

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

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NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 6, 1901.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS IN THE CHINESE QUARTER; OR THE QUEEN OF THE OPIUM FIENDS. BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.



Chang Foo stood before his door in the dim light; as the Bradys in stylish costumes came along. Nellie pointed at the Chinaman and whispered: "There stands the man you must put in jail, Harry Brady!"

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NEW YORK, September 6, 1901.

Price 5 Cents.

The Bradys in the Chinese Quarter

OR,

THE QUEEN OF THE OPIUM FIENDS.

BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE

CHAPTER I.

THE QUEEN OF THE OPIUM FIENDS.

At ten o'clock on the night of May 25th, two Secret Service detectives were crossing Chatham Square, New York, in the vicinity of Doyers Street, when they were startled by hearing wild cries for help.

The tones were evidently those of a woman.

They seemed to come from a remodelled old building near the corner, and several excited Chinamen might have been seen swarming over the dirty, narrow and crooked little street, rushing toward the house.

As the detectives paused, to accurately locate the sounds, an upper window in the building was flung open, with a crash.

The head and shoulders of a beautiful young woman were thrust out, and she shrieked in accents of the wildest terror:

"Help! Police! Murder!"

The two detectives glanced at each other.

"Trouble there, Harry!" exclaimed the eldest, who was a tall, muscular man, with white hair and a clean-shaven face.

"Evidently the woman needs aid," answered the handsome, stylishly clad boy. "Let's run into that opium joint and find out what ails the woman, Old King Brady."

No sooner was this proposition made when they started on a rush for the house at the top of their speed.

Glancing up again they saw a pair of naked arms, evidently belonging to a man, dart out the window and the

hands clutched the screaming woman by the throat and dragged her back into the house.

Down went the window, with a bang, and then all became still.

But the detectives did not pause.

Upon reaching the entrance to the building, they hurled the Chinamen aside who were in their way, and darted into a dark, gloomy hall.

Here they met with a violent rebuff.

A dozen villainous-looking Mongolians, who were back in the hall, formed a flying wedge and rushed out at them.

Unprepared for such a peculiar assault, the two detectives were hustled out into the street, followed by the yelling and chattering horde.

The broad-brimmed, white felt hat was knocked off of Old King Brady's head, the old blue frock coat was almost torn from his body, and the standing collar and black stock encircling his neck were crumpled out of shape.

But his anger arose and his deep-set, keen eyes flashed fire.

"Rough-house," he remarked to his boy partner. "Ever since you became a pupil of mine I've never experienced such rough handling."

"If we ain't equal to a dozen almond-eyed heathens," hotly replied Young King Brady, "we'd better go out of the business."

"Beat your way through the bunch, Harry."

"Come on; I'm ready for them!"

And they fearlessly charged on the Mongols.

Some of the yellow men had drawn murderous-looking

weapons from the folds of their blouses, but the intrepid detectives paid no heed to them.

Doubling up their fists, they charged on their antagonists, determined to penetrate that house and find out what aided the beautiful white woman.

Upon reaching the horde, the detectives sent in some hot swings, upper-cuts and jabs that never failed to hit a Chinese face.

Yells of agony and deep maledictions escaped the rascals as they were sent reeling, right and left, or knocked down completely.

One of them rushed behind Old King Brady and raised a dagger to plunge it into his back. But the boy saw him in time.

Leaping forward, he swung his fist against the villain's jaw and knocked him, spinning, into the middle of the street.

Then he turned and pitched into a pair of the yellow demons and gave them the worst beating they ever had in their lives.

By this time Old King Brady had gained the mastery of three men.

A clear passage was opened to the door, and Old King Brady's features were revealed in the light of a square lamp over the entrance.

By this light some of the gathering crowd recognized him, and a warning yell arose on all sides of:

"It's Old King Brady!"

That name acted like magic on the fighting Chinamen, and they quit at once and slunk away, with looks of fear upon their faces.

Every crook in Chinatown knew and feared the Bradys.

Many of them made the error of believing they were father and son. As a fact, they were not related, excepting that they were business partners.

Observing that the Mongols had abandoned the fight, a grim smile of satisfaction crossed the old detective's face, and he muttered:

"They've given up the scrap, Harry."

"It was fear, when they learned our identity."

"They're either a gang of Highbinders, or they belong to the Hatcher Society, two secret organizations like the Italian Mafia."

As they spoke, they rushed for the doorway again.

Above it hung a sign bearing the name, "Chu Yee, Laundry."

The store windows were tightly covered up, and a long, board sign over them was covered with faded, gilt letters in Chinese.

Above were three iron fire-escape platforms, and before the covered store windows was a slanting cellar door.

The Bradys plunged into the hallway, rushed upstairs to the second floor and heard the sounds of a fierce struggle.

First a man's voice was heard swearing in English, and then the hoarse, panting tones of a woman could be heard raving at him.

The detectives pushed open a door upon which hung a

long, narrow strip of red paper covered with Chinese lettering.

A blinding glare of light flashed out in their faces, and as they glanced into the room, a singular scene met their view.

Before them was a spacious room, illuminated by a handsome, gilt chandelier.

A fine, red, Wilton carpet covered the floor; the walls were hung with crimson silk, and the magnificent gold furniture was upholstered in Oriental tapestries.

Marble busts, on ebony pedestals, occupied niches and corners, figured satin portieres were draped over the doors and windows, and along the walls were a number of couches and divans covered with fancy embroidered pillows.

Beside each one stood small, octagonal tables, inlaid with pearl, upon each of which there stood a small alcohol lamp, tiny opium boxes, sponges, slender pieces of steel and curious opium pipes with bamboo stems.

The detectives saw at a glance that it was an opium joint.

There were two Chinamen in the room, clad in magnificent native costumes, and they were crouching near the wall in evident terror.

A white man and the beautiful young woman they had seen in the window were struggling, furiously, in the middle of the apartment.

The former was a fine-looking man, with gray hair and a mustache of the same color, and his silk hat and his coat and vest lay on a chair.

His face was pale, there was a wild glare in his bulging eyes, and he seemed to be very weak on his legs.

The young woman was elegantly dressed, and had a beautiful face, big, dark eyes, and black, wavy hair.

As the detectives rushed in, the man fell to the floor uttering a deep groan, and the woman gave a shriek and recoiled, glaring down at his prostrate body, her trembling hands upraised.

"Dead!" they heard her gasp, in hoarse, frenzied tones.

Hearing the detectives rushing toward her, she glanced up with a startled expression upon her pallid face.

"The Bradys!" she panted, recognizing them.

"Yes," cried the old detective, "and you are San Moy, the queen of the opium fiends."

"What do you want in my place?" she demanded.

"Your cries for help brought us in," he replied. "What's the matter?"

"Nothing."

"Yes, there is. I heard you say this man was dead. We will see."

The old detective strode toward the prostrate figure of the man, and the woman suddenly uttered several words in Chinese to her two frightened attendants, reached out her hand, pulled a lever in the wall and the lights went out.

Like a flash the room was enshrouded in dense gloom.

Instantly afterward there sounded the hurried patter of footsteps, there came a sudden rush of foul air into the room and then there was a violent crash.

The detectives paused, and Old King Brady cried, excitedly:

"Light your lantern quick, Harry. There's crooked work going on here!"

"I've got it ready now," panted the boy, drawing a lantern from his pocket.

Just then there sounded three pistol shots, and the bullets flew by in dangerous proximity to the Secret Service men.

But they did not flinch.

The boy unmasked his lantern and flashed its rays around.

A cry of amazement now escaped the detectives, for not only were the woman and the two Chinamen gone, but the body and clothing of the prostrate man had also disappeared like magic.

"She has baffled us!" exclaimed the old detective, furiously.

A mocking laugh in the voice of the woman greeted this remark and the angry detectives rushed around the room to find her.

But they found no trace of the ones they sought, and finally desisted.

"What could have become of them?" blankly asked Harry.

"Heaven only knows. There is some dark mystery here. That man was murdered. But who did it? Why was he killed? Where have they gone?"

"It's a strange case," replied the boy. "They didn't go out the door, for I locked it when we entered and have the key. The windows, as you can see, are bolted, and there is no other visible means of egress from this room."

"There is only one other explanation of the mystery," said Old King Brady, "and that is that they passed out of here through a secret exit, and carried the body of the murdered man with them."

CHAPTER II.

OUT ON THE RIVER.

As a thorough search of the premises failed to reveal the parties the detectives were looking for, they left the luxurious opium joint, and, going downstairs, they walked over to Chatham Square.

Both had been deeply thinking about the mysterious events they just encountered, and Old King Brady finally said:

"It is my opinion that the past events were all pre-arranged."

"What gives you that peculiar idea?" queried Harry, in surprise.

"The way in which those Chinamen in the hall attacked us when we first attempted to go upstairs to the assistance of San Moy. They had no apparent reason to assault us, except to keep us out of that opium den. It shows me conclusively that they must have known that the man was going to be killed, and were stationed there to

prevent any one from going up into the joint and interfering with the deed."

"Your theory may be correct," Harry assented, "but there is a point which seems to contradict it very strongly."

"To what do you refer?"

"That woman screaming out the window for help. It seems to me if the man were lured into that joint by her to get murdered, she would not have invited outside interference by summoning us up there."

"Harry, your logic is sensible. But you must remember that the woman's plan may have failed. Instead of her killing the man, he may have turned the tables on her. Finding he was getting the best of her, she might have become frightened and screamed for aid. Then, before we reached the room, she could have gained the mastery of him and accomplished her purpose."

"But why was he killed? That's the question."

"Ask me something easier."

"Who do you suppose the man was—a fiend?"

"That's pretty hard to tell. He looked like a prosperous business man. I saw his face and could recognize him if I ever saw him again."

"The queen of the opium fiends will probably keep under cover for some time to come, now, in order to let this affair blow over. But we can catch her at some future time and make her confess the facts, I am sure."

"We can gain nothing by questioning the Chinamen in this quarter," answered Old King Brady, as he took a chew of tobacco. "You know how reticent they are. One can never get any information out of them."

"Do you remember the faces of the two Chinese attendants we saw in the room? They had features of a pronounced type."

"Oh, yes; but we can't do anything with them. They are as obstinate as mules. We have got to get our information from San Moy."

"Do you know anything about that woman's history? She is a unique figure in this quarter. It is evident that she is a person of refinement and good education. And yet her being in this squalid place posing as the owner of various opium joints, and exercising a strange influence over nearly all the Chinamen around here, places the woman in a very curious light."

"I do not know what the secret of her tremendous power is," answered Old King Brady, "but I do know that she is a veritable queen over the yellow denizens of this district. They all seem to respect and obey her commands in the most servile manner. I can only say that she suddenly made her appearance here a few months ago. No one seems to know her real name or where she came from. She has an immense income from her crooked business, and is rarely ever seen away from this quarter. Nor has she any friends or companions except the yellow men over whom she rules."

"Then her past is enshrouded in mystery?"

"Absolutely. I'd like to expose it, too. She has given us a chance to find out more about her, and I am going to take advantage of it. Well, let's quit for to-night. We

were after a pocketbook snatcher, who disappeared in Pell Street, but I think he has given us the slip, so we may as well give up for the night."

Harry was about to assent to this plan when he suddenly caught view of the figure of a man dashing across the square toward James Street.

This shabby young man, in an old felt hat, was Dick Grubbs, a notorious pickpocket, who had a bad record in the police department.

As soon as the boy saw him he pointed at the man and cried, excitedly:

"There he goes now!"

"Who?" demanded Old King Brady, in startled tones.

"The pocketbook snatcher."

"So it is. Chase him!"

They started on a run after the fugitive.

Grubbs was running because he had seen the detectives.

Observing that they were chasing him, he rushed down the street with the speed of a deer and headed toward the river.

After him went the Bradys, and an exciting chase ensued.

Five blocks were covered, and as the fleet-footed pickpocket ran into James Slip, he turned up South Street.

Beyond the Clyde Line he saw a pier, beside which a boat was tied, and just as he went over the string-piece the detectives saw him.

"He's going out on the river!" panted Old King Brady.

"We can easily get a boat and follow him," the boy replied. "I ain't going to let that crook get away, if there's any way to stop him."

When they reached the end of the slip they saw Grubbs rowing out on the dark river with might and main.

There were no more boats around there, so the Bradys rushed up South Street, keeping a keen lookout for a skiff.

At pier 36 they saw just what they needed.

It was a small, clinker-built quarter-boat containing two pairs of oars, and was tied by a painter to a coal barge.

There was no trouble to get it, and they sent it flying out of the slip to the end of the pier, and gazed around in quest of the escaping criminal.

The tide was sweeping in strongly, and Harry remarked:

"He wouldn't attempt to pull against this current to escape."

"We must look for him up the stream," replied his partner.

"See, there he goes now!"

Old King Brady observed the white skiff Grubbs occupied.

He was keeping it in the shadow of the piers, but was not yet so far away that he was obscured from the detectives' view, and they raced after him and began to gain rapidly.

The string of lamps on the big bridge arching the river were left astern, and the bulkhead lanterns, dotting each side of the murky river, shed down a glow that danced on the choppy waves.

Few ships were away from their moorings at the piers

where the tall masts and mazes of rigging formed a strange forest, but a lonely ferryboat was gliding down the stream, its wheels churning the water to foam.

The Bradys skiff dashed ahead, rapidly.

When opposite the New Rochelle steamer dock they were within a few yards of the stern of the crook's boat, and Harry shouted at him:

"Grubbs, you can't escape."

"I'll knock yer heads off afore I'll surrender!" cried the man, defiantly.

As the two boats came together, he dropped one oar and raised the other to bring it down on Old King Brady's head.

Quick as a flash, Harry whipped out a revolver, aimed it at the desperate man, and shouted, sternly:

"Drop that oar, if you don't want to get shot!"

An oath escaped the crook, and he let the ashen blade fall, raised his hands high over his head, and cried, tremulously:

"Don't shoot! I quit!"

"Secure him, Old King Brady."

"I've got the nippers ready for him now," said the old detective, and he clambered into the other boat and secured his man.

"Blast ther luck, I'm pinched!" growled the thief, in tones of despair.

"Where's the leather you swiped?" asked the detective.

"In my pocket."

"I'll relieve you of it. Then we'll lock you up."

He secured the pocketbook, returned to his own boat and tied the tow-line.

Seizing the oars he said to Young King Brady, in low tones:

"Go back down the river till we return these boats to the owners. Then we can run Grubbs in and return the pocketbook to its owner."

It was hard pulling against the current, but they hugged the shore as closely as possible and thus escaped the full strength of the tide.

Nearly half an hour passed by ere they drew near their destination, and Harry glanced ahead over his shoulder.

As he did so he suddenly caught view of a cab rushing out on an open pier close by and saw it pause near the end.

Out leaped two Chinamen, carrying the limp form of a man, and going to the string-piece they dropped the body down into the river.

A cry from Harry attracted Old King Brady's attention to the scene.

It was heard by the Chinamen, and upon seeing them they leaped into the vehicle, which was now turned around and driven rapidly away.

Within a minute it disappeared in South Street.

"What were they doing?" Old King Brady asked.

"Dropped a man overboard. Row over there, quick."

Away darted the boat toward the pier, and as they reached it the body of the unfortunate man came to the surface.

Harry seized the corpse and pulled it into the skiff.

"I've got him!" the boy muttered. "He's dead, too."

"Drowned?" asked the old detective, flashing a lantern light on the body.

"No. He wasn't in the water long enough for that. He was dead when they hurled him off the pier. Fine-looking man, too, ain't he?"

"Harry," exclaimed the old detective, excitedly, "see! see! he is the man we saw killed in the opium joint to-night. What does this mean?"

CHAPTER III.

A CALL ON THE TELEPHONE.

Harry had seen the dead man's face in the opium joint, and upon a close scrutiny he now observed that his partner was not mistaken.

"It's a fact," said he. "This is the man who met his death at the hands of San Moy, the queen of the opium fiends."

"And the two Chinamen who were in the cab looked very much like the pair we saw in the queen's den," added his partner.

"She probably sent them to fling the body into the river to leave the impression that the man was drowned, if he ever were found. And if the body was lost in the water, she hoped that the evidence of her horrible crime would be hidden forever."

"We are not so sure she actually murdered the man, Harry."

"It would be easy for us to find out by examining the corpse."

"And we shall do so when we get it up on a pier."

"Here's the slip where our boat came from."

They rowed in, secured the boat to the coal barge, and carried the body of the murdered man up on the small deck.

Dick Grubbs, the prisoner, had been an interested spectator, but he sat in the other boat and did not say a word.

Having turned the light of his dark-lantern upon the corpse, Harry said:

"Search his pockets and see if you can find a clew to his identity."

"Very well," answered Old King Brady, kneeling beside the body. "Do you notice that he now has on his coat and vest? He did not wear them in the opium joint. The parties who brought him here must have put the things on him. But his hat is gone."

"I saw it floating away in the river."

The man's clothing was made of the finest broadcloth, and his underwear was equally as expensive.

He wore no jewelry, and when the detective searched his pockets he found them completely empty.

There was not a thing upon his person by means of which they could learn who he was, but the detective made an important discovery.

Over the region of his heart the man's shirt had a small blood stain.

Upon opening his shirt-bosom, Old King Brady discovered a tiny cut in his skin between the fourth and fifth ribs.

Pulling open the wound he discovered underneath the skin a small, circular piece of glass, over which the lips of the wound had closed.

By working at it for some time he finally managed to draw it out; and then, to their amazement, they found it to be the blade of a glass dagger.

It was about six inches long, no bigger around than a slate-pencil, and had a point as keen as that of a needle.

"Evidently this weapon was thrust into his heart and the handle was snapped off so the lips would close over the wound and thus conceal the buried blade," said Old King Brady.

"What an infernal weapon!" Harry could not help exclaiming.

"It's a Venetian dagger," replied his partner. "This form of weapon was in common use by the Italian assassins of ancient times."

"Could San Moy have stabbed the man with it?"

"It certainly looks as if she were the guilty party."

"But we can't prove it as a positive fact."

"Not yet, Harry, but there's no telling what the future may bring forth. This unfortunate man must have had the dagger in his heart at the moment we entered the joint. Neither of us saw the woman stab him when we rushed in. His struggle with her must have been a last-expiring effort, for he dropped dead at her feet a moment after we were in the room."

"As we can't find out who he is," said Harry, "I'll go and ring up the morgue wagon and have the body taken away."

"Do, and in the meantime I'll have to get Grubbs up here from the boat and see that he is locked up."

Harry ran down the dock to the street.

Finding a policeman, whom he knew, he detailed the occurrence, got him to open a signal-box, and the wagon was summoned.

This done, they went out on the pier and found that Old King Brady had managed to get Grubbs up on the coal barge.

In a short time the wagon arrived and carried the dead man away.

The Bradys then took their prisoner over to the Elm Street station, entered a charge of highway robbery against him, and he was locked up.

Proceeding to Secret Service headquarters they entered the chief's private office and gave him an account of all that transpired.

He was startled, as Old King Brady handed over the pocketbook, and, glancing at the contents, he finally exclaimed:

"There's one hundred dollars and a visiting-card in this pocketbook. By looking at the name on the card you will see that the owner of the pocketbook is my wife!"

"What!" cried the detectives, in genuine astonishment.

"Not only is this undeniable evidence," said the chief, as

he held up the card, "but an hour ago I received a message from my wife over the telephone, explaining how she had been robbed."

"I'm glad we saved her money for her, then," said Harry.

"And I am obliged to you both for capturing the thief, and recovering my wife's property."

"Now, about this murder mystery, chief," said the boy, to change the subject. "What do you think about it?"

"You have certainly dug up a peculiar case."

"We must bring the murderer of that man to justice."

"Yes, indeed. And I hope you will undertake to do so."

"Nothing is more difficult than to expose Chinese criminals. If the Chinamen had anything to do with ending that man's life it will require almost superhuman ingenuity to bring the fact to light. But we will do our best."

"I can expect no more."

"To me it looks like a case of robbery."

"Why do you suspect that of being the motive?"

"Simply because the dead man had nothing in his pockets. It is fair to presume that a man would at least carry a watch. But this man had none. Nor was there a cent in his pockets, and no man of his appearance goes about so utterly penniless."

"That's a fair presumption."

"In Chinatown are thugs who would murder a man for very little money. Moreover, the Chinese themselves have almost no regard at all for human life. If the queen of the opium fiends did not kill the man herself, he may have been the victim of some follower of hers and robbery could have been the reason."

"It's a pity you could not find out why she was struggling with the man in her opium den."

"We intend to capture the woman and ascertain."

"It may throw some light on the seeming mystery."

After discussing the puzzling matter at some length further, the Bradys went to their lodgings in Irving Place.

On the following afternoon, while they were at the Central Office the telephone bell rang, and some one asked for the chief.

He answered the call, and asked:

"Who is that?"

"Fred Heywood," came the reply. "I am the cashier in the office of Howard M. Pelham, banker, of 22 Broad Street."

"Well, sir, what can I do for you to-day?"

"I wish to notify you that Mr. Pelham has disappeared."

"How do you know?"

"He was to have been in this office early this morning. It was absolutely imperative for him to have been here to sign some important business papers. When he did not come, I called up the Gilsey House where he lived and the clerk told me that Mr. Pelham did not return there yesterday afternoon, although he told me he was going straight home, as he had a severe headache."

"Did he reach the hotel later?"

"No, sir. That's the mysterious part of it. He has not been there since yesterday morning and he has not been here all day. Nor have we heard a word from him. I've

become so worried over his protracted silence and absence that I resolved at last to notify you so that a search may be made for him."

"Do you suspect foul play?"

"I do; as he was always in the habit of carrying a large sum of money in his pocket. I know, as a fact, that when he left this office at four o'clock yesterday afternoon he had a thousand dollars in a wallet in his breast pocket."

"Indeed! I'll send a couple of detectives down to see you. Do not let anybody know they are coming, as there may be an enemy among his office staff, and it won't do to warn anybody of our intentions."

"Thank you. I'll wait for the officers and give them all the information I can. But, say, don't keep me waiting too long."

"Why?" asked the chief.

"I expect the lady to whom I am engaged to be married to call here at five o'clock. We are going to dine at Delmonico's together, and I do not wish to inconvenience her if I can avoid it."

"Oh, I see," laughed the chief. "We won't interfere with your plans. I'll have my men there inside of fifteen minutes."

"Very well, sir. Good-by."

And the speaker rang off.

The Chief hung up the receiver, and turning to the Bradys he told them all that was just said, and added, in conclusion:

"I think you had better call on this Mr. Heywood. There is no knowing but what the missing banker may be the very man you saw getting killed in the opium joint."

The Bradys took the hint, and departed at once.

Shortly afterward they entered the office of Howard M. Pelham.

CHAPTER IV.

CAUGHT AT THE BANKER'S.

Before going to the office of the banker the Bradys had made a complete change in their usual appearance, as they had an idea that they might have occasion to lose their identity after speaking to Fred Heywood.

Both were now clad in stylish frock suits, their creased trousers turned up at the bottoms, over patent leather shoes, glossy silk hats on their heads, canes in their gloved hands and eyeglasses on Harry's nose.

They looked like two swells, and when they entered the banker's office the clerks looked at them with great deference.

An office boy met them, and asking the nature of their business, was given a plain card simply bearing the name, "James Brady," which he was politely requested to hand to Mr. Heywood.

A few moments later the boy returned and said the cashier would be pleased to see them back in Mr. Pelham's private office.

They followed him in, and, closing the door, confronted a tall, well-dressed young man, with a blond mustache and red cheeks.

"You are from police headquarters, I presume?" said he, waving them to a couple of chairs and seating himself.

"Just so," assented Old King Brady, briefly, as he sized up the banker's clerk and saw that he was a very gentlemanly fellow.

"Do you know what I said to your chief over the telephone?"

"We do. We came here to get some more information."

"I will post you on everything I'm familiar with, gentlemen."

"First, I would like to know if Mr. Pelham has a family?"

"No. He has neither father, mother, nor wife."

"Then he lived alone in the Gilsey House?"

"All alone."

"Had he any relations at all?"

"Yes, sir; a niece named Nellie Cross. She is the young lady to whom I am engaged to be married."

"Was she Mr. Pelham's heiress?"

"Yes."

"Where does she live?"

"In a flat at No. — Madison Avenue."

"Alone?"

"Yes."

"Is she a woman of means?"

"She has a large income."

"From what?"

"I don't know, but presume from a fortune left by her parents."

"Was she on friendly terms with Mr. Pelham?"

"Very."

"Do you know if the banker had any enemies?"

"Not one. He was universally esteemed."

"Was he rich?"

"I think he was worth at least a million."

"Can you tell me if he had any bad habits?"

"What do you mean by that, Mr. Brady?"

"For instance, was he an opium fiend?"

A look of amazement flashed over Fred Heywood's face. He became so agitated that the detectives noticed it at once.

Finally he mastered his emotion and said, in low tones:

"I fear he was addicted to drugs, Mr. Brady."

"What made you think so?"

"His peculiar actions at times. Moreover, I've seen Chinamen call on him here and go away with him in his carriage."

"Hum! Just as I feared. Can you describe the banker?"

"Here's a photograph of him," replied Fred.

He opened the desk, took out a picture and handed it over.

The moment the Bradys glanced at it, Harry exclaimed:

"That's the murdered man, Old King Brady."

"No doubt about it."

"What!" cried Fred, aghast. "Mr. Pelham murdered, did you say?"

Old King Brady nodded assent, for he saw that the man whom they had taken from the river was identical with the original of this photograph.

"Yes," said he, "Howard Pelham is a dead man."

"Great heavens!" cried Fred, excitedly. "What has happened to him?"

"He was murdered."

"When?"

"At ten o'clock last night."

"Whereabouts?"

"In an opium joint in Doyers Street."

"By whom?"

"A woman who poses as the queen of the opium fiends."

"For what reason?"

"Probably robbery."

"Are you sure?"

"Well, when we found his body and searched his pockets he did not have a cent. You said he left here with a thousand dollars in his pocket. As it was gone, we are justified in presuming that he was slain by one who designed to rob him."

"This is horrible! Where is his body?"

"At the morgue, foot of East Twenty-sixth Street."

"Do you know how he was killed?"

"Yes. Somebody stabbed him in the heart with a glass dagger."

"The woman you mentioned?"

"We have strong reason to believe she was the guilty party."

"Tell me why you suspect her?"

"She was having a deadly struggle with Mr. Pelham when we rushed into the den where he was killed. In the midst of the struggle he fell dead at her feet."

"Then she very evidently killed him."

"So we infer. Afterward she escaped with his body and had it flung into the river, from which we rescued it."

"Good gracious! Such atrocious villainy!"

"That woman is a she-demon."

"No doubt of it, Mr. Brady, no doubt of it."

"We intend to arrest her for the crime the moment we catch her."

"Do so, by all means, and you'll find a hearty supporter in me."

"What will become of this banking business now?"

"As a matter of fact I have for some time been a silent partner in it," replied Fred. "It will be continued. Very likely I shall buy out the heirs and control the whole thing myself."

"In other words, if Nellie Cross, your fiancee, is the sole heiress, as you said, you will purchase her interest?"

"Either that, or take care of her end of it for her."

"I see," said Old King Brady. "Was Mr. Pelham solvent?"

"Oh, yes. The business is on a sound, financial footing."

"That is good."

"Now what shall I do about claiming Mr. Pelham's body?"

"You will have to go to the morgue and claim it for burial."

"I shall do so. Do you mind going with me?"

"Not at all."

"Come on, then, and——"

"But you are to meet Miss Cross here."

A blank look swept over Fred's face, and he paused.

In his excitement he had forgotten all about the expected call of his sweetheart, and he muttered:

"By Jove! I must wait for Nellie."

"It will be sad news for her," suggested Old King Brady.

"Perhaps so," assented Fred. "She saw so little of her uncle, though, that they were almost like strangers to each other."

"Then she won't mourn his loss much. In fact, his death will now enrich her wonderfully."

At this juncture there came a knock at the door.

"Come in!" cried Fred.

The office boy entered, and said, respectfully:

"Mr. Heywood, Miss Cross is outside."

"Send her in, Willie."

"Yes, sir," replied the boy, and out he went again.

"We may as well break the news to her at once," said Fred.

"By all means," assented Old King Brady, with a nod.

The rustle of a silk skirt was now heard approaching, the door opened and a beautiful young woman, clad in the height of fashion, entered the private office, crying:

"Well, Fred, you see I am prompt, and—oh! good gracious!"

The latter exclamation came of seeing the Bradys, and she paused, recoiled in pretty confusion and looked as if she were going to beat a hasty retreat into the outer office again.

A cry of surprise escaped the Bradys.

Harry sprang toward her, crying, as he seized her wrist:

"By heavens, it's San Moy, the queen of the opium fiends!"

A suppressed shriek burst from the young woman's lips, and a frown gathered on Fred's brow and he cried, angrily:

"Say, how dare you! What do you mean by these insulting actions?"

Harry faced him, retaining his grip on the woman's wrist, and cried:

"I mean that this is the woman who murdered Howard Pelham!"

"What!" shouted Fred, angrily. "Impossible!"

The girl did not lose her nerve for an instant.

"The boy is mad!" she exclaimed, contemptuously.

"You unhand that lady!" shouted Fred, in angry accents.

"I'll do nothing of the kind," retorted the young detective, in grim tones; "she is the murderess of Howard Pelham, and as such I am going to lock her up!"

CHAPTER V.

THE TWIN SISTER STORY.

The peculiar fact of finding that Mr. Pelham's niece, Fred's sweetheart, and the queen of the opium fiends was one and the same person, gave the Bradys a shock of surprise from which it was hard to recover.

For several moments after Harry made his firm declaration, there was a deep silence in the banker's private office.

Then the young woman, who was the coolest, calmest and most collected of the quartette, said to Harry, with a faint smile:

"Are you joking, young man?"

"Joking? No, I am deadly earnest."

"You say I am a person with the singular name of San Moy?"

"Exactly so, and you can't deny it."

"Also, that I am the queen of some opium fiends?"

"You are; in the Chinese quarter."

"And that I have murdered my uncle, Howard Pelham?"

"That's the crime you will have to answer for."

The girl now turned to Fred, with a smile of mingled pity and amusement.

"Who is this person, Fred?" she asked.

"A detective named Brady," replied the young man.

"I thought he was a lunatic. What does he mean, anyway?"

"Your uncle is dead."

"What!" she cried, with a start. "Dead?"

"Murdered!" he answered.

"And I am suspected of the crime, eh?"

"Let me tell you the circumstances."

"I wish you would. Release me, young man. I shall not run away."

Harry let go of her wrist, and she laughingly sank into a chair, faced Fred and paid no more attention to the Bradys than if they had not been in the room while the cashier told his story.

When he finished, although she seemed to be surprised to learn that her uncle had been so foully dealt with, she did not betray any particular grief over his death.

Knowing how little she had to do with Pelham, the detectives were not surprised at her exhibition of indifference.

They kept studying her features.

She was a remarkably self-possessed young woman.

As they had frequently seen San Moy in the Chinese quarter, and were familiar with her features, they now saw that this young woman was not only the exact counterpart of her, but had the same voice, the same gestures, and the same expressions of countenance.

There could be no mistake about her identity, to their way of thinking, and yet it amazed them to learn that this young lady was living in a flat, engaged to Fred, and leading a dual existence.

When the cashier finished his recital, he turned to the Bradys and said, in tones of the deepest earnestness:

"You gentlemen must be laboring under a painful mistake. Miss Cross is not this murderous dive-keeper, San Moy. You have been deceived by a fancied resemblance."

"Nothing fancied about the matter," retorted Harry, firmly. "The murderess and this woman are the same person."

"Humbug! I tell you there is some grave error here."

"Are you going to interfere with the hands of justice by defending this woman in the face of absolute evidence we have that she is the person we mentioned?" demanded Harry, sharply.

"Heaven forbid. If you were right I would not say a word. But I know you ain't. Therefore, I am not going to permit you to wrongly accuse an innocent person."

"If there is going to be trouble about the matter," said Young King Brady, "we shall shadow this woman until we have got irrefutable evidence of her identity to convince you. In the end she will be arrested, anyway."

"Oh, it's too absurd to even mention it."

At this juncture the young woman interrupted them with:

"Fred, perhaps I can explain this seeming mystery."

"How do you mean, Nellie?"

"By disclosing a painful family secret of which you have been in ignorance. It is this: I once had a twin sister. She became addicted to drugs and ran away from home, years ago. We once heard that she had drifted into the opium dens of New York. Perhaps the person these detectives mean was my unfortunate sister."

This explanation staggered the detectives.

Moreover their doubts were clinched when they heard Fred say:

"I've heard Mr. Pelham say you once had a twin sister. But he never told me anything about her fate."

As the detectives saw that Fred was an honest, upright fellow, they knew he would not make this assertion merely to corroborate the young woman unless what he stated was really true.

Misgivings entered their minds.

"Perhaps you were a little hasty," said Old King Brady to the boy.

"Ignorant of this twin sister story as I was, there's an excuse for me."

"Of course," assented Old King Brady. "As there is a possibility that we have made an error, it is no more than fair to this young lady that we apologize. It won't do to accuse the wrong person."

He made an almost imperceptible motion to Harry.

The boy understood him to signify that they must hide their intent, and he hastened to say to Nellie:

"You can't blame me, under the circumstances, for suspecting you."

"Well, no," she laughed, carelessly. "You were not expected to know my family history. I only hope, however, that you have made a mistake about my sister being a criminal. I would hate to hear of her being convicted on a charge of murder, little as I care about her, personally. Family pride, of course, actuates me in wishing to avoid

publicity and disgrace. But if she's guilty, I hope she will suffer the penalty."

Her remark sounded fair and just enough to the detectives.

They glanced at each other, somewhat surprised, and Harry said, politely:

"You must pardon what I did, Miss Cross. It was in the line of my duty. If we find your twin sister is guilty, we may be obliged to arrest her. But the question is, to find her."

"I think I could help you to do that."

"How can you?" asked Harry, in surprise.

"There is a Chinese laundryman named Chang Foo, who lives in Pell Street," said Nellie, in hesitating tones. "I've frequently had begging letters sent to me from her by that Chinaman, but I paid no heed to them. From what her letters said I know this Chinaman can show you where she is at any time. If you wish, I'll go there with you and point him or his place out to you. You can arrest him and make him confess. I am not a traitor to my sister. I merely want to prove to you that I am not the guilty woman you imagine I am."

"We will accept your offer," said Harry. "Come, we will all go to the morgue first, to reclaim Mr. Pelham's body. When that is done we will go down to Pell Street to find that man."

The girl agreed to this plan, and they all went out.

Two cabs carried them to the dead-house, and when their business there was finished they rode downtown again.

By the time they reached Pell Street the gloom of night had fallen upon the city. They alighted from the carriages.

Fred left the Bradys and the girl, saying:

"You go ahead and show the detectives the place, Nellie, while I go and send a telegram to Mr. Pelham's attorney. I will meet you at the end of the street in quarter of an hour."

"Don't keep me waiting long," she replied.

"I won't," he answered, as he strode away.

Harry proffered his arm to the girl, and said:

"You had better keep close to me. This is a dangerous neighborhood. The denizens of this street will think we are a slumming party."

"Oh, I ain't afraid," she laughed.

They strode into Pell Street, and their fashionable clothes made the loitering Chinamen stare hard at them.

A short distance ahead was an old, brick house with a sign over the door, saying, "Chang Foo, Washing for Ladies and Gents."

The Bradys quickly noticed it.

"Is that the house?" asked Harry.

"Yes," replied the young woman, nodding.

Chang Foo stood before his door, in the dim light, as the Bradys, in stylish costumes, came along.

Nellie pointed at the Chinaman, and whispered:

"There stands the man you must put in jail, Harry Brady!"

The boy glanced keenly at the Mongolian so he would know him again, and they continued on for half a block.

Finally they turned back.

Upon repassing the laundry they observed that Chang Foo was gone. He had disappeared into the house.

Fred was awaiting them at the Bowery.

He took charge of the girl, and the Bradys bowed.

"We are going back to find and arrest Chang Foo," said Old King Brady. "You will hear from us again, Mr. Heywood."

A peculiar smile crossed Nellie's face.

"Good luck to you," said she.

Then she got in the cab with Fred and they were driven away, while the Bradys went back into Pell Street.

Upon reaching Chang Foo's house they banged on the door for admittance.

CHAPTER VI.

TWO BURNING BOWLS.

The Bradys were not kept waiting long before the door was opened by a young Chinaman in a blue blouse and sandals, baggy pants and an extremely long queue, which hung far down his back.

"Well, whatee want?" he demanded.

"Chang Foo," replied Harry. "Is he in?"

"Yep. Come."

He held the door open and the detectives entered a gloomy hall.

From somewhere about the house there came the discordant music of a one-string fiddle, interrupted at frequent intervals by a clattering crash as if some one was banging on a tin pan.

The young Chinaman closed and quietly locked the door, and an odor of burning joss-sticks filled the air, sickeningly.

"Where is the laundryman?" asked Old King Brady.

"Clum, me showee," replied the young Mongolian.

They heard his clumsy sandals clattering along the bare boards of the hall, going toward the rear of the house, and followed him.

A door was opened and a dim light gushed out.

They saw the young Chinaman pass into a room, and followed.

It was a queer-looking apartment, with no windows, and no sign of another door in the wooden walls.

A table and two chairs stood in the middle of the room, there were numerous objects made of colored tissue paper representing dragons, serpents, dogs and impossible beasts tacked on the walls.

Several open Japanese umbrellas hung from the ceiling, and the floor was covered with straw matting.

It was impossible to even guess to what use the room was put by its owner, and the Bradys gave up trying.

Upon the mantel-piece were two odd-shaped clay bowls,

and the young Chinaman lit a match and set fire to a brown powder with which the bowls were half filled.

"Sit down," he said to the detectives, pointing at the chairs.

"What did you light the stuff in those bowls for?" queried Harry.

The Chinaman grinned, shrugged his shoulders and said:

"Keep way debbils."

The Bradys laughed over this quaint reply.

"Habits and superstitions are strong with these people," said Old King Brady. "As if burning those herbs were going to exorcise evil spirits. Still, they really believe it will."

"Send Chang Foo here," said Harry.

"Pletty soon," said the Mongolian, nodding.

He then went out, and a spring lock closed the door after him.

There were several paper lanterns containing small wax candles hanging to the ends of the umbrella handles, and as the dense smoke kept rising from the burning bowls it dimmed their lights.

An aromatic flavor was diffused through the room.

It was very pleasant to the senses, and the detectives rather enjoyed it at first. But after a while it became oppressive.

"If those confounded bowls continue to burn much longer," growled Old King Brady, "we will choke to death in here."

"Do you know that stuff is affecting my head," said Harry.

"I'm beginning to feel dizzy myself."

"Say—what in thunder ails me? I feel like fainting."

"And I'm getting terribly drowsy."

They glared at the smoking bowls.

A fierce crimson glow shot up from their wide rims, and the curling clouds of yellowish smoke assumed fantastic shapes.

By this time the smoke was so dense in the room that objects three feet away could not be distinguished.

A feeling of alarm took possession of the detectives and they rushed to the door and tried to get out.

Finding it locked, and resisting all their most violent efforts to tear it open, the detectives recoiled, and Harry gasped:

"We are in a trap!"

"You suspect foul play?"

"I do. Nellie Cross is a fraud."

"She has sent us to our doom."

"It's my opinion she is really San Moy."

"If that's the case she may have had a secret understanding with Chang Foo and signaled him when we passed."

"We must get out of here at once or we'll choke to death."

"Smash those bowls, Harry."

"That won't do any good. There's enough of that drug-ged smoke in here now to kill us if we remain much longer."

"Then break down the door."

"Rush at it with me."

Retreating a few paces they rushed for the door and hit it with their shoulders, but it stoutly resisted the shock.

It was now with the greatest difficulty that they resisted the overwhelming fumes of the burning drug.

They fought desperately to prevent themselves succumbing to its baneful influence, for they knew very well that both would perish the moment they gave up.

"Can't force it that way," said Harry, gaspingly.

"Hit it with the table," replied Old King Brady.

They started across the room to get it, and Harry staggered.

He fell to his knees.

"I'm done for!" he groaned.

"Get up!" yelled Old King Brady, violently shaking him and pulling him to his feet. "Don't give in. One more effort and we will get out of here."

"I can't. I'm too weak."

"You must, do you hear me!"

"Save yourself and let me die."

"No, I won't. Here—help me!"

He dragged the table over and shook the boy again.

By a violent effort Harry got up some of his flagging courage.

Grasping the table together, they swung it to and fro a moment and then let it drive with a mighty crash against the door.

It flew open, with its lock broken.

Out into the hall plunged the half-strangled detectives.

Both gasped, panted, and drank in the purer air with avidity and swiftly regained a normal condition.

The fumes of the drugged smoke rushed out through the open door and they retreated along the hall.

With the return of their breath came their strength.

"What an infernal plan to murder us!" panted Harry.

"No one but a Chinaman would have the fiendish sagacity to plan such a thing," Old King Brady replied.

"Hark! What's that?"

"Voices approaching."

"Look out now."

"Draw your gun."

They crouched back in the darkness.

Whispering voices reached their strained ears, and they soon distinguished the queer, guttural sounds of the Chinese language.

They did not understand what was said, but they quickly realized that the speakers knew they had been confined in the room, and felt sure they were discussing the matter.

"The lights betray the fact that we have broken open the door," Harry thought, "and they must know by this time that we have escaped from the room."

The voices came no nearer.

Old King Brady nudged Harry and whispered:

"Two speakers."

"Shall we go for them?"

"Yes. Got your lantern handy?"

"It's lit and ready for use."

"Are you strong enough? I am."

"Yes, I've quite recovered."

"Come on, then."

And out came his lantern, the dazzling glare was shot down the hall and it fell upon the figures of two Chinese.

One was the young man who locked them in the room and the other was Chang Foo, whom they were after.

A yell of fear escaped the pair when the lights darted in their faces; there came some jabbering in their native tongue, and the next moment the pair went flying upstairs.

"Trying to escape us!" panted Harry.

"Chase the beggars!"

Upstairs they flew, after the fugitives, and fear lending speed to the two yellow men, they retained their lead.

Through the upper hall they raced, and up a second flight of stairs, with the detectives rapidly gaining.

A ladder in the upper hall led to the roof.

The Chinamen ascended and banged down the scuttle cover.

Up the ladder went the Bradys, after them, but upon reaching the scuttle they found it secured so they could not move it.

"By Jove! we may lose them after all, now," growled Old King Brady. "I can't move this thing."

"We won't lose them," replied the boy, angrily.

CHAPTER VII.

ATTEMPTING AN ARREST.

"Harry, do you know of any means to reach those Chinamen?"

"I do. Get down from the ladder—quick!"

Down they went, and Harry seized the ladder and carried it over to the small skylight over the stairs.

Up he ran to the top again.

With one heave he sent the skylight flying from its fastenings and it landed on the roof, with a jingle of breaking glass.

In a moment more the boy was on the roof.

Old King Brady followed him.

They saw the two Chinamen rushing across the roofs of the adjoining buildings in the row, and gave chase.

Presently the fugitives saw them.

Cries of alarm escaped the pair.

They came to a wide alleyway.

Chang Foo gave a mighty leap which carried him safely over, and he went down an open scuttle, pulled it shut after him, hooked it on the inside and rushed down to the street.

His companion was not so fortunate.

As he attempted to leap across the alley the toe of his sandal caught on a wooden roofing cleat and he lost his balance.

A wild shriek of horror escaped him.

Down into the dark abyss he plunged, headfirst, and he landed on the flags, three stories below, with every bone in his body broken.

The Bradys were appalled at the tragedy:

Pausing, they glanced down.

"Poor wretch," muttered Harry. "He must have been killed."

"You look after him and I'll follow Chang Foo," cried his partner, as he sprang over the alley and dashed ahead.

Peering down, Harry saw several Chinamen moving about down below, with lanterns and candles.

The crash of the fallen body had brought them out and they all surrounded him and held an excited discussion.

Young King Brady went back to the house from whence they escaped, proceeded down through the building and reached the front door.

It was locked and the key was gone.

He pushed open a door at the side of the hall.

A room fitted up as a laundry met his view, and as it had two front windows opening on the street, Harry pushed the shutters apart and sprang through.

He landed on the sidewalk.

Running down the street he reached the alley.

It was crowded with excited Chinamen, and he pushed his way through the throng and reached the fallen man.

Kneeling down beside the unlucky fellow, Harry examined him.

"He is dead!" said the boy.

"You doctor?" queried a bystander.

"Police," replied Harry.

"How he fall?"

"From the roof."

"Yep. We hear, an' lun here."

"Do you know who he is?"

"Hop Suey."

"Where does he live?"

"Work for Chang Foo, laundry."

"Carry him home and I'll send for an ambulance."

The Chinaman spoke to his companions, and they lifted up the dead man, carried him home, broke open the door, and, taking him inside, placed him on a cot.

Meantime, Harry ran to Chatham Square, called up the Chambers Street Hospital on the telephone and asked for an ambulance.

When he got back in Pell Street, he found his partner among the crowd of Chinese in front of Chang Foo's place.

"What's going on here, Harry?" he asked, anxiously.

"The young fellow was killed by his fall and they brought him home."

"I feared you were in trouble again."

"Did you catch Chang Foo?"

"Couldn't find a trace of him."

"News of the death of his workman is bound to reach his ears and as soon as he is sure we are gone he is likely to come sneaking around to have a look at the dead man."

"That's probable."

"By shadowing this house you are sure to catch him."

"Not in this rig, though. They've got us spotted."

"We can easily change our disguises."

"Come around in the Bowery, then, and we will try your plan."

They walked away together, keenly eyed by the gang of heathens, and turning into the Bowery they passed into a saloon.

In a back room they changed their disguises, as both were provided with several changes.

When they finished, no one would have suspected that they were the same swells who had just entered.

Old King Brady was now clad in a pair of overalls, a red flannel shirt, a discolored little felt hat and heavy red whiskers.

A bald-head red wig hid his white hair from view, and by the judicious use of pencils and cosmetics he completely altered the appearance of his face.

Harry wore a sailor's uniform and a glossy brown mustache.

A bundle was made of the things they did not wish to carry with them and they left it with the bartender.

He was well acquainted with them.

"Sure it's wonderful the way yer've altered yer looks," he laughed.

"We'll send for these bundles, Jerry," replied the old detective.

"And what's your lay now?"

"We're after some Chinamen."

"I wish yer'd clean every heathen out of this quarter."

"Perhaps we may before we finish this job."

"Well, so long."

The Bradys went out, and after a brief consultation they separated.

The old detective went straight back to Pell Street, and his boy partner strolled around the block to gain the same point from another quarter, in order to avoid arousing suspicion.

Half an hour later the old detective walked up to the door of Chang Foo's place, from which the crowd dispersed, as the ambulance had been there and the surgeon could do nothing.

A couple of Chinamen stood before the door, talking.

"Is there a landhry here?" Old King Brady asked one of them.

"Light inside," answered the Chinaman addressed.

"An' is ther boss in?"

"You go in an' see."

The detective had a package in his hand, and they thought it was some collars and cuffs he was bringing to get laundered.

He passed into the hall.

Seeing the laundry door open and several Chinamen in the room he entered and glanced over the Mongolians.

There were more of them in the little back room where the body of the dead man laid, but the detective could not see their faces very plainly as the place was shrouded in gloom.

"Hey!" he shouted. "Where's ther boss?"

A man came in from the rear room.

At one glance he saw that it was Ching Foo.

"Whatee want?" demanded the laundryman.

"You!" replied the detective.

"Wha' for wantee me?"

"For trying to kill me."

And Old King Brady suddenly sprang forward, seized the startled man by the throat with his left hand and pushed a pistol in his face.

Chang Foo gave a yell of terror.

His companions saw what happened and became terrified, too.

Scattering, they fled in all directions, expecting the detective was going to blaze away with his revolver.

None of them wished to run chances of being hit.

"Save me!" yelled Chang Foo, imploringly, to his friends.

They were too busy saving themselves to heed his danger, and not a man came to his assistance.

Old King Brady dragged him out into the street, struggling, yelling, kicking, biting and scratching furiously.

"You keep still!" he roared, shaking the frightened laundryman.

"No hurtee me!" howled Chang Foo. "Me belly good Chinaman. Letee go, allee samee. Whatee take for, no savvy!"

"I'll show you when I get you in jail."

Chang Foo burst into a cold sweat.

He suddenly thought of a secret cry of the Highbinders when danger threatened them, and gave utterance to it.

Instantly dozens of Chinamen rushed from the adjacent stores and flats and ran toward the detective and his prisoner.

Old King Brady instantly realized the danger he was in, for these men, belonging to the same lodge Chang Foo did, were bound to go to his assistance.

The detective drew his pistol.

"Now let them come; and if they tackle me they'll regret it," he growled. "I am determined to take this man, dead or alive!"

CHAPTER VIII.

FIGHTING A RABBLE.

"You fellows stand back there! The first one who advances a step will get shot!" shouted Old King Brady.

He clung to his trembling prisoner with one hand, backed up against the front of a building and faced the crowd.

A sea of vengeful yellow faces surrounded him.

There was a menacing look about them which told him plainly that they meant to rescue his prisoner.

But the sight of his pistol made them hesitate.

Just then Harry appeared and saw what was transpiring.

"Hang on, Old King Brady!" he shouted, charging on the crowd with such impetuous fury that he swept them right and left out of his way. "I'll join you in a moment."

"Come on, Harry, I need you badly."

Bang! bang! went the boy's fists upon the shaven heads and gaunt faces surrounding him, and yells of pain arose.

He swept through the crowd like an avalanche.

Reaching his partner's side, he cried:

"By Jingo! you've got Chang, I see."

"And mean to keep him. Draw your gun, Harry."

Out flashed the boy's pistol.

The crowd fell back.

"If we can reach the square with your man we are safe," the boy exclaimed. "Give them a few shots. It may scatter the gang and give us a chance to get away."

Bang! bang! bang! went a volley of shots.

They took care to aim over the heads of the horde, but the effect was just as salutary as if they had fired at the men.

With shouts of alarm the gang broke and fled.

They hurled back a shower of missiles, some of which pelted the detectives unmercifully.

But they paid no heed to this.

The moment they had the gang moving the detectives kept edging toward the Bowery as fast as possible with the yelling Chang Foo, who expected nothing but death.

"Were you hurt by the missiles, Harry?"

"Not much."

"Those shots ought to bring a cop."

"We'll reach the Bowery in a few moments."

"The rascals are preparing for another assault."

"Give them a volley in the legs if they do."

They kept a wary eye on their enemies and saw their sulky faces getting together again to form a new campaign.

A few moments later the whole crowd made a rush, expecting to overwhelm the detectives by sheer force of numbers.

But the gallant Bradys were ready.

As a loud shout arose from the Mongols, and the vast horde came rushing forward, Old King Brady exclaimed:

"Fire, and run, Harry."

"Give it to them!"

Several shots pealed out.

This time they aimed for their antagonists' legs.

Howls of anguish followed and several of the yellow rascals fell, groaning, to the ground, painfully wounded.

That brought the rest to a sudden pause.

In their rage they hurled another shower of missiles at the Bradys, and then saw the officers run with their prisoner.

After them swarmed the Chinamen.

Up through Pell Street rushed the detectives, hotly pursued by the yellow gang, until they reached the Bowery.

Here they met several policemen rushing toward them, with drawn clubs, startled by the pistol shots.

Seeing the armed detectives dragging a prisoner along and observing the big gang pursuing, one of the policemen shouted:

"What's going on here?"

"Making an arrest," answered Harry.

"Detectives?"

"Yes."

"That your prisoner?"

"He is."

"What's that crowd?"

"Trying to rescue this fellow."

"We'll stop that."

And they charged on the Chinese horde.

Wild yells of alarm followed and away rushed the whole gang.

The Bradys smiled with satisfaction.

"Won't bother us again to-night," said Harry.

"We will lock this chap up."

Chang Foo tried to fight them off again, but Old King Brady got him by the neck and marched him along, forcibly.

They put him in jail and went home.

On the following day the Bradys went to headquarters and having met the chief they detailed all that happened.

A smile crossed his face, and he said:

"Well, that woman is a good actress."

"You believe as we do, then?" asked Harry.

"What's that?"

"Nellie Cross and San Moy are one and the same person."

"Of course. That twin sister gag don't go down."

"She fooled her lover all right."

"But she didn't fool you, did she?"

"Well, she had us doubting for a while."

"One thing is evident, Harry."

"And that is——"

"That she, by some secret signal, let Chang Foo know that you were her enemies and caused him to know what to do to you if you happened to go his way. You've seen the evidence of that."

"We were amazed to find ourselves in such a trap."

"Then you believed in her?"

"Yes, to some extent."

"She must be a good actress to fool you."

"No doubt of it."

"You must prove her real identity."

"So we shall."

"When you do, put young Heywood on his guard."

"He ought to be warned against that designing woman."

"Are you sure he don't know her real character?"

"Positive. She has completely pulled the wool over his eyes."

"Why don't you shadow her flat? If she is really Miss Cross you will find her at home almost any time. If she, on the contrary, is away most of the time you can depend she's the queen of the opium fiends, as you suspected."

"Very true."

"I think I've fathomed her motive for killing Mr. Pelham."

"You mean she did it to get his money?"

"Of course."

"We may find that out, too."

"Money is a strong motive for such crimes, you know. As this woman seems to be very avaricious, she is of just the sort of disposition to kill the man for what she would gain by it. Her future actions may betray that."

"We can play a trick on her to prove her identity."

"What is that?"

"I'll locate the queen in Chinatown, and Old King Brady can watch Miss Cross' flat. If we don't find the two separate people it will be fair to assume that she is leading a double life, posing in the Chinese district as an opium-joint keeper and figuring in Madison Avenue as the wealthy Miss Cross."

"Excellent! Try it."

"We'll do so at once."

They then left the chief and went out.

In the street, Harry said to his partner:

"You go down to Doyers Street to-night and I'll tackle the lady's flat up on Madison Avenue. Satisfied?"

"Perfectly."

They separated, and each one went his own way.

Harry boarded a Madison Avenue car and rode uptown as far as Forty-fifth Street, where he alighted.

He soon found the building in which Fred said Nellie lived, and going into the big vestibule a negro boy, in blue livery, opened the door, and, ushering him into the hall, he asked, politely:

"Who do you wish to see, sir?"

"Miss Nellie Cross. Does she live here?"

"Yes, sir. Take the elevator up to the third floor."

Harry thanked him, boarded a car and went up.

On the third floor he knocked at a door.

"Come in!" cried a feminine voice.

He opened the door and strode into a beautiful little parlor.

Standing expectantly in the middle of the room was Miss Cross.

A startled look flashed across her face when she saw who her caller was, and she finally cried:

"Bless me, it's Young King Brady!"

"At your service, madam," replied the boy, bowing.

CHAPTER IX.

MARKING THE GIRL.

Harry saw by the expression of the young woman's face that she was not overjoyed to see him there.

In fact, it was quite evident to him that his call was an annoyance to her in some way, and he said, after a pause:

"You don't seem to be very glad to see me."

"Why should I, after your unjust suspicions of me?"

"Holding a grudge up your sleeve against me, are you?"

"I never forget an injury, Mr. Brady."

"Nor forgive one, either, do you?"

"Candidly, I don't."

"I see you've got it in for me now."

She shrugged her shoulders and gave him a cold, calculating stare.

After pondering a few moments, she asked, rather abruptly:

"What object had you in calling here?"

"I want to find out why you tried to lure my partner and I into a trap that came pretty near costing our lives?"

"I never did anything of the kind, sir."

"Pardon me, but you did."

"When?"

"Oh, you know when."

"I am utterly at a loss to understand your meaning."

"Didn't you put us next to Chang Foo?"

"I told you he knew about my twin sister——"

"Twin humbug!" impatiently interrupted the boy. "You piloted us to Chang Foo's place simply to have the man kill us."

"You certainly are bereft of your senses."

"I'm not. I'll tell you plainly we are onto your curves. We went back to Chang Foo's place, and without the slightest provocation he made an attempt to smother us with the deadly fumes of some burning herbs."

"He may have known you."

"Suppose he did. Why should he attempt to kill us?"

"How do I know what he may have against you?"

"There was no enmity between us except what you incited by signalling him to make away with us."

"Your raving is simply absurd."

"Oh, the whole thing is plain enough to us. You lied. You are really the queen of the opium fiends. Chang is in your employ. But we foiled his rascally attempt to kill us."

"I'm not that atrocious woman."

"You can't fool me any longer, madam."

"I don't wish to."

"Admit your identity."

"You already know it."

"Ain't you San Moy?"

"No."

"We'll see about that later on."

"You are going to watch me, are you?"

"Of course we are."

"You'll gain nothing by it."

"The whole game is pretty plain now. You wanted to avoid arrest. That's why you denied your true identity. Now I want to know why you killed Mr. Pelham?"

"I did nothing of the sort."

"Of course, you'd deny it. I expected you to do so. But I will trip you up yet. You had your aged uncle murdered so you would come into immediate possession of his fortune. Finding we were dead set against you, you are now endeavoring to baffle us."

"You are greatly mistaken, sir."

"I see it is useless to waste my time trying to get you to confess."

"Most decidedly, when I have nothing to confess to you," replied Nellie, in nettled tones. "I've been very patient in the face of all the insults you have heaped on me in your insinuating way. But I'll have no more of them. I am a lady of social position, and I want you to understand it, too, Mr. Brady. I won't submit to any more of your nonsense. You are employed by the Government to hunt down criminals—not to persecute respectable ladies.

Don't forget that, and stick to your proper line of work or I'll see that you are removed from your office. I did you a kindness by pointing out to you a man whom I imagined might aid you to unravel the mystery you are solving. You have repaid my interest with the vilest ingratitude and the most unbecoming indecency. I now wash my hands of you. I will never again meet you. In a word, you are the most ill-bred young man I ever had the misfortune to meet. Now leave this house."

She haughtily pointed at the door.

Harry grew rather red in the face, and was going to give her an indignant answer, but checked the impulse.

Instead, he turned away as if to leave the room.

As quick as a flash he drew a tiny vial of liquid dye from his pocket, spilled some in his hand and faced Nellie again.

"I'm sorry I offended you," said he, humbly.

"No apologies are necessary. You have hurt my feelings too much to expect me to forgive you."

"Don't bear malice."

"I don't. You ain't worth it. Get out!"

"Good-by," said Harry.

And ere she realized his intention he seized her right hand as if to shake it.

She immediately withdrew it from his grasp, but not before he had covered it with the powerful dye.

Her hand was crimson.

Feeling the moisture, she glanced at it.

"My goodness! What have you done?" she demanded.

Harry laughed, heartily.

When his mirth subsided, he answered:

"I've discolored your hand."

"What did you do that for?"

"To indelibly mark you."

"Mark me?"

"Yes. So I'll know you again. That dye won't wash off. It's too powerful. It will have to wear off. That will take a long time. Ere you get rid of it I will meet you figuring as San Moy. If the queen of the opium fiend's right hand is covered with red dye I will know you and she are one and the same person."

A sneering smile crossed Nellie's face.

"You were foolish to tell me your design if you are so sure I am the infamous wretch you believe me to be, for being forewarned I would naturally resort to the most drastic measures to get rid of this marking in order to baffle you."

"Oh, I've figured that out," carelessly replied the boy. "I knew very well you would try to get rid of the marks, anyhow; but I also know that it is utterly impossible, for you to get rid of them. Moreover, if the 'queen' keeps out of my sight now it will be pretty good evidence to me that you and she are identical. So, you see, I've got you hedged in."

"You may be a very clever young man," said Nellie, in scornful tones, "but you will find you've had all your trouble for nothing, as far as I am concerned."

"If I am mistaken, I'll gladly acknowledge my error."

"What good will that do?"

"Satisfy your injured feelings."

"Don't you believe it. You'll never be able to repair the injury you've done me, Harry Brady. I'm a vengeful woman, and I'll make you smart before I get through with you."

"Idle threats!" carelessly answered the boy.

"You'll find in due time that they ain't. I am going to speak to Fred about you and tell him to discharge you from this case and call for better men to work it up."

An amused smile swept over Harry's face.

"So?" he laughed. "Do you imagine we are at the beck and call of young Heywood? If you do, the quicker you undeceive yourself the better. He has nothing to do with us."

Nellie's face grew dark with rage.

She paced up and down the room, nervously, a few moments, and finally pausing before the boy, she said, impressively:

"Then I'll resort to other measures."

"Bound to get revenge, are you?"

"I don't deny it."

"Very well," said Harry. "Since you've declared open warfare I will be ready for you all the time."

"And you'll get the worst of it," she declared, grimly. "There never was a man born who was equal to a woman in point of cleverness, and I'll beat you in the end."

"It gets plainer and plainer that you are the queen," said the boy. "That's why you are so bitterly opposed to me. If you were not you wouldn't be so spiteful for the slight provocation I've given you. San Moy, you are giving yourself away."

"Clear out of here!" she shrieked, angrily.

"Good-by," laughed Harry, and out he went.

CHAPTER X.

COMPARING NOTES.

When the Bradys met, Harry told his partner what he had done.

Old King Brady said he had been down in the Chinese quarter trying to find the queen at her usual haunt.

"And did you see her?" asked Harry.

"Yes," replied his partner, with a nod.

"What!" cried the startled young detective.

"Of course I saw her."

"Where?"

"No. 1 Doyers Street."

"In her own joint?"

"Yes."

"At what time?"

"About an hour ago."

"Are you sure?"

"Certainly."

"You must have been mistaken."

"Why?"

"Because about an hour ago I was away uptown in Madison Avenue, talking to Nellie in her flat, as I told you."

"Then she and San Moy can't be identical."

"Perhaps not," said Harry.

"Both couldn't be in two such widely separated places at the same time. That's impossible. One of us must err."

"I think so, too."

"Did you notice what time you saw her?"

"Glanced at my watch and observed that it was three o'clock when I left her flat," said Harry.

"And it was about half-past three when I saw her."

"Couldn't she get from her flat to Chatham Square in half an hour?" asked Harry.

"Easily."

"Perhaps the moment I left her she went downtown."

"That would explain my seeing her when I did."

"How did you chance to see the queen?"

"I went into her joint," answered Old King Brady, "and I had not been there long before she came in. Seeing me, she darted right out again, with me after her."

"Was she dressed for the street?"

"She was."

"Wore gloves?"

"Yes—brown kid ones."

"I'm sorry for that. If she hadn't, you might have seen the red stains I left on her right hand."

"Well, when she rushed out of the joint I could not find her, although I searched for her carefully all over the neighborhood."

"She would doubtless be hidden and protected by the Chinese," said Harry. "All of them are friends of hers."

"That's probably the reason I failed to discover her."

"Well," said Harry, thoughtfully, "everything now hinges on our catching view of the queen's hand. If we can accomplish that we will be able to establish the fact that she is Nellie, the murdered man's niece."

"Then we had better haunt the Chinese quarter until we have gained our point," suggested Old King Brady.

"Disguised, of course."

"Yes, and well disguised, too. I for one mean to pose as a dope fiend. That will give me a chance to get well into her place where I'll be needed most."

"And I?" asked the boy.

"Rig yourself up as a woman."

"Very well. In the meantime let's interview Chang Foo."

Old King Brady fell in with this plan and they went over to Ludlow Street Jail to which Chang had been taken.

As the warden knew the detectives, he admitted them at once and they went to the cell occupied by the Chinese prisoner.

Pausing at his door they peered in.

The laundryman laid on his cot, thinking.

"Chang!" cried Harry.

With a start the Chinaman got up.

Going over to the door he peered out at them.

Seeing who his callers were he gave a grunt of disgust and deliberately walked away from them.

"Come here!" cried Harry.

The Mongolian made no reply.

"We wish to speak to you," continued the boy.

Still no reply from Chang.

Harry beckoned to a keeper, who approached and asked:

"Well, Mr. Brady?"

"Open that door."

"Want to talk to the Chink?"

"Yes," replied the boy.

"He won't say anything to you, sir."

"Oh, I'll find means to loosen his tongue."

The keeper laughed, winked at him and unlocked the door.

Chang had gone back to his couch.

Hearing his cell door open, and peering around, he observed who was coming in, and got upon his feet.

A dark frown gathered on his brow, and he snapped:

"Whatee want?"

"To have a talk," Harry answered.

"Me no talkee, allee same."

"Oh, but you must!"

"Whatee say?"

"Now you listen to what I've got to say," said Young King Brady, in stern tones. "When my partner and I went into San Moy's opium joint the other night and saw Mr. Pelham fall dead at her feet, there were two Chinamen in the room. You were one of them."

"No, no!" cried the prisoner in alarm.

"Don't try to lie out of it, for you can't do it. We saw you there."

"Chang Foo no goee San Moy joint!" protested the prisoner.

"Like most of your race," said Harry, contemptuously, "you are an infamous liar. As I was saying, you were one of the two Chinese in that room. Therefore, you must have seen who stabbed that old gentleman with the glass dagger that killed him."

"Me no savvy," said Chang, shaking his head.

"That's the same old expression all you Chinks use when you don't want to answer questions," Harry went on. "You saw that crime committed, and we want you to tell us who killed the man. If you don't, we will see that you are accused of being the murderer and you will go to the electric chair for the deed."

"Chang no killee nobloody."

"Can you prove you didn't?"

"Yep, me plove dat."

"By whom?"

"Wing Lee."

"He was the man with you?"

"Yep."

"Ah!" said Harry, triumphantly. "I thought you would admit that you were one of the two men who were in the joint when the man was killed. And you've just committed yourself."

Chang looked mortified.

He realized his error when it was too late.

"Well," he growled, defiantly, "so be me an' Wing Lee in dlat loom."

"You own up to it, do you?"

Chang shook his head, affirmatively.

It was useless, he realized, to try any longer to deny the fact.

"Me not say, no," said he, in sullen tones.

"Did Wing cut the man?"

"No."

"Who did?"

"No savvy——"

"Liar!" cried Harry, interrupting him. "Confess! Was it San Moy?"

"No San Moy. Man killee heself, allee samee."

"He didn't. We know better than that."

Chang shrugged his shoulders.

"Me no say no more," he exclaimed.

Harry persisted in questioning him, but he obstinately refused to speak, and they finally had to leave him.

They were more than pleased at having learned as much as they did, and when they departed, Harry remarked:

"As long as we've made him admit so much, we are bound to wring more information out of him later."

"By adroit questioning," said Old King Brady, "he can be forced to unwittingly tell all he knows."

"We can try that experiment later on."

The detectives had their supper and went home.

Here they assumed new disguises and proceeded to the Chinese quarter to find Wing Lee and San Moy.

They hoped to gain a view of the woman's hand and thus establish her identity as Nellie Cross.

With this plan in view they proceeded to the queen's house and passed inside.

CHAPTER XI.

IN THE CHINESE RESTAURANT.

The joint was filled with opium fiends when the detectives entered, and a couple of Chinamen were attending to their wants.

At one glance the Bradys saw that the queen was not there.

Old King Brady wore the garb of a sedate business man, and a white beard; while Harry was clad in feminine apparel.

The boy made up as a very beautiful girl of the blonde type.

All the fiends in the place were smoking or were sleeping and dreaming from the effects of having been smoking.

The opium worked fearfully upon their imaginations.

Wild, fantastic visions filled their minds, not a few of the dreaming gang of degenerates thinking they were at perfect peace with the world, floating in space, enjoying the most exquisite pleasure.

Some of the habitues of the place were people of wealth and social standing, others were miserable wrecks, and not a few were Chinamen, with dull eyes and drawn faces.

Yet so lost to all moral decency were they on account of the deadly drug to which they were slaves, that they made no objection to race color or any other consideration, in herding together.

A feeling of supreme disgust for them overwhelmed the detectives, and they shuddered when they saw the wan faces, hollow eyes encircled by dark rings, and trembling hands of the smokers.

A gorgeous Chinaman glided up to the Bradys.

"Gentleman an' lady smoke?" glibly asked the yellow man.

"Yes. Fetch two pipes," answered Harry.

"Fifty cents or dollar?"

"The best, of course."

"You take this couch?"

"Any will do."

"Lie down. I tend you."

The detectives had to occupy the same couch.

All the rest were occupied. But they were glad of it, as they could thus keep close enough together to suit their purpose.

"This is one of the handsomest dens in Chinatown," muttered Harry, "but it's one of the most infamous, and San Moy must be coining money here. I wonder where she is?"

"She must appear sooner or later."

"Just look at those human direlicts floating down the short tide of life on a stream that brings them to death's door ten times quicker than the ordinary course of events would. Ain't they frightful! With such weakened brains it's no wonder they all subserve to the keen, smart woman who presides over their lives."

Just then the Chinaman came back with the pipes.

They had thick, silver-tipped stems, huge bowls with holes no bigger than a pea, and had a rancid odor.

Lighting the alcohol lamp, the Chinaman opened a tiny, ivory box, took out a little piece of gum opium, rolled it into a pill and fastened it on the end of a slender piece of steel.

Holding the opium pill in the flame of the lamp, he cooked and shaped it, and at the proper time thrust it in the pipe bowl, while the detectives pretended to inhale the fumes.

Some of the fiends cooked their own dope.

While this was going on, Harry asked the Chinaman, in the well-modulated tones of a woman:

"What has become of Wing Lee?"

"Me no savvy," answered the Chinaman.

"Oh, yes, you do. I mean Chang Foo's side partner."

"He? Oh, queen she tellee you."

"Will she be in to-night?"

The Chinaman shrugged his shoulders to signify that he did not know whether she would or not.

Some of the fiends went out and others came in to take their places during the next two hours.

Still they saw nothing of San Moy.

By this time Chinatown was in full blast.

People were thronging the streets, paper lanterns were lit, the red lights gleamed up the face of the Mott Street joss house, and sounds of Chinese music came from the theatre at the bend.

All night long the Chinese quarter takes on an animated appearance, and drunkards, revellers and slumming parties mingled with slinking crooks and coolies from Canton.

The Bradys gave up, finally.

They could not remain there not smoking much longer without exciting suspicion, so Harry asked the attendant:

"Where does the queen eat?"

"Chop suey?"

"Yes."

"Corner Broome and Bowery."

"You are very kind."

"No, no. You wantee see queen?"

"Oh, no. We are acquainted with her."

"So be she clum soon."

"We may return."

"Hab more pipe?"

"Not riow."

"Well, so long."

The detectives went out.

Reaching the street, Harry said:

"Let us search around for her."

"I'm willing. Try the chop suey joint first."

They went down to the restaurant in question and found it to be a brilliantly lit place, filled with Chinese oddities.

Everything adorning the big room was put there to give it an Oriental appearance, and it was filled with Chinese.

Among the divers eating the queer Mongolian delicacies were a few white people.

As the Bradys went in they caught view of a very handsomely gowned woman sitting back near the kitchen, eating and holding an animated conversation with the proprietor.

The moment Harry saw her he muttered, excitedly:

"There's the queen, now!"

"So it is."

"She is not wearing the same dress I saw on Nellie."

"And she has on gloves."

"By Jove! I'd like to see her hand."

"How shall we work it?"

"Only by one method can we succeed."

"Name your plan."

"Catch her by surprise."

"And then?"

"While you hold her I'll try to strip off her glove."

"How can we do it?"

"I'll tell you."

And Young King Brady explained his method.

They watched the woman a few moments and then strolled toward her table, paying no particular heed to her.

Harry sat down near her and Old King Brady got

behind the woman without attracting more than a glance from her.

A waiter ran over to their tables and they ordered food.

By listening, Harry was surprised to hear the woman talking in Chinese to the proprietor.

She spoke the strange language fluently.

Old King Brady was watching her keenly.

Waiting until he judged that the woman was entirely absorbed in her conversation with the Chinaman, the young detective gave his partner a prearranged signal.

Old King Brady suddenly reached over and seized one of the woman's arms in each of his hands.

She gave a shriek of alarm.

The owner of the restaurant bounded to his feet in surprise.

At the same moment Young King Brady reached out his left hand and seized San Moy's right wrist.

He then thrust two fingers of his right hand in her glove, tore open the buttons and began to rip off the brown kids.

Before the boy had a chance to tear off the obstinate glove, however, the restaurant keeper suddenly leaped at him, with hands extended, and seized him by the throat.

The shock pushed Harry backward from his chair and he fell to the floor in a heap, with the yelling Chinaman on top of him, squeezing his windpipe furiously.

All the waiters rushed to his aid, and the excited patrons of the place bounded to their feet and swarmed to the spot, to learn the cause of all the disturbance.

Released of Harry, the queen now began to struggle to tear her arms free of Old King Brady's grip.

Finding she could not do so, she pulled out a formidable hat-pin and was going to stab Old King Brady's hands with it when he observed her intention and released her.

Instantly she rushed away.

The old detective attempted to follow her, but a gang of Chinamen dashed between her and the detective.

The next moment they seized him.

A terrific struggle began between Old King Brady and his assailants.

During the excitement the queen escaped from the room.

CHAPTER XII.

CAPTURING THE SECOND CHINAMAN.

When all the Chinamen in the restaurant, divided in two parties, attacked them in defense of San Moy, the detectives knew that they were faithful friends of hers.

The Bradys saw the queen escape.

It rendered them desperate, and Old King Brady yelled: "Throw them off and chase her!"

"Can't. Too many against me," the boy answered.

"Draw your gun, then, and plug them."

Menaced on all sides by the scowling Mongolians, and seeing that only the most drastic measures would save them from rough treatment, the Bradys drew their pistols.

No sooner did the Chinamen see the weapons when they yelled words of warning to each other and scattered.

Aiming over their heads the detectives fired two shots.

Although no one was hit, fresh yells of fear were wrung from the lips of the rushing crowd, and they bolted down-stairs, plunged into closets, hid behind furniture and sprang out of windows on a shed.

In a remarkably brief time the room was cleared.

The detectives held undisputed possession of the room, and a broad grin overspread their faces, and Harry cried: "We've scared them badly."

"See if we can find that confounded woman."

"I nearly had her glove off when they interfered."

"She seems to have some great power over them, if they will fight so ferociously to defend her," said Old King Brady.

They rushed down to the street without interference.

But San Moy had vanished.

There were so many places around there in which she could find friendly shelter that the Bradys lost all hope of seeing her again, and Harry said:

"She's gone for the night."

"Never mind. We are bound to meet her again."

"Do you suppose she suspected our identity?"

"Very likely, as she is always on her guard."

"If she thinks we are detectives she certainly will keep away from her opium joint," said Harry, thoughtfully.

"I'm going around in Mott Street and see if I can find Charley Sing, the Chinese court interpreter."

"What for, Old King Brady?"

"He is familiar with nearly all the Chinamen in the district, and may be able to tell us where to find Wing Lee, the man who was with Chang Foo on the night Mr. Pelham was murdered."

"If we could pick him up we might get some useful news about the queen, if not positive information about the murder of the old banker. Come along."

And away they went.

In ten minutes they passed into a Mott Street tea store.

A bright, intelligent young Chinaman, who owned the place, met them at the door, with a nod and a smile of recognition in spite of their disguises, and said:

"Hello, Mr. Brady!"

"Ah, Charley, you know us?" said Old King Brady, in surprise.

"Your disguises are all disarranged."

They glanced at their reflections in a mirror.

As the interpreter said, the struggle had so disturbed their disguises that any one could tell who they were that knew them at all.

"No wonder you recognized us," laughed Harry.

"Why are you masquerading down here, sir?"

"Hunting for some of your people."

"Can I aid you?"

"Yes, if you can tell us where to find Wing Lee."

"I know him very well."

"So much the better."

"He is an opium-joint helper."

"We know that already."

"Lee is a desperate man. He's a great fan-tan player."

"And hangs around the gambling joints, eh?"

"Yes. You can generally find him in the Blue Dragon."

"That's a grocery store down the street?"

"The back room is a fan-tan joint."

"I see. And he plays cards there?"

"Every time he has any money."

"We'll go down and see him."

"Don't say I told you."

"Not for worlds."

Leaving the interpreter the Bradys went down Mott Street.

Pausing before a store in the basement of an old house they went in, nodded familiarly to one of the clerks, and Harry asked him:

"Is Wing Lee here? I want to see him on important business."

"Inside," replied the Chinaman.

There was a partition dividing the store in two.

Pushing open the door the detectives found themselves in a small, hot room containing several tables, all of which were surrounded by Chinese who were playing the gambling game of fan-tan.

Neither of the detectives had a very vivid recollection of Wing Lee's features, and Harry sang out:

"Wing Lee! Wing Lee! Come here!"

Every one looked at the officers, and a young Chinaman rose from the table nearest to them and asked:

"What you want?"

They now recognized him as the companion of Chang Foo in the opium joint when they saw Mr. Pelham fall dead.

Harry beckoned to him, and when he approached near enough the boy leaned over and whispered in his ear:

"The queen wants you."

"Where she?" demanded Wing, quickly.

"I'll lead you to the place."

"Any trouble?"

"Yes. Your life depends upon your doing as I say."

"Me go now, quick."

"Don't utter a word."

Wing nodded and hurried from the gambling den between the two detectives, little suspecting their true identity.

Reaching the street the Bradys marched him to the square.

Not a word was uttered.

Hurrying along, the detectives led the Chinaman straight to the Elm Street station house, and started to go in.

Wing saw the character of the place, and hung back.

Suddenly his suspicions were awakened.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed.

"What's the matter?" queried Harry.

"San Moy in prison?"

"Yes."

"Me no go in dere."

"You must. She wants to see you."

"No. Not now."

They saw he feared to enter.

A grim smile hovered over Old King Brady's face and he said:

"Give him the rush."

"Grab him!"

Wing was seized by each arm and propelled forward, despite his furious struggles and frantic yells.

He was landed inside.

The captain at the desk glanced at the trio in amazement a few moments, and then demanded, gruffly:

"Say, what are you fellows doing?"

"We are the Bradys," explained Harry. "We are disguised."

"We want this Chink locked up."

"What has he done?"

"Been concerned in the Pelham murder."

The captain nodded and a grave expression crossed his face.

Picking up his pen and opening the "blotter" he began asking the usual questions which Wing was forced to answer.

Several policemen came in and the Chinaman was searched.

He had some money and a big bowie knife.

When these things were taken away from him he was brought to one of the cells and was locked up.

The Bradys then departed for Chinatown again.

Here they worked until past midnight, but failed to see any sign of the woman they were after.

Then they went home.

On the following day, while they were at headquarters, Fred Heywood strode in, with a frown on his face, and seeing the Bradys he rushed over to Harry, shook his fist at the boy and shouted, in tones of fury:

"Say, what did you mean by going to Miss Cross' flat and insulting her in the gross manner you did?"

"Well, I'll explain that," said Harry, in quiet tones.

"Miss Cross was not insulted by me. I merely told her the truth when I said she had no twin sister. I told the truth when I said she was a fake. And I told the truth when I declared that she and San Moy, the queen of the opium fiends, were one and the same person."

"You lie, Harry Brady, you lie!" shouted Fred, excitedly.

CHAPTER XIII.

SETTING A CHINAMAN TO CATCH A CHINAMAN.

Knowing how fondly Fred Heywood loved Nellie Cross, the young detective did not blame him for defending her.

It was evident that she told her lover how Harry dyed her hand red in order to identify her with San Moy, the queen of the opium fiends, and that he had just come to headquarters to quarrel about it.

As the morning sun slanted into the office through an open window on the calm face of the young detective, he exclaimed:

"Mr. Heywood, you are unduly excited."

"Never mind if I am," shouted the bank cashier, angrily. "I deny that Miss Cross is the infamous keeper of an opium joint. I deny that she is San Moy. If you say so, you are a liar!"

"Come, come; don't get nasty. Keep your temper," interposed Old King Brady. "We have found out a good deal that is very unpleasant to you about your lady love, but we can't spare her. If she is the murderess of her uncle, Howard, M. Pelham, it is no reason why we should respect her more than any other criminal. The pity is that you are engaged to her."

"She didn't kill the banker!" shouted Fred, obstinately.

"We have captured and arrested Chang Foo and Wing Lee, who were in the queen's joint on the night we saw the old banker drop dead, with the blade of a glass dagger buried in his heart," said Old King Brady. "We captured the latter last night and put him in the Elm Street station. To-day we appeared against him in court, and he is now in Ludlow Street Jail with his pal. Either one of these men may convict San Moy. We are going to question Wing. He may confess. Chang refused to admit anything, but I'm sure one or the other will break down."

"Even if such a preposterous thing were so that Nellie were this dive keeper," said Fred, "what object would she have to kill her uncle? She has plenty of money, and was not in want. In due time she knew she would come into possession of her uncle's million. Why, then, would she kill him, I ask you?"

"That remains to be found out," said Harry, coolly.

"Nonsense!" impatiently said Fred. "If you are going to bungle the matter in such an outrageous way as to accuse innocent people of the crime, you had better give it up and I will employ competent men to run down the guilty party."

"Indeed!" said Old King Brady, with an amused smile.

"That's what I mean, exactly."

"It shows how innocent you are."

"How do you mean, sir?"

"We ain't in your employ. You ain't paying us for our work. The Government is the boss of this job, not you. We are working for the Government. And, furthermore, we intend to finish this case without any interference from you or this so-called Nellie Cross. If either one of you get too gay we will lock you both up, and don't you forget it."

Fred turned pale.

He saw that he had made a great blunder.

It took all the high-strung ideas out of him, and he cooled off rapidly and finally said, in humble tones:

"I didn't understand the matter that way."

"Well, you understand it now, young man. Go on about your business. We are doing you a favor for which you will be grateful when the truth comes to light."

Fred said no more. He was crushed in spirit.

After he was gone, the detectives discussed his call and then resolved to go and see if they could get any information out of Wing Lee.

There was time enough that coming night to go after the queen and see if her right hand was stained red.

A plan was formed, and they went and got Charley Sing.

They then proceeded to the prison and met the warden.

"We had no success at pumping Chang Foo," said Old King Brady, "and we now intend to try to get some information from the other Chinaman, if you will permit us to work a game on him."

"Do you mind telling me your plan?"

"Not at all. This naturalized Chinaman is Charley Sing, the court interpreter. We want to put him in a cell next to Chang's. Then we want you to put Wing Lee in Chang's cell. The two Chinks will begin to talk, of course, and Charley will begin to listen. When the Chinamen get through, Charley will translate to us all they say."

"That plan can easily be worked."

"Very well. Let's begin operations at once."

A keeper was called in.

"Remove prisoner No. 15 to cell 24," said the warden.

"Yes, sir."

"When that is done, put No. 20 in cell 16."

"All right, sir."

"Report back to me when No. 15 is moved."

"Very good, sir."

And the keeper went out.

In ten minutes he returned and said:

"No. 15 is in No. 24, sir."

The warden turned to Charley and said:

"This keeper will put you in cell 15."

"We'll go with him," interposed Harry.

The warden nodded and they followed the keeper out. He put them in an empty cell.

Then he took Wing and transferred him to Chang's cell.

The two Chinamen began to jabber as soon as they came together, and Charley whispered:

"They are saluting each other."

There was more talking for a while, and then the interpreter said:

"They are accusing each other of being to blame for their incarceration."

Old King Brady nodded and smiled.

"They'll say more, presently," he muttered.

Once more the excited Celestials in the next cells let their voices out and a heated argument ensued.

When a lull came in the dialogue, Charley whispered:

"Now they are reproaching somebody."

"For what?" asked Harry.

"The killing of the man."

"Who are they reproaching?"

"A woman."

"Ha! Do they mention her name?"

"No."

"Do they say how she killed him?"

"No. They merely say she caused his death."

"Ordered it, or did it herself?"

"She was the cause of it."

"How?"

"I can't make out yet."

Chang and Wing were evidently in a high temper.

They were quarreling, furiously. Charley listened intently to all they were saying, and finally turned to Old King Brady and muttered:

"They think San Moy ought to bring her political influence to bear to get them out on bail so they can run away."

"Skip their bonds?"

"Yes, by going back to China."

"We'll see that no bail is taken."

"If you don't, you'll lose them."

"What else did they say?"

"They've arranged a plan of action. When they are brought into court both of them intend to stick to the same story."

"In substance, what is it?"

"That neither of them know anything about the murder."

"But they really do, don't they?"

"Yes. They know who killed Mr. Pelham."

"You are sure of that?"

"Positive, judging by what they say."

"Do they state why he was killed?"

"No."

"Or mention a thousand dollars?"

"Ah, that's the money they spoke of."

"How did they speak of it, Charley?"

"I heard them say that they each received one hundred dollars of 'the money' to keep their mouths shut."

"That probably means some of the money Mr. Pelham had, which was taken from his pockets before we found his corpse."

"Very likely, Mr. Brady. Hark!"

Another animated dialogue ensued in the next cell.

When Charley translated it, he said:

"They were laughing over the way they fooled you two at the time of the murder by carrying away the dead man's body through a secret passage leading into the cellar."

"Just what we suspected," said Old King Brady.

"When you were gone they hired a cab and drove to the river with the corpse and flung it in, just when you appeared in a rowboat with a prisoner you had captured."

"Yes, we recall the circumstances well."

The conversation between the Chinamen now changed to general topics, so the Bradys and Charley left the cell.

Wing was put back in his own cell, and soon afterward the detectives departed from the jail.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CONVICT'S SECRET.

The result of the trick played by the Bradys pleased them very much, for they had gained a little information about the murder.

Two points were scored:

The thousand dollars Mr. Pelham had was taken by his slayer, and some of it was given to the Chinese witnesses, to bribe them to keep secret what they knew about the crime.

And the crime was instigated by a woman.

She, of course, must have been the queen of the opium fiends.

When the Bradys reached the Central Office, the chief said:

"Glad you've come. I've got a message for you."

"Who from?" queried Harry.

"Do you remember Dick Grubbs?"

"The thief who stole your wife's pocketbook?"

"Yes. He's in Sing Sing for five years."

"What about him?"

"I received a 'phone from the Warden of Sing Sing asking for you two to call there at once to see Grubbs."

"What for?" asked Old King Brady.

"Claims he knows all about the Pelham murder."

"Indeed!"

"He wants to see you to tell you all about it."

"What object has he in so doing?"

"Self-preservation, I suppose."

"It may be a fake, but we'll go to see him."

"You must follow and examine every clew you can get," the chief exclaimed. "Already this case has dragged along too slowly. Meantime, the real culprit roams free."

"We'll find that crook in due time, chief."

"I hope so. His arrest will stop all the turmoil."

The Bradys soon left the Central Office, and going up to the Grand Central Depot they boarded a train for Sing Sing.

Upon their arrival at the State prison they encountered the warden, who treated them with marked courtesy, as he had a great respect for the celebrated man-hunters.

Indeed, many of the inmates of that prison were crooks whose arrest and conviction the Bradys had secured.

Seated in the warden's office, Old King Brady said to him:

"We have called in reference to a request from Dick Grubbs, who has some important information to impart to us."

"Yes, Mr. Brady, he asked me to send for you."

"Do you know what he wishes to say?"

"No more than that he witnessed the killing of Mr. Pelham."

"He may be faking."

"You can tell when you question him."

"Let us see the crook."

A keeper was called and he ushered the Bradys to the cell occupied by the condemned pocketbook snatcher.

Grubbs wore a striped suit.

His hair was cropped and his face shaved clean.

The thief nodded and smiled when they entered his cell.

"Well," said he, "I'm glad yer've come."

"What do you want of us, Dick?" queried Old King Brady.

"I've got a secret to sell to you."

"To sell, eh?"

"Of course. Yer don't 'spose I'm goin' ter give it to yer fer nuthin', do yer?" asked Grubbs.

"Well, no. We hardly expected such generosity as that from a crook of your nature. What is it?"

"D'yer 'member the murder of Pelham?"

"Very well, indeed."

"Well, I saw it done."

"You did?"

"Yes, I did. An' it came about in a rather curious way."

"Give us the details, if you please."

"On the night I swiped the pocketbook belongin' to ther wife of your chief, an' ran, you an' Harry chased me inter ther Chinese district. I s'pose yer know."

"Yes. You disappeared in Doyers Street."

"Well, I ran inter ther hallway of ther carpenter shop at No. 1," said Grubbs, "an' I rushed up ter ther roof. From there I peeked over an seen youse two over in Chatham Square, wonderin' what became of me."

"I'll admit we were puzzled to know what became of you," said Old King Brady, with a nod and a smile.

"Well," said Grubbs, "I heard a fuss goin' on in the room under me, an' wonderin' what was goin' on, I looked through ther skylight an' seen some people scrappin'. One of 'em was old Pelham. I knowed him by sight, an' reck-ernized him ther moment I set eyes on him."

"Well?" said Old King Brady, as the crook paused.

"Among ther bunch in ther room was San Moy, the queen of ther opium fiends. When I looked down, Mr. Pelham was a-chasin' her aroun' ther room. Ther queen had ther ole feller's pocketbook. Seein' she couldn't git away from him she flew ter ther winder, an', flingin' it open, she stuck out her head an' begun ter yell fer help. Pelham grabbed her an' pulled her inter ther room ag'in. Then ther fight was renewed. Pelham was stabbed with what looked to me like a knife made out of glass. He fought fer his life. When you an' Harry rushed in he had hold of the queen an' he fell dead just as youse went into the joint."

Old King Brady nodded.

"We saw that," said he, "but the question is, who did the stabbing?"

"Ay," chuckled Grubbs, "that's ther question."

"Only the queen, Chang Foo and Wing Lee were in the room."

"I know it."

"Either one of those three did the killing."

"That's it, Brady."

"And you saw the deed committed?"

"I did."

"Who did it?"

"I won't tell you."

"Why not?"

"Cause I ain't free yet."

"What are your terms?"

"My pardon."

"If we secure your pardon you will tell us who killed Mr. Pelham?"

"Exactly."

"Nothing short of that?"

"Absolutely nuthin'."

"You can clear up the entire mystery, then?"

"I can."

The Bradys glanced at each other in their significant way, and after a few moments' reflection, Old King Brady said:

"Harry, we must petition the Governor for this man's release."

"By all means," assented the boy. "We have got to have the information he can impart to us at any cost, otherwise we cannot hope to solve this puzzling mystery."

The crook smiled.

He realized what a strong point he had scored.

Finally he said to them:

"Nuthin' will make me tell what I know 'cept my unconditional pardon."

"You are pretty stiff about the terms, Dick," said Harry.

"Can't help it," replied the crook. "It's all I've got ter rely on ter git out of this fix, an' I ain't a-goin' ter lose my chance."

"Won't you make any other terms?"

"No, sir!" was the firm reply.

The detectives saw that he meant what he said, and would not flinch from the determined stand he had taken.

They tried to puzzle him with questions.

He was too wary to commit himself that way, however, and they finally gave it up, and Harry said to him:

"We'll see the Governor and try to secure your pardon, Dick. You'll hear from us later on."

Then they left the convict.

"Well?" asked the warden, when they got back in the office.

"Can't make him confess who killed Pelham until we come back with his pardon from the Governor."

"Can you secure his release?"

"We intend to try."

"The information you'd get may be worth the effort."

"It will be. To pump the Chinamen is useless. They won't give any information at all. If San Moy is guilty, she, of course, would go to the chair protesting her innocence. Only one course remains open to us, and that is, to get a confession from Grubbs."

"It looks to me as if he had you by the throat," laughed the warden, "and he is quite smart enough to secure all the advantages that are coming to him from his knowledge."

"No doubt about that," said Harry.

CHAPTER XV.

IN THE CHINESE JOSS HOUSE.

For several days after their interview with Grubbs, the detectives quietly shadowed the Doyers Street opium joint.

From the platform of the Third Avenue elevated station they had a good view of the place, and mingling with the waiting passengers there was no chance for their detection.

San Moy did not go near the place.

Inquiries at the flat occupied by Nellie Cross elicited the news that she had gone away for the summer.

No one knew where she went.

At this stage of the game the Bradys resolved to question Fred Heywood about her, and called at his office.

The young man met them very coldly.

He had taken a dislike to the Bradys since he found out that they suspected his sweetheart of being a murderess.

A frown was on his brow when they came in, and with a cool bow he demanded, in haughty tones:

"Well, what do you want here?"

"Some information about Miss Cross," replied Harry.

"You'll get none from me."

"We wish to know where she is."

"I won't tell you."

"Then you'll be compounding a felony."

"I deny it."

"That's because you are defending the woman you love."

"It's because it's the truth, Mr. Brady."

"Our opinions differ."

"Well, you may as well leave. I won't tell you anything."

"Mr. Heywood, you had better reconsider your determination."

"Nothing will move me, sir."

Harry pondered a few moments, and whispered with his partner; after a while he said to Heywood:

"Have you ever seen the queen of the opium fiends?"

"No, and I don't want to," replied Fred.

"But we demand that you see her."

"What for? I ain't interested in her."

"You will be when you see her."

"Why should I?"

"On account of her startling resemblance to Miss Cross."

"Didn't my fiance tell you San Moy was her twin sister?"

"Yes, but we don't believe her."

"There you go, insulting her again."

"Did Miss Cross show you how I stained her hand?"

"She did, and it was an outrageous thing for you to do."

"If you saw the same stains on the hand of San Moy, would that convince you she and Miss Cross are the same person?"

Fred was staggered at this question.

He could not help realizing what it meant.

He therefore answered, hesitatingly:

"If I saw the same stains on the hand of the woman you say has the same face as my sweetheart, I'll have some doubts about the matter, of course."

"We want you to see this so-called queen."

"How can I?"

"By coming with us to-night."

"Very well. To put an end to your disagreeable per-

sistence and to show you how grievously you are wronging one of the purest and best girls in New York, I will condescend to go with you. But remember, sir, I only do this to show you once and for all that you are laboring under a most dreadful error regarding Miss Cross."

"We'll risk that."

"At what time shall I meet you?"

"There's no time like the present," answered Harry.

He feared that if they let Fred out of their sight he would go and tell Miss Cross what he intended to do. And, if she were San Moy, that would put her on her guard.

She thus could baffle their design.

The cashier glanced at his watch.

"It's just five o'clock," said he. "I have nothing to prevent me from doing as you request. I'll go with you."

"Thank you. We've got a cab outside."

"Let us go at once, then."

He put on his derby and they departed together from the office.

The Bradys stuck to him so closely because they feared he might telephone to Nellie Cross, if he had a chance.

Once in the carriage they were driven away.

The Bradys were clad in new suits and derbys. They now put on wigs and false mustaches and handed Fred similar face disguises.

"Put these on," said Harry.

"What for?" demanded the cashier.

"So the Chinamen won't know you."

"I don't care to."

"Then your trip won't be effective."

"Well," growled Fred, hesitatingly, as he took them, "I won't spoil your plan. I'll put them on."

And he adjusted the false hair in an unwilling manner.

The cabman had his instructions.

He drove them straight to Charley Sing's tea store.

The interpreter stood at the door.

Harry alighted and accosted him with:

"Hello, Charley—any news yet?"

"Who are you?" the interpreter demanded, in surprise.

"Young King Brady."

"Oh, I didn't know you. Yes, I've got some news."

"Well, do you know where San Moy is?"

"I do not, but she has got to go to the joss house at six o'clock."

"What for?"

"To pay the priests of the temple a certain amount of money, as all we Chinamen do on this date, to cover the expense of the festival of the New Moon. The queen, being so thick with all the Chinese opium fiends, is sure to be on hand. You'll find her there."

"It's half-past five now."

"I'll go up with you and fix it so you can hide there."

"Very well. It will be quite a favor, I'm sure."

The young Chinaman put on his hat, and when Old King Brady and Fred Heywood alighted from the cab they went over to the tall, brick building with red lanterns up the front.

Going in and ascending the stairs, they passed into a room containing an old Chinaman in silver-framed spectacles.

He was one of the priests.

Around the room were numerous curious Chinese objects, an altar at one end containing a statue of their god.

"Buy some of his fans and trinkets, if you want to make yourself solid with the old chap," whispered Charley.

The detectives nodded, and spent several dollars.

Charley then spoke to the old fellow, earnestly, for a few moments, and then going back to his companions he said:

"He will let me put two of you behind the altar. The other must remain outside. But you must not disturb the ceremony going on here no matter what happens."

"We are satisfied," assented Harry. "Old King Brady, you remain outside, and Mr. Heywood and I will hide behind the altar. I don't see how we are going to do it, though, as there don't seem to be any space there."

"I'll show you," said Charley, with a smile.

He went out in the hall, opened a door at the head of the stairs and led them into a big lodge room containing chairs.

There was a door in the partition wall.

Opening it, he disclosed what looked like a closet.

But the altar in the next room was built back in the wall, and consequently it set back in this closet.

By remaining in the closet one could peer through the openings in the stamped paper and bronze objects of which the altar was made up, and thus see into the room of the temple where they had been.

Charley left them there.

All strangers were now requested to leave the temple, and many Chinamen soon began to arrive.

More priests came in, incense sticks were lit and a ceremony began.

From their covert, Harry and Fred could see the strange rites practiced by the Chinamen without being seen themselves.

They also noticed that as each Celestial came in he deposited a sum of money in a metal plate on the altar, and, kneeling down before the idol, he bowed his forehead to the floor several times.

An hour passed by, during which the ceremony proceeded, accompanied by queer incantations by the priests, strange music by a band from the theatre and the jabber of the men who came and went.

Suddenly the door opened and San Moy entered in Chinese costume.

Harry squeezed Fred's arm.

The bank cashier gave a violent start as his glance fell upon her face, and he gasped:

"Good heavens, how she resembles Nellie!"

"I told you so," said Harry.

"Here she comes toward the altar."

"Now watch her hand. She wears no gloves. If her hand is stained, you may be sure she really is Nellie Cross!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SECRET OF THE STAINED HAND.

As San Moy advanced toward the altar the priests crowded round her, nodding and smiling, and shaking hands with themselves, for they never shake hands with each other.

She spoke a few words to them in their own tongue, which caused them to like her, as much as did her adoption of a Chinese costume.

Moreover, she had, since her first advent among them, always contributed heavily to their charities and church.

By this means she added to her popularity among the pagans.

As the other idolators arose and moved aside, San Moy came on toward the altar and drew a purse from the folds of her kimona.

Taking out a roll of bank notes she reached over her right hand toward the metal plate and dropped the money in it.

There were several Chinese lanterns hanging about the altar, and their light gleamed down upon the woman's hand.

"See!" gasped Harry.

The woman's hand was stained crimson!

Fred almost succumbed to the awful shock it gave him.

With difficulty he repressed a groan.

He saw that the cunning trap Harry had worked on her was effective. It proved beyond question that Nellie Cross and San Moy were one and the same person.

The young detective felt a thrill of triumph.

He had scored a success.

As the woman withdrew her tell-tale hand and prostrated herself in a deep salaam before the idol, the young detective whispered to his companion:

"Are you satisfied that we told you the truth?"

"I am," gasped Fred, who was bathed in a cold sweat. "But this is dreadful!"

"Cheer up, old man, it's better for you to know the bitter truth now, rather than link your life with that of such an abominable creature. You ought to feel glad and thank the Lord that you found out what sort of a woman she was, before it was too late. I know it is hard, but facts are facts, and it pleases me to think that we have saved you from the toils of that beautiful wretch before you had a chance to marry her. Mr. Heywood, you are in luck!"

Harry peered out again.

The queen had gone.

The boy could only hope that Old King Brady had seen her, followed her and placed her under arrest.

Fred was greatly wrought up.

"Let us get out of here," he whispered.

"Make no noise and follow me," answered Harry.

He pushed open the closet door and they passed into the lodge room and thence to the hall.

Old King Brady was not in sight.

Going down to the street they encountered a number of Chinese coming and going from the lodge room.

Chinatown was now enshrouded in the gloom of the night and gay lanterns, banners and streamers decorated all the houses occupied by Mongolians.

The street was filled with the yellow followers of Confucius, and many white people who came down to see the sights thronged the sidewalks.

"Where is your partner?" queried Fred, whose face was very pale. "I don't see him around here."

"He may have gone after the queen," replied Young King Brady. "He was on the watch for her. We may see him later."

"Will you notify me if she is arrested?"

"I don't see what good that will do."

"None, except to relieve my suspense."

"You'd be the first one to aid her."

"I might. A man can't get over his love for a woman in an instant."

"Probably not. She still has your sympathy, too."

"Of course. That's quite natural."

"So it is," assented Harry.

"You have proven her to be the wicked woman you said she was and you've proven her to be a liar. But you have not yet proved that she murdered her uncle," said Fred, hopefully.

"That's a fact," Harry assented. "We ain't sure yet that she did run that knife into Mr. Pelham's body, but we do know that she instigated the crime."

"You do?"

"We've got a witness who saw the murder committed."

"Indeed!"

"Within a short time we'll have a confession from him. He knows just who killed the old banker."

"I hope he won't say it was her."

"That's a question yet to be decided."

"Where are you going now?"

"On a hunt for my partner."

"Shall I go with you?"

"It isn't necessary."

"Then I'll go home and recover from this shock."

"Promise me one thing before you go."

"What is that?"

"That if you should meet Miss Cross you will not tell her anything about what transpired to-night."

"I promise."

"You know where to find her, don't you?"

"No, I don't."

"Are you in earnest?"

"Yes. She merely told me she was going out of town for a few days and would write me when she came back."

"Didn't tell you where she was going, eh?"

"No."

"Well, you saw how she lied to you."

"I did."

"And you recognized the stains on her hand?"

"At once. I examined them carefully when she told me what you had done. When I saw San Moy's hand I recognized the same marks. There's no mistake about the matter. Two women looking exactly alike except in dress,

could not have exactly the same stains on the right hand. Oh, no, Mr. Brady, miserable as the fact makes me, I can't deny that San Moy and Nellie Cross are one and the same woman just as you declared. I can only apologize for the rough way I acted to you, formerly, about it."

"No apologies necessary. I can understand your feelings about the matter," said Harry, generously.

Fred then shook hands and left him.

Putting the wig and false beard Fred gave him into his pocket, Young King Brady went around in Doyers Street.

He thought Old King Brady might be in the opium den. When he arrived there, however, he found that the place was crowded with Chinese fiends.

The same attendants were giving them their dope, and when Harry asked for the queen one of the attendants said:

"She no comee here no more."

"Where does she live?" asked the young detective.

"No savvy," answered the Chinaman.

"You mean you won't tell, don't you?"

"Allee samee."

"I believe it is," drily said the boy.

He went out, and crossing the street to a little old-fashioned house run by a man named Lavelle as a sporting resort, he went upstairs to the dancing-room and sat down in a front window, from which he could keep the opium joint under observation.

Young King Brady had not been there long before he caught sight of his partner coming in from the square.

Harry signalled to him and went downstairs.

They met on the sidewalk, and the boy asked:

"Were you going into San Moy's?"

"Yes. I thought I'd find her there."

"She isn't in. I've just been there."

"Where is she?"

"I don't know. I thought you were shadowing her."

"Haven't seen a sign of her, although I've been looking for her."

"Well, she was at the joss house."

"She was, eh?"

"Yes, and we saw her hand."

"Wasn't it stained?"

"It was."

"Then she is Nellie Cross?"

"Yes."

"And Fred is convinced?"

"He is."

"What became of her?"

"She went out again."

"Well, she didn't enter or leave that joss house by the main entrance, or I would have seen her, as I was watching it."

CHAPTER XVII.

PARDONING THE THIEF.

On the following day Harry went to Albany to see the Governor in an effort to secure a pardon for Dick Grubbs.

Next morning the young detective secured an interview with the high official in question, and laid the whole matter before him.

"You are asking a favor I do not feel inclined to grant, Mr. Brady," said the Governor, when he reviewed the facts.

"But see how important it is!" urged Harry.

"Reducing the matter, it merely amounts to this: By giving up a convicted thief the State will secure a murderer."

"Yes, sir, and it is more important to punish a murderer than it is to punish a thief," said Harry, warmly.

"That's a fact."

"Why hesitate, then?"

"Because you have the thief and haven't got the murderer."

"I do not intend to use the pardon to release Grubbs until I have got the murderer not only lodged in jail, but convicted of the crime," said Harry, quickly.

"That is a fair proposition."

"Under those conditions will you give me the pardon?"

The Governor reflected.

He finally made up his mind and answered:

"I will."

"Very well, sir."

"Can I rely on you to use discretion in using the pardon?"

"Most assuredly, since it was I who arrested Grubbs first."

"Oh, you did, eh?"

"Yes, sir. And we wouldn't lose him for anything."

"That fact strengthens your petition, Mr. Brady."

"Give me the pardon and I'll satisfy you of the result."

"Very well."

And he did so.

Armed with the document, Harry finally left Albany and returned to New York, where he met Old King Brady at headquarters.

"Get it?" eagerly asked the old detective.

"Yes. And here it is," Harry answered, handing over the paper.

"Now we can learn the identity of Pelham's murderer."

They told their chief of the plan.

He scowled and looked very much displeased.

"Now you'll turn a dangerous thief loose on the community again," said he. "And once Grubbs is free, it won't take him long to make trouble for the department again."

"But we will learn who killed Pelham," urged Harry.

"That's the only advantage. But, after all, I guess it's a good one."

Just then the telephone rang.

"Old King Brady wanted at the 'phone," said the operator.

The old detective answered the call.

"Hello!" he sang out. "Who is that?"

"Chief of police of Jersey City."

"Well, sir, what do you want?"

"I understood that you arrested a thief named Dick Grubbs."

"So we did. He is serving time at Sing Sing."

"How long a term?"

"Five years."

"For robbery?"

"Pocketbook snatching."

"Too bad. We wanted him for a job he did over here."

"Robbery?"

"Yes. Highway robbery."

"And you want to arrest him for it?"

"Badly."

"I'll tell you how it can be done."

"How?"

"We are going to release him on a pardon in a few days."

"Are you? That is surprising."

"Our reason is a good one."

"It certainly must be."

"Well, we will let you know when he is to be released. You can re-arrest him on a bench-warrant the moment the Warden of Sing Sing lets him go. Have a requisition ready to take him out of the State, and the man is yours."

"By Jove! that's a good plan."

"Are you going to follow it?"

"Yes, if you don't fail to let me know when he is to be pardoned."

"As we are anxious to get such crooks as he is out of New York, it will please us to have you relieve us of him."

"Very well. Thank you. Good-by."

Old King Brady hung up the receiver and rejoined his chief.

He detailed all that was said, making the chief smile.

"There's a way out of our difficulty," said he.

"Our course is satisfactory now, isn't it?"

"Very. We will get rid of Grubbs altogether that way."

"Then we'll go to the prison and see him to-morrow."

The chief nodded, and they separated.

A keen search for the queen was made that night, but she was so well hidden that they failed to find her.

Next day the Bradys, armed with the Governor's pardon, went up to Ossening (as Sing Sing is now called), and, after a brief conversation with the warden, they were taken to the cell occupied by Grubbs.

He was amazed to see them.

After the first greetings, he asked:

"What brings you here now, Mr. Brady?"

"Can you read?" asked Harry.

"Sure."

"Then glance at this."

He handed the pardon to the thief.

Grubbs instinctively realized what it was.

He eagerly read the legal document through, and a grin of joy overspread his wicked face when he finished it.

Handing back the paper, he chuckled:

"It's my pardon."

"Exactly."

"I'm ter go free, am I?"

"Under conditions."

"Yes, I know that."

"You are to tell us who murdered Howard Pelham. We will then capture the murderer. When we have proven the party's guilt and secured a conviction, you will be granted a pardon."

"I'm satisfied with that arrangement."

"Very well. To show you our good faith in the matter," said Harry, handing the pardon to the warden, "we will leave this paper with the warden. When he hears that your evidence in court convicts the guilty party, he will release you."

"Good enough."

"Well, go ahead with your confession."

Grubbs reflected as he paced up and down his cell, and when he had all the facts arranged in his mind, he said:

"When I was on ther roof of that joint, I heard what all them people said at ther time of ther murder. It seems as old Pelham was amazed ter find that ther queen of ther opium fiends was his own niece. He was a fiend himself, an' that was ther first time he ever was in that joint. Well, they had a bitter quarrel an' he swore he would disinherit ther woman. That made her wild, an' she said he wouldn't git out of there ter keep his threat. She grabbed him, an' he hit her. She ran ter ther winder an' yelled. It was when he pulled her back inter ther room that she hollered ter ther two Chinamen ter help her. They was both excited. Chang Foo pulled a glass dagger from his blouse. He rushed up ter Pelham an' stabbed him with it. Then he snapped off the handle, leaving the blade stickin' in their wound. He put ther handle in his pocket. Then they heard you two comin'. They rushed to ther rear of ther room, leavin' ther queen strugglin' with her uncle. Jist then you entered an' Pelham fell dead."

"Then Chang Foo was the murderer?"

"Yes."

"And he killed Pelham to save San Moy from being hurt?"

"He did."

"Did the woman tell him to stab Pelham?"

"She said, 'Don't let him get out of here alive to disinherit me,' an' I reckon them Chinese knew what she meant."

"Although she didn't actually murder the old man, she was responsible, in a measure, for his death."

"Of course she was."

"Well, we've got Chang Foo and Wing Lee locked up in Ludlow Street Jail," said Harry, "and now, to complete the case, it only remains for us to arrest San Moy."

"That's all."

"We will summon you to court to give your evidence when we capture the queen and put them on trial," said Harry, "and we want you to explain the matter just as it occurred if you wish to get the benefit of that pardon."

"I'll do so. Now don't fail ter let me go when Chang is convicted."

"We won't," said Harry, quietly.

And they departed for New York.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONCLUSION.

On the following evening the Bradys were going through Forty-second Street in pursuit of George Stewart, a well-known confidence man, to see what he was doing, when they met Fred Heywood.

"Have you accomplished anything?" he asked them, eagerly.

"Yes," Harry answered. "Come along—we are in a hurry—and we will explain what has happened."

"Are you following that man?"

"We are. He's a notorious crook named Stewart. Here, come in this doorway. We'll all disguise a trifle."

The wigs and beards they adjusted changed their looks wonderfully.

When they emerged, Stewart had reached Fifth Avenue and turned uptown in that fashionable thoroughfare.

As they went along, the Bradys told Fred all that occurred.

He was amazed.

On the corner of Fifty-fourth Street they were surprised to see Stewart meet San Moy, who was clad in elegant clothing.

"There's your lady love on friendly terms with a crook," said Harry.

"Yes," bitterly answered Fred. "There they go in Delmonico's."

"We will follow and try to hear what they say."

They passed into the restaurant.

San Moy and the crook sat at a table in the corner, and the cashier and two detectives were fortunate enough to get a table next to theirs.

They saw the pair glance casually at them.

It was evident they did not recognize any of the trio, for after the first passing glance they spoke unreservedly, and the Bradys and their companion overheard every word.

"We can speak here without fear of those Bradys," they heard San Moy exclaim. "I am going to leave the city."

"What for?" asked Stewart.

"They are hounding me to death."

"How about your sweetheart, Heywood?"

"That fool?" laughed the woman. "Oh, he is just as much in love with me as ever. I'll marry him, get all his money and then you and I can go to Europe the day I'm married."

"As you are my lawful wife, such a job would make a bigamist of you," said Stewart, warningly.

"What do I care?" she asked, contemptuously. "I only want his money. I never cared a snap for him, and I've fooled him all along into the belief that I'm madly in love with him."

Unable to stand this, Fred bounded to his feet, excitedly.

San Moy and Stewart glanced at him in surprise.

Throwing off his disguise, Fred cried, furiously:

"You false, designing creature, you are exposed!"

The man and woman cried out with astonishment and alarm, and bounded to their feet.

"Heywood!" cried San Moy, aghast.

"Yes, and I heard all you said!" shouted the cashier.

"I was only fooling——"

"You can't deceive me any longer. Bradys, do your duty!"

Harry seized San Moy and Old King Brady grasped Stewart.

"You are our prisoners!" cried the old detective.

"San Moy," Harry added, "Heywood knows you are Nellie Cross. Further concealment is useless."

"I see it is," answered the woman, grimly.

"Moreover," added the boy, "we know Chang stabbed Pelham because you told him and Wing not to let the banker escape from your dive, to cut you out of his will when he found his niece to be the keeper of an opium den."

This bomb was effective enough.

The startled woman turned pale.

"All is known now," she groaned.

"Then come along."

They took their prisoners out of the fashionable resort and locked them up in prison.

In course of time, San Moy and Chang and Wing were placed on trial, and Grubbs was brought down from Sing Sing to tell what he had witnessed through the skylight.

His evidence convicted the accused.

San Moy and Wing Lee were sentenced to long terms.

Chang was found guilty of the murder of the banker and they finally electrocuted him.

Their cases were appealed, and the queen of the opium fiends spent thousands of dollars to secure their acquittal.

But it was useless.

The trio were sent to receive their just deserts.

Mr. Pelham had stipulated in his will that his money was to go to charitable organizations if Nellie Cross married.

As it was proven that Stewart was her husband, she never got the money she schemed for so hard.

With the imprisonment of the queen, her opium joint was closed up and the fiends had to go elsewhere for their dope.

Grubbs was pardoned, as the Bradys promised, but was rearrested by the Jersey authorities and was sent to another prison.

Stewart, too, was given a term in jail.

As for Fred Heywood, he continued in the banking business and eventually married a girl of his choice.

That ended the case so far as the Bradys were concerned.

They became interested in other detective business and in due time engaged on a thrilling case, the story of which will be found in our next number.

THE END.

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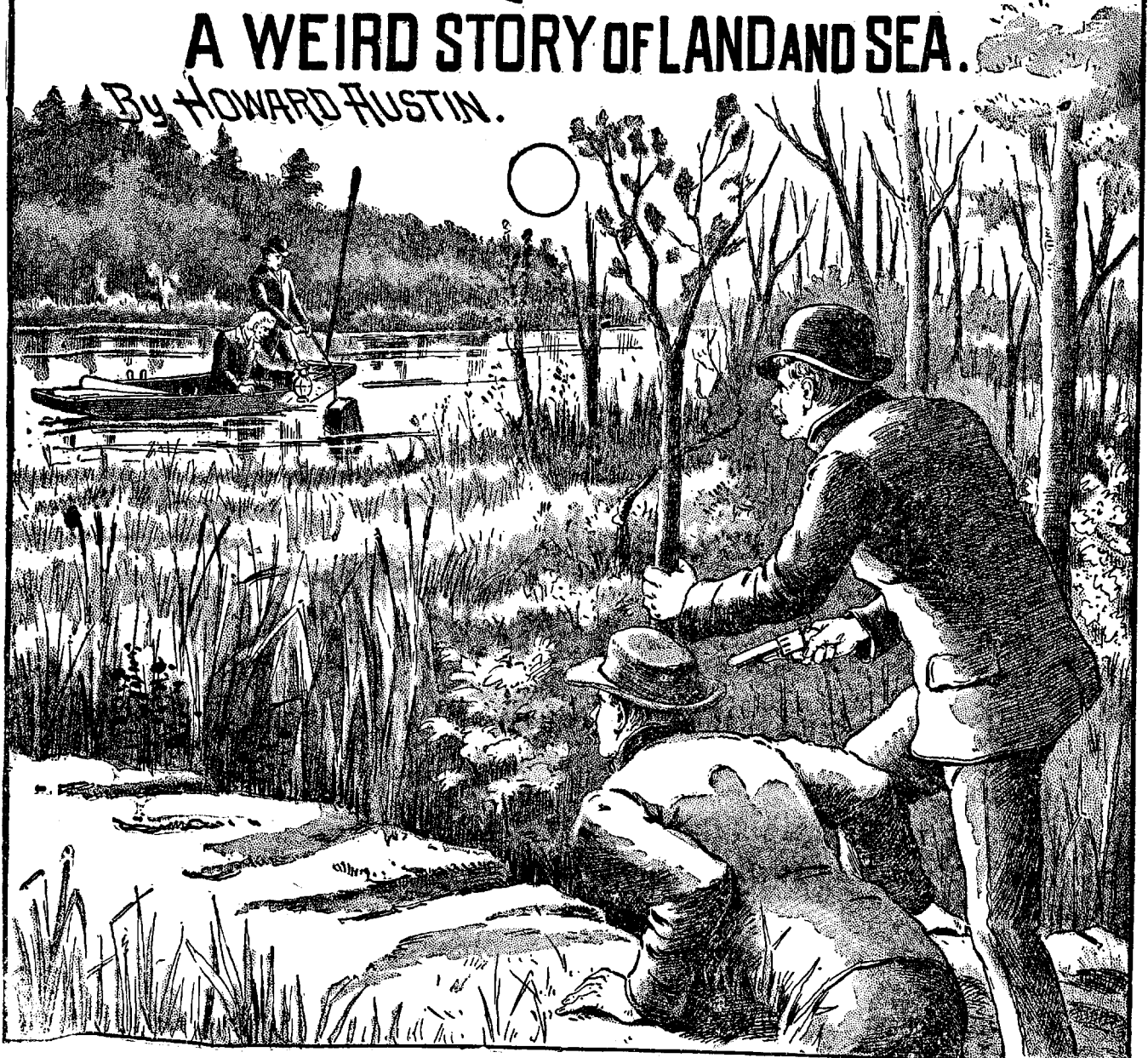
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