

Under a canopy of gold cloth held by six bearers, stood the imperial chair upon a raised platform,—not occupied however, the august Tang reclining more at his ease, a little out of the circle, upon cushions canopied by the moonlight. Around, upon the steps of the platform and near by, were grouped the noble ladies of the court and the royal princesses, (Tang living much in the female apartments and his daughters numbering several score,) and all, at the moment of Le-pih's joining the assemblage, turning to observe a damsel with a lute, to whose performance the low sweet music of the band had been a prelude. The first touch of the strings betrayed a trembling hand, and the poet's sympathies were stirred, though from her bent posture and his distant position he had not yet seen the features of the player. As the tremulous notes grew firmer, and the lute began to give out a flowing harmony, Le-pih approached, and at the same time, the listening groups of ladies began to whisper and move away, and of those who remained, none seemed to listen with pleasure except

Taya's song was a fragment of that celebrated Chinese romance from which Moore has borrowed so largely in his *Loves of the Angels*, and it chanced to be particularly appropriate to her deserted position, (she was alone now with her three listeners,) dwelling as it did upon the loneliness of a disguised Peri, wandering in exile upon earth. The lute fell from her hands when she ceased, and while the emperor applauded, and Kwonfootse looked on her with paternal pride, Le-pih modestly advanced to the fallen instrument, and with a low obeisance to the emperor and a hesitating apology to Taya, struck a prelude in the same air, and broke forth into an impulsive expression of his