

great zest by the gossips who frequent these places. If a person has been killed, or died under suspicious circumstances, their ghosts are seen reflected on the walls or tiles of the house on a moonlight night, and no one will stay in such a house for that night. Sorcerers are called in to 'cleanse the house' if the people cannot move elsewhere. But if they are able to move, no family will stay in a 'haunted house:' thus a desirable house is often sold cheaply because no one will rent it.

Haunted Houses

"One of the most silly of the Chinese superstitions which the new comer observes, is the closing of the city gates by order of the officials, in times of drought or floods. If there is too much heat, the 'South' gate, which presides over the 'fire element,' is closed; if too much rain the 'North' gate, which presides over the 'water,' element, is closed. Butchers are forbidden by the officials to kill animals; dragons are carried in procession by half-naked men, and the inhabitants throw pailfuls of water over them as a hint that they would like a supply of the cooling rain which he is supposed to preside over.

Blessing City Gates

"Demons 'fly in a straight line,' therefore walls are built crookedly to intercept them; they also may be trapped like eels, so it is a common practice to hang up an ordinary eel trap over the doorway of a house supposed to be visited by demons. These traps, made of bamboo, are of various lengths and sizes; but that used for demon trapping, is about a foot and a half long by about six inches in diameter. These traps are conical in shape and are so plaited that an eel or demon having once entered is unable to come out again. The trap is hung up by a piece of string immediately opposite the front door, and the demon in his search for the door accidentally enters the mouth of it and finds himself a prisoner.

The Eel Trap

"Every government office, public building or temple has a high wall built across the entrance some distance from the door for the purpose of preventing evil spirits from