

## THE ROMANCES OF LOUISE JORDAN MILN.\*

China seems to be in the air just now, and it would seem appropriate, for the benefit of those who are interested in her political disturbances, or for those who have the entrancing prospect of visiting that ancient territory, that we should bring under our reader's notice the delightful Chinese romances of Mrs. Miln.

## MR. WU.

No doubt many are already familiar with her works, those who are not have many a treat in store. Some few years back London was fascinated by the drama "Mr. Wu" which was adapted from the novel of the same title from her pen—a novel which thrilled with its blended beauty, pathos, and horror.

## MR. AND MRS. SEN.

"Mr. and Mrs. Sen" deals with the problem of marriage between the white and yellow races, and the most recent, "Reuben and Ivy Sen" the story of their two children, one with Western lineaments and a Chinese soul and the other outwardly Chinese but Western in heart and soul, discusses a very interesting problem!

## A FEAST OF LANTERNS.

"A Feast of Lanterns," as its title suggests, gives, incidentally, a delightful description of Eastern festivities—fanciful, graceful, subtle, pagan.

## IN A SHANTUNG GARDEN.

One of the most charming of the group is, in our opinion, "In a Shantung Garden," where again the barrier between East and West is brought poignantly before the reader in the love of Tom Drew and Yo-Ya-ling.

Tom Drew, a young American, had befriended young Yo Ki at Harvard, and the latter had needed befriending pretty badly. Then came the Great War, and Tom did his bit and thought no more of Yo Ki. On its conclusion he heard with open disgust his father's amazing announcement that he was to go to China on business for a year or two.

Tom thought several "damns," but it recalled to him no thought of Yo Ki, who unknown to him had died in New York the first year of the war. In his spare time Tom hunted for butterflies. Shantung is the home of these beautiful creatures, and delightful indeed is the author's description of them.

There was no doubt about its genuineness. "Wings of gossamer, rose and silver lined, gold-flecked black head. Every lovely detail! They kept it up for two hours—Drew and the cherry-coloured."

The graphic description of the Shantung garden where he finally finds himself holds one enthralled.

Drew saw the gleam of the low building's roofs of bright green tiles, and sensed that he was looking upon a palace of importance and distinction. A bird was singing lustily up in a loquat tree, horses and camels and donkeys drowsed or champed in the stables' yard.

"The butterfly eluded, the man pursued."

The girl who sat sewing under a great low-branching mang-tao tree saw Drew long before he saw her. In good English she exhorted him to patience in his pursuit, and "however you got in here, you are very welcome Mr. Drew."

To put a long story in a few words, he had accidentally stumbled on the dead Yo Ki's sister, who had immediately recognised him from photos found in the boy's belongings. The girl herself had received a Western education, and belonged to a progressive, though very ancient family.

They immediately, in spite of prejudices, received Tom with overpowering gratitude, and showered attention upon him.

"They held him fast—stuck tight as a fly in a saucer of treacle with their gratitude. They brought him cushions and thrust him down upon them.

The old grandmother tried to remove his dust thick shoes that his weary feet might be rested and soothed—and he feared bathed. And when old lady Yo knelt down and fed him with tit-bits with one of her hands, caressing his coat with her other, Tom Drew, as he afterwards wrote to his mother, pretty nearly died."

So it came to pass that Drew was admitted to the inner circle of one of the most ancient and exclusive families in China. His kindness to their dead son, received in return limitless devotion.

His friendship with the young Chinese girl was unrestricted, unchaperoned, and love grew up almost imperceptibly.

Many are the graceful and appealing episodes which led up to their love.

Ya-ling's pathetic admiration of Drew. Her learning to play the air "Yankee Doodle" that he so often whistled.

"No marching tune. It was a lullaby—a tender, brooding, soothing thing, a girl-mother might croon to her first baby as Ya-ling played it now."

"What is it called," she asks Tom.

"Yan Kee Dude Lee," she repeated after him.

Then, as after long weeks of romantic meetings, innocent friendship grew into passion, came the knowledge and certainty that they could never be more to each other—the barrier between East and West loomed.

"They stood and looked so long—tremulous but brave: the man and woman who loved and longed."

Yo-Ya-ling would not let a tear come till she had seen the gate close. Then she hid her face in her sleeve.

In mid-ocean Tom Drew heard a table lute, as clearly as he had heard it in the garden.

Some one was playing on it, softly sweetly "Yan Kee Dude Lee."

Mrs. Miln will convince the reader that she knows her China through and through.

H. H.

## COMING EVENTS.

November 11th.—Armistice Day.

November 13th.—Professional Union of Trained Nurses. Concert arranged by Mr. Lomax Earp. Tickets 5s., 3s. 6d., 2s., 1s. 194, Queen's Gate, S.W. 7.45 p.m.

November 14th.—National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland. Meeting of Grand Council, 431, Oxford Street, London, W.1. 3 p.m.

November 20th.—General Nursing Council for England and Wales. Meeting, 20, Portland Place, London, W. 2.30 p.m.

November 20th and 21st.—Nurses' Missionary League. Sale of Work. 135, Ebury Street, London, S.W.1. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

November 26th.—Trained Nurses' Annuity Fund. Sale of Work. 194, Queen's Gate, S.W. 12 noon.

November 30th.—Nurses' Missionary League. Quiet Day. Conductor, The Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Kingston. Chapel of the Ascension, Bayswater Road, W. 10.30 a.m.—12.30 p.m. 3 p.m.—5 p.m.

R.B.N.A. "CLUB CALENDAR" FOR NOVEMBER.

For Royal British Nurses Association Club Calendar see Advertisement Supplement, page 1.

\* Hodder and Stoughton.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)