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sharply to give in to his whims and fancies, good naturedly gave up his own beans and took his brother's instead.

Arrived at the field they planted the famous beans according to the instructions they had received from their mother, and waited patiently till the green leaves should be seen above ground. After a few days A Poon one morning woke up and found his own patch of ground dotted all over with green, while Ah Tee's was as bare as it was on the day when they planted their seeds, and though the good-natured little fellow was very loath to leave his brother, he dared not disobey the orders he had received. Consequently he started for home with a very heavy heart.

When Ah Leen saw him returning alone she guessed at once what had taken place, and refusing to receive her step-son she sent him back to fetch his brother. The poor boy silently retraced his steps and returned to the field where, look where he would, no trace of Ah Tee was to be found. So not daring to reappear before his mother without her beloved son he wandered about, calling "Ah Tee, tai tai? Ah Tee, tai tai?" (Little brother, where are you?), until at last he died of exhaustion, and was changed into a bird which now in its singing imitates the plaintive wail.

M. T. MANSFIELD.

CHINESE SUPERSTITIONS.



THE old amahs who take care of our children share the Chinese belief in the inferiority of women, and they will not believe you if, upon the arrival of an infant, you welcome your baby-girl with as much joy as you would a boy. They are further persuaded that during the first days of its life the infant knows to what sex it belongs.

At one time I was staying at Foochow with a friend of mine, who had just had a baby-girl, and I had my amah with me. One evening,

when the baby was crying for no apparent reason—according to the custom of babies,—I asked the amah if she knew why little Edie was crying. “Oh yes,” answered the old thing, with great earnestness, ‘I savy, he too muchy solly he belong girl.’”

Shortly afterwards I had a little son, who behaved in exactly the same noisy manner, quite regardless of his fond parents’ feelings. I had tried every means to pacify the little man, but all my efforts proved failures, and I was at my wits ends. Thinking my amah could suggest something, I asked again if perchance she knew why the child was crying so incessantly. The old thing was not to be caught unawares, for she answered with quite as great earnestness that “Robin was crying at thinking that he *might* have been a girl!!”

The Chinese firmly believe that if two friends have babies at about the same time, they should not visit each other with their infants till one of them is four months old. They think that in case such precaution should not be taken one of the two babes is certain to grow weakly, and perhaps die. They have the greatest objection—in fact they absolutely refuse—to enter a room in which a woman has given birth to a child if they have attended a wedding during the previous month. They are afraid of bringing bad luck, not to the mother, but to the newly-wedded pair.

An infant under four months old must not be laid on a table, or else it will be ever after afraid of thunder. If a baby-girl puts out her tongue and makes a sputtering noise, it is a sure sign of rain; while if a baby-boy indulges in the apparently innocent distraction, it will blow hard before the week is over. If a baby-girl’s hands are fat and thick, the amah rejoices, and tells you that she will never do any hard work, but that she will enjoy life and marry a rich husband.

Should a baby cut its teeth early, beware, fond parents! your child will grow up to eat its father and mother!! or will never do any thing for itself, but will live upon its parents. On the other hand, the child which cuts its teeth comparatively late will support its parents in their old age. When a baby walks very early, the old women can shake their heads and say the child will have to work hard for its living, even though it is not a Thursday child.

The Chinese have curiously enough the same superstition about

weighing babies that is to be found among the poorer classes of France and England; and they also share the belief that if you praise your child’s good health, or rejoice by words upon any happy event, ill luck is sure to follow.

In France there is an old saying that if it rains on St. Medard day it will rain for forty days. In England it is St. Swithin who looks after the weather; but in China there is no saint that I know of, so the Chinese content themselves with saying that if it rains on the 27th of the first Chinese month it will rain during forty days.

Much dark and rainy weather is sure to follow a thunderstorm if it takes place before the 27th of the first Chinese month, and a typhoon season is generally predicted if the wind blows from the south on the 11th of the first Chinese month.

On the last day of the old year, rats are said to be running here, there, and everywhere, seeking their mates, and availing themselves of such a good opportunity for eavesdropping. If they hear nothing said about them in a house, well and good; they will not trouble themselves to go to that house again. But if, unfortunately, the word *rat* is mentioned in their hearing, they will be sure to return in great force on the following year, causing great discomfort to the inhabitants of the house.

If on the Chinese New Year’s-day one happens to talk of any sad event—of sickness, sorrow, or any public evil—it will bring ill-luck to oneself and ill-luck to the country. On that day nothing but pleasant subjects must be chosen as topics of conversation.

The Chinese pierce their little boy’s ears and make them wear earrings; for if evil spirits happen to see them they will mistake them for girls, and will not take the trouble to carry them away. For the same reason they dress their little male children’s hair in two small pigtailed, plaited very tightly on both sides of their head, presenting the appearance of two little horns—the fashion generally adopted by little girls.

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