

Chinese the Greatest Gamblers of the World

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MACAO, Nov. 21, 1900.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—I write this in the Monte Carlo of Asia in the greatest gambling hell of Macao, where fantan runs riot. Day and night, Sundays and week days, year in and year out, these gambling houses are open. This is the center of the lottery system of west Asia. The Manila company has moved here and the fortunes which went to the Philippines now come to Macao. The chief gambling is in fantan, in which thousands of dollars are lost and won very night by betting on the number of copper cash under the bowls.

I am sitting in a gambling hell as I write

blers of the world. You find gambling houses in every Chinese colony, in every Chinese city and in every village. The people gamble on the roadside, in the tea houses and on board ship. The steamers which cross the Pacific from San Francisco to Shanghai often carry a thousand or more Chinese in the steerage. They are usually men who have made money in the United States, and are going home to spend it. They gamble all the way over. A dozen different games are running at one time, and in some cases the stakes are high.

Upon some of the steamships the officers and sailors come down and join in the gambling, and I have seen Americans, both



HAVING A QUIET GAME.

these notes. It is in the heart of this Portuguese capital, on the Rua de Jogo, the street of the gamblers. It is midnight and the pavement is thronged with hard-faced Chinese running to and fro. The air is full of laughing and joking and of the noises which the Chinese call singing.

There are male roysterers and females of pleasure. The rest of the city is dark, but the Rua de Jogo blazes with Chinese lanterns. Its stores are open and gambling signs invite you to "buck the tiger." The talk is of winning and losing. There is an six-eyed, long-queued man who tells how he won \$10,000 last week, and how a Frenchman came here to break the bank and lost \$4,000 in one night. Listen! He says the man got it all back the next night and \$15,000 to boot. The thought stirs the Yankee gambling blood in us and we look up the house where the money was won.

We go through a well-lighted passage and enter. The ground floor is full of Chinese. The large room at the right is crowded. Yellow men and women are gathered about a long table covered with matting, upon which money and chips and Chinese cards are lying. Look up through that opening which runs to the roof, with galleries at the second and third floors. See the hundreds of anxious, almond eyes which are looking down upon the table. Notice their owners as they let down little baskets with strings. Each basket contains the money which its owner wishes to stake. When the game is over they pull up their winnings. As the baskets go down they sing out the number where the money is to be placed, and at the close of each game the bankers shout the numbers which win.

How Fantan is Played.

In another room they are playing fantan in much the same way. Here the betting is all on the number of copper coins under a bowl. The banker takes a couple of handfuls of coin from a pile at one side of the table and covers them with a brass bowl. Later on he will count them in fours and the betting is as to whether they will come out even or whether one, two or three cash will be left.

The bets flow in from all parts of the room. There are hundreds of dollars upon the table and the croupier calls "Stop!" He raises the bowl and begins to pull out the coins with two chopsticks, taking four out at a time. He does it so slowly that there is no chance of deception.

The game looks fair, and I put my money on No. 1 only to find that No. 3 wins the stake. The next time I put it on No. 2, but luck is against me and it goes into the pile of the banker. Had I won I should have gotten three times my stake.

This game of fantan is played throughout the far east. There are different ways of counting, but of course the chances are always in the favor of the banker. In some games the chances are almost even, but the banker has a commission of 7 per cent on all that passes over the table.

There is a game where the gambler has one chance of winning, two of retaining his stake and one of losing it. This is called chingtow. If at the close of the count one coin is left he gets an amount equal to his stake. If two or three he saves his stake, but if four he loses it. Another game allows the gambler one chance of winning double the amount he puts down and three chances of losing it. The game is in many ways like roulette, although there is no wheel for the rolling ball.

The Chinese are among the greatest gam-

women and men, sit down with these dirty Chinese to play. During my last trip across the Pacific I saw the agent of one of the big Milwaukee breweries lose \$997 at fantan, while a very pretty American widow, who was, I fear, not as good as she should be, lost more than \$500 in the same way. This woman, as well dressed and as nice looking as any girl you will meet in six months, squatted down in her Paris-made dress on the deck of the steamer with piles of silver dollars before her, risking from \$10 to \$20 at a time on the cash under the bowl. The sight was a disgraceful one, and the fact that gambling is permitted on steamers carrying the American flag is a disgrace to the United States. I heard it hinted that the Chinese keepers of the game paid a proportion of their winnings to the American officers, and the latter told me that the Chinese must be permitted to gamble or they would take other boats.

Gambling is forbidden by law in China. There are many people who denounce it, and many who would no more think of gambling than a Presbyterian parson would of betting on a horse race. Gambling, however, is tolerated by the officials, who make money out of it by levying blackmail upon such houses. Indeed, there are gaming shops right at the doors of some of the government offices. They are to be found in the back and side streets and sometimes in the business streets.

Many sporting houses are conducted by joint stock companies and some by private parties. It is against the law for women to open such houses, but the flower boats of Canton, the most gorgeous palaces of sin to be found in Asia, are accustomed to have such games, and they go on in secret in many such establishments upon land.

Gambling for Meals.

Nearly every other cook shop in China is a gambling shop. Here you risk your money as to whether you will get double the portion you pay for or nothing. Upon some of the restaurant tables are bamboo tubes as big around as a tin cup, and about a foot high, each containing several long sticks of the size of a crochet needle. On the end of each stick are little dots of ink spots similar to those on dice. The man who wants a meal pays so many cash for a chance. The tube is shaken and he pulls out a certain number of the sticks. If the dots on these are the winning ones he gets double the amount of his money in food; if not, he gets nothing. I have seen cake peddlers jingling such sticks on the wharves of Tien Tsai among the coolies who were unloading the vessels. It was at lunch time, and each of the laborers had perhaps a cent or two to spend for his lunch. In nine cases out of ten he would bet with the peddler, taking the chance of getting two big cakes or going hungry.

Another method of gambling is with three short sticks. The gambler ties a piece of money to the end of one of the sticks and grasps the three sticks in his hand so that the money is concealed. The gambler fastens an equal amount to the other end of one of the sticks. If he puts it on the stick on which the money of the dealer is he wins; otherwise he loses. In this case the man who runs the game has two chances at winning.

One of the most common ways of betting here is with oranges. You see this going on at the fruit stalls and also in private houses. The bet is on the number of

seeds in an orange. Sometimes it is as to whether the number is odd or even, and at others as to the exact number of seeds the orange contains. If at a fruit stand the dealer will pay the lucky guesser five times his bet, but the loser must pay the value of the orange and also five times as much as he has wagered.

They Fight Quails and Crickets.
There is little gambling on horse-racing except at the open ports and at Hong Kong. Bird fight and insect fights take the places of bull fights and races. There is some chicken fighting in the interior and almost everywhere there are quail fights and cricket fights.

Quail fighting is done on a table with a little fence about its edge. The fighting quails have been starved for some time. As they are put into the pen a few grains of rice or wheat are laid before them and they at once begin to fight over them. They are trained for the purpose and a good fighter is worth \$100 and upward.

It is the same with the crickets. Their prize rings are little bowls. The crickets have been trained. They seem to understand their master's word, and they are urged on to the combat with straws. Some of them are very fierce and many will fight until they die. Those which chirp the most loudly are considered the best fighters.

The Chinese understand how to feed and groom the crickets for the fray. They give them honey, boiled chestnuts and boiled rice and certain kinds of fish. They do not allow anyone to smoke near them, for they think that tobacco is injurious to them. If the crickets grow sick they feed them on mosquitoes and, in certain cases, red ants.

In a cricket fight the insects are weighed before they are put into the ring. They are matched as to size and color. The betting is done just as carefully as at an American horse race. The stakes are held by a committee, which deducts a certain percentage for those who own the fighting houses. During the fight the gamblers grow excited. They scream and yell and hop up and down as one insect gets the better of the other and go almost mad when one wins.

Queer Chinese Games.

The Chinese have all sorts of games, but mostly games of chance. Even in kite flying the boys and men—for even the men here fly kites—will try to see which has the strongest string, forcing his string against the string of the others so as to break them. In such contests the strings are often soaked with glue and dusted with powdered glass that they may cut or saw the better.

At every feast there are games of guessing upon which money is staked. One is guessing how many fingers a man throws out at you, and another is quickly flinging out one or more fingers and shouting a number when the others who are playing must instantly fling out as many fingers as will when added to the number mentioned by the first man make up a total of ten. At the same time they must shout out the number of the fingers they throw out. In this case those who lose have to pay so much money or drink so much wine as a forfeit. The Chinese are very fond of this game. They grow so boisterous in playing it that the European officials of Hong Kong have prohibited it there after 11 o'clock in the evening.

Speaking of Hong Kong that city and Shanghai are among the fastest places in the empire. Shanghai leads in all varieties of vice. It has all the wickedness of the Chinese married to every vicious habit that

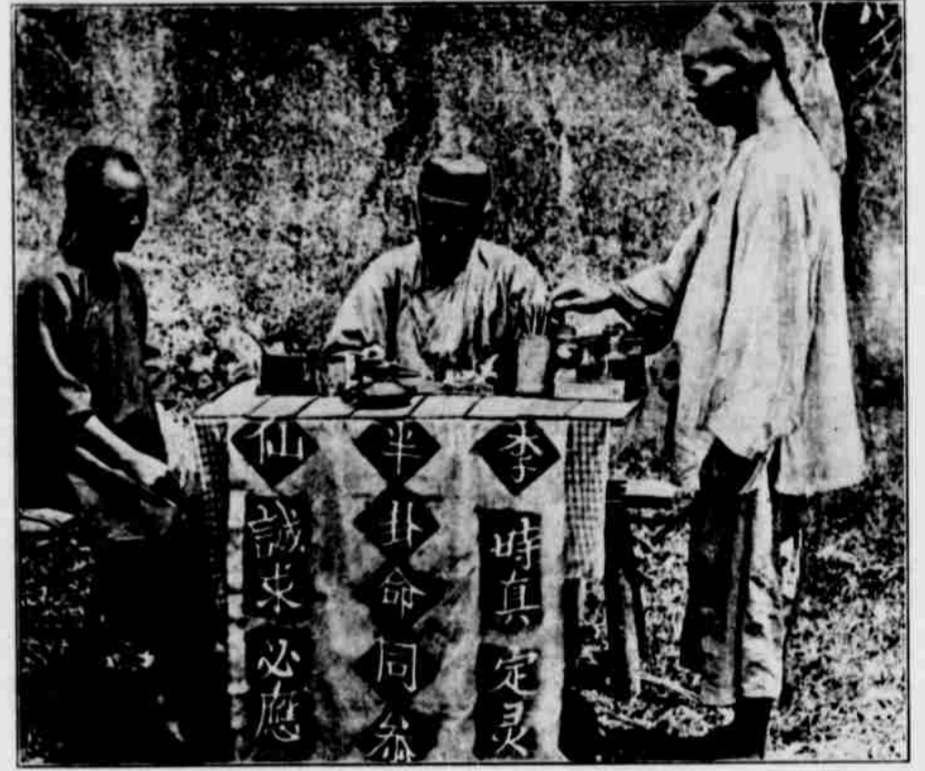
is known to Europe. The older Chinese at the treaty ports deprecate the presence of foreigners in China because of their vicious example. They claim that their sons are being ruined by European teachings. Take for instance the comrade of the American consulate at Shanghai, a man who started life as a clerk and who has now a business outside of the consulate which brings him in about \$15,000 a year. He says that he has made some money out of the foreigners, but that he would be glad to give up his every cent if they were out of China. He told me that he had seven sons, who might have been good boys, but they had been so ruined by foreigners that their only idea now was to stay out all night and spend money. I have heard the same from rich Chinese at the other treaty ports and I can see that their sons are as a rule worthless. They have all the old vices of their race added to our new ones. They are gamblers, profligates and spendthrifts.

A Model Husband

New Jersey, the land of oddities, comes to the front again with a phenomenal matrimonial agreement, absolutely without parallel anywhere. Some time ago Hugh Kreig and his wife of Hawthorne had a quarrel and separated. He soon wearied of the condition of loneliness into which the disagreement had plunged him and prayed to be restored to her favor. The only condition upon which she would consent to a reunion was that he subscribe to the following oath:

"In consideration of the fact that my wife allows me to return home and reside there and enjoy her companionship, love and care, I, Hugh Kreig, do hereby promise to begin anew, treat my wife properly and return home before 10 o'clock when not absent on mutual engagements.

"I do promise to work for her and sup-



FORTUNE TELLERS ARE CONSULTED UPON EVERYTHING.

while their fathers, on the other hand, are thrifty, upright good fellows and good business men.

Chinese God of Luck.

One reason why gambling is so universal here is through the superstition of the Chinese. They consider life largely a matter of luck. There is a large class of professional fortune tellers, who are consulted upon everything. They are asked to point out the lucky and unlucky days for all sorts of actions. There are certain days upon which the Chinese will not do certain things. If they open a granary on one day they think that the rice will rot and they will not plant upon another certain day for the same reason, while on a third they never shave because if they do their heads will be covered with boils.

Every day has its own superstition and its own luck. If you dig a well on the day called Mow you will get only bitter waters

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port her as my position in life will allow.

"I do promise further to attend prayer meeting, to abstain from all intoxicating liquor; also from tobacco and cigars and in future to conduct myself in a strictly decent, sober and orderly manner."—Oath taken before a magistrate by Hugh Kreig of Hawthorne, N. J.

Mrs. Kreig wrote the oath out. At first it staggered him. He walked about the village for two weeks cogitating and wavering. Then he resolved to do it and called in Magistrate John Keys.

"I'm tired of eating cold dinners and having nowhere to live," he said. "My wife is the best little woman in Jersey and I'm going to take that oath and stick to it if I can."

The magistrate was a little opposed to the oath. "There aren't any wings on your shoulders," he said, "and I don't believe you can keep it." But Kreig said he could and the oath was administered.

THE WINTER TERM OPENS WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2, 1901.



SECTION BUSINESS DEPARTMENT OF BOYLES' COMMERCIAL AND SHORTHAND COLLEGE, BEE BUILDING.

This accounting department is finished in oak and the ground glass partitions are labeled according to the branch of business pursued in each. This is the jobbing end of the commercial school, where the pupils are taught by practical observation the details of the work of the wholesale house, the commission office, the freight office and the national bank. Complete business course, complete shorthand and typewriting course.