

jungle-like thickets of the garden seemed rather to belong to one of those half-ruined villas once tenanted by Moghul or Sikh grandees which during years gone by had furnished me with cherished haunts in the country around Lahore. In the end I decided that a kindly fairy had chosen for my delectation to reproduce, in distant Cathay and in a climate recalling Kashmir, that delightful old garden of Shah Balawal, with its shady terraces and gaily stuccoed little shrines, which was my favourite refuge during Lahore times. Maharaja Sher Singh, with more than one of his courtiers, had been murdered there, and old friends who cheered me with their visits used to call it my 'tomb.' Would that I could have greeted them also at this its Cathayan replica!

On an airy terrace overlooking spring and lake as well as much of the fertile land across the river, I had my tent pitched. The roof of a small belvedere which had long ago lost doors, windows, and other encumbrances of a sedentary civilization, furnished welcome shade. A walled garden behind, with thick clumps of fruit-trees, on which the apricots were just ripening, secured desirable privacy. Outside it to the west, under majestic old elms which seemed to rival the plane-trees of Kashmir (Fig. 229), was my reception hall, a large and elegant temple all in wood, with a fine carved roof and gracefully curved eaves over its verandahs. Its architect had evidently thought more of providing a convenient place for social gatherings than a home for divinities; for whereas the images, grotesque figures in stucco and of recent make, occupied a modest alcove to the north, the main body of the structure was given up to a large hall without any religious use.

The whole was as airy as one could wish, the open-work screens forming the sides having long lost their paper covering and all doors their panels. The little garden parterre, full of marigolds, sunflowers, and peonies, through which the hall was approached, had suffered less from neglect than the buildings and supplied a gay patch of colours. A small dwelling by its side, half ruin half woodshed, accommodated Chiang-ssü-yeh, ever content with his