

WINTER IN CHINA

AND HOW THE PEOPLE KEEP WARM.

BY FRANK G. CARPENTER.

The Chinese will celebrate New Year's day this year with as much enthusiasm as they ever have in the past, notwithstanding their terrible punishment by the Japanese 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's 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 Fourth of July, Christmas, birthday and Sunday mixed up together. It is the birthday of the whole Chinese people. Every man, woman and child in the empire 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 solid days every month. At New Year's all lay off for a rest, and for about two weeks they do nothing but eat, drink and amuse themselves. For ten days before New Year's the country goes wild in preparation. The stores all have low prices and new goods, and the bargain-counters are thronged quite as much as they are in America. Every one buys presents, and all who can get a new suit of clothes for the occasion. Those who cannot buy, borrow or rent, and the Chinese on New Year's dress in silks, furs and satins. It is about the only day in the year when the whole Chinese people are comparatively clean. Every person is supposed to take a bath the day before, and only the majority of the people in the cities take their regular bath during the year.

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 into 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 clan. I was in China just after New Year's this year, and I found lots of bankrupts. 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 pawn before New Year's. There are crowds who want to pawn other things in order to get money to pay their debts, and the Chinese probably patronize the pawnshops 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 bankrupts, 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 was a bankrupt and that he could not open until he got more money.

The Chinese paint their whole country red, figuratively speaking, on New Year in more senses of the word than one. Red is the color with them which denotes good luck and prosperity, and all the New Year's cards and invitations are on paper of this color. Every child gets its New Year's present wrapped in red paper, and red inscriptions 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 Chinese generals are put on the front doors and the houses are scoured and made clean. Among other things eggs are dyed red and offered to the gods, and dinner parties are gotten up in bright vermilion. The red used is that which you find around our firecrackers, and the Chinese spend more in firecrackers on New Year's than we do on the Fourth of July. The night before every one is firing off packs of firecrackers, and there all sorts of fireworks, including birds and fishes and scenes of all kinds in fire. The firecrackers are used to scare off the evil spirits, and hardly any one goes to bed the last night of the old year. The Chinese say that the man who sits up the night of the old year and sees the first sunrise of the new year for ten years in succession will certainly have a long life, and there are all sorts of New Year's superstitions.

The children of China all expect to get something on New Year's, and they generally 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 next. One says, "I want to sell my laziness," and another says, "I am ready to sell my folly, in order that I may be wiser next year." They go out with their fathers to make New Year's calls, and where families are poor, they give their children new clothes in the morning. They carry lanterns through the streets, and they have balloon-like fishes of paper, which are tied to sticks over their houses in honor of the occasion. All men who have had children during the year buy lanterns and hang them up in sign of rejoicing over their good luck. 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 entertainments. The people have festivals and there are family reunions. The streets are covered with red paper, which is set on fire, and the houses become flaming masses. Everywhere there are shrines, with burning joss sticks before them, and the people fairly go wild.

All people receive visitors on New Year's day, and the relatives who call are taken into the ancestral hall, and they worship 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 Peking, and it may be that the foreigners will be received 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 ceremonies. 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

draughts, and the windows and doors seldom fit well. When they get out of order, they are allowed to remain so, and nearly all of the old houses are shabby and dilapidated. I took a trip over the great plain from Peking to the mountains of Mongolia on the edge of the winter, and I nearly froze to death in the hotels. During this time I passed many of the Mongolians riding on the great woolly camels which are common to north China, and which you find, I think, nowhere else in the world. These camels have wool about a foot long, and it hangs down in great fringes from their necks and their bellies. They have two humps, and are usually of a tan color. The Mongols upon them were all dressed in furs, and both men and women wore pantaloons. Both sexes rode astride, and they were very insolent and rough in their greetings. They are dirty and greasy, and they eat all sorts of fats. They carry great quantities of brick tea from Peking into Mongolia, and they make a tea soup which they strengthen with mutton tallow. Some of them have on robes of sheepskin with the wool of the sheep turned inward, and these fall from their necks to their ankles. They wear shaggy fur caps with earlaps, and they sometimes put their feet into bags of wolfskin, or other fur, to keep out the cold.

A great deal of sympathy is being wasted on the Japanese soldiers who are now in China. Many suppose that they have come from a warm country, and that they cannot stand the rigors of a Chinese winter. There never was a greater mistake. Japan is a land of many climates. If I remember correctly, the country is about thirteen hundred miles long from one end of it to the other, and the north is very cold in the winter. You find snow all over central and northern Japan, and Tokyo has severe snowstorms. The climate of Japan is soft, and a damp cold is much more trying than the dry cold such as you find in China and Korea. The Japanese are used to cold weather, and the daily baths which they take prevent them from taking cold easily. They are well hardened, and I have seen men in Japan trotting about in their bare feet in the snow. They have made good provision against the climate, and if they carried out the policy which the army had when it entered Korea, they probably



have their fuel with them. During the first part of the Korean invasion they carried shiplods of wood from Japan for cooking their rice. The wood was done up in bundles just large enough for a coolie to carry, and they took a lot of coolies along to transport the fuel. Korea in winter is much like some of our Northern States, save that its cold is dry, and the sky is usually clear. The houses are heated by fires which run under the floor, and the people of the Korean capital, on the average, much more comfortable than those of any Chinese city. They wear more clothes than the Chinese, and a Korean's winter stockings are about two inches thick, and they are made of wadded cotton. There are good coal mines near Ping Yang, and after the war troubles are thoroughly settled these will probably be developed.

Frank G. Carpenter

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AN INTERNATIONAL STAMP.

Probably no agitation regarding reforms in the postal system of the world has had such deep interest to those whose hobby consists of the accumulation of the thousands of different varieties of postage stamps as that which looks to the adoption of an international postage stamp. The subject is not a new one in the countries comprising the Universal Postal Union, as it has been up for discussion before. It is a matter involving so many complications, however, that it may yet be many years before it becomes an actuality; but that it will eventually become so is the firm belief of those who have given the matter the deepest consideration.

Under the present convention between the countries of the Universal Postal Union the international is fixed at 5 cents per quarter ounce, or the nearest equivalent in the coinage and weight of foreign countries.

There are some who assert that a universal postage stamp is a virtual impossibility, unless there is a precedent condition of international coinage. The reason assigned for this view is that if there is even the slightest discrepancy between the values of the relative coins of the countries which adopt the international postage stamp there will be a decided tendency to purchase the stamps in the country where the relative value of the current coin is least, thus working a hardship and injustice to all the other countries. How this obstacle is to be overcome has not yet been fully developed, though various means have already been submitted and discussed.

international postal system. It was left for final action to the Washington Postal Congress, which body meets at our national capital in 1897, but the matter is even now attracting much attention in the more important countries concerned.

Captain N. M. Brooks, superintendent of the United States Foreign Mail Service, is reported as saying that the matter will form one of the most interesting subjects to be discussed at the coming Postal Congress, and that some action is certain to be taken. The delegates composing the congress have full authority to act for their respective Governments, and if the matter is brought to a satisfactory termination treaties will be signed, which will continue in force for five years.

Quite recently the American Consul at Ghent made public the fact that Germany had placed a proposition before other Postal Union countries for the adoption of an international postage stamp. There is every likelihood that some of the European countries will adopt such a stamp, and strong hopes are entertained that the United States will also enter into such an agreement.

One of the principal reasons urged for this innovation is the convenience resulting in communication between merchants in different countries. Firms in one country have frequent occasion to write to those in other countries for certain information, and are obliged to depend upon the generosity of comparative strangers not only for the information desired but for payment of postage on the reply, unless the former provided themselves with the current postage stamps of the country to which the letter was addressed, a matter of considerable difficulty at best and most frequently an impossibility.

Another great advantage is cited in connection with Consuls, who receive many letters of inquiry from the residents of the country they represent, but which never actually return postage, owing to the inconvenience of procuring the necessary stamps.

It is also announced that the German Minister of Posts has designed a suitable stamp and formulated a plan for its adoption. It is expected that the proposed stamp will mention on its face all countries in which it will be current, also its value in the currency of each such country, though the details of the design are still maintained a secret. If this idea is carried out the stamp, it is believed, will be considerably larger than those now generally in use, especially if any additional inscriptions are to be made and appear in legible form.

Among the firmest believers in and strongest advocates of an international stamp is Postmaster-General Bissell, who hopes to see it adopted in this country.

An international stamp will also be a great convenience to those desiring to remit small amounts to foreign countries. Correspondents will thus be furnished an easily available and inexpensive means of exchange.

Should this departure go into operation it may be the stepping-stone to a system of international coinage.

Many stamp collectors view the idea with alarm, as they fear it will result in taking away the pleasure of collecting by eventually confining the varieties of stamps to a very limited number, and the fascination of stamp-collecting, as in all other kinds of collecting, lies not so much in actual possession as in the pursuit of the objects sought for. These undoubtedly lose sight for the moment of the immense field that already exists for the philatelist in the many thousands of different stamps issued since the one-penny black of Great Britain became their precursor. And, again, while there is scarcely a doubt that we shall shortly have an international stamp there is little probability that all countries will adopt it.

ENGLISH MAIDS OF HONOR.

Her Majesty Finds It No Trouble to Supply Vacancies.

The Queen of England has no difficulty in supplying vacancies in the ranks of the young women whom she selects to be her companions. They are always the daughters of peers who, if not themselves connected with the royal household, are persons of friends of the Queen. A letter is sent to the parents of the young woman selected to request the favor of her attendance at court, and the request is never refused. The social cachet is absolute, the salary is \$1500 a year, and though existence is dull in court circles, it is endurable in the light of its ulterior advantages.

When an Honorable Miss or a Lady Somebody arrives for her first "wait" she receives at once her badge as maid of honor. This is a miniature picture of the Queen set in brilliant, which she wears hung from a ribbon. Her duties are not severe—there would be less ennui probably if there were more to do—and consist chiefly in being on hand if wanted. Just before the dinner hour the maid of honor in waiting stands in the corridor outside the Queen's private apartments to receive her as she comes out. She carries a bouquet, which, on entering the dining-room, she lays beside the Queen's plate. Her place at this meal is next to the gentleman on the Queen's right hand, unless royal guests are present, when she is differently placed.

After dinner, unless otherwise commanded, she retires to her own pretty apartments, but must be in readiness to answer a summons at any moment to go to the drawing-room to read, sing, play the piano, or take a hand at cards. The Queen, by the way, is fond of cards, and a small stake is always played for. Nor will the Queen touch any but freshly coined money, so such members of the household as play with her have to be provided with coin that has never been in circulation. The maid of honor usually makes a brilliant marriage, and the Queen sends her a wedding present of an Indian shawl out of the prerogative stock.—St. Louis Republic.

Gen. Beale and His Mule.

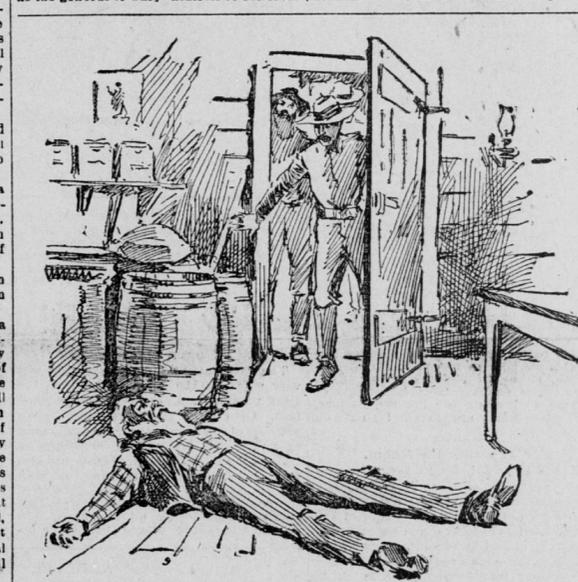


solemnly to affirm that the animal possessed more real "horse (or mule) sense" than many a biped who affected to despise him.

Once upon a time it befell that the general was obliged to carry a large amount of coin from San Francisco to Tejon. He traveled by way of Stockton from "the bay," and at the former place began the remainder of his journey upon his mule, which he had ridden to the Slough City on his last trip up from Tejon, striking out for Visalia with his golden burden securely packed in his saddle-bags.

In some mysterious manner, though he had used every effort to keep the nature of his errand a secret, the fact became known that the general was carrying a large sum of money with him, and subsequent developments showed that a plot had been laid to rob and, if necessary, murder him. He reached Visalia late in the afternoon of the second day and went at once to the hotel where it was customary for him to stop. There his watchful eye soon saw that he was observed with suspicious scrutiny by a number of men, whose general appearance was anything but prepossessing. These men were total strangers to him, but a few minutes' observation showed that they were taking careful note of everything he said and every move he made. Hence he was not altogether unprepared when the landlord, who was a staunch friend, contrived to see him in private for a minute and informed him in a whisper that he felt sure that there was a plot of some sort on foot to waylay and rob and possibly murder him.

The general did not manifest any particular anxiety over the information, but without a moment's hesitation evidently formulated a plan to defeat the plotters



OLD MEYER WAS FOUND LYING DEAD UPON THE FLOOR.

and hastily gave the landlord an idea of what he proposed to do. He then apparently dismissed the whooping thing from his mind and lounged about the hotel for some time, smoking and chatting and assuring himself that he was indeed being watched for some ulterior purpose. He was completely satisfied on this score when a man who had sought conversation with him, but who was a total stranger, after a minute or two of rather forced and trivial chat, asked him point blank what time he expected to start for home in the morning. He replied that as he had had a hard journey and felt very tired he meant to have a good night's rest and should probably take a late start on the following day. Indeed, in the presence of several of the men who he believed belonged to the gang of conspirators he instructed the landlord not to awaken him in the morning, but to have "Mannel" fed and cared for so that he should be all ready for an immediate start whenever he chose to arise.

Finally, after a sufficient period had elapsed after supper, the general with a yawn said that he was very sleepy and asked to be shown to his room. This was done, the landlord performing the service and at once returning to the office, where some of the suspicious characters were still lingering, doubtless to arrange their nefarious plans for the morrow.

But the general was too old a hand at such things to be caught napping. He allowed sufficient time to elapse after reaching his room to permit himself to disrobe and retire. Then he blew out the light, took off his boots, and leaning in the bedroom door to make sure that there was no one on watch, opened it cautiously, found the passage was clear, and with his precious saddlebags stole quietly out the back door and made his way safely to the stable.

The hostler had been sent on some errand by the landlord, as suggested by Beale to guard against his being in league with the conspirators, when told of the plot that was suspected, and hence there was no one in the place to witness his proceedings. He hastily saddled his faithful but doubtless astonished beast, which had manifestly made up his mind to enjoy a good night's feed and rest, and leading him noiselessly out of the stable, which he had opened in a direction opposite to the hotel door, he mounted him and was soon out of town and headed for the south without his sudden departure having been noticed, as he believed, by any one.

As subsequent events proved, however, his fitting mood had been learned by the plotters within a few hours after he left. They either went to his room with the design of robbing him there, or else learned by examining the stable that his mule, and therefore himself, had taken a sudden and secret departure.

The rest of the night and all the next day he rode, keeping a close watch on the trail behind him, and toward nightfall he reached the crossing of the Kern River not far from where the town of Bakersfield

now stands. Here there was a little station or store, kept by an old man named Myers, with whom Beale frequently remained over night when journeying to and from Tejon. When he rode up on the present occasion his arrival was hailed with pleasure by Myers, who expected, of course, that he would stay for the night, as it was yet thirty miles or more to his destination.

But to his surprise, the traveler said that he would halt only just long enough to eat some supper and give his mule a feed, and then he must push on homeward.

So Myers hastened his supper preparations, while Beale loosened his mule's saddle, removed the bridle, and allowed Mannel to graze on the luxuriant grasses that grew thickly all along the river bottom.

As soon as he had eaten his supper and smoked a cigarette the general cinched and bridled the mule, bade Myers good-night, and then struck out homeward. He only went two or three miles, however, when he drew aside into a convenient clump of timber, went some little distance from the trail, unsaddled and staked out Mannel, wrapped himself in his blankets, and was soon fast asleep.

Early in the morning he was in the saddle again, and the now refreshed animal carried him in a few hours to his destination. Late in the afternoon, greatly to his astonishment, a party of his friends from Visalia, mounted on horses that were completely fagged out and looked as if ridden almost to death, rode up to the fort, and when he appeared on the scene to welcome them loud were their expressions of astonishment and hearty greetings. In fact they appeared to regard him as one almost returned from the dead and whom they had never expected to greet in the flesh again. In a few words they explained the reason for their unexpected visit and for their astonishment.

Several hours after his departure from Visalia the evening previous the landlord in some way found out that the conspirators had ascertained the fact of his secret flight and had hastily saddled up and set out on his trail. He at once aroused a number of Beale's warm friends and told them what he feared. A posse was hastily formulated and took the road after the robbers.

They followed hot on the trail, expecting at every canyon and ravine to find some trace that would tell them that the general had been overtaken and murdered. But they found nothing until they reached the crossing of the Kern River. No sooner had they ridden up to Myers' store than they saw at a glance that the bandits had been there before them. The little establishment was a scene of the direst confusion. It had been ransacked from top to bottom and all the most valuable goods carried off. In one corner lay the body of the poor old, inoffensive man, almost hacked to pieces with knife wounds. He had evidently been awakened from sound sleep by his murderers, for he was clad only in his night clothes, just as he must have jumped from bed in answer to what he doubtless thought was the peaceable summons of some belated and hungry traveler, but which proved to be his death warrant.

The murderers were of course gone, and had left not a trace of their identity further than their wanton and brutal murder of the old man testified to their character. Naturally supposing that Beale had passed the night at Myers' the party made a thorough search for his body or for some trace that might discover his fate, but were unsuccessful. They finally concluded that the bandits must have taken him off into the swampy forest and there done him to death, where they could readily secrete his body.

So, with heavy hearts and mourning sincerely over the supposed death of their friend, they decided to push on to Tejon, to give warning of what they believed had been the bloody fate of the general and to obtain needed rest and refreshment for their beasts and themselves prior to continuing the search for the murderers.

Overpowering, then, was their astonishment when they rode into Tejon to have the supposed dead man welcome them before they even alighted, and great was their rejoicing over the safety of their friend.

No trace of the murderers of poor Myers was ever found, and the inhuman crime was never directly atoned for, though it is more than likely that the perpetrators of the brutal and uncalculated butchery met their deserved fate in some way or other.

G. F. W.

The Chaplain in the Senate.

While a group of Senators the other day were discussing the organization of the Senate, a number of Senators expressed the belief that the blind chaplain, Rev. Dr. Milburn, would retain his position. "It would be a pity to supplant him," said a Western Senator, "for then we would have no one to tell the Lord the news every morning." "That reminds me," remarked an older Senator, "of a chaplain we used to have here during the war. He was then, and is now, I believe, a pastor in this city. He had a way, like Dr. Milburn, of incorporating into his prayers all the latest news out of the morning papers, but he went further. He used to advise the Lord what to do and what not to do, especially in relation to the operation of the Union armies. Well, one morning, after he had been particularly generous with his advice, old Senator Sausbury of Delaware offered a resolution. It gravely recited the practice of the chaplain, and added: 'And he is hereby allowed to do as he pleases, notwithstanding the advice given him by the Chaplain of the Senate.' Of course the resolution was not passed, but it taught the aspiring chaplain a lesson."—Washington Post.

Going Too Far.

"When I was at Uncle Clover's farm last summer," said Mrs. Snaggs, "he told me that he had his cows and horses insured."

"Yes," replied Mr. Snaggs, "livestock insurance is quite a common thing."

"Well, I think the insurance of animals is being carried too far."

"What makes you think so?"

"I saw something in the newspaper about wildcat insurance companies."—Pittsburg Chronicle-Telegraph.

In proportion to the population France has more money in circulation than any other country. In France it averages \$40 56 per capita, in the United States \$24 34, and in England and Germany \$18 42.

Railway accidents are so rare in Holland that an average of only one death a year results from them throughout the entire country.