

There were, for instance, little suet dumplings, so light that they almost melted in the mouth like jelly. Some of the dishes of vegetables were also extremely good, and I especially recall a plate of stewed young celery. I cannot say, however, that I can bestow much praise on his liquor department. Warmed spirit distilled from rice is not good, and taken as incessantly as a Chinese host expects his guest to take it, is apt to make one decidedly heavy, if not more.

But the point in which the Chinese most excel in these social gatherings is in their duty as hosts. They are perfect hosts, full of attention to their guests, of cheery *bonhomie*, and of lively conversation. There is elaborate politeness, and a strict etiquette is observed, but no stiffness is apparent; every one is cheery, and everyone talks with animation. It was a revelation, indeed, to us to find what good fellows these Chinamen could be amongst themselves. Seeing only the lower classes, the mule-men, the loafers of the streets, and the frequenters of the inns, one is apt to form a most unfavourable impression of the Chinese, and to regard them as a rude, coarse, unmannerly