

race, who hate strangers, and take little trouble to disguise their feelings. But when one can see Chinese gentlemen at home, one modifies this first impression very considerably; and personally, from this and other occasions on which I afterwards had opportunities of meeting Chinese gentlemen, I saw much to admire and even to like in them.

I liked their never-failing politeness to one another, which seemed to me too incessant and sustained to be mere veneer, and to indicate a real feeling of regard for one another. Then, again, their cheeriness is a trait which one likes. The general impression among Europeans is that Chinamen are cold, hard creatures who have not a laugh in them. As a matter of fact, they have plenty of heartiness and joviality when they care to indulge in it. I should say, too, that their conversation is good; it is certainly bright, and it is natural and well sustained. In conversation with Europeans they do not excel; they are lamentably ignorant of geography, for instance, and they often annoy the stranger by asking if his country is tributary to China. But in the conversation carried on amongst themselves