

ONTARIO PAPERS

A PAPER DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE HOME AND FAMILY

JOS. J. CAVE, PUBLISHER.

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CHINESE NEW YEAR.
THE CHINESE WILL CELEBRATE IT
THIS YEAR AS USUAL.

It is a National Holiday Day, and is for Many
the Only Holiday of the Whole Year—
Something about the Chinese Winter
and How the People Spend It.

The Chinese will celebrate New Year's
Day this year with quite as much enthus-
iasm as they ever have in the past notwith-
standing their terrible punishment by the Ja-
panese troops. The majority of the Chinese
people, in fact, hardly know that a war
has been going on, and nothing could make
them give up their New Year celebration.
It occurs later than ours, and comes on the
edge of the spring. It is, however, the
great festival of the year, and it is a sort
of 24th of May Christmas, birthday
and Sunday mixed up together. It is the
birthday of the whole Chinese people,
Every man, woman and child in the em-
pire is a year older on New Year's Day,
and all trot about and wish each other
"many happy returns." It is the only
Sunday that the Chinese have throughout
the year. The working people labor from
ten to twelve hours every day, and they
put in thirty odd days every month. At
New Year's all lay off for a rest, and for
about two weeks they do nothing but eat,
eat and amuse themselves. For ten days
before the New Year the country goes
wild in preparation. The stores all have
low prices and new goods, and the bar-
gain counters are thronged quite as much
as they are in Canada. Everyone buys
presents, and, all who can, get a new suit
of clothes for the occasion. Those who
can't buy or borrow or rent, and the Chinese
buy new New Year's gowns, furs and
silks. It is about the only day in the year
when the whole Chinese people are com-
paratively clean. Every person is sup-
posed to take a bath the day before, and
this for the majority of the people is the
only time they get bathed during the
year.

A NATIONAL PAY DAY.
New Year's is the national pay day. All
accounts must be squared up at that time,
and the man who can't raise enough to pay
his debts has to go to bankruptcy. The
laws are such that the creditor can enter
the debtor's house and take what he pleases
if there is no settlement, and families club
together and make all sorts of compromises
to keep up the business reputation of the
debtor. I was in China just after New Year's
last year, and I found lots of bankruptcies.
It is a great day for the pawnbrokers, and
their shops are crowded with people who
want to pay their debts and redeem their
best clothes, in order to get them out of
the pawn before New Year's. There are crowds
of men who want to pawn other things, and
get money to pay their debts, and the
Chinese probably patronize the pawn shops
at this time of the year more than any other
people in the world. Pawnbrokers receive
very high rates of interest, and they are
protected by the government. Speaking of
bankruptcies, they are not permitted to begin
business again until some settlement is
made, and when I wanted to buy some
pictures in Shanghai I was told that the
artist who kept them in a bankrupt, and
that he could not open until he got more
money.

AN EMPHATIC PAINTED RED.
The Chinese paint their whole country
red, figuratively speaking on New Year's
in more senses of the word than one. Red
is the color with which they decorate their
luck and prosperity, and all the New Year
cards and invitations are on paper of this
color. Every child gets its New Year's pres-
ent wrapped in red paper, and red inscrip-
tions are pasted over the doors of the houses.
These inscriptions bear characters praying
for good fortune, wealth and happiness, and
they are posted on each side of the outer
doors of the houses. New pictures of Chi-
nese generals are put on the front doors,
and the houses are sooted and made clean.
Among other things, eggs are dyed red, and
are offered to the gods, and dinner parties
are gotten up in bright firework. The
red used is that which you find around our
firecrackers, and the Chinese spend more
money on New Year's than do any
people in the world. The night be-
fore everyone is firing of packs of crackers,
and there are all sorts of fireworks, includ-
ing birds and fishes, and scenes of all kinds
in fire. The firecrackers are used to scare
off the evil spirits, and hardly anyone goes
to bed the last night of the old year. The
Chinese say that the man who sits up the
last night of the old year and sees the first
sunrise of the new year for ten years in suc-
cession will certainly have a long life, and
there are all sorts of New Year's supersti-
tions.

HOW THE BOYS TAKE IT.
The children of China all expect to get
something on New Year's, and they gener-
ally receive presents of money in the shape
of copper cash wrapped in red paper. On
the last night of the year they run through
the streets, shouting out good resolutions
for the New Year. There are games of all
sorts and many of the boys come out with
new kites. There is dancing in the streets
and there are jugglers and dime museum
shows and all sorts of theatrical entertain-
ments. The people have festivals and there
are family reunions. The rivers are cover-
ed with kites and the boats are set on fire,
and the harbors become flaming masses.
Everywhere there are shrines with burning
joss sticks before them, and the people
fairly go wild.

CHINESE NEW YEAR CALLS.
All people receive visitors on New Year's
Day, and the relatives who call are taken
into the ancestral hall, and they work in
the ancestors of the family. After this the

young people go in and pay homage to
their parents and elder brothers, and then
go to their schoolmasters and teachers.
The Emperor has a New Year's reception in
Pekin, and it may be that the foreigners
will be invited this year, although they
have not been in the past. The Emperor
sits on the dragon throne, and the princes
and all the officers go in and get down on
their knees and bump their heads on the
ground before him. The day after New
Year's the officials all go to the temples to
worship, and for about ten days afterward
there are all sorts of New Year's cere-
monies. The second day is called ladies' day,
and if the weather is good the women go
out into the country to picnics. They dress
in the brightest of silks, their faces are
painted in honor of the occasion, and their
little feet are in costly shoes. They wear
a great many clothes, and it is wadded cot-
ton, and not wool and wood, that keeps China
warm.

WINTER IN CHINA.
The winter is now at its worst in the
Chinese empire, and the whole northern
country is frozen solid. This means a
great deal more than it does here.
The rivers, which form the only means of
travel outside of dirt roads, are frozen up,
and Pekin, the capital, is shut off from the
rest of the world for four months of the
year. It is reached by the winding Hai-
River, which flows into the Yellow Sea
near the Taku forts. Tien Tsin is fifty
miles inland, and this is a city of a million
people. Pekin is about eighty miles north
of it and the only conveyances are rude
Chinese carts on their wooden wheels.
In the winter have to travel overland
several hundred miles to get to reach China,
and they first go to Shanghai, and are
carried by pony express.

A NATION IN SHEEPSKIN.
Nearly all the northern Chinese dress in
sheepskin during the winter, and coats of
this kind and jackets and pantaloons of
quilted cotton make up their clothes. The
colder it gets the more garments they put
on, and a girl who in the winter looks like a
fat woman of the circus, may slowly fade
into the ether type of the living skele-
ton as she sheds jacket after jacket, when
the warm weather approaches. Clothes of
this kind cannot be washed, and those of
the poorer classes are dirty in the extreme.
The richer people wear magnificent gar-
ments of wadded silk lined with fur, and
I saw one man's warhorse which contained
at least \$1,000 worth of costly fur garments.
The furs used are of all kinds, and you can
get magnificent cloaks of Thibetan goat,
such as our ladies use for opera cloaks, for
only \$10. They have fine silks, but they
are costly, and a number of Li
Huang Chang's nobles had silk gowns lined
with mink. The fur markets of China are
as fine as any in the world. There are long
streets in Tien Tsin which are filled with fur
clothing, and there is a square in Peking
devoted to a fur market. Every morning
about 4 o'clock you may find there several
hundred wholesale fur dealers with their
goods spread out on the ground, and you
can buy all sorts of skins from the cheapest
of squirrels to the finest of moose. There are
lots of secondhand fur stores, and old furs
are bought and cleaned and resold.

CHINESE FUEL.
The Chinese do not use fire to keep warm,
and it is only in the rarest of instances that
you will find well-heated houses. Fuel
is very scarce, and everything is
carefully saved, and a man who is
pulling up stubble and gathering straw and
old weeds in order to make fires, and one
of the chief business along the Yangtze-
Kiang is the cutting the reeds which grow
along the banks of the river, and these
bundles are carried into the cities for sale.
I saw no iron stoves in China, and the
rooms which they pretended to heat were
furnished with what are called kang
benches and platforms of brick about
four feet high, and about six feet long
and four feet wide. They are heated by
flues, and a fire of straw is started under
them and it is kept burning until the bricks
are hot, but the trouble I found with
them was that they were very hot, and
they roasted me, and as soon as the fire
went out the kang became as cold as a
stone. I slept on them many nights during
my interior trip, and was continually
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