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SELECTED CHINESE STORIES OF THE
SONG AND MING DYNASTIES

II

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Chinese-English

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II



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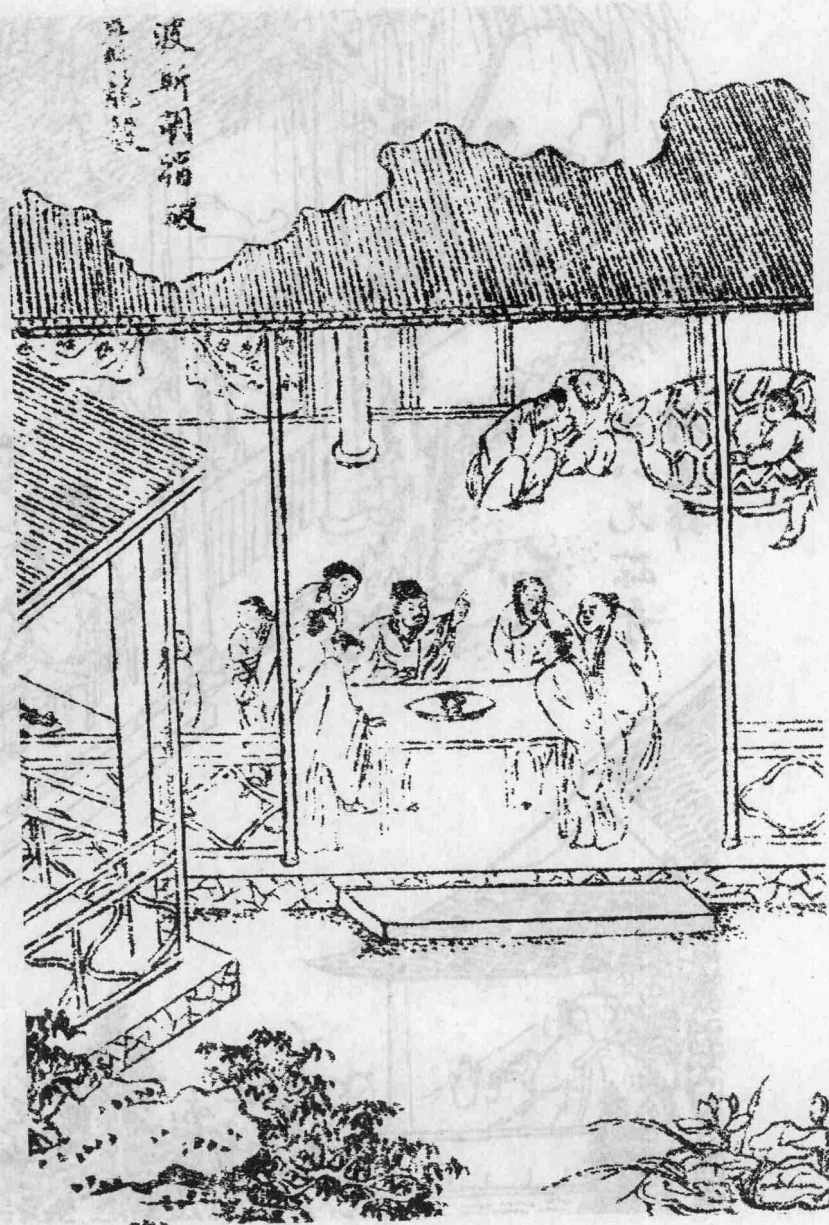
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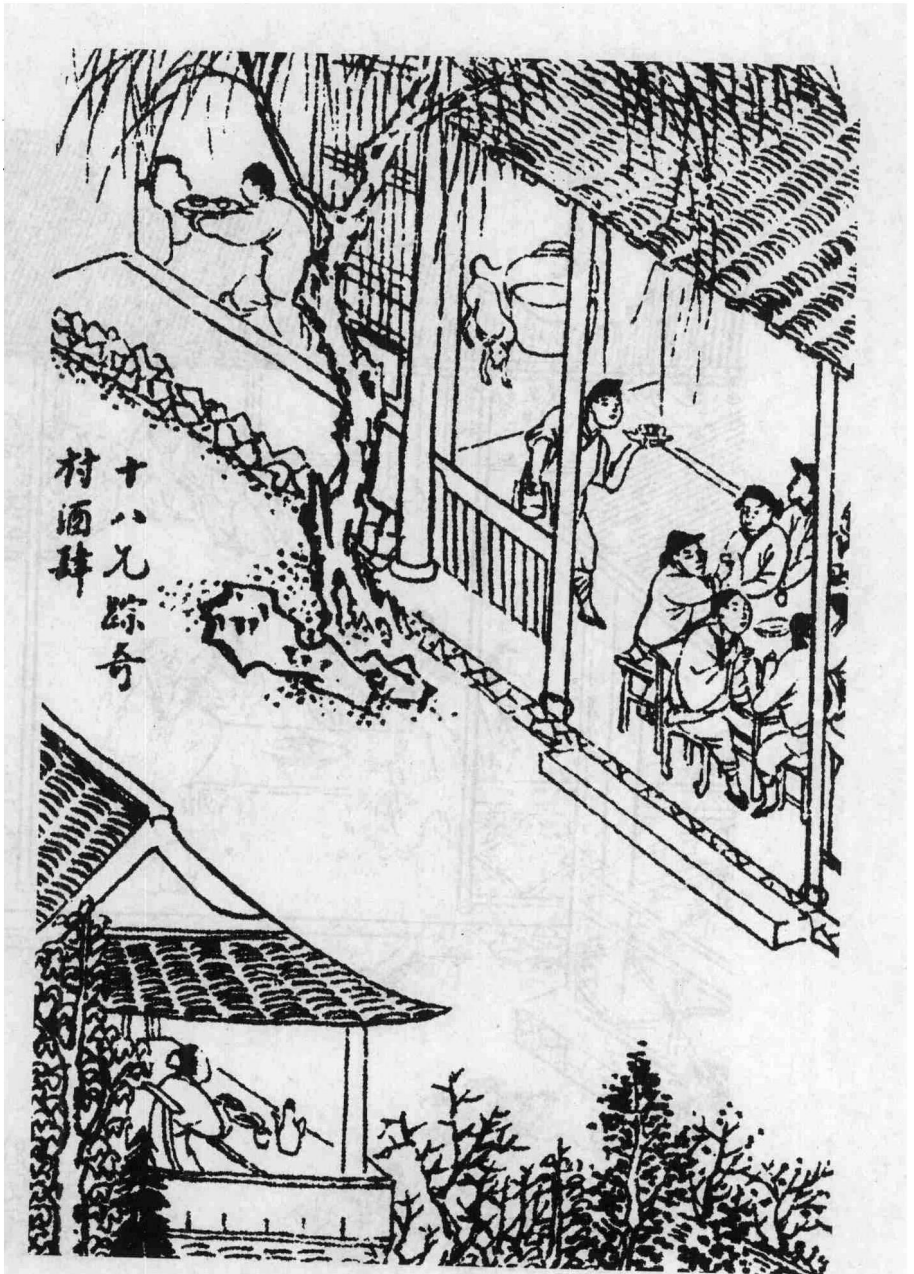
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Marriage by Proxy



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The Proud Scholar



转运汉遇巧洞庭红 波斯胡指破鼈龙壳
The Tangerines and the Tortoise Shell



十八兄踪奇
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A Prefectship Bought and Lost

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俠盜慣行三昧戲



神偷寄興一枝梅 俠盜慣行三昧戲
The Merry Adventures of Lazy Dragon

目 录

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| 卖油郎独占花魁 | 583 |
| 灌园叟晚逢仙女 | 693 |
| 钱秀才错占凤凰俦 | 767 |
| 卢太学诗酒傲王侯 | 839 |
| 转运汉遇巧洞庭红 波斯胡指破鼃龙壳 | 927 |
| 刘东山夸技顺城门 十八兄奇踪村酒肆 | 999 |
| 丹客半黍九还 富翁千金一笑 | 1031 |
| 钱多处白丁横带 运退时刺史当舫 | 1079 |
| 神偷寄兴一枝梅 侠盗惯行三昧戏 | 1119 |



CONTENTS

| | |
|--|------|
| The Oil Vendor and the Courtesan | 583 |
| The Old Gardener | 693 |
| Marriage by Proxy | 767 |
| The Proud Scholar | 839 |
| The Tangerines and the Tortoise Shell | 927 |
| The Story of a Braggart | 999 |
| The Alchemist and His Concubine | 1031 |
| A Prefectship Bought and Lost | 1079 |
| The Merry Adventures of Lazy Dragon | 1119 |
| <i>Notes</i> | 1203 |
| <i>About the Translator</i> | 1205 |



卖油郎独占花魁

THE OIL VENDOR AND
THE COURTESAN



年少争夸风月，场中波浪偏多。有钱无貌意难和，有貌无钱不可。

就是有钱有貌，还须着意揣摩。知情识趣俏哥哥，此道谁人赛我。

这首词名为《西江月》，是风月机关中最要之论。常言道：“妓爱俏，妈爱钞。”所以子弟行中，有了潘安般貌，邓通般钱，自然上和下睦，做得烟花寨内的大王，鸳鸯会上的主盟。然虽如此，还有个两字经儿，叫做帮衬。帮者，如鞋之有帮；衬者，如衣之有衬。但凡做小娘的，有一分所长，得人衬贴，就当十分。若有短处，曲意替他遮护，更兼低声下气，送暖偷寒，逢其所喜，避其所讳，以情度情，岂有不爱之理。这叫做帮衬。风月场中，只有会帮衬的最讨便宜，无貌而有貌，无钱而有钱。假如郑元和在卑田院做了乞儿，此时囊篋俱空，容颜非旧，李亚仙



*All young men like to boast of their adventures,
For there's no plain sailing in the sea of love;
Money without good looks will win no hearts,
Yet neither will looks without money prove enough;
And money and looks combined will still fall short
Without the wish to please and courtesy.
But a handsome youth who is considerate too
Will beat all rivals in the lists of love.*

This verse, written in the metre of "Moonlight on the Western River," gives us the art of pleasing women in a nutshell.

"The singsong girl likes good looks and the bawd likes money," says the proverb. So a handsome and wealthy young man should find both women agreeable and be able to reign supreme in the courtesans' quarter, coming off victorious in all amorous encounters.

Something more is needed, however, and that is consideration, which can no more be dispensed with than the uppers of a shoe or the lining of a jacket. A girl's charm can be increased tenfold and her shortcomings discounted by a considerate lover; and what woman can resist a soft-spoken man who showers her with delicate attentions and studies her likes and dislikes? This is what we mean by consideration.

In the tournaments of love the considerate lover will win the day, for consideration will serve him instead of good looks and riches.



于雪天遇之，便动了一个恻隐之心，将绣襦包裹，美食供养，与他做了夫妻。这岂是爱他之钱，恋他之貌？只为郑元和识趣知情，善于帮衬，所以亚仙心中舍他不得。你只看亚仙病中想马板肠汤吃，郑元和就把个五花马杀了，取肠煮汤奉之。只这一节上，亚仙如何不念其情！后来郑元和中了状元，李亚仙封为汴国夫人。莲花落打出万年策，卑田院只做了白玉堂。一床锦被遮盖，风月场中反为美谈。这是：

运退黄金失色，时来铁也生光。

话说大宋自太祖开基，太宗嗣位，历传真、仁、英、神、哲，共是七代帝王，都则偃武修文，民安国泰。到了徽宗道君皇帝，信任蔡京、高俅、杨戩、朱勔之徒，大兴苑囿，专务游乐，不以朝政为事。以致万民嗟怨，金虏乘之而起，把花锦般一个世界，弄得七零八落。直至二帝蒙尘，高宗泥马渡江，偏安一隅，天下分为南北，方得休息。其中数十年，百姓受了多少苦楚。正是：

甲马丛中立命，刀枪队里为家。

杀戮如同戏耍，抢夺便是生涯。

内中单表一人，乃汴梁城外安乐村居住，姓莘，名善，浑家阮氏。夫妻两口，开个六陈铺儿。虽则糗米为



Take the case of Zheng Yuanhe,¹ who lost his money and looks and became a beggar. When Li Yaxian met him in the snow she took pity on him, wrapped him in her embroidered gown, fed him on dainties and made him her husband, not for the sake of his money or his looks, but because Zheng was such an attentive young man that she could not bear to part with him. Consider how, when she was ill and wanted to drink horse-entrails soup, Zheng killed his best horse for her. One such incident is enough to win a girl's heart. When finally Zheng came first in the imperial examinations and she as his wife received a title, the beggar with his clapper became a counsellor at court, who left his wretched hovel to dwell in marble halls with silken coverlets; and their romance has been handed down through the ages.

When fortune frowns, gold sheds no light;

When fortune smiles, then iron looks bright.

The accession to the throne of the first emperor of Song was followed by seven reigns during which the people enjoyed peace and security. But after Emperor Hui Zong appointed evil ministers and gave all his time to pleasure, building parks and gardens instead of attending to affairs of state, there was great unrest among his subjects; and the Golden Tartars seized this opportunity to intrude, so that the fair and flower-like empire was all but destroyed. The emperor and his son were taken as captives to the north, and only when Prince Kang² crossed the Yangtze on a clay horse and established himself as Emperor Gao Zong in the south was peace restored. But during these decades the people suffered indescribable hardships.

Now in Anle Village outside Kaifeng, capital of the northern empire, lived a man called Xin Shan whose wife's maiden name was Ruan. They kept a grocery shop and made a comfortable living by