

I have mentioned that on our arrival, the whole of this motley population seemed engaged in a festival. With the Chinese it was that of the New Year, and with the Hindoo Mussulman the feast called "Marama," or the search for and finding of the grandchildren of Mohamed. The Chinese, on such occasions, give themselves up entirely to gambling; and the first day and night I was on shore, this part of the town might be considered as a vast gambling-shop. During this holiday they are allowed to gamble as much as they please, but what restriction is put upon the open indulgence of gaming at other times, I did not learn, but from appearances I should suppose it was not very severe.

The extent to which gaming was carried by the Chinese, could not fail to astonish any one who had not been brought up to it. It was extraordinary to see all engaged in such an exciting vice; and to watch the different individuals was amusing. Gaming was going on in every shop, and frequently in each particular corner, under the colonnades, in the bazaars, and at the corner of almost every street a variety of games were playing. Of several of these I had no knowledge; some were performed with cards, and others with dice. The stake seemed generally to be in small copper coin, called pice, about five hundred to the dollar, each of which is valued at three cowries; but although this was the usual betting coin, the stake was sometimes silver, and at times to a considerable amount. Those who have not seen the Chinese play, have never witnessed the spirit of gambling at its height; their whole soul is staked with their money, however small it may be in amount, and they appeared to me to go as earnestly to work as if it had been for the safety of their lives and fortunes.

Almost every one has formed to himself an idea of a Chinese; but to be well known, he requires to be seen on his own soil, or where he is in intercourse with his countrymen. The different individuals of this race seemed to us to have a strong resemblance to each other, and although this may in part be owing to similarity of dress, it is also due to their bodily conformation. The flat chest, in particular, is peculiar, at least to the labouring class. All of them seem active and attentive to their business, of whatever kind it may be, and as far as outward expression and action go, as harmless as lambs. It is somewhat remarkable, that the very sign which was put upon them by their Tartar conquerors to mark them as a subdued race, should now have become their national boast; for nothing seems to claim a Chinaman's attention so much as his long queue, and the longer and blacker it is the more it appears to claim his admiration. We frequently saw it touching the very heels, and tied at the end neatly with a bit of riband.