

who die at the monastery are burnt. The whole institution is more or less in decay ; the monks do not act up to the rules of their order.

Chinese are especially tasteful in arranging flower decorations. At a Chinese dinner at which I was present, and which was most hospitably arranged for us by Mr. R. Rowitt, one of the Hong Kong merchants, the entire walls of the room in which the entertainment took place were covered with most beautiful flowers set in tasteful patterns in a backing of moss.

The dining-table was closely packed with dishes of most varied kinds, tastefully ornamented and arranged. There were absolutely no bare spaces, a display of profusion being evidently intended. I was astonished to find as a condiment in the sauce of some stewed pigeons, specimens of the well-known but curious *Cordyceps sinensis*. This is a fungus which attacks and kills the caterpillars of certain moths ; the fungus penetrates the tissues of the living larva, and after the latter has buried itself in the ground in order to assume the pupa state, the fungus throws out above ground a long stem from the dead body of the larva.

The dried dead caterpillar, with the fungus outgrowth attached, is one of the many Chinese delicacies which, while they seem so strange to us, are generally prized, because, in addition to their gastronomic qualities, they are credited with exercising certain invigorating medicinal effects. The caterpillars are sold tied up in small bundles, and the article is called "the summer grass of the winter worm."

It is the fashion to decry Chinese delicacies as especially nasty, and the well-known eggs, which are pickled and buried for years before being eaten, are always cited as instances of especially disgusting food ; but after all this is more a matter of education and prejudice on the part of the foreign observer, than any real difference of habit in the Chinaman. Englishmen are apt to forget that their countrymen habitually prefer to eat game and cheese in a state of decomposition, and the latter often when swarming with maggots, and in a condition such that it would possibly sicken a Chinaman to look at it. Nearly all races fancy some form of food in a state of decomposition, and no doubt regard that particular food when in that condition as we do cheese, as simply "ripe."

Some of the popular prejudices with regard to Chinese customs are hardly to be comprehended. When I was a child, the one fact I learnt about Chinamen was that they wore pigtails, and I was led to regard that as an extraordinary and peculiar form of hairdressing ; yet the very same fashion had