XXX. A dramatic scene on the Chinese stage. The principal story of the piece, of which this scene represents a part, is taken from the ancient history of the country. It opens with the account of an emperor of China and his empress, who, in the midst of perfect felicity and apparent security, are surprised by a sudden revolt among their subjects. A war ensues; many battles are fought upon the stage; and at length the arch-rebel, a general of cavalry, characterized on the stage by a whip in his hand, overcomes his sovereign, whom he slays with his own hand. The captive empress appears in all the agonies of despair naturally resulting from the loss of her husband, as well as of her state and dignity, and indeed danger of her honour. Whilst she is uttering lamentations, and rending the skies with her complaints, the conqueror enters. Of this scene the plate is a representation. He approaches her with respect, addresses her in a gentle tone, attempts to soothe her sorrows, talks of love and adoration; and, like Richard the Third and Lady Anne in Shakspeare, in less than half an hour prevails on her to dry up her tears, to forget a dead husband, and to console herself with a living one. The persuasions of her own officers and attendants in favour of the general, have more weight with the lady than the supplicating priest, who, prostate on the ground, intreats her not to marry the murderer of her husband. The piece concludes as usual with the nuptials, and a grand procession.

The dresses worn by the ancient Chinese are still preserved in the drama. The band of music has its situation on the back part of the stage; there is no change of scene; and, in general, the front of the theatre is exposed to the open air.