

DELLS.

Swing away—swell on the air, Wild waves of sound, and away; Tongues longly telling of joy or despair; The music of folly, the sadness of care; The toll for the dead, the peal for the fair And the young on the bridal day. Swing away—swell now in sighs, Wild waves of sound, and away; Float o'er the billows that threatening rise, Hope-tongued fly forward through lowering skies, To the strong one who lives, to the weak one who dies. To the faithful who watch on and pray. Swing away—swell loud and long, And tell him who drifts with the gale, That she who is faithful now prays to the Strong To guard him from shipwreck and save him from wrong. The lures of the tempter, the soft siren's song, Where glistening the southern stars pale. Swing away—swell low and sweet, Bells of the bleak wintry night; Away now in sound-waves, O messengers fleet! Tell him I love well, my poor words repeat: The old year dies quickly, the new year we greet: Tell him the cic love burns bright. And oh! as ye swing and sway on the wind, Swift to my sailor and toil, As the old year is dying, though sometimes unkind, Though friends may be faithless and memory blind, Life's storms may be raging, a haven he'll find In this heart that loves truly and well.

MARRIAGE OF THE EMPEROR OF CHINA.

"The Great Emperor has become a guest in Heaven." Such were the words in which was officially announced the death of that dissipated monarch, the late Emperor of China, who, eleven years ago, tottered into his grave a decrepit, worn-out man of barely thirty years of age. His reign (1851-1861) had not been a fortunate one—its commencement had witnessed the capture of the southern capital by the Taeping rebels, and its close was preceded by the occupation of Peking by the allied armies—and probably few mourned for him, except, perhaps, the three hundred young ladies whom he left widows, and who, by his death, incurred the penalty of enforced celibacy in the "Cold Palace" during the remainder of their natural lives. Happily, in this instance, the country was spared that common sequel to the death of an Eastern monarch, a disputed succession, for only one son, a boy of eight years old, survived his polygamous father. On this lad, therefore, devolved the crown and the prospective duty—when he should come of age—of ruling the three hundred millions of China. Meanwhile, a regency, under the presidency of the Dowager Empress and the boy's mother, on whom was bestowed the same rank by brevet, undertook the management of him and his affairs. The virtue toga is donned early in the East, and, in accordance with Chinese Imperial etiquette, the young Emperor should have assumed that habit three years ago; but, for political reasons, the regency has, up to this time, kept him in the school-room. Now, however, at the ripe age of seventeen, His Imperial Majesty Tung-chi proclaims himself a man, and steps forward to take the reins of power. But the "Book of Ceremonies" lays it down as a rule that before a sovereign attempts to rule his kingdom, he should try his hand on the management of a household. "Marriage is the source of all rites," says that venerable book; and it was obviously necessary, therefore, that, before beginning his political career, he should enter into the complicated relations of Imperial wedded life. Kings and rulers are seldom allowed to follow their unrestrained inclinations in the selection of their wives, and to the Emperor of China is denied even the small latitude of choice which is accorded to European monarchs. But, on the other hand, he has this inestimable advantage over his Western brethren, that, whereas their domestic comfort is in a great measure dependent on the dispositions of their solitary consorts, he can seek safety from the caprices of one wife in the society of a multitude. This consideration doubtless helped to render his Imperial Majesty Tung-chi quite indifferent as to the result of the efforts of the two Dowager Empresses to settle him in life. Of the steps taken by the two ladies in the Peking Gazette, that meagre and solitary journal of Chinese officialdom, gives us very faint indications. But here the immutability of Chinese manners and customs stand us in good stead, since, in the pages of the "Ritual," which was compiled for the guidance of the founders of the "Great Pure" dynasty, we find an accurate picture of the modes of procedure which have, of late, been agitating the masters of ceremonies and the female world within the yellow-glazed tiles of the Imperial Palace. To begin at the beginning, we must go back for more than a year, for alliances of so august a nature are not to be arranged in a hurry; and if we had chanced to be in the "Hall of Great Harmony" one day in the beginning of the autumn of 1871, we should have been witnesses of the first act in the great matrimonial drama. Early in the morning we should have seen arrangements in course of being made for some great ceremony; we should have seen the throne duly prepared for its royal occupant; we should have seen one table so placed as to lead us instantly to recognize it as the future depository of an Imperial decree, and another as that of the great seal; we should have seen secretaries busy, and chamberlains ordering servants and drilling court gentlemen.

Everything ready, music would announce the approach of the Imperial sedan-chair, borne by innumerable coolies, and preceded, surrounded, and followed by heralds, marshals, eunuchs, and all the great officers of state. Amid a constant succession of bows, genuflections and prostrations, the boy-Emperor would ascend the steps to the throne, and seat himself thereon. The heralds would advance and proclaim to the assembled representatives of the Empire that, in obedience to the orders of the Dowager Empresses, His Imperial Majesty had determined to make choice of an Empress, and that a commissioner and two deputy-commissioners had been appointed to recommend a lady of the Empire for that great honor. As soon as the herald's voice had ceased the Emperor would move slowly through a crowd of prostrate officials to his sedan-chair, and when, surrounded by his followers, he had started for the apartments of the Dowager Empresses to announce the conclusion of the ceremony, we might mingle with the mob of servitors in the courtyard to inspect the betrothal presents. On one side we should find standing in a row ten trained horses; ten suits of armor, intended to clothe the limbs of as many male relations of the future Empress, would be spread out on numerous tables; and a hundred pieces of silk and twice as many pieces of cloth would be laid ready to form the nucleus of the bridal trousseau. With haste have the Imperial Commissioners set about the execution of their quagmire errand—for, in addition to an Empress, they were officially charged with the selection of three young ladies to occupy the rank of junior wives. It was said at first that the daughter of the Tartar General at Canton was to share the Imperial throne, but inquiry proved that she was past the prescribed age, so the Commissioners carried their investigations elsewhere, with the result made known by the following decree promulgated by the Dowager Empresses in February last: "His Majesty the Emperor, having been called upon to occupy the throne while yet young, has now entered on the eleventh year of his reign, and it becomes our duty to select a virtuous lady to be his consort and Empress, that she may aid him in the cultivation of imperial virtue, and assist him in regulating the affairs of his palace. We have chosen Ah-lu-to, the accomplished and virtuous daughter of Chung-chi, secretary in the Han-lin College, as Empress. And we have further selected Fu-sha, the daughter of Fong-hsin, clerk in the Board of Punishments, to be the first; Ho-sha-li, daughter of Prefect Chung-ling, to be second; and Ah-lu-to, daughter of the ex-lieutenant-general Sal Shing-sh, to be the third junior wife." These preliminaries being settled, the professors of the Fungshway art were called in to choose an auspicious day for the ceremony. Fortunately for the manufacturer of Imperial silk, these learned men declared that the 16th of October was the first day on which the influences of heaven and earth worked together for the good of imperial brides and bridegrooms, and sufficient time was thus given him for the preparation of the thirty thousand rolls of silk which custom lays down as the quantity required to clothe the limbs of the young Empress. Of how many patterns these are composed we are not told; but this we know, that six colors, symbolical of as many virtues, must be found amongst them. The rolls of white silk, which but the other day left the looms of Soochow, have, doubtless, already been transformed into robes emblematic of sincerity, clothed in which the Empress will receive visitors, and pay her respects to her liege lord. At the grand sacrifice to the ancient Emperors next spring her Imperial Majesty will call upon her dressers for the dust-colored robe, in token that the mulberry training season has begun, and on the other great festival of the year she will wear, in turn, dark-blue, light-blue, and red, embroidered with strangely-fashioned and brightly-colored pheasants. At the time of full moon, when she and she alone of all the inmates of the harem has the right of access to the Emperor's private apartments, she will be carried thither dressed in black, the personification of the female principle of nature. As the time draws near, the preparations within the palace for the reception of the Imperial bride are hurried forward, and on the day before the ceremony the preliminary form of respectably announcing to heaven and to earth the approaching event is solemnly gone through. And now, on the great day of the feast, the "Hall of Great Harmony" is again the scene of bows and prostrations. Thither, early in the morning, the Emperor goes in state, to the music of drums and bells, and surrounded by all the chief officers of his household, to hear the decree read, in which is officially announced the immediate arrival of the Empress Elect. That done, the Commissioners, eunuchs, and ladies-in-waiting march in procession to the house of the fortunate secretary of the Han-lin College to claim his daughter. Surrounded by his sons and male relatives, Chung-chi meets them at the front gate and conducts them through courtyard after courtyard into the great hall. Here the Imperial decree announcing the marriage is again read, and Chung-chi kneels thrice and bows down his head to the ground nine times in token of his love of the honor done him. The eunuchs and ladies-in-waiting then lead out Ah-lu-to, who first makes obeisance to the throne, and then, after listening to the deed of registration read by the lady heralds, takes leave of her mother and steps into the bridal sedan-chair. At the front gate her father kneels and bids her adieu, and the procession forms up. First comes the Imperial band, followed by carts, carrying the Commissioners; next comes the bride, then the maids of honor; after them the eunuchs on foot, and last of all the gentlemen-in-waiting. At the "Bridge of the Golden Waters," within the palace, the Commissioners dismount, and when the procession reaches the "Firm and Pure Palace" the eunuchs invite Ah-lu-to to descend from her much-bedazoned chair. In the centre hall the Emperor meets his bride for the first time, and with the ordinary ceremony of drinking the loving cup the marriage is complete. But there is yet no rest for poor little Ah-lu-to. The instant that she becomes Empress she goes in state to visit the Dowager Empresses, and in return for three genuflections and as many obeisances has the honor of luncheon with those august ladies. The "Rituals" leave her undisturbed for the rest of the day, but on the morrow she pays visits to the Dowager Empresses and the Emperor, and receives the congratulations of the Court officials. In the afternoon the Emperor bestows wedding-gifts on her parents and brothers. To the former he gives 300 taels of gold, 10,000 taels of silver, 1,000 pieces of silk, 20 trained horses, 20 stud horses, and 20 suits of armor; to the latter, 100 taels of gold, 5,000 taels of silver, 500 pieces of silk, 1,000 pieces of cloth, 6 horses, a suit of armor, a box of bows, a quiver of arrows, 3 suits of court clothes each, 3 ordinary suits of clothes, 3 fur robes, and a girder. Afterward he entertains her father, brothers, and male relatives, and the officers of the household at a great feast; while to Madame Chung-oh, her daughter, and to the great ladies of the palace, the Dowager Empresses show like hospitality. With these festive activities are brought to a close, and the palace-gates shut on her Imperial Majesty Ah-lu-to, to be opened only when duty and the "Book of Rites" agree in declaring it to be necessary. As each junior wife and concubine arrives she will be conducted with modified splendor to the "Hall of Great Harmony," to which place the Emperor will come in state to "inspect" the new acquisition to his harem. On these occasions the loving cup, the sole ceremony which constitutes marriage, will be wanting, and after the "inspection" the lady will retire to her apartments, there to remain a prisoner, the victim of monotonous palace routine, for the remainder of her life. The present must be a busy time for the Lord High Chamberlain, and the "Hall of Great Harmony" must be the scene of many an assemblage of "fair women and brave men," for the Empress and three junior wives form but the nucleus of the harem over which the Emperor is called upon to exercise his administrative abilities. Nine wives of the second class, twenty-seven of the third class, and eighty-one concubines are yet to be added to this number before the requirements laid down in the "Rituals" are fully complied with. Fortunately, for the peace of the guardians of these young ladies, abundance of official occupation is provided for their fair charges, by the constant recurrence of state ceremonies. Seventeen and eighteen are mischievous ages; and if this were not so it is probable that his Imperial Majesty would find the exercise of his ruling a hundred and twenty idle and pampered young women far more difficult than the more important task of governing an empire. At all the great religious festivals in the year the Empress, attended by bodies of her inferior rivals, plays a prominent part. She holds levees, at which the Court ladies attend, and pays visits to the wives of the chief officers of state. On the death of a minister she either goes herself to console with the widow, or sends one of the three junior wives of the first rank to represent her. She exercises jurisdiction over the Imperial concubines, and examines with care the work done by them in the year. On all state occasions, when the Empress is unable to be present, the three senior wives act as her deputies, and on her decease they play the part of chief mourners. To the lot of the wives of the second rank falls the duty of instructing the nine troops, into which the twenty-seven wives of the third rank and the eighty-one concubines are divided, in the virtues, language, deportment and work which are fitting for them. They attend on the Empress at all state funerals, and add loud wailings to her lamentations. They superintend the female servants of the palace, and they prepare the objects to be offered at the great sacrifices. In each and all of these various services the concubines play inferior parts. Their special duty is to assist the wives of the third rank in managing the servants, and in preparing for the religious services. Some of them also help the thirty-two eunuch tailors to make the clothes of the court, and others find employment in similar company as dressers to the Empress and junior wives. These and the numerous other duties expected of them are quite enough, if faithfully performed, to keep the hundred and twenty-one pairs of little hands busily engaged. The "Rituals" declare that there shall be no drones within the palace, and let us hope that her Majesty Ah-lu-to and her hundred and twenty rivals, who are now assembling round the boy-Emperor, will prove themselves as diligent as are said to have been the model ladies of days gone by. If to the performance of his public functions we add the duty of his becoming acquainted with all these fair daughters of Han, it is plainly impossible that the Emperor can pass his days in idleness; and down to the minutest detail the "Rituals" prescribe the part he is to play in all and every capacity, whether as king upon

his throne, as priest before the altar, or as paterfamilias in the midst of his domestic joys. And this illustrates the peculiar position which the Emperor of China occupies among the monarchs of the East. As a temporal sovereign he is obeyed, and as a spiritual ruler he is worshipped. In his double claim to supremacy he somewhat resembles the Kings of Hebrew history, and finds his approximate counterpart in modern times in the Pope of Rome. The sacredness of his person throws a religious halo around every action of his life. His meals are so arranged as to symbolize sacrificial feasts. When he partakes of vegetables he is invited to reflect on the work of the Chinese Adam; and when he tastes the six kinds of grain his thoughts are carried back to the first turner of the sod. Soft music is played to encourage his appetite, and the dishes are removed from table to the tune of fives and drums. The maxim of that "the king can do no wrong," takes rather the form, in China of "whatever the king does is holy, righteous, and pure," and hence many of the imperial doings, which would be frowned at in Europe, receive in China the sacred sanction of religion. To this circumstance we owe it that in the "Rituals" we find so many details of the private life of the Emperor and of the ladies of the palace. We learn that in every fifteen days the Emperor receives visits from representatives of each rank of wife and concubine. On each of the first nine days of the month one of the nine concubines selected from the eighty-one pay their respects to him; on the next three succeeding days three of the wives of the third rank have that honor; then follows one of the second rank; then one of each of the two superior grades; and at every full moon the Empress, and she alone, is his companion. During the last half of the month the order of visits is reversed, and in this way, in the course of about four months, the Emperor enjoys the society of every lady of his harem. If we wander from the ladies' apartments into the other quarters of the palace we find them swarming with those officials whose various callings and immense numbers go far to make up the barbaric splendor of Eastern courts—marshals, chamberlains, and lords-in-waiting are there in shoals, but we do not concern ourselves with those great gentlemen. Our object is to gain some insight into the every-day life in store for his Imperial Majesty Tung-chi, and the more domestic functionaries with whom he will be surrounded. We therefore give a wide berth to all wearers of high official buttons, and enter into conversation with the first good-natured looking *matre d'hôtel* that we meet. "He takes us into the buttery, and we are just in time to see his brother on duty—our guide tells us that there are altogether 152 of them—prepare the materials for the Emperor's dinner. Some are giving out the six kinds of grain which are to form the vegetable part of the repast; others are making hashes of the various sacrificial meats; the cellermen are pouring out the allotted quantity of half a dozen different kinds of wine; skillful hands are slicing the meats for the savory dishes, and are weighing out the hundred and twenty kinds of spices which are to season them; while others are preparing delicate morsels, such as the choice parts of a sucking-pig, or the fat of kidneys, to serve as a *bonne bouche* at the last. When all the covers have been duly laid out and prepared, they are carried into the kitchen, where 128 cooks stand ready to receive them. On fast-days—that is to say, when any great misfortune overtakes the country—the Emperor goes without this grand repast; and if he and his Court were to take a little more exercise, and to fast a little oftener than they do, it is possible that a reduction might be made in the staff of fifty-two doctors who at present reside within the palace walls. But, unfortunately, the idea of bodily exertion is abhorrent to the mind of every true Chinaman; the three score and two imperial harem men must often have cause to complain that "Their hawks are tired of perch and hood, Their weary greyhounds loth their food,"—unless, indeed, they cater for the market on their own account, a supposition to which the occasional activity observable in the neighborhood of the royal press—yes, some color—of hunting; which, before the Tartar habits of the founders of the dynasty had been subdued by contact with Chinese luxury, was the constant amusement of the Emperor and his Courts, has now, under the degenerate rule of their descendants, dwindled down to a very occasional battue, conducted in the most contemptible, luxurious, and unparagonable manner. But, though the hunters of modern times have little to do, there can be little doubt that the hands of the other caterers—100 wine-makers, 90 purple-catchers, 93 ice-men, 22 fishermen, 11 jewelers, and others—are seldom idle. It is also worthy of remark that, amid the vast population within the palace walls, we find no reference to a single priest of any sect, the Emperor himself excepted, and four praying women are deemed sufficient to gain forgiveness for the sins of the Court, and the favor of heaven for their Imperial Majesties and the Empire.

Inquiries people sometimes meet with little adventures which make them wink. A fellow who was "paying attention" to a country girl, stole up to the kitchen where she was at work the other morning, thinking to see what a kind of a housekeeper she was. He got interested as he stood behind a door all unobserved, watching the fair one at her work, and in the ardor of his observations he intruded his nose into the creek of the door. She innocently shut the door suddenly. He now wears a ring in his eye.