

FROM OPIUM FIEND

trip around my appointments, sad news awaited me. Our newly found friend had taken cholera, through dreadful bungling had been given the wrong medicine, and had died. Their leader gone, most of his thirty-five guildsmen fell away.

Several weeks afterward we were greeted, one day, by an elderly woman, who came to us saying, "I am Peh Yuin's mother. I have come two hundred miles from 'Heaven's Gate' to see my child's grave." Cheng explained to me that Peh Yuin (White Cloud) was the silk merchant's baby name, by which his fond mother still called him. Of course her loved one had been long buried, and being poor she could not take his remains back to the old home as she would have liked to do.

Daily she went to the grave and mourned her son, lamenting loudly and calling to Peh Yuin, sometimes mildly reproving him for not remaining longer to comfort her old age, and then again with tears excusing him. "To be sure, you are not blameworthy. It was fate; and you, Peh Yuin, my son, could not help it." With words like these her weeping was interspersed.