

but less is charged for the pit. Our fee permitted a visit to the galleries, had we desired it; but our object was to mix with the mass of the audience for a few minutes, and to get some faint idea of how they were interested in the play. The house was a low-roofed, dingy-looking place, capable of holding about 500 people. All the seats, except a few in the back, were filled, and with men—men ranging possibly between 16 and 40 years of age. The general type of countenance and figure and dress was, to a stranger, strikingly uniform; though doubtless, to themselves, sufficiently marked distinctions would appear. An ordinary observer cannot distinguish one sheep from another: but the shepherd knows every one in a flock of hundreds. To an ignorant white man, all negroes look the same. And a negro must be puzzled, when first landed from Africa in a country of white men, where all seem to him as much alike as the peas in a pod.

A Chinese play is an interminable affair. It begins with the birth of the hero, follows him up through his nursery life and the adventures of youth, marries him, and does not leave him then; follows him through talks with his wife, leave-takings, deputations, embassies, processions, wars, and all his busy round of life, till he shuffles off the mortal coil and stage together. The actors had been engaged already for eighteen nights on the play, a bit of which we saw; but the spectators were in no wise fatigued. There they had come night after night, and there they sat, hundreds of yellow or dim-coloured Mongolians, stolidly, but none the less intently, staring at the gorgeous tinsel-work and absurd disguises on the stage; listening to the tum-tumming, chink-chinking of what were intended for musical instruments, and the sharp, shrill dialogues and declamations—the chief characteristic of which, in our ears, was a rapid succession of rising and falling inflections, resembling the cackling of hens more than the full human voice divine. The whole performance seemed to us incredibly childish. A tall, pompous old fool, with a prodigious goat's hair beard, and robes that were a blaze of gold-paper and sparkling tinsels, strutted about the stage, bowing and scraping, waving

his hands in benignant and condescending style, stroking his mock-beard, and occasionally lifting his leg high to kick some attendant, in order to show his sovereign power and pleasure. This was the great man of the piece. His wife and friends were delicate-featured, melancholy-eyed girls, with cheeks painted the daintiest red, and necks the softest white, black hair, neatly done up, and feet the size of babies' fists. Numerous attendants were grouped about the stage, dressed in gaudy gorgeous robes, whose duty it was to fall into line every now and then, and march round about in procession to the sound of the monotonous music—some of them carrying banners, others doing duty as mounted men, by having wooden donkey's heads and trappings sewed on to the front of their robes. Our Chinese education having been neglected, we soon got tired of the whole thing, and we went out, questioning if one of our theatrical representations or pantomimes wouldn't appear equally childish or stupid in the eyes of mandarin.

We next went through several streets, courts, and blind alleys in the Chinese quarter; and of them I shall say nothing, except that they are a disgrace to any city. More flagrant, more abominable bestiality, Sodom could not have showed before its destruction.

Sick at heart, my friend next conducted me to the Presbyterian Mission-church and school for the Chinese. Though it was now 9 o'clock, the school was in full blast, both upstairs and in the basement. This mission is the oldest and most successful in Frisco. It has been under the charge of the Rev. Mr. Loomis for fourteen years, and every night he is to be found at his post. Another missionary now works with him, and two Chinese converts are valuable assistants. The school is held in the evenings, because the scholars are engaged during the day at hard work in the store, the shop, the laundry, or the kitchen. The attendance varies from 70 to 100, all of them being lads, or men whose first motive in coming is that they may get an English education. Part of the evening is devoted to oral lessons, embracing subjects needful in business, especially arithmetic, and also geography, grammar, history, reading, &c., and the