Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society

<http://journals.cambridge.org/JRA>

Additional services for *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*:

Email alerts: [Click here](#)

Subscriptions: [Click here](#)

Commercial reprints: [Click here](#)

Terms of use : [Click here](#)

Art. XX.—The Late Appearance of Romances and Novels in the Literature of China; with the History of the Great Archer, Yang Yû-chî

Legge

Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society / Volume 25 / Issue 04 / October 1893, pp 799 - 822

DOI: 10.1017/S0035869X00022577, Published online: 15 March 2011

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0035869X00022577

How to cite this article:

Legge (1893). Art. XX.—The Late Appearance of Romances and Novels in the Literature of China; with the History of the Great Archer, Yang Yû-chî. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 25, pp 799-822 doi:10.1017/S0035869X00022577

Request Permissions : [Click here](#)

ART. XX.—*The Late Appearance of Romances and Novels in the Literature of China; with the History of the Great Archer, Yang Yü-chi.* By Professor LEGGIE.

It is well known that, as Mr. Wylie has said, "Works of Fiction *par excellence* are not admitted to form a part of the Chinese National Literature."¹ We look in vain for such books in the Catalogue of the Imperial Library. In the Supplements to the Ch'un Ch'ü of Confucius, especially in that of Tso Ch'ü-ming,² we find many narratives full of stirring adventure, which have secured for him the title of "The Froissart of China." But his Work belongs to the department of history, and the finest passages in it owe their interest to the ability of the author, whom the late Stanislas Julien used to denominate, in his letters to me, "Un grand écrivain." In the works of Lieh-tsze, who could hardly be later than Tso Ch'ü-ming,³ and of Chwang-tsze,⁴ we have a good deal of Tâoist mythology and speculation; and, later on, Han Fei,⁵ Hwai-nan Tsze,⁶ Han Ying,⁷ Liü Hsiang,⁸ and others supply us with a multitude of incidents and anecdotes, with now and then an apologue, employed to point the moral of some classical passage or important statement of the authoritative writings of the Schools to which they severally belonged. In the

¹ Notes on Chinese Literature, p. 161.

² Opinions differ as to the personality, the date, and even the name of Tso-shih. See what I have written on these points in the prolegomena to the Chinese Classics, vol. v. ch. i. sect. iv. It is well established that his work made its appearance very early in the Han dynasty (B.C. 206).

³ Mayers describes Lieh-Tsze as "a metaphysician whose period is assigned to the age immediately succeeding that of Confucius."

⁴ Of the fourth century B.C. See my Introduction to the Texts of Taoism, Sacred Books of the East, vol. xxxix. p. 5.

⁵ Died by his own hand in B.C. 236.

⁶ Or Liü An, King of Hwai-nan: also died by his own hand in B.C. 123.

⁷ Of the second century B.C.

⁸ Of the first century B.C.

Lî Sáo of Ch'ü Yü'an,¹ and other pieces of composition, all poetical, classed with it under the name of "The Elegies of Ch'ü," we have more of the mythological and imaginative element, but still nothing that can be styled a novel or a romance. To find this, we have to come down to the Yüan or Mongol dynasty of our thirteenth century; so late was the literature of China in blossoming into this species of composition.

During the five centuries occupied by the Ch'in and Han dynasties there occurred the fires of Ch'in, which, no doubt, led to the loss of much of the ancient literature; and then ensued the researches of the government and scholars to recover and expound what of it could still be gathered up. In the first of our Christian centuries Buddhism was introduced into the country, and claimed possession of men's minds, along with the reveries of T'aoism, and the pure and calm rationalism of the *Literati* who had by this time adopted Confucius as their representative and hero.

Division and strife, political as well as literary, prevailed through our third, fourth, fifth and sixth centuries, amid a multitude of small and brief dynasties, some native and some of foreign origin, till we come to the great dynasty of T'ang, which dates from A.D. 618, and lasted for three centuries. It was a period of incessant contention between the Three Doctrines. Several of its emperors were strong and able men, having their sympathies very much with Buddhism, the progress of which however, was resisted by scholars and officers of great eminence. Early in the dynasty there was the historiographer Fû Yi, a resolute opponent of the Buddhistic system.² Later on there was Han Yü,³ in the

¹ Of the fourth century B.C. He drowned himself on the fifth day of the fifth moon and his death is still commemorated on that day and month of every year.

² 傅奕, Fû Yi had been in office under the Sui dynasty, and was made grand historiographer by the founder of the T'ang. He died in A.D. 639.

³ 韓愈, styled T'üi-chih (退之), and known by his local name of Ch'ang-lî (昌黎), A.D. 768-824. He was canonized as Han Wên Kung (韓文公), "Han, Duke of Literature."

eighth and ninth centuries, canonized as Han Kung, or "Duke of Literature." Mayers describes him as "foremost among the statesmen, poets, and philosophers of the dynasty, and one of the most venerated names in Chinese Literature." His essay against the relic-worship of Buddhism and the honours with which a bone of Buddha was received from the West, and admitted to the imperial palace, is still universally read,—the most celebrated State-paper and polemical diatribe in the world. Buddhism was not without its able defenders; and among them was a contemporary of Han Yü, called Liü Tsung-yüan,¹ a devoted Buddhist, a scholar also and a statesman like Han, and hardly inferior to him as an administrator and philosopher. They were both also celebrated as poets, and indeed poetry was cultivated throughout the dynasty more than it had been before. The rules that to this day are observed as to the length of the line, with the arrangement of the tones and of the cæsural pause, were first made in this dynasty. The names of Lî T'ai-po² and Tú Fû³ stand out conspicuous among a host of other celebrated poetical writers, though neither then, nor before or after, has China given birth to any Epic poem, to be regarded as a romance in metre. Tâoism was also in vigour under the T'ang dynasty; and in the year 748⁴ the emperor Hsüan confirmed the old Chang family in the headship of it with the title of *T'ien Shih*, or "Heavenly Master." The hostility between Tâoism and Buddhism came to a head during the short reign of Wû Tsung, and an edict was issued ordering the demolition of Buddhist monasteries and convents, and that monks

¹ 柳宗元, styled Tszr-hâu (子厚), and known also as Liü Liü-châu (柳柳州), from his banishment at a time of political disgrace to the charge of Liü-châu district.

² 李白, and 李太白, with the local designation of Ch'ing-lien (青蓮); A.D. 699-762.

³ 杜甫, designated Tsze-mei (子美); with the local designation of Tú-ling (杜陵).

⁴ A.D. 841-846.

and nuns should all return to the ways of common life. The blow was a heavy one, but Wú Tsung's reign soon came to an end, and the wounds of the Buddhist state began to be bound up by his successor.¹

Within fifty years of the end of the T'ang dynasty, there arose that of Sung. The two together may be called a long Augustan period of Chinese literature. The Sung dynasty, extends from A.D. 960 to 1278, rather more than three centuries; and no nation can boast of a greater number of distinguished writers and thinkers than it exhibits.

In the eleventh century there lived the two brothers Ch'äng,² with whom there began a great revival of the Confucian learning and philosophy. To the same century, and the early part of the twelfth, belonged the family of the Sûs,³ and also Sze-ma Kwang,⁴ a high minister and great historian. Above all, the twelfth century was made illustrious by the labours of Chû Hsî,⁵ the critic and commentator of the ancient classics, developing the ethical teaching of Confucius and Mencius, and attempting, though vainly, to carry a torch of metaphysical speculation into

¹ See my "Christianity in China," pp. 48, 49.

² Ch'äng Hào (程顥) styled Po-shun (伯淳), and also Ming-tào (明道), A.D. 1032-1085; and Ch'äng Î (程頤) styled Ch'äng-shû (正叔), and also Ich'wan (伊川), A.D. 1033-1107.

³ The father Sû Hsün (蘇洵), styled Ming-yun (明允), and also Láo-ch'wan (老泉), 1009-1066, with his two sons, Sû Shih (蘇軾), styled Tsze-chan (子瞻), and Tung-p'o (東坡), 1036-1101; and Sû Chên (蘇轍), styled Tsze Yu (子由), and Ying-pin (穎濱), 1039-1112.

⁴ 司馬光, styled Chün-shih 君實, and also Sû-shûi (涑水), 1009-1086.

⁵ 朱熹, styled Yüan-hui (元晦), Chung-hûi (仲晦), and Hûi-an (晦菴), with several other literary designations or pseudonyms, and canonized as Wán L'î (文理), "The highly Cultured," 1130-1200.

all the great problems of human thought. Whatever he wrote possessed a wonderful charm and fascination of style. The scholars of his day looked up to him as their oracle, and his views have ever since been the standard of orthodoxy at the competitive examinations which belong to their country.

In all the succession of dynasties which I have thus imperfectly sketched, amid the varied productions of their scholars, abounding in interesting subjects of thought and finished elegance of style, which can hardly be paralleled in other literatures, we do not meet with any romance or novel properly so called.

The rise of the Yüan, or Mongol dynasty, took place soon after the middle of our thirteenth century, and it was signalized by the appearance of what the Chinese acknowledge to be the first and best of their romanced histories. The name of the book is *San Kwo Chih Yen I*, that is, "The Expanded Narrative of the History of the Three Kingdoms." It relates vividly and romantically the closing events of the famous Han dynasty, embracing rather less than a century, from A.D. 198 to the beginning of the Tsin dynasty in 265. Foreign students generally suppose that we have in it the history of the period, and not such a history romanced. Even writers, with such a scholarly reputation as the late Dr. S. Wells Williams, ascribe it to Ch'än Shâu,² an author of our fourth century. He wrote the dynastic history of "The Three Kingdoms," which is not a bad history of its kind, but in no way superior to several others. If all the dynastic histories of China came within an appreciable distance of the "Expansion" of Ch'än's volumes, no other country would have a record of its heroes and their achievements comparable to it for genius and attractiveness.

¹ 三國志演義.

² 陳壽. See Williams' "Middle Kingdom," revised edition, vol. i. p. 677.

That expansion was executed by a Lo Kwan-chung,¹ of the Yüan dynasty; but beyond his name, as recorded by Mr. Wylie, I have not been able to discover any particulars about him. It is enough for his fame to be recognized as the writer of the finest historical romance of which literature can boast. Certainly the pages of no other have wiled from me at different times the sleep of so many nights. His example has led others to attempt to romance all the most important epochs of their history, but his work still remains "superior and alone." No other has thus far been made, either "similar or second" to it.

The short occupancy of the throne of China by the descendants of Jenghis² deserves a fuller study than it has yet received from European Sinologues.

We owe to the Yüan dynasty not only the historical romance, but also the purely ideal novel, and a great impetus to dramatic writing, the beginnings of which have been traced up to the T'ang era, and which had been cultivated by scholars of the Tartar dynasty of Chin,³

¹ Notes on Chinese Literature, p. 161.

The sovereigns of the Yüan dynasty were of the Mongolian race.

When Kublai (忽必烈), as he is called, the grandson of Jenghis, began in 1271 to feel himself secure on the throne of China, Liü Ping-chung (劉秉中), one of his ministers, suggested to him to assume Yüan (元) as the dynastic title of his rule, with reference to the signification of that term, = "first and greatest," in the first sentence of the Yî-ching.

² Jenghis (variously spelt) is taken from the Chinese attempt to give the title by which his vassals hailed the Mongol chieftain in 1206, after the successful conquests of his early career. The Chinese characters for it are 成吉思, "Ch'äng Chî Shih," which we may translate by "The Successful and Fortunate." They cannot have been intended to give the sound of the Mongol name as nearly as Chinese characters could do; but were a new title, like the *Yüan*, adopted for the name of the dynasty.

³ Chin (Kin) was the dynastic title (金) assumed by the Nü-chân (女真) Tartar tribe, said to be ancestors of the present Man-châus, who held Pekin and a considerable part of the kingdom against the later Sung dynasty for about a century (1115-1234).

which strove with the second sovereignty of Sung for the possession of the empire. One collection, embracing specimens of all these varieties of "Light Reading," may be referred to in passing. It bears the name of "The Ten Men of Genius;"¹ and after mentioning the titles of some of the works contained in it, I will pass on to the story of "The Great Archer," which I first thought of as the subject of this Paper, without the preliminary matters through which I have been groping my way to it.

The first work in this collection is "The Expanded Narrative of the History of the Three Kingdoms," of which I have already spoken;—in 120 chapters or books, each of about the same size as a chapter in one of Sir Walter Scott's novels.

The second is the novel of "The Good Mate,"² an admirable translation of which was published in 1829 by the late Sir John Francis Davis under the title of "The Fortunate Union," in twenty books.

The third is the *Yü Chiao Li*,³ which was translated in French both by Rémusat and Julien, under the title of "The Two Cousins," also in twenty books.

The fourth is the *Ping Shan Lang Yen*,⁴ of the same size as the two others, also translated by Julien, under the title of "The Two Young Accomplished Ladies."

The fifth is *Shui Hú Chwan*,⁵ or Record of the Brigands about the Hwâi and other rivers in the early part of the twelfth century, and their pacification, written by a Shih Nâi-ar of the Yüan dynasty. In seventy books.

¹ 十才子.

² 好逑傳. The title is taken from the first ode in the Shih King.

³ 玉嬌梨.

⁴ 平山冷燕. Mr. Wylie describes this as "a tale with very little plot in it," the author having seemingly exhausted his efforts in description, dialogue, and the figures of rhetoric generally.

⁵ 水滸傳. Written by Shih Nâi-an (施耐菴), of the Yüan dynasty.

I need not specify the names of the other five works in the collection. The whole contains 386 chapters, and the student who has made himself familiar with them may be considered as fairly acquainted with "The Light Reading"¹ which the literature of China supplies.

The "Expansion of the History of the Three Kingdoms" stands out pre-eminent among these romances and novels, but there is another book closely resembling it which, however, is not reckoned among them. This is the "*Tung Cháu Lieh Kwo Chih*,"² or "History of the various States or Kingdoms during the time of the Eastern Cháu." Mr. Wylie observes that "though written in the form of a novel, it differs less from authentic history probably than any other in the same category." Some Chinese writers have said that its truthfulness is what has kept it from being counted among other romances. It is not so brilliantly written as "The History of the Three Kingdoms," but its narratives are nearly as full of interest. The two have often brought to my mind the greater historical novels of Sir Walter Scott, and his "Tales of a Grandfather." The former abound more in grand pictures of chivalry and descriptions of battles; the latter are quieter, but more tender, and equally impressive. The work gives us a vivid sketch of the long period, from the reign of king Hsüan, (which commenced in B.C. 827) to the close of the dynasty of Cháu, when it was superseded by that of Ch'in, and the early feudal period of China gave place to the despotic, but not unregulated, empire which has, with many dynastic changes, continued to the present day.

The Archer's story begins in the reign of king Chwang of Ch'ü, which dates from the year B.C. 613.³ For some time after his accession, Chwang seemed to abandon himself to luxurious pleasure, leaving the government in the hands

¹ 小說.

² 東周列國志.

³ Under B.C. 614, the entry is 商臣卒子旅嗣是爲莊王.

of his ministers. His natural powers, however, were great; and while apparently indifferent to things around him, he was taking careful note of the characters of his officers, and revolving the ambitious projects of his house. Those projects had appeared so early as B.C. 888,¹ when the then count of Ch'û had assumed the title of king. The usurped title was soon abandoned—for a time²—in consequence of the vigour of the king of Châu, but it was publicly and defiantly³ resumed in B.C. 704 by the count Wăn, known to us as king Wû, and had been borne by his successors on to Chwang. Chwang succeeded to a territory, greatly enlarged by the encroachments of his predecessors on the neighbouring States; and when he awoke, or emerged, from his period of indolent enjoyment, it soon appeared that he was not less ambitious than any of them. In B.C. 606 he undertook an expedition northwards against a tribe from the West, which had fled from the aggressions of the powerful States of Ch'in and Tsin on its territory, and sought to take refuge under the tutelage of the king of Châu, in the district of Lû-hwăn, lying south from the river Lo.⁴ This expedition brought him to the neighbourhood of the capital, and the king sent his congratulations to him on his success against the refugee tribe by an envoy, to whom he showed his hand in making enquiries about the nine Tripods of Yü, which had come down from that founder of the Feudal state, through the dynasties of Hsiâ and Shang, and were regarded as palladia of the kingdom. Baffled by the ingenuity of the envoy, Chwang commenced his return to Ch'û, and on the way had to encounter a powerful insurrection, which gave occasion to the first appearance of our Great Archer.

When the count-king started for the north from his

¹ Under this year is the entry 楚僭王之始.

² In B.C. 878.

³ "Defiantly," the King of Châu having refused in 706 to sanction the assumption of the title.

⁴ The entry, under 606, is 楚子伐陸渾至洛.

capital of Ying,¹ he had left the government under the charge of Tâu² Yueh-chiào, his chief minister, associating with him several other great officers in whose fidelity he had more confidence. This precautionary measure, however, was fruitless. The minister knew that the king suspected

¹ The name of the capital of Ch'û from the time of king Wû; a little way north from the present departmental city of Ching-châu in Hû-pei.

² The Tâus (鬲 氏) were a numerous and distinguished clan in Ch'û, and many members of it had been eminent in their service of the State; no one more so than the minister of king Ch'âng (B.C. 671-625), who has come down to us with the designation of Tsze-Wan (子 文).

The story of his birth reminds us of the legend of Romulus and Remus. His grandfather, Tâu Zo-ão (鬲 若 敖), had married a daughter of the Count of Yün, and died after she had born a son named Po-pî (伯 比). The daughter of Yün then returned with her child to her native State, and the boy grew up in the palace of his maternal uncle, becoming a great favourite with his wife, who loved him, we are told, as if he had been her own son. She had a daughter, and the two children grew up together in great intimacy. Even when grown up, they were allowed to meet, and the result was that the princess became with child. Then, indeed, the mother was enraged; but not wishing to let her daughter's shame be known, she confined her to an apartment, and gave out that she was ill. Ere long a boy was born, and Po-pî went back in disgrace to Ch'û. Without telling her husband what had happened, the Countess of Yün wrapped the infant in a mat, and caused it to be thrown away in the marsh of Máng, probably in the present department of Yo-châu. It happened that the count, soon after, was hunting near the marsh, and saw a tigress crouching at a certain spot, which kept her place, notwithstanding several arrows discharged at her. It turned out that the tigress was watching over and suckling an infant, and the count hastened home and told his wife of the prodigy. "It must be the child," she said, "whom I caused to be thrown away." And she thereupon related the whole story of their daughter, urging, from ancient instances, that the infant, whose life had been so wonderfully preserved, was sure to prove a great and good man. It was accordingly brought home to its mother, who was forgiven, and sent to Ch'û to be regularly married to Tâu Po-pî. The boy grew up and fulfilled his grandmother's hope, becoming, in course of time, the famous minister Tsze-wăn. In his earlier years he was called *Tâu Ku yü-t'ü* (鬥 穀 於 菟), or Tâu Tiger-suckled; *Kü*, in the common speech of Ch'û, having the meaning of "to suckle," and *Yü-t'ü* being the name for "a tiger." The people of Ch'û had a different language from their northern conquerers. Other names in the records of the State, such as Zo-ão, which we now receive simply as names, might, no doubt, be similarly explained if we had the necessary information about them.

him, and had long been meditating rebellion, when the expedition to the North afforded him the opportunity which he desired. He procured the assassination of the men who were intended to keep him in check, collected a considerable force, raised the standard of revolt, and hurried northwards to intercept the king on his southward march. The two forces met at a place called the Dyke of Chang, where the king offered favourable terms to the rebel if he would return to his duty; but negotiation was ineffectual. A sharp engagement ensued. Yüeh-chiào was famed for his strength and archery; and while king Chwang, according to the fashion of the time, was fiercely beating the drum in the front seat of his chariot, thereby urging his troops to advance, an arrow narrowly missed him, and lodged in the drum-stand. Another followed with as good an aim, so that the king was frightened, and sounded a retreat, which would have been disastrous, but for the arrival of two fresh divisions of his army. The fortune of the day, however, remained with the rebel. His arrows were found to be half as long again as those of the ordinary size, and the soldiers gathered in groups, disappointed and desponding as to the result of the contest. King Chwang sent round a false report that there were only two such long arrows, which Tâu had brought with him from a temple in the capital. This somewhat reassured the minds of the men, but orders were issued to continue the retreat to the south, as if the only safety were in escaping from the enemy.

This retreat, however, was not a flight, but a stratagem. Having satisfied the remonstrances of his generals, the king hurried south to the river Ch'ing, in the present department of An-lû in Hû-pei. There he stopped, but did not cross the stream. Having divided his followers, and placed them in ambush, he made with a third body as if he were turning again to the North. It turned out as he expected. When news was carried to Yüeh-chiào that the king had fled, he hastened after with all his followers in pursuit; and, in one day and night, by a wonderful effort, they got to the bridge over the Ch'ing.

On the north of it some troops of Ch'û were cooking their breakfast; but, at the appearance of their pursuers, they forsook their vessels, and ran in a northward direction. The rebel urged his men to follow them, crying out, "When we have taken the king of Ch'û we will prepare our breakfast." They soon came up with the rear of the fugitives, the commander of whom, pretending to be a friend, told Tâu to push on quickly, if he would take the king. His men continued their march at the top of their speed, and came up with another detachment of the royal army. Its leader also pretended to be a friend, and told him that the king had not yet got so far; but, said he, "Your men are exhausted. You must let them have a meal; otherwise they will not be able to fight." The rebels accordingly began to prepare a meal; but, before it was ready, they were surprised by a strong force under the two brothers of the king, and fled with their leader to the south. They made for the bridge over the Ch'ing, and got to it only to find it broken down. The king's stratagem was now manifest. He had concealed himself in the neighbourhood, and, as soon as the rebels turned back to the north in pursuit of him, had caused the bridge to be broken down. Yüeh-chiào's return to the south was thus cut off. Full of anxiety, he ordered search to be made for a ford, and just then a royal general appeared with a force on the southern bank, and shouted to him to submit and surrender. He replied to the insulting language by a discharge of arrows from his men, when, just at this moment, a young officer of no high position stepped forward from the royal ranks, and begged the general to allow him to try his skill in archery against the rebel. This was Yang Yû-chî, or Yang-shû, that is, Uncle Yang, our "Great Archer."

Having received the permission which he sought, Yang advanced to the edge of the river, and shouted out to his formidable opponent, "The stream is too wide for our arrows. I have heard of your skill and would fain try my own against it. Let us take our stand on the abut-

ments of the bridge which still remain, and each shoot three arrows, and boldly await the result, be it life or death." After some parley, the other agreed, only stipulating that he should be allowed to shoot his three arrows first. "Three arrows!" cried Yung, "what have I to fear, though you shoot a hundred arrows? the one of us that slips to one side, shall not be accounted a brave man!"

On this Yüeh-chiào drew his bow, and discharged an arrow, confident that it would go through his adversary's skull. But he was in too great a hurry. To be hurried shows a lack of skill: the skilful man is never in a hurry. Yang saw the arrow coming, and hit it with the end of his bow, so that it fell into the water, while he shouted, "Quickly shoot; quickly shoot." The rebel placed a second arrow on the string, took heedful aim, and sent it off with all his strength. But Yang stooped down, and let it pass over his head. "You said," cried Tâu, "that there was to be no slipping aside. Why did you crouch down to avoid the arrow? You are not a brave man!" "You have still the third arrow," retorted Yang. "I will not try to avoid it, but if it do not hit me, it will be my turn to shoot." The other thought that with this arrow, if he did not step aside, he would be sure to hit him; and thereon, standing quite straight, he discharged it, shouting, at the same time, "A hit." And it went right for the mark; but when it came near, Yang, who stood firm, and made no movement, opened his great mouth, caught the arrow in it, and with his teeth held it fast by the point.

By this time, the rebel's heart misgave him, and he would fain have slunk away, but his character and word kept him in his place, and he called out, "Yes, you may shoot now; but if your three arrows all miss, it will be my turn again." "He would be an apprentice at the trade," cried Yang in reply, "who should need three arrows to do for you; a single arrow will be enough to make you fall by my hand!" His words still more disturbed the mind of Yüeh-chiào, and Yang then made as if he were adjusting the arrow, and raised his bow,

but without the arrow on it, drawing the string at the same time as if he were shooting. His opponent heard the twanging of the bow, and thinking the arrow was on its way to him, moved to the left to evade it. "A fine fellow you are," cried Yang, "to speak of its not being brave to slip on one side! The arrow is still in my hand!" Tâu shouted back, "He is not a good archer who is afraid of his opponent's moving." Yang again went through the same pretence of shooting, and the other slipped hastily to the right. Just at that moment, our archer looked steadily at him, put his arrow on the string, raised the bow, and sent the missile right through the brain. So it was that Tâu Yüeh-chiâo, who had been for several years chief minister of the kingdom of Ch'û, died, at the bridge of Ch'ing by the hand of the small officer, Yang Yü-chî.

On the fall of their leader there was a terrible rout of the rebels. Their slaughtered bodies lay about in heaps, and the waters of the Ch'ing were tinged with their blood. There was an end of the rebellion, and promotion came of course to Yang-shû. He obtained a high command among the royal kindred, and was made supporter of the king on the right in his war-chariot. But years pass on before we come to the record of his next great feat of archery. At this time his years could not have been much over twenty.

It is the year B.C. 575. King Chwang has passed away in 591, and it is the sixteenth year of his son king K'ang. Ch'û and the great northern State of Tsin are at war; and their armies are confronting each other in Chăng, at Yen-ling, which is still the name of one of the districts of the department K'ai-fäng. One day a general of Ch'û, called P'an Tang, was showing his skill to a crowd of onlookers behind the camp, and had thrice in succession hit what we call the bull's-eye. While all were shouting their applause, Yang Yü-chî drew near, and they cried out, "Here comes the archer with the spirit hand." This offended P'an, who exclaimed, "In what is my archery

inferior to Uncle Yang's?" and Yû-chi himself replied, "You can only hit the red heart of the target, which is not a wonderful thing, but can you go through a willow branch at a hundred paces off?" "What do you mean," asked many of the beholders, "by cleaving a willow at such a distance?" Yang said, "A friend once put a mark on a leaf of a willow, and from the distance of a hundred paces I sent an arrow right through it." "Here is a willow tree," said the others, "will you try such a mark now?" The archer agreed to do so, and they all in great glee said, "To-day we shall see the spirit-like archery of Uncle Yang." So they put a black mark on a leaf, and made Yang take aim at it from the appointed distance. The arrow whizzed forth; and, not seeing it fall to the ground, they ran to examine the tree. There, sure enough, it was, sticking by its point in the branch, having gone right through the centre of the leaf.

"It is but a chance hit," said P'an Tang, turning to his rival. "If you will allow me to mark in order three leaves, and then hit them, one after the other, I will acknowledge your marvellous skill." "I may not be able to do so," said Yang, "but I will try;" and then the other on three leaves at different heights wrote the characters for one, two, three. Yang looked at them well to make sure of them and their numbers; and then going to his place, he took three arrows, and wrote on them the same characters, one, two, three. Having done this, he discharged them, one after another, and each hit the proper mark. All bowed to him, and praised him as indeed the archer with the spirit-hand.

P'an Tang joined in the congratulations, but still he was discontented, and wished to show what he considered his own peculiar ability. "Your archery," he said to Yang, "is indeed good; but still, in the strife of men, it is strength that must carry off the palm. I can send an arrow through several buff-coats, and I should like to show the feat to the gentlemen." "Do so," was the general cry, "we should like to see it." Having called

several of their heavy-armed followers, they made them take off their thick buff-coats. Five of these were placed together, and then they said "Enough," but P'an made them add other two. "Seven buff-coats," they said, "can hardly be less than a cubit in thickness; how can an arrow be sent through them?" The pile was suspended on the target, and P'an walked to his place the hundred paces off, took up his black carved bow, and laid on it an arrow with a wolf's tooth for a point. Standing steady and erect, with his left hand as if it were laid against mount T'ai, and his right as if it were supporting an infant, he sent the arrow forth. "A hit!" he cried, as the sound of its collision came from the target, and all shouted "A good arrow! A good arrow!" It had indeed gone through all the buff-coats to the target behind, and remained sticking firmly in it, like a nail driven through a board. The general's face wore on it the consciousness of his success, and he was telling the soldiers to take the pile with the arrow through it, and carry it through the camp as a sight, when they were stopped by Yang, who cried out, "Wait a little till I also shoot an arrow." "Yes," they all responded, "let us see the wonderful strength of Uncle Yang?" but he suddenly stopped short. "Why do you not shoot?" they asked; and he said, "To go through the buff-coats in the same way would be easy, but I have a method of sending his arrow away." With these words he fitted his arrow to the string, and sent it off, saying, as the bow twanged, "All right." Straight to the head of P'an's arrow his went, not a hairbreadth too high or too low, neither to the right nor to the left. Exactly on the end of that arrow it lighted, and drove it through the buff-coats and target on to the ground, taking itself the place which the other had occupied. *

The spectators did not witness the feat without putting out their tongues. P'an Tang's jealousy was at last overcome; he acknowledged Yang's superiority, and said, "I have not your admirable hand!"

A procession hurried off with the trophy through the

camp, taking the two archers with them. It passed near king Kung himself, and the leaders of it recounted what the men had done, and concluded by saying, "Since our army has such archers in it, why need we be anxious about the thousands and myriads of the soldiers of Tsin?" The king's reception of the announcement damped their enthusiasm. "Victory," said he in a rage, "is gained by the skilful arrangements of the general, and does not depend on the chance hit of an archer." To the two men he said, "The art of which you boast is sure to be the occasion of your death." He seemed to be specially offended with our hero, took away his arrows from him, and forbade him to shoot any more. Downcast and ashamed, Uncle Yang slunk away from the royal presence, but his disgrace did not last long. A general, but indecisive, engagement took place between the two armies next day, when Ch'û had rather the worst of it, and a son of king Kung was taken prisoner, and carried off by one of the generals of Tsin. The battle was renewed the day after, the captive prince being carried in front of the fight where it was fiercest, to damp the courage of the men of Ch'û, and infuriate their king, who had deprived himself moreover of the assistance of his able and trusty Yang, for whom he had substituted another officer to take his place by himself in his chariot. Amidst the heat of the engagement, a general of Tsin, who was watching king Kung's chariot, discharged an arrow which hit the king in his left eye, entirely destroying it! Who could help him now? Amidst his terrible pain, he yet called for the Great Archer, Yang-Yû-chî, to be brought to him. This was soon done, but, as the king had ordered the day before, Yang had not a single arrow with him. The king gave him two of his own arrows, described the dress and appearance of the Tsin general who had shot him, and sent him away at once to avenge his wound. As fast as his horses could carry him, Yang galloped into the army of Tsin, and seeing a leader answering to the king's description, drove his chariot near to him, crying out, "How dared you,

Caitiff, to injure our lord?" and, before the other could reply, Yang's arrow had gone through his throat, so that he fell dead to the ground. The men of Tsin, however, gathered round the corpse, and succeeded in carrying it off, while Yang returned to the king, with one arrow still in his hand, and reported, "By Your Majesty's good fortune, Great king, I have shot the man in the green robe, with the curling beard and whiskers." The king, of course, was delighted, took off his own robe, and gave it to Yang, ordering him to receive a hundred arrows, all pointed with wolves' teeth. A retreat on the part of Ch'û, however, was necessary, and led to further distinction for our hero. Taking his position in the rear of the retiring forces, he plied his arrows on their pursuers; one and another were slain as they ventured to the front, so that opportunity was given to the other detachments of the Ch'û army to concentrate their strength and renew the battle. The day closed without any decisive result, though Tsin had the better of it.

King Kung, however, arranged with his principal commander Prince Ying-ch'i, suspending operations till next day, to allow the men a rest which was necessary; they should then fight the battle out. But this plan was strangely frustrated. First, reinforcements from the States of Lû and Wei arrived to strengthen the army of Tsin; and next, the prince commanding that of Ch'û suddenly gave way to a weakness to which he was occasionally liable, and against which he had been warned by the king. He was too fond of strong drink, and, when he once took a cup, was unable to stop. By the contrivance of one of the generals of Tsin he was led to taste, and then, through the weakness of his waiting-boy, he drank and drank again till he became dead-drunk. The king sent many times for him to come and consult about what should be done, but he could give no response. A general retreat to the south was ordered, and the commander was committed to the charge of our hero, Yang Yû-chi, who was left with a band of 300 chosen archers to bring up the rear. The

helpless prince could not be roused to do anything for himself. Yang caused him to be tied down in a carriage with leathern thongs, and so managed to bring him off. King Kung also, who was fond of the man, sent him a soothing message, but it was in vain. After what had occurred, he could not resume his command, and meet his former associates. He committed suicide, and disappears from history.

On his return from the campaign, in which he had performed such important services, our Great Archer was, no doubt, considered a more important man than he had been before. The State of Wû, though the oldest of all the Châu States, had long remained in obscurity, and the first mention of it in the text of the Ch'un-Ch'ü is in B.C. 584. As its power and resources increased, it became an enemy of Ch'ü, hardly less dangerous than the great northern State of Tsin. Its territory was in the present Chiang-sû, along the lower waters of the Yang-tsze Chiang, and on the sea-board, and this position made its people skilful in naval warfare. It was thus on the waters of the Chiang that it came into collision with Ch'ü, whose centre, as we have seen, was in Hû-pei. On the land it was long inferior to Ch'ü, but superior to it on the river; but as time went on, it learned to take the field with its forces against its powerful adversary, while Ch'ü, on its part, built a fleet of war-boats, and contested with the other the supremacy of the river.

After the battle of Yen-ling, Uncle Yang seems to have been employed in an important command on the borders of the Chiang, to watch and guard against any hostile attempt on the part of Wû. Notwithstanding the wound which king Kung received in that engagement, he lived on till 560, when he was succeeded by his son, known as king K'ang. Another of his sons fled at the same time to Wû, and next year the king of that State, called Chû-fan, sent an expedition under the command of his son, prince Tang, against Ch'ü. This was met and defeated by our hero, who also killed, by an arrow from his bow, the

prince, its leader. King Chû-fan announced the event to Tsin, and begged its ruler to convoke a great meeting of the States, and organize an invasion of Ch'û on a grand scale. The meeting was held, but no hostile movement was undertaken against Ch'û in consequence. The action of Wû in attacking Ch'û, while the people were in mourning for the death of their ruler, was universally condemned. It had thereby violated a long-recognized custom of the States, by which it was sought to lessen and mitigate the frequency and fierceness of the wars between them. "By this attack of Ch'û, while in mourning for the death of its king," said one of the speakers, "Wû has brought the disaster on itself, and does not deserve our sympathy or help."

Only once again have I found mention made of Yang Yû-chî in the "Narratives of the several States," and that mention is in connection with his death. He must have lived nearly to, or beyond, the fourscore years, frequently assigned as the limit of vigorous human life. Hostilities, we are told, broke out afresh between Wû and Ch'û in 547, about one or more small States in the present department of Lû-châu, in An-hûi, about the principality of Shû-chiû especially, which had transferred to Wû its allegiance to Ch'û; and, to punish them, king K'ang sent a force under the command of his minister Ch'ü Chien. Uncle Yang went with the expedition, and begged the minister to allow him to go on before the main body of the troops. "You are old, O General," was the reply, "the rebellious territory is insignificant. There is no fear of our not subduing it. You need be in no anxiety." The other replied, "Wû is sure to come to the rescue of the rebels. I have long been accustomed to resist its forces, and am familiar with all their ways. Allow me to go on before you; though I should die in doing so, I will not regret it." Ch'ü Chien, hearing him speak of dying, was moved with a feeling of alarm and compassion, but Yang went on to say, "I have been most graciously favoured by our last two sovereigns, and have wished to sacrifice my life for the kingdom: but,

to my sorrow I have had no opportunity to do so. Now my hair has changed its colour, or fallen out. I may fall ill any morning, and die in my bed; and you, O minister, will be the cause of my so passing away."

The minister, seeing his determination, acceded to his request, only sending the great officer Hsî Hwan with him to assist him. They then marched to the city of Lî, where they encountered Î-mei, a younger brother of the king of Wû, and the premier Ch'ü Kû-yung,¹ hastening at the head of a large force to the relief of Shû-chiû. Hsî Hwan wished to wait for the arrival of the main force before attacking, but Yang said, "The men of Wû are skilful only on the water, but now they have left their boats, and come on the land. Archery and chariot-fighting are also strange to them. Let us attack them at once, while they are not prepared to receive us." With this, he took his bow and quiver, and commenced shooting, every arrow doing its work of death, and the troops of Wû retreating out of his reach. Our Archer followed them till he met Kû-yung in his chariot, and shouted to him, "Traitor to your State, how dare you look me in the face?" At the same time he was about to shoot, but, Kû-yung turned his chariot, and fled with the speed of the wind. Yang, said in astonishment, "Have the men of Wû also become thus skilful at chariot-driving?"

Hardly were these words out of his mouth, when, from four directions, there appeared a number of chariots, protected by plates of iron, and crowded with the best archers south of the Chiang, which formed a circle round him. He was a mark for them all, and there he died from the multitude of their arrows, which came on him like a shower of hail. The words of king Kung, that the art in which he trusted was sure to prove his death, had now their fulfilment.

Hsî Hwan came up, rallied the small body of Yang's followers, who were scared by the fall of their commander,

¹ This would probably be a refugee prince from Ch'ü.

and retreated with them to report the sad event to Ch'ü Chien. The general received the news with sorrow, and sadly said, "Ah! the death of Uncle Yang was brought about by himself!" He then placed his men in ambush on the hill of Î, which was not far off, and sent the officer Tsze-ch'iang to renew the engagement with their pursuers, and then to make a hasty retreat, as if unequal to the fight. The general of Wû, however, afraid of an ambush, did not pursue them to the hill. But when the young prince Î-mei came up, he ascended a height, and not seeing the troops of Ch'ü, he supposed that they had gone off in flight, and hurried after Tsze-ch'iang till he got to the foot of Mount Î. There Tsze-ch'iang turned on him, and the force of Ch'ü Chien sprang from its ambushment, and joined in the engagement. Î-mei and his men fought desperately, but must all have fallen or been captured if the force of Ku-yung had not arrived, beat the Ch'üs back, and brought their friends off. The fortune of the day, however, had been on the side of Ch'ü, and the army of Wû withdrew from the scene of strife, and left Ch'ü Chien to prosecute to a successful termination the expedition against Shû-chiû.

We have thus followed the career of Yang Yü-chî from its beginning to its close, and he disappears from history with character unblemished, and well deserving the appellation which I have given him of "The Great Archer" of his country. He was a man of arrows, not of words, though his last utterances tell us how, as thousands of his countrymen have been, and as thousands of them, I believe, still are, he was familiar with the Roman sentiment, so well expressed by Horace,

"Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori."

Allow me now, in conclusion, to call your attention to the resemblance between his feats of archery in the campaign of Yen-ling and feats of the same kind described by the greatest of our novelists in his "Ivanhoe" and "Anne of Geierstein." The resemblance, I have no doubt,

occurred to many of you while I was reading what I had translated from my original. When you heard how Yang sent his arrow through the willow leaf, from the distance of a hundred paces, you would think of Robin Hood's cleaving the willow wand at five score yards on the second day after the tournament at Ashby-de-la-Zouch. When, again, Yang's arrow lighted on his antagonist's, and sent it on the ground through the pile of buff-coats and the target which it had pierced, you would think how Robin Hood "notched" Hubert's shaft in the centre of the target and split it to shivers. When, once more, he sent his three arrows, marked one, two, three, and nailed to the tree the three willow leaves similarly numbered, you would think of young Arthur de Vere, at the Castle of Geierstein, how, shooting at the pigeon tied to a pole, he made good the vaunt which he had previously written down,

"If I hit mast, and line, and bird,
An English archer keeps his word."

The three exploits are so similar, that we can hardly think of them as independent. But Scott could not have borrowed his descriptions from our Chinese authority, composed in the thirteenth century; and the edition of it, of which I possess a copy, bears the date of 1752. In his account of the feat of Arthur de Vere, our novelist probably had in mind Virgil's relation, in the 5th Book of his *Æneid*, of the games celebrated in Sicily by Æneas, on the anniversary of his father's death, and this relation was but an imitation of Homer's description of the games celebrated by Achilles after the death of Patroclus. The two relations have their differences, and Pope seems to give the preference to that of Virgil. Scott's account of young Arthur's archery is more wonderful than either of them as a display of archery, and the Chinese description of Uncle Yang's shooting is not inferior to it. Where did Lo Kwan-chung find any record of archery like that which he has given us? The names of Virgil, Homer, and Statius, and

their writings, were all unknown to him. Did he then himself invent the achievements of his archer as I have told them to you? I cannot tell, many coincidences in narratives, both genuine and imaginative, occur to the student, which are difficult to explain. I only refer to them as showing, how much easier it is to ask questions than to answer them, to awaken doubts than to solve them.

I conclude my Paper by one more short narrative of the skill of Uncle Yang. Once when the king, I suppose king Kung, was hunting on mount Ching, he came on an ape, which was very clever at catching the arrows discharged against it. Perched in a tree, which was surrounded by soldiers, several men deep, it caught all their arrows, until at last the king ordered Yang Yû-chî to be sent for. When the creature heard the name, it began to howl, and, immediately on our Archer's arrival, he sent an arrow to its heart. This little paragraph recalls to us stories that appear sometimes in American newspapers, about the recognition in the far West of Colonel Boone and other noted hunters by racoons and other creatures of their game.