

their rounds of visits, and offer to each other the congratulations of the season.

It was not, however, until late in the afternoon that Gertrude and I proceeded to pay our respects to Mr. Soo Wah. We had carefully studied the equivalent of "a Happy New Year" in Chinese, and we kept repeating it all the way from the hotel to the long adobe house in which Soo's laundry was situated. The ground before it was littered with bits of colored tissue paper, tails of bombs, and defunct fire-crackers, the remains of last night's display; the door was covered with hieroglyphic mottoes appropriate to the season, and above it hung a gay lantern.

Soo himself opened the door for us. His usual blue sacque had been replaced by a gorgeous dark green quilted one of a perfectly incredible thickness and stiffness; his flowing sleeves were ample enough to contain dozens of packs of cards, and his trousers so wide that they twisted about him in curving folds as he moved; his stockings were immaculate in their whiteness; his slippers were brilliant in crimson and gold garniture, and even his pig-tail appeared to have been lengthened by at least six inches. I regret to say that we were so overcome by the sight of all this magnificence that we entirely forgot our hardly learned Chinese phrases and blurted out our salutations in commonplace English.

Soo shook hands with himself, Chinese fashion, over and over again as he ushered us in, and we bowed to his two assistants, who, robed in gay purples and greens, also shook hands with themselves. All trace of sadness had banished from Soo's face, which was positively wreathed in smiles, and every few moments he gave vent to his pleasure in little hysterical giggles.

Everything pertaining to the laundry had been carefully put to one side, and the little dark room was brightened with the festal decorations. Tables graced with Chinese lilies and red trimmings were laid with various refreshments, mostly sweets. Piles of tiny Chinese oranges about the size of a walnut, quaint dishes filled with sweets of various description, candied pork fat, water melon seeds, prepared in some fashion and salty to the taste, slices of oranges and lemons dried and candied, cocoanut, queer looking nuts with raisins inside, sweet potatoes candied and a variety of other things which Soo, when we questioned him as to their nomenclature, vaguely

answered "China name allee samee."

In a dim shadowy corner low down on the floor some Joss sticks were burning before the household idol and their faint woody smell permeated the room. There was a great pile of visiting cards on the table, folded pieces of red paper with black hieroglyphics on them, left by Soo's numerous callers, and he gave us each one of these to take away as a souvenir.

We were offered refreshments, first Chinese wine or brandy, a few drops in tiny vessels of exquisite china, in shape like the half of an eggshell, and afterwards sweets in such abundance were pressed upon us that we felt quite embarrassed.

As we stood nibbling the strange tasting candy, and heroically endeavoring to look as if we enjoyed it, we asked Soo if he had ever been married. He answered no but one of his assistants had been "mallied" three years though he had not yet seen his wife, having been married by proxy; he added, however, with a beaming face that he himself had a sweetheart in China, and that when he was "heap lich" he was going home "to mally him."

"And how long have you been away from China, Soo?"

"Tirteen year."

"Why your sweet heart won't know you?"

"Yes—yes, allee-samee him mudder know."

"But, Soo, probably she'll have got tired waiting and will have married some other man?"

"No allee samee, Sabe China girl no like 'mellican girl, him mudder boss, he no talkee. China boy, China girl allee samee he no talkee, mudder boss. China girl never go udder man, China man kill him."

"And has she small feet?"

He indicated proudly with his two hands a foot measuring not many inches in length.

"But such little feet are no good, Soo."

"Yes heap good. Mellican girl big feet walk too far." He cast a sidelong contemptuous glance from his slanting eyes in the direction of our pedal extremities, "China girl him no walk far, him stay home allee timee."

And smiling complacently at the thought of the little maiden with the almond eyes and the tiny feet waiting so patiently for him far away in China, Soo bowed us out.

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