

the means they employ of compelling occasional defaulters to meet their engagements is worth recording. On becoming aware of the fraudulent intention of his debtor, the creditor reports the matter to the surety, and then digs up from the defaulter's ancestral tombs as many bones of his progenitors as he can carry away with him. This is called "seizing the white and releasing the black." As soon as the money is refunded the bones are released from pawn. The people of only one tribe, and that of the Miao, are mentioned as living in caves. These, for the most part, excavate their houses in precipitous cliffs, and gain access to them by means of bamboo ladders.

In appearance the various mountain clans differ very little from each other, but between their general physiognomy and that of the Chinese there is a wide gulf. They are shorter, darker, and are possessed of sharper features than their pigtailed neighbours. In their habits they are less constrained, and there is a bright joyousness about the youth of

both sexes which is very taking. For the most part the men wear turbans of either blue or red cloth, and almost invariably carry the "doo," or knife, *sinico* "tao," which is common also to the hill tribes of Chatangong. A few of the women wear a kind of cap; but only those of the tribe which admits them to the supreme management of family affairs wear turbans. That the existence of these small independent tribes should be possible in the midst of such a large and homogeneous race as the Chinese is passing strange; and although no doubt the inaccessible nature of their mountain fastness is their main protection, yet a further reason must be sought for in their superior warlike spirit to account for their having been able to maintain their independent and distinct existence for so many centuries. The Chinese Government has never been indifferent to their presence, but though it has repeatedly attempted to subjugate and absorb them, it has always failed, and at present appears to be as far from attaining its object as it was a decade of centuries ago.