

bars and wooden beams or beggars in tatters, everyone shares this noble passion. When I visited the principal Chinese temple in the town yesterday morning at half-past nine, a large gambling table was set up in front of the entrance, covered with a white cloth, down the middle of which there was a long, narrow red rug. At one end sat a small, pockmarked Chinese with the face of a bandit and kept the bank while two small dice were thrown in a Chinese porcelain cup. The most diverse company that the town could muster was gathered round the table. The principal players sat on benches at the table, but behind them stood a dense crowd of lesser lights, and judging by the energy with which they elbowed each other in order to place their stakes on the table, they were not the least keen players. Three smart Chinese performed the responsible duties of markers. An open wooden box like a pencil-case with two parallel grooves enabled them, by stacking a roll of copper or silver in one groove equal to the stakes in the other, to pay the winners without wasting time in counting the stakes. It was evidently hard for them to resist the impulse to remove one or two coins at the last moment from the roll they paid out. Those who staked on red won on the odd numbers, while white represented the even numbers. — At a short distance from this table, organised according to all the rules of the game, gambling went on with no less enthusiasm on the dusty ground. The players sat or lay in a circle, surrounded by interested spectators. In some of these circles dice were being thrown, in others simply four bone chips. — In a neighbouring churchyard about a dozen convicts with their heavy wooden collars, $\frac{3}{4}$ of a metre square, their iron bars etc., tried their luck against some ragamuffins, and even in the outer courtyard of the yamen some prisoners killed time in the same way. There are professional gamblers in every country, but here it is a generally recognised occupation. Dr Raquette often has patients who state their profession to be gambling.

A call that I had long been intending to pay the highest military mandarin of the place, the Shaitai, gave me an opportunity of seeing a wonderful specimen of the extraordinary caste of warriors that China has produced and has hitherto considered herself rich enough to maintain. This was a deaf old man of 70, quite uneducated and devoid of any military ideas other than the traditional, fantastic military methods of the Chinese in the field. Of the army organisation and military art of all countries the old man considered the Chinese the best. A Chinese detachment is quite invincible in the field and can resist any forces. He had himself with 800 men put 12 or 15,000 Tartars (Dungans?) to flight 30 years ago at Kan Su, for which he had been awarded his high rank. His main interest, however, is apparently not to study military history or train his troops, but, by keeping as few men as possible, to fill his pockets with the money granted for maintaining the rest. This small number of opium smokers and soldiers demoralised by other vices has also to help in supplementing his insufficient pay by working in the fields. Nowhere does the garrison make a more lamentable impression than in Yarkand, where the 150 men or so appear to be a regular gang of criminals, opium smokers, professional gamblers, usurers, owners of disreputable houses etc. Four officers on whom I called seemed to fit into the picture. No education, only physical strength, agility and dexterity in the use of weapons

*November 19th.
Yarkand.*