

STELLA BENSON

KWAN-YIN

Stella Benson

Kwan-yin

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BY STELLA BENSON

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« THE TEMPLE OF KWAN-YIN, GODDESS OF MERCY. A wide altar occupies the whole of the back of the stage; a long fringe of strips of yellow brocade hangs from the ceiling to within 3 feet of the floor at either end of the altar. In the centre of the altar the seated figure of the goddess is vaguely visible in the dimness; only the face is definitely seen – a golden face; the expression is passionless and aloof. A long table about 12 inches lower than the altar stands in front of it, right across the stage. On the table, before the feet of Kwan-yin, is her carved tablet with her name in golden characters on a red lacquer ground. In front of the tablet is a large brass bowl full of joss-sticks the smoke of which wavers in the air & occasionally obscures the face of Kwan-yin. There are several plates of waxen looking fruit & cakes on the table & two horn lanterns – these are the only light in the scene. On either side of Kwan-yin, between the table and the altar, there is a pillar with a gilded wooden dragon twisted round it, head downward. To the left, forward, is a large barrel-shaped drum slung on a carved blackwood stand.

Four priests & two acolytes are seen like shadows before this palely lit background. One acolyte to the right of the table beats a little hoarse bell. This he does during the course of the whole scene, in the following rhythm: – 7-8-20-7-8-20. He should reach the 105th beat at the end of the second hymn to Kwan-yin. The other acolyte stands by the drum and beats it softly at irregular intervals as indicated. The acolytes are little boys in long blue coats. The four priests stand at the table with their faces toward Kwan-yin; their robes are pale dull pink silk with a length of deeper apricot pink draped about the shoulders.

The priests kneel and kow-tow to Kwan-yin.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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