

OUR LOCAL CHINATOWN.

LITTLE MYSTERY OF A ST. DENIS STREET LAUNDRY.

The other day a gentleman happening to enter the Chinese laundry kept by Quing Yuen at the corner of St. Denis and Mignonne streets was surprised to see seated behind the counter a Chinese woman or girl arrayed in Chinese dress. As the costume of the Chinese woman is regulated by law and is not subject to the caprice of fashion or individual taste and is the same to-day as it was many thousands of years ago, except perhaps with a few trifling alterations which do not interfere with the general style, it might do no harm here to describe a Chinese woman's dress when she is

REALLY DRESSED UP.

It consists of a short loose robe of dark blue silk, confined at the throat with a narrow collar; the robe is worn over a full skirt and both are made of richly embroidered silk; the sleeves are wide and sufficiently long to fall over the hands, the hair is gathered at the nape of the neck in a sort of mat and ornamented with flowers made of jewels; the shoes are of light silk, beautifully worked with gold, silver and colored silks; the under skirt is in fact so richly embroidered that it

LOOKS ALMOST LIKE BEATEN GOLD.

The Chinese woman wears, not one pair of bracelets, but three or four; they are generally of solid gold, but the poorer sorts are of jasper or jade stones.

Mrs. Sam Kee, on Lagauchetiere street, has a pair of gold bracelets which cost her husband when in San Francisco two hundred and sixty-five dollars. The Chinese woman's earrings are more than an inch long and are composed of gold and three different kinds of stones, pearls being the favorite.

Of course, an apparition such as this astonished the gentleman exceedingly, especially as he had been told that there were

ONLY TWO CHINESE WOMEN

in the city and they scarcely ever left their homes, which homes were not in Quing Yuen's laundry. He had just about made up his mind to speak to the woman when she disappeared behind the counter.

A 'Witness' reporter to-day, after being told the tale, called upon Quing Yuen to find out who this daughter of the Orient was, and why she happened to be there when no woman was supposed to be on the premises. The reporter looked around upon entering the laundry, but all he could see was five persons working away industriously, and these persons were decidedly of the masculine gender; not one of them good looking enough to be a woman.

after the health of the proprietor and his associate, the reporter ventured also to say:—

'And how is your wife?'

'The boss is out,' replied one of the men, gruffly, 'and he has no wife.'

'Oh, excuse me, I thought you were the boss, but it doesn't matter, have you one?'

'Have me what?'

'A wife.'

'Oh, no, me no wife.'

'I'm sorry for that. Have you? Have you? Have you?'

The question went round and was answered by each Chinaman in the negative, some of them suppressing a giggle.

'Well, your daughter, then?'

'I have no daughter,' replied the one who had spoken first before.

'None of us have any daughters, there's no kind of women here.'

Still the reporter was unabashed.

'Perhaps you have some lady friends. Do any Chinese ladies come to see you?'

'No,' was the emphatic answer, 'no womans ever come to this shop.'

The reporter seeing that he was not wanted at Quing Yen's departed for

THE LAGAUCHETIERE STREET HOTEL,

thinking that it was likely some information could be obtained there; but on arriving at that place found it absolutely newsless.

The Chinese woman still remains a mystery. One boy who was seen at the hotel suggested that perhaps the woman whom the gentleman had seen was in reality a young man, as a Chinese youth can easily pass for a woman. But what would a young man deck himself up in the way that the mysterious person behind the counter was decked for and why should

A YOUNG MAN HIDE HIMSELF

at sight of a stranger. It is customary and natural for Chinese women to be shy, but the men do not suffer in that way. A Chinese woman dresses to please her husband whereas a Chinese man never thinks of dressing himself for the sake of his wife, although he is, as a rule, very kind to her.

The gentleman says that the woman he saw was pretty. It needs a very handsome youth to make a pretty woman, and to European eyes the majority of Chinese men here are not at all good looking. There are, however, a few exceptions and Mr. Wing Sing has in his store on St. Lawrence Main street, without the slightest exaggeration, an almost beautiful man, but his frame is much too large to pass for a woman's.