

The Chinese funerals may be occasionally seen. They are seldom attended by more than the six bearers, and the music, which consists of a tambourine, gong, and triangle. The coffin is generally made of some hard wood with scrolls at each end, and appears ponderous. It is carried along at a very rapid pace, and the mode of evincing respect for the dead differs strangely from ours.

The Hindoo Mahomedans appear to be as fond of theatrical shows and processions as the Chinese; and as the day of our landing was also a holiday with them, we had the advantage of witnessing these ceremonies. The subject of commemoration was the Marama, or funeral obsequies of Hassoun and Houssien. The observance of this forms a prominent distinction between the Shiites and the Sonnites sect of the Mahomedan belief. The former consider the caliphs who succeeded to the power of Mahomet as usurpers of the rights of Ali, and bewail annually the death of his children, slain by the emissaries of the illegal occupant of the pulpit of the Imauns. The legend alleges that the children of Ali were hidden in a well, and concealed from the pursuit of their enemies by a spider, who spun his web over its mouth. Seeing this, the bloodthirsty pursuers had passed the well several times without suspecting that it contained the objects of their search. At last, however, a lizard was heard to chuck within it, by which it was known that some one lay there concealed: the hiding-place was thus discovered, and Hassoun and Houssien taken out and slain.

In the procession which we saw, nearly all this sect of Mahomedans in Singapore must have joined. A temple, some twenty-five feet high, was carried about by thirty or forty Malays hired for the occasion. In front of all came the guards and swordsmen, fantastically dressed, who cleared the way.

The bold and expert manner in which these handled their weapons was somewhat startling to the crowd and the lookers-on. I must confess that I momentarily expected to see a head hewn in two, or an arm severed from the body. These were about a dozen in number; and when they had cleared the way, they practised sham-fights among themselves, which from their expertness and grace had a fine effect. They were followed by dancers, boys in female attire, gaudily dressed. Next came some of the branded criminals, who were convicts, and then the temple, with its vast piles of tinsel ornaments of paper, borne on men's shoulders, who were concealed from view by the draperies; then came the music, consisting of small drums, instruments somewhat resembling clarionets, and quantities of small bells, accompanied with a monotonous chaunt, and long trains of followers, with banners, afterwards. This procession was very differently conducted from