

surmount the invincible "Rockies," Uncle developed an unhappy determination to investigate the habits of the Chinese colony that swarmed not far from our doors. For this purpose he at once engaged a Celestial domestic, selected solely on account of his exceedingly heathenish cognomen—Hop Wah Kee.

One January morning when Hop Wah Kee appeared before us, the "copper-colored expanse with incidental variations, which served him for a countenance," was wreathed in more than its accustomed smiles. "Chinaman heap velly good time one more week," he remarked lucidly as he tied up the wash. "China New Year," he explained, in answer to our blank expressions; "lady fetchum dish, got China lily," and from "up his sleeves, which were wide," he produced a bulb like a sprouted onion, a bag of Chinese sweetmeats and a package of fire-crackers. The bulb he placed with great care in the dish, filling the surrounding space with smooth white pebbles and water, and explaining that it was for luck for the coming year he shouldered his burden and departed for the wash-house, his dusky countenance radiant with the blessedness of giving. Each of his white friends and patrons, no matter how their children might insult his sacred queue on the street, or they themselves cheat and overwork him, received a like gift. It was his season of "peace on earth, good will toward men," and this "heathen in his blindness" looking for nothing in return, showered his gifts on those who despitefully used him and persecuted him, with a simple joy in the doing which "we whose souls are lighted with wisdom from on high" might wisely imitate.

On his return we questioned our worthy descendant of the sun, and gathered from his disjointed utterances that another week would usher in a season of great mirth and rejoicing in swarthy Chinatown, and Hop Wah Kee signified a desire for a "day off" to join in the fight against the Chinatown devil, and the festivities following its defeat. This looked like a golden opportunity for Uncle, and he at once resolved to embrace it. Hop Wah Kee got his holiday when the time arrived, and we ourselves made ready to take in a Chinese New Year.

Long, irregular lines and tiers of limpid, bulbous, iridescent globules, swaying, dancing, tilting down a long vista to the vanishing point; tall pillars of fire sparkling, sputtering up to the lily-laden piazzas and down on the street white with its unusual covering of snow; pendant balls of blazing firecrackers everywhere; the distance all a snapping, flaming confusion of wildly skurrying Celestials, flying pigtailed, and a Chinese uproar that must go unwritten,—this was Chinatown's main street on the evening of the New Year when our little party sallied forth to take observations.

Operations had begun at midnight with snapping and crack-