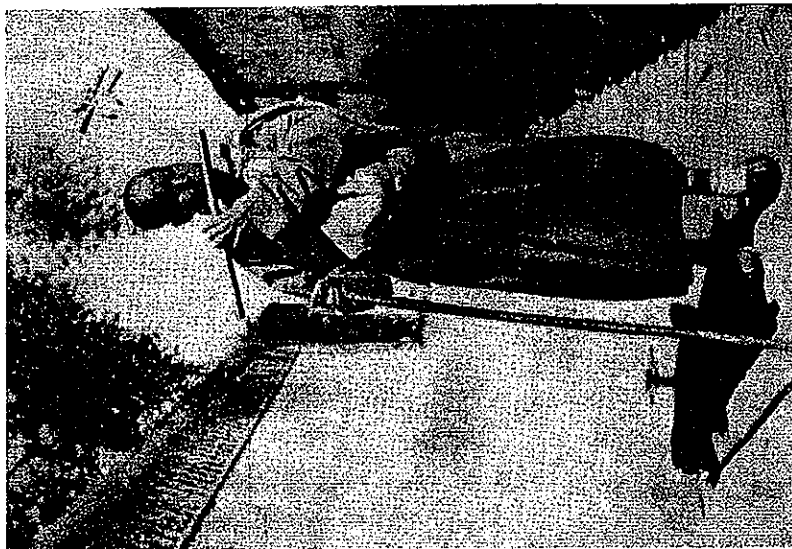
The noisiest personage is the one who carries about a Punch and Judy outfit, for he not only beats a large gong but also clangs cymbals.

PLATE XIII.



A BARBER

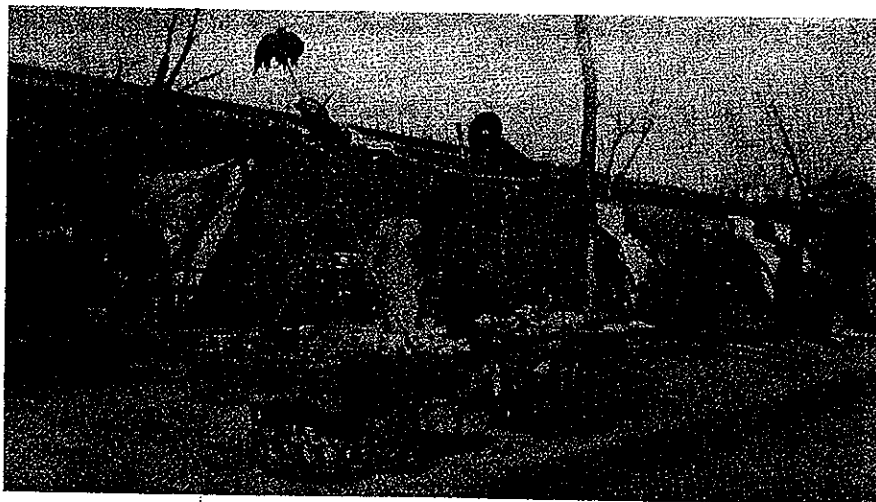
Times are hard for the old fashioned barbers for now few of their customers shave their heads. This one even wears a foreign made hat.



A BLIND MUSICIAN

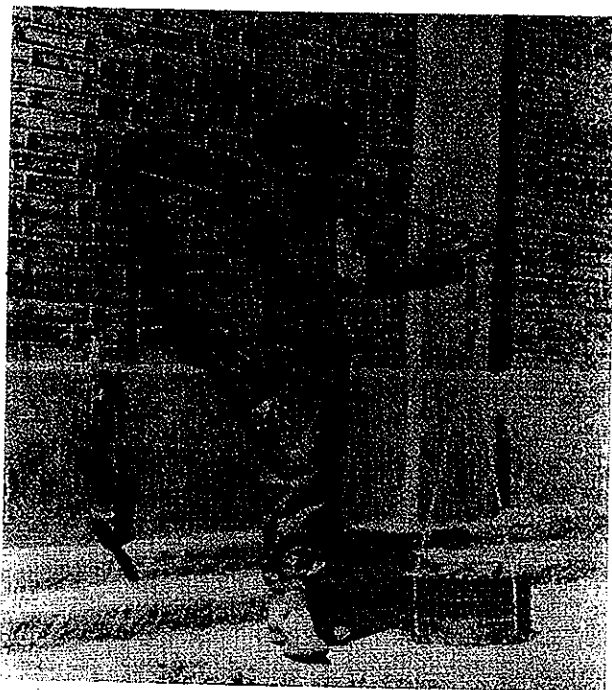
Photos by J. Zumbum, Peking.

PLATE XIV.



SWEETMEATS

Photo by J. Zumbur, Peking.



A SELLER OF NAILS &
BOOTPROTECTORS

He attracts his customers
by the clanging of his
hammers.

Photo by
J. Zumbur, Peking.

PLATE XV.

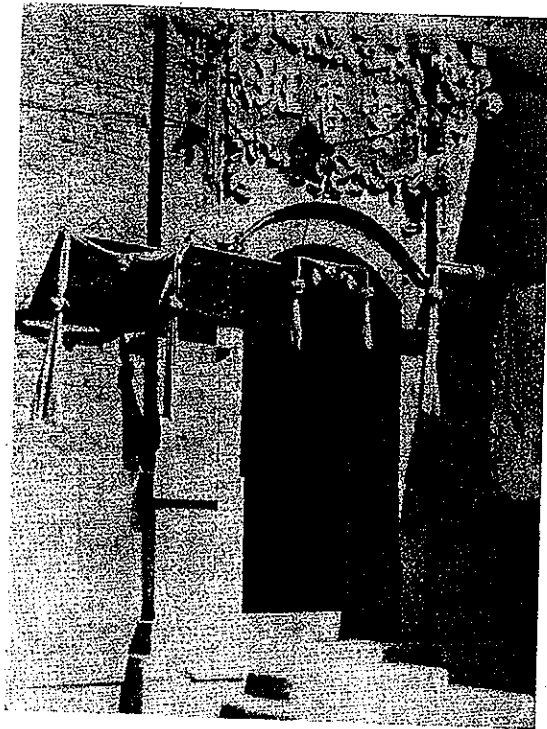


CAKES FRIED IN OIL
Photo by J. Zumbrum, Peking.



SMALL VEGETABLE MARROWS
Photo by J. Zumbrum, Peking.

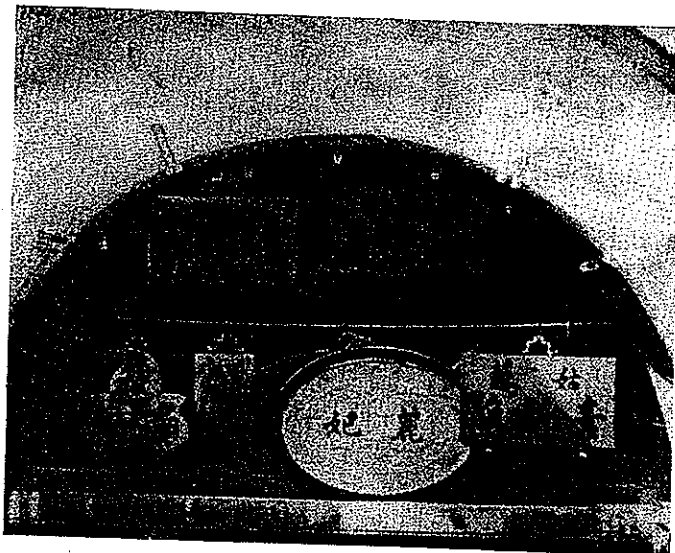
PLATE XVI.



HOUSE IN RED LIGHT
DISTRICT.

NAMES OF INMATES
IN FRAMES
(Old style)

Photo by
J. Zumburum, Peking.



HOUSE IN RED LIGHT
DISTRICT.

BRASS PLATES WITH
NAMES OF INMATES
(New style)

Photo by
J. Zumburum, Peking.

His outfit is a very compact one, and it is astonishing to see how quickly he can start his show.

The fancy goods man, whose stock includes almost everything that a lady needs, is nicknamed, *hwan chiao niang* (換嬌娘) "one who calls to the women." He twists round a gong, which is sounded by swinging wooden pellets striking against it, the whole being fixed to a wire frame with a wooden handle.

The sharpeners of knives use different methods, according to their individual fancies. Some carry 4 oblong iron plates, which are fastened one below the other, and their particular noise is made by giving the plates an upward jerk. Others prefer long trumpets, while a third class rely upon their voices and shout out: *moa chien tzi, moa ts'ai tao*, (磨剪子磨菜刀), "I grind scissors and kitchen knives."

It is said that formerly the oblong plates were samples of steel, and were shown to those who wished to place an offer for knives.

The ordinary fortune tellers tap a piece of wood against the top of a short stick, but those who are blind give themselves the option of one of three things, namely: playing a flute, beating a small gong or struming a kind of banjo.

A picturesque individual, who also has disappeared from the streets, was the seller of medicinal plasters or *kao yao* (膏藥). He used to insert two of his fingers into a kind of bell, in which were hung several pellets, and by rapidly twirling it round, he produced a sound which was quite unique. He frequently acted as doctor as well as chemist, but has had to give up his profession because his training and qualifications do not conform to the standards set up by the new police regulations.

The simplest method is to make a noise on the thing that is being offered for sale.

Kettles are carried in bundles slung from the ends of a pole, and

the vendor announces his arrival by tapping one of the utensils with a stick.

The same method is used by the seller of wooden gourds, while the man who strengthens your boot soles by driving in big headed nails, adopts the simple expedient of knocking one hammer against the other as he walks along.

We have left to the end a starting example of veracity in the one who offers for sale paper lanterns for the festival, which takes place on the 7th day of the 7th moon.

His cry is *Lien Hwa Teng* (蓮花燈), *chin t'ien mai* (今天買), *ming t'ien jeng* (明天扔), which means: "lotus flower lamps, you buy them to-day, and throw them away to-morrow."

He is evidently so certain of his customers that he can taunt them for their prodigality.

The silent ones are few in number, the best known being the leather sellers and shoe repairers, but the vendors of riding whips and those who deal in ankle ribbons also come within this category. The latter carries his wares suspended from a pole, and if the weather is inclement the goods are covered by a piece of cloth.

Should the reader care to follow up the subject he will find much that will interest him, and come across many things that have not been touched upon in this present chapter.

Be this as it may, the cries and noises will still go on, for the wants of the people must be supplied, and the ordinary man is little changed in spite of revolutions and civil war.

CHAPTER IV FLOWER STREETS AND WILLOW LANES.

The reader need not be deceived by the euphuistic title to this chapter. No attempt will be made to follow in the footsteps of Pierre Loti and weave a romantic story round "Les Amours des Chinois," but on the contrary the idea is to give as true a picture as possible of the conditions, as they exist in Peking, surrounding what Kipling has called the oldest profession in the world.

The system of having licensed houses, and of limiting them to certain districts, was introduced into China several thousands of years ago by Kuan Chung (管仲), who was tutor to one of the Emperors of the state of Wu (吳). 吳

As Wu was the chief of the 18 principalities into which China at that time was divided, it was always full of visitors from the other states, and the aged councillor's idea was to keep these strangers in the land as long as possible, and give them every opportunity of dissipating their wealth in the gilded halls of pleasure.

The taxes he collected from the proprietors of the houses were used to repair the roads and maintain the police.

During the prosperous days of Chien Lung these taxes were remitted, and they were not put on again until the reign of Hsuan T'ung, the last of the Manchu Emperors.

In the Ming Dynasty these establishments were called *Kou Lan Yuan* (勾欄院), and were in the neighbourhood of the present *Nei Wu Pu Chieh* (內務部街), or "Street of the Board of the Interior." Later on the chief quarter was in the West City, near the *Liu Hsang* (柳巷),

"Willow Lane," and it was not until after the Boxer trouble that they all moved to the district, outside the Chienmen, known as the *Pa Ta Hutung* (八大胡同), "Eight Big Hutungs," the best known of which are *Shensi Hsiang* (陝西巷), *Shih T'ou Hutung* (石頭胡同) *Han Chia T'an* (韓家潭), and *Pao Shun Hutung* (百順胡同), though a new district, named *Ta Sen Li* (大森里), near the South Park, has been opened during the last few years. There is also a very low and disreputable quarter outside the Hatanen, called *Huang Ho Lou* (黃鶴樓).

The houses are licensed by the Police authorities, and pay taxes varying in accordance with the class under which they are registered, and the number of "active members" on their staff.

Usually they are divided into three classes, though there are a few fourth class places, and also some known as *Erh Teng Pan*, (二等班), which we may vulgarly term "two point five," they being half way between the second and third classes.

The distinctions between the various classes are rigidly adhered to, not only with regard to the prices charged, but also in many other things pertaining to the entertainment of the guests and the way in which they are addressed.

Many of the inmates of these establishments are Southerners, and claim to come from Soochow, which is famous for the beauty of its women. In such cases the women attendants or *lao mas* (老媽) are also from the South, but generally the men-servants and the managers are Northerners.

Certain writers claim that "licensed places" in China are in reality a kind of teahouse, and that the great majority of the people who frequent them do so merely in order to seek a little harmless amusement, and that they are innocuous when compared with similar places

in Western countries with their drunken orgies and crimes of blackmail and violence.

This is true to a large extent. After a feast it is no unusual thing for the host and some of his guests to go to one of these houses and be entertained by the inmates. Tea is brought in, nuts and cigarettes handed round, and banter and persiflage indulged in, but as a rule no great harm is done, though the jest are inclined to be lewd, and a certain amount of horse play indulged in. In fact it may be said that a very large percentage of the crowds who frequent these places have no other object than the wish to pass an idle hour, and are quite content to pay a small sum for the privilege of being entertained. While those who go with more serious intentions find their task no easy one, and it is only after a considerable expenditure of time and money that their object is attained.

This state of things is due to the fact that the proprietors of the houses know, from long experience, that their profits, especially in the better class houses, are greater if they cater chiefly for large numbers of casual visitors, though they by no means neglect the habitués, who are often cajoled by the ladies of their choice into spending large sums of money on feasts and presents of clothes and jewelry.

It is the same old game as that which has been played in every age and in every clime, and though it is true that in China, and also in certain other parts of the East, it is not so gross and brutal as in Western countries yet the cold fact remains that the unfortunates get little of what they earn, and too often they are in the power of unscrupulous persons, who exploit them solely on account of the money they bring in.

The proprietor is known as the *Lao Pan* (老板) and the house is registered in his name. He gets into touch with certain people, chiefly women, who make it a profession to get hold of young girls, generally

by purchase, but sometimes by more doubtful methods, and carefully train them for the purpose they have in view.

They pay him rent for their rooms, and in addition he takes a percentage of all the receipts. He advances them money to pay for the furniture, and also to purchase an outfit of clothes and finery. By this means he keeps them in his power, for they can not go to other houses until his debt is paid.

As he charges them at least 30 per cent. on the loans, they are seldom able to escape from his clutches unless they find some wealthy lover, who buys them their liberty.

Others are put in by their real parents, who through poverty are compelled to sacrifice their children, and they also have to borrow money from the proprietor in order to purchase clothes and furniture.

There are a few, who are more or less independent, and not being in debt, can, if they wish, change from one place to the other.

The first class houses are called *Ch'ing Ying Hsiao Pan* (清吟小班) "Clear voices, small class," and are distinguished from one another by such fanciful designations as *Tsui Hsien Pan* (翠仙班) "The Band of Kingfisher Coloured Fairies," *Ssu Hai Pan* (四海班) "The Band of the Four Seas," *Wen Hwa Pan* (文華班) "The Band of Literature and Flowers."

The professional names of the girls are written on a piece of wood, or glass, or on a strip of silk and hung round the front entrance.

As the guests go in they are carefully scrutinised by the men at the gateway, who wish to see whether they are strangers or regular visitors. If the former, they are escorted to a room while one of the servants yells out *chien k'o* (見客), "see the guests," which is to inform the girls that they must come and show themselves to the new arrivals.

Shortly afterwards the screen, hanging in the doorway of the room,

is pulled aside, and a man shouts out the names of the young ladies as they stand for a brief moment at the entrance, and then disappear. When they have all been through the ordeal, the master of ceremonies asks the guests which ones they choose, and if they say they wish to see the one called *Kuei Ch'ing* (貴清), "The Precious Pure One," or *Hsia Fei* (霞飛), "The Flying Cloud," the name is shouted out again, and the person in question shortly afterwards comes in.

She approaches the group of men and timidly asks, which one has sent for her. The gentleman concerned replies that he is the host, and she busies herself by first seeing that the guests are supplied with tea and refreshments, before she attends to him.

On the first occasion she pretends to be very reserved, hanging down her head and answering in monosyllables, though occasionally she lapses into a smile at some quip or joke.

If she is popular it frequently happens that she has to entertain more than one party, and she solves the problem by going from one room to the other and distributing her favours as best she can. Also whenever the man in the yard yells out *chien k'o*, intimating the advent of other visitors, she has to go out and take her turn in presenting herself to them.

The first visit is supposed not to last more than half an hour, and the proper thing to do is to pay one dollar as tea money, and the same sum for the cigarettes and melon seeds, though only the tea money is obligatory. If more than one girl has been called in, the payments should be increased in proportion.

The tea money is called *k'ai pen tzi* (開盤子), "open the plate." The *amah* takes it, and gives thanks first to the giver and then to the girl. She then calls out to the *p'ao t'ang ti*, or servants, who wait on

the guests, *lai i ke ren*, *hsieh hsieh lao yeh*, *hsieh hsieh ku niang* (來一個人謝謝老爺謝謝姑娘) "one of you come and thank the gentleman and the girl."

In the division of the spoils the proprietor get 60 and the girl 40 per cent.

The *hwoa chi*, or outside servants, and the *p'ao t'ang ti*, or waiters, are paid by the manager. Their wages are very small, and they depend chiefly upon the gratuities they receive.

The *amah* is paid by her mistress, and her remuneration also depends largely upon the generosity of the callers.

We have said that it is the custom for the fair damsel to pretend to be very reserved to the host on the first occasion they meet, but if she really wishes him to come again, she manages to inform him by the most powerful of all means of expression, namely the language of the eyes, that she is not without regard for him, and a smile, hidden from the others, tells him that he welcome, if he comes again.

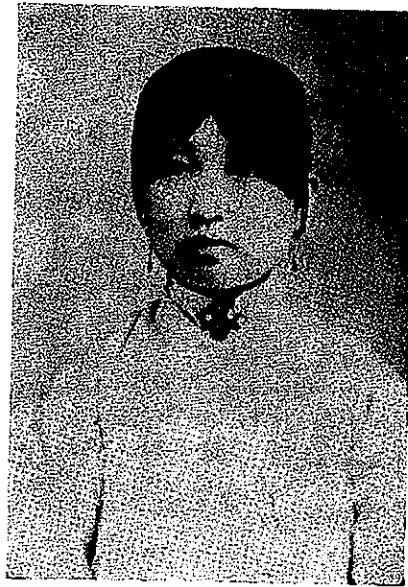
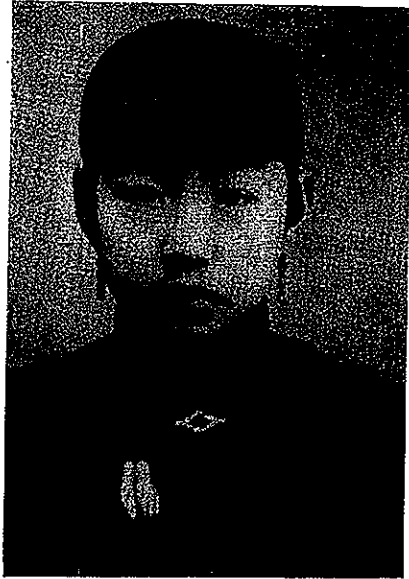
If the man wishes to continue the acquaintance he calls again in a few days, but he does not make much headway until the third visit.

In the meantime enquiries have been made as to his family and his financial standing, and the encouragement he receives depends upon the amount of money he is prepared to spend upon the lady of his affections. If he is worth encouraging, she will try to work upon his good nature, and tell him of the difficulty she has in paying for her clothes, owing to the debts she has contracted, and the poverty of her family.

She will also tell him that many of the other girls have friends who spend money freely, giving gambling parties and dinners, and hopes that he will not let her lose face.

Should he be serious in his intentions, he will buy her clothes

PLATE XVII.



VARIOUS TYPES

OF "LADIES"

PLATE XVIII.



A GROUP OF "LADIES OF THE SECOND CLASS."

三姨大婆

PLATE XIX.



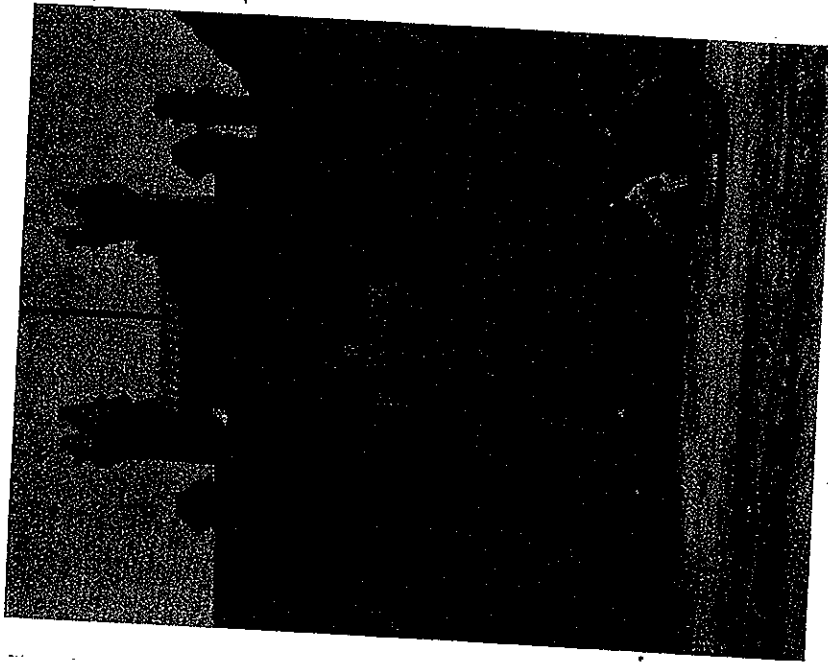
VARIOUS TYPES OF "LADIES."

PLATE XX.



**AN OLD FASHIONED PAWNSHOP WITH ITS PRISON
LIKE APPEARANCE**

The red cloth sign hangs from the poles.



A NEW STYLE PAWNSHOP.

Photos by H. C. Faxon, Esq.

and jewelry, and also arrange to spend money in entertainment. A gambling party generally consists of 4 persons, though sometimes, the girl herself may make the fourth. The host pays \$10 for the privilege, half of which goes to the girl and half to the house. This is supposed to pay for fruit and light refreshments. In addition a percentage is taken off the winners of each round, and put aside for the benefit of the lady.

A flower dinner (花酒), is far more expensive, and may easily cost over \$100.

Any of the guests, who wish, may send for their own special lady friends, and the expenses are supposed to be paid by the giver of the feast. In addition the servants expect heavy tips, while the chaffeurs, the coachman, and the ricksha boys have to be duly recompensed.

Gambling often takes place after dinner, and the ladies hover around, trying to encourage those to whom they are temporarily attached.

Sometimes a man becomes really infatuated, and offers to make the girl one of his concubines. This is the summit of her ambition, because it means freedom from her present surroundings, and assures her of a good home, as far as material comforts go.

There are however many difficulties in the way, especially if the suitor is a wealthy man. Those who claim to be her parents or guardians demand a very heavy price before they will give their consent while the debts of the manager have to be paid, and the underlings compensated. This purchase of a girl's freedom is known as *tsung liang* (從良).

Good singers are in special demand, especially for feasts and private entertainments. Those who wish to send for them write their names on red slips of paper and forward them to the house in question. Upon receiving the invitation the girls set out as soon as possible,

and take with them a musician, whose instrument is an ~~one~~-string fiddle. They are supposed to be paid \$5 a visit, while the musician expects a separate fee of \$1, and the *amah* and ricksha boy are given a hundred coppers each.

Every year each house has three special days known as *k'ai shih* (開市), "opening business." The manager gives the girls five days' notice as to the date fixed, and they send word to their friends and ask them to be sure visit them on such an occasion.

The first time is in spring, and the money gained is supposed to be used for putting up the *pengs* or mat awnings over the courtyard.

In autumn comes the day when stoves have to be put in and the windows repapered. This known as *tien lu tzi hu p'eng* (添爐子糊棚), "fit up the stoves, paper the windows."

The last special effort to collect funds is made in the early winter, and the excuse is that fur coats are needed, *hwan p'i ao* (換皮袄), "change to fur coats."

On such occasions the guests stay only a very short time in order to give the visitors a chance, though they are expected to contribute much more generously than usual. Whatever they give is called out in multiples of usual charge. Thus the cry that *Chang Lao Yeh kei ssu ke pan tzi* (張老爺給四個盤子) would mean that Mr. Chang has given four times the usual amount. The servants also expect extra money, and this is equally divided between those who work outside, known as *hwoa chi* (伙計) and the waiters of *p'ao t'ang ti* (跑堂的).

In the second class houses these days are designated as *ta ku* (打鼓), "beating the drum."

In the first class houses the guests are addressed as *Lao Yieh* (老爺), "old father," in the second class the words *Hsien Sheng* (先生) have replaced the former term *Yeh* (爺), while the visitors to the third

class places are known as *Hsiao* (小), *hsiao Li*, "small Li" and so on.

The second class places are called *Ch'a Shih* (茶室) "tea rooms," and the charges, known as *han p'u* (喊鋪), "calling the bedding," are 40 cents for tea money, and ten cents for melon seeds.

Here also much of the profit made comes from gambling parties and feasts.

Over the doors of the third class houses is the sign *San Teng Hsia Ch'u* (三等下處) "third class, lower place." In these places 40-copper pays for a cup of tea, with 10 coppers for extras. The money is kōwn as *hsieh chang* (寫賬), "written in the accounts."

Gambling is not allowed, as it would lead to disputes amongst the players, the majority of whom could not afford to lose even a small amount.

Though the whole business is a sordid one, and money is the chief consideration, it must not be supposed that it is all tragedy, for many of the girls, especially those who have a number of admirers, are well looked after, and are allowed a certain amount of freedom with regard to their likes and dislikes.

Though they are supposed to be pleasant to everyone yet human nature cannot be suppressed, and money is not always the deciding factor.

In proof of this we will end by telling the story of *Tu Shih Niang*, who is the heroine in the famous play entitled *Tu Shih Niang Na Ch'en Pai Pao Hsiang* (杜十娘怒沉百寶箱). "The girl *Tu Shih* in anger sinks (in the water) the box containing a hundred kinds of jewels."

The lady in question had an ardent admirer, who was reputed to be very wealthy, but who in fact had spent the greater part of his patrimony by the time that he had purchased her freedom.

The journey to his home had to be made by boat, and one of the fellow passengers, who was a very rich man, fell violently in love with her. He offered the "husband" an enormous price if he would forego his claims, and after much hesitation the poor man agreed. When the girl heard of the transaction she upbraided the traitor in very angry terms.

He confessed that all his money was gone, and that he had been compelled by his poverty to accept the offer made to him.

She then brought out a box full of costly jewels, and said that she had kept these as a surprise for him, and that they need not fear poverty, when they possessed such potential wealth.

Nothing however was of any value to her now, since she had found that he was ready to sacrifice her for his selfish ends.

With these words she threw the box into the water, and then jumped in herself, giving her life as a protest against his heartlessness.



CHAPTER V. PAWNSHOPS, MIDDLEMEN, AND MONEY LENDERS.

Many years ago at a college reunion dinner in England, a medical student apologised for the absence of a number of his confreres, and said it was due to the fact that the local pawnbrokers were overstocked with microscopes. In a subsequent conversation another gentlemen made the assertion that were it not for racing men, poets, actors, drunkards and medical students the pawnbrokers profession would soon be as dead as the stage coach and the sporting parson.

In China however the pawnbroker is a man of importance, owing to the fact that the economic conditions prevent the greater portion of the population from making more than a bare living, and when misfortune or sickness comes they have no other recourse beyond that of taking their goods to the *Chien Yü Mai Mai* (監獄買賣) or "Prison Shops," so called because in former times there were heavy wooden bars before the windows, and the place where the pledged goods were deposited was as dark as a prison cell, while the manager is called a *tang chia ti* (當家的) or "warden." In addition in Peking there are many expectant officials, and these people often have to pawn their valuables while they are waiting for an appointment.

A Government regulation says, that no pawnshop can be started unless an official investigation shows that there is ample capital available. The usual sum is \$50,000. but, as a rule, arrangements are made with an exchange shop, so that extra money can be obtained when needed. Most of the managers and assistants in this business are Shansi

men, who are noted for their reliability and also for their fondness of driving a hard bargain.

In no country would a pawnbroker be classed as a philanthropist, but in China one or two of the regulations would make a Shylock blush.

No detailed description is given on the ticket of the articles that are pawned, and the words silk clothes may mean anything from an almost new gown of the finest Hangchow silk to a faded specimen belonging to an impecunious secretary or teacher. If there is a single tear or hole the garment is described as dilapidated and torn.

Jade is written down as common stone, an jewelry is declared to be an imitation of the real thing.

These precautions are to protect the shopkeeper against any damage that may be done to the goods, and also against any attempt of the customer to maintain that worthless things have been substituted in place of the valuable articles he handed over.

In times of war and during a change of dynasty no money is lent out, but the law demands that, in case of fire, compensation must be paid amounting to three times the sum of money advanced on the lost articles.

If they have too much of their capital paid out they stop lending for a certain period, generally from three to six months. This is called *Chih Tang Hou Shu* (止當候贖), "cessation of advances, awaiting redemption."

The shops are open from 7 A. M. to 6 P. M. but if a man dies they must allow his clothes to be redeemed, no matter what the hour may be.

The personnel of a *Tang Pu* or pawnbroking establishment consists of :

2 *ling tung*, or representatives of the partners,
4 managers and 4 bookkeepers, together with assistants for the following departments :—

- a) General goods
- b) Curios, jade and precious stones
- c) Common clothes
- d) Silks
- e) Skins and furs.

For small transactions the assistants are allowed to lend out money as they think fit, but for sum over \$ 50 the 3rd and 4th managers must be consulted. When \$ 200 - 500 are involved the 1st and 2nd managers are called in.

If the deals requires an advance of \$ 500 - 1,000, the 2nd *ling tung* or partners' representative comes into the scene, and if \$ 1,000 - 5,000 are needed the first *ling tung* must be a party to the agreement.

Any business involving more than \$ 5,000, has to be submitted to the partners before it can be settled.

Military uniforms cannot be pawned, and the same rule applies to deeds of land and houses, as titles to property in China are often very complicated, and any attempt to raise money on them is apt to cause trouble.

The interest charged on money advanced by the pawnbrokers is 3 per cent. a month, with a time limit of 24 months.

Five days grace is allowed for the repayment of interest and principal, with the proviso that the 5th day expires at 12 o'clock noon.

Two sets of books are kept, the partners having one set in their own homes so that they know exactly how matters stand.

Valuable curios and jewels are deposited for safe custody with the partners and these cannot be redeemed without 5 days' notice being given.

The managers never get an increase of salary, but a bonus of 10 per cent. of the profits is divided amongst them, while an extra 2-5 per cent. goes to the *ling tungs*.

Like so many things in China the old fashioned pawnshops are disappearing and their places taken by modern buildings. Even the sign, a wooden dragon from which a small roll of cloth is suspended is now seldom seen.

MIDDLEMEN.

China is essentially the land of the middleman, and few things are settled by direct dealings between the principals concerned.

The system has its advantages, especially for the Chinese who have a natural disinclination to state unpleasant truths and also have an almost morbid fear of causing a loss of face either to themselves or to those with whom they are negotiating. By using intermediaries many awkward situations can be avoided, and ultimatums may be toned down so that they appear in the form of friendly offers of compromise.

Furthermore by keeping in the shadows, a man is able to play his cards more skilfully than when he is sitting face to face with his opponent, and also he is not rushed into making concessions which he may have cause to regret.

The disadvantages are obvious, for the middlemen, in order to show how valuable their services are, have a tendency to exaggerate any trouble that may come up and often imagine difficulties where none

PLATE XXI.



THE HUI HSIEN TANG RESTAURANT WHERE IN THE SUMMER THE DINERS
CAN GAZE OUT UPON THE LOTUS FLOWERS

Photo by Mr. Yung Kwang, Peking.



THE FAMOUS "DUCK RESTAURANT," "THE PIEN I FANG"

Photo by Mr. Chen Chen, Peking.

PLATE XXII.



PUPILS OF THE FU LIEN CHENG SCHOOL OF ACTING
Photos by H. C. Faxon, Esq.

PLATE XXIII.



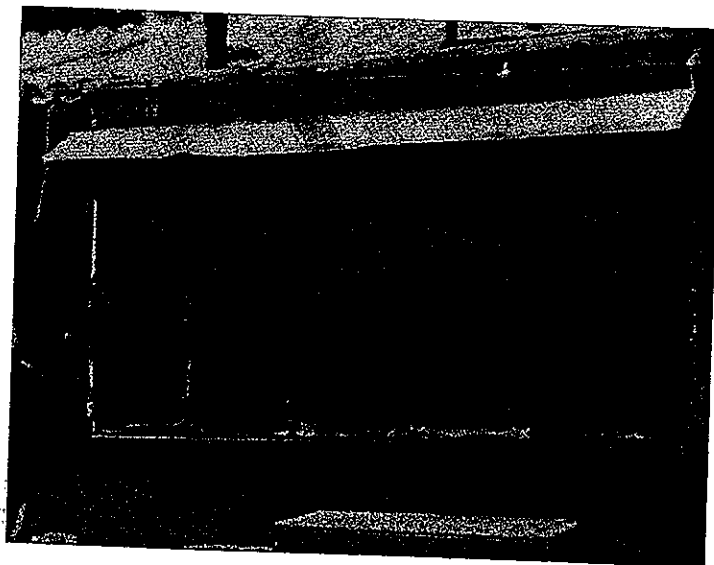
PUPILS OF THE FU LIEN CHENG
SCHOOL OF ACTING

Photos by
H. C. Faxon, Esq.

PLATE XXIV.



PUPILS OF THE FU LIEN CHENG SCHOOL OF ACTING
Photos by H. C. Faxon, Esq.



THEATRICAL ANNOUNCEMENTS AT ENTRANCE TO THEATRE
Photo by J. Zumbrum, Peking.

exist. They are also opportunists and will, rather than offend their patrons, give an optimistic report on the situation, taking a gambler's chance on the hope that things may turn out all right.

A numerous class of middlemen are those who are concerned with the buying and selling of property, the letting of houses, and the raising of mortgages. They are known as *la chien ti* (拉 繚 的), "pullers of ropes," and frequent certain tea-houses. When one of them has a client he goes to meet the members of the fraternity, and over the fragrant cup will make cautious enquiries about the matter in question.

He has to be very careful not to say too much until he is sure of his ground, or he will find himself forestalled and his hope of making a little money gone.

The great difficulty is to limit the number of people concerned, for there are many hawks hovering in the air ready to descend upon the quarry, and there are frequent quarrels as to how the commission shall be divided.

The man who introduces the business is called the *Tou'er*, and he naturally claims more than the others, but his claims are often disputed and then there is trouble.

The commission on the buying and selling of house and land in Peking is known as *ch'eng san, p'oa erh*, (成 三 破 二), the buyer pays 3 per cent. and the seller 2, this being divided amongst the *la chien ti*'s and their associates.

Mei P'oa (媒 婆) are old women who arrange for the sale and adoption of children, and they are considered respectable compared with the *mai mai ren k'ou* (買 賣 人 口), "vendors of human beings," who try to get children for the keepers of brothels, and also for those who wish to purchase slave girls or concubines. These are lawbreakers and

are severely punished when caught, but even they are better than the *p'ai hua ti* (拍花的) "kidnappers," who are summarily executed whenever they come within the grip of the law.

A harmless class are those who arrange for the hire of maidservants. The applicants are given a few days trial and if they are taken on the recommender gets a fee of 40 coppers, for which he has to act as guarantor that everything is all right.

The *mei ren* (媒人), those who arrange marriages, include both men and women, and their success depends largely upon their powers of persuasion. The male members of the profession go to the parents of some eligible youth and extol the virtues of a beautiful girl, who would make an admirable wife for the young gentleman in question. These sons of Ananias are in communication with certain females who go to the father and mother of the girl and say all kinds of nice things about the young man, laying special emphasis on the amount his family can pay towards the bridal outfit and marriage expenses. If the match is arranged the *mei ren* are given a certain percentage of the money paid out by the bridegroom's parents.

MONEY LENDERS.

Most of us can vouch for the fact that the Chinaman is an adept at borrowing money, and it is wonderful how successful they are even with their fellow countrymen, whom one would imagine would be case hardened against the most subtle appeal.

However there are times when the only course open is to apply to the professional money lender and, as is usual, the poorer the borrower the higher the interest he has to pay.

If a man wishes to mortgage his property, he can raise, under ordinary circumstances, 40 - 60 per cent. of its value. For this he must

get a shop guarantee and also hand over all the deeds as security. He gets only 98 per cent. of the loan, two per cent. going to the gatekeeper of the lender, while in addition he has to pay 5 per cent. to the middlemen. The rate of interest varies from 2 to 4 per cent. a month.

For an ordinary loan three shop guarantees are required, and as a rule for each \$1,000 received the borrower must pay back \$1,200 at the rate of \$120 dollars a month. This money is collected from the shops, the lender not having any further communication with the borrower.

The middlemen receive \$60 per \$ 1,000 but the gatekeeper does not get anything.

For small sums a shop guarantee is required and the interest is collected twice a month from the shop. The rate varies, but often amounts to as much as 80 per cent. per annum.

Even the street hawkers are provided for, and the old custom was for them to borrow 98 coppers in the morning, and repay 100 at night, but now they only receive 90 in the morning, and if they do not return 100 at night, they are fined 10 coppers a day.

Another way is to get \$1 in the morning and repay \$1.10 in the evening.

Others make a loan of only 50 coppers, and the interest charged is 2 coppers a day. They have a small book in which the daily payment, when made, is duly recorded.

A usurer who is known for his heartlessness and greed is often called *fang en Wang chang ti* (放閻王賬的), "the God of Death money lender."

The most sensible method the Chinese have of raising funds is to form what is known as a *hui*, or "society," consisting of a small

number of people, generally 10 or 12. On a fixed day each month the members pay in their subscriptions, and those who wish to use the money collected write on a piece of paper the amount of interest they are prepared to pay. The highest bidder gets the money, less the interest which is deducted and returned to the subscribers.

Each member benefits once only, but all must contribute until the round is completed.

The bids vary greatly, and at the festivals the interest offered is as a rule quite high. The fortunate ones are those who are not in great need of money and can afford to wait until near the end when the competition is less keen.



CHAPTER VI

FEASTS AND RESTAURANTS.

For smoothing over difficulties and clearing away doubts and misunderstandings, there is nothing comparable to a Chinese feast. No matter how hard a bargain may have been driven, or how heated the argument may have proved, there is nothing but sunshine as soon as the company gets seated at the round table, ready to do full justice to the good things that are due to come.

The feast plays a very important part in Chinese life. It is the master compromiser and its services are requisitioned on every possible occasion. Nothing is settled without its aid and no enterprise is started except under its auspices.

In Peking it reigns supreme, for it is the alpha and omega of political intrigue, and is indispensable to those who seek to gain the patronage of those in authority. Without its aid many a proud official would be still waiting for the sweets of office and the seeker after promotion might look in vain for the favours that he so eagerly anticipates.

It is said that there are over 6000 restaurants in the city, and the business they do is simply enormous.

Though the national exchequer may be empty, it seems to make little difference to the pleasure seeking public, and the official class, who may be termed the great unpaid, still manage to entertain on as lavish a scale as ever.

The revolution may have brought about many beneficial change, but it certainly caused a decay of manners and gave a severe blow to the old time etiquette and display of ceremony.

In the days of the Emperor a really formal feast was an imposing affair, and each guest received a separate invitation which came enclosed in a long red envelope. These were handed back to the host on the day in question, the inference being that the receiver was unworthy of the honour that had been conferred upon him.

Time was of no importance and many messengers were sent out to urge the would be feasters to come without delay. When all were assembled the host would go to the seat reserved for the most important person and, after putting his chair straight, would pour out a cup of wine and then make an obeisance, first before the cup and then before the guest. He would go through the same ceremony with each of the others in their due turn. The principal guest would return the compliment by pouring out some wine for the host.

On less important occasions the list of guests would be sent out on a long sheet of red paper. The person mentioned first would write just under his name the words, *Ching P'ei Moa Tsoa* (敬陪末座), "I will respectfully accompany you (and take) the lowest seat at the table." Others would write *Ching P'ei* (敬陪), or *Ching Chih* (敬知), "I respectfully know" (about the affair), but at the present day the simple word *Chih* (知), "I know," is generally reckoned sufficient.

To the outsider it is amusing to see the guest declining the seats of honour as indicated to them by the host, and it is often only after considerable difficulty that they are persuaded to take the places allotted to them.

Much nonsense has been written about the number of dishes that appear at a Chinese feast and also the strange and wonderful delicacies

that the guests are supposed to consume under the penalty of causing grave displeasure to the host. It is true that the courses are numerous, but many of them can be passed over by a mere pretence at eating and there are enough good things to satisfy the most fastidious appetite. It takes time for the ordinary individual to appreciate sea slugs or preserved eggs, but unhappy is the one who cannot enjoy that masterpiece of Chinese cookery, boiled duck, or who fails to appreciate the flavour of some of the wonderful soups that come on.

The host is supposed to drink with each guest in turn, but he often delegates part of his task to his friends and is quite satisfied if everyone is filled to repletion.

Twelve guests make a table, and if the thing is done in first-class style four dishes are indispensable, namely: birds nest soup, shark fins, duck, and soup with tripe and clams.

In addition there should be:

8 "fried" dishes consisting of shrimps, gizzard, chicken, fish, etc.

4 "cold" dishes

4 kinds of fruit

2 sweets

4 bowls of soup to flavour the rice.

In Peking the price of the above would be \$ 16 without wine or tips. Birds nest soup is the most expensive item and may be omitted on ordinary occasions.

The attendants of the guests receive a gratuity in lieu of food, ricksha boys getting 20 coppers inside the city and 27 outside. Drivers of carriages 40 coppers and chauffeurs from 80 to 120 coppers.

The restaurants are of all kinds and sizes and almost every portion of the community is catered for, no matter from what province they

may come. The largest are known as *T'ang* (堂) or *Fan Chwang* (飯莊) and contract for birthday or funeral celebrations. They can provide food for several hundred people and even have a stage on which theatrical performances can be given. They are also prepared to take on contracts for feasts and celebrations held in private homes, and will supply all the necessary furniture and utensils.

Some people however, from economical reasons, buy the food themselves and engage special cooks for the occasion.

These itinerant chefs frequent certain tea houses, and those who wish to engage them must go to these places and arrange with them on the spot.

The ordinary restaurant is known as a *fan kwan* (飯館) or *lou* (樓).

In the old fashioned houses the office is near the entrance, and then comes the kitchen, through which one must pass in order to go to the dining rooms. This is said to be a relic of ancient times when the meals were served in front of the shop, the dining rooms being more or less a modern innovation.

In the newer places, especially those opened by Southerners, the kitchen is behind the dining rooms, thus conforming to the well known phrase, "When you go to the theatre do not go behind the stage, and when you go to a restaurant do not go into the kitchen," (聽戲別到後台, 吃飯別進廚房).

During the Manchu Dynasty the Imperial audiences were held in the early morning, and there were three restaurants near the palace gates to which the officials would go after they had performed their duty to the Emperor.

Near the Tung Hwa Men or "East Entrance" were the Ho Hsing Hao (合興號) and the Tung Hsing Lou (東興樓). Since the revolution

PLATE XXV.



MEI LAN FANG



AN ACTOR TAKEN IN THE COURTYARD JUST
BEFORE GOING ON THE STAGE

Photos by J. Zumburum, Peking.

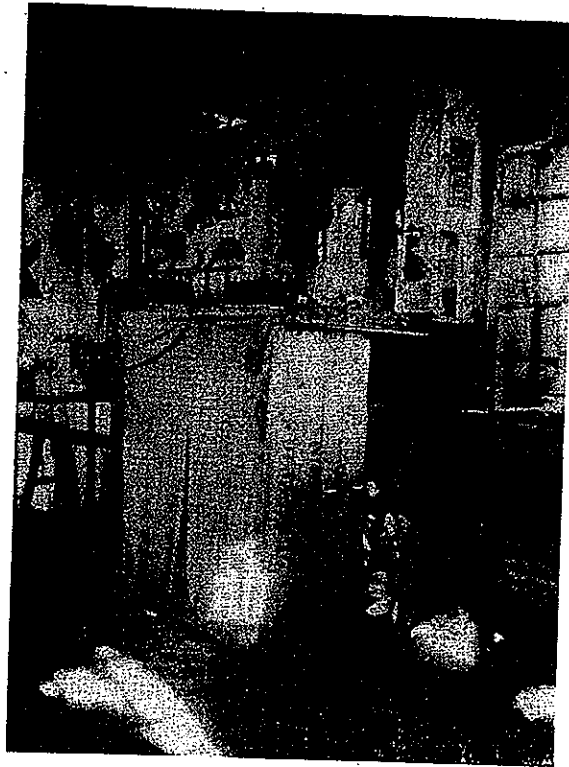
PLATE XXVI.



MEI LAN FANG IN ONE OF HIS NEWLY WRITTEN PLAYS,
"LOA SHEN" OR "THE DESCENT OF THE GODDESS"

Photo by J. Zumbur, Peking.

PLATE XXVII.



ALTAR IN DRESSING ROOM
OF TEMPORARY THEATRE
Note use of Cigarette Box.

Photo by
H. C. Faxon, Esq.



ACTORS PRACTISING
THEIR VOICES

Photo by
H. C. Faxon, Esq.

PLATE XXVIII.



CHEN YEN CH'IU, THE PUPIL OF MEI LAN FANG.

the former has had to close its doors, but the proprietors of the Tung Hsing Lou moved with the times, and it is now probably the best patronised restaurant in the city.

For those who went out by the West Entrance there was the Sha Kuo Chu (沙鍋居), which specialised in pork and kindred dishes, but did not provide duck, chicken or fish. It was essentially a breakfast house and is still flourishing in spite of the changed times.

Near the Shih Tzi Hai, a lake outside the Hou Men (後門) is a famous restaurant, the Huei Hsien Tang Fan Chwang (會賢堂飯莊), which is open in the summer time for the benefit of those who wish to gaze upon the lotus flowers in the lake.

A favourite resort for gourmands is the Cheng Yang Lou (正陽樓) which is between 200 - 300 years old, outside the Ch'ien men, where in winter time mutton is grilled on an iron plate, while in the autumn the great delicacy is crabs, which have been artificially fed on sesamum seed.

It is a recognised meeting place for literary men, and many a poem has been written there, inspired by the pleasant company and, shall we say, the good food and wine.

At the Ming Yueh Chai (明月齋) in the Hu Pu Chieh, a bowl of beef is accompanied by some famous soup, which comes from a stock said to be sixty years old.

Another famous old restaurant is the Pai Ching Lou (百景樓) in the Mei Shih Chieh (煤市街) which was established over 200 years ago.

The Pei I Fang (便宜坊), outside the Shun Chih Men, is one of the places which specializes in the famous Peking duck. The birds are kept in a dark room and artificially fed until such time as they are ready for the slaughter.

The Tu I Chai (獨一齋) in the Men Kuang Hutung outside the Ch'ien Men gets its reputation from corn beef, which is in great demand and is sent away to all parts of the country.

"Mutton" restaurants or *yáng rou kwan* (羊肉館) are very popular with certain sections of the community, and they are generally run by Mohammedans. The best known of these is perhaps the Yueh Sheng Chai (月盛齋), which is close to the new Chien Men Post Office.

In the Tu I Ch'u (都一處) on the Ch'ien Men Ta Chieh is a chair on which the Emperor Ch'ien Lung sat, when he went in one day to get a drink of wine. The chair was not used after that auspicious day, and was shown to all guests who go there for the first time, though now it has disappeared like so many other historical relics.

Near the Ts'ai Shih Kow, which was formerly the execution ground, was a wine shop named the Wu Tou Chū (五斗居), the proprietor of which used to give free drinks to all criminals who passed as they were going to their execution.

The restaurant business in Peking is largely in the hands of Shantung men, and in such places as the Tung Hsing Lou even the waiters come from that province.

In the Honan restaurants the special dish is carp, while the Szechuanese houses are noted for their hot flavourings, in which chillies play an important part.

Shansi men have their own special haunts, where they can indulge in their fondness for vinegar, and end the meal with bowls of *mien tiao* (麵條), a kind of macaroni.

An interesting feature in many of the better class places is the large tub where live fish are stored and, if the customers so wish, the specimen they are going to eat will be brought into the dining room for their inspection before it is put into the pot.

The great hour for dining is from 6-7 p.m. and the restaurants close at 11 o'clock, with the exception of a few that specially cater for supper.

On the 1st and 15th of every month there is special food provided for the assistants, though even on ordinary occasions they fare much better than the great majority of their countrymen, in spite of the fact that they are not allowed to eat the remnants left over from the feast. These are thrown into a tub and sold to hawkers who have no difficulty in finding a market for them.

As in other parts of the world, the service you receive depends largely upon whether you are known to the management, and also upon the size of the gratuity you give to the waiters.

Though much of the business is on a cash basis, old customers are allowed to settle at the festivals, and in fact they are encouraged to do so, as they naturally confine themselves to the houses where they have credit and are not likely to be inclined to try other places.

One thing that the foreigner misses is the after-dinner conversation, which is so pleasant a feature of our social life, for it is the custom in China to depart almost immediately the meal is over, though a pretence may be made at drinking tea.

If the feast has been held in a public place, such as a restaurant or hotel, the host does not escort his guests beyond the dining room door, but in his own home he will accompany them some distance, and generally as far as the front gate:



CHAPTER VII

ACTORS AND THE THEATRE.

In no way do we differ more widely from our Chinese friends than in our lack of appreciation of the plays acted in their theatres.

- There is practically no scenery, and some of the methods used to express action, or a change of place, border on the grotesque. The orchestra seems to us to give out nothing but a series of discordant notes, while the strained falsetto voices of the singers fail to arouse our enthusiasm. Nor can we suppress a smile when we see an actor turning round at convenient intervals and refreshing himself with a sip of tea either from a cup or, in the case of those with beards or painted faces, directly from the long spout of a specially constructed teapot which is handed to them by an attendant.

It is true that we may admire some of the gorgeous costumes, and admit that the wonderful make up and graceful deportment of such artists as Mei Lan Fang and Cheng Yen Ch'iu entitle them to take high rank amongst the actors of the world, yet, on the whole, the ordinary performance appears to us to be long drawn out and wearisome, and we cannot understand the hold it has over the average Chinaman, who enjoys nothing so much as to sit in a theatre for the greater part of an afternoon or evening chatting to his friends, or calmly sipping his tea and stolidly gazing at the ever changing scenes that are being acted on the stage before him.

A famous actor or an exciting scene may hold the attention of the audience for a time, but as a rule the voices of the players are half

drowned by the buzz of conversation that is being carried on in every part of the theatre, and one would think that the play was a matter of little importance.

This indifference is however more apparent than real, and if there is a false note, or a careless piece of acting, expressions of disapproval will be heard from all sides. As a matter of fact in spite of the casual manner in which people seem to stroll on the stage and stand amongst the musicians, and the lapses of the actors with regard to tea drinking and an occasional clearing of the throat, the whole performance is governed by a set of stern and unalterable rules and regulations and woe betide the unfortunate person who dares to break them.

As in the old time essay writing a standard has been set up to which all are expected to conform, and the successful actors are those who approach most nearly to this standard. There is a way of coming on the stage and a way of going out, and when crossing the floor they must not exceed the regulation number of steps. It is seven paces from the entrance to the centre of the stage, and when they have to sit down, they must move a step forward, turn round, and in three steps get to their seat.

In fact so much are they the slaves of routine, and so mechanical are their movements, that the actor Hou Kuei Shan (侯桂山), though stricken with blindness, was still able to carry on his work without difficulty.

The orthodox manner of walking must be imitated even down to the smallest detail, and great importance is attached to deportment and the proper pose or attitude. This rigid adherence to custom is not merely due to the conservatism of the Chinese, but is also necessitated by the fact that many of the actors are ignorant young boys, who are incapable of doing anything except what has been drilled into them by long and constant practice.

Actors speak of themselves as the *Li Yuan Hang* (梨園行) or "Pearl Court Company," and look upon the Emperor T'ang T'ai Tsung (唐太宗), or Ming Hwang (明皇) as their patron saint.

This illustrious ruler had a dream in which he saw a play being acted, and when he awoke he got together a number of his relatives and formed what is said to have been the first theatrical company.

In every theatre there are two shrines erected to his memory, one being in the dressing room while the other is placed in a high position facing the stage.

An actor must do obeisance before this shrine as soon as he enters the theatre, then again just before he goes on the stage, and lastly after his performance is over, but only the *lao sheng* (老生), or actors who take the part of certain high officials, are allowed to burn incense before the holy place. To omit any of these observances is a very serious matter and may bring great misfortune on the offender.

On the 18th of the 3rd moon all the theatres are closed, as it is recognised by the members of the profession as their saint's day.

An interesting sequel to the tradition that the idea of theatricals came to the Emperor during his sleep is the fact that the word *meng* (夢), "dream," is taboo to an actor, and in its place he uses the term *hwang liang* (黃梁).

As in other countries the theatrical profession is a hard and strenuous one, and though a few gain fame and fortune, there are many failures, while the great majority have to be content with a bare living.

The training is conducted in private schools which are connected with one or other of the theatres. Young boys, as a rule of the very poorest families, are offered to the principals and, if accepted, a

contract is signed by the parents giving up their rights for a period of years.

The surrender, until the expiration of the term, usually 2 or 3 years, is absolute, and one of the clauses in the agreement used to read as follows: *Ta Ssu Pu Kwan* (打死不管), "there will be no interference even though (he is) beaten in death." Since the establishment of the Republic however this clause has been deleted.

The pupils are divided into classes according to the characters they are to take in the future, the good looking ones being put under special teachers and trained to take female parts, while those who are robust and show intelligence are trained to take the principal male parts and are known as *Lao Sheng* (老生).

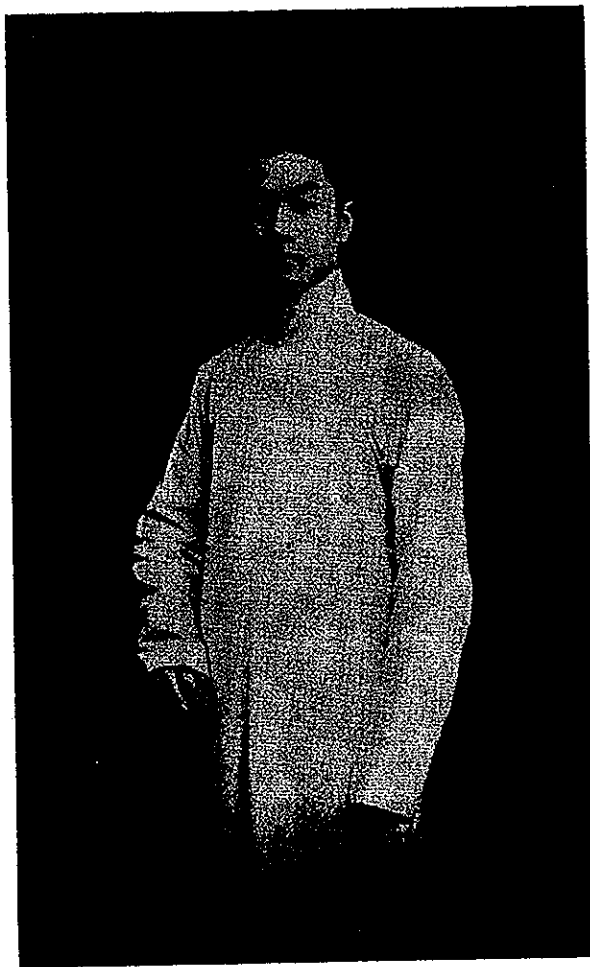
The remainder go through a course of physical training, and are taught to turn somersaults and to perform the other acrobatic feats and sword exercises, which are so characteristic a feature of the military plays. Those who fail to attain a certain proficiency in the above are relegated to the position of banner carriers and attendants.

The system is a hard and, in many respects, a cruel one, the youngsters being herded together in dark insanitary rooms, and no mercy is shown to those who fail to satisfy the demands of their instructors. In fact the system is known *ta hsi* (打戲), "beating" (in) the theatrical (idea), and the stick was, and is still, looked upon as the only means of persuasion.

The work starts in the early morning, and those who have to train their voices do so by standing against a wall or in an open space and emitting long drawn out cries.

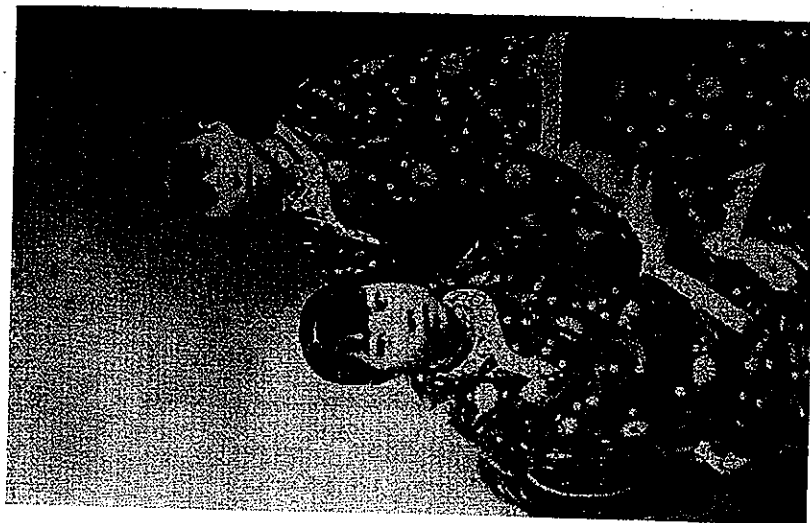
The main room is given over to the acrobats who go through their exercises under the careful eyes of their physical trainer, he personally taking hold of the beginners and helping them to bend and

PLATE XXIX.

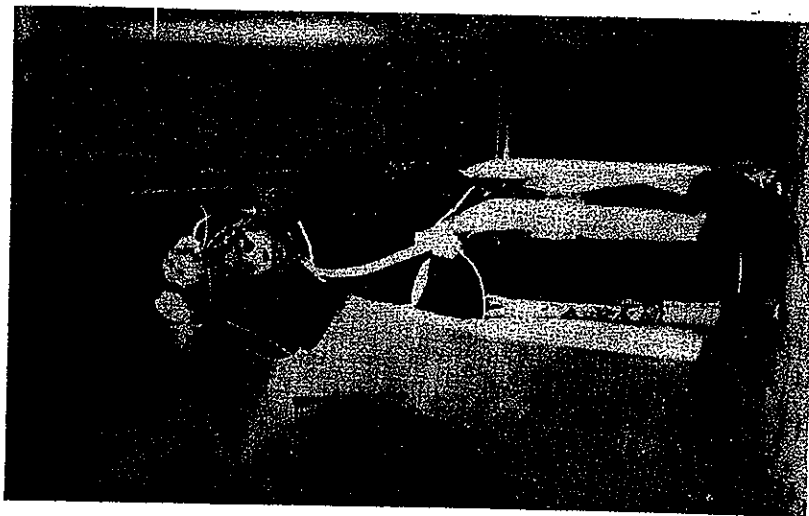


CHEN YEN CH'IU.

PLATE XXX.

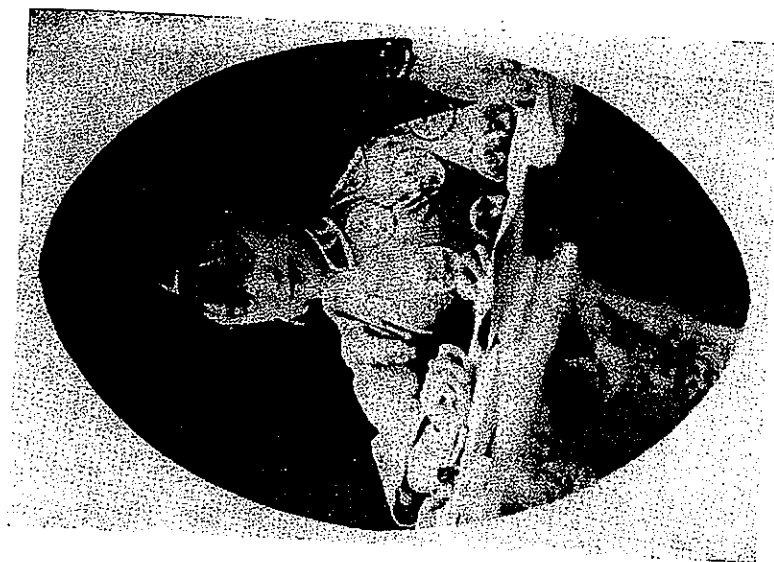


TWO STAGE FAVOURITES —
HSIAO CHENG LING AND HER SISTER
HSIAO YU LING.



EN PEI HSIEN IN THE PLAY
"FENG YANG HWA KU" —
"THE FLOWER DRUM OF FENG YANG."

PLATE XXXI.

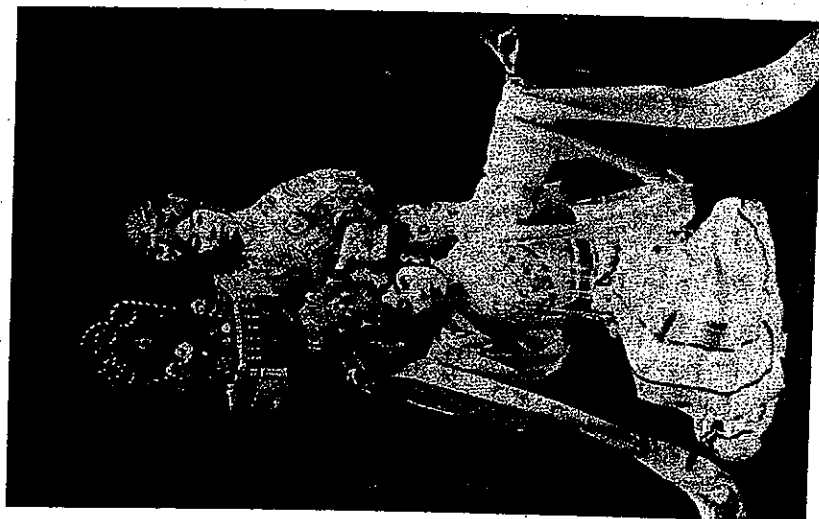
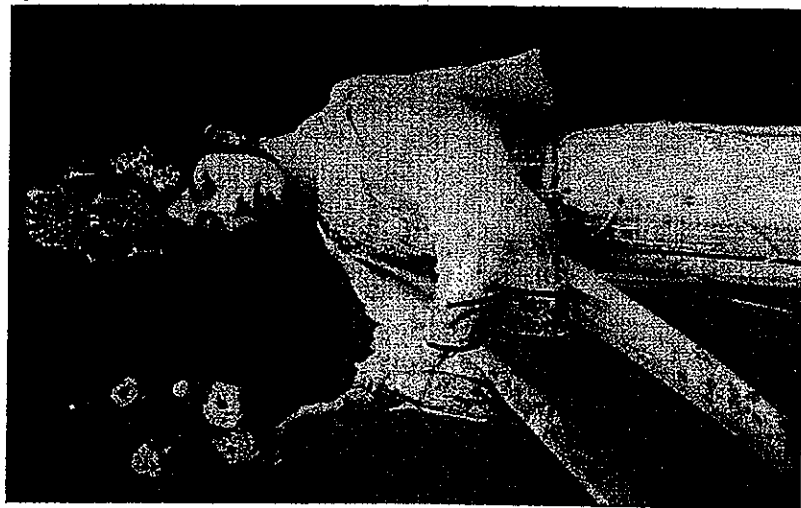


PI YUN HSIA, A WELL KNOWN ACTRESS.



CHING HSUEH FANG, A GREAT FAVOURITE
WITH PEKING AUDIENCES.

PLATE XXXII.



TWO PORTRAITS OF CHING HSUEH FANG IN "TIEN NU SAN HWA," OR "THE HEAVENLY MAID SCATTERS FLOWERS."

turn over. The more advanced ones also practice with swords and other weapons.

The hardest task falls to those who have to take the part of beautiful young girls. They are called *hwa tan* (花旦), "flower ladies" and spend many a weary hour learning to walk in the approved fashion, their difficulties being greatly increased by the fact that they have to use false feet. In the course of time they become quite expert, and move about almost as easily as they do on their natural feet. They also have to learn to stand motionless for a long time.

Those who represent the *C'hing Yi* (青衣), or "elderly women," must try to walk in a slow and dignified manner and are not considered to have reached a satisfactory standard until they can hold a brush between their knees and go forward without letting it drop.

The ones who show exceptional ability are taken away from the classes and given special instructors. When they are being definitely prepared for a play, they first learn the words of their part, then they practice the songs, and finally the action and movements. As soon as they are individually perfect they rehearse in Company.

These schools are purely money making institutions and there is no thought or care for the failures who, however, have to be kept for the term of their contract. The expenses are heavy, for the learners must be clothed and fed while the ordinary performers earn very little. Everything depends upon the few successful ones, and though great care is taken of them, yet they are worked to the utmost limit. Then comes the tragic day when their voices break, the cruel end being hastened by the merciless strain they have been subjected to since they began to bring in money for their task masters.

Had they been worked a little less and been allowed a certain amount of rest, it is probable that they might in time regain some of

their old powers of song, but under the circumstances the break down is far worse than it need have been and those who had the best voices suffer most.

A few, who have someone to look after them, may recover in the course of time, while others train on as acrobats and tumblers, or join the ranks of the musicians, or become attendants, but the majority are cast aside to form part of the world's flotsam and jetsam. A strange feature is that the voices of Mohammedans recover sooner than those of other nationalities.

There are many superstitions connected with the voice, one of which is that the sweat of a white horse or the wax from the ear of a cow will injure it beyond recovery. For this reason an actor, for fear of the jealousy of his rivals, is very reluctant to take a drink outside his own house, and so emphasises once more the difference between a Chinaman and those who come from Europe or America. Wine and vinegar are also supposed to have harmful effects on the voice.

During the last few years most of the schools have closed and the training is done by private teachers who are officially recognised as such by the managers of the theatres, who refuse to take on the pupils of unauthorised persons.

Many of the best known actors have their sons trained for the profession. They are given every possible advantage and are not forced to attempt more work than their strength will stand.

When an apprentice has finished his contract he must invite his teacher, the head of the school and the managers of various theatres to a feast. He may rejoin his old company or go to another one, in which case his special teacher goes with him.

When engaged to play in a new theatre he goes three days on trial and if satisfactory is then put on the pay list.

The actors are divided into five classes known as:

Sheng (生), males,
Tan (旦), females,
Ching (淨), old people,
Moa (莫), various coloured faces, and
Ch'ou (丑), humourists.

Each of these classes are divided again into several subdivisions the best known of which we have already mentioned namely *Lao Sheng* (老生) the hero, and *Hwa Tan* (花旦), the beautiful young lady.

There are various kinds of plays, the most difficult to perform being the *K'un Ch'iang* (昆腔), which originated in K'un Shan Hsien (昆山縣), a city in the province of Chekiang. They are of a high literary standard, while the music is soft and pleasing to the ear. Only actors who have received a good education are capable of taking part in them.

The *I Hsi* (易西) which came from I Hsien (易縣), now Kao Yang (高陽) in the province of Chihli is of a similar nature.

The *Erh Hwang* (二黃), so called from the two Hupeh cities of Hwang P'i (黃皮) and Hwang Kang (黃岡), was really first played in Anhwei, though the actors were Hupeh men. They are chiefly historical plays dealing as a rule with the famous heroes of the San Kuo period. The music is fairly even and the words of the songs can be understood by the ordinary person.

The *Ch'in Hsi* (秦戲), or Shansi Pangtu, (山西梆子) deals principally with love and tragedy, and great demands are made upon the voices of the singers, many of the notes being high pitched.

The plays that deals with the adventures of the old time heroes are termed *Wu Hsi* (武戲), "military plays," while the others go under the general name of *Wen Hsi* (文戲) "literary plays."

The formation of a first class company is a very expensive undertaking especially in the matter of clothes, as they are supposed to be able to give performances for a whole month without repeating themselves, though of late years this rule is not always followed.

The clothes and paraphernalia are grouped under six headings:—

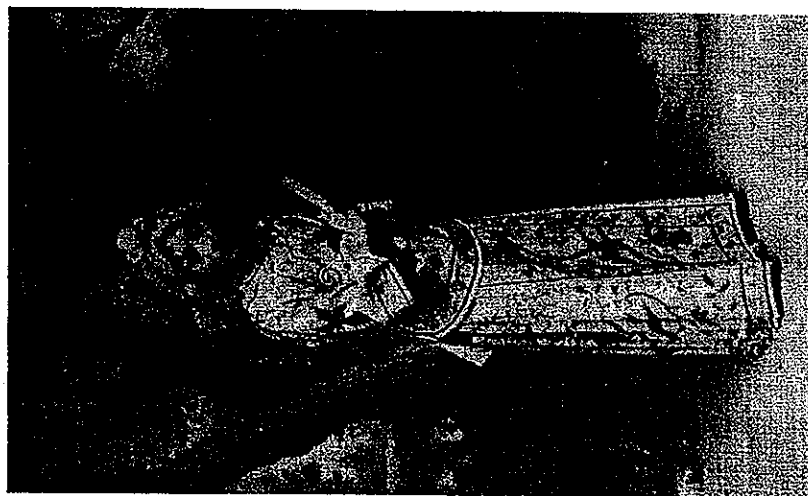
First comes the *ta i hsiang* (大衣箱), "big clothes boxes," and on the top layer of the first box is the doll which is supposed to represent a baby and which when occasion demands, is carried round the stage in the arms of some person or other. It is known as the *hsi shen* (戲神), or "fairy of the play," and is treated with extraordinary respect. It is always placed face downwards in the box and no outsiders must see it being taken out or put back in its place. Should this rule be broken a great calamity may fall upon the theatre. When carrying it about on the stage they must hold it so that its face is pressed against their bodies, as it is supposed to have an evil effect upon those who gaze on its features.

After the doll comes a ragged coat which is worn by one who has to represent a beggar. For some strange reason it is known as the *fu kuei i* (富貴衣), "coat of rich prosperity," and it also must be handled with great care and secrecy.

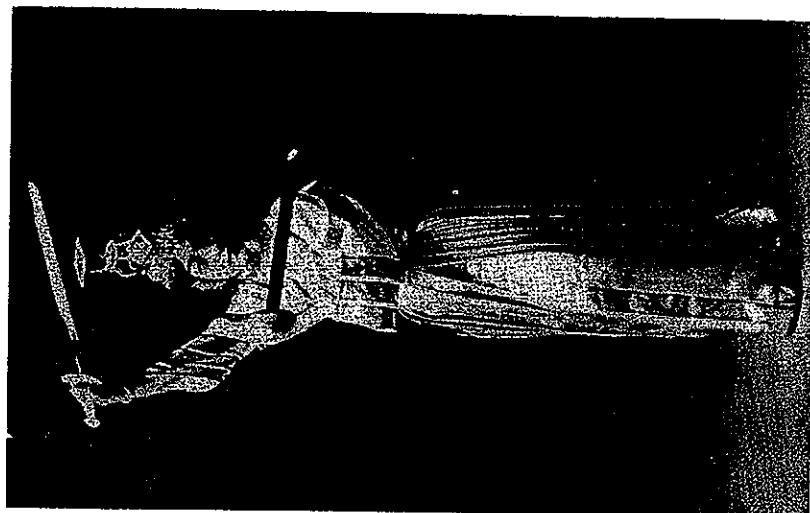
Then come the clothes of various famous men, such as emperors, famous generals, and statesmen, and some of these are truly magnificent.

The *erh i hsiang* (二衣箱), "secondary clothes boxes," contain amongst other things dresses for female parts. Here also will be found the *pang i* (綁衣), or costumes worn by those who are supposed to be naked, such as men who take off their clothes preparatory to swimming across a river. This outfit consists of a pair of black trousers and a very close fitting coat with rows of white buttons down the middle of the body and along the arms.

PLATE XXXIII.



SHIH SAN TAN "LADY NO. 13," A FAVOURITE
STAGE NAME ADOPTED BY ACTRESSES AND
THOSE WHO TAKE FEMALE PARTS.



ANOTHER PICTURE OF PI YUNG HSIA
IN "PA WANG YUEH CHI."