

Weird Ceremonies Held by the Chinese.

The oldest and largest and richest Oriental temple in America is in San Francisco's Chinatown. It is the outgrowth of the shrine that was established over fifty years ago, when the first Chinese came to California's new discovered gold fields. From a small beginning the institution has developed during the decades until now it is the biggest and wealthiest Chinese concern outside the imperial empire. Under the name of the Ning Yung Society it has gathered to its support more than 15,000 Chinese and has accumulated city property and a cash fund aggregating many thousand dollars. It owns real estate on Commercial street and the five story brick building and the lot it occupies on Waverly place.

Last week the society devoted five days and nights to the celebration of an important ceremonial that is observed but once in three years. For that one prayerful festival the thirty Celestials contributed about \$6,000. The result was the attainment of the most elaborate and important season of worship ever known to a Chinese colony in a foreign country. Entire walls and hallways on the business floor of the society's building was completely covered with little red paper placards showing the names and offerings of the various contributors. In one high hall were 2,800 of these slips, each representing a 50 cent donation. Two walls of the assembly room, where they were not occupied by huge pictures and other ornate decorations, were red with some 500 of the slips. Along another wall by a stairway leading to the holy chamber, were hundreds of \$3, \$5 and \$20 slips.

There, where all might read, were the names of the men who had given money to the cause. And all who came looked over the array of apparently similar records to find their own or to observe those persons who had been able to give more liberally.

This special occasion was practically a triennial season of prayer for the dead. Five hired priests performed the mystic rites. One of them chanted the peculiar ritual. In a sing-song tone he uttered what his followers know must be an address and an appeal to the departed relatives of the subscribers. But none was so wise as to know the exact phraseology used. These priests compose their own prayers and grind them in verbal agony from a little handbook. At other times the head functionary would sing tiresomely while proclaiming in a mumbling monotone the long list of names of those that had paid to have their dear ones reminded of the thoughts of the living. Three times a day the peculiar whining chant of the priest would sound for nearly an hour as he stood or crouched before the smoke-scented altar and addressed the beathen gods. About 10 o'clock in the forenoon, about 2 in the afternoon and about 7 in the evening were the favored hours for nasal recital, with its accompaniment of wired Chinese music.

Every afternoon a band of eight players clashed and clattered its cymbals and beat upon its pigskin drums excitedly, and snarled with its one-string fiddles, squealing with its asthmatic clarinets.

After five days of these periods of praying and playing the great festival was concluded with a midnight burning in the street of the thousands of duplicate slips of those passed on the inner walls. Hundreds of little fires blazed along the narrow paved thoroughfare. The sidewalks were thick with the men who come to witness this final tribute to their dead relatives back through the centuries.

The Chinese reverence their dead. Next to this national regard for the spirit of the departed kinsman is the devotion of the Chinese to his parents. These two traits, together with the custom of paying all debts before the Chinese New Year's day, suggest a little of the ancient morality still practised by the oldest state in the world. With such instinctive customs forming part of the framework of the religion of China it is not surprising that the 400,000,000 people in the unprogressive old empire are satisfied with their religion, and they generally object to the assumption of the younger civilizations that a handful of misfit preachers are destined to improve the moral tone of the followers of the tenets of wise old Confucius who taught hundreds of years before Christ was born. The Chinese religion is suited to the Chinese. Many of its elements are such as exist in all creeds. It differs chiefly in the manner of manifesting its presence.

Members pay no dues or fees to the

society. They contribute according to their means whenever there is a great ceremony. Some of them, when departing for China, make a money present to the institution. In this way the concern is maintained. Incidentally it derives an uncertain and variable auxiliary income from the sale of punks and sandalwood to tourists and other visitors who enter the joss-house and find themselves confronted on the altar with a very accidental sign suggesting the purchase of a paper of punks for 25 cents, or a little sandalwood for 50 cents. By making a larger donation they have the privilege of being continuously on the rolls of the society as among its supporters, and entitled to the regulation prayers of the priest. The punk purchasers receive but the one prayer. When that is offered no one knows. There is a strong suspicion here of acquired Western methods and a commercial instinct. Considering its size and cost this temple is seldom used for religious functions of note. The triennial festival just ended and the semi-annual celebration in honor of the idol, Quong Kong, are almost the only occasions on which the Ning Yung Society become the centre of religious interest among the 23,000 persons composing the Oriental population of Chinatown.

Not even the priests are a part of the big temple. They are hired to come and perform the rites. There are ten professional priests in Chinatown. Five of them were engaged for this recent demonstration. They were apparently assisted by seven little boys, corresponding in function to acolytes in the Roman catholic church. Each youngster was merely a figurehead attired to represent the gold button men, or certified graduates of a government school in China. While the head priest was solemnly chanting and accompanying his rhythmic delivery with tappings on a little metallic plate the richly gowned boys were cowering behind him on the matting, and mature men among the close spectators laughed occasionally in the half-hearted, prefatory way peculiar to their stoic race. Only to the busy head priest is the ceremony solemn. He sings drearily on, his brows puckered, his eyes with a far-away focus. At times the other priests get down on their knees and bow their foreheads to the matting. At other times a hardly noticed clarionist wails a peevish accompaniment to the rappings of the busy but abstracted man, who, seated on a pig-skin drum, plumps out dull sounds with a little stick and punctuates them at intervals with a clashing of cymbals.

A man comes along and relieves the drummer, who moves off to prepare the meal for the priests and the altar boys, and the tapping and cymbal slashing continues, with the muttering of the head priest. The little boys poke each other and grin and frisk about in their stocking feet. But the priest never hesitates or turns until he has finished his duties before the altar.

When the inside ceremony is ended the priests and boys file down into the street and begin a pilgrimage of the stations where the spirits of the dead are publicly told that they are wanted within the temple. There are three of these little curbstone shrines. Each has erected over it a flimsy pole and a crosspiece, from which is suspended a big Chinese lantern. Punks burn in a little box at the bottom of the pole. As the head priest chants the invitation to the spirits, his assistants form an irregular chorus and each clasps his hands before him and bows to the libation of tea that a menial is all the while pouring upon a tray full of rice and other eatables. Finally the crouching servant pours tea upon a flaming paper that has served as a sacrifice, and, gathering up his tray, moves on to the next station. The little procession, led by part of a noisy band, follows in a picturesque column. The head priest wears a long wine-colored silk gown; the others are attired in maroon silk. But the boys, except for their curious black caps and scarlet crowns, are nearly all in diversely colored gowns of rich silk.

Aside from the ceremony and the costumes and the chanting and the unlovely music, the temple is remarkable for itself. In it are collected bronzes and brass cases of odd shapes and elaborate finishing, mammoth ornamental things of polished pewter and shining brass all wonderfully finished; hand-embroidered silken banners and chair coverings, rows of ornamental brazen spear herds, and many other things of interest to the artist, or the collector of curios. One grand urn stands seven feet high and glistens all over until

its surfaces reflect surrounding objects in the most grotesque shapes. In this big receptacle are placed the offerings, and from the nostrils of the ugly animal on the top spouts the smoke in the uncertain way to the ceiling that is blackened with the records of hundreds and hundreds of burnt offerings.

All about are the lesser shrines with tapers burning before them, and punks in beautiful bronze bowls filled with sand. The air is laden with the perfume of sandalwood and aromatic punks. Little columns of bluish smoke twine lazily upward in cork-screw curves from the different altars, until the upper air is a stratum of hazy obscurity.

Sacred as the inmates of the building hold this realm on the third floor, they have but to pass to the story below to free themselves entirely from the effects of religious influences, and there, within constant sight of fantastic but hideous inartistic conceptions of Chinese court scenes, they go to the other extreme of Oriental character and nurse their opium pipes in the little booths fitted up for the purpose. It must be clearly understood that the Ning Yung Society and the Ning Yung Temple are not one and the same thing. The temple is a part of the society, but the opium den is not a part of the temple. Be it understood, too, that on this second floor are the rooms of the officers.

To the Chinese visitor in the temple there is more of interest in the allegorical pictures on the walls and upon the banners than there is in the real works of art in substantial metal. The pictures and the heroic figures of men and horses, made especially for the great ceremony, are ridiculous and seem like the work of another people when compared with the skillful carvings upon the bronzes that make this joss house one of the places of public interest in San Francisco.

THE STRUGGLING YOUNG AUTHOR.

Not, Apparently, Augmenting His Bank Account, but Gaining in Experience.

"More experience," said the struggling young author. "You may remember my telling you of the care I exercised fully to prepay the postage on the manuscripts I sent out. I always looked after the postage very carefully; but once I did send a package that, as it proved, was not fully prepaid; and in one time I heard from it in a manner that excited my admiration.

"This manuscript was returned; and contained in the envelope with it there was also a clipping from the envelope in which it had been originally sent. On that clipping was a postage due stamp, and the clipping had been so cut as to take in also a part of the address written on the envelope by the sender, that being, in this case, in my handwriting. So here, on this one scrap of paper was visible proof of underpayment on a package sent by me, the amount being set forth in the stamp. And this documentary evidence had all been collected with one sweep of the shears in less than a quarter of a minute.

"I forwarded the amount called for promptly, and thought as I did so that the manner in which the shortage had been brought to my notice, was modern and up to date in the very last degree. But that only shows how limited my knowledge of such things really was. No doubt, in its way, that method of dealing with the postage due question was altogether admirable, but I have had an experience since that shows me that, comparatively speaking, it was in reality antiquated and slow. By the old method something less than a quarter of a minute was required in disposing of the postage due business; by the new method it is disposed of in absolutely no time at all.

"I sent out, some weeks ago, a manuscript which in the ordinary course of events I expected to hear from in a week, but which I did not hear from for a month. I waited and waited. Of course I hoped (and thought) that the delay meant consideration; and that this careful consideration would not be given to the manuscript unless the article seemed worth it; and so on that delay I reared, of my own hopes, a beautiful structure, in which for a month I lived rent free; and then came the tornado.

"One morning I received, at the hands of the letter carrier, a large and imposing looking envelope, of tough brown paper with a lot of printing on the outside of it, and addressed in a very legible handwriting. The printing said that the envelope was from the post office department, office of the first assistant postmaster general, dead letter office, and finally that it was on official business. What under the canopy could it mean?

"Well I opened the tough, brown paper envelope, with all the printing on the outside of it, and looked; and what I saw made me laugh, as it makes me laugh again, when I think of it today. Inside was the manuscript that I had been waiting for so long and so hopefully, with a post-

age due stamp affixed to the envelope, while stamped upon the envelope itself was the word 'refused.' And so it had never been taken in at all, but had gone back to the post office, and in due time Uncle Sammy, good-humored, benevolent, kindly Uncle Sammy, had brought it back to me.

"You say you should think that in refusing things in this manner they might now and then shut out an angel? Well, possibly so; but I suppose they think that angels are not very thick in the unprepaid contributions of unknown contributors.

COST OF STREET LIGHTING.

Reasons Why the Expenditures of New York for This Purpose are Large.

Chicago spends \$600,000 a year in street lighting; Boston, \$650,000; Cincinnati, \$425,000; Baltimore, \$350,000; San Francisco, \$245,000; Providence, \$250,000; New Orleans, \$230,000; Cleveland, \$325,000; and Washington, a city of long distances, low houses and wide streets, \$235,000. New York will expend for street lighting in 1901 \$2,745,000 for gas and electricity. Of this total Manhattan uses \$950,000; Brooklyn, \$950,000. The Bronx, \$350,000; Queens, \$355,600, and Richmond, \$130,000.

By comparison with the expenditures of other American cities for illumination, New York's annual payment may seem to be abnormally high, but there are various reasons why the cost of public lighting should be proportionately much larger here than elsewhere. New York has a larger waterfront than any other American city. While other cities have usually one public market, New York has a dozen, and the eight included within the borough of Manhattan use on an average 5,000,000 cubic feet of gas in a year. Many other rent the premises they require for public departments, whereas New York owns most of her public buildings, and the gas bills, which in some other cases are met by private individuals, are in most cases here paid directly from the appropriation, which, while nominally for street lighting actually includes all illumination for which the city is responsible.

New York has in all nearly 60,000 lamps, gas and electric. There are 30,000 in New York and The Bronx, of which 24,286 are gas lamps, 4,538 electric, and the other naphtha lamps. Brooklyn has 11,015 gas lamps and 4,603 electric lamps. Queens borough, the most extensive division of New York to be lighted, has 3,839 gas lamps and 2,106 electric lamps. Richmond, the most progressive of the boroughs of New York in this particular, has all electric lights—no gas. Of these, 2,883 are incandescent lamps and 382 are arc light. There are, moreover, 100 oil lamps in use in Richmond borough.

The extent of the territory to be covered and the peculiar conditions existing in New York explain to a great extent the reasons for so large an appropriation for illumination, nearly 3 per cent. of the entire budget of the city, which is \$100,000 for next year. Though the most expensively lighted city in the country, the assertion is not made for New York that it is the best lighted American city.

Hindered in Prayer.

No man in the whole community was more respected than Elder Goodman. He was foremost in every good word and work and was exceedingly eloquent in exhortation. No devotional exercises were in fused with so much life as those he led. So well was this recognized that he was always called upon for that duty. He was once attending a conference, and had passed the night at the house of a worthy brother. At family worship the next morning the elder was naturally called upon to offer prayer. This he was doing with his usual fervor, when the door sprang slightly ajar and in walked "Tabby," the family cat.

Tabby was at once a very large cat and a badly spoiled and self-willed cat: she ruled the household with a rod of iron. Among her prerogatives was a certain comfortable and capacious rocker, which she had long since pre-empted. She would never occupy any other chair, nor permit any one else in her presence to occupy this one.

Unfortunately, Elder Goodman had this chair. Tabby eyed the kneeling figure for a moment, and then with an easy bound landed firmly in the middle of his back. The elder, taken wholly by surprise, and not knowing the nature of this sudden assault, hesitated and stammered for a moment, and then deeply ashamed that anything should interfere with his duties at such a time, he went on with steady and determined accents.

Tabby, finding herself disappointed in the hope of immediate evacuation, began to reconnoitre, walking slowly and impressively up and down the good man's back, poking his whiskered nose into his neck, and sniffing with great deliberation just behind his ears.

The two boys of the family, out of the

corners of their eyes, were watching the whole tableau and biting their tongues hard to save the family reputation. But their father, with eyes properly and tightly closed, saw nothing.

Elder Goodman's prayers were always full and comprehensive; to hurry or abbreviate them would have seemed sacrilege in his eyes, no matter with what hindrances he might meet, and he was determined not to resort to such a course now. But when Tabby finally settled down across his shoulders and began vigorously purring down the most susceptible part of his neck, even the good elder realized that a crisis had been reached; and, coming to an abrupt stop, he exclaimed to his startled host:—

"Brother G—, if I'm going to remain any longer at the throne of grace, I must have that cat removed."

Worth Remembering.

"It is the man at the top of the ladder who can reach things," remarked the haughty representative of a noble family.

One Short Puff Clears the Head.—Does your head ache? Have you pains over your eyes? Is the breath offensive? These are certain symptoms of Catarrh. Dr. Agnew's Catarrhal Powder will cure most stubborn cases in a marvelously short time. If you've had Catarrh a week it's a sure cure. If it's of fifty years' standing it's just as effective. 50 cents.—57

Mr. Bacon—I shouldn't think you'd allow any of our neighbors to abuse you in the manner I overheard some one speaking to you in the back yard, a little while ago, dear.

Mrs. Bacon—That wasn't any of the neighbors, John; that was the cook!

Bed-ridden 15 years.—"If anybody wants a written guarantee from me personally as to my wonderful cure from rheumatism by South American Rheumatic Cure I will be the gladdest woman in the world to give it," says Mrs. John Beaumont, of Elora. "I had despaired of recovery up to the time of taking this wonderful remedy. It cured completely."—58

He—I would be willing to exchange the responsibility of riches for the bonds of love at any time.

She—Unfortunately one cannot cut coupons from the bonds of love.

Like Tearing the Heart Strings.—"It is not within the conception of man to measure my great sufferings from heart disease. For years I endured almost constant cutting and tearing pains about my heart, and many a time would have welcomed death. Dr. Agnew's Cure for the Heart has worked a veritable miracle."—Thos. Hicks, Perth, Ont.—59

"Mamma, I've found out my dog's pedigree!"

"What is it, dear?"

"Uncle Jim's hired man says he's a full-blooded mongrel!"

Where Doctors do agree!—Physicians no longer consider it catering to "quackery" in recommending in practice so meritorious a remedy for Indigestion, Dyspepsia and Nervousness as South American Nerve. They realize that it is a step in advance in medical science and a sure and permanent cure for diseases of the stomach. It will cure you.—60

The king orders you executed at sunrise for offending the queen.

But she wanted me to elope with her, and I refused.

"That's just it."

Fossil Pills.—The demand is proof of their worth. Dr. Agnew's Liver Pills are beating out many fossil formulas at a quarter a box. They're better medicine, easier doses, and 10 cents a vial. A thousand ailments may arise from a disordered liver. Keep the liver right and you'll not have Sick Headache, Biliousness, Nausea, Constipation and Sallow Skin.—61

"If the fool-killer had happened on our street last night he would have had a job."

"Eh? Why I inferred from what you said that you were not at home last night."

Kidney Experiment.—There's no time for experimenting when you've discovered that you are a victim of some one form or another of kidney disease. Lay hold of the treatment that thousands have pinned their faith to and has cured quickly and permanently. South American Kidney Cure stands pre-eminent in the world of medicine as the kidney sufferer's true friend.—62

"This is the last straw," sighed the Falterer.

He pushed aside the remains of the final mint julep and speculated upon hot Scotch.

Dr. Agnew's Ointment Cures Piles.—Itching, Bleeding and Blind Piles. Comfort in one application. It cures in three to six nights. It cures all skin diseases in young and old. A remedy beyond compare, and it never fails. 35 cents.—63

Ugly husband (snarlingly)—You married me for better or worse, didn't you? Wife (unhesitatingly)—Yes, but I supposed I would have some variety.

A Casket of Pearls.—Dr. Von Stan's Pineapple Tablets would prove a great solace to the disheartened dyspeptic if he would but test their potency. They're veritable gems in preventing the seating of stomach disorders, by aiding and stimulating digestion—60 of these health "pearls" in a box, and they cost 35 cents. Recommended by most eminent physicians.—64

"Here's an account of a dispute between two New Yorkers as to which is the most corrupt city in the union."

"Well, they ought to know."