

The Fortune-Hunter Punished

By P'u Sung-ling

A certain man's uncle had no children, and the nephew, with an eye to his uncle's property, volunteered, to become his adopted son. When the uncle died all the property passed accordingly to his nephew, who thereupon broke faith as to his part of the contract. He did the same with another uncle, and thus united three properties in his own person, whereby he became the richest man of the neighbourhood. Suddenly he fell ill, and seemed to go out of his mind; for he cried out, "So you wish to live in wealth, do you?" and immediately seizing a sharp knife, he began hacking away at his own body until he had strewed the floor with pieces of flesh. He then exclaimed, "You cut off other people's posterity and expect to have posterity yourself, do you?" and forthwith he ripped himself open and died. Shortly afterwards his son, too, died, and the property fell into the hands of strangers. Is not this a retribution to be dreaded?