

like all heathen nations; but though they spend large sums of money on their idols, and most devoutly worship them, they expect to get value for their money; and when he imagines that his gods disregard his prayers, John Chinaman is not backward to remind them, rather roughly, of their neglect.

To illustrate this—some years ago there occurred a great drought all over the southern part of China. There was no rain for months, the heat was intense, and all the wells dried up. The people were in great distress. For weeks they cried to the idols and made expensive offerings to them, but in vain; there was no relief or response from their gods. At length John bethought himself that he had paid and prayed enough, and as no heed was taken by the gods he determined to try what a little pressure would do.

A deputation was sent, which first got itself into a great *sweat*, and then, covered all over with perspiration, waited on the idols, and told them it was rather *hot* outside, and that probably their excellencies, seated as they were on their cool pedestals in the temple, were not aware of the state of the weather. They proposed therefore to bring their excellencies out to spend a day in the broiling sun in order to experience for themselves the discomfort arising from the great heat, in hopes that they might the more readily listen to the prayer of their worshippers and send down the rain. And forthwith they placed hempen halters round the necks of these wooden gods and dragged them out in the open air and left them to bake all day long in the burning sun.

It has not transpired what effect this had on the idols beyond the fact that the gilding with which they were adorned cracked and shrivelled up, and John was satisfied that he had administered a severe castigation to his idols as a warning to them to be more careful in future.

#### ONE OF A FAMILY MUST REMAIN A HEATHEN.

Another curious incident happened in the province of Fuh-Kien. This was the case of an old man whose entire family—wife, sons and daughters—all, except himself, embraced Christianity. For years this old man refused to become a Christian. At length one day the missionary asked him to explain how it was that he, while willing that his entire family should join the Church, did not himself become a Christian. After a good deal of hesitation on the part of the old man, he explained that the Chinese people were quarrelsome, and fond of plundering one another; and that bitter cursing was the only weapon they had for protecting themselves from bad neighbors. But as it was well known that Christians could not curse or swear at people, the heathen would not be slow to take advantage of his family

being Christians, but would rob and ruin them. It was necessary, therefore, he said, that one of the family should remain a heathen, so as to do the cursing—and this was the reason why he did not with all the rest of his family join the Church.

#### BOYS IN GIRLS' CLOTHES.

The Chinese are also in great fear of demons and evil spirits. They believe that sickness and all the ills from which they suffer are inflicted on them by these evil spirits, so they first try all sorts of expedients to please them, and when these fail, they take steps to deceive and cheat them. Very often, in order to save the boys from the evil designs of the demons, they give these boys female names and dress them in girls' clothing till they are about eighteen years of age. They fancy that if they do this the evil spirit will not know that they are boys, and as the Chinese do not place much value upon little girls, they judge of the demon by themselves, and think that they too despise womankind and will not care to take them away by death.

#### A ROADSIDE ADVENTURE.

A very curious illustration of this happened some years ago in the case of a man who afterwards became a most earnest and devout Christian.

I was on a missionary tour far away in the interior of the province, where the people had never seen Europeans. The day was bitterly cold, and I was wrapped up in a great-coat and winter travelling cap, and, no doubt, presented an unusual appearance, especially to a Chinaman who had never seen an Englishman in his life.

I saw two men coming along the path towards me, who on seeing me suddenly disappeared behind the trees. It was a very lonely place. *They thought no doubt I was the devil*, and so tried to hide themselves. On coming to the spot where they disappeared I stopped and looked around for them, and found them crouching and trembling behind the trees.

I spoke to them; and when they found I could speak their language, they gained courage and stood up. I then told them who and what I was, and spoke to them of the great God who made and rules the world, of His love for man, and how He sent Jesus Christ, His son, to die for them, to save them from the devil and from hell. They seemed wonderfully surprised, but evidently ill at ease, and they hurried away as soon as they could courteously do so.

When they arrived at their village they told the wonderful story that they met what they at first thought was the devil, and related all that I had told them about God and Jesus