



THE
NODDING
MANDARIN,
A TRAGEDY IN CHINA
EDITED BY LEWIS F. DAY

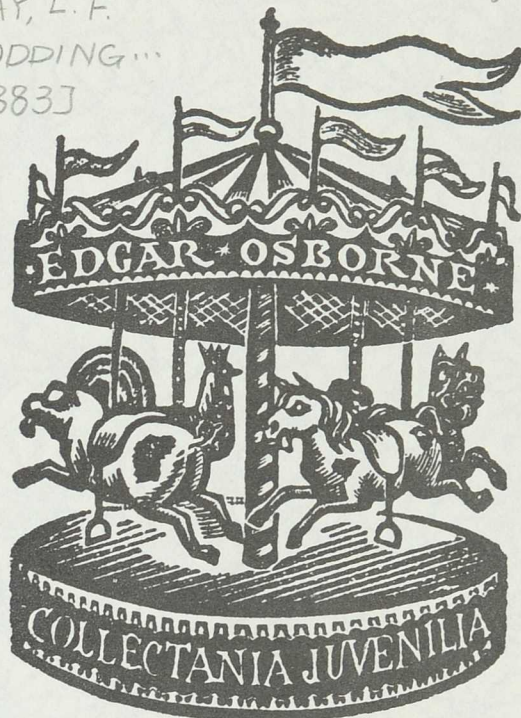


LONDON
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL & CO

MEND-ALL

(P)
DAY, L. F.
NODDING
[1883]

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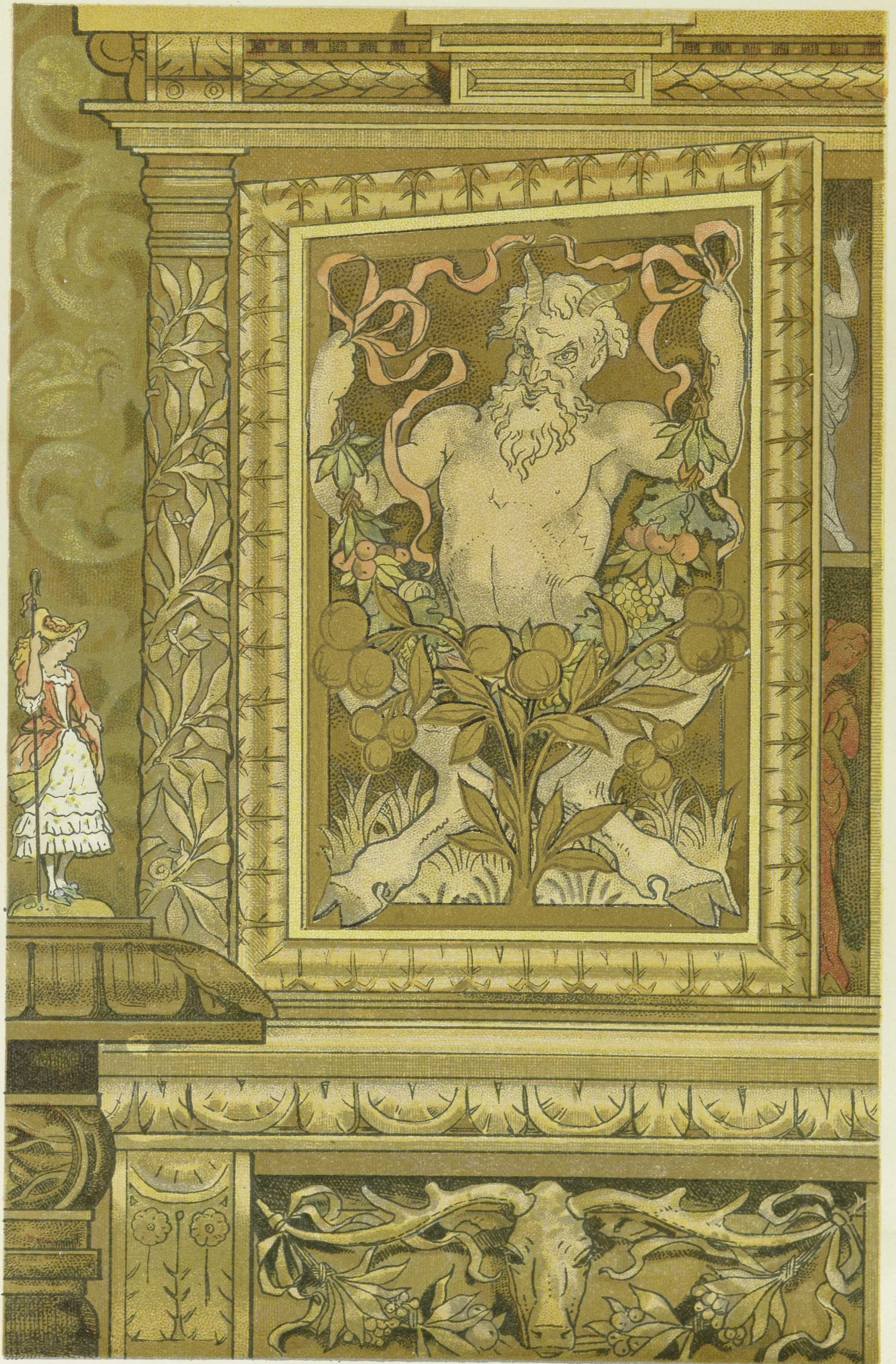
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THE
NODDING  ANDARIN

A

TRAGEDY

IN

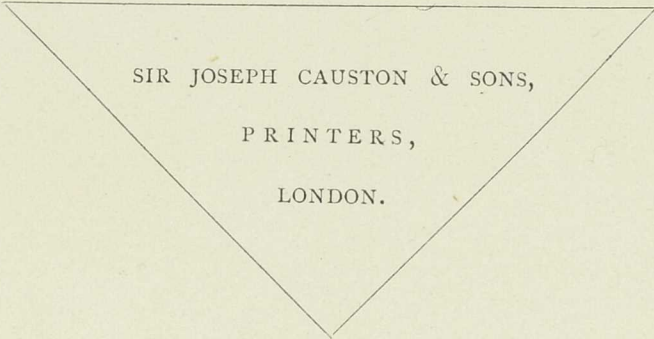
CHINA

EDITED BY LEWIS FOREMAN DAY,

AUTHOR OF "EVERY-DAY ART," "INSTANCES OF ACCESSORY ART," &c.

LONDON:

SIMPKIN, MARSHALL & Co., 4, STATIONERS' HALL COURT, E.C.



SIR JOSEPH CAUSTON & SONS,
PRINTERS,
LONDON.

THE NODDING MANDARIN,

A TRAGEDY IN CHINA.

Rich and stately was the room,
Brightly did the sunbeams fall,
Glancing gaily, like a smile,
On a cupboard quaint and tall.

There were carved the antlered deer,
Trees, and many a sylvan thing—
Ah, how long since that dry wood
Knew the quickening sap of spring!

Flowers and fruits, worm-eaten, dark,
Twined in dusty garlands ran,
And, as keeper of the whole,
Stood a laughing, goat-legged man.

Stood and watched the time go by,
Old years out, and new years in,
Looking forth upon the world
With a never-changing grin.

Sometimes, in the dead of night,
Would the cupboard crack and creak,
As if Goat-legs on his door
Meant to stretch himself and speak.

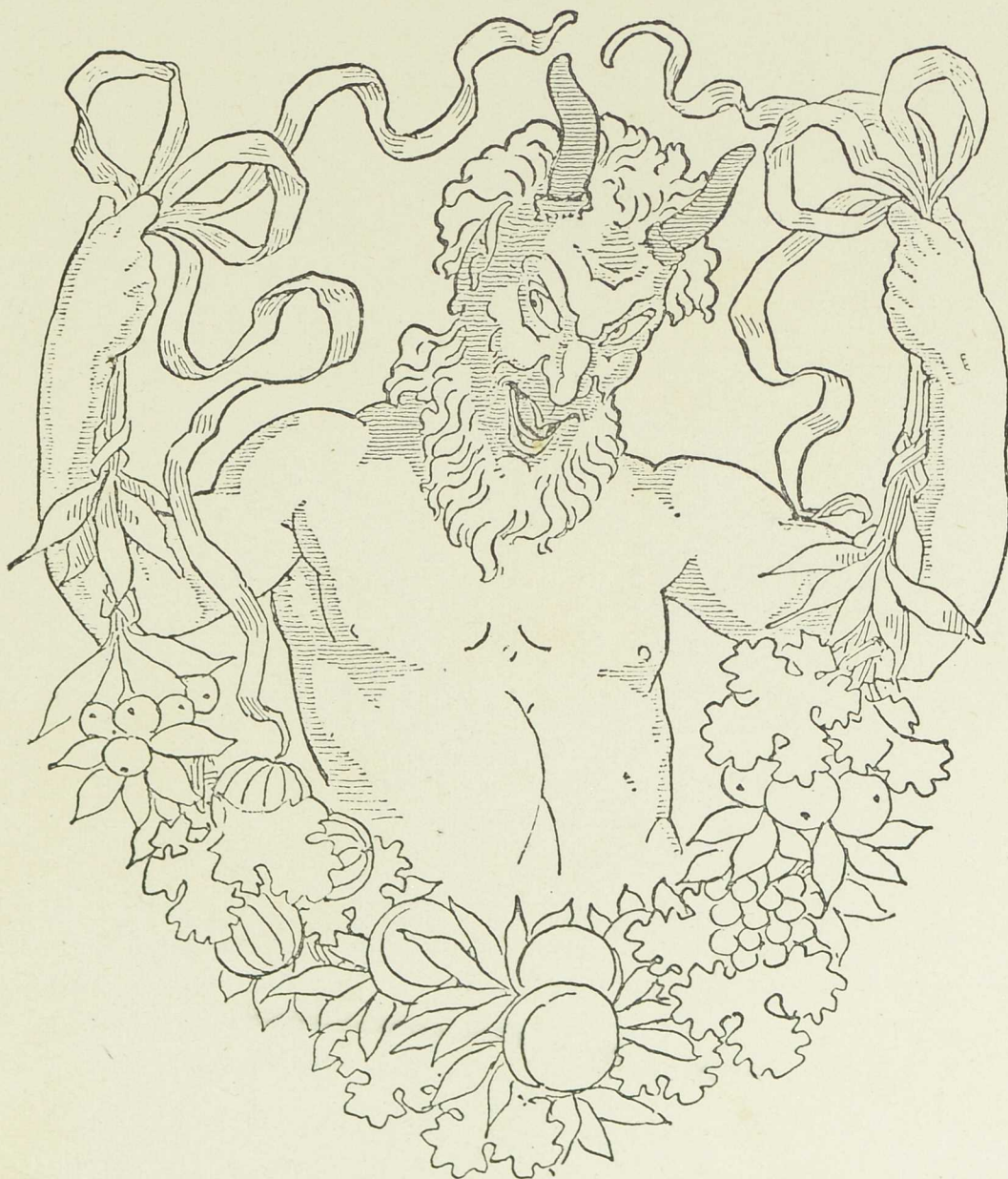
On a table, by the wall,
Were two figures, slim and small ;
A rosy little maiden, like a tiny village queen,
And a little boy, all black,
With brushes at his back,
Because he was a chimney-sweep (though really
he was clean).

They loved each other well,
And, as I have heard them tell,
They came, packed up together, in a box from
foreign parts ;
Both sweep and shepherdess
Were perfect, and no less,
The very finest Dresden, and the very truest
hearts.

But the dainty little pair
Were not living lonely there,
A quaint old China mandarin was sitting close
behind ;
He did not like the sweep,
But the girl he wished to keep ;
He said she was his granddaughter, and she must
always mind.

This mandarin was proud,
Because he sometimes bowed
With a slow and stately movement, which made
his tongue stick out,
So when anything was said
He would gravely bend his head,
To show that he agreed to it, without a moment's
doubt.

And alas! one day it chanced
That his friend old Goat-legs glanced



At the pretty little shepherdess, and fell in love
straightway.

So he sought her for his bride,
And the mandarin with pride
Made a bow by way of answer, though he nothing
deigned to say.

Then the shepherdess, dismayed,
Fell to sobbing, and she prayed,
“ Let us all stay here together, where we’ve lived
such happy lives ;
Do not bid me, I implore,
Dwell behind a heavy door,
And I cannot marry Goat-legs—he has got eleven
wives !”

Said the Chinaman, “ If true,
'Tis a happy thing for you
To be married to a man who has so got on in life.
He is better far, in truth,
Than some wild unsettled youth,
A shepherd, or a chimney-sweep, who could not
keep a wife.

“ Now let nothing more be said,
And let no more tears be shed,
I have nodded to old Goat-legs, and 'twill all be
very well ;
He shall have you if he likes,
When the clock out yonder strikes
This very night at midnight, it shall be your
wedding bell.”



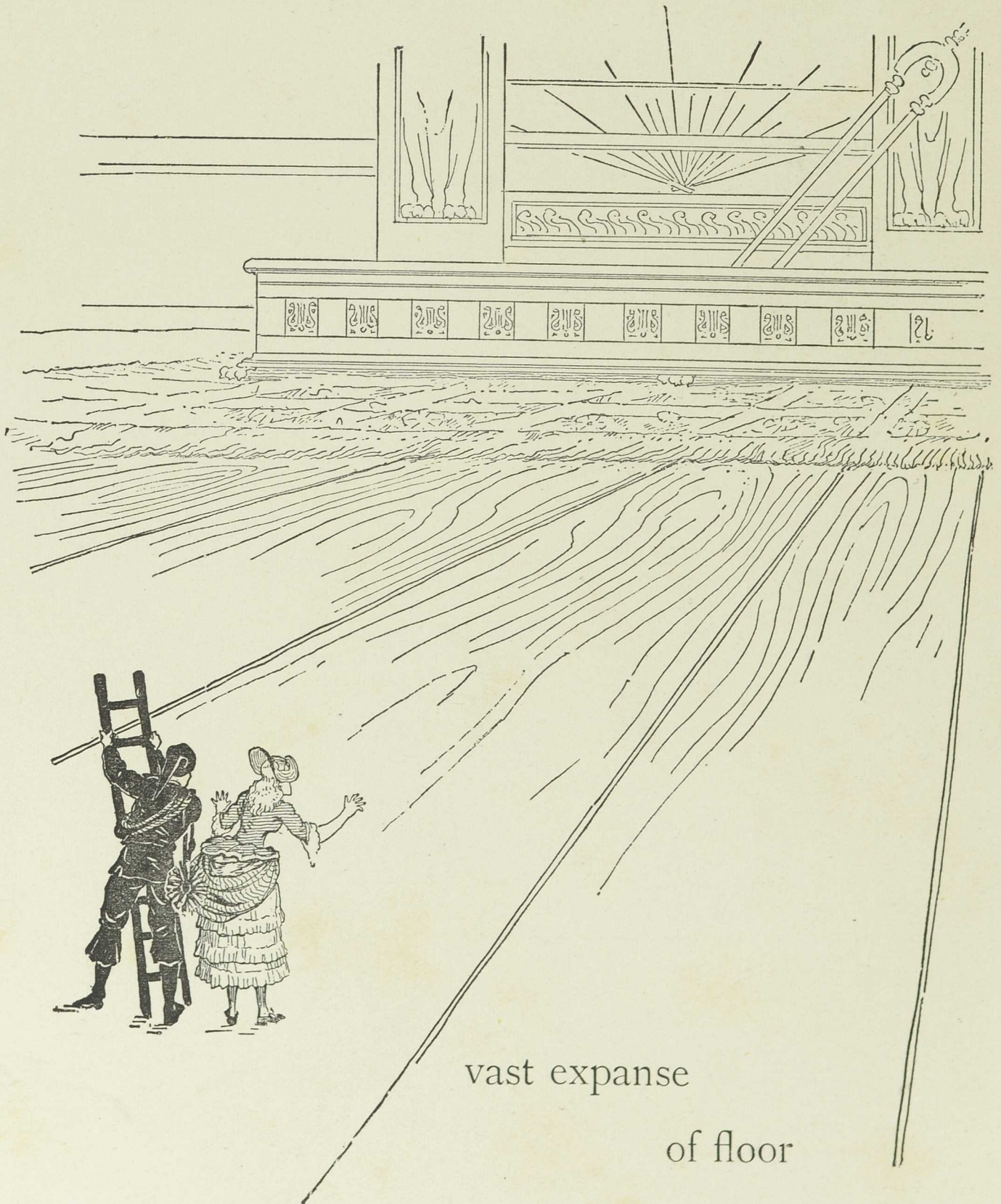
Then the hapless shepherdess
 Stood in terrible distress,
And, glancing at old Goat-legs, she shuddered
 with affright ;
 But the chimney-sweep drew near
 To her tiny porcelain ear,
And passionately whispered through the silence
 of the night :

“ Will you wait until he takes you,
 Shuts you up, perhaps, or breaks you ?
Will you listen to this Chinaman, who mocks you
 when you weep ?
Ah, no ! sweetheart, believe me,
Forget the tears that grieve me,



And fly to lands untrodden with your faithful
 chimney-sweep !”

So he brought his little ladder,
Though the shepherdess looked sadder,
And ever sadder yet at the thought of toils in store ;
Still he helped her till she found
She had lighted safe and sound,
With the chimney-sweep beside her, on a



vast expanse
of floor





To soothe the little maiden's fears
Her lover strove ;
He led the way across the floor,
And to the stove.
“ We'll climb up there,” he boldly said,
“ And ne'er come back.”
“ But O, how black !” said the shepherdess,
“ Oh, how black !”

Up through the chimney did the pair
Of pigmies creep,
Little by little, for the way
Was very steep.
“ Look up,” the boy exclaimed, “ and see
A tiny star.”
“ But O, how far !” said the shepherdess,
“ O, how far !”

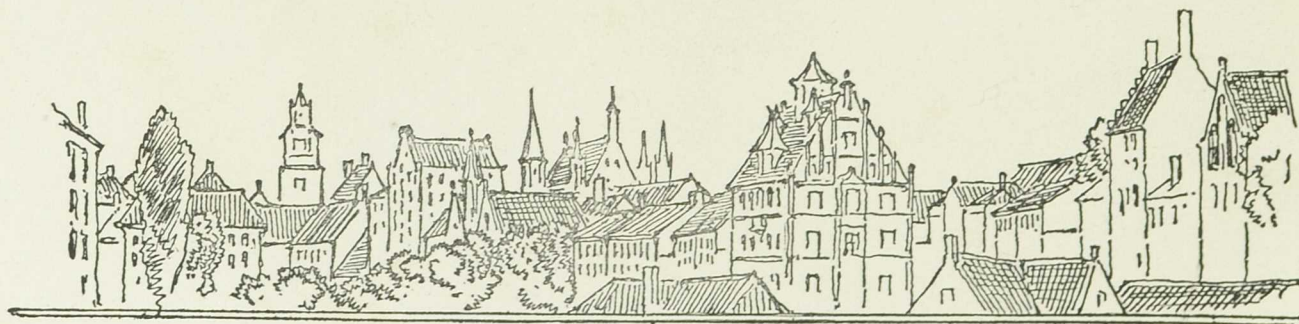
“ Take courage,” cried the chimney-sweep,
“ And onward go,
For we are very near the top,
And far below
We've left old Goat-legs with his grin
And cloven hoof,
Here is the roof at last. Sweetheart,
Here is the roof !”



And stretching far, for miles and miles,
The busy town lay there,
Miles upon miles of steep red tiles
Of street, and lane, and square.

The little shepherdess looked round,
And held her breath for awe,
Her porcelain heart was beating fast,
She trembled when she saw

The stars of the unknown paths above,
The lamps of the paths below,
They swam before her dazzled eyes,
And her tears began to flow.





“ I do not like your world,” she cried,
“ I came because you would ;
Now take me back to my table-top,
Where I have always stood !”

She kissed her little chimney-sweep
There on the chimney stack,
“ Your world is much too big,” she wept,
“ O take—O take me back !”

So he yielded to her fears,
To her kisses and her tears,
(Thus men have ever done throughout the years.)

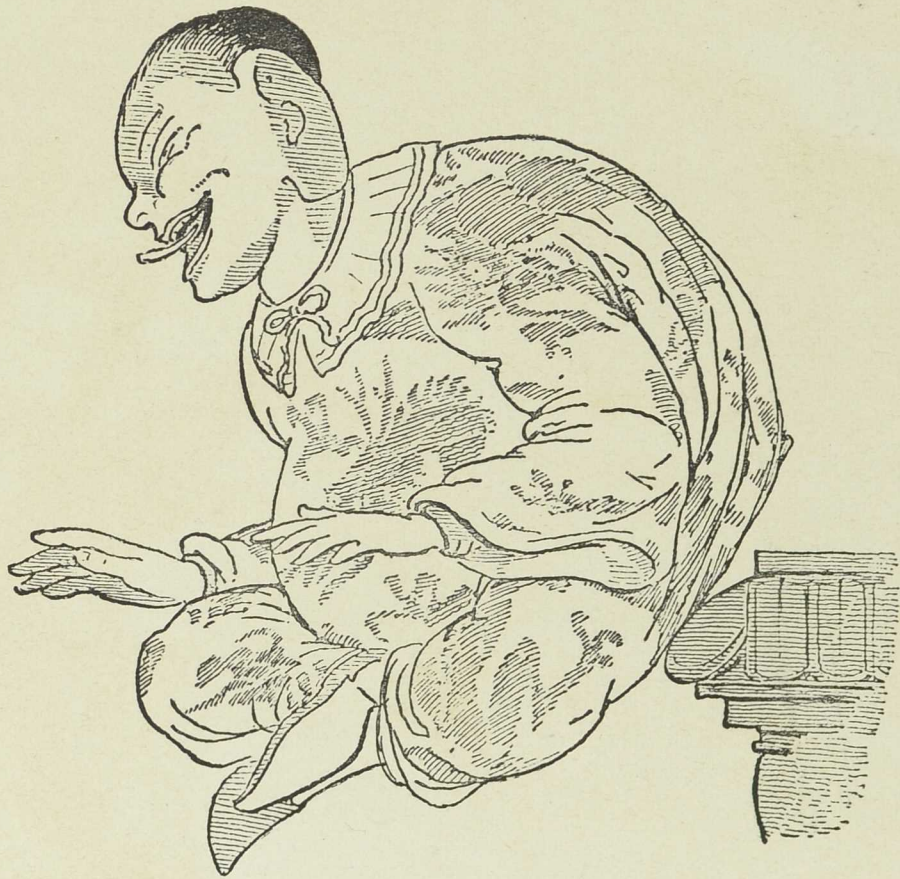
Down the gloomy way they went,
All their labour vainly spent,
Mournful and mute, upon their thoughts intent.

When again they reached the room,
All was silent as the tomb,
Yet, half-afraid, they lingered in the gloom.

“ Do not hurry,” said the sweep,
“ Down the fender we will creep—
But stop a moment first, and let us peep.”

Little figures slim and light,
Little faces pink and white,
(Faces eager with affright)
Behind them, shadows of the dusky night ;

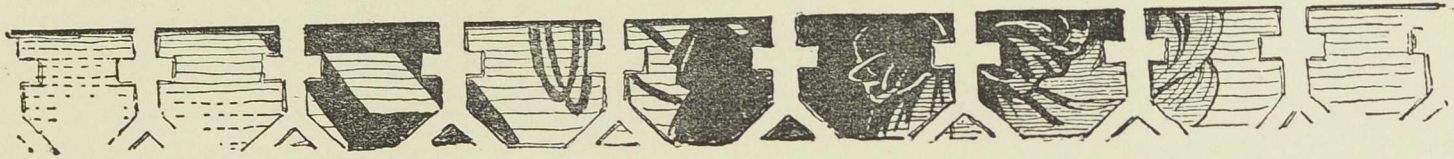
So they paused, and peeped with care—
Ah ! the Chinaman lay there !—
He fell, as he pursued the flying pair.



Fallen, shattered, there lay he,
Broken into pieces three,
His legs, his helpless back—a sight to see.

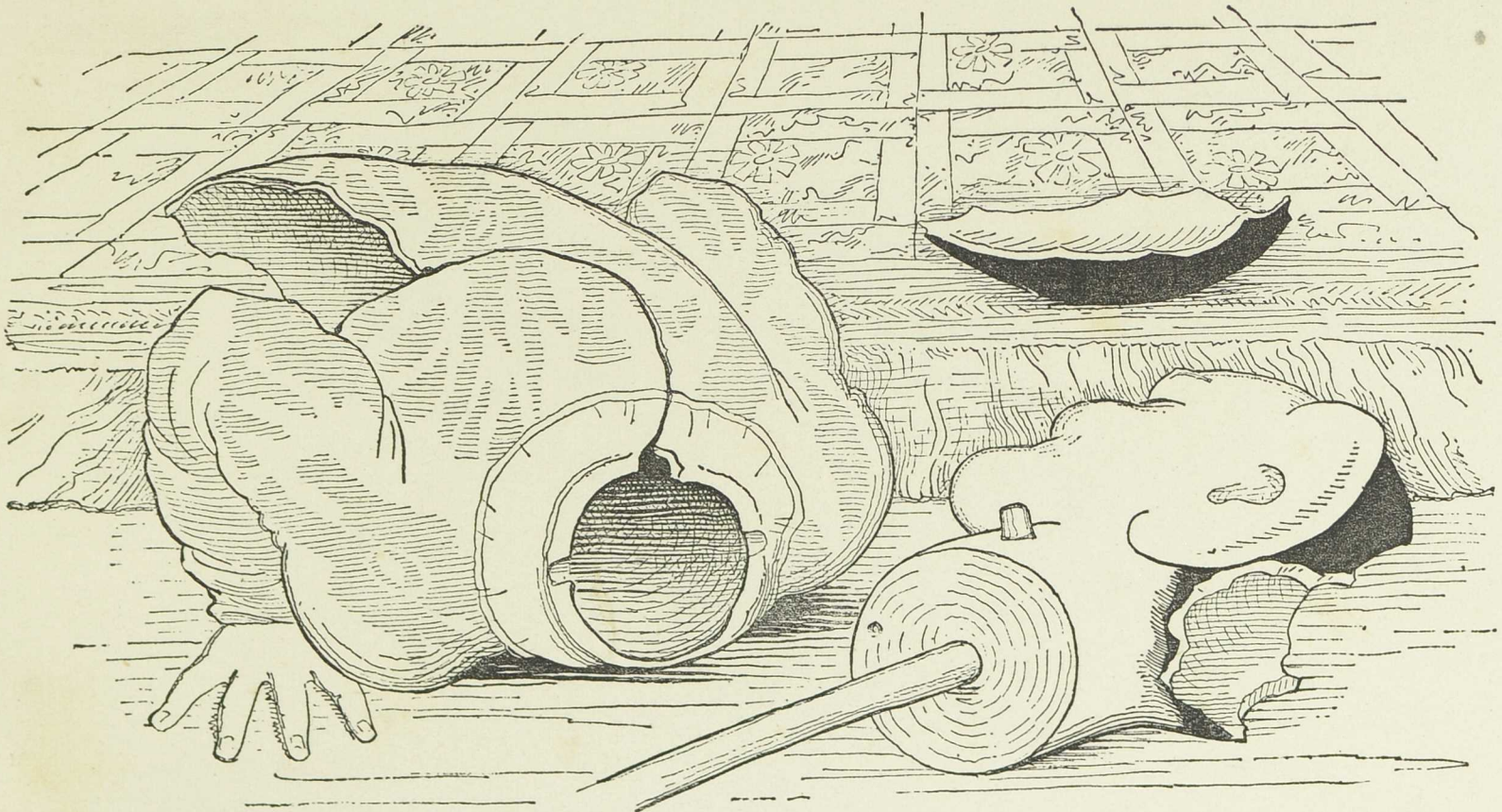
“ He is nothing now to dread,—
Look ! ” the little lover said,
“ There in the corner lies his silly head ! ”



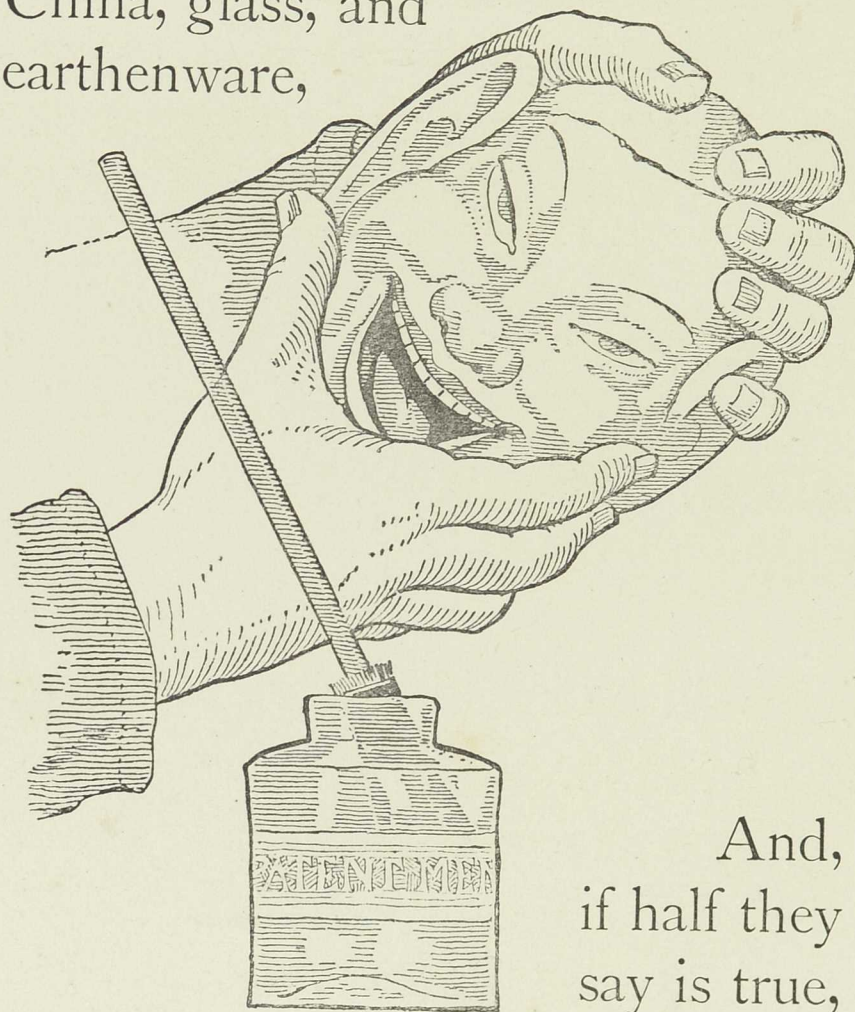


The little maiden wept afresh,
And knelt beside him, crying,
“’Tis all my fault that on the floor
In pieces he is lying.

“Ah! would he could forgive me now,
And nod his head for token—
He said he was my grandpapa,
And he is broken—broken!”



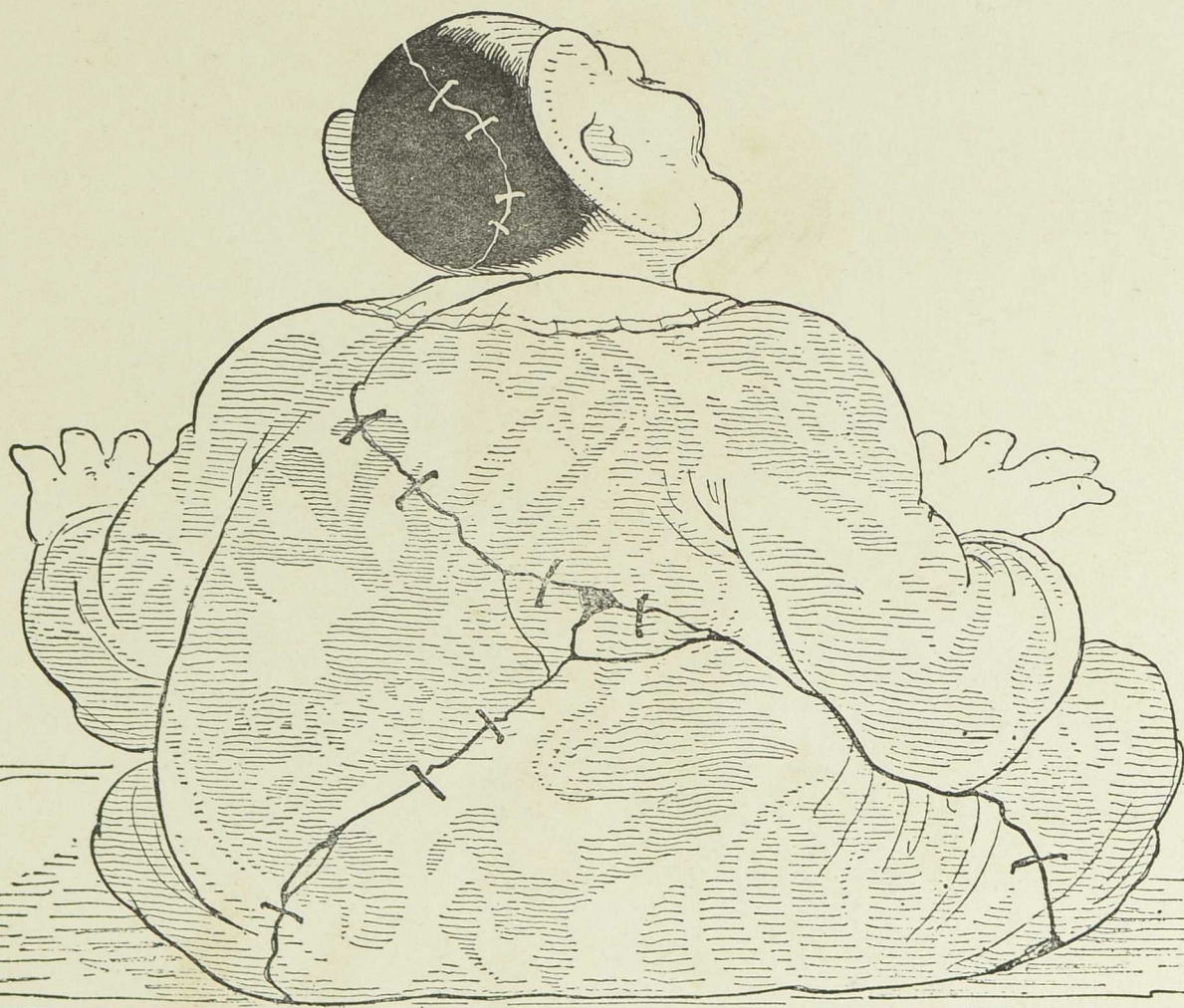
“Dearest,” said the chimney-sweep,
“This is nothing—do not weep.
Patent Mend-All will repair
China, glass, and
earthenware,



And,
if half they
say is true,
Make them twice as good as new.
This invaluable friend
All the breakages will mend,
That the human race bemoans—
Not excepting hearts and bones.
Therefore now your sobbing hush—
They'll apply it with a brush,
And he'll be himself once more—
Quite as nasty as before.
Though I fancy that his head
Must, perhaps, be riveted.”



As he said, so it was done—
Soon the melancholy wreck
Joined together with cement,
And a rivet in his neck,
Stood upon the table-top,
As he stood in former time,
And the tiny, truant pair
Back again contrived to climb.
Then the gentle shepherdess
Begged of him with might and main,
“Do not bid me go away!
Do not—do not nod again!”



From the dusky cupboard door,
Cried old Goat-legs, waxing hot,
“Chinaman, enough of this!
Shall I have the girl

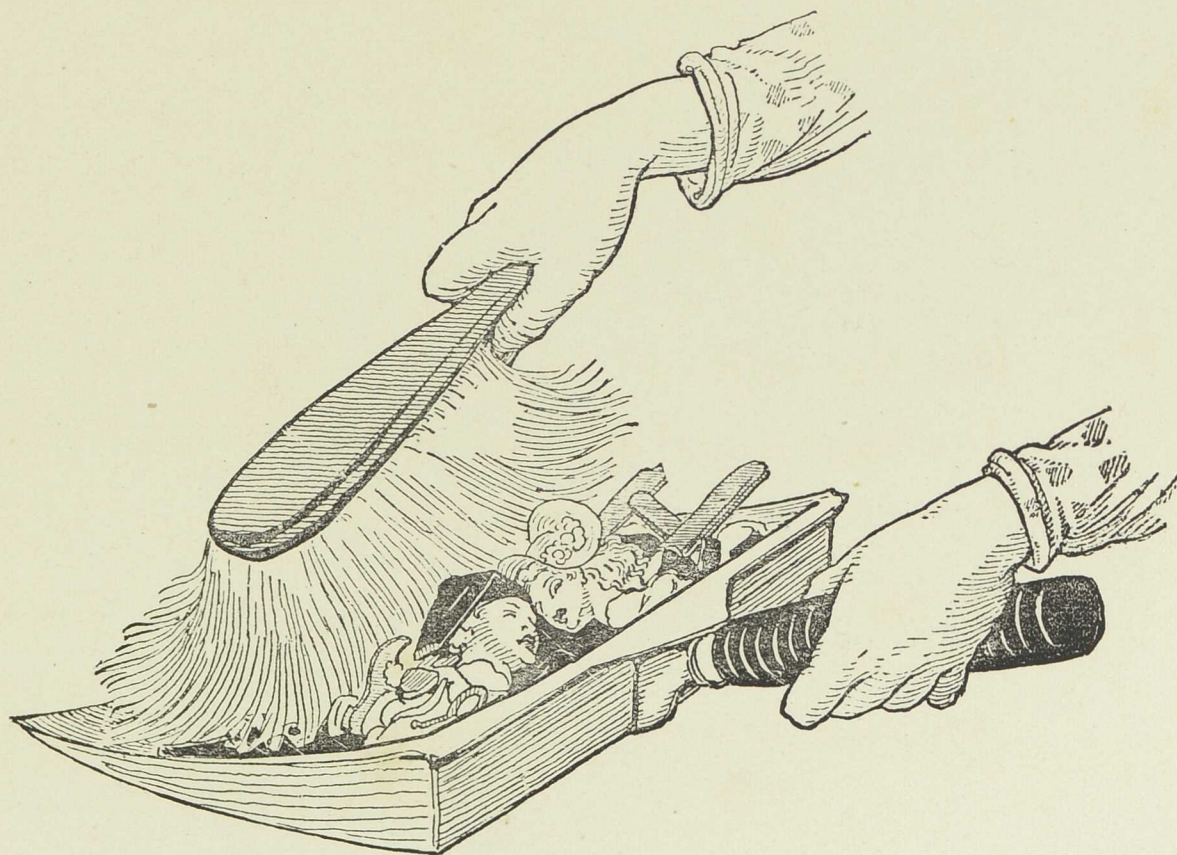


or not?”

But the stiff old mandarin
Took no heed of him at all,
Seemed as if he had not heard
Any voices plead or call.
Still he sat, he never stirred,
And he answered not a word,
not a word.

When he gave consent before,
He expressed it with a bow,
Since he could not bend his head,
He would yield in nothing now,
For he would not have it said
That his neck was riveted—
Riveted!

So these happy porcelain folk
Lived rejoicing
till
they
broke—



Till
they
broke!

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