

you didn't notice where you dropped the head." The woman was then brought before him again; and on learning that her relatives consisted only of one uncle, the magistrate remarked, "A young woman like you, left alone in the world, will hardly be able to earn a livelihood. [Here she burst into tears and implored the magistrate's pity.] The punishment of the guilty man has been already decided upon, but until we get the head, the case cannot be closed. As soon as it is closed, the best thing you can do is to marry again. A young woman like yourself should not be in and out of a police-court." The woman thanked the magistrate and retired; and the latter issued a notice to the people, calling upon them to make a search for the head. On the following day, a man named Wang, a fellow villager of the deceased, reported that he had found the missing head; and his report proving to be true, he was rewarded with 1,000 *cash*. The magistrate now summoned the woman's uncle above-mentioned, and told him that the case was complete, but that as it involved such an important matter as the life of a human being, there would necessarily be some delay in closing it for good and all.<sup>1</sup> "Meanwhile," added the magistrate, "your niece is a young woman and has no children; persuade her to marry again and so keep herself out of these troubles, and never mind what people may say." The uncle at first refused to do this; upon which the magistrate was obliged to threaten him until he was ultimately forced to consent. At this, the woman appeared before the magistrate to thank him for what he had done; whereupon the latter gave out that any

<sup>1</sup> There is a widespread belief that human life in China is held at a cheap rate. This may be accounted for by the fact that death is the legal punishment for many crimes not considered capital in the West; and by the severe measures that are always taken in cases of rebellion, when the innocent and guilty are often indiscriminately massacred. In times of tranquillity, however, this is not the case; and the execution of a criminal is surrounded by a number of formalities which go far to prevent the shedding of innocent blood. The *Hsi-yüan-lu* opens with the words, "There is nothing more important than human life."—HERBERT M. GILES, TRANSLATOR.

person who was willing to take the woman to wife was to present himself at his *yamên*. Immediately afterwards an application was made—by the very man who had found the head. The magistrate then sent for the woman and asked her if she could say who was the real murderer; to which she replied that Hu Chêng had done the deed. "No!" cried the magistrate, "it was not he. It was you and this man here. [Here both began loudly to protest their innocence.] I have long known this; but, fearing to leave the smallest loophole for escape, I have tarried thus long in elucidating the circumstances. How [to the woman], before the corpse was removed from the well, were you so certain that it was your husband's body? *Because you already knew he was dead.* And does a trader who has several hundred ounces of silver about him dress as shabbily as your husband was dressed? And you [to the man], how did you manage to find the head so readily? *Because you were in a hurry to marry the woman.*" The two culprits stood there as pale as death, unable to utter a word in their defense; and on the application of torture both confessed the crime. For this man, the woman's paramour, had killed her husband, curiously enough, about the time of Hu Chêng's braggart joke. Hu was accordingly released, but Fêng suffered the penalty of a false accuser; he was severely bamboosed, and banished for three years. The case was thus brought to a close without the wrongful punishment of a single person.

*The Sultan and his Three Sons*

*From the Arabic*

THERE was erewhile in the land of Al-Yaman a man which was a Sultan and under him were three Kinglets whom he overruled. He had four children; to wit, three sons and a daughter: he also owned wealth and treasures

greater than reed can pen or page may contain; as well as animals such as horses and camels, sheep and black cattle; and he was held in awe by all the sovereigns. But when his reign had lasted for a length of time, Age brought with it ailments and infirmities and he became incapable of faring forth his Palace to the Divan, the hall of audience; whereupon he summoned his three sons to the presence and said to them, "As for me, 'tis my wish to divide among you all my substance ere I die, that ye may be equal in circumstance and live in accordance with whatso I shall command." And they said, "Hearkening and obedience." Then quoth the Sultan, "Let the eldest of you become sovereign after me: let the cadet succeed to my moneys and treasures, and as for the youngest let him inherit my animals of every kind. Suffer none to transgress against other; but each aid each and assist his co-partner." He then caused them to sign a bond and agreement to abide by his bequeathal; and, after delaying a while, he departed to the mercy of Allah. Thereupon his three sons got ready the funeral gear and whatever was suited to his estate for the mortuary obsequies such as cements and other matters: they washed the corpse and enshrouded it and prayed over it: then, having committed it to the earth they returned to their palaces where the Wazirs and the Lords of the Land and the city-folk in their multitudes, high and low, rich and poor, flocked to condole with them on the loss of their father. And the news of his decease was soon bruited abroad in all the provinces; and deputations from each and every city came to offer condolence to the King's sons. These ceremonies duly ended, the eldest Prince demanded that he should be seated as Sultan on the stead of his sire in accordance with the paternal will and testament; but he could not obtain it from his two brothers as both and each said, "I will become ruler in room of my father." So enmity and disputes for the government now arose among them and it was not to be won by any; but at last quoth the eldest Prince, "Wend we and submit ourselves to the arbitration of a Sultan of the tributary sultans; and let him to whom he shall adjudge the realm

take it and reign over it." Quoth they, "'Tis well!" and thereto agreed, as did also the Wazirs; and the three set out without suite seeking a Sultan of the sultans who had been under the hands of their sire, in order that they might take him to arbitrator. And they stinted not faring till the middle way, when behold, they came upon a mead abounding in herbage and in rain-water lying sheeted. So they sat them down to rest and to eat of their victual, when one of the brothers, casting his eye upon the herbage, cried, "Verily a camel hath lately passed this way laden half with Halwa-sweetmeats and half with Hamiz-pickles." "True," cried the second, "and he was blind of an eye." Hardly, however, had they ended their words when lo! the owner of the camel came upon them (for he had overheard their speech and had said to himself, "By Allah, these three fellows have driven off my property, inasmuch as they have described the burden and eke the beast as one-eyed"), and cried out, "Ye three have carried away my camel!" "By Allah we have not seen him," quoth the Princes, "much less have we touched him"; but quoth the man, "By the Almighty, who can have taken him except you? and if you will not deliver him to me, off with us, I and you three, to the Sultan." They replied, "By all manner of means; let us wend to the sovereign." So the four hied forth, the three Princes and the Cameleer, and ceased not faring till they reached the capital of the King. There they took seat without the wall to rest for an hour's time, and presently they arose and pushed into the city and came to the royal Palace. Then they craved leave of the Chamberlains, and one of the Eunuchs caused them enter and signified to the sovereign that the three sons of Such-an-such a Sultan had made act of presence. So he bade them be set before him and the four went in and saluted him, and prayed for him and he returned their salams. He then asked them, "What is it hath brought you hither and what may ye want in the way of inquiry?" Now the first to speak was the Cameleer and he said, "O my lord the Sultan; verily these three men have carried off my camel by proof of their own speech, for they have indeed de-

scribed him and the burden he bore! And I require of our lord the Sultan that he take from these wights and deliver to me the camel which is mine as proved by their own words." Presently, asked the Sultan, "What say ye to the claims of this man and the camel belonging to him?" Hereto the Princes made answer, "By Allah, O King of the Age, we have not seen the camel, much less have we stolen him." Thereupon the Cameleer exclaimed, "O my lord, I heard yonder one say that the beast was blind of an eye; and the second said that half his load was of sour stuff and the other half was of sweet stuff." They replied, "True, we spake these words"; and the Sultan cried to them, "Ye have purloined the beast by this proof." They rejoined, "No, by Allah, O my lord. We sat us in such a place for repose and refreshment and we remarked that some of the pasture had been grazed down, so we said: This is the grazing of a camel; and he must have been blind of one eye as the grass was eaten only on one side. But as for our saying that the load was half Halwa-sweetmeats and half Hamiz-pickles, we saw on the place where the camel had knelt the flies gathering in great numbers while on the other were none: so the case was clear to us (as flies settle on naught save the sugared) that one of the panniers must have contained sweets and the other sour." Hearing this the Sultan said to the Cameleer, "O man, fare thee forth and look after thy camel; for these signs and tokens prove not the theft of these men, but only the power of their intellect and their penetration." And when the Cameleer heard this, he went his ways. Presently the Sultan cleared a place in the Palace and allotted to it the Princes for their entertainment: he also directed they be supplied with a banquet and the eunuchs did his bidding. But when it was eventide and supper was served up, the trio sat down to it purposing to eat; the cadet tasting a bit of kid exclaimed, "This kid was suckled by a dog"; and the youngest exclaimed, "Assuredly this Sultan must be of ignoble birth." And this was said by the youths what while the sultan had hidden himself in order to hear and to profit by the Princes' words. So he waxed

wroth and entered hastily crying, "What be these speeches ye have spoken?" They replied, "Concerning what thou hast heard inquire within and thou wilt find it wholly true." The Sultan then went forth and summoned the head-shepherd and asked him concerning the kid he had butchered. He replied, "By Allah, O my lord, the nanny-goat that bare the kid died and we found none other in milk to suckle him; but I had a dog that had just pupped and her have I made nourish him." The Sultan lastly hent his sword in hand and proceeded to the apartments of the Sultanah-mother and cried, "By Allah, unless thou avert my shame we will cut thee down with this scimiter! Say me whose son am I?" She replied, "By Allah, O my child, indeed falsehood is an excuse, but fact and truth are more saving and superior. Verily thou art the son of a cook! Thy sire could not obtain boy-children and I bare him only a single daughter. But it so fortune that the kitchener's wife lay in of a boy (to wit, thyself); so we gave my girl-babe to the cook and took thee as a son of the Sultan, dreading for the realm after thy sire's death." The King went forth from his mother in astonishment at the penetration of the youths and, when he had taken seat in his palace, he summoned the trio and as soon as they appeared he asked them: "Which of you was it that said of the kid's meat that the beast was suckled by a dog? What proof had he of this? How did he learn it and whence did his intelligence discover it to him?" Now when the deceased Sultan's second son heard these words, he made answer: "I, O King of the Age, am he who said that say!" The King replied, "'Tis well"; and the Prince resumed, "O my lord, that which showed me the matter of the meat which was to us brought is as follows: I found the fat of the kid all near by the bone, and I knew that the beast had sucked dog's milk; for the flesh of dogs lieth outside and their fat is on their bones, whereas in sheep and goats the fat lieth upon the meat. Such, then, was my proof wherein there is no doubt nor hesitation; and when thou shalt have made question and inquiry thou wilt find this to be fact." Quoth the Sultan, "'Tis well; thou hast spoken truth and

whatso thou sayest is soothfast. But which is he who declared that I am ignoble and what was his proof and what sign in me exposed it to him?" Quoth the youngest Prince, "I am he who said it"; and the Sultan rejoined, "There is no help but that thou provide me with a proof." The Prince rejoined, "O my lord, I have evidence that thou art the son of a cook and a base-born, in that thou didst not sit at meat with us and this was mine all-sufficient evidence. Every man hath three properties which he inheriteth at times from his father, at times from his maternal uncle and at times from his mother. From his sire cometh generosity or niggardness; from his uncle courage or cowardice; from his mother modesty or immodesty; and such is the proof of every man." Then quoth to him the Sultan, "Sooth thou speakest; but say me, men who like you know all things thoroughly by evidence and by your powers of penetration, what cause have they to come seeking arbitration at my hand? Beyond yours there be no increase of intelligence. So fare ye forth from me and manage the matter among yourselves, for 'tis made palpable to me by your own words that naught remaineth to you save to speak of mysterious subjects; nor have I the capacity to adjudge between you after that which I have heard from you. In fine an ye possess any document drawn up by your sire before his decease, act according to it and contrary it not." Upon this the Princes went forth from him and made for their own country and city and did as their father had bidden them do on his death-bed. The eldest enthroned himself as Sultan; the cadet assumed possession and management of the moneys and treasures, and the youngest took to himself the camels and the horses and the beeves and the muttuns. Then each and every was indeed equal with his co-partner in the gathering of good.

*A Tale of a Demon*

*From the Sanskrit*

ON the banks of the Godávarí there is a place named Pratishtána. In it there lived of old time a famous king, named Trivikramasena, the son of Vikramasena, equal to Indra in might. Every day, when he was in his hall of audience, a mendicant named Kshántiśíla came to him, to pay him his respects, and presented him with a fruit. And every day the king, as soon as he received the fruit, gave it into the hand of the superintendent of his treasury who was near him. In this way ten years passed, but one day, when the mendicant had left the hall of audience, after giving the fruit to the king, the king gave it to a young pet monkey, that had escaped from the hands of its keepers, and happened to enter there. While the monkey was eating that fruit, it burst open, and there came out of it a splendid priceless jewel. When the king saw that, he took up the jewel, and asked the treasurer the following question, "Where have you put all those fruits which I have been in the habit of handing over to you, after they were given to me by the mendicant?" When the superintendent of the treasury heard that, he was full of fear, and he said to the king, "I used to throw them into the treasury from the window without opening the door; if your Majesty orders me, I will open it and look for them." When the treasurer said this, the king gave him leave to do so, and he went away, and soon returned, and said to the king, "I see that those fruits have all rotted away in the treasury, and I also see that there is a heap of jewels there resplendent with radiant gleams."

When the king heard it, he was pleased, and gave those jewels to the treasurer, and the next day he said to the mendicant, who came as before, "Mendicant, why do you court me every day with great expenditure of wealth? I will not take your fruit to-day until you tell me." When