

AUTHOR'S NOTE

THE author wishes to acknowledge her indebtedness to the late Rev. W. A. P. Martin, D.D., LL.D., former President of the Chinese Imperial University, to whose volume, "The Lore of Cathay," she has had frequent recourse in the composition of this novel. Similar use has been made of Rev. Justus Doolittle's "Social Life of the Chinese," published in 1868. The lines from the *San Tzu Ching* or Trimetrical Classic which occur in this book are given in the usual romanised spelling with a translation by Hubert A. Giles. With respect to the rhyming couplets which are put into the mouth of the two young women in the "House of Song," no pretence is made to reproduce in them the wonderful precision and elegance which characterise a true Chinese distich, of which Dr. Martin says: "These couplets often contain two propositions in each number, accompanied by all the usual modifying terms; and so exact is the symmetry required by the rules of the art that not only must noun, verb, adjective, and particle respond to each other with scrupulous exactness, but the very tones of the characters are adjusted to each other with the precision of music." If the author has succeeded in conveying something of the spirit of these charming impromptu couplets whose composition still constitutes a favourite pastime among the *beaux esprits* of China, affording them, as Dr. Martin points out, "a fine vehicle for sallies of wit," she will have accomplished her aim.