

ling of firecrackers, the joyful howls of Celestials, and barking of terrified dogs. All this clamor and din was to scare away the Evil One, and the Mongolian devil would need to be a pretty strong minded individual to stand the pow-wow they kept up to induce him to vacate Chinatown.

Our first venture was a social call on some Chinese friends of Hop Wah Kee's. We wished them happy New Year as they welcomed us with Occidental politeness and apparent delight, and after placing seats for us at one proceeded to serve refreshments—sweetmeats direct from China, little Japan oranges, huge sticks of sugar cane and jugs of whiskey. We sampled all but the whiskey, managing to eat the uncanny looking "goodies" with outward composure, but much inward misgivings and haunting fear that possibly we were disposing of the forequarters of rats or monkey's ears done in sugar.

A being called Ting Hee Loo was to be favored with our next call, and one of his countrymen whom we hailed from out the noisy crowd consented to pilot us to his habitation. He brought us at last into a dark alley, teeming with odors, pointed to a door in front of us and clattered off, declining to "savvy" further enquiries. The door opened—not into a house, but into more outdoors where a number of houses, jumbled together in true Chinese style, rose up out of "an horror of great darkness," into which Uncle fearlessly disappeared. Presently we saw his tall plug hat mounting a flight of steps that shot up "out of the Nowhere into the Whence;" a moment he was outlined against the stars at the top, then vanished, reappearing after some time to tell us that Ting Hee Loo had gone to the theatre. Happy thought! We would include a Chinese theatre in our sight-seeing.

An acrobatic ballet seemed to be in progress, and the stage was ablaze with a procession brilliantly costumed in red and gold, with banners, fans, and hats of gauze. The orchestra kept up its infernal din inside, and at the doors sounded the monotonous drum-beats and blare of trumpets. A moment or two in the grimy smokiness of the interior, a few blasts from the orchestra, one penetrating whiff of the atmosphere, and we "stood not upon the order of our going." The Chinese are devoted play-goers. In Victoria they have but cheap and poor imitations of the gorgeous dramas of their own country, or even of San Francisco. The poem and plot of a Chinese play one is not expected to understand; only their own trained and heated imaginations can grasp the heathen pageant which to a foreigner seems but a distracting procession of emperors, vassels, gods, goddesses, animals and priests. "When you are in the theatre" say the Chinese, "you must not ask," so there is slight probability of foreigners at any early date becoming constant attendants.

From the theatre we wandered by "ways that were dark" to