

with a great pagoda of many multiplied roofs fringed with a myriad silver bells that tinkled ceaselessly in the evening airs.

Here they dismounted and together made the ascent of an age-old wooden stairway, broad and easy, with a rail of carven wood coloured like a rainbow, and thronged from the first rise to the last with weary pilgrims, beggars, lepers, laughing children, mendicant holy men. The sun was low upon the horizon when, having bribed their way along that gauntlet, O'Rourke and his bride (she could never be aught less to him) attained to the topmost platform and, having received permission, with meet show of reverence entered the temple.

It was very dark inside and for a time they moved blindly in and out; but at length they came to a massive doorway looking toward the West, and here they paused, hand in hand, looking up to the placid face of a huge Buddha who, squatting cross-legged upon a pedestal, looked through the incense-scented gloom ceaselessly forward to Nirvana.

The figure, carven originally from stone, had been so heavily plastered with gold-leaves by the devout, that now it had all the semblance of being gold to its core; and, lavishly decorated with necklaces and bracelets of rare jewels set in crusted gold, in the evening glow it shone like some great lamp of holiness. Only its face was in shadow.

Slowly the light struck higher beneath the eaves