Theatrical exhibitions are favourite amusements of the Chinese, and, as among the ancient Greeks and Romans, they are sometimes connected with religion. The estimation in which they are held may be inferred from a single fact. The money expended upon them in one year at Macao, a place where there are but few wealthy Chinese, amounted to nearly seven thousand dollars.

It is remarkable that there are no regular theatres. The actors are literally vagabonds, strolling about from city to city, and from province to province. In Canton, for example, the inhabitants of a certain quarter club together and make up a purse, with which a company is engaged. A temporary theatre is erected, and the whole neighbourhood is at liberty to attend. When the *quid pro quo* has been rendered by the actors, they move off to another quarter, and the same thing is repeated. It is customary to employ playactors at private entertainments, which are never considered complete without a theatrical exhibition. Upon such occasions a list of plays is handed to the most distinguished guest, who selects whichever best jumps with his fancy. 'The principal inns and all large private establishments have a room expressly for this purpose. Females are not allowed to appear on the stage.

Some notice of the other national amusements will not be out of place here. The Chinese have fewer holidays than perhaps any other people; yet they have a number of festivals, which are enjoyed with a keen relish. The chief of these is the Feast of the New Year, a species of Saturnalia, when the whole empire abandons itself to it frenzy of merriment. All labour is intermitted for several days; public, business is suspended; servants are dressed out in all the finery at their command; visits of ceremony and presents are interchanged among friends; the rites of religion are conducted with unusual pomp; and, in short, gayety and pleasure are the reigning divinities.

The Feast of Lanterns, which occurs soon after this, is a general illumination throughout the empire. The object seems to be to afford an occasion for the display of ingenuity and taste in the construction and mechanism of an infinite variety of lanterns. It is computed that, upon this occasion, there are not less than 200,000,000 blazing al the same time in different parts of the empire.

There are several agricultural festivals; an annual trial of skill in boat-racing; a festival in honour of the dead; and a sort of general thanksgiving, a holiday highly enjoyed, which takes place in September, at the commencement of the business year.