

my home. The woman who had accompanied me combed my hair and adjusted the thick red veil, and all the women stood by and watched and whispered. Why did everyone whisper? A nameless dread was in the heart of the little crooked-backed bride.

"When all was ready I was led out to the court to go through the ceremony. We bowed down before the Kitchen God and Heaven and Earth, and prostrated ourselves nine times before the ancestral tablets—but Su-gu knows all about that—and then my veil was removed, and for the first time I beheld my husband. Oh, Heaven, help! was the cry of the wretched girl as she sank down on the pavement at the feet of her leper husband."

The lady teacher's tears fell fast as those of poor old Huoi-mu—tears of shame that she had ever thought her burden hard.

"Poor Huoi-mu! How did you bear such sorrow?"

"Such sorrow, Su-gu, there was even worse. When the leprous hands of my husband snuffed out the life of my little first-born daughter, that was grief—grief so deep, so deep! How did I bear it? I raved until a fever mercifully robbed me of mind and strength for many weeks. Then my body grew strong and my mind knew to hate and nothing more. Time went on I knew not how quickly. The days were all alike to me.

"But one day a strange woman from a foreign land came to my door. She was tall, like you, Su-gu, but her hair was almost white, and she sat down on the door-step beside me and showed me pictures, and told me the precious story of Jesus just as you tell the women in the village. The neighbors gathered around and pointed their fingers and said that I was daft, but the foreign lady told me over and over the story, 'Jesus loves me.' I often whispered in the sleepless hours of the night. I was lame and crooked-backed and hated—oh, so bitterly—the whole world, but Jesus' face smiled on me in the darkness.

"One day a neighbor shouted to another, 'would you think it! I saw her smile.' I turned and found that they meant me. I had smiled, yet not I but the Face that smiled on me in the dark.

"Then, Su-gu, a little son came and

the father's heart was not so fierce against me. How often I asked the kind Face that was always with me to spare the child! Not long after, the father passed beyond the world. Does the lady teacher think that I am wicked when I say that I was glad? Every blow that he had struck me, the faint wail of my baby girl, all cried out against him and I loathed his memory, and even the place where I had lived such a wretched life with him.

"But the boy—how I loved him. A great, rich, warm love was in my heart. In the night I no longer awakened to see the Face shining upon me, for peace was in my heart, and the Face was before me all the quiet, restful days. But I could not bring up the boy where his father's memory was so odious, and we travelled back to the great city and up the hills to this little village. The years went quickly by and the boy was a strong lad.

"Then one day an awful fear came upon me, for I thought that the boy was developing leprosy. 'Take him to the great city and let the foreign doctors see him,' said a neighbor who carried wood into the city. Together we went down the hills, across the paddy, and inside the city walls. We entered through the same gate where I had sold cakes, and such a fear of my former mistress seized me that the drops of cold perspiration stood on my face. We hurried on through the streets to where the lady doctor lived, and so many people were about her that we were obliged to wait a day before she had leisure to see us. When at last she said, 'Fear not! the boy has a bad skin disease and nothing more,' I could have shouted with joy. Then one of my people said, 'Huoi-mu, will you and the boy attend worship?' She led us to the place of worship, and there on the walls was the picture of the face that I had seen. Then they sang 'Ia-Su Ti-ang Ngual' (Jesus Loves Me), and the woman told the story of Jesus just as the gray-haired Su-gu had told me years ago. When she had finished I told her that I had loved Jesus for a long time, but that I did not know how to worship Him. 'Praise the Lord,' said the woman. 'Come every day at this time and we will teach you.' Every day that we waited in the great city we learned more about Him. But Su-gu is weary. I must not talk more."