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Laos Folk-Lore of Farther India



A GROUP OF LAOS GIRLS.

Laos Folk-Lore of Farther India

BY

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With Illustrations from Photographs taken by
W. A. Briggs, M. D.



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Introduction

THESE Folk-Tales from the Laos country, a part of the kingdom of Siam, in addition to their intrinsic merit have the charm of complete novelty. Until the translator of this volume collected these stories, they were even unwritten, with a single exception which was found in a Laos manuscript. They are orally preserved in the provinces which constitute the Laos country, just as they have been handed down from generations of ancestors, with slight variations in words or incidents. The elders among the people tell the stories at their merrymakings around the camp-fires and within their primitive houses, to amuse and instruct the youth and children.

Living among the Laos in the friendly and intimate relation of a missionary, the translator has had the advantage of long residence and unrivalled opportunity for understanding the history, customs, religious ideas and aspirations of this interesting people. Aptness in use of their colloquial speech gave her special facility for gathering the stories with exactness, as they

fell from the lips of the narrators in her hearing; and for the delicate additional task of translating them into English. The scholar, who is a student of the world's Folk-Lore, may be assured that he has here, the Laos tales unobscured, just as they are told to-day.

Reflecting, as they do, thoughts, desires and hopes common to our humanity, these stories at the same time exhibit, in a pathetic way, the need in Laos of the uplifting and transforming power of the Christian religion.

WILLIS G. CRAIG.

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Chicago.*

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I

Tales of the Jungle



A Child of The Woods

DEEP in the forest of the North there is a large village of jungle people, and, among them is one old woman, who is held in reverence by all. The stranger who asks why she is honored as a princess is thus answered by her:

“Verily, I have much *boon*,¹ for I am but a child of nature. When I was a young maiden, it fell upon a day that my heart grew hot with anger. For many days the anger grew until it filled my whole heart, also were my eyes so red that I could see but dimly, and no longer could I live in the village or among my own people, for I hated all men and I felt that the beasts of the forest were more to me than my kindred. Therefore, I fled from the face of man into the jungle where no human foot had ever gone. All day I journeyed, running as though my feet would never weary and feeling no pangs of hunger. When the darkness closed about me, I was not afraid, but lay down under the shelter of a tree, and, for a time, slept peacefully, as peacefully as though in my own home. At length, I

¹ Merit.

was awakened by the breath of an animal, and, in the clear light of the moon, I saw a large tiger before me. It smelled of my face, my hands and my feet, then seated itself by my head and watched me through the night, and I lay there unafraid. In the early morning, the tiger departed and I continued my journey. Quieter was my heart. Still, I disliked my own people but had no fear of the beasts or the reptiles of the forest.

During the day I ate of the fruit which grew wild in abundance, and at night I slept 'neath a tree, protected and guarded by fierce, wild beasts which molested not my sleep. For many days I wandered thus, and the nights were secure; for the wild beasts watched over and protected me. Thus my heart grew cool in my bosom, and I no longer hated my people; and, after one moon had gone, I found myself near a village. The people wondered to see me approach from the jungle, dreaded as being the jungle of the man-eating tiger. When I related my story, the people were filled with wonder and brought rich gifts to me. For a year and a day I abode there, and no more the wild beasts molested their cattle.

But my heart yearned to see the face of my

kindred again, so, laden with silver, gold and rich garments and seated in the howdah¹ of an elephant, the people escorted me to my own village, and here have I abode in content these one hundred years.

The Enchanted Mountain

THE hunters who are continually going about from place to place, climbing up high hills, descending into deep ravines and making ways through jungles in search of the wild bison and other game, tell strange tales of an enchanted place away on the top of a lofty mountain. There, is a beautiful lake, which is as bright and clear as a drop of morning dew hanging on the petal of the white water-lily, and, when you drink of it, you are no longer aweary; new life has come into you, and your body is more vigorous than ever before. The flowers on the margin of this enchanted lake are more beautiful than those that grow in any other spot, and, such is the love of the cherishing spirits for it, that they care for it as for no other place in this world. Bananas of a larger growth than can be

¹ The car placed on the back of elephants.

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found in the gardens of man, and oranges, sweeter to the taste than those we ever eat, are there. The fruits of all trees, more beautiful to the eye and richer than man can produce, are there, free to those who can find them. All the fowls usually nurtured by man and flocking about his door are there, and they are not affrighted by the presence of the hunter but come at his call. Should the hunter wish to kill them, his arrow cannot pierce their charmed bodies to deprive them of life, but the arrow falls harmless to the ground, because the spirits protect them and their lives are sacred. Great fields of rice are about this place, and the hunter marvels at the size of the grains and at the strength of the stalks. No field cared for by man has seen grain like that which the spirits nourish.

Many men, on hearing of this wonderful mountain-top, have sought it, but all have returned unsuccessful to their homes, saying, no such place is on this earth. Only the hunter, who has chased the game through the jungle, o'er the streams and up the steep mountain-sides, when tired and discouraged because the coveted prize has gone far beyond his reach, is rewarded for all his labor, when he finds himself in the garden of fruit, or on the margin of the

enchanted lake, whose waters give renewed vigor to his wearied body.

Often, when the hunter desires to eat of the flesh of the fowls, he endeavors to kill the fowls, but no effort of his can take their life, as the spirits hold them in their care. No mortal can harm them. Nor can the hunter take any of the fruit away, for, as he leaves the spot, no matter how he may hold it, it vanishes from his hand. Thus, no man, who has not seen the place, has eaten of the fruit nor drank of the water; so, many doubt their existence, for such is the heart of man that he must touch with his hands, see with his eyes, or taste with his tongue, ere he can believe. Nevertheless, on the top of the lofty mountain there is the lake with the cool waters, clear and beautiful, where the fowls swim on its surface, or drink from its margin, and the grain and the fruit ripen for those who are loved of the spirits, and are led by them to this cherished spot where they may rest and be refreshed, and then return to their wives and children and tell them of the care of the spirits. The little ones, who have hearts free from guile, believe.

The Spirit-Guarded Cave

WHEN the people of the far north¹ were molested by their foes and were in continual fear, they consulted together, saying, "Our lives are spent in trying to escape from our enemies and no joy can be ours. Let us flee to the south country² where, if the people make slaves of us, we can, at least, know that our lives will be spared, and life, even in slavery, is better than this constant fear of our enemies destroying both ourselves and our dwelling-places and taking our cattle for their own." Therefore, they gathered together all their household goods, secreted their money and jewels about their persons, and, loading their cattle with rice, they commenced their toilsome journey through the narrow jungle paths and across the high mountains on their way to the south, where they hoped for peace and safety. The way was long and difficult, and the rice was all eaten and the cattle killed and consumed before they had nearly reached their journey's end. Then the fugitives commenced to use their money to buy food that they might have strength

¹ In China.

² Siam.

for the journey, and they whispered one to another that the people looked with covetous eyes on their hoard of money and jewels, and they feared they would be slain because of the greed of the people.

One man, wiser than the others, said, "Why do we endanger our lives for our possessions? Can we not find some secret place in which to leave our money and jewels, and when brighter days come to us we can return and find them even as we left them?"

All the people cried, "Your words are wise. Let us do accordingly," and as these people were loved of the spirits, they were led to a deep cave in the midst of a wood where man seldom came, and there they left their possessions in the care of the spirits who promised to guard them until in the days, when life being brighter and more secure, the owners would come and claim them.

The people journeyed on to the south country, and there lived as slaves. Many generations of them lived and died, but they could not escape nor come to claim the vast wealth and jewels which they had left in care of the spirits of the cave.

The story became known, and the inhabitants of all the surrounding countries went to the

cave and sought to secure the treasure. But such was the care of the spirits that no man with safety could enter the cave. A light was instantly extinguished, if let down into the deep pit leading into the chamber where the treasure was, for the spirits blew their breath upon it and it was no more. All devices were tried to obtain the treasure, and from all parts of the country the people came to try to overcome the charm which the spirits had placed upon the cave, but no one was able to break it. One man went even into the treasure chamber and filled his hands with the precious stones, but he was overcome by a deadly sickness and was forced to replace the jewels in the treasure chest and flee for his life so as to escape the wrath of the guarding spirits. Even the white, foreign strangers, who have come into the land and placed their strong hands on the elephants and the trees¹ of the forest and claimed them for their use, were baffled and driven back by the faithful spirits when they endeavored to enter the treasure chamber, and for all time this treasure shall remain there, for, if the white foreigner, by his wisdom, or by his craft, fails to obtain it, verily it will remain untouched forever.

¹ Teak-wood.

The Mountain Spirits and the Stone Mortars

THE spirits, who lived in the mountains near a large city, upon a time wanted money for some purpose, and they brought down to the people of the city a number of large and heavy stone mortars which they commanded them to buy at an exorbitant price.

The men of the city said, "The price you ask is too great; moreover, we have no need of your mortars, as they are too large for us to use in pounding out our rice, or for any other purpose. Therefore, we do not wish to buy them."

The spirits were very angry because they did not cheerfully agree to pay the money, and answered, "If you will not buy these mortars which we have brought for your use, you shall carry them up to our home on the top of the mountain, for the labor of bringing them down has wearied us."

Not daring to incur the wrath of the spirits, and yet being utterly unable to carry the huge mortars to the high mountain, they paid the price, for, they reasoned, "Is any price too great to risk our falling under the displeasure of the evil spirits?"

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The spirits departed with the money, and to this day, the stone mortars are scattered about the streets of that city, and, when strangers ask why they are there and what use is made of them, this story will be told, and all people say it is verily the truth, for do you not see them with your eyes, and how else could they have come here, had not the spirits brought them?



II

Fables From the Forest

Right and Might

WHILE a deer was eating wild fruit, he heard an owl call, "Haak, haak,"¹ and a cricket cry, "Wat,"² and, frightened, he fled.

In his flight he ran through the trees up into the mountains and into streams. In one of the streams the deer stepped upon a small fish and crushed it almost to death.

Then the fish complained to the court, and the deer, owl, cricket and fish had a lawsuit. In the trial came out this evidence:

As the deer fled, he ran into some dry grass, and the seed fell into the eye of a wild chicken, and the pain of the seed in the eye of the chicken caused it to fly up against a nest of red ants. Alarmed, the red ants flew out to do battle, and in their haste, bit a mon-goose. The mon-goose ran into a vine of wild fruit and shook several pieces of it on the head of a hermit, who sat thinking under a tree.

"Why didst thou, O fruit, fall on my head," cried the hermit.

The fruit answered: "We did not wish to

¹ Haak—a spear.

² Wat—surrounded.

fall; a mon-goose ran against our vine and threw us down."

And the hermit asked, "O mon-goose, why didst thou throw the fruit?"

The mon-goose answered: "I did not wish to throw down the fruit, but the red ants bit me and I ran against the vine."

The hermit asked, "O ants, why did ye bite the mon-goose?"

The red ants replied: "The hen flew against our nest and angered us."

The hermit asked, "O hen, why didst thou fly against the red ants' nest?"

And the hen replied: "The seed fell into my eyes and hurt me."

And the hermit asked, "O seed, why didst thou fall into the hen's eyes?"

And the seed replied: "The deer shook me down."

The hermit said unto the deer, "O deer, why didst thou shake down the seed?"

The deer answered: "I did not wish to do it, but the owl called, frightening me and I ran."

"O owl," asked the hermit, "why didst thou frighten the deer?"

The owl replied: "I called but as I am accustomed to call—the cricket, too, called."



A LAOS FOREST-STREAM.

Having heard the evidence, the judge said, "The cricket must replace the crushed parts of the fish and make it well," as he, the cricket, had called and frightened the deer.

The cricket was smaller and weaker than the owl or the deer, therefore had to bear the penalty.



Why the Lip of the Elephant Droops

IN the days when the earth was young lived a poor man and his wife who had twelve daughters, whom they no longer loved and no longer desired. Day after day the father and mother planned to be free of them, and upon a day, the father made ready a basket; in the bottom he placed ashes, but on the top he spread rice. Taking this basket with him, he called his daughters to come go to the jungle to hunt for game.

When the heat of the day had come, they all sat down to eat, and, after they had eaten, the father gave each daughter a bamboo joint, and bade her get water for him. The joints were so made that they would not hold water, and

while the maidens endeavored to make them so they would, the father returned home. In vain did the maidens try to make the joints hold the water and after a time they sought their father, but, lo, the father was gone and only the basket remained! Examining the basket, they found rice but on the top, and on the bottom filled with ashes, so they knew their parents sought to be free of them by leaving them in the trackless jungle. Unable to find their way out, there they slept peacefully, for the wild beasts molest not those who fearlessly stay with them.

As the eye of day opened in the East, the forlorn maidens beheld, as they awakened, a beautiful woman standing near, and of her they sought help.

“Come with me and be companions to my little daughter. Often am I away from home and she is lonely. Come home with me, play with my daughter, and, in exchange I will give you a home,” said the beautiful woman.

Gladly the maidens consented and went with the woman to her home far in the jungle. All places save one small garden were they free to enter. And upon a day, the fair woman said, “I go to the jungle and will not return until the eye of day has closed. Do not play in the small

garden." Scarcely had she gone ere she returned, but the maidens had not sought the garden.

Again, upon a day, the fair woman said, "I go to the jungle but for a short time. Go not to play in the small garden."

Thinking she would this time be gone all day, the maidens sought the small garden, and lo, it was strewn with human bones! Then they knew the fair woman was a cannibal. Full of fear, they fled, and, as they fled they met a cow.

"Protect us," they cried.

The cow opened its mouth and the maidens jumped in. Thus they journeyed from the cannibal's home. As the cow returned, it met the fair woman seeking the maidens.

"Have you seen twelve maidens pass this way?" asked she.

"No," answered the cow.

"If you do not speak the truth, I'll kill and eat you," cried she.

"I saw them as they made haste in that way," replied the cow.

The cannibal woman pursued that way.

After the cow left them, the maidens hastened on and as they hastened they met an elephant and begged it to save them from the cannibal.

The elephant opened its mouth and the

maidens jumped in, but so slowly did one jump that an edge of her garment hung out of the mouth. As they journeyed the cannibal overtook them.

“Did you see twelve maidens hastening toward the city?” asked the cannibal.

“No,” answered the elephant.

“From this time forth forever the lip of thy mouth shall hang down as a garment,” cursed the cannibal, for she had seen the edge of the maiden’s garment hanging out of the elephant’s mouth and knew it was protecting the twelve maidens. And to this day doth the lip of the elephant hang down like a garment.



How a Dead Tiger Killed the Princess

THERE was once a king who had a daughter at whose birth a wise man foretold that she would be killed by a tiger when she was a maiden grown. In order that no animal might approach her, the king built her a house set upon one huge pillar, and there she and her attendants ever dwelt.

And it fell upon a day, when the daughter was well grown, that one of the hunters, whose labor

it was to kill the tigers of the country, brought a dead one to the palace of the king. The princess, seeing her dead enemy, came down from her tower and plucked a whisker from the tiger, and, as she blew her breath on it, she cried, "I do not fear thee, O my enemy, for thou art dead!" But the poison, which is in the whiskers of a tiger, entered into the blood of the princess, and she died.

Then did the king make a proclamation, and sent messengers throughout all his realm, commanding that, when a tiger was killed, all his whiskers be immediately pulled out and burned, that a tiger may not be able to slay when dead; and until this day, the people obey the command of the king.



The Monkeys and the Crabs

ALL the monkeys which live in the forests near the great sea in the south, watch the tide running out, hoping to catch the sea-crabs which are left in the soft earth. If they can find a crab above the ground, they immediately catch and eat it.

Sometimes, the crabs bury themselves in the mud, and the monkeys, seeing the tunnels they

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have made, reach down into them with their long tails, and torment the crabs until they, in anger, seizing the tormenting tail, are drawn out and devoured by their cunning foes. But, sometimes, alas, the crab fails to come out! No matter with what strength the monkey pulls and tugs, the crabs do not appear, and the poor monkey is held fast, while the tide comes in and drowns it. When the tide goes out again, leaving the luckless monkey on the beach, the crabs come out from their strongholds and feast on the dead enemy.



III

Nature's Riddles and Their Answers

The Man in the Moon

THERE was a blacksmith once, who complained: "I am not well, and my work is too warm. I want to be a stone on the mountain. There it must be cool, for the wind blows and the trees give a shade."

A wise man, who had power over all things, replied, "Go thou, be a stone." And he was a stone, high up on the mountain-side.

It happened a stone-cutter came that way for stone, and, when he saw the one that had been the blacksmith, he knew it was what he sought and he began to cut it.

The stone cried out: "This hurts. I no longer want to be a stone. A stone-cutter I want to be. That would be pleasant."

The wise man, humoring him, said, "Be a cutter." Thus he became a stone-cutter and, as he went seeking suitable stone, he grew tired, and his feet were sore. He whimpered, "I no longer want to cut stone. I would be the sun, that would be pleasant."

The wise man commanded, "Be the sun." And he was the sun.

But the sun was warmer than the blacksmith, than a stone, than a stone-cutter, and he complained, "I do not like this. I would be the moon. It looks cool."

The wise man spake yet again, "Be the moon." And he was the moon.

"This is warmer than being the sun," murmured he, "for the light from the sun shines on me ever. I do not want to be the moon. I would be a smith again. That, verily, is the best life."

But the wise man replied, "I am weary of your changing. You wanted to be the moon; the moon you are, and it you will remain."

And in yon high heaven lives he to this day.



The Origin of Lightning

THERE was once a great chief who desired above all things to be happy in the future life, therefore he continually made feasts for the priests and the poor; spending much money in making merit. He had ten wives, nine of whom helped him in all the merit-makings, but the head wife, his favorite, would never take part. Laughing, and making herself beautiful in soft

garments and jewels, she gave naught to the priests.

And on a day, when the great chief and his nine merit-making wives were no more, but had gone to live in the sky on account of their merit-making, the great chief longed for his favorite, and taking a glass, he looked down on the earth to see her. After many days, he beheld her as a crane hunting for food on the border of a lake. The great chief, to try her heart and to see if she had repented, came down from his home in the sky in the form of a fish, and swam to the crane. Seeing the fish, the crane pecked at it, but the fish sprang out of the water, and when the crane saw it was alive, she would not touch it. Again the fish floated near the crane and she pecked at it, but on finding it was alive let it escape. Then was the heart of the great chief glad, for he saw that his favorite wife would not destroy life even to satisfy her hunger, and he knew that her merit was such she could be born in the form of a woman again.

It happened on a day that the crane died, and, when again born, had the form of a gardener's child. As the child grew in years and stature, she was fairer than any other in the land, and, when a maiden, the father and mother made

a feast, inviting all the people to come. During the feast, they gave a wreath of beautiful flowers to their daughter and said, "Throw this into the air, and on whosoever head it falls, that one will be to thee a husband."

The great chief, her husband of old, seeking her, came down to the earth in the form of an old man, and, when the maiden cast the wreath into the air, it fell on the head of this old man.

Great sport was made of him, and tauntingly the people cried, "Does this bent stick think he is mate for our lotus flower?"

But the fair maiden placed her hand in the old man's hand, and, together they rose into the air. In vain they sought to detain them—the father even shot at the old man, but they were soon lost to sight, and to this day, when the people see the chain lightning in the sky, they say it is the wreath of the beautiful maiden; when the lightning strikes, they say it is the gardener shooting at the old man, and, when the heat lightning flashes, they say it is the great chief flashing his glass over the earth in search of his favorite and beautiful wife.

Why the Parrot and the Minor Bird but Echo the Words of Man

LONG ago people caught and nourished the sao bird, because it learned the language of man more readily than either the parrot or minor bird. While they had to be taught with much care, the sao bird had but to hear a word and it could readily utter it; moreover, the sao bird could utter its own thoughts.

Upon a time a man of the north country, owning a sao bird, stole a buffalo from his neighbor and killed it. Part of the buffalo the man cooked and ate; the rest he hid either in the rice bin or over the rice house.

Seeking the buffalo, next day, the neighbor asked the man if he had seen it.

The man replied, "No." The sao bird, however, cried out, "He killed it; part he hid in the rice bin, part over the rice house."

The neighbor searched in both of these places and found the parts just as the sao bird had said.

"I did not steal the buffalo," insisted the man.

But the bird ever called, "He killed it and put part into the rice bin, and part over the rice house."

Unable to decide between the words of the man and the words of the bird, the neighbor appealed to the court. And, it happened, the night before the trial, that the man took the sao bird, placed it in a jar, covered the jar and poured water over the cloth and beat on the outside of the jar. The noise of the beating was low and rumbling. All that night was the bird kept in the jar, and not once did it see the bright moonlight, which was almost as bright as day, for it was in the midst of the dry season and full moon. When the eye of day opened, the man removed the bird from the jar and placed it in its cage, and then took it to the court as a witness.

When the bird was called, it said, as before, "He killed it; part he put in the rice bin, and part over the rice house."

All people believed the bird.

"Ask it another question. Ask it what manner of night it was last night. Will you condemn me to death on the word of a bird?" cried the man.

The question was put to the bird, but, remembering its fear, during the night, of the rumbling noise and the sound of running water, it answered, "Last night the sky called and the rain fell."

Then the people cried, "Of a truth, the bird cannot be believed. Because it has imperilled the life of an innocent man, from this time forth, the sao bird must not be cherished by man."

The thief was set free because there were but the words of the bird to condemn him.

No longer is the sao bird nourished by man, but lives in the forest. Those who are full of fear, when they hear them talking in the forest, say, "it is the spirits."

When the sao bird saw the bright plumage of the parrot, and the black and gold of the minor bird, it knew they were strangers who had come to dwell in the north, and it asked the crow and the owl what manner of birds they were.

"Beautiful in plumage, as thou canst readily see," answered they. "Moreover, they speak the words of man."

"Speak the words of man," echoed the sao bird. "I'll warn them. Come, let us greet them." And they went forth to meet the beautiful strangers.

And upon a day, as they all came together in one place, the sao bird cried out, "We, the chief birds of the north land, come to greet you and to give you of our wisdom, as you are but strangers in our land. It is told me you speak as

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does man; even so can I. Nourished by the hand of man many years, I did see with my eyes and hear with my ears, and my tongue uttered not only the things I beheld and heard, but things displeasing to my masters. At one time, all men spoke well of me, but afterward was I cruelly punished and driven from the homes of men. Therefore come I this day unto you to warn you that, if man learns of your speaking tongue, he will capture you and nourish you in his home. Yet, should you speak other than he teaches you, you will be punished and driven from the homes of men, for man loves only to hear *his* thoughts repeated and loves not even a bird that has wisdom or truth greater than his own."

Fearful of uttering their thoughts, lest man resent it, the parrot and minor bird but echo the words of man.



The Fatherless Birds

A MOTHER bird sat brooding on her nest. Her heart was sad, for her mate had flown away in the morning and had not returned. When the little ones stirred and clamored for food, with drooping wings she flew in quest of it that they might not hunger.

Day after day her heart grew sadder, for her mate came not, and alone she struggled to provide for her fledglings.

When the little birds had grown strong and were able to fly, sorrow and heart hunger had so weakened the mother bird that she lay dying. The little birds crowded about her asking what they could do to aid her, and with her dying breath she cried, "Call, oh, call your father."

The little birds, flying low over the plains, cried, "Paw hūey, paw hūey," and children, left alone in their homes, while their parents labor in the rice fields, hearing the wail of the birds, wept, crying too, "Paw hūey, maa hūey."¹

Never has the father bird been found, and, to this day, flying low over the plains, the little birds cry, in their plaintive voices, "Paw hūey, paw hūey," and lonely children echo, "Paw hūey, maa hūey."

¹ Paw hūey—Oh, father! Maa hūey—Oh, mother!

IV

Romance and Tragedy

The Lovers' Leap

MANY, many years ago there lived, on the mountains among the rapids of the Maa Ping, a young man who loved a maiden and the maiden loved him truly, but her father refused his consent to their union and commanded that his daughter see her lover no more, nor hold communication with him. At all times and in all ways the father of the maiden endeavored to overcome her regard for her lover, but she would think of no other, although many came to woo her.

Often did the young lovers seek to meet, but so constantly were they watched it was impossible and they could only wait patiently. Each knew the other was true and each heart rested in this assurance.

And upon a time the father of the maiden thought she had forgotten her lover, and, greatly rejoiced, he made a feast and invited all the people of the province to come and make merry with him, and he reasoned, "Now that she has forgotten her former lover, will she not consent to marry a man I choose for her?"

While they were feasting the maiden wandered out to think of the one she had not seen for so long and weary a time, and, suddenly, the dark evening became to her as the bright noon-day, for her lover was before her. He entreated her to come with him and to be his wife. Thinking of the dreary days she had passed and the more dreary ones to come, should she see her heart's choice no more, she consented. As they were mounting his strong, young horse, a servant saw them and ran to the house and gave the alarm. Soon the father and all the men were in pursuit of the lovers. For a time the young horse kept far ahead of its pursuers, but, wearying of its double burden, it began to lag just as it reached the top of a lofty hill overhanging a rushing torrent of the river far below.

Nearer and nearer came the father and all the men. The only escape, and a most desperate venture was it, was to leap across the rushing torrent to the hill on the other side. Looking into each other's eyes, then back at their approaching pursuers, and then at the wide chasm, they chose death together rather than life apart, and, urging their jaded horse to the leap, they missed the opposite cliff and were dashed to pieces on the rocks of the rapids below.

The Faithful Husband¹

UPON a day in years long since gone by, Chow² Soo Tome, wearied of the talking of his slaves, wandered into the forest. As he walked in an unfrequented path, he came to a lake where seven beautiful winged nymphs were disporting themselves in the water. One, Chow Soo Tome readily saw was more beautiful than the others, and he loved her and desired her for his wife. On seeing the Chow, however, they all fled, but the most beautiful one permitted herself to be overtaken.

“When I saw thee, my heart was filled with love for thee. If thou dost not consent to be my wife, of sorrow will I die,” cried Chow Soo Tome.

“Easily could I have escaped, had not love for thee made me loath to leave thee,” replied the nymph. And in great joy they returned to the Chow’s home.

“My son, let me take the wings of thy wife, lest she fly and leave thee in sorrow,” urged the

¹ This represents a very well-known mährchen.

² Chow—a prince or high official.

Chow's mother, and, readily did the nymph wife lay aside her wings.

But it happened that the head chow heard of the beauty of the wife of Chow Soo Tome, and he coveted her, and seeking to do away with Chow Soo Tome, he sent him to war, and commanded that he lead the battle.

The young nymph wife knew the design of the head chow, and, as soon as her husband had gone, she sought her mother-in-law and begged that she give her back her wings.

"I am filled with sorrow. Without Soo Tome I cannot remain in the house. Give me my wings that I may fly in the air and be comforted," pled the wife.

"Consent that I tie a rope to thy feet. Then, I will give thee the wings," answered Soo Tome's mother.

The young wife consented, but, having donned her wings and flown up in the air, she cut the rope fastened to her feet and was safe from the head chow's pursuit. Her freedom made her think of the home of her father in the kingdom of Chom Kow Kilat,¹ and thither she flew.

Chow Soo Tome, unhurt and victorious, returned from the war and found his home desolate

¹ A fabulous city.

without his nymph wife, and would not be comforted but determined to seek her. "Now, I will go seek her in her father's kingdom, Chom Kow Kilat, though seven years, seven months and seven days be required for the journey."

Through forest, over mountains and across plains toiled Chow Soo Tome patiently. And, as he journeyed, upon a day, he met an ape.

"My friend, where do you go?" asked the ape.

"To a land far away, where the love of my heart abides, in the kingdom of Chom Kow Kilat. The way I do not know, but my heart guides me," answered Chow Soo Tome.

The ape pitied him and sought to aid him, and what food he had or found he shared with Chow Soo Tome gladly. Together they travelled many days until they reached the sea. They had no means of crossing, and when the ape realized he could no longer aid Chow Soo Tome, he cried bitterly, saying, "No longer can I aid thee, now; therefore is my sorrow greater than I can bear," and, lo, he died! For three days did Chow Soo Tome mourn this kind friend, and, as he mourned, a fly came to eat of the ape.

"I am but alive and fear I will die if I do not have food at once," said the fly. "The ape is dead and can feel no pain. I am alive and hunger,

thou art in trouble and need aid. If thou wilt give me to eat of the flesh of the dead ape, whenever thou needst me, think on me and I will come to thee," added the fly.

"Eat," said Chow Soo Tome, and then he went on his way, but shortly after, sat down under a tree. While there, he saw two eagles alight on the tree.

"When we are rested, we will fly across the sea and eat of the feast which the king of Chom Kow Kilat gives in honor of the return of his beautiful daughter," said one of the eagles to its mate.

Hearing these words, Chow Soo Tome cautiously climbed into the tree and crept under the wing of the larger eagle, who shortly after said to its mate: "Before we fly hence, I must rid myself of an insect which is under my wing and annoys me."

"This is a sacred day, and, for some punishment has the insect come under your wing; let it remain," counselled the other eagle, and then they flew over the sea. When they rested in a tree on the other shore, Chow Soo Tome crept from under the wing and climbed down the tree. After a time he reached a *sala*¹ near a large city.

¹A rest-house for guests.

Near the sala was a well, and, as Chow Soo Tome rested, seven slaves of the king of Chom Kow Kilat came from the city for water.

"Why dost thou draw of the water?" asked Chow Soo Tome of a slave.

"We are this day glad, for the most beautiful daughter of the king of Chom Kow Kilat hath returned from the land of men and the water will be poured over her head," said the slave addressed.

Approaching the seventh slave, Chow Soo Tome asked that he might place a ring in her water jar. Now, the ring was one which he had received from his nymph wife, and he sought thus to turn her thoughts to him again.

"Pour your water in such a manner that, when it falls, the ring will fall upon the hands of the princess," directed Chow Soo Tome.

The slave did as directed, and, as the ring fell on the hands of the young princess, she knew her husband was near, and she asked the slave who was at the well when she drew the water.

"A chow of a far country," said the slave, "who rests in the sala by the sacred well outside the city gate."

In great haste and joy, did the young princess

seek her father. "Outside the city gate, in the sala by the sacred well, doth my husband await me. Let me go to him, father," she pleaded.

"I must first prove that he be thy husband. Let all my daughters make ready a table spread with the best of the feast, and hide themselves. The man shall be called, and, if he selects thy table, he is thy husband, but, if he knows not thy table, he shall die," replied the king.

The tables were made ready, Chow Soo Tome was summoned and commanded to select the table prepared by the princess whom he claimed as his wife. Sore perplexed, Chow Soo Tome bethought himself of the fly's promise, and he called it to his aid. Immediately the fly appeared and sat on the table prepared by the wife of Chow Soo Tome, and there Chow Soo Tome sat down.

"Yet another test," said the king. "Make ready seven curtains and place my daughters behind the seven curtains, allowing but one finger of each princess to be seen. Then, from among the fingers, select that of thy wife."

Immediately did the grateful fly rest upon the curtain where lay the finger of the young wife, and unhesitatingly Chow Soo Tome walked up to the curtain and clasped the right finger.



THE LAOS GOVERNOR'S WIFE AT HER EMBROIDERY FRAME.

"It is enough. She is thy wife," declared the king, and so pleased was he that he made Chow Soo Tome second in power in the kingdom of Chom Kow Kilat.



The Faithful Wife

THE young and beautiful son of a head chow sought of a wise man what manner of wife should be his.

"As you walked by the way, whom did you meet?" asked the wizard.

"No one," replied the young man.

"Nay, my son, you saw a slave of your father's, cutting grass in a garden. She is to be your wife."

Distressed that such a woman should be his wife, the young man fled from his own country.

And it came to pass, that the chow saw the slave girl that she was kind, noble, and beautiful, and he took her to his house as a daughter, and she became more kind, more noble, and more beautiful.

Years had gone by, and, upon a day the son returned, and, seeing in the one-time slave a most lovable and lovely woman, sought and

gained her as his wife. Word reached the young man then that this was but a slave, and, on learning the truth, he begged that he might be released to go on a long journey. The young wife consented.

A boat was made ready, and the chow's son had it in his heart never to return. So, secretly, the chow had a gold image hidden in the bottom of the boat. When the day of departure had come, the chow in haste sent his servants to inquire of his son what he had in the boat.

"I have but my possessions," replied the son.

"Nay, you have the image of gold, which is the possession of my master, the chow," insisted the servants. "If we find it in the boat, what will you do?" they asked.

"Return with you as a slave to my father!" exclaimed the son.

All the goods were removed from the boat and the image was found. Then the son returned as a slave to his father and was made keeper of the elephants.

Upon a day, the young wife of the son came to the chow and sought permission to go to the forest to find her husband.

Willingly did the chow say, "Go, my child," and forthwith he had a boat put in readiness for

her and sent with her many of his servants. One servant was called, "Eye That Sees Well," another, "Ear That Hears Well."

Sailing down the river, they reached the province where the young man was searching for elephants, and there they remained.

The chow of the province sent a servant secretly to hide a golden image in the boat. But the "Ear That Hears Well" heard and the "Eye That Sees Well" saw, and together they took the image from the boat and hid it in the sand.

The following day, the chow sent a messenger asking why the princess had taken the image.

"I have not seen it," were the words of the princess.

"If it is found in your boat, what will you promise?" asked the chow's messenger.

"I and my servants will be slaves to him, if the image be found in my boat," replied the princess, "but, should the image not be found there, what will your master promise?"

"All his goods and his province, if the image be not found," readily answered the messenger.

A diligent search failed to discover the image of gold, and, true to his word, the chow gave of his goods and his province to the princess. Rejoicing, and hoping thus to discover her husband,

the princess gave a large feast, and bade all the people. While all were feasting, lo, a man, in soiled garments and carrying a heavy tusk of an elephant, came towards them, and immediately did the princess recognize her husband, and the husband, realizing after what manner his wife loved him, grew to love her, and together they lived in her province for many, many years.



An Unexpected Issue

FAR away from other men, on the side of a lonely mountain, a man and his wife were preparing their ground that they might plant the hill rice. Their work was hard, and they saw no one from day to day, and, upon a time, when tired of their labor, the husband said,

“Let us play that we are young and unmarried, and that I am coming to visit you to try to gain you for a wife.”

The wife dressed herself as a young maiden, with flowers in her hair, and sat at the spinning-wheel.

The husband came as though from a distance, and in his hand he carried the stem of a banana leaf, which he pretended was a musical instru-

ment. Playfully, he drew his fingers over it, singing, "It is pleasant to be here. Where you are, I am happy. Where you are not, I am but of little heart and sad." He drew near, and, as he was not forbidden, he walked up into the house and sat down by the maiden. Bowing himself to the ground, he spoke, saying, "O fair princess, I come but as your servant! May I sit here near you?"

Smilingly she answered, "To sit there is but a waste of time."

"I am not sitting where another has sat. Tell me, do I talk to one who has another lover?"

"I fear that the one who loves you, and whom you loved ere you came to me, will be angry with me and curse me," she coyly answered.

Then he feigned anger, and moved away quickly. In his haste he did not see where he was going, and he fell down the steps of the house, upon a stone. Though he lay there groaning, and called, "O, help me!" his wife thought him still in sport and sat quietly at her wheel. Having waited some time, she arose and went to him, and, lo, he lay there dead!

"Had we worked and not played as children, my husband would be yet alive," lamented the wife.

V

Temples and Priests

The Giants' Mountain and the Temple

IN the time long since gone by, when the world was young, the men of a large province desired to build a temple, a temple which might be seen by men from afar. Their ground, however, was low, and there was no lofty mountain on which they might rear it, and it was deemed wise by all to entreat the giants, who lived in the far East, to help them bring the earth together in one place for a mound.

Willingly did the giants consent to aid them, but asked, "Why labor to dig the earth and pile it into a mound? Behold the high hills are ours, with our strong arms we can remove the top from one of them and bring it to you and you may rear your beautiful temple thereon, and all men can see it. Go, therefore, and make ready your bricks and mortar, bringing to one place all the materials which you will require, whilst we carry one of our mountains to you for your use."

The giants went their way to bring a mountain-top from the far East to the plains near the city. Day after day they labored and moved the mountain top a great distance, but the people

neither helped them nor did they even commence to prepare the materials for the temple. As the giants toiled, word was brought them that the people were sitting in idleness on the ground.

"Come help us, or gather the materials together," the giants sent word.

"You, yourselves, offered to carry the mountain-top to us. Your words are stronger than your deeds. You say you will aid us, then ask us to help you," the people replied. This they said, thinking to goad the giants on to the labor of bringing the mountain-top to the desired place.

"We offered to aid you," retorted the giants, "but you sit and watch while we do all. Had you done your part, we would have done ours. Now, you shall labor, and we, from our high mountain, will laugh at you."

Thereupon they left the work and sought their homes, and wearily did the men of the plains dig the earth, carrying it in small loads into one place to build the mound, and sadly did they look toward the East, where they could see the mountain-top the giants had carried such a distance to them, and most bitterly did they repent not having done their share.

The temple is builded now, and from afar the



A GROUP OF BUDDHIST PRIESTS.



THE INTERIOR OF A BUDDHIST TEMPLE.

people can see the gleam of the spire when the eye of day first opens in the East, or closes in the West, and, to this day the mountain-top lies there far distant from the mountain range and equally far distant from the city of the plains, and the people point it out to strangers, saying, "If you ask aid from others, it is well to put your own heart into the work."



Cheating the Priest

UPON a time a man and his wife went a day's journey from their village to the bazaar to sell their wares, and it fell upon the day of their return that it rained heavily, and as they hurried along the highway, they sought shelter from the head priest of a temple. He, however, would not even let them enter. They begged to be permitted to sleep in the sheltered place at the head of the stairs, but this also the priest refused. Angered, they went under the temple and there rested.

When the priest had lain down on his mat in the room just over the place where the man and his wife were hidden, he heard the man say to his wife, "It will be good to be again with our

young and beautiful daughter. I trust all is well with her."

Having heard these words, the priest arose hastily and called, "Come up, good people, and sleep in the temple. Here, too, are mats to rest upon." And, as they talked of their beautiful daughter, the priest asked, "When I am out of the temple, released from my vows, will you give me your daughter to wife?"

Looking at his wife, the husband replied, "It is good in our sight."

When the morning came and they wished to steam some rice for their breakfast, they had no pot, but the priest freely offered the use of his pot and insisted upon their using of the sacred wood for their fire, the wood which was used in propping the branches of the Po tree.¹

Being ready to go on their way, the priest presented them with gifts of food, silver and gold, saying, "I will soon leave the priesthood and come to marry your beautiful daughter."

But three days had passed, when the man and his wife came again to the temple and told the priest that their daughter was dead, and a long time they all mourned together.

"I will ever remain true to my love for your

¹ The sacred tree of Buddhists.

daughter. Never will I leave the priesthood," vowed the priest, while the man and his wife returned to their home, spent the silver and gold the priest had given them, and cheerfully laughed at him, for never had they had a daughter!



The Disappointed Priest

IN a temple of the north lived a priest who had great greed for the betel nut.¹ One day, compelled by his appetite, he inquired of a boy-priest if no one had died that day, but the boy replied he had heard of no death.

A man, while worshipping in the temple, overheard the priest's words, and on his return to his home, said, "The priest wants some one to die so he can have betel to eat. Let us punish him, because he loves the betel nut better than the life of a man. Make me ready for the grave, then wail with a loud voice and the priest will come."

When all was ready, they wailed with a loud voice and the priest, filled with cheerful thoughts of satisfying his appetite, came quickly.

The people all said, "We must hasten to the

¹ Areca nut. Chewing this nut is a habit common among all the peoples of Farther India and Malaysia.

grave with our dead brother. As it is already evening, we will not have the feast until we return."

All hastened to the place of burning, and, upon reaching it, they took one end of the cloth covering the body and placed it in the hands of the priest, while the other end they left on the body of the supposed dead man.

"While you ask blessings on our dead brother, we will go prepare wood for the burning," said the people, and, leaving the priest praying, they returned as they had come, cut thorns and briars and placed them on and about the path, so the priest could not escape unhurt. Then they hid themselves.

As the darkness closed about him, the priest prayed fast and loud. Lo! the man stirred and groaned, and the priest cried, "O, my father, I am asking blessings on thee! Why movest thou?"

Again the man rose up and groaned even louder, and the priest, terrified, ran away towards the temple. Caught by the briars, he fell headlong, cut and bleeding. With great effort, he at last reached the temple, and with much pain had his wounds dressed by the boy-priest. Not until he had rested, did he inquire of the boy if the

people of the dead man had brought any betel to the temple in his absence.

“No,” said the boy-priest. “Go to the house of the dead man and eat with them.”

But the priest most vehemently said, “If ten or twenty men die, I will not go again. Die like that man! I shall never go again.”



The Greedy Priest

IN the compound of a temple in the south there was a large fruit tree, the fruit of which was coveted by all, as they passed, but the head priest would permit no one to eat of it, because he was greedy and selfish and wished but to satisfy his own appetite.

Two men, talking together, said they would obtain fruit from the priest, and they would have it without price.

One came and asked for the fruit. The priest refused him gruffly, saying, “I need it for my own use.” The man replied, “I desired it to eat with my venison curry, of which I have so much that I want you to come and eat with me.” On hearing this the priest said, “Take what you want.” Filling his scarf with the coveted fruit,

the man left the priest, saying, "I will call for you as the eye of day closes."

Shortly after, the second man came and begged for fruit and likewise was refused, until he said he wished it to eat with his pork curry, and, that as the eye of day closed, he would come for the priest to eat with him, when the priest said, "All you desire, take." And the man filled a large basket with the coveted fruit.

As the eye of day closed, the two men called together for the priest.

When they reached a fork in the road, one laid hold on the arm of the priest, and said, "Come with me first, my house is down this way."

"Come with me first," said the other, "my family will already be eating."

Thus they disputed, drawing the greedy old priest this way and that until he was bruised and tired, when he said, "It is enough. I will neither eat of the venison, nor of the pork."

And the men went home and laughed, for neither had the one venison nor the other pork.



MONASTERY GROUNDS AT CHIENG TUNG, LAOS.

The Ambitious Priest

THERE is a tale of an old priest who prayed each day that the gods would give him a jewel of great price—one that had the power to make him fly as a bird.

A young priest in the temple hearing his prayer, secured the eye of a fish and hid it in his room, and when again the old priest prayed for the jewel, the young priest brought the eye of the fish and gave it to him. Then was the old priest glad, "Now can I rise up as though on wings and fly from this earth," said he.

Selecting two large palm leaves, thinking "I must have wings first," he tried to fly, but could not.

The young priest said, "From here you cannot fly; it is not high enough. Go up to the roof of the temple and fly from there."

Acting on this suggestion, the old priest went up to the roof, but fell from his high place, and, lo, when they came to him, he was dead!

VI

Moderation and Greed

The Wizard and the Beggar

ONCE upon a time there was a poor man who ever begged for food, and, as he walked along the road he thought, "If any one will give me to eat until I am satisfied, never will I forget the grace or merit of that person." Chanting these words as he walked slowly along, he met a wizard.

"What do you say as you walk along, my son?" asked the wizard.

"If any one will give me to eat all I crave, I will never forget the grace or merit of that person," said the poor man.

"My son, the people of this day are ever careless and ungrateful. They forget benefits," replied the wizard.

"I will not forget," vowed the poor man.

"Go on, my son," said the wizard.

Chanting as before, the poor man went on his way, and as he walked he met a dog.

"What do you say as you go along, my son?" asked the dog.

"Whosoever will give me to eat to my satisfaction, the grace or merit of that person will I never forget," replied the poor man.

“Men are prone to forget. None remember favors. When I was young and strong, I guarded my master’s house and grounds; now, when I am old, he will not permit me to enter his gate, but curses and beats me and gives me no food. By him are all my services forgotten,” said the dog.

Ever chanting, the poor man walked on, and as he walked he met a buffalo.

“What do you say as you walk along, my son?” asked the buffalo. And the poor man repeated what he had told the wizard and the dog.

“Man is ever ungrateful. When I was young and strong, I plowed the fields so my master could have rice and my master was grateful to me. Now that I cannot work, I am driven out to die,” said the buffalo. And the poor man, discouraged, sought the wizard again.

“My son, will you ever remember benefits?” asked the wizard.

“Never would I forget a benefit,” vowed the poor man, vehemently.

“Then here are two jewels; one, if held in your mouth, will enable you to fly as a bird; the other, if held in the mouth, will give you your desires, and this second one I now give to you,”

said the wizard, and he handed the second jewel to the poor man.

“Your grace and merit will ever be remembered by me. More than tongue can utter, do I thank you. Ever will I wish you health and happiness and pray for blessings on your head,” declared the poor man. Having thus spoken, the once poor man sought his home and, through the virtue of the wishing jewel he had every wish for wealth gratified.

“How do you secure your desires?” asked the neighbors of the once poor, begging man.

“A wizard gave me a wishing-jewel and, by simply placing it in my mouth, all I wish to possess is mine,” answered he. “Listen to me,” he continued, “the wizard has yet another jewel, which, if placed in the mouth, will enable one to fly as a bird. Come, let us go and kill him that we may all possess it together.”

With one accord they agreed, and, as they approached the home of the wizard, the wizard, espying the man he had so benefited, called to him,

“Why have you not visited me, my son?”

“There was no time, much work have I had to do,” replied the ungrateful man.

Now the wizard of course knew the intent

of the wicked fellow, that he, with his neighbors, had come to secure the second jewel, and he asked,

“Why do you desire to kill me?”

“Give to me the jewel you have, else I shall kill you, you old wizard,” cried the ungrateful fellow.

“Have you the wishing-jewel with you? If so, show it to me first,” said the wizard.

Eagerly did the greedy fellow thrust it toward the old wizard, but he, having already placed the flying-jewel in his mouth, seized the wishing-jewel and instead of giving the rascal the flying jewel, flew away, leaving both the man and his neighbors without either.



A Covetous Neighbor

THERE was a poor and lonely man who had but a few melon seeds and grains of corn which he planted; tenderly did he care for them, as the garden would furnish his only means of a living. And it came to pass that the melons and corn grew luxuriantly, and the apes and the monkeys from the neighboring wilderness, seeing them,

came daily to eat of them, and, as they talked of the owner of the garden, wondered just what manner of man he might be that he permitted them unmolested to eat of his melons. But the poor man, through his sufferings, had much merit, and charitably and willingly shared his abundant fruit with them.

And upon a day, the man lay down in the garden and feigned death. As the monkeys and apes drew near, seeing him so still, his scarf lying about his head, with one accord they cried, "He is already dead! Lo, these many days have we eaten of his fruit, therefore it is but just that we should bury him in as choice a place as we can find."

Lifting the man, they carried him until they came to a place where two ways met, when one of the monkeys said, "Let us take him to the cave of silver." Another said, "No, the cave of gold would be better."

"Go to the cave of gold," commanded the head monkey. There they carried him and laid him to rest.

Finding himself thus alone, the man arose, gathered all the gold he could carry and returned to his old home, and, with the gold thus easily gained, he built a beautiful house.

“How did you, who are but a gardener, gain all this gold?” asked a neighbor, and freely the man told all that had befallen him.

“If you did it, I, too, can do it,” said the neighbor, and forthwith, he hastened home, made a garden, and waited for the monkeys to feast in it. All came to pass as the neighbor hoped; when the melons were ripe great numbers of monkeys and apes came to the garden and feasted. And upon a day, they found the owner lying as one dead in the garden. Prompted by gratitude, the monkeys made ready to bury him, and while carrying him to the place of burial, they came to the place in the way where the two roads met. Here they disputed as to whether they should place the man in the cave of silver, or the cave of gold. Meanwhile, the man was thinking thus, “I’ll gather gold all day. When I have more than I can carry in my arms, I’ll draw some behind me in a basket I can readily make from bamboo,” and, when the head monkey said, “Put him in the cave of silver,” he unguardedly cried out, “No, put me in the cave of gold.”

Frightened, the monkeys dropped the man and fled, whilst he, scratched and bleeding, crept painfully home.

A Lazy Man's Plot¹

UPON a day a beggar, who was too lazy to work, but ever lived on the bounty of the people, received a great quantity of rice. He put it in a large jar and placed the jar at the foot of his bed, then he lay down on the bed and thus reasoned:

“If there come a famine, I will sell the rice, and with the money, buy me a pair of cows, and when the cows have a calf, I'll buy a pair of buffaloes. Then, when they have a calf, I'll sell them, and with that money, I'll make a wedding and take me a wife. And, when we have a child large enough to sit alone, I'll take care of it, while my wife works the rice fields. Should she say, 'I will not work,' I'll kick her after this manner,” and he struck out his foot, knocking the jar over, and broke it. The rice ran through the slats of the floor, and the neighbors' pigs ate it, leaving the lazy plotter but the broken jar.

¹ The motive corresponds to that of the venerable story of the Milkmaid.

The Ungrateful Fisherman

It happened on a time that a poor fisherman had caught nothing for many days, and while he was sitting thinking sadly of his miserable fortune, Punya In, the god of wisdom, came from his high home in heaven in the form of a crow, and asked him, "Do you desire to escape from this life of a fisherman, and live in ease?" And the fisherman replied, "Greatly do I desire to escape from this miserable life."

Beckoning him to come to him and listen, the crow told him of a far distant province, whose chow lay dead.

"Both the province and all the chow's former possessions will I give thee, if thou wilt promise ever to remember the benefits I bestow," said the crow.

Readily did the fisherman promise, "Never, never will I forget."

Immediately the crow took the fisherman on his back and flew to the far distant province. Leaving the fisherman just outside the city gate, the crow entered the city, went to the chow's home, and took the body of the chow away, and, in the place put the fisherman.

When the fisherman moved, the watchers heard, and rejoicing, they all cried, "Our chow is again alive."

Great was the joy of the people, and, for many years, the fisherman ruled in the province and enjoyed the possessions of the former chow.

But, as time went by, the fisherman forgot the crow had been the author of all his good fortune, that all were the gifts of a crow, and he drove all crows from the rice fields. Even did he attempt to banish them from the province. Perceiving this, the god of wisdom again assumed the form of a crow and came down and sat near the one-time fisherman.

"O, chow, wouldst thou desire to go where all is pleasure and delight?" asked the crow.

"Let me go," replied the chow. And the crow took him on his back and flew with him to the house where, as a fisherman he had lived in poverty and squalor, and ever had he to remain there.



The Legend of the Rice

IN the days when the earth was young and all things were better than they now are, when men

and women were stronger and of greater beauty, and the fruit of the trees was larger and sweeter than that which we now eat, rice, the food of the people, was of larger grain. One grain was all a man could eat, and in those early days, such, too, was the merit of the people, they never had to toil gathering the rice, for, when ripe, it fell from the stalks and rolled into the villages, even unto the granaries.

And upon a year, when the rice was larger and more plentiful than ever before, a widow said to her daughter, "Our granaries are too small. We will pull them down and build larger."

When the old granaries were pulled down and the new one not yet ready for use, the rice was ripe in the fields. Great haste was made, but the rice came rolling in where the work was going on, and the widow, angered, struck a grain and cried, "Could you not wait in the fields until we were ready? You should not bother us now when you are not wanted."

The rice broke into thousands of pieces and said, "From this time forth, we will wait in the fields until we are wanted," and, from that time the rice has been of small grain, and the people of the earth must gather it into the granary from the fields.



AT WORK IN THE RICE FIELDS.

VII

Parables and Proverbs

“One Woman in Deceit and Craft is More Than a Match for Eight Men”

CHUM PAW was a maiden of the south country. Many suitors had she, but, by her craft and devices, each suitor thought himself the only one. Constantly did each seek her in marriage, and, upon a day as one pressed her to name the time of their nuptials, she said, “Build me a house, and I’ll marry you when all is in readiness.” To the others, did she speak the same words.

Each man sought the jungle for bamboo for a house, and, it happened, while they were in the jungle that they all met.

“What seekest thou?” they asked one another. “What seekest thou?” The one answer was, “I have come to fell wood for my house.”

And, as they ate their midday meal together, each had a bamboo stick, filled with chicken and rice. Now, it happened that Chum Paw had given the bamboo sticks to the men, and, lo, on investigation, they found the pieces in their various sticks were the parts of one chicken, and with one accord, they cried, “Chum Paw has deceived us. Come, let us kill her. Each has she promised to marry; each has she deceived.”

All were exceedingly angry and vowed they would kill the deceitful woman.

Chum Paw, seeing the men return together, knew her duplicity was known and realized they sought to kill her.

“I entreat that you spare my life, but take and sell me as a slave to the captain of the ship lying at the mouth of the river.”

Relenting, the suitors took her to the captain. She, however, running on before, privately told the captain she had seven young men, her slaves, whom she would sell him for seven hundred pieces of silver. Seeing the young men were desirable, the captain gave Chum Paw the silver, and she fled while the seven lovers were placed in irons.

Chum Paw fled to the jungle, but, frightened by the wild beasts, she sought refuge in a tree. And it came to pass that the suitors escaped from the ship and they, too, sought refuge in the jungle. Unable to sleep and also frightened, one of them climbed a tree that he might be safe from the wild beasts, and, lo, it was the same tree in which Chum Paw had taken refuge.

“Be silent, make no noise, lest the others hear us,” whispered Chum Paw. “I love you and knew you were wise and would escape from the

ship. I only desired the silver for us to spend together."

The unfortunate man believed, and sought to embrace her, but, as he threw up his arms, Chum Paw threw him down, hoping thus to kill him. The others, hearing the commotion, feared a large bear was in the tree and hastily fled. Uninjured the suitor, whom Chum Paw had thrown from the tree, fled with them.

Chum Paw seeing that they all fled ran behind, as she knew no beast would attack her while there was so great a commotion. As the suitors looked back, they saw her, but mistook her for a bear and ran but the faster, and finally, they all, the seven suitors and Chum Paw reached their homes.

Knowing the suitors would again seek her life, Chum Paw made a feast of all things they most liked and bade the young men to come. (All the food was prepared by Chum Paw and poisoned.) "I want but to make me *boon* before I die, so I beg you eat of my food and forgive me, for I merit death," said the maiden, as they sat in her house. All ate; and all died.

Chum Paw carried six bodies into the inner part of the house, and one she prepared for the grave. Weeping and wailing, she ran to the

nearest neighbor, crying, "I want a man to come bury my husband. He died last night. As he had smallpox, fifty pieces of silver will I give to the one who buries him."

A man who loved money said, "I will bury him." When he came to the house, Chum Paw said, "Many times has he died and come back to life. If he comes back again, no money shall you have."

The man took the body, made a deep grave, buried the man and returned for his silver. Lo, on the mat lay the body! He made a deeper grave and again buried it. Six times he buried, as he supposed, the body, and, on returning and finding it a seventh time, he angrily cried, "You shall never return again." Taking the body with him, he built a fire, placed the body on it, and, while it burned, went to the stream for water. When he returned, lo, a charcoal man was standing there, black from his work.

Filled with wrath, the man ran up to him crying, "You will come back again, will you? will cause me this trouble again, will you?"

The charcoal burner replied, "I do not understand." Not a word would the man hear, but fought the burner, and as they struggled, they both fell into the fire and were burned to death.

Chum Paw built a beautiful home and spent the silver as she willed.



**“The Wisest Man of a Small Village is
Not Equal in Wisdom to a Boy
of the City Streets”**

ONCE a boy of the city, watching a buffalo outside the gate of the largest city in the province, saw three men approaching. Each was the wisest man of the village from whence he came. The boy called to them, “Where go ye, old men?”

The men angrily replied, “Wherefore dost thou, who art but a child, speak thus to us who are old and the judges of the villages from whence we come?”

The boy replied, “There is no cause for anger. How was I to know ye were wise men? To me, ye seem but as other men from a country place,—the wisest of whom are but fools.”

The three men were very angry, caught the boy and said, “We will not enter into the city, but will go to another province and sell this insolent boy, because he neither reverences age nor wisdom.”

The boy refused to walk, so they carried him. All day they walked along the road, carrying the boy, and at night they slept by the roadside. In the morning, when they craved water and bade the boy go to a brook, he refused, saying, "If I go, ye will run and leave me. I will not go."

Thirst drove one of the wise men for the water, and the boy drank of it freely.

Several days' journey brought them to a wall of a large city, and night was spent at a *sala* near the wall. Seeking to rid themselves of the boy, they bade him go to the city for fire to cook food. Realizing their motive, he answered, "Should I go, ye will leave me. I will not go, though, if ye let me tie ye to the posts of the *sala*, then will I go."

With one accord they agreed, saying, "Do thou even so. We are weary carrying thee and cannot go for the fire."

Tying them all, the boy ran to the city, where he met a man whom he asked, "Dost thou wish to purchase three slaves? Come with me."

The man returned with the boy, saw the men, and gave him full value for each.

Having thus disposed of his captors, the cunning little fellow joined some men going to his native city, and as he walked along, he thought, "I was

ever wanting to see other places, and now I have been carried a long journey, and have silver to last me many days . . . surely, I have much *boon*.”¹



**“To Aid Beast is Merit; To Aid Man is
but Vanity”²**

A HUNTER, walking through a jungle, saw a man in a pit unable to escape. The man called to him, “If thou wilt aid me to escape from this snare, always will I remember thy grace and merit.” The hunter drew him out of the pit, and the man said, “I am goldsmith to the head chow, and dwell by the city’s gate. Shouldst thou ever want any benefit, come to me, and gladly will I aid thee.”

As the hunter travelled, he met a tiger caught in a snare set for an elephant, and the tiger cried, “If thy heart prompts thee to set me free, thy aid will ever be remembered by me.” He helped the tiger from the snare, and it said, “If ever thou needest aid, call and I will come to thee.”

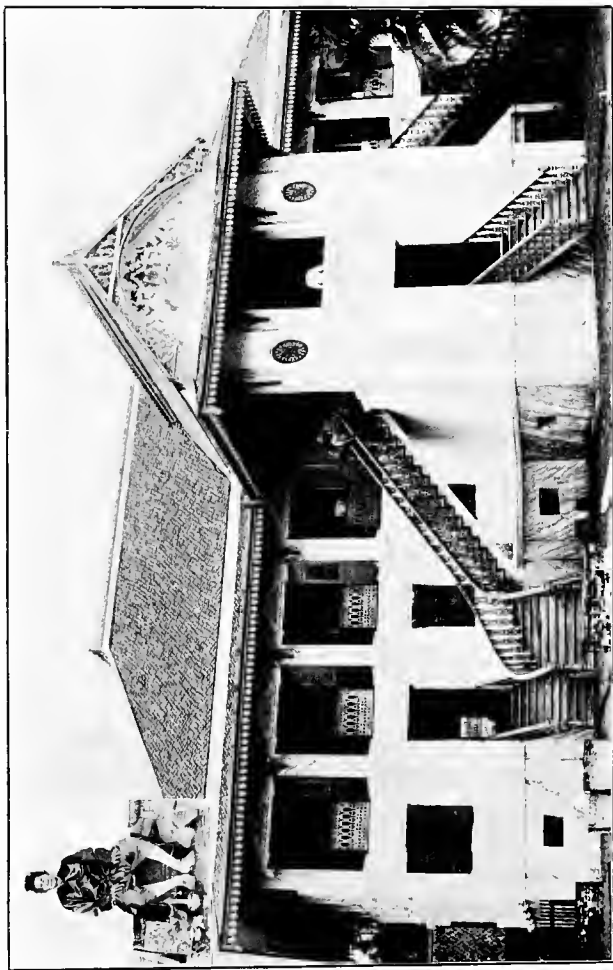
¹ Merit.

² This only of the Folk Tales has been written before. It is taken from an ancient temple book and is well-known in all the Laos country.

Then again the hunter went on his way, and came to a place where a snake had fallen into a well and could not get out, and the snake cried, "If thou wilt aid me, I can aid thee also in the time soon to come," and he assisted the snake. "When the time comes that thou needest me, think of me, and I will come to thee with haste," said the snake.

Now, it had happened that on the day that the hunter had rescued the tiger it had killed the chow's child, but of this the hunter knew nothing. And it came to pass that three days after, the hunter desiring to test the words of the tiger, went to the forest. Upon calling it, the tiger came to him immediately and brought with him a long golden chain, which he gave to the hunter. The hunter took the chain home, and, wishing to sell it, sought the goldsmith whom he had befriended. But the goldsmith, seeing it, said, "You are the man who has killed the chow's child." And he had his men bind the hunter with strong cords and took him to the chow in the hope of gaining the reward offered to any who might find him who had killed the child.

The chow put the hunter in chains and commanded he die on the morrow. The hunter begged for seven days' respite, and it was granted



THE "CHOW" AND HIS PALACE.

him. In the night he thought of the snake he had helped, and immediately the snake came, bringing with him a medicine to cure blindness. While the household of the chow slept, the snake entered and cast of its venom in the eyes of the chow's wife, and she was blind.

Throughout all the province the chow sought for some one to restore the eyes of his afflicted wife, but no one was found.

It happened on a day, that word came to the chow's ears that the hunter he had in chains for the death of his child, was a man of wisdom and knew the merit of all the herbs of the field, therefore he sent for him.

When the hunter came into the presence of the chow unto where the wife sat, he put the medicine which the snake had brought him into the eyes of the princess, and sight, even like unto that of a young maiden, was restored unto her.

Then the chow desired to reward the hunter, and the hunter told him how he had come into possession of the golden chain, of the medicine which the serpent had given him because he had aided it in its time of trouble, and of the goldsmith, who had not only forgotten benefits received, but had accused him so he might gain a

reward. And when the chow learned the truth, he had the ungrateful goldsmith put to death, but to the hunter did he give half of his province, for had he not restored the sight of the princess?



VIII

The Gods Know and the Gods Reward

Love's Secrets

THERE was once a poor woodsman, who went to the jungle to cut wood, so he might sell it and buy food for his wife and child. And upon a day, when the cool evening had come, wearied, the man lay down to rest and fell into a deep sleep.

From his home in the sky, the god who looks after the destiny of man was hot-hearted¹ when he saw the man did not move, and he came down to see if he were dead. When he spake in the wood-cutter's ear, he awoke and arose, and the fostering god led him home. As they came near the gate, the god said, "Stand here, whilst I go and see to the welfare of thy wife." Listening without, the god heard the fond wife say to the little child, "I fear some evil hath befallen thy kind father. Ever doth he return as it darkens about us."

The god knew from her words that the wife was good, and taught the child love and reverence for its father, therefore was he pleased, and returning to the woodsman, sent him in haste to his home, and said, "I, myself, will lay the wood in its place."

¹ Anxious.

The next morning, when the eye of day opened, the fond wife went for wood to build a fire that her husband might eat of hot food ere he went to his daily labor, and, lo, when she saw the wood which her husband had brought home, all was turned into gold! Thus had the cherishing god rewarded a husband faithful in his work, and a wife loving and thoughtful.

Leaving the house of the worthy woodsman, the god met a man tardily wending his way home with a small, poorly-made bundle of sticks. Approaching him, the god said, "Wait at the steps. I will go first and see how it is with thy wife." And the god went up unseen, and heard the wife say to her son, "Ever is it thus. Thy father thinks naught of us; he stays away so he need be with us but little."

Sadly the god returned to the laggard, took the bundle from him, and bade him go to his wife and child, saying he would put the wood in its place.

Late the following day, long after the husband had gone to his work, the wife went for some wood, and, lo, found all the wood had turned to venomous snakes! Then was she afraid, and she grew kinder of heart and strove to make her husband better and happy.

Poison-Mouth

THERE was once a poor father and mother who had a little daughter, called "Poison-Mouth."

And it happened on a day that a great number of cows came into the garden, and when the mother saw them she cried angrily, "You but destroy our garden. I would you were all dead."

"Poison-Mouth" hearing her mother's angry words, called out, "Die, all of you, for you are destroying our garden." And immediately all the cattle dropped dead.

Upon another day, the bees were swarming and great companies flew over the house, and the mother said complainingly, "Why do you never come to us that we may have honey?"

Little "Poison-Mouth" called: "Come to us that we may have honey." And, lo, before the eye of day had closed, the house was filled with bees and the poor people had more honey than they could use.

Word of "Poison-Mouth" reached a great chow, and, prompted by the god of love to sweeten the poisoned mouth, he sent ten men with this message to the child's parents: "Take

good care of your child; let her hear no evil, and when she is old enough, I will take her to wife."

When the men approached the home of "Poison-Mouth" they said, "O, poor people," but the mother would not permit them to finish, as their words angered her, and she exclaimed, "You are bad dogs!" And the men were no longer men, but dogs, snapping and snarling, for little "Poison-Mouth" had also cried, "Bad dogs are you."

Though greatly distressed, the chow sent yet again twenty men with his message. And again, when the mother beheld these men, she exclaimed, "See, the dogs coming yonder!" "Poison-Mouth" echoed, "Yes, twenty dogs are coming now," and they also changed into dogs, fighting on the streets.

"Who can help me?" cried the chow, distressed though not despairing.

An old man answered, "I will help you. I will go to the child." And, while the mother was absent, he sought the little one, and thus softly said, "My child, thy tongue is given thee to bless with, and not to curse. Come with me, and learn only that which is good." The little one answered, "I will come," and the old man took her to the chow, who, from that time forth,

spoke no evil, and, little "Poison-Mouth," hearing none but beautiful and good words, grew beautiful and good, and her words brought blessings ever.



Strife and Peace

THERE was once a husband and wife who ever quarrelled. Never were they pleasant with each other.

A wealthy man sought to see if they could spend but a day in peace, so he sent two men with one hundred pieces of silver to them, saying, "If this day be spent without strife, this silver shall be yours." Then the two men hid themselves near the house to watch after what fashion they spent the day.

"If we are to earn the reward, it were better thou shouldst hold thy tongue with thy hand, else thou canst not endure throughout the day," said the husband.

"Ever am I quiet. It is well known of all the neighbors that thou, and thou alone, art ever quarrelsome," retorted the wife.

And thus they disputed until both grew angry, and the quarrel was so loud that all the people

living near heard it. Thereupon the two men came forth from their hiding-place, and said, "The silver does not belong to you, of a certainty."

Determined to find virtue, the rich man sent the two men with the silver to a husband and wife who never quarrelled, and bade them say, "If this day, you will strive one with the other, these one hundred pieces of silver shall be yours."

The husband greatly desired the money and sought to anger his wife. He wrought a basket which she wanted to use in sunning the cotton, with the strands of bamboo so wide apart that the least wind would blow all the cotton out of the basket. Yet, when he handed it to his wife, she pleasantly said, "This is just the right kind of a basket. The sun can come in all about the cotton, as though it were not in a basket at all."

Again, the husband made a basket so narrow at the top that it was difficult to put anything into it, and also the mouth was of rough material so that the hand would be scratched in putting in or taking out the cotton. "Surely, this will anger her," thought the husband.

Turning it from ~~side~~ side to side, the wife said,

“Now, this, too, is just right, for when the wind blows, the cotton will be caught on the rough wood at the mouth and cannot blow away.”

The two men in hiding all day heard nothing but gentle words, so, in the evening, they returned to the rich man, saying, for they knew not the efforts of the husband to provoke his wife, “Those two know not how to quarrel.”

Gladdened, the seeker for virtue commanded them to be given the silver, for they loved peace.



The Widow's Punishment

ONCE there lived a woman who had a son and a nephew living with her. And upon a day they came to her desiring money that they might go and trade in the bazaar. She gave each a piece of silver of equal value, and bade them so to trade and cheat that they might bring home much money.

At the bazaar, one bought a large fish, the other, the head and horns of a buffalo, and, as they rested by the roadside on their way home, they tied the large, living fish and the buffalo head together, and threw them in a muddy

stream. When they threw the stones at the fish, it jumped, thus causing the buffalo head to move as though it were alive.

A man saw the head in the water and desired to buy the buffalo. The boys named the price of a live animal, and, having received it, they fled.

As they went along, not long after, they found a deer which a wild dog had killed, but had not eaten of it. It they took with them, and, a drover, seeing it, asked where they had found it.

“Our dog,” said the boys, “is so trained, it goes to the jungle and catches the wild animals for our food.”

The drover desired to buy the dog.

“No,” said the boys, “we will not sell it.”

Their words but made the drover more eager to possess the dog, and he offered ten of his best cattle in exchange. The exchange pleased the boys, and, having received the cattle for their useless dog, they hastened to a large city, where they sold them for much money and returned home. On reaching it, they divided the money equally, but the mother was dissatisfied and desired that her son have the larger portion, therefore she insisted that they make an offering to the spirit in the hollow tree near by, before the money could be rightly divided.

While the boys were preparing the offering, the mother ran and hid in the hollow tree, and when they had made their offering and asked the spirit, "What division must we make of the money?" a voice replied, "Unto the son of the widow, give two portions—unto the nephew of the widow, give one portion."

Greatly angered, the nephew put wood all about the tree and set fire to it. Though he heard the voice of his aunt, saying, "I beg that thou have mercy on me and set me free," he would not recognize it, and the widow and the tree perished. Thus, she who had taught him to cheat, by her own pupil was destroyed.



Honesty Rewarded

IN the far north country there lived a father, mother, and son. So poor and desolate were they that their only possession was an old ax. Each morning, as the eye of day opened on the earth, they went to the woods and there remained until the evening, cutting the wood, which, when sold, furnished their only source of a living.

Upon a day, when the cutting was done, they

placed the ax near the wood and went deeper into the jungle for vines to bind the wood. It happened the chow of the province came that way with twelve of his men; one of whom bore an ax of gold, another bore an ax of silver and both belonged to the chow. Yet, when the chow saw the old, wooden-handled ax lying near the wood, he commanded that it be taken home with them.

The family returning found their ax gone. Deeply distressed, they sat down and wept, and thus in trouble, did the chow and his men find them as they came that way again.

“Why are your hearts thus troubled?” inquired the chow.

They answered: “O chow, we had but one ax and it is gone and no other means of earning food have we!”

The chow replied: “I found your ax. Here it is.” And he commanded they be given the ax of silver, whose handle even was silver.

“That is not ours,” they cried, “not ours.”

The chow commanded the ax of gold be given them. Yet they wept but the more, saying, “The golden ax is not ours. Ours was old, ’twas but of steel and the handle of wood, but ’twas all we had.”

Their honesty gladdened the heart of the chow and he commanded that not only their own ax be returned, but the ax of gold, the ax of silver, and even a pun¹ of gold be given them. Thus was merit rewarded.



The Justice of In Ta Pome

MEN of three countries wanted a chemical to change stones and metals into gold, and they all came together to worship In Ta Pome, one of the gods. One man was from China, one from India, and one from Siam. They all worshipped at the feet of In Ta Pome, saying, "We beg thee, O In Ta Pome, give unto us the chemical which will change all stones and metals into gold."

In Ta Pome replied, "Each of you kill one of your children, cut him into pieces and put him into a jar. Cover this with a new, clean cloth, and bring it unto me."

The Chinaman feared to kill his child, so killed a pig, cut it up and placed it in a jar, over which he tied a close cover.

¹ About 3 lbs. avoirdupois.

The Siamese did the same with a dog, but the Indiaman believed in In Ta Pome, and killed his only son, put him into a jar, and covered it.

All returned to the god with their several jars.

In Ta Pome sprinkled the jar of the Chinaman first, saying, "Whatsoever is silver, let it be silver; whatsoever is gold, let it be gold," but the pig grunted, as pigs do, and In Ta Pome said, "From this time forth, you shall take care of pigs and kill them to gain gold." Sprinkling the jar of the Siamese, the god again said, "Whatsoever is silver, let it be silver; whatsoever is gold, let it be gold," but the dog barked, as dogs do, and In Ta Pome said, "You must plow the earth, and only by the sweat of your brow shall you have enough to keep you in food."

Taking the jar of the Indiaman, and having sprinkled it, In Ta Pome cried, "Whatsoever is silver, let it be silver, and whatsoever is gold, let it be gold," and lo, the child came to life! And to the Indiaman did In Ta Pome give the chemical that changes all stones and metals into gold, because he had believed, and had not tried to mock and deceive the gods.

IX

Wonders of Wisdom

The Words of Untold Value

IN the days long since gone by, a young man, a son of a poor widow, desired to go with two of his friends to Tuck Kasula,¹ the country where one could learn the wisdom of all the world, but he had no gold with which to buy the wisdom, for does not every one know that wisdom is difficult to obtain, and is therefore of great price.

Now, the two young friends had each two puns² of gold, but the widow's son had but two hairs of his mother's, which, when he wept because he had no money, the widow had given him, saying, "I have naught but these two fine hairs to give thee, my son, but go with thy friends, each hair will be to thee as a pun of gold."

Then the son placed the two hairs in a package with his clothing, and sealed the package with wax, and set out with his friends to visit Tuck Kasula.

After they had travelled some time, they grew hungry, and on arriving in a village, they entered

¹ A fabulous "City of Wisdom."

² A pun—about 3 lbs. avoirdupois.

a house for food. The widow's son left his package and his other goods on the veranda. While he was within the house a hen ran away with the package and lost it. The owners of the hen offered the son anything they had either of food or clothing to replace his loss, but he would be content with nothing but the hen, and they gave it to him.

And again when they entered another house for food, the widow's son tied the hen to a small bush in the compound, and, lo, an elephant stepped upon it and killed it!

The people offered the young man many things to make good his loss, but he would be content with nothing but the elephant, and they gave him the elephant.

At last they reached Tuck Kasula, and while his two friends, with their gold, sought the house of the teachers, the widow's son stayed under a tree where he could hear the teachers instructing their disciples.

"If you wish to know others, sleep. If you wish to see, go and look," said a wise man. "These words are of untold value, but, for only two puns of gold will I give them unto you," he added.

The widow's son knew he had heard without

price the wisdom for which his two friends would each have to pay two puns of gold, so he quietly turned the elephant and returned home.

“I will buy your words of wisdom, if you will sell them,” said the judge to the widow’s son.

“For two puns of gold I will sell them,” answered the widow’s son.

“Two puns of gold will I give thee,” said the judge.

“‘If you wish to know others, sleep. If you wish to see, go and look,’” said the widow’s son, when he had in his possession the two puns of gold.

The judge, desiring to test the truth of the words, as he understood them, called unto him his four wives, and said, “I am not well. Give me water to drink, and fan me.” Soon he seemed to be asleep, and his wives talked thus together in low voices:

“It is not pleasant to be the wife of this foolish man,” said the first.

“I like another man better,” said the second.

“I wish I could steal his goods and flee while he sleeps,” said the third.

“I would like to make him a savory dish with poison in it to kill him,” said the fourth.

Then the judge sprang up and cruelly punished his wives and put them in chains.

And upon another day, the judge arose early and went out to see how his slaves worked. Under the house, hunting for something, he saw a man.

“What do you seek?” asked the judge.

“I have just stolen from the judge all of his silver, and, in trying to get it through a small opening, I broke my finger-nail. If I do not find it, the judge will die and all his possessions will be destroyed, for, as thou knowest, ever is it thus, if a finger-nail falls near a house.”

When the man had found the broken nail, the judge said, “I, who stand here, am the judge. I will but take from you the silver which you have stolen and no punishment shall be yours, because of the truth which you have told.” Then the judge said to himself, “The two puns of gold was a small price to pay for the wisdom which I have obtained.”



A Wise Philosopher

As a rich trader journeyed to another province, he rested by the road under a tree, and, as he sat there, a poor young man approached and asked that he might accompany him.

“Come,” said the trader, and, as they journeyed, they came to a place where there were many stones, indeed there was naught else to be seen.

“Here are there no stones,” said the poor young man.

“You are right, here are no stones,” replied the trader.

Soon they reached the shade of a large forest, and the young man said,

“Here are no trees.”

“You are right, here are no trees,” the trader assented.

When they reached a large village, the poor young man said,

“Here are no people.”

“You are right,” spake the trader, but he wondered what manner of man might he be who knows nothing and has neither eyes nor ears. However, as he returned home and the

poor young man begged to accompany him, he agreed and took him with him.

And, as they approached the trader's home his daughter called, "O father, what have you brought?"

"Nothing but this foolish young man," answered the trader.

"Why do you call him a fool?" asked the daughter. "By his appearance and manner I would judge he were the god of wisdom come down in man's form."

"I can see no wisdom in one who, when he can see but stones, says, 'There are no stones here,' or, when he is in the forest, says, 'Here are no trees,' or, when in the midst of a populous village, says, 'There is no man here,'" replied the trader.

"He meant, where the stones were all about, that none were precious; where the forest was, that there was no teak, no wood good for man's use; and, where the village was, there were no people, as the people had all fallen away from the religion of Buddha, living but as beasts and making no merit for the future life," argued the daughter.

"If you esteem him so highly, take him for your husband," said the trader.

“If your daughter will have me as her husband, ever will I endeavor to make the path on which she treads smooth and beautiful for her feet,” cried the poor young man.

They were married and lived happily, and, upon a time, the head chow summoned the trader to come watch his house during the night. Greatly was the trader troubled. “I shall die this night,” cried the trader.

“Why shall you die, my father?” asked the son-in-law, in great concern.

“The chow has called me to watch this night and for some time past he has killed all who have watched for him; an evil spirit has possessed him and he loves to punish with death the watchmen, for, he falsely says they sleep and he has them killed but to satisfy the spirit in him,” answered the trader.

“I will watch in thy stead,” said the son-in-law. And fearlessly did he go to the chow’s, and, when midnight was come and the chow descended secretly to see if the watchman slept, lo, the young man prayed aloud for the god of wisdom to come teach him what to do. The chow, hearing the sound of voices, listened, and heard one voice say, “The brave and the strong govern themselves, then have they the power to

govern others. The wise make themselves loved because they are good and true, and are served by others through love and not through fear," and another voice steadily repeated the words. Three times during the night came the chow. Each time the voice was speaking and being answered, and, lo, when the eye of day opened in the East, the chow was found possessed of a kind and loving spirit and no longer desired to destroy his people. The young son-in-law of the trader was made a leader of the people, for the chow declared unto all that the spirit of the god of wisdom dwelt in the young man's heart, and, it came to pass that the whole land was blessed because one young man had learned of the god of wisdom.



The Boys Who Were Not Appreciated

ONCE there were two brothers. The elder watched and tended the younger during the day, while their mother went to labor for food. It had happened that the father had died, and the mother had taken another husband who ever sought to teach the mother to dislike and neglect the brothers.

And it fell upon a day that the children waited and watched for their mother's return until they were hungry, for all day had they had no food. When the eye of day closed, they sought food and found some green fruit. This they ate and then lay down to sleep.

Long after darkness had settled, came the mother and her husband home, and the mother cooked rice which they sat down to eat.

Awakened by the odor of the rice, the children heard the talking, and the elder led his younger brother to his mother and begged food, but the husband said, "Do not give them of our food," and the mother beat them and drove them from home. The elder brother carried his little brother back to sleep under the house, but even thence were they driven. At last they sought and found shelter with a neighboring widow, who gave them mats to sleep on. As the eye of day opened, the two children set out to find a new home. For many days did they walk, and upon an evening they found a *sala* near the chief city of another province. There they slept. In the morning the elder boy sought food, and behold, he saw two snakes wrestling under the *sala*. Both were wounded. One, however, killed the other and then left it and ate some grass growing

near, and, lo, immediately the snake was whole as before. Waiting only until the restored snake had gone, the boy gathered some of the grass, and put it in the mouth of the dead snake, and forthwith it came to life and blessed the boy. Gathering more of the grass, the boy returned to his brother and they both ate of it and were strengthened.

Not long after, a servant of the chow of the neighboring province came to the *sala*, and the boys asked, "For whom is the mourning in the city?" The servant replied, "The young daughter of the chow; and the chow mourns. If any one will restore her unto life, the chow declares, unto him will he give half of his province and goods."

Eager to try the wonderful grass, the boy carried his young brother and some of the grass even unto the chow's house, where he sought permission to restore the child with the grass. Gladly the chow consented. The boy placed the magic grass in the maiden's mouth, and immediately she came to life. Full of joy, the chow shared his province and goods with him and even gave his daughter in marriage, as promised.

And upon a day after they had lived happily a long time in that province and had grown wise

and strong, the two young men thought of their mother, and said, "We will go and visit her and her husband."

They made ready joints of bamboo and closed them, after having filled them with gold, in such a way that no one could see the gold. When all was ready, with a great number of elephants and servants, they returned to their native province.

On reaching their home, they gave of the bamboo joints to their friends and relatives, one each, but to their mother and her husband, gave they five of the largest joints, and two of the largest gave they to the kind widow.

"The bamboo makes fine firewood," they said to their mother. "Cut it up and burn it."

The mother and her husband were angry and would not speak to the sons who had brought but wood as a gift, and sorrowfully they returned to the other province.

Upon a day the widow visited the mother and urged that she cut the bamboo joints.

"Your sons say that the bamboo makes a good firewood. Where is yours?" the widow asked.

The mother replied, "It is outside. Our children came from a great distance and brought to us but this firewood. We shall never touch it."

But the widow urged, "I would believe and

trust the love of my children. I beg that you cut up the wood." At last they did so, and when the husband cut into the joints, lo, he found them all gold. Then ran they both to find the sons to thank them, but they were already too far distant. Unable to endure their remorse, there the mother and her husband died on the wayside.



The Magic Well

THE chow of a large province lay ill. All the doctors of many provinces were summoned, but none could aid him, nor could any understand his malady. Lying in his house one day, an old man begged he might see him, saying he had a message from the spirits. Brought into the presence of the chow, the old man said, "Last night, as I lay on my bed, I had this vision. A spirit came to me and touched me and led me to the river's brink. There I saw a boat prepared for my use. I entered the boat and it was rowed swiftly by unseen hands down the stream. After a little time, it stopped at the foot of a tall mountain. Up this the spirit led me, and through which was no path. We journeyed until we

reached the mountain's top. On its summit were two great walls of rock, and between the walls was a gate, looking like a gate which led into a city. Leading me to the other side of the mountain, the spirit bade me ascend the rock where the foot of man had never before trod, and, far up in the face of the rock, I saw a small opening, like the mouth of a well. I lay down and stretched my arm to its full length, but failed to reach the bottom of the opening. By the side of this opening, on looking more closely, I beheld a cup tied to the end of a staff. With the cup I dipped pure water from the well. About to drink of the water, the spirit restrained me and commanded I should come to thee and tell thee this water, and this water alone, would heal thee. Therefore have I come, O prince, to lead thee unto this place."

The prince did not doubt him, but commanded the boats be prepared for his use. Taking with him a large retinue of servants, and guided by the aged man, they departed in search of the health-restoring well.

After just such a journey as the man had described, at his bidding, the boats landed at the foot of a tall mountain, where he led them unerringly upward, although no path could be

seen; the chow, leaning on the arms of two strong men, followed.

There indeed were the walls of rock and the gateway, as the guide had described, and, after a long and weary climb, they reached the opening in the rock.

Taking the staff of the chow and binding his golden drinking-cup thereto, the aged man dipped from the well and gave it to the prince to drink. Having drank of the water, and having poured it on his head and hands, the chow was healed of his sickness, and was as a new man. And to this day, the water is used for the healing of the people.



X

Strange Fortunes of Strange People

The Fortunes of Ai Powlo

ONCE upon a time a father and mother had a wicked son whose name was Ai Powlo. One day, while in the rice fields together, the father sent the son to his mother with a message. Instead, however, of delivering the message, Ai Powlo said his father had been eaten by a tiger. Leaving his mother in great distress, he returned to the rice fields and told his father that both his mother and the house were burned, and, for three days, did the father mourn for his wife, as he lay in the watchhouse.

While the father was mourning, Ai Powlo moved his mother and the house to a new place and then sought his father, saying, "I saw a woman in a new house by the stream who resembles my mother. Would you like her for a wife?"

"If my son seeks her for me, I would be thankful," replied the father.

Going to his mother, Ai Powlo said, "I have a man who would make thee a good husband. He would work in the rice fields. Will you take him for a husband?"

Thinking of the work, the mother said, "I will. Go, bring him to me, my son."

Lo, when the father and mother met, they recognized one another, and they knew their crafty son had deceived them!

As Ai Powlo fled from the wrath of his mother and father, he journeyed many days, and, upon a day it happened he stole some pork from a Chinaman. Taking the pork, he sought the rice fields and there he saw an old man at work. Running up to him, he called, "Father, do you not hunger for some pork? I have some to share with you."

"I do, my son," replied the old man.

Together they went to the watchhouse to cook the pork, but found no pot there.

"Whilst I make a fire, go thou, my son, to my house and ask my wife for a pot."

"Your husband wants you to give me all the money in the house, as he has heard of an elephant which he can buy now," said Ai Powlo to the wife.

The wife refused to give it to him and Ai Powlo called to the husband, who sat by the watchhouse waiting for the pot, "She will not give it to me." The old man called back, as he was hungry for the pork, "Give it to him.

Make haste," and receiving all their store, Ai Powlo fled into another province.

Upon a day, as Ai Powlo walked by the highway, he saw four bald-headed men pouring water on their heads to cool themselves. Running up to them, he said, "I know a medicine which will make the hair grow. Rub your heads until the skin is broken, whilst I make the medicine."

Taking some red peppers, he pounded them to a soft paste, put some salt in it, and then handed it to the four simple-minded old men, who had already rubbed their heads until they bled.

Having used the medicine, they suffered great pain and would have killed Ai Powlo, but he fled and took refuge with the chow, to whom he said, "I saw four old men on the way, who butted their heads together, trying to see which could overcome the other. All have much strength, and their heads are scratched and bleeding." Even as Ai Powlo spoke to the chow, the chow espied the men, and, when they came up, he commanded them, saying, "If you are able thus to wrestle for your own pleasure, you can wrestle for my pleasure." Not daring to disobey the command of the chow, the men painfully wrestled. While they struggled, Ai

Powlo, fearing their wrath, fled, and as he fled, he fell into a deep stream and was drowned.

Many years after, two fishermen were fishing in the stream, and as they drew in the net, they found not a fish, but a skull, and lo, the skull both laughed and mocked!

As the fishermen talked together of the curious skull, a man with a boat-load of goods approached, and they called to him, asking, "Did you ever see a skull which laughed and mocked?"

"Never did I see such a skull, nor ever will I believe there is such a thing," replied the man.

"If we show you such a skull, what will you give unto us?" asked the fishermen.

"All the goods in my boat," laughingly answered the man.

On beholding the skull, which, of a truth did both laugh and mock him, the boatman forfeited his goods, but, in his anger, he cut the skull and broke it into pieces, and, of these pieces he made dice with which to gamble, and was it not fitting, as Ai Powlo, whose skull it was, in life had but deceived, and ever done evil?

The Fortunes of a Lazy Beggar

ONCE upon a time a man lived who was never known to work. When the neighbors grew weary supplying him with food, he sought the forest, and lay down under a fig-tree so the ripe fruit might drop into his mouth. Often, when the food fell out of his reach, he would suffer hunger, rather than make an effort.

It fell upon a day that a stranger passed that way, and the lazy man asked him to please gather some fruit and put it into his mouth, as he hungered. The wily stranger gathered a handful of earth and put it into his mouth, as he lay there with his eyes even closed. Tasting the earth, the lazy man was angry, and he threw figs after the retreating impostor, who ran away mocking him.

Days after, a ripe fig fell into a stream near by and, floating down the stream, was seen and eaten by the daughter of a chow. Delicious to the taste, she grew dissatisfied with all other fruit and vowed that, from henceforth, she would eat of no other fruit, and that the man who had thrown the one beautiful fig should be her husband.

Angered by such a caprice, her father urged her to be guided by his judgment. Unable to restrain her, and, hoping to turn her desire elsewhere, the chow made an elaborate feast and bade all the people of the province to it. But, among all was not the one who had thrown the fig into the stream.

“Is there not yet a man who has not come to the feast?” asked the chow.

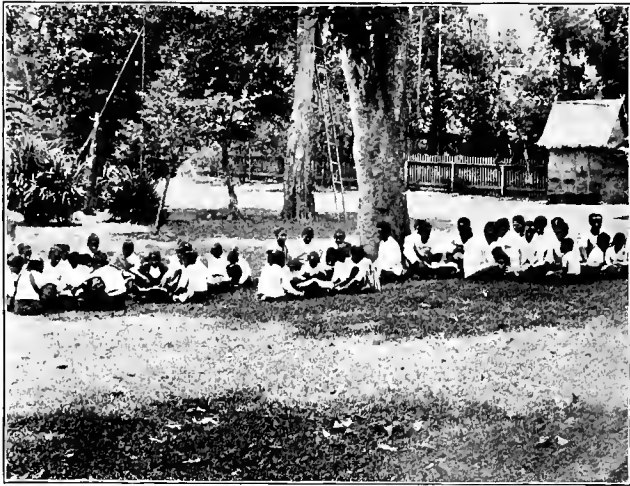
“None save the lazy beggar who lies at the fig-tree,” they said.

“Bring him hither,” commanded the chow, determined to have his daughter see what manner of man she was selecting as her husband.

Too lazy to walk, the lazy man was carried into the presence of the chow and his guests.

Ashamed that his daughter sought such as her husband, and would have no other, as it was supposed that the lazy man alone had thrown the fig into the stream, and he was too lazy to deny it, the chow had a boat built for their use and commanded that they be floated down the stream to the sea. This he did, hoping his obstinate daughter and her lazy husband might be lost to the world forever.

All day long the boat drifted; all day long spake the princess not one word to her husband,



A LAOS FEAST.



A STREET IN A LAOS TOWN.

nor would she have aught to eat. Fearing she would not live, if she did not eat, the beggar made a fire to cook some rice for her. Lazy as ever, he put but two stones under the kettle, and it tottered.

"I cannot endure your lazy ways. Put three stones under the kettle," cried his wife.

The husband did so, glad she had spoken to him.

And when the boat had drifted many days, it came to a place where once there had been a large rice field and there it remained.

While the princess stayed in the boat, the once indolent beggar labored day after day in the rice fields that they might live; moreover, he had learned to love his princess wife.

When the god, who looks to men's deeds, from his home in the sky saw the man no longer loved his ease more than all else, but would toil for his wife, he said within himself, "the man deserves reward." So he called to him six wild monkeys from his woods, and gave into their care six magic gongs, telling them to go beat them in the rice fields where the husband toiled.

The husband heard the monkeys and the clanging of the gongs, but, at last, unable to endure the noise, finally caught the monkeys and secured

the gongs. He then threatened to kill the monkeys, but they plead that they were sent, by the god who looks to men's deeds, with the gongs as a reward for his merit. "Having seen your efforts to provide for your wife, who loves not you, he sends you these gongs. If you strike this one, you will grow beautiful; that one, you will have wisdom. Another gives you lands and servants, and, another, if struck while holding it in your hands, will cause people to do you reverence as though you were a god," they told the man.

Having permitted the monkeys to go, he beat the gong of beauty, and his body grew straight and tall, also his face became most pleasant to look upon. Beating the gong of power, and taking the others with him, he sought his wife. She did not recognize him, and would have done him reverence, but he said, "Do me no reverence. I am thy husband," and he told her of the god's reward. When she heard of the magic gongs, she entreated him to return to her father that he might forgive her for not having heeded his counsel.

Through the magic gongs, had they wealth, power and all benefits the gods could bestow, and the father loved them, and indeed gave his

son-in-law power above all the princes in his province. And the once lazy man thought within himself: "In former times the people derided me as a lazy man, because I would not work, now that I am possessed of wealth, they do me reverence; yet behold I am as lazy as ever, for I open my mouth and food is ready for my use. Thus it is, that when a poor man does not work, he is called a lazy beggar, but when a prince, or rich man, does not work, he has power, and people do him reverence."



The Misfortunes of Paw Yan

UPON a day, Paw Yan¹ said to his wife, "To-day I shall build a watch-tower in the rice fields."

"You will need four posts about the size of our children here," replied the wife.

Taking the four children with him to the rice fields, Paw Yan dug four post holes and made the children stand in them. Then he packed the earth about their feet to make them firm, took the beams and laid them on their shoulders, tied them in place, and went for more bamboo to finish the watch-tower.

¹ Paw Yan—a blunderer.

The eye of day had closed in the West, yet the husband and the children returned not, so the wife, in distress, sought them in the fields, and, lo, when she reached them, there stood the four children as posts for the watch-tower.

“Know you not anything? I said take four posts the size of our children,” cried the wife.

And upon another day did Paw Yan attempt to build the tower, but so utterly did he fail that his wife said, “While I build the watch-tower you gather the food for the pigs, and, when the eye of day closes, give it to them.”

Paw Yan watched until the eye of day was about to close, but forgot to gather the food for the pigs, so he took all the rice, which was the food for the family, and went out to the pigs. He called, “Ow, ow, ow,”¹ and the pigs ran about trying to find the food, but Paw Yan forgot to throw it to them, for, while he stood there, he saw ants running down the trunk of a tree, and he could think of nothing else. “That’s an easy way to get down a tree,” thought Paw Yan. “I’ll try it,” and, throwing the rice aside, he climbed the tree, and, head first, started down, but fell to the ground and broke his neck!

¹Ow—take.

An Unfortunate Shot

THERE was once a poor man too ill to work, and he had no one to give him food. The chow of the province heard of him and sent for him to come to his house.

When the man reached the house of the chow, the chow gave him a bow and arrow, saying, "Shoot upward toward the sky. When the arrow falls to the earth, if it fall making a hole in the earth, I will weigh the earth which the arrow digs up, and give thee the weight of it in gold. On whatsoever thy arrow falls, that will I weigh and give its weight unto thee in gold. If, in its fall, the arrow should make a hole in the ground six feet long and six feet deep, that earth will I weigh, and gold according to the weight thereof shall be thine."

The poor man was indeed glad, and, shooting with all his strength into the air, the arrow pierced a pomegranate seed, therefore the chow gave unto him gold but the weight of the seed!

XI

Stories Gone Astray

The Blind Man

A MAN and a woman had a daughter to whom they ever taught, in selecting a husband, to take none but a man with rough hands, as then she might know he would work.

Overhearing this advice, and desiring a wife, a blind man took some rice, pounded it, and having rubbed it over his hands, came to woo the maiden. Though utterly blind, the eyes of the blind man appeared even as the eyes of those who see, and the maiden loved him and gave herself to him in marriage. Never did she suspect the truth.

Many days they lived happily, but upon a time the wife made curry of many kinds of meat, and her husband ate but of one kind. When she asked him why he ate but of the one kind, the husband replied, "If a man eat from a dish, that dish should he wash. If I eat but from one, I need wash but one."

Again, upon a day, as the husband plowed the rice field, he plowed up the ridges between the fields.

"Why dost thou work after that fashion?" asked the wife.

"The places for planting the rice are small and narrow. I wish to make them larger," replied the husband.

When the rice had grown, the man went into the fields with his wife, and, as they walked, he fell over the ridges, in among the rice.

"Why dost thou fall upon the rice?" asked the wife.

"I do but measure the distance between the plants. If the rice be good this year, I will then know just how far apart to plant it next year," he answered.

And upon a time it happened the house was burning, and, as the wife fled, she saw her husband lingering and unable to find the door.

"Come this way, the door is here," cried the wife.

"I know, I know. I but measure the house that we may build another of its size," retorted the husband.

Lo, as the husband left the burning house and was running, he fell into a well. His wife placed a ladder for him to climb out, but, behold, he climbed far above the mouth of the well.

"Come down. Here is the ground," called the wife.

"I know, I know. I am up here to see if the fire is out," called down the husband.

Long had the father of the wife suspected the husband was blind, and, upon a day, he came to test his eyes. Carrying a bell, such as a buffalo wears, the father hid in the bushes and rang the bell.

"Go, bring the buffalo into the compound,"¹ directed the wife.

Suspecting naught, the husband went to the bushes, and cried, "Yoo, yoo!"² The father struck him, but he freed himself and returned to the house and told his wife that the buffalo had been dangerous and had horned him. But the father, convinced the husband had deceived them all, drove him from the house.

As the blind man walked, he met a man with palsied feet.

"If thou wilt be eyes to me, I will be feet to thee," called the blind man, and, forthwith, he put the palsied man on his back. As they journeyed, they met a wizard, who said, "Would you prosper, that which you grasp hold with a secure hand."

And upon a day, the man with the palsy saw

¹ Enclosed grounds or yard—generally a place of residence.

² Yoo, yoo—stand still, be quiet.

a bird's nest; thinking there would be eggs therein, he bade the blind man go up the tree and bring them. When the blind man grasped the nest, the head of a venomous snake appeared, but his companion called, "Grasp it tightly," and, as he held it, the snake cast of its venom in his eyes, and he saw all things. Just lingering to place the snake on his afflicted friend, and seeing him, too, restored, the husband hastened home to his wife, but as he ran, he beheld her coming out to him. With these kind words did she greet him, "O, my husband, come I will work for thee. I have ever loved thee!" but, when she beheld that his eyesight was restored, she was exceeding glad, and greatly did she rejoice.



Heads I Win, Tails You Lose

A MAN once asked his newly-married son-in-law, "You will help me in the work that the chow gives me to do, now that you are one of us, will you not?"

And the son-in-law replied, "I will promise this. Whenever you go, I will stay at home, and when I stay at home, you will go and work."

Pleased with the ready promise, the father said, "I thank you, my son."

When the chow called the father, the son said, "This time you go, and I will stay at home," and the father went.

And when the chow again called, the son said, "Now, I will stay at home, whilst you go."

Then the father understood the promise of his son, and he did his government work alone until the day of his death.



The Great Boaster

THERE lived in the south a man who so continually boasted of his strength and endurance that all the people called him, "Kee-oo-yai"—the great boaster. Never entered into his ear a tale of danger, but his mouth opened to speak of a greater one which had been his; never a feat of strength but he could tell of one requiring greater strength which he had done, so, when the men of the village talked together and saw him drawing near, they would derisively say, "There is the great boaster coming. We must flee from his face for, is not he as strong and brave as the elephant? And we, compared to him are but as

the dogs, or as the pigs." And the company would separate, so when the boaster reached the place no one would be there.

Once, a young boy came from a distant province, and, hearing of the boaster, said, "Verily, I can bring him to have a face of shame before his neighbors, for, in one thing I can excel any man almost. I can run for a short distance and my heart does not beat faster, neither can any man say that my heart is quicker than when I am but seated, doing no labor. I will challenge the boaster to run up a hill with me, breathing but four times until the top is reached."

The next day, the boy met and challenged the boaster to run to the top of a small hill, drawing breath but four times on the way. "If you can run and draw breath but four times, I can run the same distance and draw breath but twice," the boaster said.

When the race was run, many men ran along to see that neither of the runners deceived the other. The boaster ran but a short distance, when he shouted in pain and shame, "Had we been running down-hill, I am sure that I could have done more than you."

Then all the men mocked the boaster, saying,

“Your words are truly large, but your works are but small. Never again will we listen to you, for a young lad has overcome one who says that he is stronger than the strongest.” From that time never were they troubled, for, “Kee-oo-yai,”—the great boaster, was never heard to boast again.



A Clever Thief

ONCE a man went into the field of a gardener and stole a melon. Before he had had time to eat it the gardener discovered him, took the melon and tied it to the neck of the thief, and led him to the home of the head man of the village.

As they walked along, the thief took his scarf and covered his head and shoulders, and, as he was in front, he ate the melon without the gardener's seeing him.

When they reached the home of the head man, the gardener said, “This man stole a melon from me. It is tied to his neck under the cloth which covers his head and shoulders.”

“I thought this man but walked along. I did not know he would accuse me of such a sin. If

"I stole a melon, where is it?" asked the thief. He removed the scarf, and, lo, there was nothing to prove his guilt, and the head man said, "I see no sign of guilt in this man. Do not again falsely accuse one, or you will be punished."



Eyeless-Needle, Rotten-Egg, Rotten-Banana, Old-Fish and Broken-Pestle.

ONCE upon a time there were five men so lazy and wicked that no one would speak to them nor have anything to do with them. No one of their native province would speak to them at all, and, to show their contempt for them, the people had christened them by odious names. One was called, "Eyeless-Needle"; one, "Rotten-Egg"; one, "Rotten-Banana"; one, "Old-Fish," and the fifth, "Broken-Pestle."

As there was neither shelter nor food for them in the village, they went to live in the woods, and one day they saw a cannibal building a fire. He had both a fine house and much goods, so one of the men said, "Let us go kill him, and take his goods."

"Eyeless-needle" said, "No, we must not

kill him now. When he sleeps we will kill him. I have planned just how it shall be done. You, 'Rotten-Egg,' go to the fireplace. You, 'Old-Fish,' jump into the water jar. 'Rotten-Banana,' lie down at the top of the stairs, and, you, 'Broken-Pestle,' lie at the foot."

As the eye of day had closed and the cannibal slept, "Eyeless-Needle," from under the bed, pricked him. The cannibal thought insects were biting him, and, unable to sleep, he arose to build a fire. When he stooped to blow the flame, "Rotten-Egg" broke and flew up into his face; when he sought the water jar to wash his face, "Old-Fish" jumped and broke the jar and all the water was lost. Taking the dipper to go to the well for water, the cannibal slipped on "Rotten-Banana" and fell downstairs, where "Broken-Pestle" struck him on the head and killed him. Then, taking much goods, "Eyeless-Needle," "Rotten-Banana," "Rotten-Egg," "Old-Fish," and "Broken-Pestle" fled, and to this day, has no one either seen or heard of them.

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