

# SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, by Frank Tousey.

No. 84.

NEW YORK, AUGUST 31, 1900.

Price 5 Cents.

## THE BRADYS' RACE FOR LIFE;

OR

### ROUNDING UP A TOUGH TRIO.

A DETECTIVE STORY OF LIFE.  
BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.



Van and Burke fought like tigers, but were finally overpowered. "You are trapped, my fine birds," cried Old King Brady jubilantly. But at this moment Ah Ling appeared on the scene. The uproar had attracted him. With white, scared face he stared at the detectives.

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## The Bradys' Race for Life ;

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### ROUNDING UP A TOUGH TRIO.

A Detective Story of Life.

BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### A MYSTERIOUS CRIME.

"Help! Help!"

This thrilling cry rang out upon the night air in one of the side streets of New York City.

The few pedestrians in the bleak, storm-swept vicinity paused and instinctively looked for the cause of this blood-curdling appeal.

Someone was in trouble.

That was certain.

But who was it and what was the nature of the trouble?

As usual, no officer chanced to be within call. Two men who were on their way home from business, however, crossed the street with long strides and plunged into a dingy area.

It was illy lighted by a gaslight over the door of a wretched tenement.

No person could be seen in the area, but one of the men, whose name was Mortimer Smith, bent over and cried:

"My soul! This looks as if murder had been done!"

His companion, a merchant named Benjamin Hanks, echoed:

"Murder beyond a doubt!"

The snow in the area was trodden and saturated with blood. All the ghostly evidences of a crime save the body of the victim were there.

The trail of blood led to the door of the wretched dwelling.

The two men noted this, and for a moment seemed about to enter the dwelling. But Smith said:

"We had better call the police."

"Yes."

"Undoubtedly they have taken the body of the victim into that house."

"That is true."

"Let us give the alarm."

These two well-meaning and worthy citizens started for an officer. They reached the nearest corner and found a patrolman just pulling in an electric call.

Upon their statement of the case the officer made it a hurry call, and then hastily returned to the area with them.

He tried the door of the tenement.

It was locked.

He pressed his weight upon the door and forced it in.

A dark hallway was seen. All was silence of the tomb.

Naturally the guardian of the peace hesitated ere entering the place alone and in the dark.

It was a rough quarter where crimes were of common occurrence.

But just at this moment the hurry wagon arrived with more officers.

A quick consultation was held.

The police captain at once surrounded the house. That is, men went to the alley in its rear while the place was entered from the front.

The two citizens, Smith and Hanks, were held as witnesses.

But just as the officers with dark-lanterns entered the tenement they were met by a sudden wall of smoke.

The crackling of flames was heard.

"Fire!" cried the police captain.

The word was echoed by the others. The inference was easy.

The criminals had sought to conceal the evidences of their crime by means of the flames.

The fire alarm was given and into the street now there dashed the fire companies.

Lines of hose were quickly run into the building and preparations made to subdue the fire.

Not one of the inmates of the place had thus far put in an appearance. Indeed, it seemed deserted.

But while the police had been hesitating about entering the smoke-filled dwelling, two men had joined them.

"Hello! What is wrong here?" said one of them, a tall, strong-framed man, dressed in a tightly-buttoned blue coat, old-fashioned stock collar and wide-brimmed slouch hat.

"Ah, Old King Brady!" cried the police captain. "Here is a case for you. It looks like murder and attempt to conceal it by means of arson."

"Who has entered the place?"

"Nobody as yet."

"Is anybody in there?"

"We do not know."

"Humph! What are you waiting for?"

"The smoke is so dense that it is not safe. The firemen will soon have the blaze under control."

"Bah!" cried Old King Brady. "By that time evidence of the crime will be missing. Come on, Harry!"

This to his younger companion. The officers were startled and the police captain cried:

"Why, Brady, you don't think of entering that place?"

"Yes, I do!"

"Why, that is foolhardy. You'll not come out alive!"

"No matter. It is my duty!"

"You must not attempt it!"

The man with the wide-brimmed hat laughed sardonically.

"Come on, Harry," he said to his young companion, "this is work for us."

"All right, partner."

And then before the police could recover from their surprise, both plunged into the dark hallway and the smoke.

"Here, stop them!" cried the police captain. "They are going to their death."

But it was too late.

The Bradys, detectives of the first class, and the best in the Secret Service, were out of sight.

The men in that police squad were what might be ordinarily termed brave men.

But not one of them cared to follow the two detectives.

But Old King Brady, Gotham's greatest detective, and

his protege and pupil, Harry Brady, knew that if the mystery was to be solved, great risk must be incurred.

So they plunged unhesitatingly into the burning dwelling. The possibility of death never deterred either from exact fulfillment of duty.

They dashed through the smoke and reached the foot of a flight of stairs.

As near as he could, Old King Brady located the fire.

He believed that it was confined to a point in the rear of the tenement and had, as yet, not extended beyond one room.

Each of the detectives carried a dark-lantern.

It could hardly furnish light enough to penetrate the pall of stifling smoke, but yet enabled them to find their way up the stairs.

Choking and gasping they made their way bravely from room to room.

The dwelling was humbly furnished.

It was plainly the abode of people of small means. It was dingy and meagre.

The Bradys looked for a clew to the supposed crime.

Suddenly Harry went down on his knees and focused his lantern on the floor.

He cried excitedly:

"Ah, here is the clew!"

A trail of blood marked the floor. In the trail lay a white handkerchief of dainty texture.

The detectives examined it closely. Harry gave an exclamation.

On one corner in ink was marked a name:

"Evelyn Grimm."

This was the name.

It was a clew.

The detectives realized this. At once they began to follow the trail of blood.

They felt certain of a sure revelation of the mystery. The blood trail led to the door of a room at the end of the corridor.

This door was closed and locked.

What was beyond it, the detectives could only guess.

But in their mind's-eye they saw the mangled remains of the murderer's victim. So they threw themselves against the door.

And beneath their combined weight it gave way.

As it crashed in, however, they were met by an impassable barrier.

Flames and smoke filled the doorway and forbade their entrance. They were driven back.

In fact it now became a question of self-preservation.

The old building was like a tinder-box.

The Bradys seemed to be literally penned in by the fire and smoke.

There was no time to lose.

"No use, Harry!" cried Old King Brady. "We are beaten for just now. We must get out of here."

The detectives reached the stairs. But escape in this direction was cut off. Flames were in their faces.

At the other end of the corridor was a window opening upon the street. The detectives made a rush for this.

They reached it just as the sash was carried away by a stream of water from the firemen's hose. This gave the detectives a chance.

Drawing a deep breath of fresh air they felt returning strength.

Harry vaulted lightly over the sill. It was fifteen feet to the area below. The firemen shouted, but Harry dropped to the flagging.

Old King Brady followed.

In another moment they were safe within the fire lines.

By this time a great crowd was in the street, attracted in spite of the driving storm.

The firemen were badly handicapped by the snow, but yet fought their way bravely while the rickety tenement was being consumed.

The fire was not allowed to spread, but the tenement was reduced to ashes.

Then the crowd dispersed.

The detectives left the scene and returned to their lodgings for the night.

One thing was certain.

A tragedy had been enacted, which the flames concealed and the only clew which the Bradys had secured was the delicate lady's handkerchief.

This alone could furnish the only suggestion to be gained in any way from the affair.

Whether it would prove a sufficient means for the complete revelation of the mystery or not, remained to be seen.

The detectives hoped it would.

## CHAPTER II.

### FOLLOWING THE CLEWS.

Fire had destroyed all tangible evidence of the supposed murder.

The Bradys were up against a hard proposition.

To evolve the truth from the matter as it now stood did not by any means seem easy.

Insurmountable difficulties had seemed to present themselves. All hung upon the single clew.

This was the lace handkerchief.

It was of delicate workmanship and had certainly belonged to a lady of refinement.

All manner of deductions could be made. It might be assumed that the victim was a wealthy woman, decoyed into a trap of death and for some unknown purpose murdered.

The Bradys pondered over the case long and deeply.

The ruins of the fire were visited.

An inspection seemed to verify the fact of the murder.

In the ashes there were found the bones of an unknown victim.

So nearly consumed were they that it was not easy to say whether they were those of a man or a woman.

But it was safe to assume the latter.

But beyond this, all was a wall of mystery. The detectives learned that the inmates of the tenement were an Irish family by the name of Roche.

They were honest working people and had been absent for the night on a visit to an adjoining town.

It was easily proved that they had no connection whatever with the crime.

Thus matters remained in statu quo when one day the detectives dropped into the office of the Chief of the Secret Service.

"Hello, boys!" called out the chief, in his cheery way. "What is the good word to-day?"

"We are up a stump," replied Old King Brady.

"How so?"

"You know that mysterious Fifteenth street fire and murder?"

"Yes."

"We can't get a clew beyond this lace handkerchief."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the chief. "Well, that is something. Let me see the handkerchief."

Old King Brady placed a hand in his pocket for the handkerchief.

To his surprise it was not there.

"Oh, I recall," he said, "I left that handkerchief in the room at our lodging house. "Do you remember, Harry?"

"Yes," replied the young detective. "That is the truth."

"Then that is your only clew?" asked the chief.

"Yes."

"To be sure it is a slight one. Was it a lady's handkerchief?"

"Yes."

"Then the victim was a woman?"

"We think so."

The chief was silent a moment.

"Many a dark crime has been covered up in that same way," he said. "Nothing obliterates the traces of a crime like fire."

"That is right," agreed Old King Brady. "The oddest thing of all is that the house was occupied by people who could have had no possible connection with the crime on account of absence."

"Well, that is strange," agreed the chief. "You cannot explain the dragging of the body into that house in particular?"

"Exactly."

"It would seem that the perpetrators of the crime were acquainted with the fact that the inmates were away and that an excellent chance was afforded to cover up the murder," said Harry.

"Ah, I see!" agreed the chief. "Altogether it is a baffling case."

"There seems not even a shadow for us to grasp."

The chief laughed.

"I'll wager that state of affairs will not last long," he

said. "The Bradys were never yet defeated, and I'm sure this case will meet the fate of all others."

"We shall do our best," said Old King Brady.

"If you were not already engaged on this case I could give you another which would interest you," said the chief.

"What is it?" asked Harry.

"Perhaps we can handle both," said Old King Brady.

But the chief shook his head.

"I think not," he said. "It is a case which will require the best efforts of a man, and could hardly be divided."

"Let us hear it," said Old King Brady, with interest.

"Certainly!" agreed the chief, as he turned to his notebook. "Here are the details."

The chief glanced over his notes and then said:

"A mysterious disappearance. A beautiful young society lady and heiress, of Westchester, drops suddenly from sight. Not a clew to her whereabouts.

"Miss Evelyn Grimm, daughter of the late Theophilus Grimm, and heiress to a vast estate now held in trust by Napoleon Blood, her uncle, awaiting her coming of age, suddenly disappears. The uncle is frantic and has used every means to trace her.

"The only clew is a brief note of appointment, written in a masculine hand, with these words:

"Miss Grimm: I will be at the Union Square rendezvous at ten o'clock. Do not fail to meet me, for I have business of very great importance. D. B."

The chief finished reading the notes and then leaned back in his chair.

When he looked up he was startled at the expression on the faces of the detectives.

Old King Brady's eyes gleamed like balls of fire.

"What's the matter, Brady? You look excited!" exclaimed the chief.

"Well, perhaps I am," replied the old detective. "I beg leave to ask you the name of that young lady?"

"I read it to you. Miss Evelyn Grimm."

"Grimm?"

"Yes."

Both detectives drew a deep breath.

"She lived in Westchester?"

"So the notes say."

"And kept an appointment at ten o'clock Wednesday evening at Union Square?"

"It is believed so."

"That was the night of the storm?"

"Yes."

"Also the night of the fire and murder in East Fifteenth street."

"That is so!" The chief gave a start. "By jove!" he exclaimed. "You don't really think that—there is any connection—"

"Yes," said Old King Brady, emphatically, "there is no doubt of it!"

"How—"

"The name on the lace handkerchief which we found in the burning tenement, bore the name of Evelyn Grimm."

For a moment the chief sat in startled silence.

Then he whistled.

"Whew!" he exclaimed. "I never dreamed of such a thing. But—I can see it plainly now."

"The two cases are one."

"Yes."

"We can easily undertake your case for you."

"On my word, this is a surprise," said the chief. "But this is light upon the mystery. We now know the identity of the victim."

"Beyond a doubt."

"It is easy to assume that the young girl was decoyed to Fifteenth street and foully murdered."

"For what purpose?"

"And by whom?"

"That remains to be unearthed."

"It must be done!"

At this moment the door opened and a clerk appeared.

"What is it, White?" asked the chief.

"A gentleman to see you, sir," replied the clerk, handing the chief a card. The latter glanced at it.

Then he gave a start.

The name upon the card was:

"Napoleon Blood, Notary and Justice, Wall street, New York."

"The uncle and guardian," said the chief. "What does he want to see me for? Perhaps he has a clew!"

The Bradys arose.

"Wait a moment," said the chief, "I want you to hear what this visitor has to say."

"But—perhaps he will not speak if we are here," said Old King Brady.

"We will fix that," said the chief, drawing the wing of a folding screen across a corner of the room. "Get behind this and listen."

The detectives obeyed.

In a few moments the door again opened and the clerk showed Mr. Blood into the room.

Napoleon Blood, uncle of the missing heiress, was a sharp-eyed, hatchet-faced man of not altogether prepossessing appearance.

He was dressed in dark clothes and had an oily, suave manner.

He bowed obsequiously as he accepted the chair proffered him by the chief.

"Well, Mr. Blood, what can I do for you?" asked the chief.

"Ah, if you could only give me a clew to the fate of my dear niece I would be forever in your debt," replied Blood, in a psalm-singing tone.

The chief bowed.

"Then you have discovered nothing new?" he asked.

"Well, ahem! That is, I have a new theory."

The chief affected interest.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Well, it may be only theory, but sometimes I think it fact. I do not wish to wrong the young man—but—you

see young people will be foolish—and—I—of course, this is all confidential."

"Certainly!" replied the chief in a mystified way.

"There is a young man in the case. His name is Allerton Banks."

The chief noted down the name.

"He is a poverty-stricken clerk," continued Blood, "but he dared to aspire to the hand of my niece. Of course I forbade the thing at once. My niece acted very rebellious and forward and I was obliged to be very peremptory with her.

"I suspect that young Banks made the appointment with her which the note indicates. They very likely quarreled. Probably he tried to induce her to elope with him. When she refused, he might have, in a fit of rage, killed her and dragged her body into the tenement."

The chief listened to this statement silently.

He was silent a long while. His gaze was fixed on Blood so long that the latter became nervous.

"I am sure," said the notary, "that this clew, if followed up, will yield an explanation of the motive. I would suggest that detectives shadow young Banks and even that his lodgings be searched. I am convinced he is guilty."

"Is it so bad as that?" said the chief, quietly. "We will consider your proposition, Mr. Blood. We are glad to get all the hints possible."

"And young Banks——"

"Shall be put under surveillance."

### CHAPTER III.

#### IN SLY JIMMIE'S PLACE.

An evil smile flickered about the lips of the guardian.

"Well," he said, "I give you the hint. Make the most of it. I could have given it to the private detectives, but I thought the Secret Service safer."

"That was a wise move," said the chief. "The Secret Service is all that its name implies, absolutely safe!"

"When shall I expect to hear from you?"

"At a date as early as possible."

"You know where my office is?"

"Yes."

"Very well. Good-day!"

"Good-day!"

The door closed and Blood was gone. The detectives emerged from behind the screen.

"Well?" said the chief.

"Ahem!" said Harry.

"Humph!" exclaimed Old King Brady.

They exchanged glances.

"What do you think of that fellow?" asked the chief, finally.

"He's an atrocious old scoundrel!" said Harry, impulsively.

"Well, I think so," agreed Old King Brady. "There is

a dark game underneath all this. Somebody has been fearfully wronged."

"I hope you will get at the bottom of it," said the chief.

"We will!"

"I wish you luck!"

The Bradys went to the door.

"Thank you!" replied Old King Brady. "We shall see you again when we have something worth reporting."

"Good! I shall wait with eagerness."

Then parting salutations were exchanged and the detectives went out upon the street.

It was natural for them to fall into the making of deductions.

Many an important fact is arrived at through the medium of deduction.

By a process of reasoning, therefore, the Bradys managed to hit upon what they believed was a true line.

To them it looked logical that there was an animus in the purpose of Blood in throwing suspicion upon the young clerk, Allerton Banks.

The detectives made searching inquiries.

They discovered that Allerton Banks was a young man of character and reputation beyond reproach.

No charge could possibly be brought against him.

Moreover, by inquiry, they learned that he could not possibly have written the note of appointment signed D. B., and that it was easy for him to prove a certain alibi.

All these things had their value and were given due weight by the Bradys.

On the other hand, investigation showed that Napoleon Blood was a crotchety, narrow-minded old usurer and that he handled the inheritance of Evelyn Grimm as if it was his own.

In fact, now that it was assumed that she was out of existence, the property was likely to revert to him as the next and only heir.

All these things the detectives quietly unearthed.

Thus they got a line upon the case and were able to form their conclusions.

"I can see only one party at the bottom of it all," said Harry, "and that is Napoleon Blood."

"Precisely!" agreed Old King Brady. "He is our man!"

"It is a gigantic black conspiracy."

"Yes."

"But Blood had accomplices."

"Oh, yes. The crime that evening on Fifteenth street could not have been committed by him alone."

So the detectives made their diagnosis. It was in order now to place Blood under close surveillance.

The detectives shadowed him persistently.

Wherever he went they dogged him and this resulted in bearing fruit.

One day Blood left his office in Wall street and made his way to Chatham Square.

Here there was a small bar-room known as the "Travelers' Rest," and kept by a notorious fence called Sly Jimmie Callahan.

That the eminently respectable Mr. Blood should visit such a place as Sly Jimmie's, was odd, to say the least.

The detectives felt sure that at last they had a clew.

So they kept close behind the notary and followed him into Sly Jimmie's place.

Blood kept his collar turned up and his hat pulled over his eyes as if to escape recognition.

He had hardly entered the place, however, when three men stepped up to him.

They were a trio of as odd-looking crooks as ever saw the light of day.

The detectives knew them in an instant.

"By Jupiter! The Tough Trio!" exclaimed Harry.

"Whew!" whispered Old King Brady. "When did they return? They have not been seen around New York for five years."

This was true.

The three men were a trio of the most dreaded crooks Gotham had ever known.

But they had been absent from New York for years.

The tall, lantern-jawed fellow with the patch over his eye was Dick Burke. He was a cool, shrewd villain, and the brains of the trio.

The hump-backed, heavy-jowled fellow with the scar on his cheek was Dan Collins.

He was a cunning sneak thief.

The short, pudgy rascal with the leer and St. Vitus dance was Martin Van, as atrocious a monster as ever saw the light of day—a veritable Caliban.

It was not easy for this trio to disguise themselves.

They couldn't conceal their identity anywhere, yet they were mysteriously elusive and always fooled the detectives.

They managed to perpetrate the blackest of crimes and yet cover their tracks so well that they could not be cornered.

The Tough Trio was an appropriate name for them.

What could the eminently respectable Mr. Blood be doing in such company?

What business could he possibly have with them?

This was the question.

The detectives, it is hardly necessary to say, were interested.

Yet Mr. Blood met the trio familiarly and as if they were old friends.

All drank at the bar and then withdrew to a table nearby.

The detectives in their clever disguise were not recognized.

They also sat at a table and pretended to sip the vile beer which the place afforded.

They regretted that not a word of the conversation reached them.

It was impossible to get any nearer without exciting suspicion.

So the Bradys were compelled to wait and be satisfied with the assumption that something of importance was being discussed.

They were content now to accept as a fact that their first theory was absolutely correct.

The murder of Evelyn Grimm was the work of Napoleon Blood.

The motive was the securing of her inheritance.

The Tough Trio were his hired tools.

It was a horrible thing to think of. The young girl decoyed by the note of appointment to the Fifteenth street rendezvous on that fearful stormy night in winter. The fearful murder and the burning of the tenement.

The work of fiends.

Such it was.

But the trio were capable of even worse crimes than this.

The detectives were assured of this.

For over an hour the conference between Blood and the Tough Trio went on.

Then they arose and left the place.

It was now after dark.

Blood shook hands with each and left them. The detectives caught only one sentence uttered by Blood:

"They can't beat us now."

Old King Brady's jaws snapped.

He smiled grimly.

"We shall see!" he muttered.

"Well," whispered Harry, "what shall we do?"

"Shadow them."

"The trio?"

"Yes."

This they proceeded to do. The three villains now walked away toward the Bowery.

The detectives shadowed them from one place to another until long past midnight.

Then they turned into a cheap concert hall in Bleecker street, known as Dan Maguire's.

The trio seated themselves at a table and sipped their beer.

Suddenly Burke arose and walked leisurely to the bar where the detectives stood, apparently engaged in drinking beer.

Burke went up to them coolly and said:

"How are ye, gents? Won't ye have a drink with us?"

The Bradys were never more astonished in their lives.

"Eh?" exclaimed Old King Brady. "You have the advantage of us!"

"Have I?" leered the villain. "Well, that's queer, for I know you!"

"You do?"

"Yas!"

For a moment the old detective was staggered. Harry was also dumfounded.

"Come!" continued Burke. "We'd like to talk with ye. Come over an' sit down."

"I—I can't leave my friend, thank you," replied Old King Brady. "It is evident you take me for somebody else."

"Who are ye?"

"My name is Schmidt."

"Oh!" said Burke, significantly. "I thought it was Brady!"

The Bradys were never more astonished in their lives.



It was certain that their disguise had been penetrated by the keen rogues and they were known.

Concealment was out of the question. Old King Brady saw that a bluff would be foolish.

So he said:

"All right, Burke. You're dead onto us."

"Certainly I am!"

"What are you doing in New York?"

"That's my affair. What are ye shadowing us for?"

"Can't you guess?"

"I wouldn't ask if I could!"

"Well, we lay you up for the gang that burned the Fifteenth street tenement."

Burke only grinned.

"That's jest our luck," he said. "Everybody lays things to us!"

"Well, not without reason."

"Mebbe so! But ye can't clinch us. Anyhow, come over an' sit down, we want to talk with ye."

Old King Brady looked at Harry.

"All right," he said, "we'll do it."

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE PRIVATE DETECTIVE.

It was an unusual request made by Burke.

It was a strange thing for the detectives to sit at the same table in a friendly way with three men whom they meant to hang, if possible.

But life is full of anomalies.

And detectives certainly meet with queer experiences. This was one of them beyond a doubt.

The Bradys quietly seated themselves at the table.

Burke called for beer.

But Old King Brady said:

"Don't order any for us."

"You won't drink?"

"No."

"Ah, that's odd!" said Burke, with bad grace. "Mebbe it would be to yer interest to."

"We do not drink anyway," replied the old detective. "Not with anybody except when absolutely necessary."

"Well, all right. Now let's get to the point. What be ye shadowing us fer?"

"I have told you once," replied Old King Brady, quietly.

"Humph!" exclaimed Collins. "Do ye think we had anything to do with killing that gal?"

"Yes, I am sure you did."

The trio exchanged glances.

Martin Van contorted his ugly face frightfully and said:

"So ye mean to haul us in, do ye? That's your game?"

"That is just it," replied Old King Brady. "I know that you are the hired tools of Napoleon Blood!"

"Ugh!" said Collins, in a gritty voice. "Whoever runs up ag'in' the trio has a hard time."

"Lot's of 'em have tried it:"

"And they've paid fer it," said Burke.

"It's a fair warnin'."

Old King Brady laughed.

"You are talking to the wrong man," he said. "There's nothing you can do or say will scare me. I mean to put you fellows in the electric chair."

"Well," said Burke, darkly, "that's a declaration of war."

"That is my duty!"

For a few moments there was silence. Then Burke said:

"Yes, it is!"

"An' you make war on us?"

"Ye don't know what ye're doin'. No man ever run up ag'in' us that didn't get the worst of it. Nuthin' kin save ye if we git after ye. Don't fergit that. Ye'll have a hot race fer life!"

"All right," said the old detective, rising, "you understand me, and I understand you."

"You are satisfied to let it go at that?" asked Collins.

"Yes."

"Very well. You will know what it is to fight the Tough Trio!"

"And you will soon find yourselves in the meshes of the law," retorted Harry. "Remember that escape is impossible. You are not for a moment lost sight of and whatever comes you are always within our reach!"

The villains laughed scornfully.

"Save your threats," said Van.

"Make your peace with God!" advised Burke, coolly.

"You say you will hound us," said Collins. "Why don't you arrest us now?"

"Yes," echoed Van. "You are so sure of our guilt, take us right in!"

Old King Brady smiled.

"Have your fun now," he said, "you may not have the stomach for it later."

"Well, why don't you arrest us?"

"I am not ready."

"Is that your only excuse?"

"Just at present."

Old King Brady bowed very politely. Then he said to Harry:

"Come! Let us get away from here."

The detectives left the saloon.

They had no idea of leaving the vicinity, though. Their purpose was to remain as long as possible in close touch with the villains.

If the truth was told, the Bradys were not at all sure of their case.

They had not the slightest bit of legal evidence against the trio.

What they were satisfied of in their own minds could never be proved in a court of law.

So they were baffled.

But the bull-dog tenacity of Old King Brady's nature was never more evident than now.

Leaving the saloon they dodged into a dark doorway near and waited.

"Harry," said Old King Brady in a low tone of voice, "that old Blood is a fiend in human shape."

"Indeed he is!"

"We must convict him!"

"We certainly will do so."

Just then Harry gave a start and nudged Old King Brady.

At first, unseen to both, a man with muffled features had been standing in the shadows of the doorway.

He now emerged.

As he came into the light he turned sharply and said:

"Gentlemen, I wish you luck, but you're on the wrong tack!"

"Eh?" exclaimed Old King Brady. "What do you mean, sir?"

"You are tracking the trio with a belief that they are involved in that affair at the Fifteenth street house."

"We are!"

"Well, you're wrong. They are not the men."

"Eh?" exclaimed Old King Brady. "What do you know about it?"

"I know it all."

"Who are you?"

"I am Ralph Scott, detective, the same as you. I have the right clew!"

The two Bradys stared at the fellow.

"You have?" exclaimed Harry. "I would like to know what it is?"

"I can prove it, too!"

"That is best."

"Well, I can tell you that the young cashier is the guilty man."

"Do you mean Allerton Banks?"

"Yes."

The fellow spoke positively.

The detectives exchanged glances.

"Look here, Scott," said Old King Brady, "you're not a Secret Service man."

The fellow looked defiant.

"It isn't necessary to be in the Secret Service to be a detective," he snapped.

"Perhaps not. But what service are you in?"

"I have no ties. I am in the business on my own hook!"

"Private detective?"

"Yes."

"Umph! What is your clew?"

"I got it through a man who is in a position to know all about the case."

"Who is he?"

"That is my affair."

"I can tell you who you mean."

Scott looked incredulous.

"Well," he said, "who?"

"Napoleon Blood, the uncle and guardian of the dead girl."

The private detective started. His face flushed angrily.

"Eh? You'd better guess again," he said. "Who told you that?"

"Is it not so?"

"I refuse to say."

"Well, how much has Blood promised to pay you to convict the cashier?"

Scott looked angry and baffled. He glared at the detectives savagely. Then muttering he began to move away.

"Hold on!" said Harry. "Take a bit of advice before you go."

"What do you mean?" demanded Scott, in a surly way.

"Better let this matter alone entirely. It makes no difference what you do, you're going to get the worst of it. Old Blood will surely be found out."

"You talk like fools!" growled Scott. "But just keep on and we'll see who comes out best. I work for money, I do!"

"That is right," agreed Old King Brady. "Nobody will dispute that."

Scott went away in high dudgeon. The Bradys were much edified.

"It is easy to understand him," said the old detective. "He is only a tool for Blood."

"It is evident the old usurer means to put the young cashier out of the way," said Harry.

"Very true."

"I think it would be a good idea to see Allerton and warn him."

"So do I. Ah!"

Old King Brady gave a great start. A man had crossed the street and now passed very close to the detectives.

It was Blood.

The detectives were, of course, greatly interested.

They watched the old usurer carefully. He entered Sly Jimmie's dive.

"He has gone in to see the trio," said Old King Brady in a breath.

"Yes."

"They will tell him of our position in the case."

"The old fellow will be put on his guard."

"Just so."

"By Jupiter!" exclaimed Harry. "I'd like mighty well to know just what their conversation will be."

"Would it be safe to venture into the place again in another guise?"

"They would know us."

"Well," said the old detective, with sudden inspiration, "I think I have a plan."

"What is it?"

"Do you see the alley on this side of the building?"

"Yes."

"Well, I think there is a small window on a level with the ground. It is directly over the table where those fellows sit."

"Indeed!"

"It is true. I remember seeing it. Now, if we can only creep in there and either open the window or remove a pane of glass, we ought to hear every word."

"Good! Let us try it."

The Bradys were not slow in undertaking this feat.

They crept into the alley and soon had located the window.

Here they made an agreeable discovery. It was not necessary to open the window or remove the glass.

Every word spoken by the villains below came up to their ears.

They were still seated at the table and Blood was with them.

The old usurer seemed greatly excited that the Bradys were possessed of a knowledge of his complicity in the crime.

"Curse them!" cried Blood, savagely. "I hope they do not know too much. Did you admit anything?"

"You bet we didn't!" said Collins, angrily. "What do you take us for?"

"Well, it looks as if they might be an obstacle in our path."

"Wall, you bet!"

"There's only one thing to be done!"

"We're waitin' fer the word!"

"If the trio gets after them it's all up with them."

"You bet!" cried Van, with a fierce grin. "Say the word, boss. We'll give 'em a race fer life. What's the job worth to ye in solid money?"

"Ten thousand dollars!" replied the usurer.

## CHAPTER V.

### OUTWITTING THE CROOKS.

"Done!" cried Burke. "We are your birds."

"It's understood," said Collins, "when the Bradys are safe outen the way you will pay us ten thousand in gold?"

"That is right!" agreed Blood.

"Then the job is as good as done!"

"They are a pair of foxes!"

The trio laughed in a blood-curdling way.

"Don't ye fear!" said Burke.

"Well, it's worth that to me," said Blood. "Once they are out of the way the course is pretty clear."

"Wall, it oughter be."

"I fear nobody else."

"Ten thousand in gold!" said Burke. "That will take us to Australia. The twenty thousand we got fer the Fifteenth street job will start us in business, all right!"

"Yes, and I wish you luck!" said Blood. "Make the work sure!"

"Did ye ever know us to fail?"

"Well, no!"

"Very well. Ye'll see that we'll take keer of them Bradys all right."

"Look here!" cried Collins. "What be ye going to do with that young Banks, anyway?"

"I'm going to arrest him," replied Blood. This interested the detectives.

"Arrest him?"

"Yes."

"Ah! Have ye got the right evidence, think ye?"

"My man Scott, a private detective, has worked that all right. Some of the girl's jewelry, and a lace necktie stained with blood will be found in young Banks' room to-morrow. Also, there'll be blood on some of his clothes."

The trio laughed grimly.

"You'll do!" jeered Burke. "If you'd join us this trio might become a quartette."

At this there was a general laugh. Then Blood arose to go.

"All right," he said in parting, "see that you do your work well by the Bradys. I'll keep an eye out all the while."

Blood left the place.

Then the trio also separated for the night. It was a peculiarity of theirs to be seldom found together.

The Bradys had gained the most valuable of information. "We have got them solid!" cried Old King Brady. "We can now easily checkmate them."

"What do you advise?" asked Harry.

"We must see young Banks at once."

"So I think!"

"He must be put on his guard and the dastardly scheme of Blood's frustrated. Then we will have sufficient against both Blood and the trio."

"And arrest them?"

"Instantly!"

"Good! Nothing could be better."

The Bradys left Sly Jimmie's place. The air was crisp and cold, for the frigidity of winter had not yet passed away.

They did not attempt to shadow any individual member of the gang.

But they started at once for the lodgings of young Banks.

He roomed, while at work in the city, in Irving Place. The room was a specimen of the sort usually found in lodging houses.

As is usually the case in New York, Allerton knew none of the other lodgers.

He simply knew that a tall, hawk-eyed man roomed next to him. But he had never ventured a surmise as to the man's character or identity.

The chambermaid had caught Mr. Scott, the hawk-eyed man, one day trying to fit skeleton keys to Allerton's door.

But Mr. Scott profusely explained that he had got the wrong room by mistake and went into his own room.

All this the Bradys possessed themselves of very quickly after arriving at Allerton's lodging house.

He was not in when they called, but they waited for him. In due time he entered.

At once the Bradys introduced themselves and a pleasant conversation followed.

"I can assure you," said young Banks, "the disappearance of my fiancee has been a dreadful blow to me. I have until now never given up hope that she might be found alive."

"I fear there is no ground for such a hope," said Old

King Brady. "You will do well to preserve your own life from the same gang."

Allerton was startled.

"Is that true?" he exclaimed.

"As true as can be. We have come to warn you."

Young Banks was dumfounded. He listened to the story repeated by the Bradys.

"That is very strange," he said, finally. "I cannot understand it."

"Now, we must work sharp to beat Blood at his own game," said Old King Brady. "Who could have access to your room here?"

"Only the maid and landlady," replied Allerton.

"Unless your next-door neighbor picked the lock."

"Do you think it?"

"It is likely."

"I do not even know him beyond the fact that he is a private detective and his name is Scott."

The detectives winked hard.

"Yes, yes!" said Harry. "Well, such fellows make no trouble in finding their way through any door."

"Do you think it possible?"

"I am sure of it."

"But what could he enter my room for?" asked Allerton.

"The answer we will give you speedily," replied Old King Brady. "Overhaul your wardrobe. We must search every corner of this room."

"You puzzle me!"

"Never mind. Do as I say!"

"Oh, certainly!"

The young cashier went through his wardrobe. To his horror a suit of clothes was found smeared with blood.

In the coat pocket was a bloody knife.

The detectives kept grimly at work. Other incriminating evidence was quickly produced.

The young cashier was aghast.

"I need only say," he said, "that this is all very inexplicable to me."

"Indeed?" said Old King Brady. "How did these bloody clothes come in your room?"

"I have not the slightest idea."

"Do you mean that?"

"Yes, I do!"

"Are they not yours?"

"They are."

"How did the blood come upon them?"

"I do not know."

Young Banks was like one dazed.

"Gentlemen," he said, earnestly, "I swear to you that I have committed no crime. How the blood came here is an intense mystery to me. Could anybody have placed it there to incriminate me?"

Old King Brady's face relaxed.

"Im glad you have come to your senses, young man," he said. "Now you are getting near the mark."

"Do you know that such is the case?" asked Banks.

"Yes," replied Old King Brady.

Banks was amazed.

"All this is very strange and incomprehensible to me," he said. "Can you kindly explain it all?"

With this, Old King Brady gave succinctly the facts in the case.

Young Banks listened with surprise, horror and indignation.

"And it is true that Evelyn was foully murdered?" he gasped. "I have had hopes until now. Oh, this is too dreadful! And it is all Blood's work?"

"Yes."

"Then I swear that he shall be brought to justice. He shall hang."

"That is just what we are trying to do now," said Old King Brady. "And I think we are in a fair way to succeed."

"I hope so. Oh, gentlemen, I place myself in your hands! What ought I to do under these circumstances?"

"Keep very quiet," advised Old King Brady. "Officers will come here to arrest you and to search your room. Make no objection. Even let them arrest you if they will. Have faith in us. We will not see you come to harm."

"Oh, heaven bless you! This is a terrible nightmare to me."

"Do as we tell you and you will be safe!"

"I will surely do so!"

The Bradys now took their leave.

They carried with them the blood-stained clothes and all the evidences of the murder.

Thus the matter rested.

The next day officers went to young Banks' room and arrested him.

The place was searched thoroughly, but not a trace of the evidence, supposed by Scott to be there, was found.

The effect of this upon the private detective it is easy to estimate.

However, the warrant demanded the arrest of Allerton Banks and he was taken to the Tombs.

The evening papers came out with a thrilling account of the arrest.

"The murderer found!" it read. "At last an arrest is made. It proves a great surprise, for the party charged with the crime by Detective Scott is no other than the lover of the missing girl, Allerton Banks."

A long reminiscent account of the crime followed.

The Bradys read this with interest.

Then they caused an article to appear the next day deriding Scott and ridiculing the arrest.

The brief hearing before a police magistrate justified this.

There was no case whatever against young Banks.

The police justice at once discharged him and reprimanded Scott.

The Bradys now decided to act.

Their purpose was to make wholesale arrests. They would scoop the whole gang at once.

They believed they had plenty of evidence to convict all.

They had evidence that Scott had secured the room next to Banks for the purpose of effecting an entrance.

They had the evidence of the chambermaid that he had been seen trying to pick the lock.

They could show complicity between Blood and the Tough Trio.

They could also show a warrantable motive for the crime and altogether quite sufficient evidence to convict the gang.

So the Bradys went first to the residence of Mr. Napoleon Blood in lonely Westchester.

But he was not there.

"He has just gone to the city with Mr. Scott, the detective," declared the servant.

And that was all.

Mr. Blood did not return. His good sense precluded this.

He had seen the handwriting on the wall and at once took measures to protect himself.

He was missing.

So also was Scott, the detective, and the Tough Trio.

## CHAPTER VI.

### SHADOWED.

With no one to appear against him young Allerton Banks was discharged as free of guilt.

Great excitement was created when it was known that a warrant was out for Napoleon Blood.

And the interest was at fever heat when it was learned that he had skipped for parts unknown.

The Bradys were deeply chagrined that their birds had slipped them.

They had not dreamed that they would skip so soon.

They regretted not having made the arrests earlier.

However, they were by no means discouraged or defeated.

They knew that Blood had money and would not be easily overtaken. But the Tough Trio could not get away so easily.

But events proved that this was not at all the purpose of the three toughs.

The Bradys were surprised to receive the following unique message.

It came by mail, being post-marked at Station E, and was written in a coarse hand as follows:

"Mr. Braddy: You hev opened the action ag'in' us and we are on the deefensive. Pretty soon it will be the other way an' we'll be on the offensive. Mark it now, we're goin' to do you up. No man can stand ag'in' the trio and you'll be kept busy running a race fer life.

"You can't take no step we don't kno' about and we'll be hot on your heels all the while. You can't sleep nites fer the knife will be at yure windpipe. You can't leave the city or a bullet will drop ye. We're watchin' every move of yours and you can't fool us. There's no escape unless you make a race for it.

Yures fer revenge,

"The Trio."

The Bradys read this message several times with curious emotions.

Then Hary said:

"On my word, partner, this is no joke. It means something."

"I believe you, Harry," agreed Old King Brady. "But our move is to keep ahead of them."

"They mean to kill us!"

"That is so."

"Then we have certainly got to capture or kill them."

"For self-preservation if nothing else."

"Yes."

"It is literally a race for life. We must win."

"We must."

The detectives decided to give up their quest for Blood. They knew that a false step now meant their lives.

It is no light thing to ponder upon that three elusive deadly thugs are seeking one's life and waking or sleeping there is never a safe moment.

The Bradys were constrained to do a heap of thinking.

The problem before them was the worst they had ever undertaken.

Every step must be guarded, every move carefully weighed.

They knew that it was true that they were under the constant surveillance of the trio.

How to turn the tables and place the other gang under the shadow was the question.

They considered the matter of disguise.

Disguises are all right and in many cases a valuable aid to a detective.

But they are not infallible.

In a passing crowd or the glare of gaslight they will prove sometimes very effective.

But not always are they effective. The cunning crook penetrates the cleverest disguise with ease.

Every person has certain physical peculiarities which no disguise on earth can absolutely conceal.

The Bradys knew that they could not depend wholly upon disguise.

The detectives decided finally that their only way to baffle their murderous foes was to make a literal race of it.

They knew that the three crooks would make hot pursuit.

By keeping always just ahead of the trio they could be sure of safety and perhaps find a way of doubling and turning the tables on the foe.

"We will lead them a chase across the continent!" cried Old King Brady. "If they can catch us they may have our scalps. In the meantime we will try every kind of a decoy for them."

The Bradys left their lodgings.

They had barely struck the street when Harry exclaimed:

"We are shadowed!"

"Eh?" exclaimed the old detective.

"I tell you it is so!"

"How do you know that?"

"I saw one of the gang slip around that corner."

"If that is so we ought to be able to decoy him. Come on!"

The two detectives carelessly strolled down the street.

It was a crowded thoroughfare and they knew that no attempt would be made upon their lives here.

But presently they slipped into a dark alley.

Here they crouched behind some barrels. Each held a revolver in his hand.

If their foes came into the alley, the trap was ready and would be sprung.

The detectives watched very closely. Twice they saw their birds at a corner far down the street.

But they would not venture to accept the decoy.

Old King Brady was disgruntled.

"Confound them! They are too sharp," he said. "What shall we do?"

"Give it up," said Harry, laconically.

"It looks like it. Well, we would be foolish to go their way. Let us give them the slip through this alley."

"Very well."

So the detectives slipped away and into another street. Soon they were on Broadway.

"Aha!" said Old King Brady, triumphantly. "That's the way to slip them. I think we can fool them yet, Harry."

But the young detective clutched his arm and said:

"Don't you believe it. Just look across the street."

Old King Brady was astounded.

One of the trio, Collins it was, stood at an opposite street corner.

He glanced at the detectives and then vanished down the side street.

"By Jupiter!" exclaimed the old detective. "That beats me! Where did he come from?"

"I tell you they are almost omnipresent," declared Harry. "We can't seem to turn the trick on them."

"Well, we will!" cried Old King Brady, angrily. "We'll catch that fellow. Stay here, Harry."

With this the old detective darted across the street.

But search as he would, he could find no trace of Collins. Baffled, Old King Brady returned to Broadway.

"Confound the slippery rascal!" he cried. "There must be a way to trip them up."

"I have a plan," said Harry.

"What?" asked the old detective, eagerly.

"Well, it may seem simple, but I think it will work. Go to an uptown hotel and register."

"Well?"

"We will assume to go to our room. But in reality we will slip out by a rear entrance. Once the gang enters the hotel we will nab them."

"But will they do that?"

"I think they will. Certainly they will leave nothing undone to encompass our death."

"Very good!" agreed Old King Brady. "We'll try your plan."

"We'll go to the Broadway Central Hotel."

"Very good!"

"It is an old hostelry and does not depend altogether on elevators. There are rear stairs for us to descend."

The detectives proceeded to carry out their plan.

Certainly it looked feasible.

They registered at the hotel, boldly, under their own names.

They prepaid their room as they did not have baggage.

Then they ascended by the elevator. They proceeded to the door of their room.

They entered and waited for the bell-boy to disappear.

Then they emerged and started for the rear stairs.

They reached a corner of the long corridor when something like a chuckle came to their ears.

Old King Brady turned his head.

"By jove!" he exclaimed, aghast.

At the same moment Harry saw the cause of the old detective's excitement.

Far down the corridor a man stood apparently studying the number on a room door. He seemed totally oblivious of the presence of the detectives.

It was Dick Burke.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Harry, and said no more. The detectives looked at each other in sheer wonderment.

"What do you think of that?"

"I think I want that cuss!" said Old King Brady, starting for the crook.

But at that moment Burke stepped into a side corridor and vanished.

When the detectives reached the spot he was gone.

They made a quick search and went all over the hotel.

They made inquiries of bell-boys and other attaches.

But in vain.

It convinced them that they were truly up against a hard game.

The trio seemed possessed of a supernatural faculty for making themselves invisible at will.

Completely mystified, the Bradys sat down in the hotel lobby and tried to think.

It was a conundrum.

The foes were close upon their heels and could not be shaken off or decoyed. They were as elusive as the will-o'-the-wisp.

It was easy to understand their game.

They were waiting only a favorable opportunity for pouncing upon their intended victims. They were slow and patient as the Hindoo thug himself.

Old King Brady was all cold sweat.

"By Jupiter, Harry!" he exclaimed. "They certainly mean to catch us off our guard. What can we do?"

"There is only one plan."

"Well?"

"We must make a race of it. Let them chase us. We will keep on the jump. At a favorable moment we will double back on our tracks and then—they are ours."

"A good plan and the only one," said Old King Brady. "They will pursue us. We are sure of that. We are not smart if we do not fool them in some way."

So the plan was decided upon and action made at once.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE RACE BEGINS.

The plan of the Bradys certainly looked logical.

To make a race of it was the only safe way. So they acted at once.

They did not even spend the night at the Broadway Central Hotel. Instead they took a car for the Grand Central Depot.

Here they bought tickets for Boston.

The plan was cleverly laid.

It was arranged to go on to Boston by the night express. When they arrived in the Hub city they would at once slip onto the next train back.

This would confuse the pursuers and place them on the defensive.

The Shore Line Express took them out of New York.

The Bradys kept a sharp outlook and were certain that none of the gang were on the train.

Consequently they felt elated.

"On my word!" exclaimed Harry. "I believe we have slipped them."

"It looks like it," agreed Old King Brady. "But I am not wholly sure. They have disappointed us several times."

"That is true," agreed Harry. "Yet I believe we will fool them this time."

The Bradys made themselves comfortable in the sleeping car.

Just as they were about to retire, a short man with bushy whiskers and a tweed suit came into the car.

He occupied the section next to the detectives.

He claimed their attention at once, but neither remembered having seen him before.

He ignored them, however, and at once tumbled into his bunk. His snore could soon be heard above the rumble of the train.

In due season the Bradys also retired.

They slept soundly until at about six o'clock the train rolled into Boston.

The detectives had decided to stay in Boston during the day and take the night train back to New York.

Then they could assume the best disguise they had and perhaps shake their murderous pursuers.

They left the depot and made their way to a respectable Boston hostelry.

The weather was typical of New England at the time of year and was most bitterly cold.

When the detectives registered at the Parker House, the fellow-passenger in the tweed suit also registered.

He was assigned to a room, as were the detectives. Young King Brady noted the coincidence, but thought nothing of it.

But once in the room, a sudden thought came to Harry.

He instantly exclaimed:

"Confound it! You and I are getting daft, partner."

"Eh?" exclaimed Old King Brady. "What are you driving at?"

"We are blind fools! Far from eluding the gang, we are only getting into their way."

"What do you mean?"

"Do you remember the man who slept in the berth next us?"

"On the train?"

"Yes."

"Short man with tweed suit?"

"The very one!"

"Yes. What of it?"

"Well, we are blind. That fellow is Martin Van in disguise!"

Old King Brady gasped.

"Harry!" he ejaculated. "What do you mean?"

"It is true! I have placed him now. I knew he seemed familiar."

"Nonsense! I can't see any connection or any similarity."

"You can't?"

"No."

"Well, I couldn't at first. But after we registered, I went down into the wash-room. He was there as well!"

"Ah!"

"I passed by him and chancing to glance into a side mirror I had profile view of him. He was indulging in the St. Vitus dance and his features were all contorted."

Old King Brady was silent.

He knew that Van had the St. Vitus dance. The coincidence was certainly suspicious.

He was thoughtful.

"I declare!" he finally exclaimed. "Perhaps you are right, Harry. Those whiskers did not look really natural."

"No, nor are they. I tell you that fellow is Van!"

Old King Brady strode up and down the room for some time.

"Well," he said, finally, "what ought we to do?"

"I see only one plan."

"What?"

"Arrest him!"

"Of course! We could have done it at the hotel desk."

"But we did not know him."

"That is it."

"He is very likely in his room just now. Let us work the surprise on him. Fate seems to have played this into our hands."

The Bradys were elated.

Their luck in having probed the fellow's disguise seemed likely to stand them in good stead.

But they knew better than to act too openly.

"Harry," said Old King Brady, "we must proceed with due caution. You can slip out now and get an officer."

"Yes."

"I will go down and look on the register and get the number of his room."

"Very well."

"Then I will meet you at the Tremont street door. Do you see?"

"Yes."

"Very good. The officer can go right up to his room. I will go up one corridor and you the other. Then we have him trapped."

"Splendid!"

The detectives had laid their plan well. As a matter of fact, their surmises were correct.

Martin Van was in his room.

He did not dream, of course, that the Bradys had penetrated his disguise.

It was his purpose to follow them like a lynx and at a favorable moment strike one or both down with his own hand.

The officer secured by Harry carried out his part of the programme.

He proceeded to the door of Van's room and rapped.

At first there was no answer.

Then a movement in the room was heard and a voice said:

"Who is it?"

"A friend on business!"

"What is the name?"

"Open the door and you will see!"

Silence ensued and the officer rapped again.

"Wait a moment!" said the occupant of the room. That was the last answer. The officer suddenly put his shoulder to the door and forced it in.

The Bradys came rushing up the corridor expecting trouble.

But there was none.

The reason was evident.

The room was empty.

A window opening upon a fire-escape was open. It was by means of this that Van had escaped.

"Quick!" cried Harry. "We must cut him off below."

Downstairs dashed the detectives. As they reached the sidewalk they saw a man in a big overcoat turn the corner below into Washington street.

It was Van.

The detectives rushed after him. In the crowd, however, they lost track of their man.

Much chagrined, however, the detectives would not give up.

They went on at random.

Suddenly leaving Haymarket Square they turned into Portland street.

This is the street of livery stables. From the door of one of these stables they saw a cutter sleigh drawn by a spirited horse emerge.

One man sat in the sleigh.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Harry. "Is not that Van?"

The same big overcoat and hat betokened that it was the crook. He looked back once and saw the Bradys.

His whiskers had been sacrificed.

It was easy to recognize him.

His face lit up with evil exultation and he made a contemptuous gesture with his hand.

"Hold!" shouted Old King Brady at the top of his lungs. "Stop or I will fire!"

The old detective's revolver came out then.

But it was too late.

The cutter turned a corner and Van was out of sight.

The Bradys looked about for a means of pursuit.

"The stable!" cried Harry. "Get another team at once!"

Into the stable the Bradys rushed.

The proprietor stared at them.

"Quick!" cried Old King Brady. "Give us the best horse you've got in your stable. We will pay for him."

"Who are you?" asked the stableman, suspiciously.

"We are Secret Service detectives."

"Why, I just let a team to a detective to go to Lexington."

"What!" cried Old King Brady. "Did you say to Lexington?"

"Yes."

"Well, he fooled you. He is a noted crook and we are after him."

"Look here, I can't let my teams this way."

"Enough of that!" cried Old King Brady, thrusting a roll of greenbacks in the man's face. "Your best horse. I'll buy him. Here's his value as security!"

"The other fellow left a deposit, too. Do you mean it?"

"Yes, here is five hundred. If I don't bring the team back you are paid."

This was enough.

The stable keeper quickly brought out a flea-bitten gray horse. He was attached to a light sleigh.

"Do you know the Lexington road?" he asked.

"By Scallay Square and Brighton street to Cambridge and Arlington?" said Old King Brady.

"Yes."

"I'll find it. Thank you!"

"That's the best road horse in Boston. You'll catch your man before he gets there."

"That's what we want!" cried Old King Brady.

Then away in pursuit went the two detectives.

"If we can catch Van," said Old King Brady, "we shall be all right. We will have only two bloodhounds on our trail."

Highly elated, the detectives drove on. It was slow work getting out of the crowded streets. But finally they crossed the Cambridge Bridge and were out on a clear highway.

Then the horse was given a free head.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### AT THE ASYLUM.

The horse given the Bradys by the stable keeper was certainly a good one.



He dashed over the snow-covered road like the wind. Sleighs were met and passed.

But yet nothing was seen of the sleigh which contained Martin Van. To be sure he had a long start.

But still the Bradys kept on.

Arlington highway was reached and then they turned up the historic thoroughfare, the route of Paul Revere on his memorable ride, and entered Lexington.

On the left was a historic tavern.

The minute men of olden times who had met here to resist the advance of the British column of invasion, had once drank their flip and toddy in this ancient house.

As the detectives dashed along the snow-bound thoroughfare, Old King Brady gave a start.

"Hello!" he exclaimed. "Luck is with us!"

In the tavern yard was a sleigh. It was the veritable cutter hired by Van in Boston.

"Now we have him!" chuckled Old King Brady, as he turned his horse into the yard.

The detectives threw the reins to a hostler.

Then they dashed into the tavern.

At a counter stood a man of plain, stern features. He was evidently the proprietor and stared at the invaders.

Old King Brady leaned over the counter and said:

"Where is the man who just came up in that cutter out there?"

The proprietor looked blank.

"He did not stop here," he said.

The detectives were staggered.

"Are you sure of that?"

"Yes."

"Do you know which way he went?"

"Yes, he took the Concord road."

"Thank you!"

The Bradys rushed out and leaped into their wagon. They drove on at full speed for Concord.

They were soon outside the little town of Lexington.

The road to Concord is a hilly and difficult highway, particularly in winter.

Moreover, a blinding snow storm had commenced to block the roads. After going a few miles the detectives found that their horse was giving out.

"On my word, Harry," said Old King Brady, "I am afraid we are bound to get stuck."

"There is one consolation."

"What?"

"If we are, Van is also."

Night was at hand and darkness began to settle down.

The Bradys realized that it was necessary to get under cover somewhere.

They were averse to going back to Lexington.

Suddenly, after floundering a while in the snow, a dim light was seen in the distance.

"There is a habitation of some kind," said Old King Brady. "I think we had better strike for it."

"Very good," declared Harry. "I will go ahead on foot."

Slowly the Bradys staggered on through the snow.

After a while they passed through a gateway and drew up in the yard of a time-stained and weather-beaten old mansion of revolutionary style.

Lights shone in the windows of the old house.

Old King Brady shouted and two farm boys came out with lanterns.

"Reckon hyars some more storm-bound people," said one of the boys. "Say, mister, what kin we do fer ye?"

"It looks as if we had got to trespass on you for the night," said Old King Brady.

"Wall, ye're welcome! Put yer hoss right in the barn."

This was done.

The big barn doors were with difficulty swung back. Then as the detectives entered they were given a thrilling start.

Right in the center of the barn floor was the cutter which Van had driven from Boston.

The horse was in a nearby stall.

"By jove!" whispered Harry. "We've come up with the sharp rogue at last. He won't slip us this time."

"Indeed he won't!" declared Old King Brady. "I say, my man?"

"Well, sir?"

"Where is the man who came in with this team?"

Both boys stared.

"Eh?" stammered one. "That team? Why, nobody came in with it."

"What?"

"That's so, sir."

"Do you mean to say nobody drove in here with that team?"

"Jest so, sir! It came in by itself an' nobody in the sleigh. I don't know nuthin' more about it."

"And you don't know where the driver of it is?"

"No, sir."

The detectives were dumfounded.

It was a most astounding turn in affairs. For a few moments they were overcome.

What could it mean?

It was easy to assume that Van had deserted the team. But where and why? Where was he now?

It seemed an altogether foolish thing for him to desert the horse and sleigh to go afoot such a wild night.

No man could hope to live long in such a storm.

Yet it seemed that he had done this very thing.

The closest inquiries by the detectives revealed nothing more.

The farmer's boys could vouchsafe no further information.

The detectives were obliged to be satisfied with it.

Wherever Van was, nothing could be done to secure him that night. He might be freezing somewhere in the snow.

However this might be, the Bradys knew that they could only make themselves comfortable for the night and wait for the morrow.

So they went into the farm house.

A cheery fire blazed on the hearth.

John Paine, the farmer, and his wife welcomed the detectives.

They were given seats by the fire and the housewife hustled about to get them something to eat.

The Bradys were soon toasting their frigid feet by the fire and listening to John Paine's homely talk.

"I reckoned it ud be a pow'ful hard winter," he said. "Everything p'inted that way."

"How far are you from the next house?" asked Old King Brady.

"Summut of a mile, I reckon."

"What is it, a farm house like this?"

John Paine screwed up his mouth.

"I reckon ye're strangers about yere," he said.

"We are."

"Bekase if ye warn't ye'd never ax that question. Why, the next house ain't a house at all. It's a mad-house!"

"A mad-house?"

"Yes, some people call it a 'sylum."

"Oh, yes; a private asylum!"

"I reckon so. It's private enuff. Old Doctor Scraggs who keeps it has about four of ther wust dogs in this kentry. Nobody dares to go about there arter dark."

The detectives were doing some deep thinking.

Private asylums were not uncommon in any part of the country.

They wondered if there could be any connection between Van's disappearance and the asylum.

For a long while they pondered over it.

Then Old King Brady asked:

"I say, my friend! Have you any snowshoes?"

"Sartin!" replied Paine. "But ye ain't goin' out to-night?"

"I have a desire to visit that asylum," said the detective.

"Wait till ter-morrer. We'll break the road out airy."

"Oh, I don't mind the storm."

At this moment one of the farm boys came in with a stamp of his feet.

"I say!" he cried. "It's all breaking away an' the moon is coming out."

"Sho!" cried the farmer. "You don't say so?"

"That settles it!" cried Old King Brady. "We'll take a trip on snowshoes, anyway!"

The farmer made no further demur. For himself he couldn't see the sense of it.

"But city folks does hev queer ways," he remarked to his wife.

Two pairs of snowshoes were brought out.

The Bradys first indulged in a hearty meal as prepared by the good housewife.

Then they sallied forth.

Warmly wrapped they did not feel the chill air. The moon had appeared high in the heavens and the air was sublime.

Over the drifted fields the detectives made their way.

"It's easy enough to understand it all now," said Old King Brady. "You see Van went as far as he could with

his team. Then he turned it into this man's yard and went ahead on foot."

"He meant to reach the asylum. It was certainly his objective point."

"Yes."

"But what business can he possibly have at the asylum of Doctor Scraggs?"

"That is for us to find out."

"Perhaps——"

Old King Brady paused. Both detectives had experienced the same thought. Was there any connection between the insane asylum of Doctor Scraggs and the Fifteenth street mystery?

Had the Tough Trio any relationship with this private home for the insane?

The Bradys knew well that many of these private asylums are but prisons for innocent victims of evil plots.

On the charge of insanity a perfectly sane man may be kept for years, even to the hour of his death, in awful, torturous confinement.

It seemed certain that Van had not alone come on to Boston to shadow the detectives or even to decoy them.

It was really to pay a visit to Doctor Scraggs' asylum.

But what was his business there?

What sort of a place was it?

The Bradys felt that they were upon a new lead.

As they glided along on their snowshoes, they were resolved to solve the mystery that night if possible.

Nearer now they drew to the grounds of the asylum.

Now a barrier arose which seemed likely to thwart them.

## CHAPTER IX.

### A CLEVER GAME.

The savage baying of a dog broke the stillness of the winter night.

The hoarse barking was succeeded by others until the air became heavy with the uproar.

Then the distant clang of a door was heard.

The Bradys had come to a halt undecided what to do.

They had little fear that the dogs could reach them in that deep snow. But suddenly as they stood there in the moonlight a distant sharp crack was heard and the hiss of a bullet by Harry's ear was a note of danger.

"Down, my lad!" cried Old King Brady, warningly.

They crouched behind the rails of a fence.

Bullets now began to sing about their heads.

It was evident that they had been seen in the moonlight.

Why the asylum people should receive possible visitors in this warlike if not murderous fashion was a problem which needed solution.

"It is might queer," said Old King Brady. "The place cannot be very straight to be sure. Can it be that they suspect our identity?"

"Let us find out."

"How?"

"I'll show you!"

Harry disguised his voice, imitating the vernacular of a Yankee farmer.

"I say, what in darnation be yu afirin' at us fer?" he shouted in a nasal twang. "Gosh hang it! We ain't doin' of anything to yu!"

The firing ceased.

There was a distant murmur of voices as if a consultation was being held.

Then a gruff voice came over the expanse of snow:

"Who are ye?"

"Wall, I'm Jim Simpson an' this ere is my uncle Hank Small. We live up tew Concord an' we've got tuckered out an' thought mebber we cud git yu to keep us until mornin'. We're willin' tu pay fer a nite's lodgin'."

"That don't count," came back the same gruff voice. "We ain't got no use fer strangers around hyar, I kin tell ye. Better move on!"

"Wall, I must say ye're mighty civil people tu try tu shoot us. I reckon I'll send the constable down to see yu!"

A savage curse came back.

"Ye wouldn't want to spend the night hyar if ye knew what sort of a house this is," said the gruff speaker.

"Eh?" retorted Harry. "What kind of a house is it? Dang me, but it looks big enuff for a hotel."

"Wall, it's a hotel fast enuff. But it's a hotel fer mad people!"

Harry whistled shrilly.

"Yu don't say! Say, now, I'd like to see a mad pusson. Won't ye let us take a look at one?"

Fierce oaths greeted this request.

"Go on yer way an' leave this place as far behind ye as ye can, or it'll be the wuss for ye."

"Durn it! But we're all tuckered out. Take us in an' give us a cup of suthin' warm, anyway. Then we'll go along."

"Ye'll git somethin' hotter nor ye want if ye fool around hyar too long. Now git out!"

"All right!" replied Harry, in a disappointed voice.

"I say!" came back the call.

"Wall?"

"Did ye cum up from Lexington?"

"Yas!"

"By ther highway?"

"We did."

"Ah, did ye see anything of two men in a sleigh on the way?"

"Oh, they turned back fer ther snow was too deep!"

This reply seemed to have a peculiar effect upon the asylum people. A distant murmur was heard and then there came another hail.

Meanwhile, Harry and Old King Brady had been holding a hurried consultation.

On the way from Paine's farm house they had effected a very clever disguise. They had borrowed some old coats, mufflers and hats of Farmer Paine.

With the use of false beards and wigs they had easily

made themselves up for countrymen of the most verdant kind.

"What do you think?" whispered Harry. "Is our disguise good enough to risk a trip to the asylum if they finally decide to take us in?"

Old King Brady hesitated.

He knew that it would be like walking literally into a lion's den.

Discovery was of course possible and could mean nothing but death.

But the daring old detective was ready to take any risk, however great, to gain a valuable end.

So he replied:

"We will take the chances."

At this moment the hail came again.

"Hello, you rubes!"

"Hello!" replied Harry.

"Did ye give us a straight story about the two men in the sleigh?"

"Dead straight!"

"Do ye know who they were?"

"Naw! Somebody down in Lexington said they wuz New York people, but they didn't look tu me tu be stylish enuff."

At this a laugh came back.

"Well, Simpson, you an' your friend can come over an' we'll take a look at ye. Mebber we can put ye up fer the night."

"Whoopla!" cried Harry. "We're glad enuff of that an' we'll pay ye fur it."

"Don't want no pay, see?"

"All right!"

"Come along sharp now. It's mighty cold."

The detectives climbed over the fence and came along on their snowshoes. It required nerve to do this.

For aught they knew this might be only a subterfuge on the part of the villains to get them within range.

They could be easily shot dead. Indeed, their nerves were sorely tried.

But it was all honest enough on the villains' part.

The detectives came suddenly to a high wicket gate in an iron fence.

Three huge mastiffs were held in leash by a bull-faced keeper. In the gateway stood three men.

Two of these the detectives recognized at once as Burke and Collins of the trio. This was a revelation.

It proved that Dr. Scraggs' asylum was really a rendezvous for the thugs.

The third man was tall and lean with rounded shoulders and a hatchet face.

He was the asylum proprietor. No other than Doctor Scraggs himself.

The three miscreants and the rascally gatekeeper keenly scrutinized the two detectives.

It was a critical moment.

Collins held the lantern close up to their faces and studied them hard. Then he grinned.

"It's all right," he said. "They're a couple of Rubes all right. Come in an' we'll keep ye till morning."

"Isaac," said Scraggs to the gatekeeper, "put the dogs back in the kennel. Show these two men to a room in the south wing. Give 'em a swig of whiskey."

"Much obleeged to yu, mister," said Harry, profusely. "I kin see yu are a gentleman. An' yu kin bet Jim Simpson won't fergit to make it up with yu."

"That's all right," growled the asylum keeper. "Maybe you won't like your room when you find out it's next to a madman's cell."

"I kin stand it if yu can," replied Harry.

"What's that?"

"I say that anything is a durned sight better than freezing to death out in this tarnal snow."

"Oh, I see! Well, come on, gentlemen, there's business for us to do. Look here, you jays, you're not lying to me about those two detec—I mean men in the sleigh? They really went back to Lexington?"

"Dead sure, boss! They couldn't git through."

"Thet is about right," said Van's voice from an open door in the building. "I know I had the start an' a half hour afterwards I couldn't have got through myself."

This ended the confab.

Isaac, the bull-faced keeper, led the detectives across the snow-covered yard to a wing of the asylum which was dark and looked cheerless and grim enough with its iron-barred windows.

In a few moments, however, the Bradys were in the kitchen of the asylum and the keeper had prepared some hot whisky for them.

The detectives never made a practice of drinking, but the exposure and the chill made the potation welcome.

Then they fell into easy conversation with Isaac.

The fellow had the appearance of a sharp, ferret-like rascal, but in the hands of the wily detectives he was like wax.

In a few moments they had wormed some interesting facts out of him.

"Betcher life Scraggy knows his biz," said Isaac, in a tough way. "He'll make anything pay. This ere asylum is a dead open cinch fer a fortune. See!"

"Gosh!" exclaimed Harry, rolling his eyes up. "Yu don't say so? What kind of mad peopel is there here?"

"Oh, thar's all kinds," replied the keeper. "Them that's fat an' them that's lean. Men an' women, an' anybody whose friends don't want 'em around. Do ye see?"

"What's that ye say?" interrogated Harry. "What's that about people's friends?"

"If ye don't ax me too many questions I'll tell ye no lies!" said Isaac with a shrewd wink.

"I say," said Harry, in a dull way, "s'posin' ye knew a man yu didn't like! Couldn't ye put him in this 'ere 'sylum an' swear he wuz crazy?"

Isaac looked sharply at Harry.

"Have you any friends you want to git rid of?" he asked.

"Wall, I dunno! That depends."

The keeper chuckled.

"You kin bet your dimes that this is a straight joint," he said. "If anybody gits in hyar they stays hyar."

"P'r'aps ye won't let us out," said Harry, suspiciously. Isaac laughed loudly.

"P'r'aps we won't, you jay!" he declared. "This is a hot place for jays, you can bet!"

"Do women ever go crazy?" asked Harry, credulously.

"Eh?" exclaimed the keeper in surprise. "Do women go crazy? Wall, I should say so!"

"Are there any here?"

"Any crazy women here? Well, there's one on the very floor above this."

The detectives had the deepest of interest. They questioned Isaac closely and skillfully, but they could learn no more.

They wondered who the lady inmate of the asylum was.

But they felt sure that before morning the chance would be given them to ascertain.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE ASYLUM PRISONER.

Isaac, the keeper, became quite voluble after a few drinks of whisky.

He talked freely and the detectives used every effort to pump him.

They learned that there was a strange female patient in the asylum.

That she had been brought there by the four crooks.

That all the gang were in the asylum and that Dr. Scraggs was a close ally.

All this Isaac, of course, did not tell them in as many words.

But from his conversation these facts were easily gathered.

Altogether the Bradys were well satisfied with the progress of affairs.

They had all their birds located and but for the embargo of the storm they might easily have summoned officers and completed the arrest of their birds.

Napoleon Blood was safely hidden in the asylum.

Under ordinary circumstances there would have been scant chance of his being found.

But the Bradys were in luck.

Their foes, from dogging their footsteps with murderous intent, were now in the position of being dogged themselves.

The race for life which they had intended giving the detectives had been arrested by circumstances.

Altogether the odds were just now decidedly in the detectives' favor.

But the Bradys were not disposed to spend their whole evening in the kitchen of the asylum.

There was other work for them to do.

Somewhere within the walls of the place the four conspirators were holding a meeting.

What that meeting was to decide the detectives could only guess.

But it was exceedingly important that they should know. This was their purpose.

So they did not waste much further time in the kitchen with the keeper.

Harry began to yawn.

"By gum, I'm awful sleepy," he averred. "I reckon I'd like tew turn in. Ain't it about time, mister?"

"So ye want to go to bed, do ye?" said Isaac, with a leer. "Yas."

"All right!"

The fellow trimmed the wick of an oil lamp and said:

"Follow me!"

The detectives shuffled along after the keeper up several flights of stairs and finally they passed through a narrow corridor with iron-barred doors on either side.

A distant wailing cry gave the detectives a chilly feeling along the spine. There is no more dreadful sound than the cry of a maniac.

"Here ye are," said the keeper, throwing open one of the iron doors. "Ye'll be good an' quiet here, fer Old Hickory, the only madman on this floor, is asleep. Thar's a good bed fer ye!"

The detectives passed into the little chamber.

As they looked about the place they suddenly heard a little click and a chuckle behind them.

Turning suddenly they were aghast at the sight which rewarded them.

The barred door was between them and the grinning keeper.

He had shut it and barred it.

They were prisoners.

Harry was the first to recover.

"Oh, I say, b'gosh! I don't like that kind of foolin'," he said, angrily. "Open that door, mister!"

"Will I?" leered the keeper. "Jest hold yer hat on till I do!"

"Are ye foolin'?"

"Does it look like it?"

"Gosh hang ye, let us out!"

"What for?"

"Come, we don't like it!"

"Don't ye? Wall, I'm sorry, but it's orders, ye know!"

For a moment a horrible fear struck the Bradys.

Was it true?

Had they walked unwittingly into a trap?

Were the tough trio after all to be able to carry out their fearful threat of vengeance?

For a moment the thought made both detectives shiver.

They exchanged glances. Then Harry placed his hands on the iron bars of the door.

"Gol darn it, friend, this ain't no joke!" he said, entreatingly. "Let us out an' we'll say no more!"

Isaac laughed demoniacally.

"Let ye out? Wall, what fer? When we git two as good

patients as you we allus holds 'em. You'll be worth something to your friends, likely."

"Oh, ye think ye'll get a ransom fer us, do ye?" asked Harry.

"Well, we oughter."

"You won't!"

"We'll see!"

"I tell ye we've got no money nor friends. Let us out!"

"Ye live in Concord?"

"Yas."

"What do ye do?"

"Work out fer a livin'."

"I believe ye're durned liars. This is the safest place fer ye to-night. To-morrow the boss kin decide what to do with ye. I hope as how ye'll have pleasant dreams!"

And with this the fellow was gone. The detectives were aghast.

They saw it was no joke.

It was a clever game to keep them close prisoners for the night. But for what purpose?

Did the crooks suspect them?

Old King Brady was loth to believe this. He reckoned that it was only intended to keep them from wandering about the asylum, as curious countrymen might be tempted to do.

But even at this the situation was extremely unsatisfactory to the detectives.

Above all things they wanted their freedom.

Harry inspected the iron bars of the door closely.

Suddenly with a thrill he discovered that one of them was loose.

He believed that it could be sprung from its socket.

He whispered this fact to Old King Brady and said:

"Never mind. We will get out all right, yet."

"Do you think so?"

"I do!"

"We had better not try it yet."

"Oh, certainly not."

The detectives listened long and intently. They heard a door creak at intervals at the far end of the corridor.

It was possible that the wily keeper was on watch there to see what move to escape the two men might make.

But the detectives made loud conversation.

"I don't keer a durn!" Harry finally yawned. "I'm goin' to have some sleep, anyway."

"Same hyar! I'm fagged."

They cast themselves heavily upon the iron cot beds. Then in a few moments both were snoring.

But they were not sleeping.

Each, through half-shut eyes, watched the cell door.

Just what they expected occurred.

Suddenly at the iron bars there appeared a leering face.

It was the keeper Isaac.

He crouched there a moment and then glided away.

A distant door creaked and then all was silence.

Old King Brady sat up on the edge of his bunk.

"It's all right, Harry," he said. "The coast is clear."

"We are safe?"

"Yes."

"The fellow was easy to fool. He is off his guard now."

"Sure!"

Harry now tried the iron bar.

It was an easy matter to spring it from the socket. The aperture thus made was small.

But Harry squeezed far enough through it to reach the bar and lift it. The door swung back.

Freedom was theirs.

But there was lively work before them. They glided away down the dark corridor.

Noiselessly they passed from one corridor to another, past the doors of cells where madmen prattled, until suddenly Old King Brady gave a gasp.

A light shone through the grated door of one cell.

It was more cheerfully furnished than the others. But the single occupant enchained the detectives.

A young girl, beautiful, though pale as marble.

Her face was clear and sweet. Her manner mild and gentle. Surely she was no maniac.

The Bradys paused and gazed upon the fair occupant of this cell as if spellbound.

She did not at the moment observe them.

When she did, finally, she gave a great start and half arose. A frightened light was in her eyes.

"I pray you be not alarmed, young lady," said Old King Brady, in an undertone. "We are friends!"

"Who—who are you?" she asked. "Have you come to take me away?"

"Perhaps so," said Old King Brady, closely searching for any possible evidence of insanity.

But there was none.

He was satisfied of this.

No doubt she was confined here against her will. Perhaps she was the victim of some cowardly plot.

"Oh, I am thankful!" she said, joyfully. "For my prayer is answered. I shall die if I remain longer in this awful place!"

Old King Brady drew close to the bars of the cell door.

"Come a little nearer, young lady," he said. "We are in danger of being overheard."

She drew nearer.

Her large eyes were fixed upon the detectives questioningly. But it was plain that her confidence was wan.

"Oh, I am sure you are friends," she said, earnestly, "and you will take me from this dreadful place."

"Tell me your story," said Old King Brady. "Who brought you here? Why are you here?"

"Oh, I do not know," she said with a shudder. "They tell me that I am insane like the others in this place. But I am not. Truly I am not!"

"Where did you come from?"

"My home is in Westchester near New York City."

Old King Brady gave a start.

His eyes flashed.

"Will you tell me your name?"

"Certainly!" replied the fair prisoner. "My name is Evelyn Grimm!"

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE RESCUE.

"Evelyn Grimm!"

Old King Brady repeated the name with a horrified gasp. Both detectives rubbed their eyes.

"Did I hear you aright?" asked the old detective. "Did you say the name was Grimm?"

"Yes, sir."

The young girl looked at him wonderingly.

"You lived in Westchester?"

"That is my home."

"Do you know Napoleon Blood?"

The young girl shuddered.

"He is my uncle," she said. "He it was who declared I was insane and had me brought here!"

Old King Brady began to see his way through the fog. The vile plot in all its intricacies was now exposed to him.

"That was the way of it," he said. "Then you did not keep an appointment in Union Square on a certain evening?"

"Never!"

"Nor you were not murdered and burned up in a Fifteenth street house?"

The young girl looked astonished.

"I do not understand you," she said.

"I do not wonder," said the old detective. "I will explain. That is the story of your mysterious disappearance as given to the world by your uncle."

"Well, it is false!"

"Even traces of your clothing were found and other clues to show that you were burned in that dwelling."

"That is strange."

"Yes, it is part of the plot."

"Plot?"

"Yes, young lady, you are the victim of a villainous plot."

"I think you are right," said Evelyn, with conviction. "And I believe my uncle is at the bottom of it. I know he always hated me and he wanted my heritage."

"Now you have it right," said Old King Brady. "He tried to hang young Allerton Banks for the supposed crime, but an alibi was proved."

A cry of horror and indignation escaped the young girl.

"The scoundrel!" she said, intensely. "He always hated Allerton. Oh, sir, who are you? Surely you do not keep this dreadful place?"

"Sh!" said Old King Brady, in a whisper. "We must be careful. No, my dear young lady, we do not. We are New York detectives, of the Secret Service. We are in quest of the villains who were supposed to be your murderers!"

Evelyn Grimm was plainly surprised and delighted.

"Oh, heaven be praised!" she said, ardently. "You will save me. You will take me back to New York. In another year my heritage will be mine. I shall contest my uncle's right to put me in an insane asylum."

"And well you may. It is as you say, only a scheme to beat you out of your inheritance."

"Uncle Napoleon will pay for it."

"We promise you he will. But now let us consider what is to be done. Very naturally you are anxious to escape."

"Yes."

"But there are many things to consider. In the first place there is a terrible risk!"

"Indeed!"

"You see the gang of villains with whom your uncle is in league are here to-night. We want to entrap them."

"Then I must wait?"

"Perhaps so. Or—it might be as well for us to liberate you now. But you must be very careful and not betray us."

"Oh, I will promise."

"Very well."

The detectives now lifted the iron bar and opened the cell door.

It creaked a bit, but after listening carefully the detectives were convinced that they were not betrayed.

In another moment Evelyn Grimm, the supposed victim of the Fifteenth street crime, walked out safe and well.

The Bradys felt that they had made a great step toward the winning of this remarkable case.

While they knew that the crime charged against the trio was thus disproved, yet there was sufficient evidence against the gang to hold them for the law.

So they did not deem the case by any means ended, with the liberation of Evelyn Grimm.

Along the corridor to the end of the wing they now all crept.

It had been decided by the Bradys what was to be done.

At the end of the wing there was an iron fire-escape.

It would be easy to descend by this to the ground.

Luckily Evelyn knew the use of snowshoes. Harry was to accompany her to the Paine farm house.

Then he was to organize a band of the farmers, armed, and return. The asylum would be surrounded.

It seemed that this must be a certain way of capturing the gang.

"Queer, isn't it?" said Harry. "The charred remains of a body were found in the ruins of that Fifteenth street fire."

"Very good."

"Well, now we find Evelyn Grimm alive."

"Yes."

"But I cannot see that that disproves the crime of murder. A murder must have been enacted."

"Beyond a doubt."

"But who was the victim?"

"That remains to be seen. It certainly was not Evelyn Grimm."

"No."

"I can see the gist of the whole diabolical plot," said Harry. "Old Blood thought he could bury his niece forever in this asylum. The evidences of her presence in the burning dwelling would blind everybody and make them believe that she was burned to death."

"That is true."

"But she is very much alive."

"Well, I should rather think so. Ah, here we are!"

They had now reached the window opening out upon the fire-escape.

Harry softly raised the sash.

Then he descended and assisted the young girl down. The snowshoes were found in the kitchen which luckily was deserted and Harry quickly appeared with them.

They were put on, and then Harry and his fair charge walked away across the white fields.

Old King Brady closed the window down and went back along the corridor.

He could not help wondering at the unexpected outcome of the case.

"Indeed, people will be surprised beyond measure when they learn that Evelyn Grimm is alive!" he mused. "It will prove a great sensation."

But the old detective had no idea of remaining idle while Harry was absent.

There was work before him.

Somewhere in the asylum he knew that a council of villainy was being held.

He was desirous of becoming a listener to the same. He proceeded, however, with extreme caution.

He made his way carefully to the head of a flight of stairs.

Down these he crept to a floor below.

Still further below he now heard the murmur of voices. The light in the corridor was dim.

But far below he saw a bright gleam which seemed to come from the reception room of the asylum.

The place was unusually quiet.

Some of the boisterous patients had been drugged to keep them quiet. It was a villainous practice, but yet of common occurrence.

Old King Brady had half expected to run across Isaac or some one of the other keepers in the corridors.

But good fortune favored him.

He did not come across any of them. Down the stairs he glided.

The door of the reception room was half open.

The old detective peered in.

The scene which met his gaze at once interested him.

There were the five precious villains. At a table sat the Tough Trio.

Beside them were Doctor Scraggs and Napoleon Blood. On the table were a number of papers.

"You know, curse ye, that ye agreed to keep the girl until she dies," said Blood, in an angry tone. "And now you want to back out."

"I never had any luck with women patients," said Scraggs, persistently, "and I know what I'm talking about. You must pay me good money to keep her here."

"Why more for her than any other patient?" growled Blood.

"She gives us more trouble."

"Bah! You're over nice!"

"Not a bit of it. But confound 'em! I never had any luck with women."

"Ye've got to keep her! She'll die before long."

"Humph!" ejaculated Collins, sourly. "Why don't ye make it a sure thing right off?"

"What do ye mean?"

"You want the gal out of the way?"

"Yes."

"Well, the safest way is the best."

"What?"

"Kill her!"

Blood shivered. He drew his cloak closer about him.

"That's work for a man younger than I am," he said.

"I'm too old to cover up the job."

"Pshaw! We'll do it for you!"

"All right. What is your price?"

"The girl and money!"

Blood gave a violent start.

He glanced at Collins.

"The girl?" he repeated.

"Yes, the gal!"

"What do you want of her? You will only have her dead body?"

"That is just it," said Collins, with a leer, "we could get a good price fer the body."

"Who will pay it?"

"Her lover—or perhaps her friends."

Blood sneered scornfully.

"You are cracked!" he declared. "But if you want her you can have her. That settles it."

"Very well, then," said Burke. "It is understood."

"Yes."

"We are to put the gal out of the way. You don't care so long as she never puts in an appearance ag'in'?"

"No! Curse her!" gritted Blood. "She has been nothing but a source of trouble to me. See that you make the job sure."

"Trust the trio fer that," said Burke with a horrible leer "Come on, boys! The dainty female is ours."

## CHAPTER XII.

### DISAFFECTION.

Collins and Van both arose eagerly at this.

The detective's blood surged hotly through his veins.

"The unconscionable scoundrels!" he muttered under his breath. "They are human fiends."

And in that moment the old detective rejoiced that their would-be victim was beyond their reach.

But he was conscious of his own perilous position.

If the trio of villains went to Evelyn's prison cell to commit the contemplated horrible crime of murder, her escape would be discovered.

But the old detective was only temporarily alarmed.

He reckoned that it would be very soon time for Harry to return from Paine's with assistance.

Certainly escape would be a difficult matter for the villains.

The snow was too deep to admit of their making very rapid progress if they attempted to leave the asylum.

The trio of villains had arisen for the purpose of paying a murderous visit to the prison cell of the young girl.

But at that moment Scraggs interposed.

"Hold on!" he growled. "What are ye going to do?"

Burke turned and stared at him.

"You heard the agreement."

"Well, you can't kill the girl in this house. I object to that!"

"Thunder!" ejaculated Burke. "What has come over you?"

"That's what has come over me," said Dr. Scraggs, coolly.

"You are blocking our plans."

"I don't care if I am. This is my house and I am boss here!"

There was an ominous silence.

The trio looked ugly and Collins glared at the asylum keeper.

"You're a cursed traitor!"

"No, I am not!"

"Then what's the matter with ye?"

"I'm not going to have any murder in my house, that's all! I don't care a picayune what you do with the girl, but you can't kill her here. Do you see?"

"Humph!" exclaimed Burke. "You're mighty particular. It's an easy job. There'll be no blood stains. We'll just shut her windpipe and she can be carried out for a dead patient. See?"

But Scraggs was obdurate.

"I don't care!" he said. "It's not going to be done here. That ends it."

All this while Blood had been silent. Now he said:

"Well, I don't blame Scraggs for that, boys. This asylum is his way of making a living. If any scandal arose out of this place it would put him out of business."

"That's it," agreed Scraggs. "Them's my reasons an' nothin' more nor less."

"Well," said Burke, in a mollified way, "if that's the way of it perhaps you're right."

"We can fix that!" said Collins.

"How?"

"To-morrow we'll take her away in a sleigh. A few miles from here is the Assabet river. We can dump her in under the ice and if she's ever found it won't be until Spring, anyway."

"Good!" cried Blood. "That is the best way to work it. No need of having any hard feelings."

"I haven't any feelings about it," said Burke. "So we'll put it off until morning. One more drink, gents."

Brandy was decanted and the party drank freely.

All this while Old King Brady had listened with deep interest.



Now that the fate of Evelyn Grimm had been settled, other matters came in for discussion.

Burke laughed uproariously.

"Haw! Haw!" he guffawed. "Every detective in this country thinks the girl was burned up in Fifteenth street."

"Everybody else does, for that matter," said Blood.

"We led 'em astray easy enough. The poor woman who was burned up there though——"

"Sh!" exclaimed Van, with a frightful contortion of the face. "Let that rest."

"Oh, it's a tender subject with you, Old Bluebeard. How many more wives have you burned up the same way?"

"Curse you, shut up!" growled Van, savagely. "I had to shut her mouth. She was false and would have betrayed the whole gang of us sooner or later."

"Never mind that," said Scraggs, "I am interested in those accursed detectives. You say a couple of them chased you as far as Lexington?"

"Yes," agreed Burke.

"Do you know who they were?"

"I do!" said Van. "For I'm the man they chased. Curse 'em! They are the Bradys of New York!"

"They are on our list," said Collins. "We'll trap them."

"They must die!"

"Well," growled Scraggs, "I don't want them to get their eyes on my place here. I've too much at stake. See?"

"Ain't you with us?"

"Of course!"

"Then you've got to take chances."

"But there's no need of being so reckless."

"Oh, don't fret, we can handle the Bradys all right! Hello! What the deuce is that?"

A wild, animal-like cry came down the stairs.

Old King Brady crouched back in the shadows just in time.

A dark form rushed past him. The next moment Isaac, the keeper, sprang into the reception room.

He was wildly excited.

"Quick!" he shouted. "They have got her! She is gone! She is gone, I tell you!"

Wildly threshing his arms about him he made the circuit of the room.

Van caught him by the shoulder.

"What are ye talkin' about, ye cursed hyena?" he yelled.

"Speak plain! What's wrong?"

"Oh, the girl! She's gone!"

"Gone?" echoed all.

"Yes."

"Where?"

"I don't know. The two countrymen slipped a bar out of the cell door and they're gone, too!"

Fierce exclamations filled the room. Van hurled the unfortunate keeper to the floor.

"You cursed traitorous dog!" he yelled, drawing a knife. "I'll kill you for this!"

He flung himself forward and that moment might indeed have been the keeper's last.

But Scraggs forced the ruffian back.

"Hold on!" he growled. "Hear the man's story first. I've always found him true."

"Oh, I swear it!" cried Isaac. "I left the door securely barred. Come and see for yourself. They were asleep before I left them."

"Come on then, you dog!" hissed Van. "If I find you've lied, you shall die!"

Up the stairs all now rushed.

They found the prison cell of the girl captive empty.

A brief examination told the whole story.

The tracks on the fire-escape and the snow beneath told all.

Fury and fear alike overwhelmed the villains.

Their consternation was great.

"We've been fooled!" cried Burke, savagely. "I tell ye it was a game!"

"Them two Rubes weren't what we thought they were."

Martin brought his hands forcibly together.

"Curse it!" he cried. "We had the game right in our hands and didn't know it. Them two jays were our men!"

"The Bradys?"

"Yes."

"They fooled us!"

As this conviction dawned upon the villains their fury was beyond expression. Words cannot depict it.

But Scraggs was sour.

"Confound you for coming here at all!" he growled.

"Why didn't you lead those detectives somewhere else?"

"We thought this the best place," said Van. "If things had worked the way I thought they would——"

"But they didn't!" snapped Scraggs. "What are you going to do about it?"

"That's the idea!" cried Van. "We are gaining nothin' hyar. We ought to chase 'em."

"Chase 'em!" said Burke. "In this snow?"

"We ought to git along just as well as they kin!"

"You fergit."

"What?"

"They have snowshoes."

"Wall, git snowshoes, then, for us. I say, Scraggs, have ye such athing?"

"No!" replied the asylum keeper. "What do you take me for? I'm no keeper of a logging camp."

"No, nor anything else!" snapped Burke, viciously. "But if we can't do any better we must wade."

"That would be a fool's game," said the asylum keeper.

"They can go four steps to your one on snowshoes."

"Curse the luck! They can't go far on such a night."

"Ten miles would put 'em beyond your reach."

"Wall, suggest a plan then," growled Burke. "I'm sick of it."

"So am I!" snapped Scraggs. "I wish I'd never seen you or your girl. This will be my ruin."

"You're awful afraid of being ruined," said Blood, angrily. "I've paid you good money, Anthony Scraggs!"

"And you're making a fugitive from justice of me, the same as yourself."

"Well, you ought to be. You're the worst shark of us all."

Old King Brady listened to all this wrangling with much edification.

The old detective was exultant.

Certainly he had reason to be.

In a short while the asylum would be surrounded by armed men and the birds would be in limbo,

The great case would be won.

Old King Brady could hardly contain himself.

He listened intently for some distant sound of the return of Harry. But time passed.

The crooks did not attempt a pursuit.

They abandoned it as impracticable. But they were alive fully to the exigencies of the moment.

It had been decided to let the girl go without any effort to recapture her.

The trio would trudge the best way they could through the snow to a distant railway station.

Blood was to remain in the asylum with Scraggs.

"I can hide you where nobody will ever find you," said the proprietor of the asylum. "So have no fears."

Old King Brady listened to all this with some misgiving. Would his men slip him after all?"

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### BAFFLED AGAIN.

The trio went on with their preparations to leave the asylum.

Old King Brady was powerless to prevent it.

Moreover, he had all he could do now to keep out of sight and assure his own safety.

It was long past midnight.

What had become of Harry?

It seemed full time for him to return. Yet he did not come.

Old King Brady knew that it would require some time to arouse the neighbors and organize a relief band.

But yet, it would seem that this had already ought to have been accomplished.

Old King Brady grew nervous.

He was half tempted to essay the conflict single handed. But he knew that it could only result in failure.

So he tried to remain patient and hopeful. The trio were now all ready to leave the asylum.

Yet Harry did not return.

A fear came to the old detective that some mishap might have overtaken the young detective.

The three crooks now took their leave. Old King Brady felt the hands of his watch.

It was two o'clock.

He heard the crooks leave by way of the big front door. He did not dare to follow them.

But he was consoled with one reflection.

It might not be difficult to overtake them when Harry should arrive, for the trio had no snowshoes and must leave a plain trail.

So the old detective was patient.

It was half-past three before the long-looked-for summons came. The dogs were confined, so they gave no warning.

But there came a loud knock on the door.

Scraggs, who had retired to sleep, scrambled out of bed and thrust his head out of a window.

"Who is it?" he asked. "And what do you want?"

"It's yer neighbor," said the voice of Paine, the farmer. "Come down, Scraggs, we want to see ye!"

"What do you want?" demanded the asylum keeper.

"You'll find out when you git down hyar."

"Well, I'm not to be aroused from my bed at this hour of the night," replied Scraggs, angrily. "If you want to see me, come around in the daytime."

"We want to see ye now," insisted Paine.

"Well, you won't see me!" replied Scraggs, hotly. "Get off my premises or I'll fire on you!"

"No, ye won't!" gritted the angry farmer. "Ye've run your rig hyar, Scraggs. We air goin' to run you out of this kentry. If ye don't come down we'll come up after ye!"

"Curse you! What does this mean?"

"Come down!"

Scraggs closed the window and then went down to the door. He met John Paine backed by a score of armed men.

These pushed by Scraggs and entered the asylum.

They instantly took possession of the place.

Harry Brady was foremost and gave directions what to do.

Scraggs was stunned.

"Look here!" he cried. "This is an outrage. I'm a peaceable, law-abiding citizen, and——"

"Oh, come off!" cried one of the invaders. "You're a swindling old hypocrite, you are!"

"Where are those crooks who came up here yesterday?" asked Harry. "I mean Burke, Collins and Van?"

Scraggs looked desperate.

"I don't know 'em!" he said.

"Come now, that lie won't save you. Search the place, men! We'll find them and——"

Harry ceased talking. Old King Brady had appeared.

In a moment the two detectives were comparing notes.

"I reached Paine's all right," said Harry, "and the girl is safe. It took a long while to get these men together."

"Too bad!" said Old King Brady. "For our birds are gone!"

"Gone?" gasped the young detective.

"Yes."

"Where?"

"For the nearest railway station. But I think we can overtake them."

"We must do so!" cried the young detective. "We have staked too much to lose now."

"You are right we have. But one of our men is still here!"

"Who?"

"Napoleon Blood!"

"The old scoundrel! I have the town constable with me. We will arrest him and Scraggs, too."

"Very good!"

"Paine will look out for Miss Grimm until we want to take her back to New York. Everything is working all right."

"Splendid! Let us then give chase to the trio at once!"

Scraggs was arrested at once and easily frightened into revealing the hiding place of Blood.

The latter was handcuffed and left in the care of the constable.

Then the Bradys organized the party to pursue the trio.

The best men in the party were selected. Only those with snowshoes were taken.

Then the pursuit began.

It was now almost daylight.

There was little difficulty in following the trail of the fugitives.

But as they went on the Bradys were impressed with one startling fact.

The villains had made wonderfully rapid progress through the snow.

It was not so easy to overtake them.

At six o'clock it was daylight.

This brought the party to a railroad track. It was cleared of snow and far down the line a semaphore was seen.

The station was just around the curve and the Bradys pushed on.

"Perhaps they are in the station waiting for a train," said Harry.

"In that case," declared Old King Brady, "we had better deploy and surround the place."

This was done.

Gradually the party of searchers drew in about the railway station.

They finally reached the platform.

The station agent had just come out.

He stared at them.

"What's this?" he asked. "Do you want a train?"

"We want three men who are here waiting for a train," said Old King Brady. "Where are they?"

"I am sorry," replied the station agent, "but they are gone!"

"Gone?"

"Yes. They left on the five-forty train for Boston."

The Bradys were beaten.

There was nothing left but to return to the asylum.

There was no use in wiring ahead to make the arrest in Boston, for the train had reached that city long ere this.

So back to the asylum they went.

The case against Scraggs was left in the hands of the local constable.

But the Bradys took Napoleon Blood with them back to Boston.

Here he was delivered to State officers to await requisition papers.

Then the Bradys scoured Boston for a clew to the trio. Meanwhile, Evelyn Grimm had gone back to New York in the care of friends who were bound to see her wrongs righted.

It is needless to say that a tremendous sensation was created when the facts concerning Evelyn Grimm's experience were made known.

It was known now, as overheard by Old King Brady, that the bones found in the tenement ruins were those of the last of Martin Van's innumerable wives.

He had killed her in a fit of anger and by the suggestion of Napoleon Blood, had arranged clews to suggest that Evelyn was the victim instead.

Certainly the plot had for a time worked well.

Even such keen detectives as the Bradys had certainly been deceived.

The case had now simmered down to one thread and this the Bradys were taking up.

It consisted namely in the chase and capture of the Tough Trio.

A murder had certainly been committed.

It was just as necessary as ever, therefore, for the detectives to capture the trio of villains.

Evelyn Grimm and her rascally uncle were now entirely out of the case.

The young girl's friends took hold of her affairs, with the assurance that much of the inheritance would be saved for her.

As for Napoleon Blood, he was held for trial on a number of criminal charges.

Scraggs, the Asylum keeper, was also jailed and his asylum closed.

The case simmered rapidly down to the problem of running down the Tough Trio.

Or rather to the running down of the Bradys by this clique of rogues.

For that they had not abandoned their purpose of assassinating the detectives was proved by the following startling message received by Old King Brady one day.

Thus it read:

"To the Bradys:

"Mebbe you think you hev scared the trio. Butt you will find thet death is on your track an' you can't escape it. An' don't you fergit it, either! Wakin' or sleepin' it don't make no diffrence which, we are rite after you. So look out!

"Thet's all fer just now from,

The Trio."

Old King Brady carefully studied the post-mark on the envelope. It was mailed at Station C, New York.

The Bradys were assured that their birds were in the big city, so they had returned to New York.

For a week they groped blindly in vain for a clew.

Then one day almost a grim accomplishment of the threat uttered by the villains occurred.

The two detectives stood on the platform of an elevated station.

They were waiting for an uptown train. Suddenly as the train came thundering up a man with muffled features sprang out of the crowd.

With all his force he rushed against Old King Brady and hurled him from the station platform down in front of the train which was rushing in at the moment.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### A LIVELY CHASE.

Only one thing saved Old King Brady from an awful death.

The impetus given by the push was exceedingly fierce.

An ordinary shove would have dropped anyone right under the onrushing wheels.

But the force of the push sent the old detective far out into the air. He struck the further rail and the locomotive just brushed his body as it rolled over upon the next track.

It was a fearful fall, however, and for a moment stunned the old detective.

He lay half senseless upon the middle track.

Luckily no train was approaching for it was not the time of day for the expresses which used this track.

A great shriek of horror went up from the spectators.

Women fainted, men turned sick and all was fearful excitement.

Harry was so horror-struck and dazed that he allowed the assailant to vanish.

When he found that his partner had escaped death, he turned to look for the perpetrator of the deed.

But it was too late.

He was gone.

Meanwhile, the train guards and policemen had climbed down to give assistance to the detective.

But though badly shaken, Old King Brady recovered and got upon his feet.

He was assisted back to the platform and the train went on.

The police, learning who he was, asked no questions. The Bradys, it is needless to say, were on the qui vive.

"Did you see the fellow?" asked Old King Brady.

"No," replied Harry. "He got away too quick."

"I have no doubt it was one of the trio."

"Oh, certainly!"

"That was a close call, Harry."

"I should say so."

"To think he was so near us and we did not know it. I fear we have lost ground, my boy."

"We are the shadowed!"

"Just so."

"Well," said the young detective, resolutely, "we've got to rig a trap for those fellows. If we don't they'll finish us."

"You are right!"

"What can we do?"

"I have an idea!"

"What is it?"

Old King Brady was thoughtful. They had decided not to take the train and had left the elevated station.

They were walking down a part of Columbus avenue. The elevated trains thundered along overhead.

But before Old King Brady could elucidate his plan, exciting incidents came along in quick order.

Harry suddenly ejaculated:

"There is our man!"

He clutched Old King Brady's arm and drew him back into a doorway.

Standing before the door of a liquor saloon on the opposite side of the street, sure enough, was Dan Collins.

He wore the same slouch hat and it was beyond doubt that he was the villain who had pushed Old King Brady off the platform.

The two detectives gazed at him for a moment intently.

Then Harry whispered:

"It's no use!"

"What?"

"He is onto us! He knows we are watching him."

"Do you think so?"

"Sure!"

Old King Brady changed his position slightly.

Then he gave a start.

"By the great horn spoon!" he exclaimed. "They are all around us!"

Harry followed his gaze and saw his meaning.

On the opposite corner stood Martin Van. The crook seemed utterly oblivious of the presence of the detectives.

But the Bradys knew better.

They were sure that the villain knew of their presence.

"We will test it," said Old King Brady, after some discussion.

The old detective left the doorway and leisurely sauntered toward the corner.

Instantly Van, who appeared to be studying something in his hand, began also to change his position.

"Ah! That is it!" thought the old detective. "He can see me plainly enough from the little mirror he carries in his hand."

Very swiftly the old detective revolved a plan of action in his head.

He acted with great suddenness.

As he slowly approached, Van moved as slowly away.

This was irritating to the old detective.

Suddenly he made a panther-like leap forward.

So swift was his action that the villain was taken off his guard.

Old King Brady actually succeeded in getting hold of his arm.

A hissing curse broke from Van's lips.

He aimed a murderous blow at Old King Brady.

But the old detective dodged it.

He would have had his man then and there but for an unlooked-for incident.

When Harry saw the old detective grapple with Van, he also saw Collins perform a strange act.

He raised the palm of his hand.

In it was a tiny revolver.

The next moment the spiteful little report rang out on the air and Old King Brady released his hold on Van and sank to the sidewalk.

Harry had crossed the street in flying leaps and was upon Collins like a panther.

People on the sidewalk paused in terror, not understanding the situation at all.

In another moment Harry would have collared his man.

But a sharp warning cry from Van caused Collins to turn his head.

With a side leap he went through a saloon entrance.

Harry burst into the place hot after his man.

Half a dozen or more men were drinking at the bar.

These turned in surprise as Harry burst into the place.

The proprietor, a huge, red-faced man, confronted the young detective.

"What do you want here?" he demanded. "Get out before you're bounced!"

"Easy, my friend," said the young detective. "I am in pursuit of a criminal. He came into this place."

"You're mistaken. No such man is here!"

"I saw him enter."

"That's not so. Come, get out!"

Harry ran his gaze quickly over the place.

He saw a door at the far end of the saloon.

He was convinced that his man had gone through that door.

He made a move toward it, but the big man barred his way.

"No, I guess not!" he said. "You're not going in!"

"You stop me at your peril!" said Harry, sternly. "I am an officer of the law!"

"Is that so?" cried one of habitués of the place, jeeringly. "Well, we haven't any use for you here!"

"He's a peeler!"

"Throw him out!"

These were the cries which filled the place.

Harry saw that the situation was by no means a pleasant one. He was only one against ten.

All this while Collins was making good his escape. Probably by some rear way.

This angered the young detective exceedingly, and he cried:

"You pack of hounds! You are trying to aid in the escape of that man. You are thwarting justice."

A jeering roar of laughter followed.

But at this moment the door of the place burst open again.

This time Old King Brady and a couple of policemen appeared.

The old detective had not been seriously wounded.

The bullet had struck him a glancing blow in the leg and had brought him down with the shock.

But he had quickly recovered.

Van, however, was beyond pursuit.

But Old King Brady had seen Harry pursue his man into the liquor saloon.

Realizing that the young detective might need assistance, he hailed a couple of policemen and started after him.

He had arrived just in the nick of time.

Harry was facing the gang of crooks, but the odds were too great for him and the result might have been serious had he been left to play his hand alone.

The appearance of the officers, however, had a salutary effect.

The gang fell back toward the bar.

"What's this?" cried Old King Brady. "Where is your man, Harry?"

"I might have caught him but for these fellows who have tried to block me," said Harry.

The old detective gazed keenly at the proprietor of the place.

"If I am not mistaken, I know you, Jack Billings!" he said. "Up to your old tricks, eh? Where is Dan Collins?"

Billings shifted his gaze.

"I don't know who you mean," he said.

"Yes, you do, too," said Old King Brady, sharply. "Come, out with it. I want the truth."

"I don't know the man!"

"You speak falsely!"

"I swear it."

"Your oath is worthless. Come, tell us the truth. Where is he?"

"Really," protested Billings, "I don't know the man you are speaking of. But perhaps you are after a fellow who rushed through here a little while ago and went out through that rear door."

"And you detained me here on purpose to aid his escape," declared Harry. "Don't you deny it. You shall pay for this."

"That is not so!"

"Don't lie about it. I shall see you later!" cried the young detective as with his companions he rushed through the door at the far end of the saloon.

They emerged into a small paved court.

## CHAPTER XV.

### WHICH ENDS THE CASE.

But the birds had flown.

Again they had escaped the Bradys. It was a disheartening reflection.

Ordinary men might have abandoned the case in despair.

But the Bradys were not of that sort.

With their usual tenacity they hung out, still looking for a clew which they felt was bound to come.

In fact they had little choice in the matter.

They knew there was nothing to be done but to trap the Tough Trio.

If they did not do so the trio would trap them. It was a case of the survival of the fittest.

The Bradys failed to track their birds even the slightest distance. The trio had seemed to cover their tracks effectually.

Days passed and still the Bradys were befogged.

One day they ran across a detective of the regular city force in a lower part of New York.

"There's no use in you fellows trying to find the trio," said this fellow, whose name was Whitman.

"Indeed!" said Old King Brady, caustically. "You are very sure of that, are you?"

"As sure as can be!"

"How do you get your surety?"

"Well, I know that all three of the rascals have skipped the country."

For a moment the Bradys stared at each other.

Then Old King Brady said:

"Do you mean to Europe?"

"Yes."

"Do you know that?"

"Well, you bet I do!"

"Can you prove it?"

Whitman was silent a moment. Then he said:

"Well, I've been working up a case on the White Star Line dock. I know three men sailed from there last Saturday whom I am sure are the trio."

"Did you see them?"

"Well, that is, a friend of mine did."

Finally the fellow was bound to admit that he was not by any means sure of his statement.

He depended largely upon the imagination of another, and finally, much discomfited, admitted that he could not prove it.

The Bradys thus met with all sorts of rumors.

But they said nothing.

All the while they were quietly at work.

One day, however, a messenger boy stopped them at the door of their lodgings.

He handed them a message.

Thus it read:

"My dear Brady:

"Come down to the office at once. I think I have a clew for you. Chief of the Secret Service."

"Ah!" said Old King Brady, with a smile. "Perhaps at last we have hit upon the right thing. Let us try it."

So the Bradys at once went down to the Secret Service headquarters.

The chief welcomed them warmly.

"I am glad to see you!" he said. "And I believe I have valuable news for you!"

"That is what we are looking for," said Harry.

"You are still after the trio?"

"Yes."

"You can't seem to find a clew as to their whereabouts?"

"Not the slightest."

"Well," said the chief, slowly, "yesterday we brought a man in here from Chinatown. He killed a man in an opium den.

"While questioning him closely I learned that he knew Dan Collins."

"Dan Collins!" exclaimed Harry.

"Yes. Do you know him?"

"He is one of the trio!"

"Ah! Then it is all right. Collins and two companions have been frequenting Ah Ling's place in Mott street for a few days past."

"Hitting the pipe?"

"Yes."

"Are they there now?"

"They may be!"

Old King Brady sprang up.

"Come, Harry!" he cried. "Here is work for us."

"I feel it in my bones," said the young detective, "that the game is ours."

"I agree with you," said the chief. "If those fellows are taking dope you will surely get them."

Old King Brady knew that many a criminal had been taken in this way.

Under the influence of opium they are careless and easily entrapped. So Old King Brady's spirits arose.

"Very good!" he said, with his grim smile. "I think we shall get them."

"The tip may be of no value," said the chief, "but such as it is I give it to you."

"I feel sure that it is of great value!" said Harry. "We will get our men this time."

Frequenters of the opium dens sometimes drop from sight for days.

This would easily explain why the Bradys had not heard from the villains before.

The detectives lost no time.

They at once set out for Mott street.

Ah Ling was a character very familiar to them.

There was no shrewder character, no deeper scoundrel in Chinatown than Ah Ling.

The Bradys knew that it would be folly to attempt to gain admittance to his place in their own character.

So they went thither in a clever disguise.

And Harry, for the first time in a long while dressed up as a very handsome young lady.

As men and women both frequented the opium joints, this was not deemed strange.

Old King Brady made himself up as a country jay, and Harry took him in tow.

He steered him into Mott street and Harry led the way into Ah Ling's shop.

That urbane Celestial came up smiling and bowing.

"Ah, Melican lady buy fine handkerchief," he simpered "Sellee cheap! Comee allee way China."

Harry punched his rustic partner in the ribs and in true Bowery-girl style said:

"Come, buy me that, cully! Don't you see I'm your steady now?"

"B'gosh! Haow much money do ye want fer the durned thing, Mister Chineeman?" asked Old King Brady.

"Sellee cheap. Allee same one dollar!" said the Celestial, winking at Harry.

"All right! Hyars yer dollar. Now take it gal, an' I say, what's that you told me about? I want to see all the sights. But I'll be gol-blamed if I haven't forgotten."

"Oh, you mean hit the pipe," said Harry.

"Yas, yas! That's it. I dunno what it is, but b'gosh I'm reddy fer it."

Harry winked at Ah Ling, who bit readily enough.

"Yeppee, me slee!" he said. "Hittee pipe. Heap fine ttime. Comee dis lay."

The detectives followed the Chinaman through various corridors and down stairs until finally they were in the opium den.

About on bunks and rugs lay the half-stupefied devotees of the pipe.

The Bradys almost instantly singled out their men.

Collins lay completely stupefied. Van was still smoking and Burke was getting ready for the same.

The Bradys were elated.

The birds were at last in their hands.

Escape was out of the question.

The detectives took in the full situation at a glance.

Not one of the gang was capable of offering much resistance. The Bradys quickly planned their coup.

After Ah Ling had gone, the two detectives laid their plans.

Nobody in the place noticed them. Old King Brady whispered:

"Everything is coming our way. Now, I'll first slip over and put the handcuffs on Collins."

"Yes."

"He'll never know it for he is too deeply asleep."

"Exactly."

"Then together we will tackle the other two."

"Capital!"

"That will place them hors du combat. We must trust to a bold dash to get them out of here."

"If Ah Ling is wise he will not offer resistance."

"He may not."

"Very good."

"I'll spring it now!"

"All right!"

Old King Brady crept over to where Collins lay.

He snapped the handcuffs on him and the fellow never moved. Then Harry took the signal.

Van and Burke were both half dazed. They fought like tigers, however, but were finally overpowered.

"You are trapped, my fine birds!" cried Old King Brady, jubilantly.

But at this moment Ah Ling appeared on the scene.

The uproar had attracted him. With white, scared face he stared at the detectives.

"Whatee de debbil you do?" he cried. "You no make such noise. Hi-hi, yeppee, yeppee, who you be? No pleece-man?"

"Yes," replied Old King Brady, sternly, covering the Chinaman with a revolver. "We are detectives. These men are murderers. We are going to take them out of here. If you offer resistance, I will shoot you dead!"

Old King Brady kept Ah Ling covered while Harry went out to the nearest signal box.

In a very short space of time a squad of police were in the place. A short while later the Tough Trio were in the Tombs.

The Bradys had won their famous race for life.

The case was thus ended.

The three notorious criminals expiated their crimes in the electric chair. The Fifteenth street case soon became a matter of past history and the two famous detectives soon had their attention claimed by another undertaking even more complex and mysterious. The details of this we will reserve for another story.

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS' LAST CHANCE; OR, THE CASE IN THE DARK," which will be the next number (85) of "Secret Service."

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