

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, March 1, 1899, by Frank Tousey.

No. 227.

NEW YORK, MAY 29, 1903.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS AND THE OPIUM SMUGGLERS; OR, A HOT TRAIL ON THE PACIFIC COAST.

By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE



"Traitor! You shall die!" shouted Cammeyer, and he called out something in Chinese to the masked men. "Back!" shouted Old King Brady, whipping out a revolver. "Back, I say! Lay a hand on that girl at your peril!"

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(Continued on page 3 of cover.)

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THE BRADYS AND THE OPIUM SMUGGLERS;

OR,

A Hot Trail on the Pacific Coast.

BY A NEW YORK DETECTIVE.

CHAPTER I.

THE BRADYS AND THE BRASS MONKEY.

A night in San Francisco's Chinatown is something to be remembered for a lifetime.

Compared with this remarkable place Chinatown in New York is but a tame affair.

To take a walk along Dupont Street, Jackson, Washington, or Sacramento streets, is to see a bit of old China itself, with absolutely no difference except in the construction of the buildings in which these strange people dwell.

Such crowds as one beholds!

On Mott, Doyers, and Pell streets in New York one sees very few Chinamen moving about, considering the number who actually dwell there.

On Dupont Street and the others mentioned great crowds of Chinamen and almost an equal number of women are constantly passing back and forth, while in New York's Chinatown one might visit it a thousand times and never lay eyes on a Chinese woman, in spite of the fact that there are quite a number of them there.

One windy evening in the month of November, an old man wearing shabby clothes, and pushing a dilapidated piano wagon with a small drum and cymbals attached, turned the corner of Dupont and Sacramento streets at about half past nine o'clock.

Following close at his side was a young girl dressed in native Italian costume, carrying a tambourine.

Yung Moy Hip's big Chinese restaurant was the place in front of which they stopped.

The front of the building was gay with Chinese flags, and the evening being unusually warm, as it often is in Frisco at this season, the windows, which reached to the floor of a large overhanging balcony, were open, and strains of wild Chinese music issued forth; the squeak of the two-stringed fiddle and twang of the moon banjo mingling with the crashing of cymbals and the banging of a cracked bass drum.

This was true Chinese music, and was suited to the place.

It seemed strange then that the organ-grinder should halt here and begin droning out a ragtime tune.

When the forte parts of the chorus came the drum beat and the crash of cymbals rivaled Yung Moy Hip's band upstairs, while to still further attract the attention of the crowd, it would seem, the young girl, producing a tambourine, began beating it vigorously, from time to time tossing it in the air, catching it in one finger as it fell, when it was twirled and beaten all in true ragtime to fit the swing of the chorus of the music.

It was truly remarkable to watch the result of this strange innovation into Chinatown.

Not a man even looked at them.

Chinamen by hundreds, with their hands buried in their sleeves, went shuffling past.

A few women occasionally stopped to view the tambourine as it flew skyward, but that was all.

"An' phwat are yez doin' here with your hand-organ?" asked a policeman, stopping in front of the aged music grinder.

"Don't yous know that the haythen Chinks has no use for Christian music? Yous had better be moving on!"

"No, mister," replied the old man, in broken English. "Me gotta de permit. Looka here."

He produced a paper and handed it to the policeman.

It was a peremptory order from the chief of police to allow Signor J. Bradio to play his organ in any part of Chinatown.

"Humph!" said the policeman, handing back the paper, "for a ginny you seem to have a mighty big pull."

Then the policeman moved on, and so did the music.

In front of the building, down by the corner of Jackson Street, in which Low Toy's opium joint lies hidden, it stopped again, and began its performance there.

Still the same result.

Aside from the slumming parties and a few Chinawomen nobody paid the slightest attention to them.

Signor Bradio ground away industriously, and the young girl beat, twisted, and tossed the tambourine, but not one cent came their way, and the strangest part of it was that the tambourine player made no effort to collect.

The policeman was right.

The organ grinder had a big pull.

That this pair were not what they seemed goes without saying.

In short, they were detectives, the famous Bradys, the best known and most skilful of their class.

"You may quit punching that tambourine for a few minutes, Harry," whispered Old King Brady, as he changed the stop for a march and two step. "Upon my word, my head is fairly splitting with the noise you make. The Chinese orchestra in the Jackson Street theater isn't in it with us."

"For this relief much thanks, Governor," was the low response. "Still, I am willing to do my part. I'll sing if you wish."

"For heaven sake, don't! You know very well that I don't know one note from another. The clatter of this infernal organ is almost driving me wild."

"I was thinking how rich we would grow if we depended upon this sort of thing for a living," remarked Harry. "A great many deluded people have the idea that organ grinders all own rows of houses and are rolling in wealth, but I think that must be a mistake."

"A terrible mistake if they ply their trade in Chinatown, that's certain. Strange he does not come."

"I'm beginning to think we may have been deceived."

"It is possible, of course, but I hardly think so. We have traced him all the way from New York. We know he has been exceedingly busy about town all day. It can be due to nothing else than the fact that a shipment of opium has been landed. He will surely try to bring it to his holdout to-night. You know our orders. It is the entire gang we want, and we are on no account to arrest this man alone."

"I know; but he has kept most beautifully away from Chinatown all day."

"Which makes it all the more certain that he will visit it to-night; but how he will come is a question I am

unable to answer. Now we will move up in front of Hip's again, and you may once more tackle that beautiful tambourine."

Another half hour of torture for Old King Brady followed.

Suddenly Young King Brady, whose eyes were everywhere as he turned this way and that with his tambourine, laid a hand on the arm of his chief.

"Coming," he whispered. "Express wagon. Keep your eye peeled."

The Bradys were in the direct employ of the United States Secret Service Bureau.

Word had reached the bureau that opium smuggling on an extensive scale was being carried on out on the Pacific coast, and for some reason a man named J. J. Cammeyer was suspected.

This person was a New Yorker who spent much of his time in Chinatown, making frequent trips to California.

All the Bradys knew about him was that he was suspected. Why, they had not been informed, nor did they know why the case had suddenly been taken out of the hands of detective Baldwin J. Sly, an employee of the Secret Service Bureau, who had been working on it for some time.

All they knew was contained in a letter from Washington, which gave them Cammeyer's address, and ordered them to shadow the man, find out his associates and his methods; but upon no account to arrest him unless they were certain that they could take his associates with him, and break up the entire gang.

That their movements from the first moment they spotted their man had been closely watched the Bradys had reason to know.

While shadowing Cammeyer that day through the streets of San Francisco they well knew that they had been shadowed themselves, hence Old King Brady deemed it best to pull off from the trail and start in again in the manner described.

Receiving the warning of his pupil and partner Old King Brady slowly turned and looked up Dupont Street.

A small express wagon was coming toward them, driven at a rapid rate by a large man who was roughly dressed.

"Cammeyer in disguise, and not a very good one, either," he whispered. "Our time has come at last."

But Old King Brady was entirely mistaken.

Sharp eyes were watching them; his disguise had also been penetrated.

Suddenly someone in the moving crowd of Celestials called out in a loud voice:

"Beware of the handorgan man!"

"Confound it!" muttered Young King Brady, "our fat is all in the fire now."

It was so, but the suspected opium smuggler was to find his fat in the fire, too.

He gave a violent start, reined in his horse, and began to turn.

This he did so clumsily that one hind wheel of the wagon went up on the curb.

The mischief was done in an instant.

The wagon was but a light affair, and it was overturned, dumping a large, oblong case upon the sidewalk. It fell heavily and split apart.

At the same moment the horse started on the run.

But the man who drove the wagon and who had been thrown out as well as the case, did not make the slightest effort to stop the horse.

Instead of that, he darted off among the crowd of Chinamen, leaving the frightened animal to follow his own sweet will.

"Grind the organ, Harry," said Old King Brady, and he instantly joined the crowd of Chinamen around the fallen case.

The policeman who had accosted him was promptly on the scene.

"Begorra, an' it's a brass monkey," he exclaimed, kicking the case apart.

And so it was!

What Old King Brady saw was a cleverly constructed image of a monkey, almost as big as himself, made of sheet brass.

Possibly if he had seen it before it came out of the box he might have supposed it to be all of one piece, but seen now as the policeman bent over it the brass monkey lay in two pieces.

The image was hollow, and inside was snugly packed numerous little packages done up in canvas.

"Opium," thought Old King Brady.

He tapped the policeman on the shoulder, whispered a few words in his ear, and showed his detective's shield with one quick movement of the lapel of his coat.

"Is that so," said the policeman in a low voice. "Smuggled hop, eh?"

"That's it," said the detective. "I want one of these packages, officer. You take charge of the rest."

A few minutes later and the Bradys went out of business as far as the handorgan was concerned.

"We have been betrayed by someone," remarked Harry as they trundled the organ down Jackson Street to return it to its owner.

"We started to trap a man and instead we caught a monkey," the old detective dryly replied.

"Ah," said Young King Brady, "but it was a brass one. I'd like to break it over the head of that fellow who shouted 'Look out for the hand-organ man!'"

CHAPTER II.

A DECOY LETTER.

Having delivered the organ to the Italian gentleman from whom it had been hired and resumed their usual

dress, the Bradys started up Montgomery street toward the Lick House, where they were staying.

"Governor, this is a serious business," remarked Young King Brady. "Who can that man be who gave us away?"

"It isn't much use to speculate about it," replied Old King Brady. "I am satisfied that we have been watched from the start."

"No doubt we were seen to go into the house of the Italian."

"Of course."

"Unless we can put a stop to this business we shall never make any headway."

"That is an absolute certainty. We shall have to resort to desperate measures. I really feel quite ashamed of myself. It is not often we are queered in this way."

"I should say not. But we spoiled one shipment of opium for them, just the same."

"Yes, and the loss will only make them more vicious. The next attempt will be to trap us."

"What do you intend to do?"

"To take the bull by the horns."

"That sounds well, but explains nothing. What do you mean?"

"I mean to let them trap us, or rather try to. I suppose you would be for leaving the Lick House and going into lodgings."

"I confess I had thought of it."

"Harry, I shall do nothing of the sort. We will stay just where we are. To-morrow we will make the rounds of the hop joints, I in my old blue coat, my big white felt hat with its broad brim, and you in your usual dress. Everyone shall see us, everyone shall know the business of the Bradys. They expect us to make some deep move, but we won't, and take my word for it before many days have passed they will."

With this plan in mind the Bradys returned to the hotel, and went to bed.

First thing next morning Old King Brady went to the offices of the San Francisco Call, the Chronical, and the Evening Bulletin.

At each he told the story of the brass monkey, and of course it was published in the next issue of each paper.

During the day the detectives went from one hop joint to another, interviewed the proprietors, told about the brass monkey, and pretended to be very anxious to learn to whom it had belonged.

If they were shadowed during this trip Old King Brady did not discover it, and yet he felt satisfied that every movement they made was being closely watched.

Nothing came of it all that day or the next.

Young King Brady began to think that the plan of his chief was going to prove of no value after all.

But on the third day the morning mail brought the following letter, which proved fully that Old King Brady had made no mistake:

"San Francisco, Nov. —, —.

"To Old King Brady, the Detective:

"You are after the Opium Smugglers; you hope to catch them. I am one of the gang, but I have soured on them, and I can tell you a way; but don't go disguised as you did the night you played the piano organ in Chinatown, for it is useless to attempt to deceive these men, who are a sharper gang than you ever had to deal with yet, notwithstanding all the experience you have had.

"To-night they sail for a certain island down the coast, where a big shipment of opium is to be landed. They are all to meet at a certain place, which I shall presently name, and it has been arranged that they come ten minutes apart, so as not to attract attention.

"Cammeyer will be the first to arrive, the others following, six all told. Should not the Bradys be good for these one by one?

"From what I have been told of them I should say I guess yes."

"Of course, I can't tell you how to do business, and I am not going to try. I give you the tip, and you must act as you please.

"Go to North Beach, and pass the last bathing-house on the shore, and you will come to the point of rocks which juts out into the bay. Mebbe you know the place. Go around the rocks, and you will come to a flight of steps, which will lead you up on top of the cliff to the house Mike Flannery used to keep long ago, and which has been deserted this long time. That's the place where they are to meet. There is nobody living there. It will be entirely deserted until Cammeyer comes. It has been used by the gang this long time, and many a thousand dollars' worth of hop has been put away there.

"They leave by a boat, and a little steamer will pick them up down the bay just this side of the Golden Gate. If I knew the name of the island where they are going I would tell you, but I don't; sometimes it's one and sometimes another, but I think this time it will be one of the Santa Barbara islands. It's a big shipment coming anyhow—that much I know.

"I've been storekeeper for the gang, and until the other day Mike's old house was my hangout. They have used me rough, especially Cammeyer, who is a snoozer, and this is the time I hit back.

"You watch round there about midnight, and you will surely see them. You two ought to be able to down 'em one at a time, and that's the way they will come. All I can say is I hope you get 'em. I'm with you as soon as you do, for I have determined to knock their game.

"Squealer.

"P. S.—Good luck."

Old King Brady read all this aloud.

"That's a queer letter," Harry remarked.

"That's what it is," replied Old King Brady. "What do you think of it now?"

"I don't know what to think of it. It sounds straight and it doesn't."

"What points do you see in it to make you think it is straight?"

"Its great length for one thing. If they had been trying to spring a trap on us they might have done it with very many less words."

"The point is well put, and it is absolutely the only point in its favor."

"Then you consider the letter a fake?"

"Absolutely."

"A mere trick to catch us napping?"

"To kill us, Harry. These fellows expect to down us, surest thing, and to put us down so low that we can never rise again."

"You smoked 'em out, just as you thought. Now, what do you propose to do?"

"I'll let you know later. I haven't quite got through talking about this remarkable letter yet."

"Well?"

"While I call it a fake, I also believe it to be in part straight."

"What part?"

"That house probably exists; it is probably their secret holdout; it is also probable that there really is a big shipment of opium expected, just as is stated here."

"How do you figure that out?"

"Easiest thing. If it was not so they wouldn't bother their heads about us, but would just lie low."

"There's a whole lot in that, too, Governor. I had made up my mind that they were lying low. As you know, we haven't seen a thing of Cammeyer since the affair of the brass monkey, although I have been pretty active in trying to look him up."

"Exactly. Rely upon it, Harry, this is intended to be the finishing stroke."

"We might go there with a few policemen lying round loose somewhere to back us up."

"We might, of course, but I shall do nothing of the sort. This is our business, and we will handle it alone. Leave everything to me, and hold yourself in readiness to act. There is only one thing I want you to do."

"Which is what?"

"Get into some disguise that absolutely can't be seen through, and get down around that house. Learn all you can about it. When we meet again, which will be at supper, I shall have all my arrangements made."

Here the conversation ended.

The Bradys separated, to meet at the appointed time at the Lick House, and immediately went in to supper.

Not a word was said until the meal was served, and then while they ate they talked.

"Find out anything, Governor?" Harry asked.

"Not a thing. I didn't try," replied Old King Brady.

"I have been busy with other matters, and have my arrangements all made."

"Well?"

"Oh, we won't discuss my plan; it is enough to put it into action. By the way, your disguise was first-rate, my long-haired artist. I hope that beautiful watercolor will sell."

"Thunder! Were you down there on the shore?"

"Possibly you recollect the old fisherman who admired your sketch, which, by the way, was abominably bad."

"Governor, that wasn't really you?"

"Oh, yes, it was."

"I never suspected you."

"No? I didn't go inside the old house, though; but you did, through the window toward the Presidio. What did you learn?"

"Well, you were there all right, I see. The house has not been recently occupied, it seemed to me."

"I thought the same thing; that's why I didn't go in."

"But why didn't you let me know who you were?"

"Because I am certain that we were being watched, and I didn't propose to make a giveaway of it; besides, we were only together a few moments, you recollect."

"That's right."

"To cut it short, you did nothing but to get the lay of the land, Harry."

"That is all. There seemed to be nothing else to do."

"There was nothing else, and I didn't suppose there would be. I, however, found plenty to do, and it is all done now."

"Are you going to tell me what it is?"

"No. I'm going to let you find out for yourself."

"Oh, all right," replied Harry, for he knew Old King Brady too well to press him to reveal anything which he did not want to tell.

"We start about eleven o'clock," remarked the old detective, "and as there is no telling how long we may be on this trail I am going upstairs to get a little sleep."

"Very good. How about disguise?"

"There will be no disguising this trip. These fellows are a little too keen for that. We might as well go just as we are. You had better go and take a nap, too."

But Harry, not feeling sleepy, declined, and spent the evening wandering about town, returning to the Lick House promptly at eleven o'clock.

He found Old King Brady waiting for him.

"Well, where have you been?" he asked.

"Wandering about town, and I have been followed every step of the way."

"You don't mean it. Who by?"

"A woman, or at least my shadow was fixed up like one."

"Were you speaking to her?"

"Oh, no. She kept well behind me, sometimes on one side of the street, and sometimes on the other."

"How was she fixed up?"

"Dressed all in black, and wore a heavy veil. I didn't get a sight of her face once. She followed me to the door of the hotel."

"Confound it. We shall have to wait," said Old King Brady. "This is the first knockout, and I don't like it."

"Why must we wait?"

"To give her time to think we are going to pay no attention to this matter. Well, it can't be helped. Fortunately, I have provided for it. My man will wait for me."

"Oh, there is someone going with us?"

"Yes; just a helper, that's all. We will hold back until midnight, and then make a move."

Promptly at twelve o'clock the Bradys left the Lick House, and strolled down Montgomery Street.

They were not shadowed.

The woman in black, whom they had three times seen pass the hotel, had now disappeared.

"Good!" said Old King Brady, when it became certain that they were not being shadowed. "Now for business. I am curious to see where this night's work will end."

CHAPTER III.

DOUBLING WITH A DUMMY.

The Bradys strolled down Montgomery as far as Vallejo Street, and then started up the hill, passing by way of Leavenworth Street to the bluff above the North Beach, where they descended a long flight of wooden steps down to the water's edge.

Here there were many bathhouses with diving floats and boat landings.

Making their way out upon one of the latter, the old detective gave a peculiar whistle.

A man immediately rose up out of a small boat in which he had been lying.

"Is that you, boss?" he asked in a low voice.

"Here I am," said Old King Brady. "Did the box come?"

"Yes, sir. You are an hour late."

"Couldn't be helped. Pull us out into the bay a hundred yards or so, and then I will tell you what to do next."

The Bradys got into the boat, and had hard work to do it, large as it was, for a big box, as large as a coffin, lay along the slats.

"What in thunder have you got in that box, Governor?" Harry asked.

"Oh, that's me," chuckled Old King Brady.

"You? What can you mean?"

"Just wait a bit, Harry, and you will see."

"You are the greatest man. I believe you have been rigging up some blessed old dummy."

But Old King Brady merely laughed.

Reaching a position where they could not possibly be seen from the shore, Old King Brady ordered the man to stop rowing, and tackled the box.

He ripped it open with hammer and cold chisel, which

had been provided for the occasion, and then Harry saw that he was right.

It was a dummy, and a very clever one.

A long coat, an old pair of trousers, a big white hat, with a cheap penny mask for the face."

"Here's your jumping-jack," chuckled Old King Brady.

He pulled a string, and the right coat sleeve went up and dropped again. He pulled another, and the head turned first this way and then that.

"Where on earth did you catch it?" demanded Harry.

"Oh, it was made for me by a man I know," was the reply. "It's nothing but a few sticks jointed together, but it works all right, though. Now, my friend, you are willing to assume this risk? I want to give you a last chance to back out if you feel the least bit afraid."

"No," said the boatman. "I'm not backing out, boss. You told me you would give me a hundred dollars to take my chances of being killed in this deal. I'm taking 'em. I'm pretty low down, and a hundred dollars means a whole lot to me."

"Means a spree which will probably put you out of business, unless somebody swipes your money first night," said Old King Brady, bluntly. "You had better take care."

"Oh, you can put it that way if you want to. I mean to turn over a new leaf," replied the man.

"Very well," said Old King Brady. "I'll do my part. See that you do yours. Now pull up to the landing in front of Mike Flannery's old place, and stop. You know where it is?"

"Yes, I know," said the man. "It's a strange thing that you should have picked me out from all them other tramps in the lodging house."

"I picked you out because I thought you looked as though you knew something. But what do you mean?"

"Why, I used to be Mike's bartender in the palmy days of his place. I never dreamed you were going there."

"The deuce you did! Do you ever go there these days?"

"Never. I hain't been inside the place since Mike busted up five years ago, but I've got just a little curiosity, boss, and I would like to know what all this means?"

"That I can't explain. I can't tell you any more than I have already told, but this will talk for me. Here's the cash."

Old King Brady handed the man a roll of bills.

Strictly just in all his dealings, Old King Brady did not propose to have this man risk his life other than for a compensation which would be worth while.

"Thank you, boss," said the "bum." "You are white. I hope we come out of it all right, that's all."

"I think we shall," said Old King Brady confidently. "Move on."

The man took up his oars, and pulled down along the line of the shore until they came opposite the deserted house, where he turned in.

"Will I pull right up to the float?" he asked. "I dunno as it's there now, but there used to be one."

"It is there still. Pull up to it. Now, Harry, you want

to pick out a good position for yourself. All you have to do is to lie down in the bottom of the boat and keep out of the way."

"I can do that if you insist, but I am perfectly willing to take my chances, Governor," Harry replied.

"But I don't want you to take chances. It won't do any good."

"You didn't have to blow in a hundred on this man," whispered Harry. "I am game for his job."

To this Old King Brady only grunted, and the boat moved on.

Harry crouched down in the stern, and as they drew near the float Old King Brady did the same thing amidships.

The boat was an unusually large one, and had been selected for the express purpose of permitting them to thus conceal themselves.

Not a ray of light was to be seen from the old house on the bluff.

It seemed hard to believe that there was anyone lurking there.

"What if the letter should be a mere bluff?" Harry asked himself. "What if the Governor should have blown in his money for nothing, and is now just going to have his labor for his pains?"

But it was not so, as he was soon to learn.

The oars were muffled, and they approached the float without a sound.

As they drew near Old King Brady suddenly sat up in the boat, and producing a powerful dark lantern, flashed it ashore.

"For heaven's sake, what are you doing that for?" asked Harry. "Do you want to be killed?"

"I have to draw their fire, don't I?" retorted the detective. "Keep still."

"But I thought the dummy was to do that?"

"Harry, hush up, will you? You bother me! Ah! As I thought."

Suddenly the lantern slide was shut off, and Old King Brady's head bobbed down again.

"What did you see?" demanded Young King Brady, who could not be suppressed, it seemed. "I saw nothing at all."

"Better get the dust out of your eyes, then," snapped Old King Brady, who seemed to be unusually abrupt that night. "As sure as we are in this boat I saw a man open the door of that house and look out."

"You did?"

"I certainly did."

"Then I guess we are in for it."

"We are. Just keep quiet, and do nothing. It will be all over in a minute, and unless I miss my guess somebody gets fooled."

They were now close to the float.

"Stop," said Old King Brady, and the "bum" pulled in his oars.

Old King Brady seized the dummy and stood it erect in

the boat, the "bum" by his direction holding it in position.

Then, turning on his lantern again, Old King Brady held it up against the hand of the dummy, while with his other hand he began manipulating the strings, turning the head of the figure and raising the right arm while he moved the lantern to suit.

All in an instant a shot came whizzing toward the boat.

"I'm shot! I'm killed!" shouted Old King Brady, and over went the dummy, striking the water with a splash.

"Row around the bluff!" whispered the detective. "Be quick.

Bang!

"Gee!" gasped the bum. "I got the whiz of the bullet that time!"

"All over now," whispered Old King Brady as they passed around the turn of the bluff. "Now pull in under the shore, and we will wait for the next move."

"Governor, you're immense," said Young King Brady. "They think they have done you sure."

"That's what was intended," replied Old King Brady, "and I can only hope that it may turn out that way. Now keep your eye on those two lights."

The lights were well out in the bay, and wide apart.

Harry had noticed them all along, and had supposed that they belonged on crafts anchored off shore, as was indeed the case; but until now he had not supposed that they had anything to do with the detective's schemes.

"What are they, Governor?" he asked.

"Lights," replied Old King Brady, who seemed to be in an unusually uncommunicative mood.

In a moment a shot rang out, then another and another in quick succession.

"Gee! Who are them fellers trying to do now?" exclaimed the bum.

"It is only signals," said Old King Brady. "It has no reference to us."

They waited a long time now.

At last they heard the sound of oars, and a long boat pulled by two men could be seen making for the float in front of Flannery's old hotel.

"As I supposed," muttered Old King Brady.

"Now, Harry, I'll tell you all about it," he added. "The light nearest to the city is on a small steamer, which in my way of thing has never cleared at the custom house, and don't intend to. That steamer sails to-night, however, and in it go our friends, secure in the thought that they have put me out of business, and given you such a scare that you will drop the case and get back to New York first train."

"I have figured that all out," replied Harry, "but where do we come in?"

"We don't come in; we go out," replied Old King Brady, waving his hand toward the other light.

"What? You have chartered a steamer?"

"Even so."

"By jove, you must have had a busy day of it, Governor. Why didn't you let me do some of this work?"

"Oh, it was a case of too many cooks spoiling the broth," replied Old King Brady. "I just had to work alone. There they go."

The boat shot out from behind the bluff, now moving toward the upper light.

Besides the rowers there were now four persons in it. One of these was a woman, and another a Chinaman.

"There goes the working part of our gang," said Old King Brady, "and with all due respect to Uncle Sam's orders I shall proceed to bag them as soon as I can catch them with the goods on, irrespective of any of their confederates who may have been left ashore. Pull for the lower light, my man, as soon as they have made a little headway, and pull just as fast as you can. Perhaps you would like to have one of us lend you a hand at the oars?"

"No," said the "bum." "I can manage it. I've earned my hundred plunks dead easy, boss, and I am ready to do something for my money now."

They started now, and pulled out into the bay, coming alongside a trim little steam yacht at last.

Meanwhile the upper lights were on the move.

The opium smugglers had evidently been put aboard, and the steamer was now on its way toward the Golden Gate.

"Ahoy, there! Ahoy, on board the Loretta!" shouted Old King Brady.

A man with a lantern immediately came to the rail.

"Aye, aye, sir!" he called. "We are all ready."

"Let down your ladder. We are coming aboard," said Old King Brady. "Where's Captain Dickson?"

"Ladder is down, sir," was the reply. "Captain Dickson has turned in, but I'll have him on deck in a jiffy. They've started, sir; I suppose you know."

"Yes, we know," replied Old King Brady, making fast to the ladder.

"Good-night, my friend," he said to the "bum." "You have done your part well, and fully earned your money."

"And thanks to you, boss," returned the "bum." "Hope to strike you again one of these days."

The boat moved off into the darkness as soon as the Bradys had gained the deck of the yacht.

With a dummy Old King Brady had doubled on his men.

CHAPTER IV.

ON BOARD THE YACHT.

A stout man with a fiery red face came bustling up to the Bradys almost as soon as they gained the deck.

It was Captain Dickson, owner and commander of the steam yacht Loretta, a craft which had formerly been the property of a big gold king, but now used for anyone who would hire.

"So you have come, Mr. Brady," he said bluffly. "How did you make out?"

"There they go," replied Old King Brady, pointing to the moving lights, which had now passed the yacht, and were speeding rapidly toward the Golden Gate.

"I thought as much," said the captain. "I was lying down in my stateroom, trying to get a little rest before starting in on this cruise, but I was not asleep when I heard those shot. I said to myself: 'That's Old King Brady getting in his fine work.' I was right, so it seems."

"On the contrary, captain, you were wrong," replied the detective, "for the fact of the matter is I never fired a shot. Allow me to introduce my partner, Young King Brady. Harry, this is Captain Dickson, who kindly placed his yacht at our service for this trip."

"Do we start right up?" asked the captain, having shaken hands with Young King Brady.

"Give them a little further start," replied the detective. "I suppose there will be no difficulty in coming up with them after they get outside the Gate?"

"Well, you don't want to leave it too long," replied Captain Dickson. "If they take it into their heads to douse their lights once they are outside of the Gate, we might never find them."

"How about dowsing our lights and starting right along now?"

"Well, I can do that. It is against the law, though."

"Take the risk. I'll stand by you if there is a fine."

"It isn't that. The trouble is I am liable to lose my license. However, we are so near the Gate that I'll take chances. I want to make this thing a success at any cost."

"All right, cap. We will sit down here on deck and watch."

"Don't retire till I see you," said Captain Dickson. "I've got something I want to say."

"Something we won't like; I can read it in your face. Out with it now, captain. No use in keeping anything back."

"Well, then, you were shadowed."

"I thought as much."

"Of course, I can't be sure, but as soon as you had left I went ashore to order provisions for the cruise in the California market.

"I noticed a Chinaman hanging around the wharf, and it just occurred to me that he might be shadowing you. But then I thought there was nothing to it but my notion, don't you see, so I didn't do anything about it. When I came back I found that the Chink had been aboard and talking with my Chinese cook and waiter boy. Within ten minutes from the time the mate told me both of them came to me and threw up their jobs and demanded their money, so there was nothing for it but to let them go and hire new ones."

"It may have no connection with me at all," said Old King Brady.

"You think not?"

"I hardly think it has. Who did you get in their places?"

"Well, there's the point; within half an hour another Chink came along, applied for the cook's berth, and I gave it to him. A little later a young white boy appeared and wanted a waiter's job, so I hired him. I didn't think much about it at the time, but afterward it struck me as very strange."

"And both are on board now?"

"Yes."

"I guess you are right. We will have to look into this."

"I'll send 'em ashore if you wish, and we'll scratch along the best we can."

"No, no! Not on any account. If they really are in with this gang of smugglers they would only carry the news to their friends, and that would not help us a bit."

"All right. Just as you say. We will start right along, then."

Captain Dickson bustled about, giving orders, leaving the Bradys seated on the deck, where they conversed in low tones.

"They are right on to us, Governor," Harry remarked.

"Surest thing, I fancy. Too bad. It does seem as if we just couldn't give them the shake."

"Shall I take this waiter in hand?"

"Yes; first thing in the morning."

"And for to-night?"

"I will mount guard. You had better turn in and get your sleep. There is really nothing for you to do."

Soon afterward the yacht started without her lights.

Young King Brady remained on deck until they had passed through the Golden Gate.

When he went below, the craft which carried the supposed opium smugglers was steaming down the coast.

Harry retired to his stateroom, but not to sleep by any means.

The fact was, Young King Brady felt that so far he had done little or no work on this case.

But sometimes things shaped themselves that way.

Often almost the entire work of a case devolved upon Harry, Old King Brady doing nothing but to stand by and advise.

At other times conditions reversed themselves, and as in this instance, the work all seemed to devolve upon the elder man.

But Harry, a little dissatisfied that it should be so, had now determined to start in and work on his own account.

"What's the use of waiting till to-morrow," he said to himself. "Perhaps I can find out something to-night."

Removing his shoes and fastening some bits of thick felt to the soles and heels by means of a clever arrangement which he often found occasion to use, Young King Brady put them on again, and slipped on deck.

He had already located the companion-way which led to the fo'castle, and he now slipped down the stairs, determined to find the cook's galley.

"Like enough the new cook sleeps in a stateroom adjoin-

ing," he said to himself. "I may get a chance to see what sort of looking Chink he is."

Gliding noiselessly along the passage, Harry soon came to the galley.

The place was dark, but sure enough there was a door leading to a stateroom adjoining.

Harry had once seen a similar arrangement on another yacht, which suggested it in this case, and here was his supposition proved correct.

Through the keyhole of this door a ray of light streamed out, and Young King Brady could hear low voices inside.

"By jove, there is somebody in there with cookee," thought Young King Brady. "What can this mean?"

He kneeled beside the door, and clapped his eye to the keyhole.

A young Chinaman lay in a bunk hitting an opium pipe. Standing alongside was a white boy talking earnestly.

The face, which was partly turned toward Young King Brady, was beardless and very effeminate, but what gave the boy, who otherwise would have been decidedly handsome, a most peculiar appearance, was his hair.

This was brown, extraordinarily thick, and stood up in little curls all over his head.

"A wig," thought Harry. "By jove, this is pretty good. Still it's well put on. I must hear what they are saying; if it is only in English I may find out something now."

He clapped his ear to the keyhole.

"I tell you, Foy, I won't do it," the boy was saying emphatically. "I can stand for anything but murder in this business. That's too much."

"Murder! What murder you do?" retorted the Chinaman. "I puttee hop in cloffee—no you."

"Yes, but you want me to serve it, and that's all the same. Besides, the captain will surely get on to it. Where will we land then?" replied the boy.

"Ah, you too muchee 'flaid. You do it, me makee you. No do it me makee trouble, you know. Me tellee who you are. Den what? Me say me no know you, you tellee on me."

"Nonsense! That's as broad as it is long. But I don't want trouble with you, Foy, and I don't want to do this thing; and what is more, I won't."

"You won't?"

"No, I won't!"

"Come here!"

"What do you want?"

"Me whisper someting in you ear."

"I don't believe you have anything to tell me. I won't come."

"Oh, yes me have. Come on."

The boy moved toward the bunk.

As he came within reach the Chinaman, suddenly rising, dealt him a stunning blow between the eyes, which sent him to the floor with a thud.

"Now me killee you for fair!" cried Foy, drawing a long knife and standing over him.

"Yes, but you won't!" cried Young King Brady, bursting through the door.

Quick as lightning he struck the knife from the Chinaman's hand, and catching him by the throat, crowded him back against the bunk.

CHAPTER V.

"ED."

"Go! Go quick!" panted Young King Brady. "Go while I hold him!"

"Don't hurt him," pleaded the boy, who had scrambled to his feet.

Fact was, Harry was pinching the cook's throat until he was black in the face.

The boy glided out of the door, his face as white as death.

Harry banged the Chinaman's head against the bunk two or three times, and then, giving him a fling with a force which sent him to the floor, he kicked him and withdrew.

Not a word did Foy Jin utter once he found himself in Harry's strong hands.

Young King Brady shut the door and hurried along the passage to the foot of the companionway.

The boy stood there wiping his eyes.

"You didn't kill him?" he asked.

"No; but he would have killed you, all right."

"Yes, he would. You saved my life. I almost wish you hadn't, though."

"Why do you say that?"

"Because I want to die."

"That's nonsense. Why should a boy like you want to die?"

A low moan was the only answer.

"Now, see here," said Harry, laying his hand on the boy's shoulder, "what you want to do is to brace up. You are mixed up with that Chink some way, but you want to pull out of it. Chinks and white folks don't mix well. Give him the shake."

"I can't," said the boy. "You don't know all, or you wouldn't say that."

"I know more than you think I do. For one thing, I know that you know who I am."

The boy stared dumbly.

"I know that you and that Chink were put on board this yacht to kill me and my partner in case we came here. I know more still."

"You were listening at the door?" demanded the boy, in a low, frightened way.

"I was. I heard your refusal to serve us coffee into which the cook was to put opium."

"You did?"

"I did."

"Don't report him to the captain."

"I must. Our lives are in danger. Of course I can't stand for that."

"He will kill me before morning."

"He won't get the chance. Where do you sleep?"

"There was no room forward. I have to go back there and sleep in the bunk above his."

"You don't have to do anything of the sort. You come with me."

"Oh, no, no, no! I can't! I mustn't!"

"You can, you must, and you will."

"But what are you going to do with me?"

"I am going to let you sleep in my stateroom. I'm going to lock you in."

"No, no! I can't."

"You will have the place to yourself if you are bashful. I shall sleep in the stateroom with my partner to-night."

"Please put me in your stateroom, then," said the boy, suddenly changing his tone.

And that was what Young King Brady did.

Having locked the door, he hurried on deck.

Old King Brady was lying back in a steamer chair, calmly smoking and watching the stars.

"Hello, Harry. Why in thunder don't you go to bed?" he exclaimed. "I thought you were asleep long ago."

"No; I've been working."

"What at?"

"Life saving."

"I don't catch on. Whose life have you been saving, may I ask?"

"Yours, for one; mine for another; and that of our new waiter boy, whose name I don't know, for a third."

"Heavens! You are doing a wholesale business, it seems."

"Well, I must admit that business has been rather lively," replied Harry, drawing up a chair. "I supposed you would want to know all about it, so I came up here to tell you—look! Look! A sea-serpent, by gracious!"

Some huge thing, long, black, and round, rose upon the waves.

Old King Brady laughed.

"You have a whole lot to learn about the Pacific Ocean," he said. "That's nothing but a piece of kelp."

"Kelp?"

"Yes."

"What's that?"

"Giant seaweed. It grows here in the Pacific. I've seen pieces fifty feet long, and as big round as your body. But not knowing, I don't wonder you took it for a sea serpent. It looks remarkably like one, I must admit. But go on with your story, please."

Harry has a habit of cutting things short, and his story took but a few minutes in the telling.

"Well, I'm not surprised," replied Old King Brady.

"These people seem to have provided for everything," said Harry. "In case we didn't answer the letter, but laid

for them to follow their steamer, they were bound to be all prepared."

"Not the least doubt of it. Of course, my trick with the dummy has nothing to do with this. If Cammeyer is really in that steamer, I flatter myself that he believes me dead."

"I agree with you. But what shall we do about the cook?"

"If it was anything but a case of poisoning I should say let him alone, but being poison, I say irons. I'll speak to the captain about it in a minute. What is that boy's name?"

"I didn't ask him."

"Find out. Make a whole lot of him. Perhaps you can get something out of him. Hadn't you better sleep in the stateroom with him to-night?"

"He didn't seem to want me to."

"Very well; let him alone, then. Ah, here comes Captain Dickson. Oh, captain, that beautiful cook of yours intends to poison us all, it seems."

"What!" cried Captain Dickson. "Who says so? What do you mean?"

Old King Brady told.

"I'll fix him," said the captain. "We'll clap him in irons."

"Want my help?" asked Old King Brady.

"No, no! I'm good for twenty like him. I'll shoot him if he puts up a fight."

Old King Brady, leaning back in the steamer chair, gave Harry a cigar.

"I suppose it is of no use to pump the Chink?" Young King Brady remarked.

"Not the slightest. In all my experience I never yet succeeded in getting anything out of a Chink which he did not want to tell. I propose to put in my time smoking and watching the stars," replied the old detective.

In a few minutes Captain Dickson came along and reported the cook in irons.

"He denies the whole business," he remarked. "I could get nothing out of him at all."

"Don't worry about that, captain. Tell us who is going to cook," Old King Brady replied.

"Oh," said the captain, "there is one of the deck hands who is a fairly good cook. I guess we will get along well enough. That steamer is making good time, Mr. Brady."

"Yes, but we are holding our own, and all I want to do is to keep her in sight. By the way, I have not had a chance to ask her name yet. I suppose you know what it is."

"The Silver Star."

"Run to any particular place?"

"I couldn't tell you. I have seen her about the bay often enough, but I never heard who she belonged to or what her business was."

"Well, we shall know more about her before we get through. I think I shall sleep right here on deck, captain, the night is so warm."

"Look out you don't get cold and die, Mr. Brady.

"Bless your heart, man, I haven't got time to die," replied the detective, and the captain moved away.

After some further talk Harry concluded to turn in.

Before going to Old King Brady's stateroom for that purpose he unlocked the door of his own and looked in.

The waiter boy, who had not removed any of his clothes, lay wide awake in the bunk.

"Why don't you go to sleep, young fellow?" Harry asked.

"Can't," was the reply. "It isn't a bit of use to try."

"Did you ever hit the pipe?"

"Yes, sir."

"I thought so. That's what makes you so nervous. Want a smoke now?"

"If I only could; but that wouldn't do here in the cabin."

"You don't have to stay in the cabin. Foy Jin has been put in irons by Captain Dickson. It is perfectly safe for you to go to the little room off the kitchen and smoke if you wish."

"I'll do it," said the boy, springing up eagerly.

"Hold on. What's your name?"

"Ed."

"Ed what?"

"Oh, never mind, sir. I can't tell you my true name."

"All right, Ed. Keep your own counsel. And, by the way, my boy, if you have anything else you want to tell me I'll promise you absolute protection against the gang of smugglers who sent you on board this yacht."

Ed made no answer whatever, but stood leaning against the berths, looking straight ahead.

"Mind you," continued Young King Brady, "I'm not going to force you to tell; unless you do it of your own accord you needn't do it at all."

"I don't know what you are talking about," said Ed, in a low voice. "I never heard of any such gang."

"Very well."

"I came here because I wanted to get a job. I wasn't sent by anybody."

"Very well."

"That's true."

"Just as you say."

"You don't believe me."

"I neither believe you nor disbelieve you. I don't know anything about it, but I have my own ideas about you."

"What ideas?" asked Ed, looking up with sudden interest.

"When you get ready to tell me what I want to know I'll return the compliment by telling what you want to know. Until then I am going to keep my ideas to myself."

"I think I'll take that smoke now, if you are willing."

"Go on. You are perfectly safe in there now, as far as I know anything about the workings of this yacht."

Ed left the stateroom, and Young King Brady then lay down in the bunk, thinking it not worth while to go to the other stateroom under the circumstances.

He soon fell asleep, but, as it seemed to him, was awake

again in a few minutes, although as he afterward learned, fully two hours had elapsed.

A change of weather had come.

One of those sudden rainless storms which sometimes break upon the California coast had broken, and the yacht was tumbling about in great shape.

Fortunately for Young King Brady, seasickness was something he never had occasion to deal with, but the old detective was occasionally so afflicted for a short time, and Harry now concluded that he had better look him up.

He went first to the stateroom, and knocked on the door.

There was no answer. Old King Brady was not there, and Harry found him on deck, looking rather white.

"When did this begin?" he asked.

"About half an hour ago," replied Old King Brady. "Did you ever see such a wind?"

"Never! Nor such waves either, and not a cloud in the sky."

"I've seen this sort of thing before. It's a bad job for us, Harry. This may keep up for two or three days."

"Where is the Silver Star?"

Old King Brady pointed ahead.

"You can catch a glimpse of her lights if you watch closely," he said, "but she is under the waves half the time."

"The yacht seems to be behaving well."

"Fine. Captain Dickson knows his business."

"How about yourself?"

"Well, young man, I hope I know my business. What do you mean?"

"I don't mean that, Governor, and you ought to know it. I was merely inquiring how you felt."

"I feel squeamish."

"Better turn in."

"I was just thinking the same thing myself. Hello! Isn't that your waiter boy?"

"By Jove, it is. He must be taken seasick. He's been hitting the pipe."

"Get over to him, Harry. Be quick! Something tells me that he means mischief."

Young King Brady gave a jump toward the stern, over which an electric light now burned.

Ed had already reached the rail.

As Harry had his felt soles on he did not hear him coming.

Young King Brady was close beside him, when suddenly placing both hands on the rail, he started to leap overboard into the heaving waves.

"Hold on, there!" shouted Harry.

He caught him by the collar with one hand and, for want of a better place to grab him, by the curly hair with the other.

The collar held, and Young King Brady pulled him back to the deck, but the hair came off in his hands, and down tumbled a mass of black hair which reached almost to the deck.

"Let me go! Let me die!" screamed Ed, struggling.
 "Hold her, Harry!" called Old King Brady. "I knew it! It's a girl in disguise!"

CHAPTER VI.

MYRA'S CONFESSION.

Morning broke upon the Pacific, and brought no change. That fearful northwest wind, sweeping down the coast, was sending the Loretta along at tremendous speed.

Well in the distance the Silver Star could still be seen, tossing about.

Unless there came a change the two crafts bid fair to be off the Santa Barbara islands some time during the succeeding night.

This served Old King Brady's purpose well enough if the yacht was only able to weather the storm.

All sense of discomfort had left the old detective by this time, and he was able to eat as substantial a breakfast as Harry himself.

Back against the deckhouse they now stood, watching the gale, hardly daring to move, for the danger of being washed overboard was certainly great.

"A glorious sight, Governor," remarked Young King Brady, and the remark had to be shouted, for the wind almost swept his words away.

"Yes," replied the detective. "Look at those hills! What a place for a sheep ranch, and yet I don't see a living thing upon them."

The Loretta was now off San Luis Obispo.

Here the mountains rise directly from the water's edge to a height of several thousand feet.

This is the famous coast range.

Except for a few live oaks in the valleys, these mountains are treeless, and as the rainy season had set in some weeks before they were covered with grass, without a rock to break the green expanse.

In this respect these mountains may be considered as remarkable as any in the world.

Looking off on the ocean, the whitecaps were chasing each other over the whole immense expanse as far as the eye could reach.

Directly in the wake of the yacht, and evidently following it, was a school of porpoises, chasing each other, now upon the surface, now diving, now rising, now tumbling, their black shiny sides glistening in the sun.

"I wish we were going all the way down to Panama," remarked Harry. "I like this sort of thing. There is no danger, I suppose."

"I don't know about that," replied Old King Brady. "If we were thrown on the coast, or blown to pieces by the wind it wouldn't be the first time that such a thing had occurred by a good deal. By the way, have you interviewed your young lady since breakfast?"

"Yes. Just came down from the stateroom now."

"Well?"

"I could get nothing out of her. She is deep in the dope."

"The Chink says she is his wife," remarked Old King Brady. "He says she was his school teacher, and he married her, poor thing."

"It's a shame," said Harry. "She looks to be well educated."

"She is, and came from some respectable family, no doubt. Yes, it is a shame. Such marriages ought not to be allowed."

"I do believe she is fond of him, however. It was all I could do to rouse her up, and when I finally got her so she could talk, the first thing she asked me was how Foy Jin was."

"That's the woman of it. I wish I could devise some way to make her tell what she knows."

"You will find it difficult, I'm afraid, Governor."

"I think it could be done in time, but the deuce of it is we want to know now."

"How about your Chink? Are you making any more headway with him than I am with my girl?"

"Not a bit, and never will. No, no, Harry. I'm wasting no time setting my hopes on the Chink, but a little scheme to make your girl talk is floating through my brain."

"Out with it, Governor."

"How is she now? Asleep or awake?"

"Asleep. She hit another pipe while I was there with her."

"I see. Go again in about an hour and wake her up. Tell her you see a great change in her appearance, and that you think she is liable to die if you don't get a doctor for her at once."

"But she says she wants to die."

"I know; but understand it is one thing to screw up one's courage to jump overboard while under the influence of opium and another to be told by a white-headed old doctor that you are about to croak."

"But——"

"No buts. Do as I tell you."

"Oh, I didn't understand the idea had gone that far in your mind," replied Harry. "Well, consider it done."

"Settled," said Old King Brady. "Now, I think I will lie down awhile. By the way, you will find the old white-haired doctor in my stateroom when he is wanted."

"I thought so," replied Young King Brady, dryly. "Good-by, Doc."

Old King Brady disappeared in the cabin.

He had already told Captain Dickson that he intended to appear in disguise.

He did not consider it necessary to give Harry any instruction as to what course he should take to explain to the girl how it happened that a stranger should suddenly appear on board, nor was it necessary, for the detectives worked together in perfect harmony, and each knew the other's way of doing business so well that a mere suggestion was always enough.

In about an hour Harry entered the stateroom assigned to himself, in which the girl had been placed after her attempt at suicide.

Not a word relating to herself would she utter at the time of the rescue, nor had she since, not even being willing to tell her name.

Now she lay in a dazed condition, with the opium layout beside her.

Harry saw that the last pill had been smoked up, and he made up his mind that as far as he was concerned the wretched girl should get no more of the poisonous stuff.

"Ed! Ed! Wake up, Ed!" he called, shaking the girl and using the only name he knew her by.

It was hard work at first, but presently she opened her eyes.

"That you, Foy?" she asked drowsily. "Oh, don't kill me, Foy!"

"It isn't Foy; it is I," replied Harry. "Don't you see?"

"Oh! The detective. Oh, dear! I wish I hadn't come!"

"I daresay you do," replied Harry. "By the way, you are looking very badly about the face."

"What do you mean? What's the matter with my face?"

"I think you have smoked a pill too much, Ed. You look as if you were going to die."

"I want to die."

"I know, but you don't want to be doped to death."

"Take me to Foy. I feel very bad. Let me see him before I die."

"Don't you think you had better see a doctor?"

"How can I see a doctor?"

"Why, there is one on board the yacht. Didn't you know?"

"No."

"It's a fact. Dr. Dingwell. He came on board before you did, perhaps."

"Bring him, then," gasped the girl. "You are right. I have changed my mind. I don't want to die."

"I'll bring him right away," was the reply, and Harry departed, quickly returning with Old King Brady, wearing a white wig and glasses, an altogether different looking man from anyone the girl had seen on board the yacht.

"So this is the young woman who puts on male attire," said the supposed doctor. "Leave me alone with her, please, Mr. Brady. I can see by her face that she is a very sick girl."

Harry departed.

He did not quite close the stateroom door, however.

By previous arrangement he took up his place as a listener outside.

Old King Brady made a pretended examination of his patient.

"Yes, you are in great danger," he said gravely. "You have smoked so much opium that it has affected your heart. It is well that you called me, daughter."

"Can you save me, doctor?" moaned the girl.

"I can. I can give you medicine which will surely save you, but only on one condition will I do so. This may seem hard to you, but you may as well understand the situation first as last."

"What is the condition? That I leave my Chinese husband? I have already made up my mind to do that. Before I could bring myself to do it I wanted to die, but now I am willing, and I want to live."

"I didn't refer to that," said Old King Brady, "although you have come to a very wise conclusion in my way of thinking. What I referred to was something different altogether."

"Do tell me what it is, doctor. We are losing time."

"I want your confession, daughter. I am working in the interest of these detectives. I want you to tell me all you know about the opium smuggling plot."

"Ed" closed her eyes wearily.

"Oh, I can't do that," she said.

"You must if you want help from me."

"It is very little, doctor."

"Little or much, I want it. Why do you refuse?"

"Ed" was silent.

"Is it because you still love your Chinese husband? That you secretly mean to make friends with him again?" Old King Brady asked.

"He will be arrested if I tell."

"There! I knew it. Well, it is a woman's way. Is there anyone else in this gang of smugglers whom you are trying to shield?"

"No one else."

"Suppose I was to tell you that Old King Brady has authorized me to promise you that Foy shall not be interfered with providing you tell. Will that satisfy you?"

"Yes. If I can have that promise I am satisfied."

"And you will tell?"

"Yes."

"Very well. I shall now dissolve this powder in half a tumbler of water; you are to drink it, and it will save your life."

The powder was nothing but a little sugar, but white hair always carries confidence.

"Ed" drank the mixture, and declared that she felt better.

"Now, daughter, speak freely," said Old King Brady, sitting down beside the bunk.

"There is almost nothing that I can tell you," replied the girl.

"You can tell me your name, for one thing."

"It was Myra Barnes before I married Foy."

"And your parents?"

"Are both dead. I am the daughter of the Rev. William Barnes, who preached in the Baptist church in Suison."

"You shall be restored to your friends, if you wish."

"I have none."

"Well, we will try and help you in some other way, then. Now for this confession. Don't hold back."

"But what can I tell? My husband belongs to a gang who smuggle opium. They have their headquarters at Yung Moy Hip's restaurant on Dupont Street. They are expecting a big shipment in by some vessel, and have gone down the coast in the steamer Silver Star to meet the ship. That is all I know."

"Let me ask you a few questions, and perhaps that will help matters out."

"I will answer any question I can," replied the girl wearily, "but I wish you would let me hit another pipe."

"It would be sure death after the medicine I have given you."

"And can I never hit the pipe again?" cried "Ed," looking greatly alarmed.

"How long have you been an opium-smoker?"

"It is less than a year."

"Well, you never can with safety."

"If she has been so short a time at it she can stand the strain, and I might as well frighten her into a cure," the detective thought.

"I shall die of the yen-yen" (after effects of opium), the girl exclaimed.

"No, you won't, for I am going to give you some pills to cure the yen-yen," said Old King Brady. "But first for these questions. Is Yung Moy Hip in this band of smugglers?"

"I believe he is. I cannot tell you. I speak only a few words of Chinese, and can't understand them at all when they talk."

"Do you know a man named Cammeyer?"

"Oh, yes. He travels for the gang, and sells the hop in different cities. It does not all go to the Chinks, doctor. He sells a great deal to druggists, and makes lots of money for himself and the gang."

"Who is the head of the gang?"

"I don't know."

"What others do you know besides Cammeyer?"

"There is Maggie Reed."

"Who is Maggie Reed?"

"She is Jock High's wife."

"Did she and her husband go down on the Silver Star?"

"Yes."

"Who else do you know?"

"I don't know any one else. There were always Chinks coming and going at Yung Moy Hip's when I went there with Foy. I don't know their names, nor what they are saying when they talk."

"Do you know the name of the ship on which the opium is expected?"

"Yes. It is the James Marshall."

"And the name of the island where the cargo is to be landed?"

"It is one of the Santa Barbara islands. San Miguel, I think."

"You are not sure?"

"No; I heard them talk of Santa Cruz, and San Miguel both. I don't know which it is."

"And is that all?"

"Everything I can think of, doctor."

"Do you usually go about with Foy disguised as a boy?"

"Oh, no. I only put on these clothes when he ordered me to come to this yacht and ask for a waiter's job."

"I see. And Foy really meant to poison the Bradys?"

"Yes. I did not know it at the time I engaged here as waiter. You won't let them hurt him, doctor?"

"You have my promise, and you shall have Old King Brady's. By your refusal to act you no doubt saved his life, and you will not find him ungrateful. Well, I will let you rest now for half an hour, then I will give you a powder which will put you right. By to-morrow you will hardly know yourself."

"I hope so," replied the girl wearily, and with this Old King Brady left the stateroom.

"Well," said Harry, withdrawing to another part of the cabin, "it didn't amount to much, after all."

"Two points are valuable; yes, three," replied Old King Brady. "We know that it is on the Santa Barbara islands that our work lies; we know the name of the ship which carries the opium, and we know that Yung Moy Hip's restaurant is the meeting-place of the gang. We are getting ahead slowly, Harry, but this is a decided step in advance."

CHAPTER VII.

THE BRADYS IN A BOAT.

Night settled down over the Loretta, and the storm still raged.

Inwardly Old King Brady was raging, too, for they had been distanced by the Silver Star.

It was now several hours since she disappeared.

When the Bradys turned in at ten o'clock Captain Dickson assured them that he could make the island of San Miguel by two o'clock in the morning, and promised to call them when it came in sight.

But as it turned out the Bradys needed no calling.

At a little after midnight the wind suddenly dropped.

Half an hour later the Loretta was enveloped in a dense fog, which came creeping up the coast.

Captain Dickson did not disturb the detectives.

He came to half speed, and steering by compass, kept on his way, whistling occasionally.

It was one of these blasts which awoke Old King Brady.

"Harry, are you asleep?" he called.

"I guess I was," came the reply from the upper berth.

"I woke up, though, just as soon as you spoke. What's wrong?"

"Didn't you hear the whistle?"

"No."

"It blew. We must have struck a fog. I think I shall get up and go on deck."

"Heavens! We have struck something else, then?" cried Young King Brady, springing out of his berth.

A terrific shock had shaken the Loretta from stem to stern.

Scarcely uttering a word to each other, the Bradys dressed as rapidly as possible, and hurried on deck.

At first, it was impossible to tell what had happened.

Captain Dickson's hoarse voice giving orders in the emergency was among the things missing.

A mysterious silence prevailed.

A fog so dense that they could scarcely see each other enshrouded everything.

That the situation was very serious Old King Brady comprehended at a glance.

"This is a bad business, boy!" he said. "We are up against trouble of the worst kind."

"I believe you. Where's the captain and everybody else?" replied Harry looking around.

A man emerged from the fog as Harry spoke. It was Captain Dickson, with his head all cut and bleeding.

"On the rocks, Brady!" he gasped. "Three men knocked overboard by the shock. All is lost, I'm afraid!"

The engineer now appeared, also the man who acted as cook.

These two constituted all that remained of the crew.

"Man the boats, Mr. Fuller!" the captain shouted to the engineer. "I was knocked down and got a fearful crack on the head, but I'm not dead by any means. I'll look after the pumps. First thing is to know how things stand."

"We are sinking, all right, Governor," whispered Harry. "There's that girl."

"Get her," said Old King Brady.

Harry darted down into the cabin.

By the time he got Myra, who still wore her male attire, upon deck the worst was known.

The yacht had struck a sunken rock, and a large hole knocked through her bow.

She was sinking rapidly.

There was but one thing to do, and that was to promptly abandon her.

The boats were lowered at once.

It was arranged that Old King Brady and Harry should take charge of the smaller of the two, and that "Myra" should go with them.

Captain Dickson, Engineer Fuller, and the cook were to go in the other.

The captain offered to go with the detectives, but Old King Brady preferred to take charge on his own account.

The old detective possessed a good general knowledge of the California coast, and he decided that he had rather manage his own affairs.

Foy Jin was brought on deck, his irons removed, and made to enter the captain's boat.

The Chinaman was frightened out of his wits, and was meek enough now.

He begged to be allowed to go in the boat with his wife and Myra urged it, too, but to this Old King Brady would not listen.

"Girl," he said sternly, "this man tried to kill you. Don't forget that. Be done with this folly forever."

As they pushed off from the yacht, whose deck was now almost on a level with the water, the girl gave a scream.

"Oh, the doctor! The old doctor! We are leaving him behind!" she cried.

"Don't worry about him. He is here with you, daughter," said Old King Brady quietly.

"It was you, then?"

"Yes."

"I never guessed it! So many things have happened, I am all in a whirl. Oh, I wish death would come and relieve it all."

"Possibly you do," replied the detective grimly. "But we don't wish anything of the sort. Now just keep quiet, and we will save you if we can. We are all in the same boat in every sense of the word. We must take our chances just as they come."

There was little said for some time after that.

Old King Brady was doing the rowing, and Harry sat in the bow, keeping a sharp lookout ahead.

Not that this was of much use, however.

The fog was so dense that to see a foot beyond the bow of the boat was an impossibility.

"Strange we don't strike land of some sort," remarked Harry at last. "The rock the yacht ran upon must have been part of some ledge extending out from the shore."

"Exactly," replied Old King Brady. "Trouble is we are not going toward the shore."

"Heavens! You don't mean it! Hadn't we better turn?"

"That's what we are doing, turning round and round in a circle. I am doing my best to stop it; perhaps I shall succeed pretty soon."

The detective had scarcely spoken when the boom of a ship's gun rang out through the fog.

It was very close to the boat, and terribly startling.

"Heavens!" gasped Harry. "That sounds as if we might have had a close shave."

"There was no ball in the cannon," said Old King Brady.

"How do you know?" Harry asked.

"Because we would have heard it sing as it passed us."

"The deuce! Then we stood a chance of having our head knocked off."

"That's what the matter. Don't talk now; listen. We want to keep our eyes and ears open for what is coming next."

"Precious little good our eyes can do us now," muttered Harry, bound to have the last word.

Captain Dickson's boat, it should be mentioned, had been separated from them at the start.

Three or four times the captain gave them the hail, and it was answered.

Then, when Harry hailed the captain's boat a few moments later, no answer came.

Again and again they tried it, but, with the same result.

Since then the best part of an hour had elapsed.

Old King Brady had given up all hope of falling in with the boat when the gun sounded.

What could it mean?"

The old detective had already drawn his own conclusions.

The gun could not have been fired from the deck of a steamer, for there was no sound of the propeller, and Old King Brady knew that they must be quite near enough to hear it in the deathly stillness which reigned.

"It must be a ship," thought Old King Brady, "and I believe on my soul it is the opium ship and nothing else."

He lay back on his oars, feeling that it was of no use to pull until he knew more.

For fully ten minutes the Bradys remained in absolute silence.

Boom!

Suddenly the gun thundered again, and this time so near that they could feel the concussion of the air.

"Harry," whispered Old King Brady, "that's a ship, and that it is the James Marshall signalling for the smugglers I firmly believe."

The words were scarcely spoken when far in the distance an answering gun was heard.

"The Silver Star speaking to them, by gracious!" Young King Brady exclaimed.

"Hush! Not so loud!" whispered the detective. "Our voices may be heard. Ha! A puff of wind at last! That's what we want. If this infernal fog would only lift we should soon be a little wiser. There goes the gun again!"

This time it did not seem as if the sound was so near.

This confirmed Old King Brady's idea that they were drifting in a circle, and it gave him a clew to the situation, too.

Off the Santa Barbara islands there are many of these circular ocean currents, caused by the numerous sunken ledges which there abound.

That the boat was in one of them seemed certain.

"We are close to the islands, Harry," the detective remarked, and as he said it the answering signal was twice heard.

"That sounded louder than before," said Harry.

"Yes. We are drifting in a circle."

"How can that be?"

Old King Brady explained.

"I guess you are right. What are we to do?" Harry asked.

"Nothing for a little. We shall know more in a few minutes. The wind is certainly rising, and if it keeps on that will be the last of the fog. Is that girl asleep?"

"That's what she is," replied Harry.

Myra sat in the stern seat with her head dropped upon her breast.

"She could not have stood very much more of the hop,"

remarked Old King Brady. "I believe we took her in hand just in time to save her life."

There was no more firing after that.

The ship having located the island, the evident intention was to wait until the fog lifted.

Waiting in silence a few moments, the Bradys found a chance to use their ears.

Voices were heard speaking in the fog.

At first it was impossible to distinguish words, but as the moments passed the voices grew more distinct.

A hoarse voice and a shrill one were speaking.

The first distinguishable words were when the hoarse voice said:

"She'll be lifting soon now, sir."

"I think so, Jim."

"We must be right off San Miguel."

"We are, undoubtedly. Within three miles."

"Will you run in shore if the fog lifts?"

"Yes; we can go within a quarter of a mile. I can only hope they will be on hand, as I want to get rid of this blame dope as soon as possible. Hang me if I'll ever run in another lot. Only for your sharpness, Jim, the Marshall would have been on the ledges."

"Well, Captain Tomlin, I know this coast pretty well. You see, I ran a fish business in Santa Barbara for three years, and many a day's fishing I've put in among these islands."

"You are invaluable in a case like this, Jim. You will be remembered when we run into Frisco, and don't you forget it."

"Thank you, sir. The breeze is increasing. I look to see the fog gone in ten minutes' time."

And it was gone in less.

Five minutes had not elapsed before the stars were shining, and the last trace of the fog had vanished.

A big four-masted schooner lay revealed, but none of those on board saw the Bradys or their boat.

The shrewd old detective knew his business.

The boat had disappeared.

CHAPTER VIII.

' PRISONERS ON SAN MIGUEL.

Had the Bradys sunk their boat, sent it up in the air by the exercise of some mysterious power, or what?

None of these things.

The old detective had played one of his clever tricks—that was all.

As soon as Old King Brady heard the voices in the fog and realized how close they were to the unseen ship, he proceeded to muffle the oars.

That Old King Brady never starts on a case without being prepared for any emergency is well known.

With the oars thus silenced, the detective pulled toward the voices.

When it finally did lift, Old King Brady's boat was under the stern, which, fortunately for his purpose, was unusually high and sloping.

Here by rare good chance a rope dangled. The detective caught it and made fast.

And when the fog lifted there was the boat right behind the Marshall.

It was a big risk to run, of course.

If the man at the wheel chanced to look down upon them they would undoubtedly be discovered.

But it was night, and their presence unsuspected, so the old detective determined to take the risk.

Absolute silence was observed now.

Luckily the girl Myra remained asleep.

Listening, the Bradys could hear the orders given to hoist sail and make a start.

Soon they were moving, and then the gun was fired again.

The answer came promptly.

This time three reports were heard.

This was evidently done to prove to Captain Tomlin that it was actually the opium smugglers signalling.

The wind continued to blow in shore, and the schooner made great headway.

Not once did the helmsman look over the rail, yet of course the Bradys felt by no means secure.

At last the sound of oars approaching was heard in the distance, and someone on the deck remarked: "There they are at last!"

Old King Brady quietly unfastened the line and dropped astern.

It was the only moment when he could have safely done it.

The eyes of the helmsman were fixed upon the lights of the steamer.

The lights did not move, however.

"She has anchored off the island!" breathed Old King Brady. "Perhaps they don't intend to start out to-night."

"If they had I should have supposed they would run the steamer alongside," remarked Harry.

"It is strange that they didn't," replied the detective. "I begin to suspect that there is something wrong."

"That she is on the rocks?"

"Yes."

"Wonder if it can be so?"

"We might have known if we had held back long enough to hear the talk made, but I did not care to run that risk. I think we are doing the right thing."

"There's the boat," cried Young King Brady.

A steamer's boat containing three men had just come into view.

They saw her pull alongside of the Marshall and make fast, two of the men going aboard.

"Strange they don't get on to us," said Harry.

"Not at all," replied Old King Brady. "We are well away from them now, and these stars give but little light; but speaking of lights, I think we had better make for the steamer, land on the island somewhere, and sneak up to some point where we can learn their plans."

"You wouldn't dare to pull up to the steamer as you did to the schooner?"

"No; it would be too risky. That gang is altogether too keen for any such tricks. With the schooner people it was different, for of course they had not the faintest idea that anybody was liable to be hanging around."

The detective pulled on silently.

Just then Myra awoke.

"Where are we now?" she exclaimed. "I think I must have been asleep."

"Not the least doubt of it," said Old King Brady. "You have been asleep for the best part of an hour. It was the powder I gave you that did it. Now you should be entirely well."

"I am certainly a great deal better. Is that the Loretta where I see the lights?"

"Not at all; that is the Silver Star."

"Oh, you are not going there, are you? I don't want to have anything to do with those people. If Maggie Reed sees me she will know me sure. We stand a good chance of being killed."

"Leave me to regulate that," replied Old King Brady. "You don't appear to want to die now any more than I do, and that is not at all."

Looking back at the schooner they could not see that the men belonging to the boat were making any move to return to the Silver Star.

A long, low island was now looming up out of the darkness.

The Bradys pulled steadily toward it, finally landing in a cove behind a high ledge of rocks.

The boat was pulled up on the shore, and seeing a small hut in the distance, the detectives started for it.

The place looked to be utterly deserted.

Old King Brady, who had posted himself on the Santa Barbara islands as soon as the anonymous letter was received, declared that it must be a shepherd's hut.

The island of San Miguel was at this time quite uninhabited, but some years before Santa Barbara parties had done sheep ranching there on a large scale, several huts having been built for the accommodation of the shepherds at the time.

It proved to be as the detective thought.

The hut was entirely deserted.

There were several bunks ranged along the wall of the main room, and the detective told Myra to lie down in one of them and finish out her sleep, to which the poor drugged creature consented readily enough.

Closing the door upon her, the Bradys started out to investigate the Silver Star.

They kept along the shore over rising ground, until at last they found themselves on top of the bluff, where

they could look down upon the steamer, which lay about a hundred yards out from the shore, all careened over to one side.

"Something wrong," muttered the detective. "She's on the rocks fast enough."

"Looks so," replied Harry.

"It is so. She must have run head onto them in the fog. Queer; there don't seem to be anybody aboard."

The steamer appeared to be entirely deserted.

The Bradys watched her for the best part of half an hour, but not a soul appeared on deck.

"They have abandoned her, surest thing," he said. "And yet she don't seem to be in such a very bad way. This is strange."

"What's the matter with sneaking up in the boat and boarding her?" asked Harry.

"Perhaps I will later. Let's take a squint at the schooner first, and see if those fellows have made a start with their boat. I suppose, of course, they mean to return."

Among other things Old King Brady carried a powerful night glass, and now producing it he looked out over the Pacific.

It took time to get the focus, and then he could see the boat.

Some men on board the schooner were busy lowering a large case on board.

There were two similar cases already in the boat, which was of unusual size.

"More brass monkeys, I guess," exclaimed Old King Brady, abruptly.

"What on earth do you mean?" replied Harry.

"Look and see for yourself."

"There's some dummy or another in those cases," said Harry, looking through the glass. "There! They are going to start now!"

The boat pulled steadily toward the island, the Bradys watching.

As it drew near, instead of making for the stranded steamer its course was suddenly checked, and it shot in toward the cove where the detectives' boat lay.

"Heavens! Our fat is all in the fire now!" exclaimed Old King Brady. "Isn't this exasperating! That girl will spit out all she knows."

"Surest thing, Governor! We are in the soup."

"Who would ever have supposed it. I made sure that they would go back to the steamer. I can't think for the moment just what we ought to do."

The boat had now disappeared under the bluff.

"We have either got to retreat into the interior or prepare for a fight, I fancy," said the old detective. "Which to do I really don't know. Hello! There is someone alive on board the steamer, after all."

A sharp whistle rang out.

Apparently it proceeded from the boat.

Immediately a man appeared on the deck of the steamer.

The Bradys dropped to the ground, and lying flat, peered over the edge of the bluff and watched.

The man carried a big megaphone in his hand, and now, raising it to his lips, shouted:

"You are dead right not to come here. The tide is falling, the rocks are all exposed. She will probably beat herself to pieces on the rising tide."

He put down the megaphone, and stood as though waiting for an answer, but none came."

"Why don't they answer?" demanded Harry.

"I suspect they have answered," replied Old King Brady, "but the wind is against them. It blows their words away."

"Wait! He is going to hit the megaphone again," said Harry.

The man raised the megaphone to his lips and shouted:

"If you are going to pull over to Santa Barbara with the cases whistle twice."

Two whistles sounded.

"Do you want me to come to you?" he shouted. "If you do, whistle once."

One whistle was heard.

"We are safe," said Old King Brady. "He is evidently the only man left aboard. What on earth has become of the captain, the crew, and all the rest of the gang?"

"They must have gone ashore in another boat," said Harry. "They seem to have fared worse than we did. There he goes."

The night glass, still in use, showed the detectives all that it was necessary for them to see.

The man lowered the only boat there was left, and pulled directly in under the bluff.

The Bradys waited.

Inasmuch as the steamer had been abandoned, and was expected to go to pieces, and the cargo of smuggled opium secured, Old King Brady did not anticipate that the smugglers would attempt to hunt them up even if Myra was to tell all she knew.

"The game is to run those cases into Santa Barbara and hide them somewhere until they can find means of transporting the hop to Frisco," he remarked. "I don't believe they will bother us. Let them go."

Once more Old King Brady was right.

Ten minutes later they saw three boats pull away from the island, heading for the channel which lies between San Miguel and Santa Cruz.

"Well, there you are," said Harry, despairingly. "It's all up now."

For the third boat was being towed, and Myra was in it.

The Bradys were prisoners on the island of San Miguel.

CHAPTER IX.

RIGHT AMONG THE GANG.

Never was there a more beautiful morning that that which next dawned over the island of San Miguel.

The atmosphere was absolutely clear, and in the distance Santa Barbara, with the old mission perched on the slope of the foothills, could be distinctly seen, with the whole grand vista of the Santa Cruz mountains lying behind.

Leaving Harry still asleep on the grass, Old King Brady climbed down to the foot of the bluff.

The tide was now up, but the Silver Star, which lay at a distance of about a hundred yards from the narrow beach, did not seem to be pounding any, as there was almost no wind.

"That steamer would have sunk long ago if she was as badly damaged as they think for," Old King Brady said to himself. "I wish I could get out to her and have one look."

This, of course, was impossible now, but the old detective did not despair of being able to do so when the tide went out again.

The Silver Star was but a small craft, but she was still too valuable a piece of property to be abandoned.

The schooner James Marshall was no longer visible.

No doubt she had continued her voyage up the coast.

And as Old King Brady continued to look off at the steamer, he suddenly made a discovery which sent him down behind a big rock.

And yet it was only a little thing.

A thin puff of smoke came out of the stove-pipe, which served as chimney for the galley.

"Somebody aboard," thought the detective, and in a minute he knew that he was right, for a man suddenly appeared on deck.

He was a tall, weatherbeaten looking person, evidently a sailor, but to the disappointment of the detective it was neither Captain Dickson nor the engineer, for it had been in his mind that they might have boarded the steamer during the night.

"It is probably the captain of the Silver Star," thought the detective. "No doubt he went ashore for help to get the steamer off, and leaving the smugglers to go their own way, he has returned."

Old King Brady's mind was made up on the instant.

Prompt at decision, the old detective seldom hesitates as to how to act.

Ten minutes later Harry, shaken roughly by the shoulder, was awakened, and jumped up rather startled to find an old man bending over him.

His hair was snow white, his beard reached almost to his waist.

"Wake up, young man, I want to speak to you," he gruffly said.

"Who are you?" demanded Young King Brady, and then burst into a laugh.

"Well, Governor, you fooled me for the moment," he said, "but it was only because I was half awake."

"Follow me," replied Old King Brady. "Quick, or we shall be seen."

"What! Is there anyone here?"

"Half a dozen men on board the Silver Star, that's all."

"Great Scott! How did they get here?"

"Came off from the shore in a tug during the night while we were asleep, I suppose."

"Is that so? I'd like to have a look at them if you only wouldn't hurry me along quite so fast."

"You'll see enough of them before you get through."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that you are to disguise and we are to go aboard if they will take us. You want to be lively about it, too, for it wouldn't surprise me a bit if there is hot work ahead."

Over on the steamer men were busily at work making ready to get the Silver Star off of the rocks.

As the Bradys were subsequently to learn, Captain Baldwin, master of the smuggling steamer, as soon as he found himself upon the rocks, started to consider his own interests, as most men do, and abandoning the smugglers, took to the boats with his crew, struck directly across the channel to Santa Barbara, put his business in the hands of a professional wrecker, and had returned with help on a tug during the night.

Having ascertained the condition of things while the Bradys were still sleeping, the tug returned to Santa Barbara for necessary appliances to float the steamer.

The distance across the island channel is only fifteen miles, and already the tug was on her way to San Miguel again.

Thus the Bradys were by no means so completely isolated from their fellow beings as they had supposed.

About twenty minutes after Harry's rude awakening, two persons suddenly put in an appearance on the beach directly in front of the ledges, upon which the Silver Star lay stranded.

One was the aged individual who had so startled Young King Brady, and the other was no one but Harry himself, excellently made up as a Chinaman, in which role he was simply perfect, having done the part many times.

"Hello! Hello! Hello out there?" called the old detective in a shrill, piping voice.

Everybody on board the steamer and in the three small boats now anchored around it stopped work, and looked off toward the shore.

"Who in thunder are you?" shouted the big man, who was no less a person than Captain Baldwin himself.

"We have been left ashore here!" answered Old King Brady. "We are almost starved. We want you to take us off."

"Don't know whether I will or not," was the grumbling reply. "I've got all I can do to look after my own affairs just now."

But Captain Baldwin, although a rough man, and long in the opium smuggling line, was not altogether a brute.

Old King Brady's snowy locks appealed to him, and after a little he sent a boat ashore.

"What steamer is that?" asked Old King Brady meekly, as the sailor was pulling them out."

"That's the Silver Star, of San Francisco," was the reply.

"And the captain? What's his name?"

"Captain Baldwin."

"You went ashore on the rocks in the fog last night?"

"Yesterday. We were blown in by the gale before the fog came."

"Is she much damaged?"

"Not very much."

"You expect to get her off?"

"Yes; in a few hours' time."

"Where are you going then?"

But the sailor had grown tired of answering questions.

"See here, old man," he said, "I'm not hired to talk to you. If you want to do any pumping, why, pump the skipper, and it's a fat lot you will get out of him, and don't you forget it."

Old King Brady subsided.

He had found out all he wanted to know.

Meanwhile the supposed Chinaman, with his false pig-tail tucked under his round hat, sat as dumb as an oyster in the stern.

Captain Baldwin met them when they came on deck.

"Well, who the mischief are you?" he demanded suspiciously. "How did you come to be left on San Miguel?"

"Am I addressing Captain Baldwin?" asked Old King Brady, with an immense assumption of dignity.

"That's me. Who told you my name?" was the gruff response.

"Your man who pulled us off shore informed me that the master of this unfortunate craft was named Baldwin, my good friend."

"I am not your good friend, and my craft is all right. We shall be afloat in an hour after the tug comes back, and she is on her way here now."

"Ah, indeed! I am delighted to hear it. I was afraid that you had met with a heavy loss."

"Quit talking about me," snarled Captain Baldwin. "Tell me about yourself. How did you come to be on San Miguel along with this Chink?"

"Why, sir, that is easily explained," replied the detective. "I am a botanist. My name is Tackaberry—Professor Tackaberry, of New York. I was botanizing, and unfortunately the storm arose and blew away my boat."

"Did, hey? If you are a botanist where's your baggage? I suppose you must have had some."

"Unfortunately it was blown away in the boat."

"And this man is?"

"My servant. Surely you can see that."

"Didn't know but he was your son," sneered Captain Baldwin.

"Can he suspect?" thought Old King Brady.

But the captain's next words convinced him that he did not.

"Well, what do you want here, anyway?" he demanded.

"To get back to Santa Barbara, I suppose. The wreck-

ing tug is to be back presently. You can go in her if you've got the price."

"Captain, I am no pauper," replied Old King Brady, producing a big roll of bills. "I have got money enough to pay for whatever I want, and what I particularly want now is to get up to San Francisco. Is there any reason why I should not go with you after your steamer is afloat?"

"Well, that's a different story," said the captain, suddenly altering his tone. "Under the circumstances it ought to be worth fifty dollars to get up to Frisco, I should say."

"Surely a high price, but I am willing to pay it. Here you are, sir, fifty dollars," replied the detective, counting out the bills.

The way Captain Baldwin grabbed the money and eyed the roll as Old King Brady put it back into his pocket told the story.

The price he asked for passage was fully five times as much as it was worth.

"That man is money mad," thought Old King Brady. "He would do anything for the dough."

That he was entirely right in this conclusion he was soon to learn.

Walking about the deck, Old King Brady watched the work of the wreckers with a good deal of interest.

The men were professionals and knew their business.

It is always a pleasure to one of inquiring mind to watch such people at their work.

Meanwhile Young King Brady was rather at a loss what to do.

To keep near his chief was out of the question.

Harry got off in a corner and smoked a little bamboo Chinese pipe, which he had to keep filling every five minutes, wondering what was coming next.

This proved to be the wrecking tug.

She came steaming up alongside of the Silver Star, and when her captain came aboard he handed Capt. Baldwin a letter, which he hurriedly read, and started to thrust into the outside pocket of his coat.

But in his haste Captain Baldwin made a mess of it, and the letter fell on the deck.

Harry watched his chance, and soon had it in his possession.

In the shadow of the deckhouse he read as follows:

"Cap:—It's no use. I can't see my way clear to get transportation and shall have to come to your terms, outrageous as they are. Drop anchor off the cove beyond Point Conception, give the signal, and we will come aboard. The cash will be paid at the Joss House, seeing that I haven't half the amount with me. There is no other way. If for any reason you find that you can't get the steamer off send me word at once. I'm stopping at the Morris House, Santa Barbara. If all goes well be on the lookout for the signal. I shall start for the cove as soon as the

wrecking tug comes back—that is, if I don't hear from you then.

“Yours for Cash,
“Cammeyer.”

“Wonder what the captain means to do?” whispered Harry when, having found opportunity to have a word in quiet with Old King Brady, he gave him the letter.

“We can only wait and see,” replied the detective. “But if I know anything, this steamer will be afloat inside of a few hours, and if I know mankind, and I think I do a little bit, Captain Baldwin will accept.”

“Evidently they don't pull together. The captain and the smugglers, I mean.”

“You are right. The man is all for money. He has probably bled the gang beyond endurance. I know he is that kind of a man.”

“And what can we do in the meanwhile?”

“Nothing but wait and watch. I believe that in a few hours we shall be right in among the gang.”

And so it proved.

It took about four hours to float the steamer, and then the wrecking tug left, Captain Baldwin, the engineer, and a crew of four men remaining behind.

But no attempt to start was made before sundown.

Then the Silver Star steamed slowly over to Point Conception, and having rounded it, came to anchor close in shore, when the small brass cannon at the bow was fired once.

Immediately a rocket went up from the shore.

“That's the signal,” thought Old King Brady. “I wonder if Harry sees it?”

He started to find his partner, and ran into Captain Baldwin instead.

Since receiving the money the man had been remarkably civil.

“Oh, professor, I suppose you are wondering why I have stopped here?” he said.

“Naturally; yet I am not particularly curious to know,” Old King Brady replied.

“I'm glad of that, because I can't tell you. There are some people coming aboard in a few minutes. They are a queer lot, but I have important business relations with them. I advise you to keep to yourself as much as possible if you want to avoid trouble. I shan't even introduce you to them. I hope you won't mind.”

“Oh, not at all,” said Old King Brady. “What are they to me?”

“Nothing; that's right. I only wanted to explain. Another thing I want to ask you. Hope you won't mind.”

“Ask anything you like, captain. If I can help you in any way I shall be only too happy.”

“Oh, it isn't you; it's that young Chink of yours. Can he cook?”

“He's a good cook. Why do you ask?”

“Because my cook, who went ashore with the rest of us when the steamer struck, gave me the shake in Santa

Barbara, and I am without one. I suppose you have no particular use for his services during the trip.”

“Not at all. You are welcome to use him. Shall I call him?”

“If you please.”

“Oh, Moy!” called Old King Brady, “come here!”

Harry came up with a true Chinese grin on his face.

“Captain wants you to cook for him, Moy,” Old King Brady said.

“Allee light,” replied Harry. “Me cookee, boss. Me good cookee.”

“Give you five dollars to cook for us up to Frisco,” said Captain Baldwin.

“Flive dollar. Flive dollar, no muchee. Me wante tlen dollar.”

“Give you eight, and that settles it,” said the captain. “No more.”

“Allee light. Eight dollar. When me begin?”

“Right now. I am expecting company, and want a good dinner prepared.”

“Allee light, boss,” said Harry, and he departed for the galley forthwith.

There were but a few minutes to wait before further developments came.

Soon the sound of oars was heard, and two boats were seen approaching the steamer.

They came alongside and made fast.

In one of the boats were two long cases similar to the one in which the brass monkey had been packed.

The other boat also carried a case.

There were two Chinamen richly dressed, and a coarse-looking young woman in the second boat, while pulling the first boat was J. J. Cammeyer himself, and a girl.

The Bradys now found themselves right in among the gang.

But Old King Brady's heart sank as he looked down at the boats.

He had expected it, but still he hoped that it might not be so.

The girl was Myra.

She had resumed her proper dress, and the look she gave the detective showed that she recognized him.

“Infernal nuisance,” muttered Old King Brady. “I only wish I had another disguise with me. She recognizes her doctor, and unless I can head her off trouble will surely come.”

CHAPTER X.

OLD KING BRADY ALL AT SEA.

“Well, cap, we are here, you see!” called Cammeyer. “Can't seem to shake you, old man.”

“That's what's the matter,” replied Captain Baldwin. “You fellers can't get along without the old Silver Star,

and there's no use trying. But where did you pick up the dame?"

"She's Foy Jin's wife, don't you see? We found her on the island last night. The Loretta was wrecked in the storm, it seems. She escaped in a boat, and was smart enough to pull ashore."

"The deuce you say! Everybody lost?"

"Every soul. Foy Jin with the rest."

"And the Bradys?"

"Were on board, after all, it seems, though I can't understand it."

"You are sure they went down with the yacht?"

"They did, captain," said Myra, who sat calmly listening to this interesting conversation. "All hands were lost. I'm a widow now."

"Myra, you are a little brick," thought Old King Brady. "If I win out in this game of bluff you will get your share of the reward."

The relief was immense.

The conversation ended here. The women and the Chinamen came aboard.

A sailor went down into the boat to help Cammeyer, and by aid of hoisting tackle the cases were lifted on deck.

"Look like small coffin boxes," growled Captain Baldwin. "Blame me if they don't."

"And they carry their stiffs, all right," chuckled Cammeyer. "Jolly heathen gods for the Jackson Street Joss House. Ha, ha!"

"More images," thought Old King Brady. "This is a great game."

Cammeyer came aboard then, and the boats were hoisted on deck.

From the first the smuggler had been eyeing Old King Brady suspiciously, but he made no remark until he stepped on deck.

"Say, Cap, what wind blew that old guy with the Billy-goat beard aboard here," Old King Brady overheard him asking suspiciously.

"Oh, he's all right," replied the captain.

Then, forgetting what he had said, he added:

"Let me introduce you, Professor Tackaberry; this is my friend, Mr. Cammeyer. The professor and his Chinese servant were botanizing on San Miguel, and the wind blew their boat away," he explained. "They are going up to San Francisco with us."

Mr. Cammeyer looked anything but pleased.

"So you got left on San Miguel," he growled. "S'pose you saw the steamer go ashore. It's a wonder you didn't make your presence known at the time."

"That's where you are mistaken, Mr. Cammeyer," replied the detective. "We did not see the steamer go ashore. We did not discover her until this morning, after the wreckers began their work."

"Didn't, hey. Well, where were you all the time?"

"On the east side of the island, in one of the shepherds' huts during the storm. The wind blew so that it was

impossible to stand up against it. I'm an old man, as you see."

"You certainly look old enough to be Methuselah's grandfather," replied Cammeyer, rudely, as he turned away.

He went down into the cabin, and the captain giving orders to raise anchor, a start was soon made.

Seeing that he was not being particularly observed, Old King Brady slipped down into the galley, where he found Harry busy among his pots and pans.

"Only for a moment," the old detective hurriedly whispered. "They have come aboard."

"I know. I saw them out through the window," Young King Brady replied.

"Cammeyer is the only white man among them. The others are Chinks, it seems."

"Yes, and that infernal girl! I was hoping she would not come."

"I think she is all right. She told the captain that all hands on board the Loretta were drowned, the Bradys with the rest."

"The deuce she did! Well, if she sticks to that there ought to be something coming to her at the end of the chapter."

"There surely will be."

"Do you think she knew you, Governor?"

"I am certain she did. She could hardly have helped it. I am different from her doctor only in the beard, and knowing that we were left on the island what else could she think?"

"I guess you are right," replied Harry, adding:

"But you had better go, Governor. Someone is liable to come at any moment. I don't think it is safe for you to have much to do with me anyhow. Better cut that out."

"You are right," replied Old King Brady, and he left the galley and returned to the deck.

The steamer was now under way, and moving rapidly up the coast.

Old King Brady walked astern, and was standing there looking off on the Pacific when light footsteps behind caused him to turn.

It was Myra.

Her face wore a nervous, frightened look.

"I suppose you know you are in the greatest danger?" she breathed.

"Perfectly well, my dear. I am used to being in danger," the old detective replied, adding:

"But I have you to thank for not being in worse danger than I am."

"I mean to stand by you," breathed Myra; "that is, if I can. But I am only a girl, so you must not depend too much on me. Your partner saved me from suicide, and I am not ungrateful, and you have saved me from worse than death."

"I am thankful to hear you say so. You can only mean that you intend to give up the hop forever."

"Yes. Your medicine has worked wonders. I have almost no desire to smoke now. I think if you could give me a few more of those powders it would leave me altogether. Don't think that I deserted you willingly. They found me in the hut and forced me to go away with them in the boat."

"I never had any such idea," replied Old King Brady, "and as for the powders, I can give you some of them right now. The medicine they contain is perfectly harmless, and will surely cure you if you persevere."

"So much for imagination," he added to himself, as he handed Myra several of the sugar powders, which he fortunately had on hand.

"Thank you a thousand times, Mr. Brady," whispered Myra. "And now may I ask another and greater favor of you?"

"Indeed, you may ask me any favor, my dear," replied the old detective kindly. "If it is in my power to grant it I surely will."

"You will be going back East when you are through here?"

"Certainly."

"Take me with you. I want to get away from Chinatown, and from under the influence of Maggie Reed."

"That is the woman who came aboard to-night?"

"Yes. She is the wife of Jock High, the biggest of those two Chinks. She is a wicked woman, and I can never reform unless I can get beyond her reach."

"You shall go with us to New York, and I promise to put you in some place where you can earn a respectable living."

"Thank you a thousand times. I'm going to pay you in advance, Mr. Brady. I didn't tell you all I knew."

"The obligation will be all on my side if you can help me to bring this gang to justice."

"I can do it, and I have made up my mind to, for even if Foy Jin is not dead I never want to see him again."

"You are right. A husband who would try to stab his wife, be he white or yellow, should be promptly shaken. Speak freely; no harm shall come to you."

"Well, then, listen. Maggie Reed is the woman who shadowed your partner through the streets the other night, and it was Jock High who shadowed you to the yacht. The real headquarters of the gang are at—oh, dear! I must go now."

"Yes, miss," said Old King Brady, aloud. "It is indeed a beautiful night. Do you observe that bright star in the direction I am pointing. That is Arcturus, and— Ah, Mr. Cammeyer, you are trying a turn on deck. Fine evening, sir."

Old King Brady's vexation was intense.

He had missed a chance which might not come again.

The man Cammeyer had stolen up behind them.

What had he heard?

It was impossible to tell.

"Mrs. Foy Jin, Maggie is waiting for you in the cabin," he said in a hard voice. "Better get right down there, for

she has something important to tell you. What were you saying, sir?"

"I remarked that it was a fine evening," replied Old King Brady quietly.

"I have no time to admire the weather or the stars, sir. I have all I can do to watch out for my business. By the way, you seem to be acquainted with that girl. Met her while you were botanizing on San Miguel, perhaps?"

"Which I did not, sir. She is a stranger to me."

"Indeed! This your first trip down here?"

"Second. I was on San Miguel and Santa Cruz last year."

"Yes, yes. I suppose you are wondering what was in those cases I brought off with me to-night."

"Why, to tell the truth, Mr. Cammeyer, I never gave it a thought."

"Didn't, hey? Well, I will tell you, so in case you do give it a thought your curiosity may be satisfied."

"I have no curiosity, Mr. Cammeyer, nor am I likely to have. I am a man who minds his own business seven days in the week."

"Just so; but I insist on telling you. I am a man who defies the world, sir. I care nothing for any man's opinion, and as for the laws of the land, I keep them or break them as I please."

"He suspects me," thought Old King Brady. "He is the sharpest crook I have struck in a long while. Well, this is too bad."

"Yes, sir," continued Cammeyer, "that's the kind of man I am, so I am going to tell what's in those cases right out plain."

"Very good, sir. Since you insist upon forcing your confidence on me I cannot refuse to receive it, but you can rest assured that your secret will be perfectly safe with me."

"But I am not going to make a secret of it," persisted Cammeyer. "In those cases are three Chinese idols, and each idol is packed with smuggled opium."

"Yes?"

"What do you think of that?"

"I assure you, sir, it does not interest me in the least."

"And I am going to tell you something else," continued Cammeyer. "Those cases are to be taken to the Chinese Joss House on Jackson Street. Call around and I will show you the idols. They are as well worth looking at as the stars."

With this Cammeyer turned on his heel, and walked away.

"It's all up," thought Old King Brady. "What a hot trail this has been. That fellow heads me off at every turn. Now, I wonder what he means shall be the next move?"

But whatever it was to be it did not develop during the trip.

With the finest weather to help her along on her way, the Silver Star steamed up the coast, and crept in through

the Golden Gate unchallenged during the middle of the next night.

Not another word did Cammeyer address to the detective, although they sat together at each meal.

The Chinamen and the two women came to the table, too, but the detective never got another opportunity to speak to Myra, who remained in the cabin all the time. The Bradys were wholly at a loss to account for Cammeyer's conduct.

Dropping anchor off Mike Flannery's steps, a boat came out to meet them, and the cases were taken ashore, the boat making three trips, some of the party going each time.

Cammeyer was the last to leave. Myra and Maggie Reed went by the first boat.

As the opium smuggler was about to embark he turned to Old King Brady, who stood leaning against the rail, and whispered:

"I know you."

"I'm aware of that," replied the detective. "What then?"

"This. I give up. I am ready to go back on the gang and turn State's evidence. Call and see me to-morrow at the Joss House and bring your partner, who, by the way, is an excellent cook, along with you. Promise me protection and I will give up the goods and give away the gang. Afterward I shall rely upon you to do the best you can for me. Is it a go?"

"Certainly," replied Old King Brady. "Rely upon it, Mr. Cammeyer, you will find me on hand at the right time."

"Very well. Good night."

"Good-night," replied Old King Brady, and Cammeyer, descending to the boat, was pulled toward the shore.

"There goes one of the slickest scoundrels I ever tackled," muttered Old King Brady. "What is to be done to trap his gang, and so obey the orders of the Secret Service department, I'm sure I don't know."

For once in his life Old King Brady found himself all at sea.

CHAPTER XI.

THE AUDACITY OF MR. CAMMEYER.

Certainly nothing could have been more strenuous than the voyage down the coast without the opium smugglers, or more commonplace than the return trip with the gang on board.

After the departure of the smugglers, Old King Brady went to Captain Baldwin, and requested to be put on shore at once.

"Oh, I can't send out a boat to-night," replied the captain nervously.

"You must," replied Old King Brady, "and I'm willing to pay for it."

"No," said the captain, "you shan't pay for it, professor. You have acted like a gentleman, and I want you to un-

derstand I am no hog. If you insist I will take you ashore myself."

"Cammeyer has told him nothing," thought the detective. "Whatever that bait of his means is known only to himself."

"But why must you go?" he asked. "Why not one of the crew?"

"Oh, something might happen to you, and I want to see you safely ashore," was the reply, and that put the detective all at sea again.

"Perhaps, after all, he does know, and wants to make sure that I shall take up with Cammeyer's proposition," he thought.

It was hard to decide, but Old King Brady was most anxious to set foot on land again. Each night he had been on the watch, and he greatly needed sleep.

So with Harry he went aboard the boat with Captain Baldwin, and was pulled to Mike Flannery's steps.

Harry got his \$8, and the captain pulled away.

It was pitch dark, and the detectives stood there at the foot of the steps, fully expecting a shot.

"By jove, Governor, this is a mighty ticklish situation," whispered Young King Brady. "I don't relish the idea of going up those steps not for a little bit."

"Same here," replied the detective. "Having been shot here in effigy, I don't care to be shot in reality. But what's to be done? I didn't dare to ask him to land us anywhere else."

"You couldn't, of course. Let us stand here for a minute or so, and see what happens. I haven't had a chance to say a word to you since last night in the galley. What did you learn?"

"Enough to make it plain that we are dealing with a most consummate scoundrel. What do you think he had the audacity to do?"

"I'm sure I don't know. What?"

"To tell me that he was an opium smuggler, and that the cases contained Chinese idols stuffed with opium."

"You don't mean it!"

"But I do. Just before he left the steamer he whispered in my ear that he was going to take the idols to the Jackson Street Joss House, and invited me to call around with my partner and have a look at them."

"It beats the band. What do you suppose he meant?"

"It's a trap, of course."

"Does he think we are fools enough to go there? Of course, it is all a lie about that being the place where they propose to take the hop."

"Oh, I don't know, Harry. I can't get onto his curves at all. I'm sure I don't know what to think about it. By the way, we have been whispering here five minutes now, and haven't been shot yet."

"Suppose I flash a light and see how the case stands at the head of the steps."

"Not yet. Give us five minutes more, and then we will decide. Meanwhile let me tell you about Myra. That little girl is a heroine, if ever there was one."

And Old King Brady related how nearly Myra had told him the true holdout of the opium gang.

"Well, well," said Harry. "That was a bad foul, wasn't it? What a pity! But time must be about up, Governor, and still we are not dead."

"Right. Now you can show the glim."

Harry turned on his little electric dark lantern.

At the head of the steps they could see Mike Flannery's old beach house, dark and deserted.

"If they are there they will make no move until we do," muttered the old detective. "Let us go ahead. But hold on! What have we here?"

"A letter, by jove!"

"And what is more, it is addressed to Old King Brady."

"Surest thing. This is another strange move."

The letter lay upon the landing stage directly at the detective's feet.

Old King Brady stooped and picked it up.

"We won't attempt to read it here," he said. "Let us get out of this first."

There was only one way out, and that was by Mike Flannery's steps.

Each armed with a cocked revolver, the Bradys now went boldly up to the deserted house, and passed away from it unharmed.

It was not until they reached the Lick House that they breathed freely.

"Ah, you are back again, Mr. Brady?" said the clerk, for although Harry still remained a Chinaman, Old King Brady had found opportunity to do away with the wig and whiskers, and had resumed his usual dress.

"Back once more," he replied. "Mr. Smithers, I want this young Chink to go up to my room with me for a few moments. I have to question him about certain matters. By the way, I might as well register for my partner while I am about it. He will be along in a few moments."

"All right," said the clerk. "Been down the coast?"

"Yes, as far as Santa Barbara."

"I saw a whole lot in the Call about you and your case the other day. You are after opium smugglers?"

"That's what."

"How did you make out?"

"Well, between ourselves, we didn't make out at all. They gave us the slip all around."

At this moment the supposed Chink put up his hand and stroked his face in a peculiar way.

This was one of the Bradys' signals.

It meant "look behind you."

It was now just a quarter to three in the morning, and there had been no guest in the hotel office when the Bradys entered.

Now a tall, well-dressed man was coming across the tiled floor.

It was J. J. Cammeyer!

"Ah, Mr. Brady, how do you do?" he exclaimed effusively. "Just returned from your smuggler's hunt?"

It was all Old King Brady could do to control himself. Cammeyer came forward with outstretched hand.

Old King Brady shook hands as warmly as though the man had been his best friend.

"Yes, I am back again," he said. "How do you do, Mr. Cammeyer. I hope I see you well?"

"Never better," was the reply, "and business with me is simply fine."

"By the way," he added, turning to the clerk, "are there any letters here for me? My name is Cammeyer—J. J. Cammeyer."

"None, sir," replied the night clerk.

"Indeed. I had reason to suppose that a certain party would address me here. Well, good-night, Mr. Brady. Call around and see me to-morrow. We can do business together, I am sure."

Thereupon Mr. Cammeyer, insisting upon shaking hands again, hurried out of the hotel.

"Well, for sheer cool audacity, that man takes a whole bakery!" exclaimed Harry, as soon as they were in the room behind a locked door.

"He is a wonder," replied Old King Brady.

"Were we ever up against his equal?"

"I doubt it. He must have followed us every step of the way."

"No doubt now about our having been watched at the landing by the steps. Probably he saw you pick the letter up."

"Harry, it looks so. I can't think otherwise. Why he didn't shoot us and tumble our bodies into the bay beats me. He certainly had every chance."

"He's a tough proposition," said Harry, stripping off his Chinaman's clothes. "But you had better read the letter, had you not?"

Old King Brady produced it, tore open the envelope, and read as follows:

"Mr. Brady:

"Dear Sir.—I have had no chance to speak to you. They were watching me all the time, and Cammeyer has threatened to kill me if I dared open my lips, so I am going to write, in the hope that I may be able to drop this letter where you are likely to find it, and so repay you for your kindness to me by telling what you want to know. Cammeyer is the head and front of the gang, although I told you to the contrary. He is also the only white man in it. The others are Jock High, my husband, Foy Jin, if he still lives, Low Quong Hok, the other Chink who was on the steamer, Maggie Reed, and Yung Moy Hip, the restaurant keeper, who puts up the cash. The gang also have agents in every large city in the country, but I don't know their names, and I don't think anybody does except Yung Moy Hip and Cammeyer himself. The Jackson Street Joss House is really their holdout. Low Quong Hok is priest there. The plan is to get you in there and kill you. There is a room downstairs where the job is to be done. Beneath this room is a deep hole which is reached

by a trap door. Here they store their opium, and they mean to keep your body there until they get the chance to dispose of it. Do not come there as you value your life. I shall try to escape and come to you. Remember, if you get Cammeyer and the Chinks I have mentioned, you have got the gang."

This was all.

The letter was unsigned.

"Well, there you have it," said Harry. "We are just as far from success as we were at the start."

"I don't know about that," replied Old King Brady. "I believe that every word of this letter is true. We know our men now, and knowing them, I think we have a fair chance of success."

"I am glad to hear you say so, but I must confess I don't see how we are to proceed."

"Nor I; therefore I shall go to bed and see if I can't dream of a way, for one thing is certain—I am going to accept Cammeyer's invitation to call."

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Nothing further in regard to the case passed between the Bradys until they sat down to breakfast next morning.

"Well, Governor, did you have your dream?" Harry then asked.

"Yes, I did," replied Old King Brady, and there was a curious twinkle in his eye. "I dreamed that the Jackson Street Joss House took fire, and that we were in that underground room Myra speaks of helping to put it out."

"Indeed! And did we succeed?"

"Can't tell you. I woke up then; but we shall probably know before the day is through."

And after that, as Old King Brady refused to discuss the case any further, Harry knew that he must have found some plan.

Immediately after breakfast Old King Brady, instructing his partner to disguise himself as a mechanic, get up around the Jackson Street Joss House, and take a general view of the outside, so as to study the approaches to the building, left him and went off by himself.

His destination was the office of the chief of the San Francisco police.

That official he found up to his eyes in work, but he laid everything aside and received the old detective in his private office.

"Well, how are you making out with your opium smugglers?" he asked.

"First-rate," replied Old King Brady. "I now know the names of the gang and their holdout. To bag the whole lot I only require a little help from you."

"Well, I'm sure I stand ready to give it to you, Mr. Brady. You may take as many of my men as you wish, and raid the place. All you have to do is to name your wants."

"That plan wouldn't work at all, for when we raided the place we should surely find nobody," replied the detective. "What control have you over the fire department, chief?"

"No direct control, of course. Why do you ask?"

Old King Brady leaned forward across the desk, and whispered a few words in the chief's ear.

"Yes, I can do that," was the reply. "Put the details of your plan on paper, and they shall be carried out."

Leaving the office of the chief of police, Old King Brady returned to the Lick House, where he found Harry waiting for him.

"Well, how did you make out?" he asked.

"I was all around the Joss House."

"How many entrances are there?"

"Only two doors, one in front and the other opening upon the alley in the rear."

"Oh, there is an alley entrance?"

"Yes."

"You get into it off Stockton Street?"

"Yes."

"See anything of Cammeyer?"

"No. I saw nobody that had anything to do with our case."

"Very well. Now, I have an errand for you to do. Take this note to the chief of the fire department, and take this paper which I have drawn up also. It contains full instructions for you. Carry them out to the letter. That is all."

"Have you made up your mind about the Joss House, Governor?"

"Yes, I am going there."

"In disguise?"

"No; just as I am."

"It is running the biggest kind of risk."

"I know it. I have determined to take the risk. Our business is all risk anyhow. It makes but little difference in what way we come up against it as far as I can see."

"I suppose that is so," replied Harry. "Well, we have got to take our chances, anyhow. I guess you will come out ahead. You usually do."

"There is one thing I can do," replied Old King Brady, "and that is to show our friend Cammeyer that I can be just as bold and audacious as he is himself, and that I propose to do. If I lose my life I shall have the satisfaction of dying in the harness, at all events."

Harry took the letters and withdrew.

After smoking one cigar Old King Brady sauntered to Chinatown, and climbing the Jackson Street hill, entered the famous Joss House, between Stockton and Dupont streets.

In San Francisco the joss houses are like some drug stores, always open and ready for business.

As is well known, the Chinese religion calls for no regular form of worship where people gather and listen to preaching.

Like everything else they do, the Chinese work their religion in an entirely different way.

In the joss house there is an altar, upon which many idols, great and small, are placed.

These are not worshiped as people generally suppose.

They are supposed to be merely temporary lodging-places for the spirits of the dead.

The Chinaman goes to the joss house to consult his particular joss or guardian spirit about his affairs.

This spirit is supposed to enter one of the idols upon the altar—if he can't get into one he goes into another.

The Chinaman buys a box of joss sticks, kneels before the altar, and shakes the sticks in the box as one would shake dice, throwing them on the floor, and at the same time putting mentally the question which he wishes to ask.

The joss sticks bear general answers to many questions stamped upon them, and the Chinaman is guided by the answer upon the stick which falls nearest to his particular joss.

There were several worshipers kneeling before the hideous idols upon the altar, shaking their joss sticks, when Old King Brady entered the place.

None of them paid the slightest attention to the detective.

Anyone can go into a joss house and look around. As we have said before, they are open for business night and day.

Old King Brady watched the stick throwers for a few minutes, and then approached the attendant who sold the joss sticks.

"Tell Mr. Cammeyer that I am here to see him," he said. "Here is my card."

"No sabe Cammeyer," growled the Chinaman, without touching the card.

At the same instant a little door alongside the altar opened, and a Chinaman thrust out his head and spoke a few quick words.

"Jock High," thought Old King Brady. "It looks as though these scoundrels really expected me. Well, I have come."

The Chinaman then took the card and popped in through the little door.

In a minute it opened again, and there stood J. J. Cammeyer.

He held up one hand and beckoned to Old King Brady, who passed through the door.

That it was an act requiring great courage need scarcely be said.

Unless his own schemes proved successful Old King Brady knew that he was probably going to his death.

The room into which he was admitted was scarcely big enough to turn around in, and the floor space was still further reduced by a flight of stairs leading down.

Standing at the head of the stairs was Cammeyer, with his face wreathed in smiles.

"So you have come to look at my idols, Mr. Brady," he said. "Well, I was waiting for you. Where is your partner, by the way?"

"He was otherwise engaged this morning, and could not join me," replied the detective.

"I'm sorry for that. I had hoped to have the pleasure of entertaining you both. But step this way, and I will show you these interesting heathen gods. Well, well, it was a pleasant trip we had up the coast, wasn't it? I dare say we shall be able to come to terms. I am tired of being chased about as I have been, and have made up my mind to quit the business and give the gang away."

Cammeyer was descending the stairs while talking, and he now ushered Old King Brady into a large lighted room which was below the level of the street.

It was unfurnished except for three empty packing-cases. In front of each case was a hideous idol, carved out of wood. They were all alike, and represented the seated figure of a man.

"There they are," said Cammeyer, pointing. "Stand right here, Mr. Brady, you can get a better look at them. Each one is stuffed full of hop, several thousand dollars' worth, my dear sir."

"I'm right over the trap-door," thought Old King Brady, as he took the place indicated. "Good heavens, I do hope there is to be no hitch in my plans."

"So those are your fancy hop boxes," he remarked. "Well, they are ugly enough to contain anything, I must say."

"They certainly are," replied Cammeyer. "But at the same time they represent a joss much revered by these Chinks. Strange people, the Chinks, Mr. Brady, yet they are square if you come to know them. After all, I kind of hate to give them away. Suppose we see if we can't come to terms in this business?"

"I'm willing."

"You are?"

"Certainly."

"But I thought the Bradys were not to be bribed. That has always been the talk."

"Every man has his price, Mr. Cammeyer."

"So they say. What is yours?"

"Full information about this hop smuggling business, so that I may arrest every Chink concerned in it; then I will try and arrange it so that you can go free."

"That's reasonable. But I shall have to consult my partners."

"Consult nobody. That would simply spoil all."

"I don't think so," sneered Cammeyer. "My partners are in on this deal," and as he spoke he clapped his hands.

Instantly a door on each side of the room flew open, and through each rushed two hideously masked forms.

They looked like the masked actors in a Chinese theatre. The masks covered the entire head in each case.

One was horned, another had huge teeth displayed, and were equally hideous.

Each masked man held a long Chinese knife.

They rushed threateningly at the detective, who had scarcely expected a display like this.

"Now, then, Brother Brady, let me introduce you to my four demons," cried Cammeyer. "I presume you perceive that you are entirely at my mercy; there are two knives behind you, and two in front, and all I have to do is to speak the word to have them buried in your breast and back. Besides, you are standing on a trap door, which I can instantly open and drop your dead body into a hole, where it can remain indefinitely. I did not suppose you would be audacious enough to come here alone even on my pressing invitation; but since you are here I have made up my mind to entertain you handsomely, as you see."

"Mr. Cammeyer, speaking of audacity, I did not propose to let myself be outdone by you," replied the detective, with the utmost calmness. "You seem to have me pretty effectually corraled. Perhaps you will be kind enough to let me know my fate."

"Certainly," replied the opium smuggler. "That's a reasonable request. Your fate, my dear sir, can be accurately stated in one word, and that word is——"

"Death!" cried all four demons in chorus, and the knives were flashed at Old King Brady again.

"No, no, no!" screamed a voice behind the detective. "No, Cammeyer, it shall not be!"

It was the girl Myra.

She rushed out from some concealment and threw herself in front of Old King Brady.

"Traitor! You shall die!" shouted Cammeyer, and he called out something in Chinese to the masked men.

"Back!" shouted Old King Brady, whipping out two revolvers. "Back, I say! Lay a hand on that girl at your peril!"

The time had come.

There had been an uproar in the street above while this was going on, and quick footsteps were heard overhead.

"Fire! Fire! Fire!" someone had shouted.

Surely it was the rattle of fire engines mingling with the cry!

Now all in an instant the cry was taken up at the head of the stairs:

"Fire! Fire! Fire!"

"Heavens! The fire is in the joss house!" the opium smuggler gasped and then down the steps several firemen came dashing, headed by Young King Brady.

"Cover that man, Harry!" shouted Old King Brady, and as it was done he sprang upon Cammeyer.

.Yes, the Bradys knew their business.

Just a brief struggle, and the handcuffs were on Cammeyer's wrists, while Harry and the firemen seized the four demons, and the job was done.

"Yours truly, J. J. Cammeyer," said Old King Brady. "Many thanks for your invitation to call. Now we will proceed to inspect your heathen gods!"

The smuggled opium was not found inside the idols, but all of it and a great deal more was discovered in the vaults below.

Of course, the fire was a fake, but the Jackson Street Joss House, swarming with people who tumbled the idols about and raised Cain generally, got such a shaking up as it had not had in many a long day.

The four demons arrested by the Bradys and the firemen proved to be Jock High, Yung Moy Hip, a strange Chink, and Foy Jin, poor Myra's husband.

All were taken around to police headquarters on Washington Street, together with Myra and the woman, Maggie Reed, who was captured in a room upstairs.

The Chinks proved perfect Sphinxes, but Cammeyer promptly confessed, and begged to be allowed to appear as State's evidence.

This, however, was not permitted by the United States marshal who took the case in hand.

The case was rushed to accommodate the Bradys, who remained in Frisco to see its finish.

Thousands of dollars' worth of opium was captured and turned over to the Custom House officials.

Cammeyer and his Chinese confederates each got two years in San Quentin. Maggie Reed went free.

As for Captain Baldwin, he vanished, leaving the Silver Star to her fate.

Captain Dickson, of the Loretta, and the engineer made a safe landing at Santa Barbara, and coming north by train, Foy Jin was able to turn up at the joss house before Old King Brady arrived.

And thus the hot trail on the Pacific coast was followed to a successful finish.

Myra went East with the detectives, where she was given over to a mission. Later she secured a divorce from her Chinese husband and married a respectable young man.

From the Secret Service Bureau the usual fees came to the detectives, and their payment marked the end of the case of THE BRADYS AND THE OPIUM SMUGGLERS.

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS' BOOMERANG; OR, SHAKING UP THE WALL STREET WIRE TAPPERS," which will be the next number (228) of "Secret Service."

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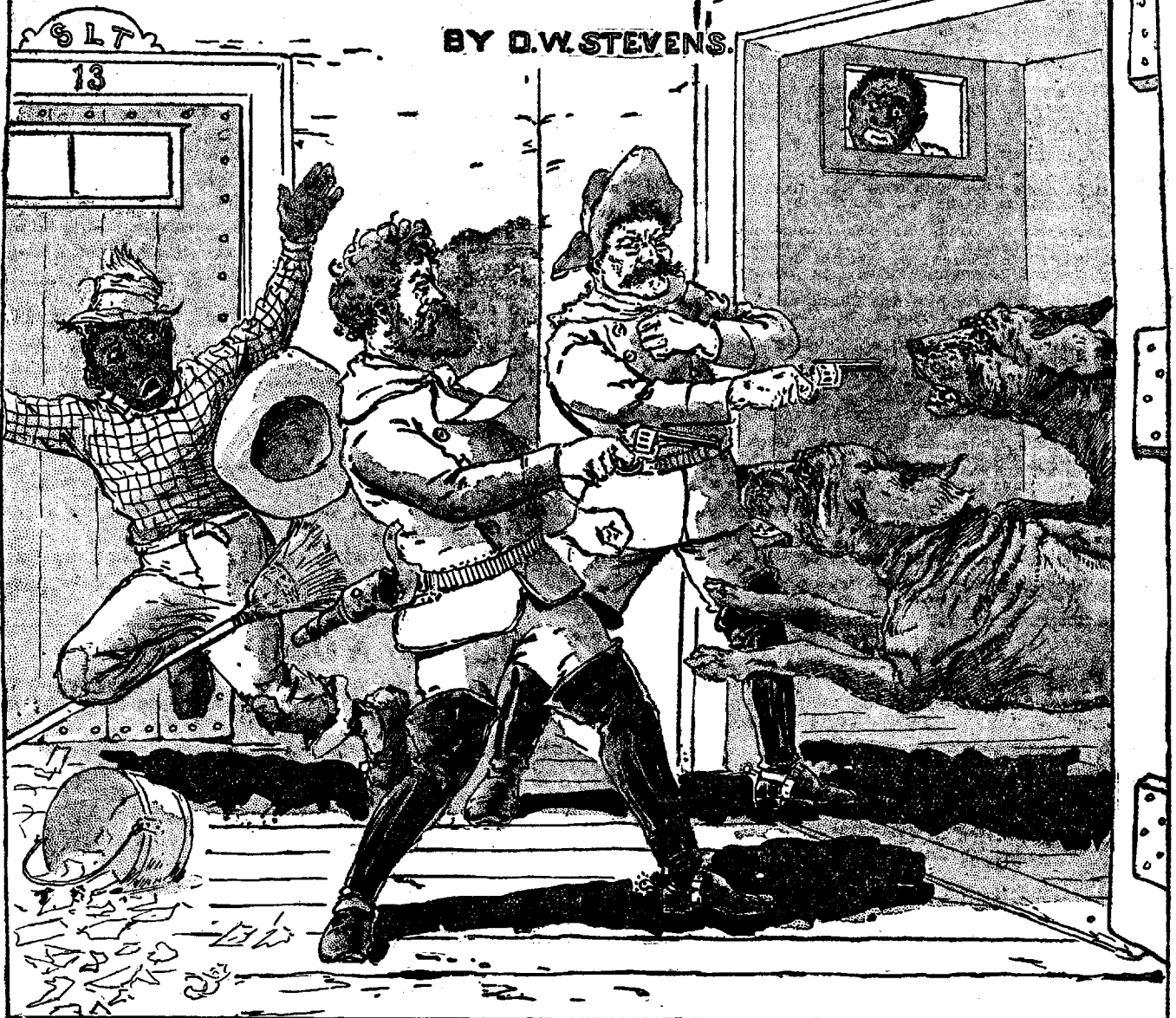
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