

THE CHINESE

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DAILY LIFE OF FOREIGNERS IN CHINA

The feeling of exile, ever too melancholy in the heart of the white stranger whose lot is cast in this southern land of ten thousand granite peaks which extend along the coast for two days of the sea journey from Shanghai, is nowhere more happily dispelled for a season than at Hong-Kong Island during the "race week" in February. The indispensable Celestial, Ah Chow, arrives from the breeding camps in Mongolia with a motley-colored string of shaggy, hardy Chinese ponies, thirteen hands high, for which he paid at the breeding steppes only ten dollars each, but which he will sell at ten times that price. They are all of such uncertain temper that bets are laid as to whether they will be left at the post or run away before the starter has shouted, "Go." Fatbellied as they are, some do the mile in two minutes ten seconds. There was a day in China in the reign of Hiao, when the Superintendent of the Stud ranked next in importance to the Throne itself. Then horses were large enough to bear armored men to battle. The history of stock in Japan, as well, since that time has been one of decadence. These ponies are drawn by lot by the staffs of the Scotch firms, English officers and gentlemen, and the Parsee bankers who deal in opium and land.