ERECTED TO JOSS

The Beautiful Temple of the Gods in Los Angeles.

Kwan Kung, the God of War, and His Exalted Position Among the Celestial Deities—Interesting Features of the Worship.

One of the finest Chinese temples in America is found in the city of Los Angeles, the metropolis of southern California. It was erected three years ago and is the property of the Kung Chow company. The entrance of the building bears the Chinese inscription: "Purify thyself by fasting and self-denial."

On the first floor, says the New York Herald, is the assembly room, or guild hall of the company, over the door of which is a gilt inscription, reading: "Honesty is the bond of association." The proper place of worship is on the second floor, constantly guarded by an old gray-haired Tao priest. On the veranda, over the door, is a red tablet, bearing the inscription: "Leet Shing Kung," or, "Pantheon of the Holy Gods." Worship offered at this temple is accepted by all the gods. On either side of the door are three red tablets, with gilt inscriptions. One chandelier and two lanterns of enormous size hang from the ceiling. In a corner stands the furnace where paper money and other sacrifices are burned.

Entering the temple from the veranda we come to an isolated folded door, that is never opened except when the idol is carried forth in procession. Over the door hangs a magnificent monumental gateway piece of carved and gilded woodwork. It is a most artistic composition of miniature temples, festooned with flowers, amid which are throned the principal gods and goddesses of the Chinese Pantheon. Behind the folded doors are two altars, bearing the utensils of sacrifices, the joss sticks and the five sacred implements, consisting of an urn, two candlesticks and two vases. The fronts of the altars are set with elaborate carved work, representing scenes of feudal times, the pageantry of royal courts or figures of sages and kings, illustrious generals and statesmen, mingled with gorgeous peacocks and fabulous birds.

The walls are adorned with bright-colored tablets bearing eulogistic inscriptions to the gods. One in crimson reads: "Thy grace abounds like ocean waves." A purple tablet says: "The breath of the gods fills Heaven and earth."

A Chinese temple has no fixed time for religious services. The worshiper comes when he has something to pray about. Family sickness, adverse fortune or some risky business undertaking drives him to the oracle. As he enters he lights his candles and incense, kneels upon a mat in front of the altar, and calls upon the god by name three times. The priest then takes up two semi-oval blocks of wood called Yum Yeung Fuey, bows toward the idol, says his litany and tosses them up. The success of his supplications depends upon the position in which these blocks fall. If they both fall in the same position the god is not at home or is in a bad mood. If the blocks fall one with the flat side turned up and the other with the flat surface turned down, the god is supposed to be ready to listen. The worshiper now knocks his head three times three upon the floor and offers up his petitions. This done, the priest takes a cylindrical bamboo pot containing bamboo slips about fifteen inches in length, each marked with a number. These are called sticks of fate, and are shaken together with the ends turned to the idol, till one is jostled out. The priest or temple keeper looks at the number, consults his books, and hunts up the answer given to the man's prayer. The drum beats and the bell tolls.

Of all the gods worshiped by the Cantonese in America Kwan Kung is the most popular. He is the hero of their ballads, novels and dramas, the embodiment of Chinese patriotism. In life he was a distinguished general, who, during the reign of Emperor Lau Pey, conquered the various tribes then inhabiting the country, and welded them into one great Chinese empire, called the Middle Flowery Kingdom. It was not until eight hundred years after his death, however, that he became a god. The occasion of his canonization is said to have been the drying up of the salt wells in the province of Shan Si, a calamity that caused widespread misery. The emperor and his ministers are said to have prepared written prayers, which were burned and conveyed to Heaven in the smoke. An hour had scarcely elapsed when, as the legend says, Kwan Kung, riding his red charger, appeared in the mid heaven, and informed his majesty that his petitions could not be granted till a temple was erected to his honor. No time was lost; hundreds of masons were set to work, and when the top stone was set in its place the wells once more yielded their supplies.

It is said that during the rebellion of 1853 the hero appeared to the commander in chief of the imperial forces, directing the plan for the campaign and assisting in the battle that led to the overthrow of the rebels at Nanking. Grateful for this interposition, the emperor, Hien Tung, placed him on the same rank with Confucius in the national pantheon, and Kwan Kung was henceforth known as the god of war, whose full apotheosis title is the Faithful, Brave and All-Compassionate Prince Kwan Kung, the god of war.

One Advantage.

Perhaps it may seem strange that Mr. Dolan, who had prospered well in his adopted country and filled many offices, should find that there "was wan great advantage in bein' born in this country;" but that, according to the Washington Star, was what he said to Mr. Mullaney the other day. "An' thwat advantage is that?" asked Mr. Mullaney, in surprise. "It saves ye the price of the stameship ticket over," said Mr. Dolan.

WORK VS. WORRY.

Why Mental Cares Break Down the Lives of the Strongest.

It is a well-understood fact that it is not work that kills, says the Massachusetts Medical Journal, but worry, and from this text some most sensible and profitable hygienic discourses have been preached during recent years. The conclusion of the whole matter is this: Brain work is conducive to health and longevity, while brain worry causes disease and shortens life. The truth of this statement, and its application to what we see around us, are evident enough; yet it is well that such subjects should be continually discussed. A life of intellectual labor, although severe, like that performed by the judges of our highest courts, or by scholars and persons devoted to literary pursuits, if unmixed with excitement, and followed with regularity, is not only a happy life, but is seen also to promote bodily health and long life. On the other hand, mental cares, attended with suppressed emotions, and occupations which from their nature are subject to great vicissitudes of fortune and constant anxiety, break down the lives of the strongest. Every one has seen a class of men whose early mental training was deficient, and to whom the writing of memoranda was irksome, engaged in middle life in great undertakings, and taxing the memory with a mass of complicated business accounts, simply because they could more easily remember than write. Their power of memory for a certain kind of facts is often truly astonishing; but the strain is at last too much, and they die before their time. The brain worry of our school children might furnish useful illustrations of the truth of the same general proposition, but we forbear. "Don't worry."

Neglected Opportunity.

Lord Aberdeen once left London at midnight in a sleeping car for the north. In the morning he saw a stranger opposite him.

"Excuse me," said the stranger, "may I ask if you are rich?"

Somewhat surprised, his lordship replied that he was tolerably well-to-do.

"May I ask," continued the stranger, "how rich you are?"

"Well, if it will do you any good to know," was the reply, "I suppose I have several hundred thousand pounds."

"Indeed!" went on the stranger. "Then if I were as rich as you, and snored as loud as you, I should take a whole carriage, so as not to interrupt the sleep of others."—Household Words.

—Experience is a jewel, and it hath needs to be so, for it is often purchased at an infinite rate.—Shakspeare.

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