

WEI-CH'I, OR THE CHINESE GAME  
OF WAR.\*

Two Chinese gentlemen, with at least one pair of huge spectacles between them, leaning over a delicately-lacquered board on which they are arranging certain black and white pips made from the beautiful marble of Yunnan, two pipes, two cups of the fragrant tea known only to China—and the reader has before him the not uncommon tableau of a game of Wei-ch'i.† It will be noted that the players have a something in facial expression, something in general bearing, enough to distinguish them from the attendants who from time to time refill the empty pipe, replenish the half-drained cup, or hand the grotesquely-painted spittoon, did not the short sight and sunken chest of the student, added to the fact of their indulging in the abtrusest of all games 'under heaven,'‡ at once proclaim their companionship of the mighty order of the *literati*. For none but the educated play at Wei-ch'i. A knowledge of this difficult game stamps a man in China as

\* Reprinted from *Temple Bar*, by permission of the Editor.

† Pronounced *Way-ch'ee*. *Wei* means to surround, and *ch'i* is the specific name of games played on boards divided into squares.

‡ An ordinary term for China, still in use, though the Chinese are now more alive to its absurdity than they were a few years ago.

somewhat more than an ordinary person. Its subtleties are beyond the reach of the lazy; its triumphs too refined for the man of gross material tastes. Skill in Wei-ch'i implies the astuteness and versatility so prized amongst the Chinese. They could hardly believe a man to play Wei-ch'i well and yet be possessed of indifferent abilities as a practical man of the world. It would amount to a contradiction of terms. All the more so, as nearly all of those who enter upon a literary career make a point of attempting to learn the game. But many faint by the way. To a beginner, a mere knowledge of the rules for a long time seems hopeless; and subsequent application of them more hopeless still. The persevering ones alone play on day by day, until at last—suddenly as it were—the great scheme of Wei-ch'i dawns upon them in all its fulness and beauty; and from that day they are ardent enthusiasts in support of its unquestionable merits.

Wei-ch'i is solemnly declared by Chinese writers to have been invented by the great Emperor Yao,\* who flourished two thousand three hundred years before the birth of Christ. The cautious student of Western chronology, whose highest flights are confined to the paltry limits of centuries, may well stand aghast at the free and easy way in which Chinese history deals with thousands, albeit India has long since taught us that there are other claims to antiquity besides those of Egypt, Greece, and Rome. On this subject we shall

\* See quotation from the *Po wu chih* in K'ang Hsi's dictionary: 'Yao invented Wei-ch'i, and Tan Chu was the best player.'

refer the reader to the late Mr. John Williams' valuable work on Chinese Comets, in the introduction of which it appears that certain astronomical phenomena recorded by the Chinese, even at an earlier date than that of the Emperor Yao, have since been tested and found correct. Truth and falsehood apart, it was a fitting tribute of respect to dedicate this noble game to the memory of that virtuous prince. With the convulsions of four thousand years many great names have sunk into oblivion; but the fame of Yao is as fresh to-day in the hearts of the Chinese people as it was in those days of yore when, after a glorious reign extending over two generations of man, he passed over his dissolute heir\* and abdicated the throne in favour of a private individual† whose title to Imperial advancement rested upon integrity alone.

The earliest mention of Wei-ch'ī occurs only three hundred years before the Christian era; but it was then evidently a game of long standing, and the champion player of the day was not deemed unworthy to illustrate the teaching of China's most original thinker—the divine Mencius. We give a translation of the passage:—

Now take the art of Wei'chi.‡ It may be a small art, but unless a man gives his whole mind to it with energy, he will not

\* The 'Tan Chu' referred to in the last note.

† Named Shun, and taken, like Coriolanus, from the plough-tail. See p. 2.

‡ The single word in the text which stands for Wei-ch'ī has been inaccurately translated by Dr. Legge as *chess*. That the two words are not interchangeable terms will be amply evident to the reader before he gets to the end of this essay.

succeed. Wei-ch'i Ch'iu is the best player in all the kingdom. Let him teach two men to play, one of whom gives his whole mind to it with energy, listening only to Wei-ch'i Ch'iu; the other of whom, although listening, has his whole mind fixed upon a wild swan which is approaching, and longs to bend his bow, adjust an arrow, and have a shot at it. Although he is learning along with the other, he will not keep up with him.'\*

According to a sentence in the *Lun Yü*, or Confucian Gospels, the game of Wei-ch'i would come under a sweeping clause which condemns emulation of all sorts and kinds: 'The perfect man has no contentions;' the latter word being understood in the sense of 'rivalries.' The virtue of Confucius was cast in too stern a mould to allow of anything so frivolous as play, even of so high an order as Wei-ch'i. Besides, the necessary spirit of emulation was stigmatised by him as bad in itself. Man should excel for the sake of excelling, and not for the sake of being superior to his neighbour. The practice of virtue as an end, and not as a means, is a leading feature in the teachings of Confucius.

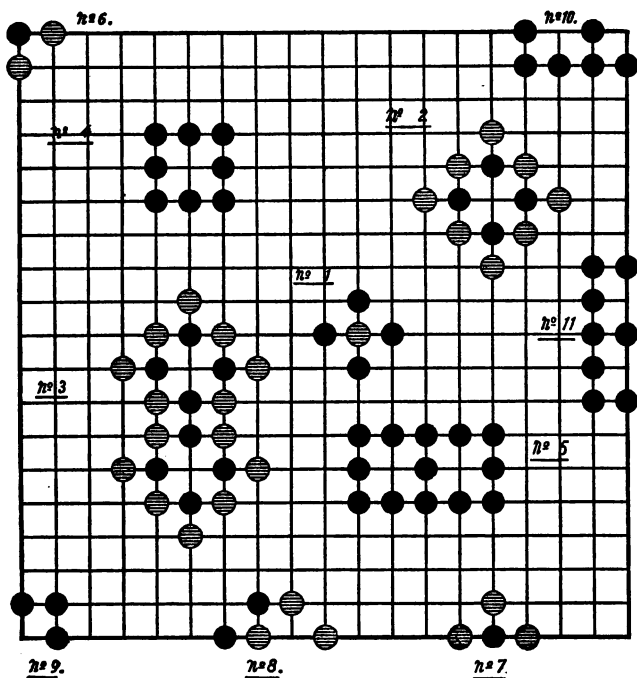
In the later literature of China Wei-ch'i has received no small share of attention. Several voluminous works † have been entirely devoted to elucidating its principles and many shorter treatises on the subject have appeared in collections of miscellaneous writings. Most of these are adorned with cuts showing advantageous positions and giving problems to be worked out by the student.

\* Mencius alludes once more to this game. He says that one of the five unfilial acts is 'to play Wei-ch'i for money;' *sc.* to gamble.

† We may mention the *T'ao hua ch'üan* in eight volumes, and the *Hsien chi wu k'u*.

As is not uncommonly the case on matters Chinese, the profoundest possible ignorance prevails amongst Europeans resident in China with regard to this wonderful game. We shall venture to begin with our own. Up to the end of 1874 we had frequently alluded to it in conversation with educated Chinese, and had always found them loud in its praises. At the same time it was freely declared to be far too difficult for foreigners to learn. Nor was any insult thereby intended to the members of that mighty Western fraternity which had produced steamers, sewing-machines, and the telegraph. If anything, it was meant that the sole means of communication being the Chinese language, too great difficulty would be experienced by the *teacher* in making the intricacies of the game sufficiently clear to the learner. For, inasmuch as only educated men know Wei-ch'i, and no educated man can speak a word of English, the alternative would be a Pidgin-English-speaking servant, and then it would be necessary first to make him understand the principles he was undertaking to explain. Supposing, however, even that to be accomplished, and a knowledge of the hidden mysteries of Wei-ch'i to be actually infused into the dull brain of one innocent of all acquaintanceship with the thirteen classics. Then we can well imagine him entering upon his functions as interpreter in some such glittering phraseology as this: "Wei-ch'i belong allo same two piecee man makee fightum ; wantchee stealum he compound." Altogether, we had long accepted the dictum that no foreigner could learn Wei-ch'i without an infinite

deal of labour, and must have unconsciously adopted the opinion that it probably was not worth the effort. In 1875 we casually alluded to Wei-ch'i in a volume of miscellaneous sketches of Chinese life and character as 'a



game played with 360 black and white pips on a board containing 361 squares;’ also as being ‘very difficult and known only to the few.’ The ‘361 squares’ is an error, as will shortly be explained, which strangely

enough occurs in almost the same words in Dr. Williams new Chinese-English dictionary—the outcome of forty years' residence in China. It was owing to a remark by 'Cæcilius,' who noticed the above-mentioned 'Sketches' in the *Daily Press and St. James' Chronicle* of the 11th of December, 1875, that we subsequently determined to learn the game; a threat which we put in execution on our return to China in the spring, and the results of which we shall now endeavour to put before the reader as briefly and as clearly as possible.

Wei-ch'i is played on a board with a number of black and white pips. The board is a square containing 324 squares, or  $18 \times 18$ . About 300 pips will suffice—150 black and 150 white. They should bear the same proportion to the size of a Wei-ch'i board as draughts to the size of a draught-board. It is etiquette to offer white to the adversary, but the receiver of points plays with black as a matter of course. Wei-ch'i is not played on the squares as chess or draughts. It is played on the points where the lines forming the squares *cut or touch* one another. Now a board of 18 squares by 18 is made by 19 lines cutting or touching 19 lines at right angles; and if every point where these lines either *cut or touch* be carefully counted, the result will give 361 places,\* or 19 by 19. These 361 places connect with each other

\* The learner will do well to make sure that there actually are 361 *crosses*. It will familiarise him with the habitual use of this term in the explanations to follow, and teach him that the *places* on the boundary lines and at the four corners are just as much crosses as any of the others.

*along the lines*, not diagonally across the squares. In the absence of a better term let us call them *crosses*.

The object aimed at in Wei-ch'i is to acquire, by a process of surrounding, as many of these 361 crosses as possible; but before proceeding any further with description, a few simple examples may be worked out on the board which will tend very much to clear the way for future explanations.

(1). For instance, place a white pip on any cross near the middle of the board, and surround it with four black pips placed on the nearest or *connecting* crosses. White having no move left may be taken up, and the space inclosed becomes the property of black.

(2). Black's four pips remaining *in statu quo*, surround them with eight white pips placed on the eight crosses *immediately connecting* (with black's four pips). As, however, there is still a vacant cross—*i.e.*, a move, in the middle—black is 'alive,' and cannot be taken up by white. But at white's next move he may put down a pip in that middle space, and take up black, who is now hemmed in on all sides and has no move left. The space thus inclosed becomes the property of white. Nor could black fill up that middle space with one of his own pips, as he would be himself cutting off his only claim to existence, and be at once taken up by white. It is plain, therefore, that such a space inclosed by only four pips is not safe from an irruption of the enemy.

(3). Let us go back a step. Black has four pips down surrounding a vacant cross. Place an exactly



similar square of four more black pips in direct connection with these, but connected by only a single line, and then surround the whole lot with fourteen white pips. In this instance, there being *two* vacant moves in the middle of black's garrison, white is no longer able to put down a pip and take up black's eight, because black may claim that he has still one available move left. But a close inspection will show that if white does put a pip down in one of these—'eyes' the Chinese call them, and it is as well to keep to the Chinese terms—he will, at any rate, have cut off three of black's pips from all communication with the other eye or with anything else, and these he may at once take up, the space so inclosed becoming his. Further, as by this move he has reduced black's remaining five pips to exactly the same condition as black's four pips in Example 2—*i.e.*, surrounded from the outside with only a single move in the middle—all white has to do is to wait his turn and fill up this solitary eye, by which means black's five pips may be at once taken up. It is clear, therefore, that such an inclosure as 'black's, even though containing two eyes, is not an impregnable garrison, though it takes longer to reduce than a garrison with only one eye.

(4). Again, surround a single cross with four pips, and add to these four more, making a *square* of eight pips. Such an eye as this differs essentially from an eye composed of only four pips, inasmuch as no single one of its component pips is open to be surrounded and cut off by the enemy, though of course the whole

garrison could be surrounded and subsequently taken up by a hostile pip being placed in the middle, as in Example 2. This is what is called a *true eye*. It should be noticed that even if two of the corner pips of this square of eight be taken away, the remaining six form a semi-true eye. No single one of its pips can be surrounded, but the whole body may easily be cut in half, as will be easily seen on the board. Neither are two of these six-pip eyes, placed in no matter what connection, perfectly secure from the enemy. A part of one or the other will always be open to attack, and when one eye is broken into, the remaining eye cannot stand alone, as in Example 3.

(5). But arrange a perfectly true eye of eight pips in the form of a square (Example 4); and make this square into an oblong by the addition of five more pips at either one of its four sides. The oblong thus composed of thirteen pips (twelve outside and one in the middle) contains *two true eyes*. The enemy may surround it on every side, and cut off all communication with the main body; but the little garrison stands secure from every form of assault. *It contains two true eyes*. For supposing the adversary does surround it—what then? To take it up both eyes must be filled, and that is of course impossible, as a pip may only be put down in an enemy's eye when either or all the surrounding pips can be immediately taken up.

A *resumé* of the above examples gives us the following results:—

Four pips surrounding a single cross are open to attack

(Example 2), because they contain only one eye, and that one a *false* eye.

Eight pips surrounding two crosses are open to attack (Example 3), because, though they inclose two eyes, each one is a false eye.\*

Eight pips in the form of a square, inclosing a single cross, are open to attack (Example 4); for, though containing a true eye, they contain but a single eye.

Any space containing two true eyes (Example 5) is utterly impregnable.

Of course the examples given above could not happen in so many words in practice where the players put down pips alternately. I have been speaking as if one of the opponents lay dormant and let the other surround him at his pleasure. It now only remains to speak of the four extreme or boundary lines of the Wei-ch'i board, which are played upon in the same way as the other lines and have exactly the same number (nineteen) of crosses, the four corners of the board being necessarily included to make up the grand total of 361 places. We will attempt explanation with the aid of a few simple examples as before.

(6.) A black pip at either of the four corner crosses may be killed by placing one white pip on each side of it. As will be readily seen, it has no move left.

(7.) Supposing a solitary black pip to occupy a cross, other than one of the four corners, on either of the four

\* Even were one of them a true eye the garrison would be no safer, as the enemy would begin by reducing the false eye, and then (Example 4) make short work of the other.

extreme or boundary lines. Three pips are sufficient to hem it in; it is taken up and that space becomes of course the property of white.

(8.) But three pips at the side of the board do not make a true eye any more than four pips in the middle of the board. Either one of these three may be attacked and cut off from the rest. For instance, suppose black has a pip down on the first line close alongside either, not in the middle of white's two pips on the first (*i.e.*, boundary) line, and another on the same side of white's triangle on the second line, in close connection with white's pip on the second line; then that one of white's pips which is in connection with black's two pips is in danger. For all black has to do, if it is his move, is to put a pip down in the middle of white's triangle and take up the surrounded pip. Suppose black does this, it is clear that white is now in exactly the same relative position to black as black to white before the last move—*i.e.*, having two pips close up to black's newly-formed triangle, endangering the safety of black's nearest pip on the first line. It naturally suggests itself to white to retort by putting a pip down on the very cross just lost and take up the pip just played by black. But it is evident that there would be no end to such a system of retort; and therefore the rules of the game make it compulsory that a player who has just lost a single pip *in no matter what part of the board* shall allow one move to intervene before retorting on the pip which caused his loss. This being the case, it becomes white's business to look round the board for some weak point in his own, or, better

still, for some vulnerable point in his adversary's game, and play a pip accordingly. Then, if he succeeds in creating such a diversion that black is compelled to hurry off to the rescue, next move he will be able to take up black's pip and regain his lost ground, when of course the same process repeats itself with regard to black. But if white fails in making an important move, and drawing off black's attention, then black puts down a pip in the middle of his own triangle and renders further contest in that particular way impossible.\* Of course if black's four pips thus arranged are not in connection with a *live* garrison, they are in danger of being bodily surrounded from the outside, and the absence of two true eyes hands them over an easy prey to white.

(9.) A true eye may be made at the corner of the board by placing a pip on each side of the extreme corner cross, and a third in direct connection with these two. The result is a tiny square hemming in the corner cross.

(10.) To make two true eyes at a corner, preserve the tiny square mentioned in the last example, and by adding three pips transform it into an oblong,† containing exactly three times the area of the original square, and two vacant crosses which are the eyes. It is an impregnable garrison.

(11.) A single true eye on the first line, not at a corner,

\* This is called 'stealing,' and in skilful hands may often be made to turn the tide of an apparently hopeless game.

† The 'squares' and 'oblongs' here mentioned are not necessarily made of four sides of pips inclosing a space. At the side of the board only three sides of pips would be wanted, the boundary line taking the place of the fourth.

will require not less than five pips; two true eyes not less than eight. The first is made by arranging three pips round a cross on the first line, as in Example 8, and making a rectangle by adding two pips, one on each side of the single pip on the second line. The second, by adding three pips to the above five in such a manner as to double the length of the oblong contained by those five.

It should now be possible for the reader to begin a game. The first move is an important point to secure, as it gives the *lead*, upon the possession of which much depends throughout the game. It belongs by right to the giver of points; otherwise it may be decided by toss. And here we must put in the remark that beginners should not attempt to use a full-sized board. A smaller one shows the principles of the game quite as well, and is not nearly so bewildering. Take a board of 121 crosses only,\* or eleven lines cutting or touching eleven lines at right angles. This is called a "corner board." Now supposing white to give four points on a board of these dimensions. Black places four pips down, each one at a distance of four crosses (all inclusive) from *two* sides of the board; in other words, each at one of the extreme corner crosses of an interior square of 5 lines by 5—*i.e.*, 4 squares by 4 = 16. On a larger board, the four pips are also put down each at a distance of four places (all inclusive) from two sides of the board; but the interior square thus formed varies with the area of the whole. If two points only are

\* Always an odd number.

given, any two opposite corners of this square of four pips are the places. If eight pips are given, the same square of four is arranged, and four more are put down, one in the middle of each of its four sides, and so on. But if the players are equal, the winner of the toss begins by putting down a pip wherever fancy may lead him; somewhere midway between the middle and sides of the board is the best place. The adversary then follows, generally on a cross somewhere close at hand, nearer the side or middle of the board, according as he sees a chance of hemming down the enemy to the side, or finally circling round him in the middle. And thus they play alternately until one has succeeded in surrounding all but a single move a pip or body of such belonging to his opponent; in the latter case of course without two true eyes (Example 4). He then cries *check*—in Chinese, 'I'll eat you'—to that pip or body of pips, and his opponent must strive to join on either to another pip or body of pips which work freely—*i.e.*, are not surrounded, or, if they are, contain two true eyes. In this way the threatened outpost is placed in a state of perfect security.\* It is here important to note that an isolated pip checked on any cross of any second line cannot possibly be saved, if only the adversary play properly. To attempt to do so is only waste of time.

\* Any cross surrounded on three sides by the enemy is called a 'tiger's mouth.' A pip put down on such a cross is thrown away, for the opponent immediately puts another on the fourth side and takes it up. A 'tiger's mouth' should be broken up by surrounding one of its component pips, or by leading a column right into the dangerous inclosure.

The variety of combinations even on a small Wei-ch'i board is enormous, and that variety has the advantage of beginning from the very first move. It is often remarked in China, that the uncertainties of life and death are well exemplified in a game of Wei-ch'i. For instance, black may check one or more of white's pips, and, white failing to save them, black is of course in a position to take them up when it comes to his move. Seeing, however, that they are irrevocably his, he may direct his attention to some other part of the board; and by-and-by white, gradually working up his forces in that direction, may by some means or other break through the lines that inclose these pips, and, by joining them on to some garrison or to his main body, restore to them the *life* they had apparently lost beyond all recovery. Even supposing black to have fenced off a space by a connecting line of pips from one boundary line of the board to another, a space in the middle of the board, in either of the corners, or anywhere else, it by no means follows that such space is irrevocably black's. For white, having hemmed in the garrison from the outside, may dash into the middle; and then, if he can fill up before black has time to make his two eyes, black's pips being hemmed in on all sides without a move left, fall an easy prey to white. Even if black does succeed in making his two eyes, white may still (if there is room, and if he has a fair start) manage to inclose a small space inside black's with two true eyes in it, which becomes his, and counts for him at the end of the game.



Now, let black have inclosed by connecting pips a small space anywhere on the board, at either corner or in the middle, and himself to be closely surrounded from the outside by white. Unless he can at once secure two true eyes, it is by no means sure that the garrison will remain his. For, as in the last paragraph, supposing white to fill up this space with pips, then black is dead. Even if black waits until white has filled up all but one and then puts down a pip himself and takes up white, white may begin again directly and fill up until he is taken up once more. But if this is repeated a certain number of times (according to the size of the space), at last black will have himself filled up every move but one, and then white puts a pip down there and all black's are gone. Such spaces afford many neat problems to the beginner. I will attempt to put one of the simplest into words.

Black has two true eyes at the edge of the board (see latter half of Example 11), all except the middle of the three pips on the boundary line. He is surrounded on the outside by white. Now if it is his turn to play, he naturally puts his pip down at once and secures the two true eyes shown in the example. But if it is white's turn to play and *he* makes this move, then black's pips are practically dead. For supposing him to put down a pip each side of white and take up his single pip, then only a single cross remains, and white of course occupies it next move and takes up black. If he lets white put down a second pip and then takes him up, it is but putting off the fatal moment. Next

move white occupies one of the two remaining squares, and then if he is again taken up, we have the old position of a single vacant cross. In such a case, if black fails to secure the middle cross at first, he directs his energies elsewhere and does not contend for a space which can never be his. Black's only chance would be to call off white's attention and endeavour meanwhile to break through his exterior line of pips. By varying the number of crosses thus inclosed, many pretty combinations of this kind may be produced. Trained players see at a glance in whose possession such spaces will ultimately remain, and accordingly do not play them out; but the tyro should take no conclusions for granted until he has proved them satisfactorily by experience. Sometimes it will happen that one player will get a few pips down in a piece of his adversary's ground (already surrounded on the outside) in such a position that, although two crosses remain vacant, neither can be the first to fill up one of these, because the opponent by filling up the other would at once take up, and by the series of combinations to follow would gain final possession of the contested space. Thus some half-dozen pips will often be able to remain unharmed in the midst of a hostile garrison, though wanting the two true eyes, without which under ordinary circumstances no body of pips can successfully resist attack. Such pips are called *truce* pips, and count at the end of the game. The position is not an easy one to explain, but once met with in practice cannot fail to be understood.

And now supposing the board to be so covered with pips that neither party can play another move without putting down in the adversary's ground, where they are sure to be immediately taken up, or in his own ground, where, if already safe from hostile inroads, they are of course perfectly useless,—then the game of Wei-ch'i is at an end, and it only remains to see who is the winner. This is effected by counting the crosses *occupied and inclosed* by the pips of either player. Good players inclose large tracts, which it is not obligatory to cover with pips. Only if the adversary dashes in with a view to make a smaller garrison inside, it then becomes necessary to follow him about closely so that he cannot make his two true eyes, at the same time securing two or more such eyes for oneself. Such pips may be removed from the interior of a garrison before counting up begins. The pips are nothing in themselves; they merely mark the crosses covered or inclosed. Of these crosses, a 'corner' Wei-ch'i board, such as has been recommended for learners, contains  $11 \times 11 = 121$ —always an odd number. Now black may have possessed himself of sixty of these, and white of sixty-one. Then, if there is nothing else to take into consideration, white wins by one cross. But if he was the receiver of points, then these must be deducted from his total and added on to black's, who will become the winner by so many as his total exceeds sixty or one-half the board, the idea being that each player starts with one-half the board as capital which he may increase or lose, a drawn game being impossible, as there is always one cross left to

fight for, over and above the halves just mentioned. Thus, if black has one hundred crosses, and white twenty-one only, black wins by forty—*i.e.*, thirty-nine over his capital of sixty, plus the one contended for. White loses by forty, for it would take thirty-nine to make up white's original capital and one extra to make him the winner. It should be noticed here that it is only necessary to count the crosses of one player to see who has won the game, and by how many. But even now the game is not quite decided.

Suppose black to have sixty-one, and white sixty places, no points having been given by either side. It still remains to count the garrisons or spaces inclosed. If the players have (as they should aim at having) one large garrison each, no matter how parts of it ramify among the enemy's pips so long as all the outposts are connected with the main body, and consequently with each other, then black wins the game by the single cross he holds to the good. But if, instead of one, black has three separate garrisons, for each garrison that he has more than white he forfeits one cross. In the present instance, therefore, two points would be taken from black and added on to white, making the latter the winner by that number. This is all on the subject of counting, which is as simple as it well can be.

And now we fancy we hear some weary experimentalist who has carefully followed this somewhat trying description, expecting every instant that the light of Wei-ch'i would flash across his understanding, exclaim against the tedium of acquiring this difficult game. If

such be the case, if all we have written still fails to rouse the necessary energy for learning its rules, and kindle the necessary enthusiasm for appreciating its combinations, we only ask it to be conceded that the fault may lie in our own sickly disquisition, or possibly in the learner himself; not in the fundamental principles of a game which has survived the crash of dynasties, the havoc of rebellion and war. Is it rational to believe that an ingenious people like the Chinese, delighting as they do in intellectual subtleties, would have given their homage for so many centuries to a game not worth the candle? Many of China's greatest heroes have been famous for their skill at Wei-ch'i. Su Tung-p'o\* forgot the shame and misery of exile in the excitement of a hard-fought game. The great general, Mêng Ch'ang-chün, in his hours of peaceful retirement when the din of battle was hushed, played daily bouts of Wei-ch'i to keep his hand in practice for the art of war. So unusual is it in China for a man of high literary tastes and abilities to be ignorant of Wei-ch'i that history has deigned to record that fact of the talented emperor who reigned under the style of Ch'ien Lung.† It chanced, one day, that a Japanese envoy—in those days 'Tribute-bearer'—petitioned his Imperial Majesty for the honour of a game. Ashamed to say that he could not play, the Emperor caused a board and pips to be brought and gravely sat down as if he knew all about it. Royalty of course took the first move, but his Majesty, not

\* See p. 82.

† See p. 116.

knowing where to begin, thought the middle of the board would be as good a place as any, and accordingly put his pip down on the very centre cross of all, to the no small astonishment of his opponent. The Japanese then made such a move as he deemed advantageous, which the Emperor immediately imitated by putting down a pip in an exactly relative position on the opposite side of the middle pip, and this he continued to do all through the game, at the end of which he was necessarily the winner by the pip he put down first.

Had the Chinese nothing to take the place of Wei-ch'i, we might be forced to concede—even then under protest—that they only play Wei-ch'i for want of a better game. But they have games involving thought with cards, they have dominoes, and many other games played with and without pips, requiring either calculation or memory. Lastly they have that beautiful game\* which has so long reigned supreme in India, Persia, and the West—the 'Game and Playe of y<sup>e</sup> Chesse.' To compare Wei-ch'i with either Chinese or Western chess is quite beside the question. They have nothing in common but the element of calculation and an absence of anything like chance. Chess has a decided advantage in the variety of character attaching to the different pieces. In variety of combinations, besides that of number, Wei-ch'i has this advantage, that such variety begins from the very first move. That drawn games may

\* Differing in detail from our game, and, in our opinion, decidedly inferior.

occur in chess, but not in Wei-ch'i, might be quoted as an advantage by the supporters of either side. Without being a scientific player of one game or the other, we have no hesitation in saying that, national pride, prejudice, and the force of early association apart, Wei-ch'i and chess meet upon equal terms.

In taking leave of Wei-ch'i, we must ask permission to add that we do so only so far as these pages are concerned. It has established itself securely with us as a household game, and will doubtless yet afford us many a pleasant hour. We can only hope we have succeeded in presenting its general features in a tolerably clear light to the uninitiated reader. To enable us even to attempt this, it was necessary to master the science of the game ourselves; and though we still remain but indifferent players, and frequently meet with the roughest treatment at the hands of Chinese experts, we do not regret one instant of the time spent in acquiring this truly noble game.