

# A NEW YEAR'S PRAYER.

I know a little temple,  
Its walls are dim and low,  
Yet up and down its darkened aisles  
The blessed angels go.  
And he who keeps the temple  
Should pray to God tonight  
That faith may light the altar flame  
And hope may keep it bright.  
That love may bring the sacrifice  
Which love delights to give,  
And all the angels innocent  
May tarry there to live.  
And may no evil spirit  
Have in its place or part  
What is this temple beautiful  
The temple of the heart.  
—Youth's Companion.

# A CHINESE ROMANCE.

Ding Dong heaved a huge sigh and sobbed a convulsive sob as he laid his aching head on his weary arms on the table and rucked his brain in great agony of spirit. The dice had come—his day of reckoning. It was the day before the Chinese New Year's—Feb. 6, according to your calendar—when every good Chinaman must settle up or go up the spout and confess himself dishonored. He owed only a little matter of 100 taels—not pignions nor cowtills, you understand, but silver taels—equivalent to \$130 in American money. If he had that many taels, he would gladly have paid up, for there was nothing small about Ding; but he didn't, and thereby hangs a tale.

If Ding had only possessed the glorious birthright of an American, instead of worrying over such a trifling matter he would have let his creditor do so, got an extension of time, and then settle up at 20 cents on the dollar.

As it was, poor Ding only saw ruination before him and dilapidation of his air castles. Grim despair, like an immense bat, spread her sable wings and overcast his sensitive soul with shadows and dark forebodings.

Ding Dong was poor and an orphan—not quite as poor as a church mouse, perhaps, for he still had something better to eat than hymn books and velvet cushions, but still so poor that the patches on his gown made it look like a crazy quilt, while his back had received such a deposit of oil from his braided hair as would gladden the heart of a Pennsylvania capitalist to strike.

His father was the famous Ding Tung, who had been a mandarin in the service of the emperor. Ding was a true father to the people over whom he was sent to rule, and knowing that too much money would not be good for them, "ageezing" them on all occasions, thereby growing enormously rich. But, as he was not prudent enough to share his ill gotten gains with his superiors, he was denounced by the censors for malfeasance in office and had his head taken off and his property confiscated.

His mother having died during his father's financial crisis, the younger Ding found himself at the age of 18 a lone orphan and penniless. Now that he had to shift for himself, our hero opened a school and was so far successful that he had plenty to eat and good clothes on his back until ambition and a laudable desire to better his condition prompted him to borrow money to defray the expense of a journey to Canton, where he proposed to test his luck and skill in the public examination. From this literary contest he came out with flying colors. He was no slouch as a scholar, though he might be wanting when weighed in the scales of Mammon. In scholastic attainments he had few equals and hardly any superiors. He had vanquished many antagonists in the examination halls of his native town, where he proved again and again that he could quote Confucius and other sages at a longer stretch than any one, compose poems with greater elegance and ease and write Chinese hieroglyphics with finer touch and finish. He led his class in the examination at Canton, thereby climbing the first rung on the ladder of fame and winning the seal-tai brass button. There remained only two more trials, which, successfully passed through, would land him at the top of the heap, from which he could fatten at the public crib at his leisure.

But his triumph was shortened and his dreams of future greatness were disturbed by thoughts of the debt he still owed, whose interest he had been able to pay by dint of economy, but whose principal he saw no chance of settling before the new year rolled in.

His creditor was no other than his future father-in-law, to whose daughter he had been engaged while the older Ding was making money hand over fist, and the Ding family seemed to be in the flood tide of worldly prosperity. But when the family was reduced in numbers as well as in means by order of his sacred majesty, the son of heaven, the father of the girl said to his wife, "I told you so," and regretted his haste in making the match. The old gentleman, who went by the name of Ju Dan, was rich and wore worldly minded than common. He, too, grew wealthy by "ageezing" the people—not, however, as their father, like Ding Dong, but as their "uncle," whose golden rule was, "Do others or they will do you." He was in the habit of loaning little sums to people in straitened circumstances at 10 per cent per month interest, and by adding this to the principal in case of its nonpayment at the end of the month. By this method of compounding interest he got many persons to give up houses and lands, and even daughters, to him in payment of debts. Those who could not settle up thus had to settle down in the debtors' prison, where they languished in chains and misery until death came to their relief.

Ju Dan was withal a miser and hoarded the money he did not lend as if he were to excel Methuselah in longevity. His clothes were worn as long as they could stand mending. He grudged his wife and only child the very necessities of life. In order to save the expense of a luxurious table and at the same time preserve the appearance

he and his family were in the habit of eating the coarsest and cheapest rice and dining on what seemed to be a large fish, but which was made of wood garnished with strips of salt pork and seasoned with sauce, ginger and onion shoots. Instead of meat he had a lot of pebbles fried in the most approved style of the culinary art, which in the month of the lunar gave a relish to the rice and could be fried over and over again with hardly any appreciable loss of substance.

Being such a grasping usurer and close fist ed skiffint, or rather skin pebble, one would not naturally expect Ju Dan to view his prospective son-in-law with favor, but there was the marriage contract, which he himself had drawn up with the elder Ding. How was he going to get around it without Ding Dong's consent? He saw no way of going back on his bond at that time or forcing Ding Dong to withdraw from the alliance; but like the wily rascal that he was, he determined to bide his time and watch for an opportunity to gracefully give Ding the go by.

The opportunity came when Ding Dong went to him to ask for a loan for the purpose of paying his debts, when the following conversation took place, which we will translate for the reader's benefit:

"Hoon! d' sir"—thus Ding Dong began—"I have come humbly to solicit the loan of 100 taels, which your well filled coffers will hardly miss, that I may go to Canton and take part in the coming examination. I felt some delinquency in asking this of you on account of our future relationship, but my urgent necessity has banished all hesitation."

"Young man," replied Ju Dan, "what do you take me for—a gold mine? People don't know how poor I am when they tell ridiculous stories about my wealth. Wealth, indeed! I wish I had only one-tenth of what they say I am worth. I lose money every day. Why, only yesterday a man hanged himself to escape the payment of money rightfully due to me."

"I am sorry, worthy sir," returned Ding, "but I am not at all likely to follow that man's example. I have my school, you know, and I propose to pay the tuition fees to you until I shall have wiped out the debt. And, although you may not have the required 100 taels on hand, you can easily raise it. I trust that you will permit your benevolent disposition to do its work in my case."

Ding knew he was administering a rather strong dose of taffy.

The miser seemed to relent a little, saying:

"But I never lend without good security. What security can you offer?"

"None, my good sir, except an order to my pupils to pay you their tuition fees—excepting the little that I shall require to live and—the word of an honest man."

"The last I do not want," said Ju Dan. "It is not negotiable in the money market. But the other security will do so far as the interest is concerned. But how about the principal?"

"I expect, sir, to earn enough to pay it off by the end of this year."

A look of cunning stole into Ju Dan's eyes as he asked:

"If not, what then?"

"I do not apprehend such a contingency," answered Ding.

"Well, then," said Ju Dan. "I have a mind not to lend you the money. Still, I will risk a little for the friendship I bore your father. But you understand, most talented sir, that in case you cannot pay me the principal before New Year's day our intimate relations must cease, for I will not and cannot marry my only child to a bankrupt and a dishonored man."

The blood rushed over Ding's cheeks and mounted his temples at the bare possibility of dishonor coming to him. He was an honorable young man, was Ding, chock full of fine feeling. It was his misfortune to have had such a father. If he had had his say about it instead of the God who presided over the wheel of transmigration, he would have preferred a more prudent man to be his father. He was no "chip off the old block"—not by a great deal.

He felt humiliated, but nevertheless answered spiritedly, "Excellent sir, if I fail to pay you, I will gladly release you from performing your part of the marriage contract."

"You need not get so huffy over it," rejoined the old man. "Business is business, and it is no harm to let you understand the conditions. Sit down here and write a promissory note with an express condition to the effect that in case you fail to pay up interest and principal in full for value received before the next New Year's day you will renounce all claims to my daughter's hand, and I will try to raise the money for you."

Ding drew his chair up to the table and wrote the note, while the old miser went into the garden to raise the 100 taels. Making sure that no one was looking, he moved a large vase from its position, then unlocked a trapdoor, which covered a sort of stairway that led to a vault. This vault held an iron chest, in which all his valuables were deposited. It took but a few minutes to descend, open the box, secure the money and put everything back as it was before.

The note and the money soon changed hands, and Ding went away rejoicing, leaving Ju Dan equally pleased with his bargain, for he had no idea Ding could pay it.

Ding went to Canton and was successful, as has been related. But he found it no easy matter to earn money even after his splendid achievement in the literary arena. He tried hard to get more pupils, but they didn't materialize to any great extent. He tried his hand at fan writing, but fans which were inscribed over with moral and poetical sentiments were a drug in the market. They brought him nothing but the wind of applause. But money was what he wanted. He could not easily get along without some.

Ding worried and worried over that small sum of 100 taels and lost flesh by thinking so much and dreaming so often of the gleaming, treacherous tael.

At length he was reduced to that condition of despair in which our story first finds him.

He sat in that chair immovable and alone. He had sent his pupils home that morning for their long vacation. Thoughts unwelcome and bitter as nutgall passed in procession before his mental vision, and, like Banquo's reiterate ghost, would not down.

"No," he cried wildly, as if he had debated the matter in his mind and had reached a final conclusion, "there is nothing left me but death!"

Absorbed as Ding was in melancholy reflections and imagining himself already a cold corpse dangling under the branches of some tree, he did not perceive the approach of a little boy until the latter stood beside him and startled him by saying in a timid voice:

"Teacher, father sent me to ask you to come to our house."

Ding raised his head and saw one of his pupils before him.

"What is it you want?"

"My father sends his respects and asks you to favor him with a call. My oldest brother came back this morning from America. He brought home lots of funny things. If you come, he will show them to you."

Gladdened by this little relief, Ding accompanied the boy to the latter's house and there received a most hearty welcome. The big brother displayed his treasures and as he explained the uses and the modus operandi of every article to him. There were a sewing machine, a pair of opera glasses, a contrivance for making hash out of every kind of meat under the sun, a stereoscope, a microscope and a hundred other things beside, that stamp the Yankee as the most ingenious person in all the world. But nothing astonished Ding so much as the little electric machine which sent a thrill through his spare frame and sunk his suicidal purpose in the lowest depths of Letha. But the photograph seemed him with its peculiar and sepulchral tones. As he stood before the talking machine with dilated eyes and mouth opened wide as a fish, an American music greeted his ears.

Then "Home, Sweet Home," "Annie Bonny," "Rock-a-bye-Baby," "Thou Art So Near and Yet So Far" and "What is Home Without a Mother-in-law!" rolled out in rapid succession. Ding of course could not appreciate them any more than a cat, but the weirdness of the sounds fascinated him. When the concert was ended, he had many questions to ask. The returned traveler kindly showed him everything pertaining to the wonderful machine, told him to talk to it himself and excited his wonder still more by making the photograph repeat Ding's own words.

Suddenly a thought struck him so hard that he jumped up like one possessed, nearly upsetting the machine and the big brother's gravity, yelling at the same time:

"Whooop! whooop! I have got it! I have got it! I'll beat that old miser yet."

"Got what?" shouted everybody in the room in a chorus. "What are you talking about?"

"Got him, you know—the old skinflint. I'll have him, by the shadow of the great Confucius, or die in the attempt!"

"Explain yourself," said the returned traveler. This Ding did, after taking him aside, by recounting all his troubles from beginning to end, closing with an appeal for aid to defeat the wicked plan of Ju Dan. It was arranged and agreed upon that the traveler should make the machine talk like Quan King, the god who avenges wrongs, when Ju Dan should make his demand for payment of the debt. At the same time a dose of electricity—Edison's best—was to be administered to him as an alternative and mild emetic.

Word was sent to Ju Dan to meet Ding at the latter's residence (which was likewise the school) after dark, without fail.

The two conspirators got ready their machines in Ding's sitting room. The photograph was set in a corner where it could be manipulated by the returned traveler behind a curtain with the box of condensed lightning beside him. The wires belonging to the last piece of mechanism were so laid on the arms of the guest's chair that any one sitting in it was sure to form a connection between them.

It was dark. The patrolman outside had just struck the first hour of the night watch when a knock was heard at the door. Ding answered the summons, and soon ushered the old usurer into his room. It was dimly lighted up with the stump and of a candle. There was on every side every evidence of poverty. A bed made of hard boards, surrounded by a mosquito bar, nearly filled one side of the apartment. A cheap table held all his books on the opposite side. Two stuff-backed chairs stood beside the table, one of which Ding politely offered to his guest, while he took the other.

It was evident that Ju Dan was secretly exultant. Ding, of course, had sent for him to beg his mercy. There was no chance of hisipping. There was a look in Ju's little black eyes which boded no good to anybody. However, a smile played around his mouth as he opened the discourse and came right down to business:

"My dear young friend, I suppose you are now ready to cancel the note. No? Then you know the alternative. You are a bankrupt, and I renounce."

Suddenly a voice—a clear but unearthly voice—interrupted him with:

"You hoary headed old miser, you low born caricature of a man, you old sucker of pebbles, do you know who I am? I am Quan King, the avenger of wrongs, the punisher and destroyer of just such pests as you. I have orders to kill you and take you to hell with me!"

At this point Ju Dan's face was a study, for the electric current was turned on by the conspirator behind the mosquito curtain. He grew as white as the best grade of flour. The sculptor of the Laocoön could not have devised a more horrified and agonized expression

of countenance than the one Ju Dan exhibited for a model.

"Unless," continued the unearthly voice, "you tear up the note which this young man gave you, give him your daughter in marriage within a month with a suitable dowry and attend your grasping, blood sucking ways."

These words were uttered with a few more volts of electricity.

"I promised, I promised! Let me go, and I will tear up the note and do everything you command."

The current was broken off at this juncture. His hands now being free, Ju Dan thrust one of them into his pocket, brought out the piece of paper in question and tore it into hundreds of fragments with the other. Then turning to Ding, who had been watching the execution of his scheme in a state of wild vacillation between hope and fear, he bade him come to his house on the morrow to arrange for the wedding.

Ju Dan obeyed the god's commands to the very letter and to this day does not know how he had been tricked.—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

# NEW YEAR'S CALLING.

A Good Old Custom That Has Gone With Bygone Years.

The old custom of New Year's calling, which for many years has been falling into disfavor, seems this year different than ever. Except in certain quarters and among certain classes whose social canons are neither new nor exacting, there will be no calling. The doors of society will be more tightly shut than ever tomorrow, and even the daintily ribboned basket at the doorbell will be missing, for the whole custom of exchanging greetings on the advent of the New Year is dead beyond the hope of resurrection.

And it is an end which no sensible person regrets. What abuses it led to, what disastrous scenes it rendered possible, what social outrages it sanctioned or tolerated, and how silly and disgusting it all became before society reached to crush it out! The life of this deceased social function may be said to be consistent with the life of the republic. As it existed in the earlier days it was, no doubt, both a pleasurable and profitable custom. It had its origin in France, but the custom became fully ingrained upon the American social fabric during the last years of the preceding century. New York and the cities of the south were where it was doing its most tenacious work. The Puritans of New England paid little or no attention to the New Year's amenities. Thanksgiving day was their day, and they had a little use for New Year's day as for Christmas. And the same may be said of the Quakers in Philadelphia, with whom the custom of New Year's calling never did obtain generally or cordial recognition. But among the descendants of the Dutch in New York and New Jersey and the cavaliers of Virginia the social functions of the new year were never lost sight of, and from them the custom spread to all portions of the country.—Exchange.

# BOUNDING THE PARISH.

A Curious Old Time New Year's Custom of Great Britain.

Down to the present century a custom prevailed in many parts of Great Britain of "bounding the parishes," or "beating the bounds," on New Year's day. The custom was designed to keep in memory the parochial limits, and as maps had not come into use and surveys of Great Britain had not been made this primitive method of preserving parish boundaries was high in popular favor. A procession was formed, headed by the leading dignitaries of the parish, including the vestrymen and sometimes the parson. Liberal potations were indulged in, and a procession was formed composed of all who wanted to go and including a number of boys who did not want to go, but were taken per force. The procession then marched completely around the parish, and at certain appointed points a halt was made, and a boy was whipped to make him remember the place.

Other curious scenes often occurred during the "bound beating." In one parish, near London, the line ran through a man's kitchen, and the whole procession every year came in at the door and went out by the window. On one occasion in London a hackney coach stood directly in the line of the procession, and the entire body of men and boys went in at one door and out at the other, volunteers holding the horse while this novel performance went on and looking at the grating of the hackney driver, who beheld his coach almost ruined by the tread of hundreds of muddy feet.—Exchange.

# Riding Stags.

A strange custom in the north of England on New Year's day slightly resembles the game for Easter week known as "heaving." It was called "riding stags." A stag is the same thing as a cow staff. A cow staff is a big staff for carrying a cow, and a stag is a water vessel with a handle, through which the staff is passed so that it may be carried by two men. Now, on New Year's day as many people as liked, men and women, came together in a crowd with stags and baskets. Every body who was not with the crowd was against it—that is to say, was its legitimate victim. When the victim was caught, if a man, he was mounted astride the stag, which was raised on the shoulders of two or more men, and if a woman, she was put in a basket, which was held by the stags thrust through its handles. In either case the victim was carried to the nearest public house, where the prior of release was sixpence.—New York Tribune.

# A Picture of January.

In the old misdeeds the month of January was pictorially represented by a white haired man old in years, bent with the cold and blowing on his fingers to warm them. He is standing almost knee deep in the snow, and a billow of wood, and sometimes an ax, is by his side.—Exchange.

# DIOCESAN NEWS.

What Our Father in the Vicarage Has to Say.

From Our Vicarage Correspondent.

Lines.

The remains of Mr. McCaffrey of West Bloomfield, who died on Sunday last, were interred here last evening.

A festival was held in Erasmus hall in the last future for the benefit of the church. Christmas passed off quietly in Lincolnton, and the evening before was a short entertainment was given in the school hall by the children, followed by a Christmas festival, being the distribution of candy, etc. The annual Christmas collection was taken up, and was unusually large.

Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Slattery, Michael Josie and May Slattery and Mrs. Fred Tyler, all of Rochester, spent Christmas in Lincolnton.

Michael Ryan, Jr., of Rochester, was home last week.

Michael Ryan spent Christmas in Lincolnton. Robert Phillips of New York, who arrived home after an absence of five years, John Harvey of Chicago, formerly of Lincolnton, spent Christmas here.

Miss Kate Sullivan of Rochester is spending the holidays in town.

Aurora.

The Christmas tree and entertainment given by the pupils of the public school under the direction of Miss Roark, was enjoyed by all who were present.

During the holiday vacation the managers of the G. L. N. A. are placing a new steam heating apparatus.

Mr. and Mrs. C. Dwyer have returned home after spending Christmas with their children.

Miss Belle Radcliff is recovering from her painful accident.

Mr. Reade.

A new choir has been organized at the church of Our Mother of Sorrows composed of the following ladies and gentlemen: John Whelan, Walter Godwin, Leo Whelan, Mrs. Anna Fleming, Miss Joe Whelan, Mrs. Anna Godwin, Miss Maggie Whelan and Miss Mary Whelan, with Miss Lilla Quinn as organist.

Christmas was fittingly observed at the church of Our Mother of Sorrows. The church and altar were tastefully decorated by the young ladies of the parish with palms, ferns, holly, ivy and evergreens. Canticles were read by Rev. Father Quinn, and a 5 o'clock service was held at 4 o'clock. That was an anniversary for the late pastor, Father Marice, who having died on Christmas day of last year, the anniversary of his death calls to our minds the noble work that the priest has done for the church in the town of Geneva, he came to this town in 1862, and so of mass for the first time at St. Road in St. Ambrose church on the feast of Our Mother of Sorrows in September of that year. In 1863 he erected the present church, and in 1867 built a tower on the northwest corner of it, which is still there. In the meantime he had purchased a site and erected a church at Charlotte which he later turned over to the people of that place without remuneration. He also purchased ten acres of land on the Little Ridge road and opened a church thereon, and later presented the Catholics of that place with the entire property free from incumbrance. For several years he read mass in each of those churches on Sunday, driving from one to another in a single day, and the season of the year required, often traveling in the winter time with great difficulty.

Such was the busy life of him whom the residents of this place were called upon a year ago to mourn to the little church that he loved so well, and look for the last time on the cold features of him who labored so long and faithfully among them.

Arthur Mattia, who fell and broke his shoulder blade recently, is improving slowly.

Paul Van.

Miss Ella Wilson, of New Falls Normal school, is spending the holidays at her home in this place.

Miss Sarah Caffee of Rochester is visiting her parents in Boston.

Mr. and Mrs. C. Wier of Rochester spent Christmas with relatives in town.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Quinn of Geneva spent Christmas with friends in this village.

Mrs. Thomas Sullivan of Conny's is the guest of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Beck.

Mr. and Mrs. James Agan of Albion, Pa., are the guests of relatives in this place.

J. Dwyer is spending a short vacation with his family in town.

J. C. Gray of Rochester is spending the holidays at his home in this village.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank T. Byrne of Buffalo spent Christmas with Mrs. Ennis on Elm street.

Miss Lizzie O'Kane of Rochester was in town Christmas.

The funeral of Miss Madeline Coleman, daughter of Mr. Coleman, took place on Monday morning at St. Michael's church in this village.

Miss Nora Murphy of Boston is the guest of her sister, Miss Ella Murphy of this place.

Mr. and Mrs. John Sheridan are rejoicing over the birth of a son—Dec. 20th.

Miss Mollie Wier is spending the holidays in Brooklyn with her sister, Miss Elizabeth Wier.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Burke of Geneva, spent Christmas with Mr. Burke's parents, Mr. and Mrs. James O'Connor.

The funeral of Timothy Mahoney, formerly of Starkey, was held from St. Michael's church in this village on Dec. 27th. Mr. Mahoney was a highly respected citizen, and leaves many friends to mourn his loss.

Mr. and Mrs. Ed. Prundergast were in town on Christmas day.

Miss Alice Carroll of Rochester is visiting relatives in this place.

A Life Saved.

Marvelous cure of throat and lung affections are made daily by Dr. Bull's Cough Syrup. Miss Annie Swan, Petersburg, Va., writes: "My brother was attacked by a bad cough and cold, and it was thought he had consumption. Dr. Bull's Cough Syrup was used, and to our great surprise it made him well and hearty. There is no better cure in the world than this Syrup." Dr. Bull's Cough Syrup is sold everywhere for 25 cents.

## Rich F.

It is a common saying that Rich F. is a good man. It is a common saying that Rich F. is a good man. It is a common saying that Rich F. is a good man.

## Blood

And good health, like Rich F. is a good man. It is a common saying that Rich F. is a good man. It is a common saying that Rich F. is a good man.

## Hood's Sarsaparilla

The Hood's Sarsaparilla is a good man. It is a common saying that Rich F. is a good man. It is a common saying that Rich F. is a good man.

## Hood's Pills

Hood's Pills are a good man. It is a common saying that Rich F. is a good man. It is a common saying that Rich F. is a good man.

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