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## Er Ku Niang's Surrender.

(Theodora Marshall Inglis, in the 'Presbyterian Banner.')

Er Ku Niang was born in the city of Peking, and there her childhood passed uneventfully, as most girl's lives are passed in China. She had her childish amusements with her young neighbors, in the same yard or compound, where a number of families lived in rented houses. These were all surrounded by one mud brick wall, some fifteen feet in height and three feet thick. But the children were not confined within this enclosure during the daytime, and for hours together played out in the narrow street or alley near their big gate; here they enjoyed all sorts of games, but Er Ku Niang most delighted in shouting ridicule after any chance foreigner who passed that way.

Yet, despite this pernicious pastime and her unfavorable surroundings, she grew up into a most lovable little Chinese maiden. In fact, the neighbors could record of her few unfavorable actions up until the time she fell into a spasm of genuine Chinese rage. And for this even they excused her because of her provocation. It was that her widowed mother, Mrs. Wang, had come out boldly as a believer in the 'Jesus Doctrine.'

This occurred when Er Ku Niang was thirteen years of age, and she was soon after taken to live in a mission compound, where her persecuted mother had found refuge and service. While there, influence was brought to bear upon little Er Ku Niang in the hope of having her enter the mission school, but she scoffed at the school girls and reproached her mother for following the despised foreigners and their doctrines. She boasted that she preferred the gods of her own people and even went so far as to keep a painted paper god in her possession, but it must be said that her private devotions to his majesty were sadly neglected, once she even spit upon him, because of some unanswered prayer.

Thus a few years passed and gradually those about her realized that Er Ku Niang had developed into a beautiful young woman, with charms indescribable in her possession. The maiden knew it also, for her mirror daily showed her a winsome face of oval lines, from forehead to rounded chin, lustrous black lashed eyes, pouting lips, a dash of red beneath the olive of her cheeks, and all this loveliness framed by purple black hair.

The mirror was too small to reveal more of what she knew well enough, her shapely little figure, tapering fingers and chin and beautiful unbound feet, for Er Ku Niang was of the Manchu race.

When she was sixteen, the men-servants in the compound were all jealous of each other because of her. The clerks from the shops were calling at the compound with every conceivable display of goods. So, in desperation over her waywardness and coquetry, Mrs. Wang set about to betroth Er Ku Niang. Her brother was engaged as 'go between,' and he soon made



### LIGHT IN THE HOME.

'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul:

The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart:

The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever:

The judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold;

Sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb.

Moreover by them is Thy servant warned,

And in keeping of them there is great reward.'

—Psalm xix., 7-11.

arrangements that his niece should become the wife of a heathen shopkeeper, who lived in another city, thirty miles distant from Peking.

Er Ku Niang was secretly delighted with the prospect of a change in her life, and glad, she told her mother, that she was to marry into a heathen family, where they would follow the heathen customs. Yet, with all her boasting, she was surprised and dismayed to find, upon her entrance into her husband's household, that he had other little wives or concubines. She suddenly realized that she preferred the Christian custom of one wife for one man. And still another sad discovery was in store for her. She was linked to a besotted opium smoker, who never wearied in his efforts to persuade her to use the drug. In fact, Er Ku Niang was out of all

harmony with her wretched surroundings, and she finally became so desperate that she planned to escape back to her mother. To this end she became slovenly, shrewish, until her husband disdained her company altogether and her mother-in-law gossiped about her with the strutting wives.

When she concluded that she had made herself so disagreeable as to be undesirable, Er Ku Niang donned ragged garments, fled out into the city streets, hired a cart, and within twenty-four hours flung herself at the feet of her mother, sobbing out her wrongs.

Mrs. Wang's mother's heart responded, and clasping her daughter in her arms, she vowed that Er Ku Niang should never return to her husband. And she never did, for news of his death came soon after the