

I promise thee nothing. Follow me, and be content. Take, with a prayer for wisdom, this winged moment. The next day may not be mine to give, yet, if we walk onward together, forget not that thou art a pilgrim for eternity. If I bring thee a cup of joy be thankful, and be pitiful to those who mourn; and let all men be unto thee as brethren. If the dregs of bitterness cleave unto thy lips be not too eager to receive relief, lest thou betray the weakness of thy faith. God's perfect discipline giveth wisdom. There are count those happy who endure. When morning breaketh in the east, gird thyself for thy duties with a song of thanksgiving; and when night putteth on her coronet of stars, look over the day just gone, and let its failures and blunders guide thee to better things on the morrow, so that when I have no longer any days or nights to give thee, and must myself die, thou wilt bless me as a friend and a helper on the road to heaven."—*Anon.*

The Old Year Dies.

BY MARGARET EYTINGE.

THE dying Old Year pallid lies
Upon a bier heaped thick and high
With faded roses and their thorns,
And some weep as they watch him die.
And these are they to whom he gave
Nights of sweet rest and happy morns,
And, though they withered in their time,
The roses with the fewest thorns.
They weep in fear—his reign once o'er,
Such lovely flowers they'll find no more.

And some there are who see him die
With tearless eyes—longing to hear
The joyful bells and merry shouts
That hail the happy young New Year.
And these are those who 'mong his gifts
But little joy unshaded found,
To whom he never threw a rose
That sharpest thorn did not surround.
They wait in hope—his reign once o'er,
Such bitter thorns they'll find no more.

And some with sight just dimmed, and lips
That show the coming of a smile,
Look on him with regretful gaze,
Their hearts untouched by grief the while.
And these are they who of dark clouds
And sunshine have had equal share,
Who for each care a gladness found,
And with each thorn a rose most fair.
They are content, his reign once o'er,
Of him who comes to ask no more.

How the Chinese New Year is Kept.

BY FANNIE ROPER FEUDGE.

It falls usually during the first week in February, and very near the 6th instant. To the Celestial it is the grandest jubilee of all the year, and is observed by men, women, and children of every grade, from the Emperor down to the humblest subject; and not alone with the Empire, but on sea and land, at home and abroad, wherever a Chinese community may chance to be on this propitious day.

Thought always a day of feasting and rejoicing, in 1888 it was celebrated by the Chinese in this country with more *éclat* than ever before, because of the opening of a new "joss-house" in the Chinese quarter of San Francisco, California; and in 1889 it was observed with surpassing splendour, wherever the Chinese are found, because of the expected marriage of the young Emperor. Enormous sums of money were spent by the Chinese Government in preparations for the double celebrations of the royal nuptials and the time-honoured festival of the "New Year," which, it is said, was to be observed on this joyful occasion

with many new features, indicating progress among that ancient people in the newer inventions of the people of the West.

Well, though the Chinese have a way of their own for doing everything, and not always the best way, yet there are some lessons that even we, with all our boasted civilization, may profitably learn of them.

For example: On every New Year's morning, each man and boy, from the Emperor to the humblest peasant, pays a visit to his mother, and carries her a present, which varies in value according to his station and pecuniary ability. He thanks his mother very devoutly for all she has done for him in the past, and humbly asks for a continuance of her favour for another year.

This matter of reverence for parents is a cardinal virtue among the Chinese, duly inculcated from early childhood, and so ingrained into the very warp and woof of the daily life, that the mother's influence over her sons usually lasts, for bane or blessing, all through their existence.

Another excellent custom is the squaring-up of old accounts, and, as far as possible, paying off every debt before the close of the old year, so that the New Year's dawn may be unclouded by a single anxiety concerning the one just ended. This is deemed so requisite to a man's good standing in business, that the rule is generally observed, even though it be necessary to sell off goods cheaper than at any other time, or at heavy pecuniary

loss.

While father and sons are thus engaged in store and counting-room, mothers and daughters are equally busy in renovating and adorning the home. Every niche and corner of the dwelling is thoroughly cleaned, and must put on its gala dress of flowers, flags, and mottoes before New Year's dawn; a feast of good things is to be prepared; and, above all, the household altar must be newly decorated, flowers fresh and fair laid thereon, and candles and incense lighted to welcome the incoming year with joy and gladness. Flaming red papers, bearing appropriate devices or expressive of some wish for "good luck," are placed over or beside each door and lintel; huge lustrous transparencies float above; and sundry devices, in the form of dragons, sea-monsters, etc., intended to keep off evil spirits, are displayed everywhere.

Every hill-top, temple, and street is gaily decorated with flags and paper lanterns of huge dimensions; and the idols in the temples are decked in silken robes and adorned with glittering jewels. Boats, houses, and fences are freshly painted and adorned profusely with long strips of bright red paper, upon which are inscribed, in black and gilt letters, good wishes, congratulations, and compliments to all who may chance to pass that way; and every street and lane is crowded with well-dressed people, who for the time seem to have no thought but for this festive occasion.

Some are calling on friends and relatives, porters are bearing loads of presents to various houses, and crowds are wending their way to the temples and "joss-houses." Every worshipper goes laden with gifts; and the altars of the gods of wealth, of war, of medicine, letters, fire, and many others, are literally piled with offerings of flowers, fruit, confectionery, and some more costly wares.

Each devotee selects from the group the "god" he specially desires to propitiate, lights his "incense-sticks," places them before the idol, and performs his devotions with sundry prostrations, salaams, and murmured words, unintelligible to all but himself, and then retires to spend the rest of the day in mirth and jollity—feasting, visiting, fireworks, or gambling, as may be most in accord with his special proclivities. But his religion comes

first. The devotees before the "god of wealth" are especially numerous among the Chinese, as among other nations.

On New Year's eve, sacrifices are made to the old year, and the custom of watching out its last expiring moments is strictly observed by the Chinese; and during the whole night the streets are thronged. At dawn on the New Year's day every door is closed for a time, and streets comparatively deserted. But, after a very brief lull, all hands wake up to a renewal, with interest, of noisy mirth, which is then kept up for a week at least, and with the wealthy for a much longer time.

The New Year being considered the most propitious day of all the year for important negotiations, many betrothals and marriages take place at this time, thus increasing the hilarity of both family and social gatherings.

Another very pleasant custom I observed among the Chinese while living among them. Every visitor who called on New Year's day was sure to go away loaded with presents—or, rather, to have them taken to his home by a servant. The gift is always accompanied with many compliments and good wishes from the donor. The value of the presents varies, of course, with the wealth or generosity of the giver. It may be only a basket of fruit, a vase of flowers, a pretty fan, or package of choice tea, but it carries with it the "New Year" charm, and is a pleasing token of friendly regard that is always welcome. It was especially so to us, as strangers and foreigners so far away from home.

Then, whenever Americans or Europeans look into the Chinese temples, from motives of curiosity, to witness the ceremonies of the day, they always receive a courteous salutation and an invitation to enter—for a Chinese, whether in business, religion, or pleasure, is always a gentleman. We who are Christians, and who claim for ourselves a higher civilization, may well learn of these foreigners to welcome them kindly to our churches and Sunday-schools, and try to lead them to the knowledge and worship of the true God.

We have been sadly remiss concerning the millions who, after these nearly nineteen centuries, are yet "without hope and without God," and strangely slow in carrying to them the words of life.

Now that God has brought some of the heathen to our doors, and given to us—here in our own fair land—a sight of the folly and sin of idolatry, shall we still close our eyes to its abominations, and permit the enemy, while we sleep, to sow the tares of paganism upon Christian soil?

"When You Are at Rome, Do as Rome Does."

THIS is often said, but seldom thought of: your conduct would be contemptible if it ran in that line. It is said of the brilliant Frenchman—Voltaire—that he was a Protestant at Berlin, a Papist at Rome, and an infidel at Paris. I think he paid Berlin a high compliment, was sufficiently fawning at Rome, and made a fool of himself at Paris. It all shows that he had no principles to guide him; hence his eccentric conduct—like a ship without a rudder.

My dear young Christian, let your motto be: "Anywhere, everywhere, I will follow Jesus; everywhere he leads me, I will follow on." This will make yours a sublime life—a contrast to the life of that scoffer, who scoffed all his days, and at last had the temerity to build a temple "to God." Alas! he knew him not.

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